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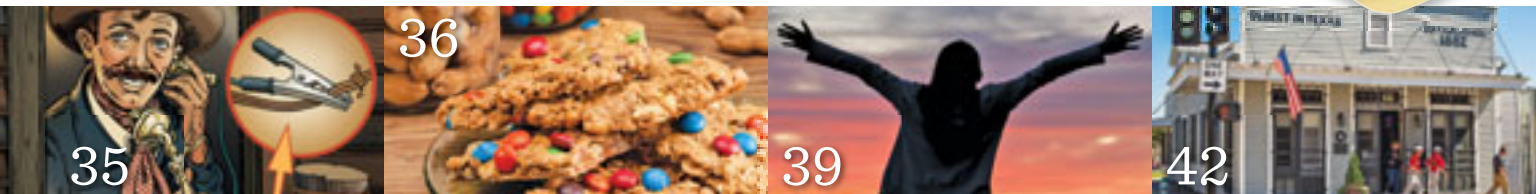
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COVER PHOTO A 2012 cabernet claret flows into a glass at Spicewood Vineyards. By Laura Jenkins

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SURPRISE PECAN BRIE QUESADILLAS

2012 Texas Co-op Power Holiday Recipe Contest \$500 Winner

- 3 slices bacon
- ¾ cup butter, divided
- 1 cup Texas pecans, chopped medium fine
- ¼ cup packed dark brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- ½ teaspoon prepared yellow mustard
- 2 crisp pears
- 1 round (8 ounces) Brie
- 6 flour tortillas (fajita size)

- Fry bacon slices until crisp. Break into ½-inch pieces and set aside.
- Melt 4 tablespoons of butter in a sauté pan. Add pecans, brown sugar, Worcestershire and mustard and stir well. Cook 3 to 4 minutes, stirring well to mix. Remove from heat and set aside.
- Core pears and slice into 24 ¼-inch rounds. Melt 2 tablespoons of butter in the pan. Add pear slices and cook for 1 minute per side. Remove from pan and set aside.
- Place 4 slices of Brie, 4 pear slices, 4 to 5 bacon pieces and about 2 tablespoons of pecan mixture on half of each tortilla.
- Melt 1 tablespoon butter in a small (9- to 10-inch) skillet. Add one quesadilla to pan and sauté for 1 minute. Fold empty half of the tortilla over the Brie mixture and continue to sauté until lightly browned and slightly crisp on both sides. Repeat process with remaining quesadillas, keeping each quesadilla warm until ready to serve.

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Include These Books, Too

Good list. I would add "The Jefferson Bible." With Greek, Latin, French and English on facing pages, I could perhaps teach myself an extra language or two.

VEDA SMITH | PIPE CREEK
BANDERA EC

I would recommend very highly William J. Bennett's "The Book of Virtues." It is more than 800 pages of poems, stories, famous speeches and excerpts from the Bible and plays. Good reading for all ages.

JUANA BISHOP | AUSTIN
PEDERNALES EC

What books would you want on a deserted island? Share your list on our Facebook page or send it to editor@texas-ec.org. And see more lists from readers in our online Letters to the Editor.

Making Us Proud

"Valor Always Welcome" [March 2014] on Gainesville's recognition as the Most Patriotic Small Town in America was the best article you've ever printed. I knew of Gainesville's title, but I hadn't realized the reason or the extent of the town's project.

The article by E.R. Bills demonstrates all that is possible when a

Must Reads for a Deserted Island

I enjoyed "Bound and Determined" [March 2014], but I was especially challenged by the question, "What books would you want on a deserted island?" Initially, I started to list all of my favorite books and writers, which in itself is not an easy task. But as I explored this task in more depth, my list began to change.

The books would have to sustain me. They would have to keep me sane and grounded. They would have to bring me hope and keep me connected to my past and to the rest of humanity. Some would have to soothe; some would have to challenge; some would have to make me laugh.

The Bible

- "Charming Billy" by Alice McDermott
- "Leaving Cheyenne" by Larry McMurry
- "The Power of One" by Bryce Courtenay
- "Paula" by Isabel Allende
- "PrairieErth" by William Least Heat-Moon
- "Hard Times" by Studs Terkel
- "The Decameron" by Giovanni Boccaccio
- "The Best Short Stories of Ring Lardner"
- "Selected Poems" (Spanish and English) by Pablo Neruda

JIM HILL | LUBBOCK | SOUTH PLAINS EC



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LORETTA BEDFORD | SAN AUGUSTINE
DEEP EAST TEXAS EC

A Great Native Son

Thanks so much for the short article about T.R. Fehrenbach ["He Wrote Texas' History Book," March 2014]. I had not heard about his death in December, so that was a surprise.

My favorite work of his is "This Kind of War." It includes several pages of information about my father, Col. Arthur

B. Busbey Jr. (then a captain) and his experiences as an infantry company commander in the Korean War. I quoted from that book at my

father's funeral at Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery four years ago. Sadly, Texas lost another great native son in Mr. Fehrenbach.

CHARLES P. B. BUSBEY | DRIPPING SPRINGS
PEDERNALES EC

Pearl Portrayed Perfectly

Your article describes Pearl perfectly ["Pearl Bluegrass Jam," March 2014]. My parents, Tom and Jeanette Ludwick, were avid bluegrass fans and called Pearl their second home, even to the extent of leaving their travel trailer permanently parked at the community center until their deaths.

Any bluegrass fan or musician worth his or her salt knows all about Pearl. Thank you for a heartwarming article that I can share with my family.

JEFF LUDWICK | TEMPLE
HEART OF TEXAS EC

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Medal of Honor recipient
Duane E. Dewey

town is united in beliefs and works together to make reality happen. All Texans should be proud of the residents of Gainesville as well as

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CO-OPS IN THE COMMUNITY

Lost Pines Find Friends

More than two years after a wildfire burned 34,000 acres of the famed Lost Pines forest in Central Texas, Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative employees lent a hand and some shovels to the recovery. About 80 co-op employees and their families planted more than 5,000 loblolly pine seedlings on 15 acres at the co-op's Bastrop headquarters in January, replacing trees lost in the Bastrop County Complex fire, which started over Labor Day weekend in 2011. The seedlings were provided by TreeFolks, an Austin-based urban forestry charity.



Bluebonnet EC employees and friends plant 5,000 loblolly pine seedlings to replace trees lost in the 2011 Bastrop County wildfire.



Mother's Day Milestone

Mother's Day officially turns 100 this month. By 1911, Mother's Day was celebrated in most states, and on May 8, 1914, President Woodrow Wilson signed a joint resolution designating the second Sunday in May as Mother's Day.

Anna Jarvis is considered the founder of Mother's Day in the U.S. Though she never married or had children, she lobbied passionately to set aside a day to honor mothers. She was inspired by her own mother, Anna Marie Reeves Jarvis, an activist and social worker in West Virginia who used to express her desire that someday someone should honor all mothers, living and dead.

When Mother's Day quickly became a gold mine for the flower, candy and greeting card businesses, the younger Jarvis fervently objected and spent decades trying to turn the focus of the day to intimate family celebrations.

Was she successful? You decide. American consumers spent about \$170 on Mom last year, according to theweek.com. (That compares to about \$120 spent on Dad for Father's Day, according to outsidethebeltway.com.)

Tuxes and Deep Pockets

High school students—or, more likely, their parents—dig deep these days for their social event of the school year: prom. The nationwide average cost of going to prom was \$1,139 last year, according to a survey by Visa Inc. Parents foot 59 percent of that bill, the survey showed.

Where does all the money go? A *Seventeen* magazine survey in 2012 found that girls spent an average of \$231 on a dress, \$50 to get their hair done and \$68 on their makeup. In addition, they shell out \$45 for shoes and \$32 on jewelry. Then there are the costs of tuxedo rentals, dining out, perhaps a limo.

Texas teens go to prom at a cost higher than the national average, spending \$1,203. Kids in the Northeast rack up the heaviest bills, averaging \$1,528.

ENERGY NEWS

CFLs' Grace Period

For decades, most of the light-bulbs in our homes were incandescents. They were cheap to buy and costly to run. Ninety percent of the energy they use is given off as heat, and only 10 percent as light. Maybe that's why many of us had "Turn out the light!" drilled into us every time we left a room as kids.

Incandescents are being phased out, replaced in large part by CFLs—compact fluorescent lamps. They are cheap to run and more expensive to buy than incandescents. They can last 10 times longer than incandescents, although the more you flip them on and off, the more you shorten their lifespans. So does "Turn out the light!" apply to CFLs?

The Department of Energy proposes a simple rule: Leave your CFL on if you will be out of the room for 15 minutes or less. Otherwise, turn off the light.



HAPPENINGS

Mudbug Mania

Memorial Day weekend marks the unofficial start of summer, and there's no secret about what's on the menu May 23–25 at the Crawfish Festival in Fredericksburg. Of course, there is more to do than eat your fill of the tasty little mudbugs. (Still, bring your appetite: Last year, close to 6,000 pounds of boiled crawfish were served.)

Delicacies featuring the popular critter include bread, sausage and po-boys. If crawdaddies aren't your thang, there's boiled shrimp. Have a more refined palate? Opt for the Sunday creole brunch from chef John Russ.

Swing your hips to country and zydeco music and shop from some of Texas' finest artisans. For the kiddies, a carnival, climbing wall and zip line beckon, but perhaps best of all is a petting zoo featuring baby alligators.

