

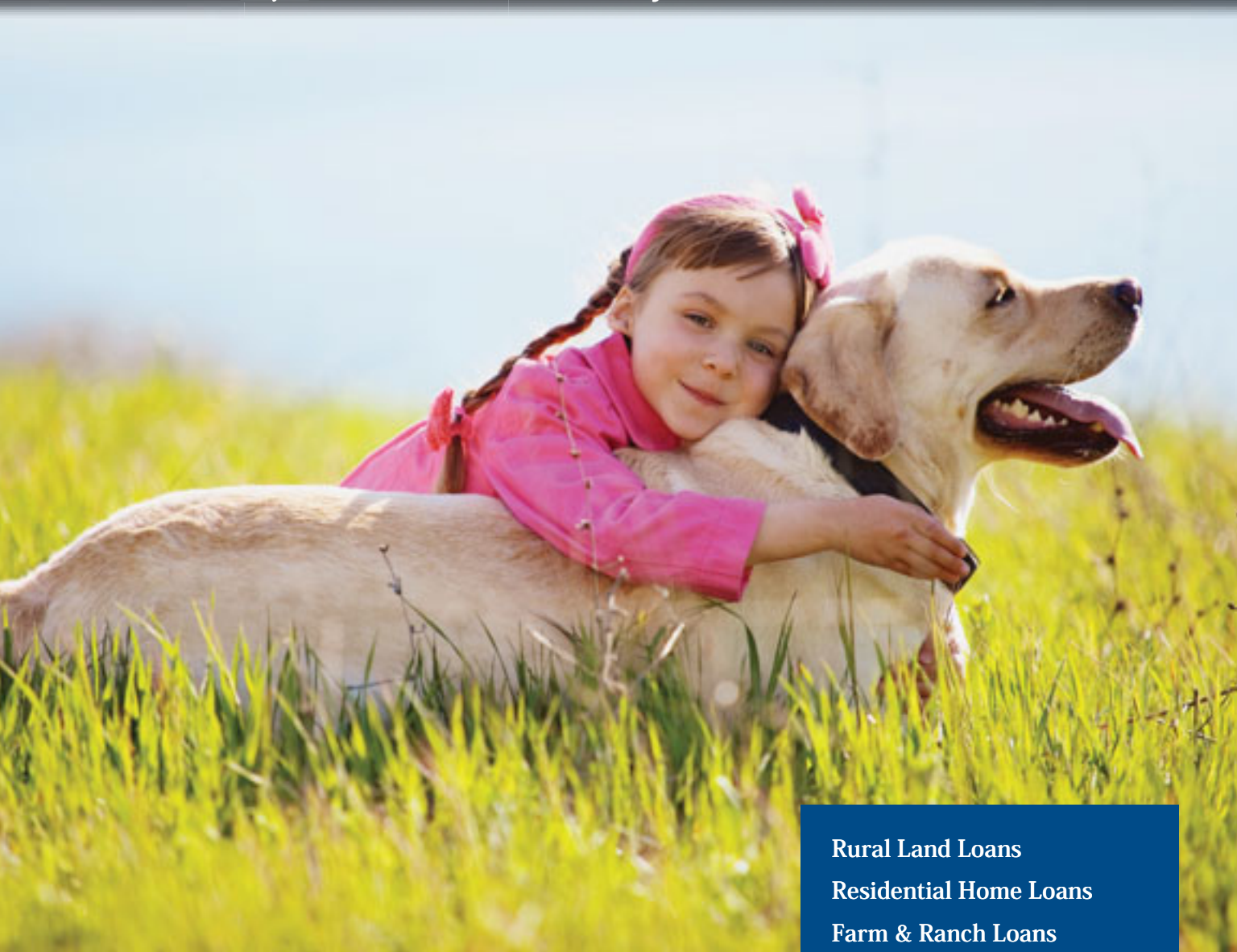
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COVER PHOTO *The balloon glow at the Great Texas Balloon Race fills the night sky with a rainbow of colors.* By Destry Jaimes

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Rekindled Memories

Your article brought back wonderful childhood memories of my grandmother cooking on a cast-iron wood-burning stove in the early 1950s in Waco. My grandfather would break up the thin wooden crates that held Ruby Red grapefruit or oranges to use as kindling.

As a small child, I enjoyed playing with the crates and looking at the colorful labels, especially if a horse was featured.

One correction to the article: Assault, owned by the King Ranch, was a thoroughbred and not a quarter horse. Only thoroughbreds can compete for the Triple Crown.

DOROTHY HEAD POWELL | NORTH ZULCH
MID-SOUTH SYNERGY

Editor's note: Our reader is correct. King Ranch breeds quarter horses in addition to thoroughbreds. The Triple Crown races—Kentucky Derby, Preakness Stakes and Belmont Stakes—feature only thoroughbreds.

Wild Pigs

I've been hunting in Texas since 1957, when I joined the Air Force and went to Lackland AFB for basic training. I was from New York and fell in love with Texas.

I've seen the pig problem grow, and Grow and GROW! ["Here a Pig, There a Pig," April 2014] But one thing I have not noticed is landowners calling for responsible hunters to set traps or hunt pigs with shotguns, which is fairly safe for hunting where there is livestock to consider.

My experience is that if you

lease their land to hunt deer you are free to shoot pigs, but otherwise, there is no access. If the problem is so bad (and I know it is), it seems advantageous to consider giving responsible hunters access for pig trapping and hunting.