INFO: \$7 for adults, \$5 for ages 6-12; (830) 433-5225; fbgcrawfish.com

Find more happenings all across the state at TexasCoopPower.com

433,000,000

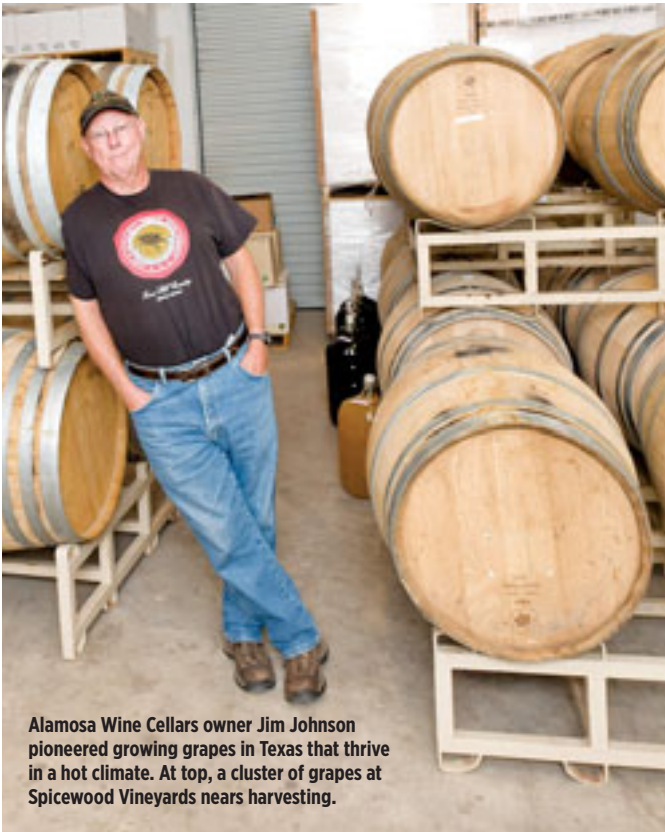
Texas farms produced 433 million pounds of peanuts in 2013, according to the Texas Department of Agriculture. That's enough to make more than 4 billion peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. Of course, peanuts have a place in many recipes, as you'll see starting on Page 36.



CFL: © SOMCHAIKUM | DOLLAR PHOTO CLUB. CRAWFISH: © SERGEJ RAZVDODOVSKIJ | DOLLAR PHOTO CLUB. PEANUT: © YVONDAVID | DOLLAR PHOTO CLUB

We Know Vino

The rest of the world is discovering, as are Texans, that our bragging rights include winemaking



Alamosa Wine Cellars owner Jim Johnson pioneered growing grapes in Texas that thrive in a hot climate. At top, a cluster of grapes at Spicewood Vineyards nears harvesting.

AS A GENERAL RULE, TEXANS AREN'T GREAT AT keeping secrets. We're the swaggering sort, ever poised to tell the world about our Blue Bell, our barbecue, our bluebonnets and our beer. We've got the goods, and we're highly inclined to tout them to anyone who'll listen.

But even the most loyal and loudmouthed among us might not be aware that our beloved state has been quietly cultivating another extraordinary asset. Texas is settling into its *terroir*—a French term to describe the specific environmental conditions, especially soil and climate, that influence a wine's flavor. And that, in turn, has spawned an emergent wine culture that's unlike any other in the nation. For a variety of reasons, the Texas wine industry has seen astonishing growth over the past 10 years, and by all indications, the rest of the world is catching on.

Wine Enthusiast Magazine named the Texas Hill Country one of the top 10 wine travel destinations in the world for 2014. Numerous Texas wines have recently received high honors at prominent competitions around the globe, outscoring wines that hail from many of the most celebrated viticultural regions.

The figures alone reflect an astounding expansion: The number of wineries in Texas has increased more than 500 percent, from 46 in 2001 to 293 as of December 2013. The Texas wine and grape industry contributed \$1.8 billion to the Texas economy in 2011 and is currently ranked fifth in the nation in both wine production and consumption. Clearly, we're in the midst of an epic growth spurt.

Wine in Texas is nothing new. In his book, “The Wineslinger Chronicles: Texas on the Vine” (Texas Tech University Press, 2012), Russell Kane recounts the origins of winemaking in Texas. The abbreviated explanation is that Spanish missionaries brought vines to Texas in the mid-1600s. Though the grapes survived the next 175 years, wine wasn’t terribly common or popular by the time Texas won independence from Mexico. Add in the Civil War and a host of other conflicts, and it’s plain to see, Kane writes, how such forces “delayed the civility and economic development necessary for expanding wine culture in Texas.”

Texas grape growing and winemaking accelerated in the 19th and 20th centuries, but the 18th Amendment, which outlawed producing, selling or transporting alcoholic beverages from January 1920 until its repeal in December 1933, interrupted viticultural expansion for decades. According to Kane, there were more than 50 wineries in Texas before Prohibition, and it took until the late 1990s to surpass that number. Prohibition “left a complicated and arcane set of laws” in its wake, says Kane, some of which have been lifted only recently.

Today, many refer to state legislation passed in 2003 and 2005 as the tipping point for the recent industry surge. Among other things, those changes in the law expanded wineries’ ability to ship directly to consumers and extended permission to sell and serve wine on their premises—regardless of whether they are located in a dry county.

Late wine pioneers Doc McPherson and Bob Reed are largely regarded as the fathers of the modern Texas wine industry. The two Texas Tech researchers experimented with grape growing in the Panhandle near Lubbock in the 1960s and ’70s. The area

later became the Texas High Plains American Viticultural Area, which generates more than half of the state’s wine grapes every year. The pair eventually established Llano Estacado in 1976, an iconic Texas winery near Lubbock that’s still one of the top wine producers in the state.

McPherson is thought to have been the first to plant Italian sangiovese grapes in Texas. Though he reportedly never made a commercial wine entirely from sangiovese, McPherson’s experiment reinforced the notion that grapes from regions that share climate similarities with Texas—Italy, Spain and Portugal, for example—might thrive here. Still, most vintners in the Lone Star State continued to focus on California-centric grapes, including varieties such as chardonnay and cabernet sauvignon, which don’t typically flourish in extreme heat.

In the late 1980s, Jim Johnson had a hunch that adopting California’s model might not be the most effective approach to Texas winemaking. At the time, Johnson lived in Houston and worked for NASA, but he also moonlighted at a wine store to satisfy his growing fascination with winemaking.

“I thought that there might be some grapes we could grow that could do better than what the California paradigm demanded at the time,” says Johnson, now the owner of Alamosa Wine Cellars in the Hill Country near San Saba. “It was a gut feeling. I knew there were hot places in Europe that made wines and that the wines they were making weren’t cabernet, merlot or chardonnay.”

After hearing a California vintner underscore the importance of winemaking talent in the industry, Johnson left NASA, moved to California and enrolled in the viticulture and enology program at the University of California, Davis.

Spicewood Vineyards owner Ron Yates is as likely to be tending his grapevines—his 32 acres of grapes include European varieties such as viognier, graciano and tempranillo—as he is pouring wine for visitors eager for a taste. Yates and his staff are eager to engage guests in conversations about wine.





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After graduating in 1991, Johnson worked for wineries in California and Texas before planting his own vineyard near San Saba in 1996. He started by growing sangiovese and viognier (grapes indigenous to Italy and France, respectively) and later added tempranillo, a Spanish grape that has done so well here some have started calling it the “National Red Grape of Texas.” Alamosa released the first commercial tempranillo in Texas in 2000.

Johnson was near the forefront of the growing trend to cultivate nontraditional grapes, which include varieties most Americans haven’t heard of—tannat, souzão, mourvèdre and albariño, to name a few. Many of these grapes have been around for centuries in Europe, and they thrive in weather conditions that somewhat mirror Texas’. So far, the European grapes seem to be making themselves right at home here.

If you’ve ever been to Napa, chances are you’ve tasted plenty of California cabernet sauvignon. It accounts for 40 percent of the region’s production. Most people know that California is the undisputed wine king of America. And for that reason, many have tried to duplicate its success.

“When Oregon first started as a wine-producing state, they

were trying to emulate California and grow the same stuff,” Johnson says. “It wasn’t until they figured out that pinot noir and pinot gris were the varieties that worked best for their climate, their soil and their topography that they finally got their own chapter in ‘The World Atlas of Wine.’ ” Johnson says that he and other Texas growers and winemakers are arguably making the same types of discoveries.

The hope, of course, is that wine lovers will embrace the unconventional. But 90 percent of the domestic wine produced in the United States comes out of California, and many consumers tend to equate familiar names with quality—a bias that often keeps them from trying anything else. Dacota Haselwood, former chief governmental affairs officer at the Texas Wine and Grape Growers Association, says that tasting rooms have the right idea on how to get past such preconceptions.

“One of the things I think the Texas wine industry learned early is the best way to convince somebody that you have a good product is to get it in their mouths,” Haselwood says. “If a person walks into a tasting room and they’ve never had wine in their lives, you have much more of an opportunity to educate

Tours of wineries allow oenophiles—wine connoisseurs—to observe the production process. Clockwise from top left: Visitors get a sip of red straight from a barrel at William Chris Vineyards in Hye. Elsewhere at William Chris, a vat of white wine awaits the next step of production. An aroma wheel, inset, helps wine tasters identify the many fragrances and flavors in wine. Grapes get stirred early in the production process at Dry Comal Creek Vineyards in New Braunfels.





Clockwise from top right: Tempranillo grape vines, gaining a reputation as the ‘National Red Grape of Texas,’ bask in the Hill Country sun at Spicewood Vineyards. Grape stomp events are festive rituals at wineries across the state. At Dry Comal Creek, willing guests can partake in the Annual Order of the Purple Foot, where feet get undressed and wine glasses get wrapped. For those who prefer to limit the purple to their taste buds, Andrew Stephens offers a variety of choices in the tasting room.

them about nontraditional varietals. They’re open to trying anything. But you and I both know people who only drink white wine, and they only drink pinot grigio.”

Many in the industry say that the biggest hurdle in introducing new wines is persuading folks to try something besides what they’re attached to. But once the “new” wine hits their taste buds, they’re often sold.

Not Everything Is Bigger

SPENDING AN AFTERNOON AT SPICEWOOD VINEYARDS, ABOUT 30 miles northwest of Austin, is like being cradled in the palm of the Texas Hill Country. A cluster of towering live oaks hangs like a canopy over the spacious, breezy porch. Visitors recline in comfy chairs and savor wine while chatting, picnicking or simply enjoying the serenity.

If you’re looking for owner Ron Yates, he’s probably the bearded guy in shorts and flip-flops pouring your wine. Yates and his staff exemplify the ethos that has given Texans a reputation for being approachable, friendly and easygoing—where

winemakers issue an invitation not only to taste great wine but also to be a part of the conversation that surrounds it, regardless of how much you know.

Wineries in Texas come in all shapes and sizes. Among the largest are Mesa Vineyards in Fort Stockton, which produces the Ste Genevieve wine brand; Becker Vineyards in Stonewall; and Llano Estacado. Those three combined accounted for more than half of the 3.2 million gallons of wine produced in Texas in 2013.

But much of the growth in the industry over the past 10 years can be attributed to a host of smaller wineries that are slowly helping define Texas wine culture. Most will never become a Mesa Vineyards or a Llano Estacado, and that’s exactly what their owners want. A growing number of vintners prefer a low-key operation, where the demands of production are high enough to sustain a business and low enough to keep them near the shop floor.

“It’s a challenge for us as we grow to keep our balance,” says John Rivenburgh, a co-founder of Bending Branch, a boutique winery in Comfort. “As you get bigger, obviously there are more things you’ve got to do. When there’s more work, it’s a little harder to taste wines with people. We’re definitely striving to keep that small, intimate feeling about our place.”

There are differing opinions about what constitutes a “boutique” winery. Usually the term refers to small, sometimes family-owned and operated cellars that produce wine in limited quantities. The emphasis is less on volume and the size of the facility and more on the art of winemaking and creating a communal experience around it. Bending Branch typifies that approach. It’s not that large wineries don’t make spectacular wines or provide stellar tasting experiences. Many do. But you’re not as likely to run into the winemakers or the owners when you’re in their tasting rooms.

Johnson is a good example of an “artisan” winemaker, meaning he’s at the helm of every step of the process at Alamosa Wine Cellars—from growing the grapes to bottling the wine. In all likelihood, you’ll find him in the tasting room because he’s there about 80 percent of the time it’s open. Rivenburgh and his co-founder (and father-in-law), Bob Young, stay busy tending to the 16 grape varieties they’ve planted in their vineyard. But they also intentionally spend time in the tasting room whenever they can.

Bobby Cox, a legendary viticultural consultant who has been a key player in the evolution of the Texas wine industry, says that what Texas has to offer is not only great wines but also a highly accessible experience. That sociable vibe is in direct contrast to the elitism that many attribute to Napa.

“Part of the problem of establishing a consumer base in Texas is that all too often people assume that they don’t know enough to drink wine,” Cox says. “They think it’s too formal; it’s kind of a crooked pinkie thing. But that’s not the way it is in Texas; we want wine to be fun.”

If the online calendars of many Texas wineries are any indication, Cox is spot on. Plans for 2014 include stargazing parties, grape stomps, cook-offs, barrel tastings, gourmet pairings and live music galore. And that’s the short list.

“Texas wines are more like the ones you would find on your vacation in Italy than your vacation in California,” Cox says. “One of the subliminal reasons that we love our Italian wines is that Lucille Ball stomped grapes in Italy, not France. It’s the fun aspect, the casual aspect. You don’t have to know about the wines to enjoy them.”

Laura Jenkins is an Austin writer and photographer.

FIELD GUIDE to BASTROP COUNTY

ISSUE
No 38



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LAWN BE GONE!

Xeriscaping offers water-wise strategy to cultivate attractive yards

BY KAYE NORTHCOTT



The watersaver garden at the San Antonio Botanical Garden showcases water-friendly lantana, mugwort, agave, yucca and esperanza.



The cottage gardens along WaterSaver Lane feature bat-faced cuphea, Belinda's Dream rose and Confederate jasmine.

A WALK DOWN WATERSAVER LANE at the San Antonio Botanical Garden takes only a few minutes, but that's long enough to get a bonanza of ideas for reducing water use without sacrificing a beautiful and inviting landscape.

With the assistance of the San Antonio Water System, the garden has created six model landscapes that offer a variety of approaches to using drought-resistant vegetation. WaterSaver Lane is one of many educational efforts in parched San Antonio, where the population has grown by 52 percent since 1984, but water use has increased only 21 percent, according to the city's water utility.

Sasha Kodet, the botanical garden's education director, takes me on a tour of several sample gardens and explains that water-thrifty yards don't have to be rocky and forbidding.

One of the first lawns Kodet shows me is the Traditional American Lawn, one of the most common Texas yards. It relies on St. Augustine, the greediest of all turfs that uses more water, fertilizer and pesticides than other lawn grass, according to Kodet. It's close-cropped and needs watering once a week during the growing season.

Farther down WaterSaver Lane, we'll see yards with less turf and more patios, perennial flowerbeds, herb gardens and groundcover.

Before we get there, it's time to consider why we should care. Of course, there is saving money. Many cities are using graduated rates for water use, making it expensive to water lawns and plants.

But what if you don't mind paying more to keep your St. Augustine lush and green? Well, there's another compelling reason to save water: Texas is running out of it.

Much of the state is in the midst of an extended drought. Fall rains provided significant relief to some areas, giving the impression that things aren't so bad.

However, a little perspective shows otherwise. Texas State Climatologist John Nielsen-Gammon of Texas A&M University explains that drought conditions affected half of the state in November 2013. “That’s a smaller percentage than at any time since the current drought began in late 2010,” Nielsen-Gammon says.

But you need to consider, he adds, that “in the western half of the state, several consecutive years of drought have continued to deplete water stored in reservoirs and aquifers. Despite all the rain in the eastern half, statewide reservoir storage is only about 63 percent of capacity, while in a normal year it would be about 80 percent. The long-range forecasts aren’t especially favorable, and normal rain isn’t sufficient in West Texas to replenish water supplies.”

Across the state, the No. 1 use of water is irrigation. “That water is ultimately being used to feed people,” says Nielsen-Gammon. “Urban irrigation, or watering, is the largest use of water within cities, but unlike irrigation for food, urban irrigation is more like simply pouring water on the ground.”

He explains that in a large urban area, a 20 percent reduction in irrigation could eliminate the need for an entire new reservoir. Water-saving practices in the yard are among the least punishing and most rewarding ways to address shortages that will only become more acute.

The now-common term for such conservation efforts is xeriscaping, a concept developed in 1981 and copyrighted by the Denver Water Department. Xeriscaping sets you free from the traditional lawn. Imagine less mowing, or no mowing at all, and winding paths through glades of perennial flowers with transitions to dramatic grasses or shrubs.

Depending on the size of your property, you might want to think of the outdoor area as different rooms. You can have an area for succulents leaning against rocks, especially if you have a slope for good drainage. You can have crushed granite or pebbles for walkways or even geometric sections divided by brushed steel for a clean, modern look. You can have an outdoor living room and a kitchen annex.

Back on WaterSaver Lane, Kodet shows me the Manicured Xeriscape Landscape, which is similar to traditional American lawns. It provides the same



Asiatic jasmine, zoysia grass, salvia farinacea, artemisia and Mexican ruellia create a manicured xeriscape.



Visitors on WaterSaver Lane walk past vix, duranta, Belinda's Dream rose and a turkey fig tree.

neat, clean appearance but substitutes less thirsty grasses and ground cover for St. Augustine. I get one idea for my yard, which is to plant privet, a perennial shrub, in an area where I once had St. Augustine and keep it cut low.

The Texas Hill Country Landscape is

great for areas with thin, alkaline soils. This yard uses natural rock outcroppings and leaves some areas as natural habitat. (This could take on a desert look.) For the most part, it is water-wise to use perennial plants (ones that come back year after year) rather than annuals that

Agave calliandra, cenizo and yucca rostrata thrive at the Botanical Garden entrance.



Mexican oregano and aloë



Goldenrod with porterweed in foreground



Mexican bush sage

have to be replanted or reseeded yearly. Wildflowers are the exception. They must be reseeded every year, but they adapt so well to the natural landscape and need so little attention that xeriscapers endorse them. The more native plants used, the less watering is required.

On to the Wildscape Landscape, designed to attract wildlife and insects that need a variety of food—nectar, seeds and berries. As in the Hill Country landscape, native plants are used because they handle periods of drought better than most imports.