LUIS VIGO | LOS FRESNOS
MAGIC VALLEY EC

It makes it hard to sympathize with the ranchers and farmers when you ask one about the opportunity to maybe hunt a pig on their place, and they tell you, "I'll HAVE to charge you to kill a pig." Well, no, you don't. You can also keep your pig problem.

There are thousands of low-income hunters who don't get the chance to hunt big game. By demanding fees, the big landowners hurt themselves and leave a lot of potential hunters with a bad taste in their mouth.

MIKE FRANKLIN | POTEET
KARNES EC

SMU and Ford

I don't know about the Ford executive, Lee Iacocca, naming his Mustang car after the SMU Mustangs, but my son, Mike Ford, brought Mustang mania alive in 1977 and 1978 ["Mustang Mania," April 2014]. He was a Ford, driving a Ford truck, and he was the Mustangs quarterback.

MOLLY FORD | BAGWELL
LAMAR COUNTY ECA

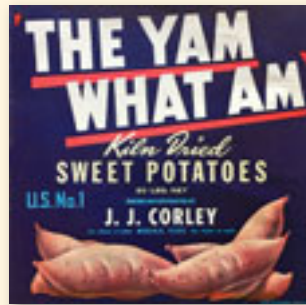


SMU Quarterback Mike Ford

I am now reading.

Thanks for sending me back to the library.

CHARLES POSTLEWATE | GRANBURY
UNITED COOPERATIVE SERVICES



Crate Labels

One of my prized possessions is a label from the estate of my grandfather, J.J. Corley ["When Crates Became Canvases," April 2014]. It was used in his sweet potato business in Van Zandt County. The Yam What Am was a very well-known brand from Grand Saline to El Paso in its day.

DANNY PICKENS | WHITEHOUSE
CHEROKEE COUNTY ECA



Worth Reading

I immensely enjoyed "Aggie with a Secret" [March 2014]. One of the most impressionable movies that I watched as a young boy (63 years ago in San Antonio) was "A Place in the Sun," starring Montgomery Clift, Shelley Winters and Elizabeth Taylor. After reading Jerome Loving's article, I realized that it was based on that famous crime and Theodore Dreiser's novel "An American Tragedy," which

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The 'Pray for Riley' Facebook page posted this photo, saying, 'The ladies of GCEC support Riley.' The Grayson-Collin EC employees are wearing T-shirts sold to raise funds for a co-worker's son, Riley Sprowl, who was injured in an accident.

CO-OPS IN THE COMMUNITY

Family Support at Grayson-Collin

When the son of a Grayson-Collin Electric Cooperative employee was injured in a sledding accident this winter, the co-op family mobilized support.

GCEC Foreman Jason Sprowl's teenage son, Riley, was sledding with friends near Van Alstyne in December when he hit a fencepost. When he told his mother he might be paralyzed, he told her not to worry because he knew God has a plan for him.

His father's co-workers had a plan, too.

"On the Monday morning after the accident, our employees, out of the goodness of their hearts, just opened their wallets," says Tracy Chandler, GCEC executive assistant and human resources manager, who explained that some employees gave back their Christmas bonuses. "Before I knew it, in just 15-20 minutes, I was holding almost \$3,000 in my hands with tears running down my face."

Co-op employees have also worked with the Sprowls' friends and family to hold fundraisers. And GCEC isn't done yet.

"To this day, I come in and there is money on my desk with a note saying, 'This is for Riley,'" Chandler says. "No name listed, just the note ... It makes me very, very proud to be part of the Grayson-Collin Electric Cooperative family!"

HAPPENINGS

Palestine Does Branson

If you find yourself hankerin' for a little twang with a side of laughter, consider resting your boots at Dogwood Jamboree's "A Country Cavalcade" show June 14 in Palestine. This Branson, Missouri-style country music show features classic tunes and rib-tickling comedy, all in a family-friendly atmosphere.

Dogwood Jamboree is in its 10th year, and Dan Manuel, producer and director, says "A Country Cavalcade" is sure to be one of its best performances.

Doors at the Palestine Civic Center open at 6 p.m., and the show begins at 7 p.m. Tickets can be purchased in advance by calling (903) 729-7090.

INFO: \$12.50 in advance, \$15 at the door; dogwoodjamboree.org

Find more happenings all across the state at TexasCoopPower.com



WHO KNEW

Storm Chaser

Benjamin Franklin was well aware of the dangers of lightning even before he fully understood the weather phenomenon. An intense interest in electricity led to his classic—and dangerous—experiment in 1752, when he flew a kite with a metal key attached to it during a thunderstorm. When a bolt electrified the key, it affirmed lightning was a form of electricity.

Continued research and eagerness to prevent buildings from being damaged by lightning strikes led to what Franklin considered his most important invention, the lightning rod, which diverts lightning away from structures. Among his other inventions are bifocals, swim fins, the odometer and, of course, the Franklin stove.

GRAYSON-COLLIN: COURTESY GRAYSON-COLLIN EC. PALESTINE: EDD RATON



When Lightning Roars, Go Indoors!

That's the National Weather Service's rule of thumb when it comes to the dangers of lightning. Lightning Safety Awareness Week is June 22-28, and we want you to be aware of lightning's hazards as you begin your summer of outdoor fun.

Lightning killed 23 people in the United States—including two in Texas—in 2013, the lowest figure since weather officials began keeping records in 1940, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The deadliest year was 1943, when 432 people were struck and killed.

During thunderstorms, follow

these reminders from the National Weather Service:

- No place outside is safe when thunderstorms are in the area.
- If you hear thunder, lightning is close enough to strike.
- When you hear thunder, immediately move to a substantial building with electricity or plumbing or an enclosed, metal-topped vehicle with the windows up.
- Remain there at least 30 minutes after you hear the last sound of thunder.