The Cottage Garden, or kitchen garden, is a part of every culture. Designs may change around the world, but there is a practical use for every planting,

whether for cut flowers, herbs, vegetables or fruit. It's rather a hodgepodge, but your eye can be directed to a trellis or a birdbath or a garden bench.

Last, we see one of my favorites, the Spanish Courtyard. I've already adopted this look in my backyard. Designed as an extension of living space, a patio made of brick, stone or crushed rock is set in decorative patterns. I have a recirculating fountain. It loses some water to evaporation but nowhere near as much as a lawn sprinkler. Birdbaths provide an interesting sculptural look. Vegetation is usually limited to the periphery or large pots.

Xeriscaping has an option for just about everyone. For myself, I'd rather be

filling a birdbath, watering a few plants in big pots and topping off the fountain than mowing and weeding and putting in a lawn irrigation system. Besides, I enjoy my yard a lot more knowing I did my part to conserve Texas' water.

Visit sabot.org to learn more about the San Antonio Botanical Garden's WaterSaver Lane.

Kaye Northcott is a former editor of Texas Co-op Power.

Web Extras on TexasCoopPower.com

- Learn tips for designing your garden escape.
- Read about seven principles for designing a successful xeriscape garden.

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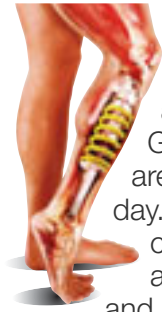
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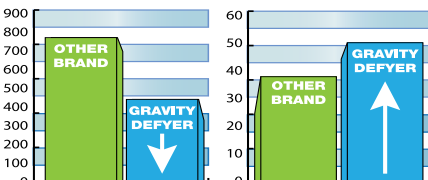
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CONSERVATION AND SAFETY INFORMATION

Use Generators Wisely

When weather forecasters predict a stormy spring, it might be time to think about backing up your co-op-delivered electricity with a home generator.

Generators come in two styles: portable and permanent.

Small portable generators that cost a few hundred dollars typically can power a few appliances at a time—such as a small refrigerator, TV or hair dryer. Larger portable generators can keep the TV, water heater and sump pump running if you lose electricity during a storm.

Inverter generators, which are portable but cost about three times more than the standard model, are designed to run sensitive electronic equipment, such as computers and home theater equipment.

Permanent, standby generators cost a few thousand dollars, but they can run large appliances. Larger ones can run all of a home's electrical devices, including the air-conditioning system, while you're waiting for power to be restored.

Most permanent generators are connected to the home's power supply through the electrical panel and will automatically turn on when the lights go out.

A caution: A qualified electrician is the only one who should connect a generator to your home's electrical panel. If installed incorrectly, the switch that makes the connection can backfeed electricity into a "dead" power line, and anyone who is touching the line—such as your electric cooperative's personnel working to restore power—could get electrocuted.



Keep your energy needs in mind when shopping for a home generator.

If you use a portable generator, the same caution applies: Never connect the generator to your home's wiring system, which can backfeed to main distribution lines. Instead, plug individual appliances into it.

Also, operate generators well away from living spaces with plenty of open area around it. Generators and other gasoline-powered appliances give off carbon monoxide, a deadly gas, as part of operation.

Don't wait until the power goes out to decide which kind of generator you need. If you do, you'll probably wind up with the only unit that's left on the store's shelves during the middle of a storm—and you won't get what you really need.



Energy Star appliances are exempt from sales taxes on Memorial Day weekend.

Tax Holiday

If you've had your eye on an energy-efficient appliance, Memorial Day weekend might be the time to buy. That weekend, shoppers in Texas will not pay sales tax on certain Energy Star-rated appliances.

The tax holiday, created by the Legislature in 2007, runs from May 24-26 this year.

Items exempt from taxes that weekend include any of these products that are Energy Star-rated:

- ▶ Air conditioners priced at \$6,000 or less
- ▶ Ceiling fans
- ▶ Clothes washers
- ▶ Dehumidifiers
- ▶ Dishwashers
- ▶ Incandescent and fluorescent lightbulbs
- ▶ Programmable thermostats
- ▶ Refrigerators priced at \$2,000 or less

Clothes dryers are not rated by Energy Star and are not included. Water heaters are also excluded, even those rated by Energy Star.

The holiday covers Internet, catalog and layaway sales of qualifying products as well. In addition to the purchase price, the tax holiday extends to shipping, delivery and installation charges if the purchased item becomes a permanent part of a home, such as a ceiling fan or a plumbed-in dishwasher.

Smart Planning for Hurricane Season

Even if you live well inland, a hurricane, with its high winds and heavy rain, can affect you. Now is the time to start planning for the Atlantic hurricane season, which officially begins June 1 and continues through November 30.

If you live in an area threatened by storm surge—an evacuation zone—discuss evacuation plans with your family. Check with city or county officials to find out if your home is in an evacuation zone if you are not sure.

When making a family plan for any hazard, choose a place to call and a place to meet. Give all family members the name and phone number of someone outside your city or state. Anyone separated from the group should call that person to let others know where they are. The American Red Cross offers a free online service called Safe and Well that will help you put out the word that you are OK. Find it online at safeandwell.communityos.org/cms/index.php.

Here is advice from the Texas Department of Public Safety on what you can do now to prepare for a catastrophe.

- ▶ Put an emergency supply kit together. Refill and recheck supplies after every storm. After the storm hits, you may be able to return home in a matter of days. But re-entry may take much longer, depending on storm damage. Because hurricanes are extremely dangerous and unpredictable, officials plan for storms one category worse than is predicted. So should you.

- ▶ Learn evacuation routes BEFORE storm season. If possible, practice driving the route out of town ahead of time. Make sure you have a full tank of gas at all times when there is a storm in the Gulf of Mexico. Expect delays and longer drive times than normal. Just like any rush hour, traffic congestion in an evacuation is unavoidable.

- ▶ An emergency supply kit includes: NOAA weather radio and batteries; flashlight and batteries; extra eyeglasses; bottled water; nonperishable food; dry clothes; bedding; medications



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Practice your family's evacuation route before the storm season hits.

and copies of prescriptions; special products for babies, elderly and medically fragile family members; cash; credit cards; photo IDs; and important documents and records, proof of residence and information your agent will require to process insurance claims.

- ▶ Make a checklist of preparations before an evacuation and go over it with your family. Review it again when a storm is in the Gulf of Mexico.

- ▶ Prepare an emergency kit for your pets and a plan for how to care for them when you are on the road and in a shelter or motel. Do not leave your pets behind.

- ▶ If you plan to stay in a hotel or motel, make reservations and confirm your reservations before you leave. If you plan to stay in a shelter, bring what you need to be comfortable, including bedding and toys for kids. Shelters will vary in what they offer evacuees.

- ▶ Contact your local office of emergency management to get information on making arrangements for anyone in your household who may need special assistance during an evacuation.

REGISTER NOW FOR EVACUATION HELP

If you live in a hurricane evacuation zone, and you have special health-care or transportation needs, you need to make extra efforts to get ready for hurricane season, according to the Governor's Division of Emergency Management.

It is critical that you begin now to make your evacuation plans, prepare an emergency kit and learn evacuation routes

This should be done well in advance. Operators answering the phones at 211—and 1-877-541-7905 for deaf people using a video or Internet-relay services—are prepared to help you register for transportation and special assistance now, before hurricane season begins.

If you have special health-care needs, register by dialing 211 or 1-877-541-7905.

Gulf Coast residents with special health-care needs (including

those who are disabled or medically fragile) who live in evacuation zones and do not have friends or family to help in an evacuation should register for a ride in advance by dialing 211 or 1-877-541-7905.

The registry must be dialed IN ADVANCE. Do not wait until a storm is in the Gulf to register for assistance. This service is for people who cannot drive themselves or make transportation arrangements. If you need transportation, call and register.

Hurricane Preparedness Tips on the Web

- ▶ **Governor's Division of Emergency Management:**

www.txdps.state.tx.us/dem

- ▶ **Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA):** ready.gov

- ▶ **The American Red Cross:** redcross.org

Women's Work

Texas governor temporarily appoints first all female state Supreme Court in U.S. to solve men-only quandary

BY E.R. BILLS

IN 1924, TEXAS HAD A PROBLEM. A CASE involving insurance cooperative Woodmen of the World reached the Supreme Court of Texas, and all three sitting justices—like nearly every other judge and lawyer in the state—were members of the company's fraternal organization. Anyone who bought Woodmen insurance automatically became a member of the organization.

The case, *Johnson v. Darr*, involved parcels of land entrusted to a Woodmen of the World chapter in El Paso. But ownership of the land became entangled in a lawsuit over an unpaid debt. After hearings in district and appellate courts, the case reached the state's highest court.

On March 8, 1924, Chief Justice C.M. Cureton informed Gov. Pat Neff that he and the court's associate justices, William Pierson and Thomas B. Greenwood, were Woodmen and would have to recuse themselves from hearing the case.

For the next 10 months, Neff attempted to temporarily replace Cureton, Pierson and Greenwood with male attorneys or judges who met state requirements to serve as Supreme Court justices but were not Woodmen. In the end, the charter of the fraternal organization gave Neff an out. The Woodmen of the World excluded women from membership.