Indoors

- Stay off corded phones, computers and other electrical equipment that put you in direct contact with electricity.

- Avoid touching plumbing, including sinks, baths and faucets.
- Stay away from windows and doors; stay off porches.
- Do not lie on concrete floors or lean against concrete walls.

Outdoors

- Immediately get off of elevated areas.
- Never lie flat on the ground.
- Never shelter under an isolated tree.
- Never use a cliff or rocky overhang for shelter.
- Immediately get out of and away from ponds, lakes and other bodies of water.
- Stay away from objects that conduct electricity (power lines, barbed wire fences, windmills, etc.).

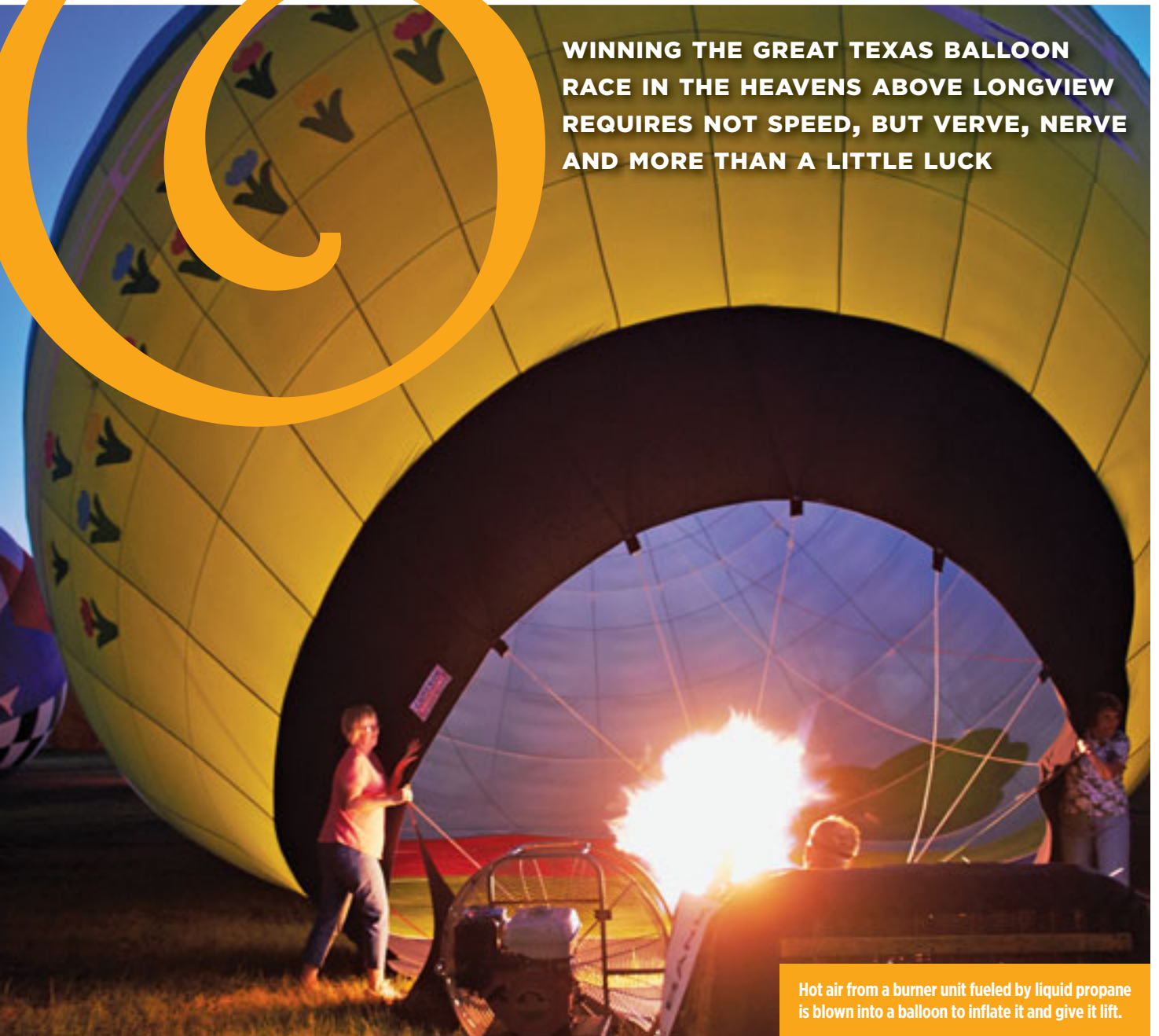
18.18

Barry St. Clair was fishing for crappie, using minnows as bait, when he hooked an 18.18-pound bass on January 24, 1992, at Lake Fork near Quitman. That fish is the state record for largemouth bass, according to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. Anglers have been trying to top that ever since, including the competitors at the Texas High School Fishing State Championship in March at Central Texas' Lake LBJ, where the biggest largemouth bass caught weighed 10 pounds, 3 ounces. "Finders, Keepers" on Page 14 puts you on the water with the teens competing for a state title.



BY GOD WIND

WINNING THE GREAT TEXAS BALLOON RACE IN THE HEAVENS ABOVE LONGVIEW REQUIRES NOT SPEED, BUT VERVE, NERVE AND MORE THAN A LITTLE LUCK



Hot air from a burner unit fueled by liquid propane is blown into a balloon to inflate it and give it lift.

FIRST THIS BUSINESS WITH THE NAME—Great Texas Balloon Race. This annual event in Longview is as much a race as the Super Bowl is a beauty pageant. It's not timed. There are no photo finishes. The prize goes not to the swiftest, nor the fittest, most persistent or the one with the razor reflexes.