Neff was the first Texas governor to appoint a woman as his chief of staff and women to the boards of regents of the University of Texas and Texas A&M University. Some questioned the legality of appointing a woman to the Supreme Court, but the court deputy, H.L. Clamp,

informed Neff it was permissible if the candidates were at least 30 years of age and had practiced law in Texas for a minimum of seven years.

On New Year's Day 1925, Neff appointed America's first all-female state Supreme Court.

Nellie Gray Robertson of Granbury, the county attorney of Hood County; Hortense Sparks Ward, a Houston attorney; and Edith E. Wilmans of Dallas, a former state representative, were to serve as justices. At the time, there were only 30 female attorneys licensed in Texas, according to James R. Evans Jr., writing in the spring 1998 edition of *Heritage*, the Texas History Foundation magazine.

The governor's appointments were not properly vetted, and Wilmans and Robertson resigned within days of their appointments because each fell short of the required seven years of experience practicing law in the state.

Neff appointed Dallas attorney Hattie Leah Henenberg to replace Wilmans and Galveston attorney Ruth Virginia Brazzil to replace Robertson. Ward became the tribunal's chief justice.

Ward was already a giant of women's rights in Texas. In 1910, she became the first woman to pass the state bar exam. In 1918, she was the first woman to register to vote in Harris County. Ward was also a major player in securing married women's property rights, was a leader in the Texas suffragist movement and became the first Texas woman admitted to practice before the U.S. Supreme Court, according to Evans.



For a brief time in 1925, from left, Hattie Leah Henenberg, Chief Justice Hortense Sparks Ward and Ruth Virginia Brazzil constituted the Supreme Court of Texas.

Henenberg passed the Texas bar exam in 1916. She worked as a Dallas attorney and was a member of women’s civic and business clubs in the community. Brazzil passed the state bar in 1912, and her legal career was varied. She practiced in real estate and worked for a state legislator.

Neff’s special Texas Supreme Court met for the first time on January 8 and was heralded as the first “Supreme Court of Women” by The New York Times. The court oath, which at the time included a passage requiring petitioners to swear they had never participated in a duel, elicited smiles throughout the courtroom. Cureton, accompanied by his fellow recused justices, administered the oath. Johnson v. Darr was scheduled for late January.

The historically unchallenged, male-dominated power brokers in Texas grumbled mightily, referring to Ward, Henenberg and Brazzil as the “Petticoat Court.” When the special tribunal met January 30, clerk Fred Connerly refused to participate in the proceedings and was replaced. Regardless, the first female Supreme Court justices in the land heard arguments from attorneys representing the parties to the lawsuit, including the Woodmen of the World, and then recessed to consider the appeal.

On May 23, 1925, the special tribunal reconvened and rendered its decision. The Woodmen prevailed, and Ward wrote the unanimous opinion.

At the time, women in Texas had been allowed to vote for only seven years

and, though Neff was succeeded by the first female governor in Texas history, Miriam “Ma” Ferguson, it would be three decades before women won the right to serve on juries and almost six before another woman was appointed to the Texas Supreme Court—Ruby Kless Sondock in 1982.

Their special stint fulfilled, Ward, Henenberg and Brazzil stepped down and continued with their careers. When Ward was queried about what was then considered an almost fantastical tenure on the state’s highest court, she responded supremely. “The novelty,” she said, “is entirely lost in the great responsibility.”

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

Secretary Appreciation

Antique desk once propped up
the prose of a Prohibitionist
lawmaker in Illinois, my
great-grandfather

BY MARTHA DEERING

GREAT-GRANDFATHER LAMONT'S SECRETARY was not a buxom blonde with shapely legs and a steno pad. It was an immense piece of antique furniture that stood in a place of honor against the wall of our living room all through my childhood. Far from appreciating it, my brothers and I avoided all contact with the towering wooden heirloom, a consequence of the many times that we were admonished "... NOT to throw the ball (block, shoe, tantrum, etc.) near your great-grandfather's secretary!"

The "Field Guide to American Victorian Furniture" describes the piece as a "Gothic Secretary." If by Gothic they mean looming and a bit scary in a darkened room, it is an apt description. The cove-molded cornice topped by a low triangular crown grazes the ceiling. Two glass doors close off a recessed bookcase above a foldout writing desk. Below are three recalcitrant drawers showing handmade dovetailed joints—if you can get the drawers open. They stick.

I have vague memories of my father's tale that his grandfather, James Lamont, an Illinois legislator, wrote Prohibition papers on that very piece of furniture.

More than 50 years later, the stately secretary graced my own living room, and when I ran a dust cloth over its glowing walnut surface, I felt slightly ashamed. Its flawed glass doors showed the wavy reflection of an insensitive great-granddaughter. The secretary had a story to tell, and I had not thought to ask questions about it while my father was still alive to answer them.

Then I read a quote from author and psychologist Philip Carr-Gomm: "The songs of our ancestors are also the songs of our children." Did I really want to ignore this link to my family's history? Nagged by guilt and—I admit it—curiosity, I began to search for information about this relative's lost story. One historical record at a time, the motivation for my search shifted from guilt to intrigue, then fascination.

Researching a 19th-century Illinois legislator from my home on the prairies of Central Texas proved a bit daunting for a genealogical neophyte like me. An aunt from Ohio, a dyed-in-the-wool family historian, dug up census records. (You must have excellent vision and a good imagination to read century-old census records.) Google helped with more basic information.

I discovered that Lamont was editor and publisher of *The Monitor*, a weekly Prohibitionist newspaper in Rockford, Illinois, but the major breakthrough came when my brother from Austin made a detour through Rockford on a trip to Springfield. There he found a research librarian in the Rockford Public Library who dug up a lengthy obituary and copied it for us.

Little by little, I learned details about Lamont that, like the layers of an oil portrait, helped him take shape in my imagination. Elected in 1886, he was the "original" Prohibitionist in the Illinois General Assembly and "had more than a state-wide reputation," the *Rockford Register* wrote. And it said he was "a man of proverbial

integrity, clean life and high ideals.” Now the faded man of my imagination held his head higher and wrote at his secretary with a purposeful flourish. Sadly, his high ideals once got him hanged in effigy by residents of Rockford who weren’t so enamored with his stand on the consumption of alcohol.

I’ve recently located a library at the University of Illinois that has some of his editorials on microfilm and is willing to loan them. I’m excited about the prospect of reading words penned by the old gentleman on the foldout desk that now holds a place of honor in my living room. I’ve learned that the piece was made before 1860, as indicated by the straight saw marks that show on the insides of the drawers. After 1860, circular saws were used. The inset metal lock plate has long since lost its key.

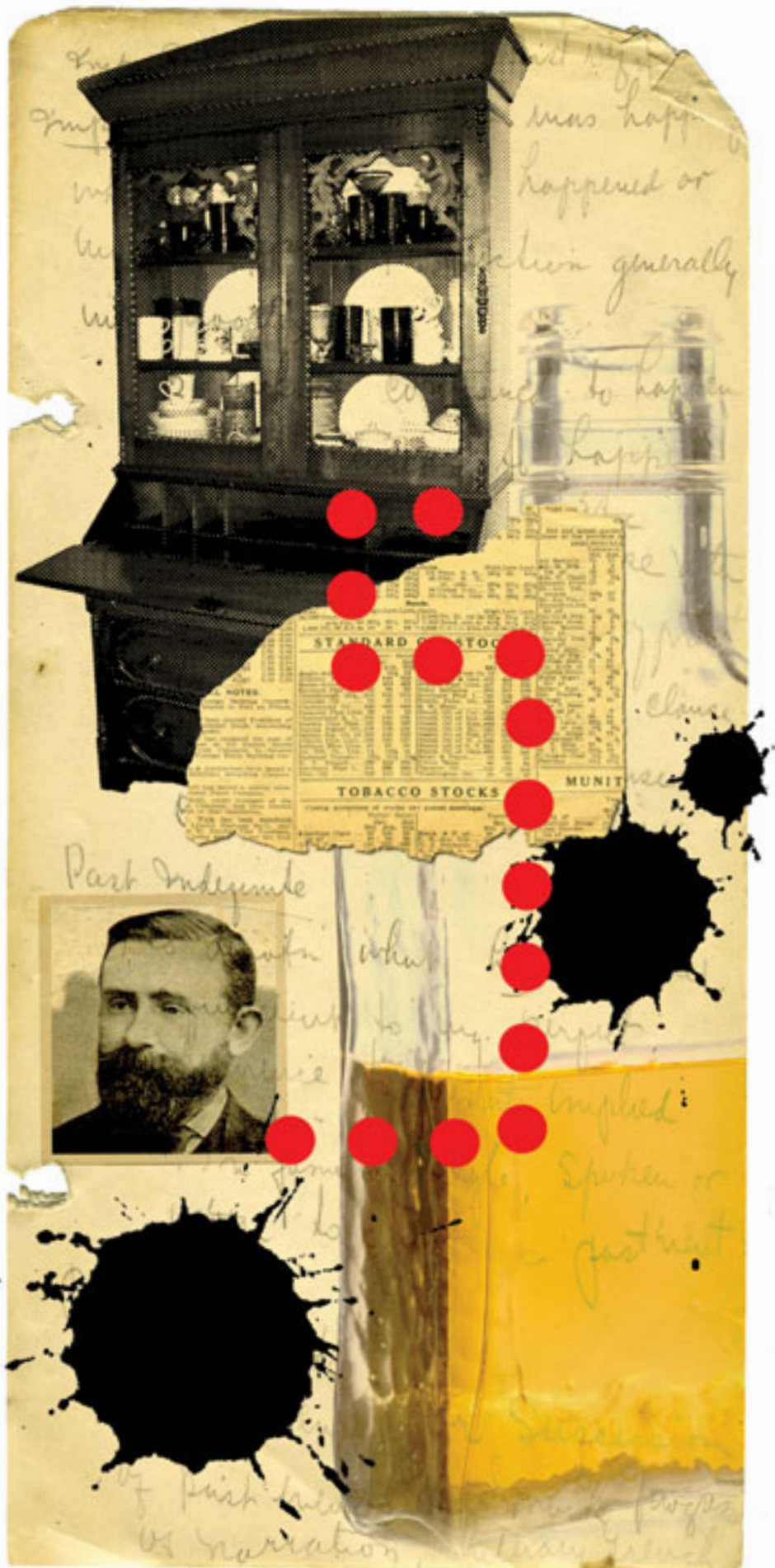
Behind the fold-down writing flap are five small compartments for filing paperwork and a tiny drawer with finger grips on the lower edge. Did these once hold the handwritten drafts of the editorials that so divided Illinois voters? “Mr. Lamont possessed great ability as a writer and speaker,” wrote the Rockford Morning Star in 1909, “and worked early and late for the suppression of the traffic in liquor ...”