No, to win the GTBR, a balloonist must be without peer at doing the math in his head; making U-turns; not letting being lost ruin the day; throwing beanbags at targets and playing ring toss; and, above all, staying poised. The winner must be the best at being decisive while questioning everything, and, when it's all on the line, playing hunches and having faith that the oft-fickle winds of fortune literally have his back when he needs them most.

Kind of makes a race look simple.

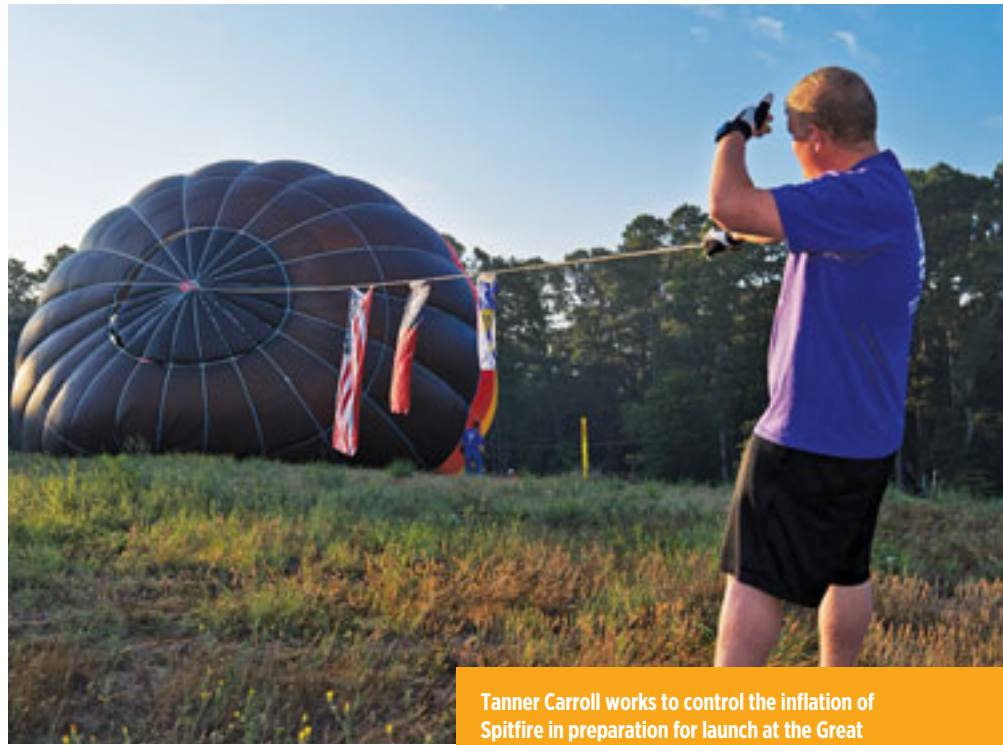
It's 5 a.m. on the last Sunday in July 2013. Today is the final day of competition in a weeklong series of trials, about half of which have been scrubbed because of weather. A ground fog covers the low land surrounding East Texas Regional Airport, and a half moon glows above. Slowly the parking lot begins filling with pickups and vans, modified with back lifts that are carrying large wicker baskets with sturdy aluminum handles. It's either the world's largest picnic or ground zero for the Great Texas Balloon Race and the U.S. National Championships, which run concurrently from 2012 through 2015.

The Great Texas Balloon Race traces its origins to 1978, when Bill Bussey, a Longview dentist and world-record-holding hot air balloon pilot, agreed to drag a banner behind his balloon touting the opening of a local shopping mall in return for backing for a balloon race. Today the GTBR is one of the premier gatherings in the country, drawing more than 100 racing and novelty balloons annually for the three-day event.

Pilots and their ground crews mill about, making nervous small talk and sampling doughnuts and coffee. A couple of pi balls, helium balloons with strobe lights, are set loose to test wind conditions. One heads east. The other starts west.

At 6 a.m., the doors to LeTourneau University's Abbott Aviation Center open, and the pilots, already queued up, quickly file in.

For the next 15 minutes, after getting GPS monitors and souvenir coffee mugs,



Tanner Carroll works to control the inflation of Spitfire in preparation for launch at the Great Texas Balloon Race.

they're briefed on the tasks they must complete, the location of the perimeter outside which they must launch, wind and weather conditions, and forecasts at varying altitudes. There are two kinds of balloonists: floaters and flyers. Floaters just enjoy being in the air. Flyers try to get from Point A to Point B. Today, they're all flyers.

Outside, in the middle of a long row of 62 vehicles parked side by side, like a ready row of F-16s on alert, Bill Adler's crew sits patiently in a red Ford van. Jean, his wife, is in the passenger seat. She's the reason they're here. Thirteen years ago, she wanted a balloon ride and, in Bill's words, "one thing led to another."

In the middle row are Ramey Carroll, his son, Tanner, and Sam Robey, 52. In the back are a photographer and a writer from Texas Co-op Power who pledge to shut up and stay the heck out of the way. In the ignition are the keys.

The plan is simple. Jean Adler acts as crew chief, handles the GPS readings and talks with other crews to share ideas. Robey programs the GPS and, along with Ramey Carroll, helps put the rig together. Tanner Carroll, 20, still carrying the muscle that allowed him to play offensive line at nearby Pine Tree High, provides the beef.

Preparation requires more than just manpower and time. Guy Gauthier, 68, a Longview balloon builder—he rigs them for launching—says a new balloon

can cost \$20,000. Top-of-the-line racing balloons, shaped more like footballs than inverted raindrops, can approach \$100,000.