I’ve never had the secretary appraised, but for me the connection to the editor of a small-town newspaper who dipped his pen and dripped ink on the desktop so many years ago and so many states away is far more valuable than its monetary worth.

A grainy old photograph of Lamont shows a serious man with dark hair and a Ulysses S. Grant beard, neatly trimmed and just beginning to gray. His tie fits snugly beneath a starched white collar, pretty much the way you would envision a straitlaced Prohibitionist. I wonder what he would think if he knew his old secretary was now an occupant of cowboy country. Would the beer cans in the ditch alongside the highway offend him?

Although Lamont died more than 100 years ago, he lives again for me because of an old piece of furniture. While I might not have agreed with his politics, I’ve begun to beseech my grandchildren NOT to throw the ball (cup, toy airplane, hissy fit) near their great-great-great-grandfather’s secretary!

Martha Deeringer is a frequent contributor who lives in McGregor.



Martha Deeringer explored the connection between her family heirloom secretary and her prohibitionist grandfather James Lamont, shown above.

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

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



Dear
Darryl

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

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

Clogged and Smelly – San Marcos, 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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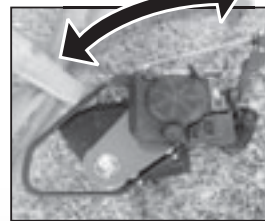
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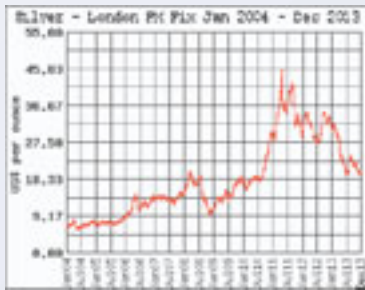
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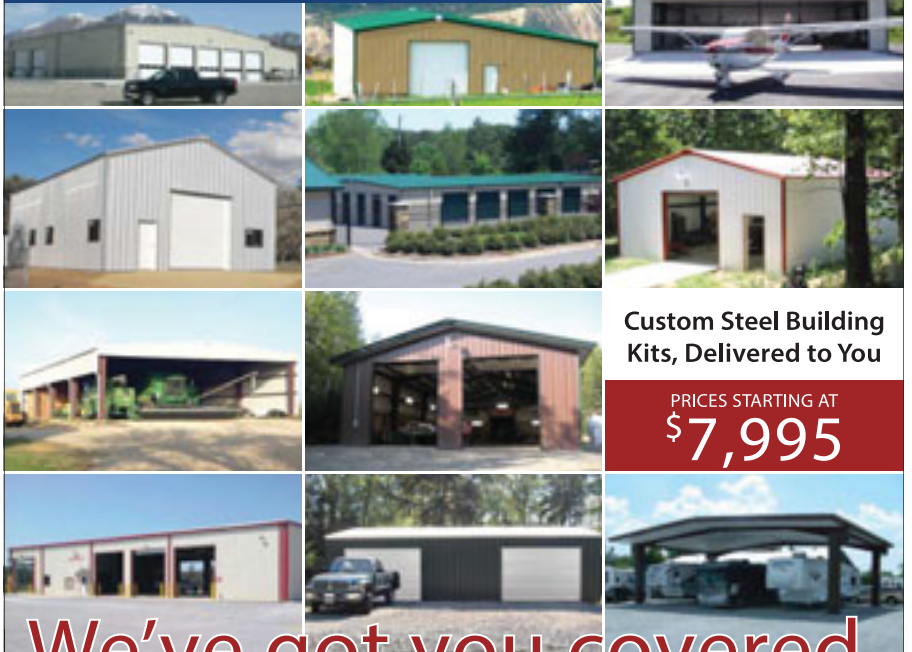
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Wired for Sound

Between you, me and the fence post, barbed-wire telephone systems kept rural folks hanging on every word

BY CAMILLE WHEELER

ON MARCH 10, 1876, ALEXANDER GRAHAM Bell debuted the talking telegraph: the telephone. Bell earned two patents for his invention, and in 1877, he and two financial backers formed the Bell Telephone Company. But when Bell's second patent expired in 1894, the technological landscape underwent a seismic shift. Suddenly, Bell wasn't the only company that could legally operate telephone systems in the U.S.

Over the next decade, more than 6,000 independent telephone companies went into business, and the number of telephones in the country swelled from less than half a million to 3.3 million. Telephone systems, though, mostly served urban populations. Entrepreneurs steered clear of rural regions, where the installation of poles and phone wires carried exorbitant costs.

But near the turn of the 20th century, Great Plains settlers, including pioneers across Texas, weren't wireless. They had a ready-made telephone transmission system in place: miles and miles of barbed-wire fences that kept ranchers' cattle herds separate; prevented northern cattle herds from drifting on to grass-rich Panhandle spreads; and delineated ranch pasture from farm field, cow horse from plow horse.

Fences symbolized division—and connection. The process started on the pages of Montgomery Ward and Sears Roebuck & Co. catalogs, from which people could order telephones by mail. From there, the spark of ingenuity provided the missing link.

As described by Seguin-based historian and author Charley Eckhardt, electronic communication was now easily within grasp. Using a jawed, metal alligator clip, you could clamp the telephone wire from your house to the top wire on your barbed-wire pasture fence, making sure it connected to a property-line fence. Or, if the yard fence was connected to the pasture fence, you could clamp on there.

And so it went, house after house, fence after fence as rural families struck up the kind of conversation, sort of, that Bell imagined hearing when he began experimenting with telegraph-wire voice transmission in the early 1870s. "A rural telephone system that had no operators, no bills—and no long-distance charges—was born," Eckhardt wrote in a 2008 online Texas Escapes story, a version of which originally appeared in *The Tombstone Epitaph*, a historical monthly Arizona newspaper.

Not surprisingly, the system had its flaws. Roaming cows and lovesick bulls broke many a telephone wire. And rain-soaked



fence posts shorted out phones and lines. But discarded saloon bottles, as Eckhardt explains, were good glass insulators. Wooden pegs with drilled holes were whittled to fit inside broken bottle necks, and the bottles were nailed to fence posts, with wire strung between the insulators.

There were other challenges. Without a central operator, each household had its own crank-phone ring, such as two longs and three shorts, to indicate incoming calls. A single long ring denoted an emergency, and everybody along the line would pick up the phone to hear the news. All telephones rang when calls were made. Eavesdropping prevailed, and the discussion of anything intimate was ill-advised, Eckhardt says.

But glitches and all, the system worked, surviving into the 1930s in some areas. After enabling farming and ranching to coexist, "barbed wire unwittingly became part of the nation's budding telephone network," Maryland-based author and historian David B. Sicilia wrote in a 1997 *Inc.* magazine article. "What kept crops and animals apart helped bring people together."

In her 1958 book, "Light 'n Hitch: A Collection of Historical Writing Depicting Life on the High Plains," author Laura V. Hamner praised barbed wire as both a "thorny barrier" and a link among Texas ranch women. "Equally important as the urgent message," she wrote, "was the woman-talk which kept the barb wire humming—and which meant so much to the lonely ladies of the plains."

Camille Wheeler is an Austin writer.

For Love of Peanuts

It's hard to find a food more versatile than the peanut, and Texas has long been one of the country's leading producers. The mighty legume, a good source of monounsaturated fat, fiber and protein, remains a stalwart of Texas agriculture. Our state holds the distinction of growing all four types of peanuts including runners, Spanish, Virginia and Valencia. Each is usually identified with certain foods. For instance, runners are commonly used in peanut butter, while the high-oil, papery-skinned Spanish peanuts are often used in candy.

Through history, peanuts have been grown in various Texas towns, including Aubrey, Whitesboro and Floresville. These towns no longer consider peanuts a cash crop but still each honor their peanut-growing heritage at festivals held every October. These days, the "peanut capital" of Texas is Gaines County, the largest peanut-producing county in the state—and the entire country, according to the Texas Peanut Producers Board. Nearby Terry County also grows peanuts and is home to shelling facilities including Birdsong and Golden Peanut, which supply nuts to some of the country's most recognizable brands.

Here's one of my favorite peanut recipes, Monster Bark, a free-form cookie cut into pieces and served like candy bark or brittle.

ANNA GINSBERG, FOOD EDITOR

Monster Bark

- 1 large egg
- 1/3 cup granulated sugar
- 1/3 cup packed light brown sugar
- 3/4 teaspoon baking soda
- 3/8 scant teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract

- 1/2 cup peanut butter (4.8 ounces on a scale)
- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
- 2 1/2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1 1/2 cups quick-cooking or old-fashioned (not instant) oats
- 1/4 cup semisweet chocolate or peanut butter chips
- 1/4 cup mini candy-coated chocolates (M&M's)
- 1/3 cup chopped, lightly salted peanuts



Monster Bark

- > Preheat oven to 250 degrees. Line a large (about 18-by-13-inch), rimmed, heavy-duty baking sheet with parchment paper.
- > In a mixing bowl, stir together the egg, both types of sugar, baking soda, salt and vanilla. Stir in the peanut butter and butter. When mixed, add flour and stir until blended. Lastly, stir in the oats, chips, candies and peanuts.
- > Empty onto the baking sheet and divide dough into two sections.
- > Dampen fingers and press each section down to make it as thin as possible. You could make one big slab, but making two gives you more edge pieces and more crunch.
- > Bake for 45 minutes. Remove from the oven and slide parchment onto a cutting board. With a pizza cutter, cut the slabs into multiple uneven pieces—but do not separate cut pieces, as the cookies will still be rather crumbly at this point. Return parchment paper with cookies to baking sheet.
- > Return to the oven and bake for another 15 to 20 minutes. Let cool for about 10 minutes on baking sheet and carefully transfer to a wire rack to cool completely. Cookies should crisp as they cool.

Servings: 12. Serving size: 2 cookies. Per serving: 229 calories, 6.1 g protein, 12.9 g fat, 25.6 g carbohydrates, 2.2 g dietary fiber, 240 mg sodium, 15.4 g sugars, 23 mg cholesterol

Cook's Tip: *If you have some thicker pieces that aren't crunchy once cooled, throw them back in the 250-degree oven for another 10 to 15 minutes, then let cool. The thinner you press the slabs, the better chance you have of getting crunchy bark.*

MARIAN EVONIUK | PEDERNALES EC

Peanuts Contest Winner: Texans love their peanuts, and this month's recipe submissions were evidence of that! Although many readers' recipes scored high in testing, here's our favorite.



Peanut Butter Dream Pie

- 1 cup Spanish peanuts (no skins), finely chopped
- 6 cinnamon graham cracker squares, finely crushed
- ¼ cup butter, melted
- ¼ cup brown sugar
- ½ cup plus 2 tablespoons chocolate syrup, divided
- 3½ cups heavy cream
- 4 tablespoons granulated sugar
- 1½ teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1 package (8 ounces) cream cheese, divided
- ½ cup peanut butter
- 1 cup powdered sugar, divided

- Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
- In a small bowl, combine peanuts, graham cracker crumbs, butter and brown sugar. Reserve ¼ cup for topping. Press remainder into bottom and up sides of a 10-inch pie pan. Bake for 8 minutes. Let cool slightly then drizzle bottom of crust with ¼ cup of chocolate syrup.
- In a medium bowl, beat heavy cream until frothy. Add granulated sugar and vanilla and beat until peaks are stiff but not dry.
- In a large bowl, beat half of the cream cheese with the peanut butter and ½ cup powdered sugar until fluffy. Add half of the whipped cream and beat until smooth. Pour into crust and drizzle with another ¼ cup chocolate syrup.
- In a large bowl, beat remaining cream cheese and ½ cup powdered sugar until smooth. Add remaining whipped cream and beat until fluffy. Spread over first layer and drizzle with remaining chocolate syrup. Swirl syrup into second layer and top with reserved graham cracker mixture.
- Refrigerate at least 4 hours or overnight before serving. Pie can be frozen. Remove from freezer 1 hour before serving.

Servings: 12. Serving size: 1 slice. Per serving: 612 calories, 9.3 g protein, 48.4 g fat, 39.5 g carbohydrates, 2.3 g dietary fiber, 274 mg sodium, 28.6 g sugars, 126 mg cholesterol

Peanut and Pea Salad

- 1 package (10 ounces) frozen peas, thawed
- 1 cup dry-roasted peanuts
- 1 cup chopped celery
- 6 strips bacon, cooked and crumbled
- ¼ cup chopped red onion

- ½ cup mayonnaise
- ¼ cup prepared zesty Italian salad dressing

- In a large bowl, combine the peas, peanuts, celery, bacon and onion.
- Mix the mayonnaise and Italian dressing in a small bowl. Pour over salad and toss to coat.
- Chill until served.

Servings: 5. Serving size: ¾ cup. Per serving: 494 calories, 15.8 g protein, 39.2 g fat, 17.8 g carbohydrates, 5.8 g dietary fiber, 592 mg sodium, 6.6 g sugars, 15 mg cholesterol

DEBRA TACKER | FARMERS EC

Pea-Nutty Meat Loaf

- ½ cup chopped onions
- ½ cup chopped bell peppers
- 1 teaspoon olive oil
- ½ cup finely chopped dry-roasted peanuts
- 2 pounds ground chuck
- 2 slices white sandwich bread, torn into pieces
- 2 teaspoons seasoned salt
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- ¾ teaspoon black pepper
- 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- 2 beaten eggs
- 2 tablespoons milk
- ½ cup tomato sauce
- Ketchup or barbecue sauce for topping, optional

- Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
- Saute onions and bell peppers in olive oil. Put in a large bowl and add peanuts, chuck, bread, salt, sugar, pepper, Worcestershire, eggs, milk and tomato sauce. Mix well.
- Divide mixture equally between two loaf pans and bake for about 40 to 45 minutes. During last 10 minutes of baking, top with ketchup or barbecue sauce, if desired.

Servings: 8. Serving size: 1 slice. Per serving: 397 calories, 24.4 g protein, 29.5 g fat, 8.6 g carbohydrates, 1.6 g dietary fiber, 766 mg sodium, 2.9 g sugars, 127 mg cholesterol

TOMMY OSTEEEN | CENTRAL TEXAS EC

Web Extra on TexasCoopPower.com

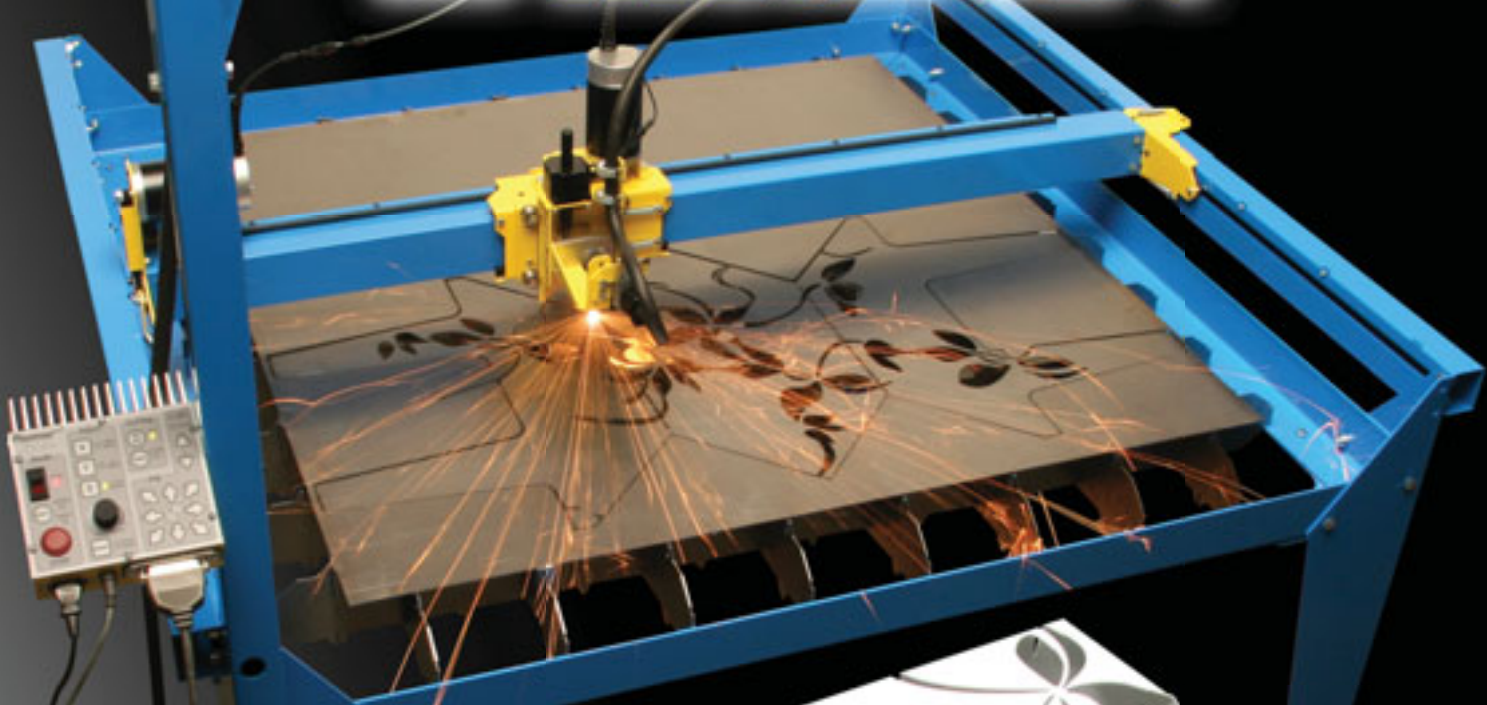
Find more peanut recipes online along with recipes from years past.