"Just to buy a good used balloon can run \$15,000 to \$17,000," says Richard James of Diana, a balloonist and member of Upshur Rural Electric Cooperative. "I know people who pay nearly that much to play golf year-round."

Most of the balloons have sponsors. LeTourneau University sponsors Adler, 71. Pat Cannon, a two-time national champion and member of Rusk County Electric Cooperative, says funding is the least of a pilot's needs. "What you really need more than money are really, really good friends," says Cannon, who took third place at the 2013 nationals. "You have to have people who are willing to get up at zero dark thirty and drive all over creation and crew for you."

'THIS IS WHERE IT GETS FUN'

ADLER'S CREW MEMBERS ARE READY TO roll. They will use the maps in their minds and on their laptops and suss out the best places to launch. If they get there first, they'll launch a helium test balloon and watch its ascent with binoculars and a compass to determine if they're in the right place at the right time to take advantage of the varying wind directions at that spot at different altitudes.

If it's right, and they're on public



Part of Spitfire's crew, from left, Ramey Carroll, pilot Bill Adler, Sam Robey and Jean Adler move into launch position for the race.

property, they're golden.

If it's right, and they're on private property, they must get the often-sleepy landowner to sign a release saying it's cool to launch on their property. The Adlers already have a secretly delicious plan: They'll launch in their own front yard on Lake Cherokee about 2 miles away, should conditions permit.

Within 10 minutes, the skittish winds will literally blow the plan apart.

It's 6:15 a.m. The Abbott Center's doors open and the pilots bustle out. Some run. Most, the experienced ones anyway, walk. They must launch before 7:30 a.m., but other than that, there is no real urgency. Adler reaches the van and the plan goes into action.

Tanner Carroll turns to the back seat and smiles. "This," he says, "is where it gets fun."

For the next 99 minutes, it's fun if your broad idea of fun includes liberal interpretations of the Texas Motor Vehicle code; a series of launching spots that don't pan out; inevitable U-turns and impromptu off-roading; and the constant peppering of coordinates, bearings, GPS numbers and wind direction. There's the thrill of the fog limiting visibility to about 100 feet—tops—and of a delivery truck heading straight at the van stopped in the turn lane as its driver stares intently

at the balloons hovering over the airport. "Do you think he sees us?" Jean Adler asks, sounding as worried as she'll get this morning. A blast of the van's horn and the sudden jerk of the delivery truck's steering wheel by the startled driver answers that question.

Adler's crew makes six U-turns, tears down a couple of one-lane roads, releases two pi balls, shouts out coordinates like an artillery spotter and drives about 25 miles to travel one. The spot they choose is on the other side of the fence that bounds the southeast corner of the airport.

"It's not an exact science," Jean Adler shrugs.

This is the spot. It's got the right clearance, right wind, right range ... but the Adlers have the wrong balloon. The night before, he flew his balloon called Wildfire over the crowd as part of the nightly fan festivities, which include demonstration flights, some character balloons and the dusk glow, when the burners are cranked for a few seconds to create a sea of light and color. Adler forgot to change balloons. Fortunately, he lives only 15 minutes away.

He makes it in 10.

All but one of the dozen or so balloons that will launch from the same property are airborne before Adler returns. His crew springs into action, unstrapping Spitfire, stretching it out, attaching it to the basket, fitting the GPS and laptop to

their mounts, blowing air into the balloon with a giant fan and then heating that air with a burner powered by three propane tanks, each one able to keep it aloft for 30 to 45 minutes, depending on air temperature.

Seven minutes later, they're ready. The Adlers kiss, and Bill says, "I'm gone," hits the burner and eases into the air.

This is his moment, but the crew lives vicariously. Tanner Carroll, an Eagle Scout who just finished his sophomore year at Texas A&M University, got introduced to ballooning through a connection from Cub Scouts. Ramey Carroll crews because his son loves it so, and he values the bonding time.

Pilots are drawn to ballooning for varied reasons, but most have to do with the tranquility and feeling of going with the flow of nature. "I love the idea that I really can't control it," James says. "You have some control, but God and the wind determine where you go."

Says Tanner Carroll: "You get up in an airplane, it's fascinating, but in a balloon, you're free with the elements. It feels like the ground is going away from you instead of you going away from the ground."

STICKING THE LANDING

THAT PEACEFUL, ETHEREAL, KUMBAYA feeling isn't guaranteed.

At the 1986 National Championships in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, Cannon heard a rifle bullet whiz by and looked down to see an irate landowner aiming at his balloon, perhaps fearing an alien abduction or a discovery of his secret brewing operation—or just overly persnickety about his airspace. Cannon didn't stick around to find out. He recorded the GPS coordinates and, upon landing, alerted the local sheriff, who paid the man a visit to discuss the felony crime of shooting at aircraft.

Lee Ratcliff, 65, who's been crewing for 15 years, values the friendships. "I don't really know why I get up at 5 a.m. all week to do this," he muses. "Well, the people are friendly; there's a certain camaraderie. It's not like NASCAR drivers, who'll get into a fistfight after one nudges the other—and there is some nudging here."

Often it comes when the pilots are attempting one of the two skill tasks, the ring toss. The idea is to control your altitude such that the crosswinds take you right by the 20-foot pole, and you can simply reach out and slip the 12-inch ring over the top, the equivalent of a basketball dunk. "I've been bumped away more than I care to remember," says Cannon, who's also dunked more than a few.