\$100 Recipe Contest

- Instead of a recipe contest in September, we will showcase staff picks. Watch for favorite dishes from our kitchens.
- October's recipe contest topic is **Cakes**. If you think you bake one so yummy it, well, takes the cake, share the recipe with our readers. The deadline is **May 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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Inspirational Sources of inspiration are the driving force behind some of life's most rewarding achievements. When facing adversity, one drop of encouragement can become a reservoir of confidence and creativity. These are a few reader-submitted photos that were inspirational to us. **ANDREW BOZE**



▲ **Elizabeth Coffman** of Heart of Texas EC submitted this well-arranged shot, taken by her daughter, **Emma**.

Web Extras on TexasCoopPower.com

'You miss 100 percent of the shots you don't take.' Hockey legend Wayne Gretzky said that. You also miss 100 percent of our online Inspirational photos unless you check out our website.



◀ This photo, taken by **Susan Green** of Heart of Texas EC, shows a vast field of resilient sunflowers, shining even under a cloudy sky.

Carrie O'Brien-Sibley of Farmers EC spotted a great blue heron coming home to its family on Lake Fork in Rains County. ▼



▲ **Ralph Arvesen** of Pedernales EC captured this photo of daughter **Makayla** against the sunset in northwestern Blanco County.

This photo, submitted by **Judy Faught** of Lyntegar EC and taken by her daughter **Breck**, captures the connection between generations. ►



Upcoming Contests

July Issue: Friendship *Deadline: May 10*

August: Refreshing **September: Energy**

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

Chalk This Way!

Lewisville [May 17]
(972) 625-1726, lakesidearts.org

This daylong event features professional chalk artists, an amateur chalk art contest, a scholarship contest and a children's gallery, plus art vendors, food, drinks and music.



CHALK: © VESNA CVOROVIC | DOLLAR PHOTO CLUB. FLOWERS: © ALEKSS | DOLLAR PHOTO CLUB



May 10
Wimberley
Garden Club Tour

May

10

Corsicana 16th Annual Coyote Squadron Airsho, (903) 257-8282, coyotesquadron.org

Johnson City JCVFD Annual Fish Fry and Raffle Fundraiser, (830) 868-7684, johnsoncity-texas.com

Mico Mico VFD Annual BBQ, (830) 751-2848, micovfd.org

Waco Funky Junk Roundup, (405) 596-1687, montagefestivals.com

Wimberley Garden Club Tour, (512) 847-3595, wimberleygardenclub.org

15

Luling 87th Annual Field Day, (830) 875-2438, lulingfoundation.org

Bulverde [15-18, 22-25] S.T.A.G.E. performances of 'Tom Walker,' (830) 438-2339

16

Gainesville M-o-o-ving Thru the Mud with Landon, (940) 372-0343, mudwithlandon.com

Huntsville 11th Annual Shot in the Dark Golf Tournament, (936) 295-8113, chamber.huntsville.tx.us

Lufkin Sawmill Sampler, (936) 632-9535, treetexas.com

Kerens [16-17] 2nd Annual Dancin' on the Bricks and BBQ Cook-off, (903) 396-2971, ci.kerens.tx.us

Madisonville [16-17] MSCA BBQ Cook-off, (936) 348-8460, sidewalkcattlemens.com

17

Gainesville A Day and Night for VISTO, (940) 902-3402, concertforvisto.com

Valley Spring Valley Spring VFD Annual Fish Fry, (325) 247-5354

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

17

Victoria Art Car Victoria Parade, (361) 575-8227, navemuseum.com

Dripping Springs [17-18] Tour the Talent Art Studio Tour, (512) 296-7751, tourthetalent.com

18

Bleiberville Bleiberville VFD Fish Fry & Fundraiser, (979) 249-6382

23

Ennis [23-25] 48th Annual National Polka Festival, (972) 878-4748, nationalpolkafestival.com

May 23
Ennis

48th Annual
National Polka
Festival



POLKA COUPLE: © KITTY | DOLLAR PHOTO CLUB. TACKLE BOX: © GARRY_IMAGES | DOLLAR PHOTO CLUB

23

Fredericksburg [23-25] Fredericksburg Crawfish Festival, (830) 433-5225, fbgcrawfish.com

24

Port O'Connor Memorial Weekend Kids' Fishing Tournament, (361) 983-2244, portoconnorchamber.org

Fort Worth [24-25] Fort Worth Gem and Mineral Club Annual Show, (817) 925-5760, fortworthgemandmineralclub.org

Gainesville [24-26] Lavender Festival, (940) 665-6938, lavenderidgefarms.com

30

Athens [30-31] Athens Old Fiddlers Reunion and Contest, (888) 294-2847, athens.tx.org

31

The Colony Mother & Son Luau, (972) 625-1106, visitthecolonytx.com

Tyler Vince Vance and the Valiants Concert, (903) 881-9733, josefelicianofoundation.org



May 24
Port O'Connor
Memorial Weekend
Kids' Fishing Tournament

June

1

Sherman [1-7] 8th Annual Melody Ranch Bluegrass Festival, (903) 546-5893, melodyranchbluegrassfestival.com

5

Levelland [5, 12, 19, 26] Sounds of Texas Concert Series, (803) 894-3157, levellandtexas.org

Submit Your Event!

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

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Fossati's Delicatessen, billed as the oldest in the state, boasts menu items and captivating tales from another century

BY SHERYL SMITH-RODGERS

IF ONLY WALLS COULD TALK. THEN, OH, the tales that Fossati's Delicatessen in Victoria could tell. The wooden slats might whisper about a bloody incident after the turn of the 20th century when an enraged resident shot down his wife's

intersection of South Main and Juan Linn streets, she says. Later, he opened a bar across the street. In 1895, he and a partner opened a saloon on a third corner. Then in 1902, he opened Fossati's Grocery and Feed Store in the present 1895 clapboard

we got it back in July 2013."

Caeton retired in 1967. Managers outside the family ran Fossati's until 1981, when it shut down. But not for long. Seven descendants, including Bomersbach, bought back the business in 1984. After renovations, Fossati's reopened for lunch only (it is closed weekends) in 1987.

On the menu, several items harken back to Frank and Caeton's time, like the Reuben sandwich and Kite's Kalterauschnitt (Dutch lunch), a plate of sliced meats and cheeses served with coleslaw, potato salad and sliced bread. Along with sandwiches, the deli also serves soups, salads and a daily special, such as King Ranch chicken or lasagna. Tempting desserts include peach cobbler, apple crisp and Fossati's brownie sundae.

Daring customers request the deli's signature hot beer mustard, made fresh using Frank's original recipe. "Our mustard doesn't get you going down, but it'll sure clear out your sinuses!" Bomersbach grins. "We use beer, ground mustard and one other ingredient. And it's not horseradish!"

No hot mustard, please, for Phil Castille, president of the University of Houston-Victoria, who drops by regularly for a double-meat corned beef on rye with a side of coleslaw. "Fossati's is a local institution with a long history," he says between bites. "We love to bring our job candidates here. But the thing is, the food is always good. Just having a heritage wouldn't keep this place open!"

Sheryl Smith-Rodgers, a frequent contributor, is a member of Pedernales Electric Cooperative.

Fossati's Deli, 302 S. Main St., (361) 576-3354, open from 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. on weekdays only.



Good food and a colorful history draw crowds to **FOSSATI'S DELICATESSEN** in Victoria.

lover, who staggered across the deli's front threshold and died. Or they might recall a hot day in August 1932 when gangsters Bonnie and Clyde flung open the swinging doors, gulped down a beer at the bar, then fled. "At least, that's what Uncle Kite used to tell," says Therese Fossati Bomersbach, 71, who runs the family deli, billed as the state's oldest.

True or not, the colorful stories add to the Wild West ambiance that permeates Fossati's, established in 1882 by Frank Napoleon Fossati (feh-SEH'-tee). "My grandfather was a stonecutter from Italy who hoped to find a job at the state Capitol, but he arrived too soon," says Bomersbach, a member of Nueces Electric Cooperative. "For a time, he worked for the railroad. Then he came to Victoria and opened a chili and sandwich stand" at the

building, which still retains the original wooden bar and large mirror.

Frank retired in 1910 and handed the business to son Caeton (Kite). In those early years, only men frequented Fossati's. At the bar, a trough-style spittoon at their feet provided a convenient place to spit tobacco and take care of other matters. At day's end, someone would rinse the trough into an outside drain. To this day, the spittoon remains—but for looks only!

Another remnant from Frank's era hangs high on one wall. The framed prose, hand-penned in black ink on stained butcher paper, advises patrons how to act like gentlemen. "In 1908, my grandfather paid a traveling sign painter two schooners [mugs] of beer and a sandwich for that," Bomersbach says. "The sign disappeared in the 1960s, but

Web Extras on TexasCoopPower.com

- Watch a video from Fossati's.
- View a slideshow with more photos.
- Can't get to Victoria anytime soon? Sample Fossati's menu with recipes for German potato salad and broccoli cheese soup.



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