Acing the ring toss brings a \$5,000 prize. If more than one pilot does it, the first one gets \$1,000 and splits the remaining \$4,000 equally with the other winners.

On this day, Adler doesn't even

attempt the ring toss. He's too far away. He missed with his first projectile during the beanbag toss, in which a pilot must hit a target on the ground with the first bag and then try to get close to the first beanbag with the second. Now, getting anything out of the skill portion is moot.

He's been in the air 17 minutes. With his tasks completed, he looks to land. Being a local, he knows where to look. He spots a clearing between two cul-de-sacs a little over a quarter mile from one corner of the airport.

Jean Adler already knows where he's heading. She pulls the van onto Anita Street and slams the transmission into park. Locating a landing spot is more difficult than finding a launching point. Sometimes you have to set down without permission. Ratcliff remembers one pilot setting down on a soccer field that looked public but wasn't. And it was locked. But Ratcliff played a hunch. Many such facilities simply use some form of the street address as the lock combination. Ratcliff's hunch was right.

Cannon also once landed in a cul-de-sac deserted save for a parked car in which a couple was engaged *in flagrante delicto* in the back seat. "Both of them jumped out buck naked and ran," he laughs.

This landing is relatively routine. In her house across Anita Street, Toya Moore hears the roar of the burner. "I told my son, 'I think a balloon is landing

outside our kitchen window,' " Moore says. Instead, the balloon is a good 100 feet away. Moore takes a few snapshots with her camera phone and buries her face in the keypad. "I'm going to put on Facebook: 'This is what I woke up to!'"

The whole flight has taken less than 20 minutes. The crew patches a quarter-size hole in the fabric, disassembles the rig, rolls up the balloon and slides the basket on the lift. Their day is done.

Adler goes to the race website and checks the standings. He's holding at 35th place.

"If I stay 35th, I'll be tickled," he says. "Last year, I was 45th. Next year, I'll be 25th or better."

When the final standings are posted, he'll have slipped to 37th, but Adler remains undaunted. He's confident that in 2014, the skies will be clear, the temperature right, the ring toss will be a slam-dunk, the beanbag throws will be true and the winds of fortune will have his back. Maybe he'll even get that backyard launch after all.

Mark Wangrin is an Austin writer.

The Great Texas Balloon Race is July 28 to August 3; greattexasballoonrace.com.

Web Extras on TexasCoopPower.com

View a slideshow with more photos.



It's almost time for the balloon glow, an after-dark spectacle when blasts of flame turn the night sky into a radiant array of colors.

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Coins enlarged to show detail.



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Finders, Keepers



Tournament fishing sends high school teams across the water in search of big bass

STORY AND PHOTOS BY JEFF JOINER

STANDING ON THE DECK OF HIS BASS boat, Wyatt Frankens casts a lure toward the overgrown bank of a cove on Lake Lyndon B. Johnson near Marble Falls. The 18-year-old cranks the lure back and casts again, all the time waiting for the telltale sign of a largemouth bass strike.

Suddenly, just as a downpour lets loose, Frankens jerks his rod to set the hook as a fish takes the bait. Unfazed by the rain, fishing partner Clay Nash grabs a net to retrieve his friend's catch, but even before they net the fish, Frankens knows this one isn't a keeper. The too-small bass is quickly released, and the anglers get back to casting.

"When you set the hook and it doesn't budge, and then the line starts going out into deeper water, that's when you know you've got a big fish on," he says. "That one wasn't very big."

Frankens and Nash make up one of 84 two-person teams competing in the 2014 Texas High School Fishing State Championship in March. Their team is one of

four representing Corrigan-Camden High School from Southeast Texas. The tournament has attracted high school teams from throughout the state, competing to claim the state title sponsored by The Bass Federation and its Student Angler Federation. Frankens and Nash are especially eager to do well because they won the state championship in 2012 and tied for second last year.

Texas hosts hundreds of bass tournaments each year, from televised professional events offering hundreds of thousands of dollars in prize money to small club tournaments, where pride counts more than winnings. The state is also home to dozens of high school events that attract student anglers, many new to the sport, who fish for fun, trophies and sometimes scholarships.

The growing popularity of high school tournament fishing has swelled the number of participants, clubs and competitive events throughout Texas, especially in the last two years, says Bryan Thomas, adviser

to the Lumberton High School fishing club. Thomas has watched interest in the sport explode in Southeast Texas.

"I think kids are attracted to fishing clubs because it's something anyone can do that's not limited to either boys or girls," says Thomas, a Lumberton marketing program teacher. "This is a level playing field for everyone. You don't have to be an athlete. We're giving them a chance to represent their school in an organized competition that's not a traditional sport."

Thomas, an avid fisherman himself, organized the school's club last year and was pleased when 45 students joined. This school year, that number ballooned to 82. There was so much interest in high school tournament fishing in the region that Thomas and two friends organized the Southeast Texas High School Fishing Association. The group attracted people from 15 high schools to an informal meeting last summer. By the time Thomas launched the association earlier

this year, 31 schools, representing 750 student anglers, had joined. In one of the association's first tournaments, 262 boats were put in the water at Sam Rayburn Reservoir.

"We're 70 to 90 miles from two of the premiere bass fisheries in the state of Texas—Toledo Bend and Sam Rayburn," says Thomas. "So the growth has a lot to do with how big fishing is here."

Though not recognized as a high school sport, most fishing clubs, including Lumberton's, are school-sanctioned extracurricular activities. The Lumberton school board approved the club. But just like school sports teams, Lumberton's anglers must "pass to play," Thomas says, adding he has had students who couldn't fish in tournaments because of failing grades.

High school clubs attract a wide spectrum of fishing experience, from teens who have never fished, let alone entered a tournament, to those who have been fishing most of their lives. Frankens and Nash are the latter. They take the sport seriously and know the habits and seasonal activity of the fish they're after.

The teammates, who will fish in eight to 10 tournaments this year, usually arrive

a couple of days early to prefish a lake, identifying spawning beds, coves and underwater structures that, depending on time of year and weather, should hold fish.

"You can't just go there on tournament day and fish," says Frankens, who owns his own boat. "If you expect to do well, you need to go early and fish to find patterns in key areas and figure out what bait to key on."

Each two-person team can keep five fish to be weighed. Teams are ranked by the total weight of their catch. Last year, when Frankens and Nash tied for second, the champions won by 2 ounces. "It was a pretty tough deal," says Frankens, whose family is served by Sam Houston Electric Cooperative.

Education, as much as competition, is an important part of the mission of high school fishing teams, says Scott Anderson of Cedar Park, director of the Faith Angler Network High School Bass Team.

"Probably 75 percent of the kids on our team are new to fishing," says Anderson, a member of Pedernales Electric Cooperative. "Maybe their parents don't fish, so they haven't grown up with it, but they see the excitement of it, and they see it's an opportunity to belong to a team."

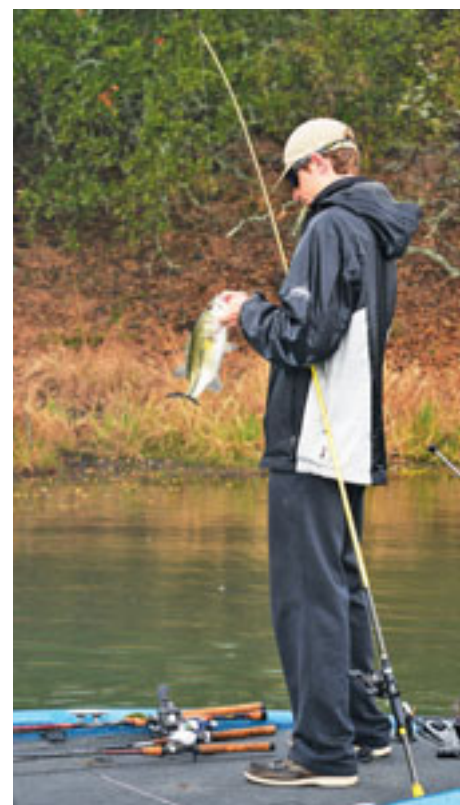
The FAN team, unaffiliated with any particular high school, draws anglers from Williamson and Travis counties. Anderson says he became involved because he wanted to do more outdoor activities with his son, Colt, who competed in the state championship with his dad as boat captain. In high school tournaments sponsored by The Bass Federation, teams are accompanied on the water by an adult captain who provides and operates the boat but does not fish. Anderson says captains serve as mentors and coaches, especially to those just learning the sport.

"Fishing is part skill, part time out on the water and part luck," says Anderson. "We're trying to teach them how to prepare and how to find the fish, and I'm seeing a lot of satisfaction when these kids finally catch something. Some have caught their first fish ever."

Anderson also hopes the experience is something kids will continue and pass on to their children, as was the case with him.

"Man, there's something about that fish pulling on the end of your line that really gets you hooked," he says. "Hopefully, these guys will pass that on even though maybe their parents didn't fish."

OPPOSITE: Austin Ellis, left, and Ben Stripling of Marble Falls High School cast for bass in the opening minutes of the Texas High School Fishing State Championship on Lake Lyndon B. Johnson in March. Dave Cosner operates the boat. **BELOW, LEFT:** Not even a downpour dampens Hyde Park Baptist High School's Jake Wood's focus on finding fish. **BELOW, RIGHT:** Wyatt Frankens of Corrigan-Camden High School retrieves his lure from a largemouth bass that is too small to keep.





TOP LEFT: Carthage High School's Waymon Liles smiles as tournament official Mike Clark inspects one of the fish his team caught. **TOP RIGHT:** Brett Sunvion, center, heads to the weigh-in as Harrison Lansdale secures the boat. They fish for the Faith Angler Network High School Bass Team. **BOTTOM LEFT:** High school fishing attracts a growing number of girls, including Cadie Lawrence of Carthage. 'The fish don't care if you're a boy or a girl,' says tournament volunteer Bill Flanary. **BOTTOM RIGHT:** Corrigan-Camden's Jay Lawson, left, and Kade Bentley show off their limit of five fish.

Retired businessman and former pro tournament fisherman Bill Flanary of Kingsland volunteers with the Marble Falls High School team, which has 15 boats in the championship. He often volunteers as a boat captain and helps teach newbie anglers basic skills like knot-tying and bait selection. He also collects and repairs donated gear for those who come to the sport with none.

"It can get expensive," he says, pointing

at his bass boat with compartments filled with more than \$3,000 in baits alone. "The kids that need help, we outfit them. This is a way a lot of tournament fishermen give back to this next generation."

Back at Lake LBJ, teams have been on the water since first light, and as the 3:30 p.m. weigh-in approaches, boats begin to pull into the LBJ Yacht Club and Marina in Marble Falls. Parents and friends crowd the dock and a grass bank at the

marina as anglers and boat captains, many wearing brightly colored club jerseys, pull fish out of live wells, placing them in large clear bags. Anglers watch competitors carry their bags of fish, some straining under the weight, to tanks of water next to the tournament stage. The fish are kept alive from the time they're caught and while they're weighed, then they're released back into the lake. But not before each team has a chance to

show off its catch on stage to a large, enthusiastic audience with cameras clicking as anglers hold up their fish and smile broadly.

Of course, not every boat catches its limit of five fish, and a few teams even come up empty, but tournament organizers announce that the winners, Joe Beebe and Will Brady of The Woodlands and College Park club, caught a tournament-record 32 pounds of fish. One of Anderson's FAN teams, Dalton Denson and Nicklaus Langlois, caught the tournament's biggest fish at 10 pounds, 3 ounces. In all, 232 fish were weighed.

Frankens and Nash finished sixth with a catch of 18 pounds, 9 ounces. The two, along with the other top eight teams, now qualify to fish in The Bass Federation's High School Conference Tournament, which is a qualifier for the organization's High School Fishing National Championship in spring 2015.

Frankens says he is proud of how he and his partner did and is excited to move on to the conference tournament. "We pretty much had a perfect day as far as catching fish," he says.

Jeff Joiner is Texas Co-op Power editor.

To learn more about high school fishing, including tournament listings, visit highschoolfishing.org or setxhighschoolfishing.com.

Fish are released back into Lake LBJ.



FIELD GUIDE to BASTROP COUNTY

ISSUE
No 43



Tee Time

BASTROP / ELGIN / SMITHVILLE



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CONSERVATION AND SAFETY INFORMATION



Keep your pets away from electronics to keep them safe from electrical hazards.

Keep Pets Safe, Too

Bringing a pet into your home is an adjustment. If you are considering getting a pet, or already have one, Safe Electricity encourages you to protect your pet from electrical hazards around the home.

“Pets need to be trained to avoid electrical hazards, both for their safety and for the safety of everyone in the home,” said Molly Hall, executive director of the Safe Electricity program.

Safe Electricity encourages you to keep these tips in mind to keep your pet safe:

- ▶ Some pets may find a cozy, warm spot near electronics to stay warm. This is not safe. Discourage your pets from doing so, and block off electronics if you must.
- ▶ Make sure all electronics are completely plugged in. A visible electric prong may attract the attention of a pet. A small nose or paw could fit in a gap between a plug and outlet.
- ▶ If you have an aquarium, make sure you create a drip loop on every electrical cord that enters the tank. This will prevent water from running down the cord and into the electrical outlet. To be sure the cord stays looped, stick a cord clip on the wall just below the outlet and thread the cord into the clip.
- ▶ If your pet shows an interest in cords, do something about it. Tuck cords where a pet cannot reach them, or string them through PVC pipe. Cords could cause an electric shock, or even kill a small pet.
- ▶ All appliances near sinks or bathtubs should be plugged into an outlet equipped with a ground-fault circuit interrupter, or GFCI. Playful pets can knock radios, curling irons and other items into the water, creating a dangerous situation. GFCIs stop the flow of electricity instantly if there is a problem and, when properly used, can save lives.
- ▶ Never let a pet sleep on top of an electric blanket.
- ▶ Pay extra attention to pet safety when you have put up lights and decorations.

Your pets may confuse them for new toys.

If you think your pet may have suffered an electrical shock, approach it with caution to keep from being injured by the same electrical danger and to keep from being bitten. Inspect the animal for injuries, and get your pet to an animal care center as soon as possible.

For more information on how to protect your family from electrical hazards, visit SafeElectricity.org.

Give Appliances a Rest During Hot Summer Days

Today’s appliances are more energy efficient than ever, performing better and using less electricity than they did in the past. Despite their functionality and efficiency, most major household appliances give off heat when in use.

During peak daytime temperatures, the residual heat from appliances can put an unnecessary strain on your home’s cooling system and increase your power bill. Cooler temperatures in the early morning or late evening make these more ideal times for running the dishwasher or washing and drying clothes.

When possible, turn off your dishwasher’s dryer cycle. This prevents even more residual heat from warming your home. Washing your clothes in cold water and hanging them out to dry are also great strides toward reducing your household energy consumption.

As your summer heats up, call on your friends at your electric cooperative for more ways to lower your power bill.

To save energy and reduce the heat added to your home, turn off the dryer cycle on your dishwasher.



Safety Tips for Weekend DIY Warriors

If you are a homeowner, the weekend is often your opportunity to tackle one of the projects on your to-do list. Whether it is trimming the hedges, washing windows, building a patio, fixing the garage door or anything else on your list, **Safe Electricity** reminds you to prepare to handle all projects safely.

Begin by making sure you have the right tools for the job. Also, check power tool cords for any cracks or frayed insulation and proper connections. Then take note of potential hazards in the work area, such as overhead power lines—especially those connected to the home.

Look up and around you. Always be aware of the location of power lines, particularly when using long metal tools such as ladders, pool skimmers and pruning poles; when installing rooftop antennas and satellite dishes; or when doing roof repair work.

Other safety tips to keep in mind when tackling DIY projects:

- ▶ Be especially careful when working near power lines attached to your house. Keep equipment and yourself at least 10 feet from lines.

- ▶ Use only extension cords that are rated for outdoor use when working outside. Keep your work area tidy and do not allow power cords to tangle.

- ▶ Remember that electricity and water are a dangerous mix. If it is raining or the ground is wet, do not use tools that require electric power. Never use electrical appliances or touch circuit breakers or fuses when you are wet or standing in water. Keep electric equipment at least 10 feet from wet areas.

- ▶ Make sure outdoor outlets are



When home projects require digging, make sure you know the location of underground utilities.

equipped with ground-fault circuit interrupters. If your outdoor outlets do not have them, use a portable GFCI.

- ▶ If your projects include digging, like building a patio or planting a tree, call 811 to have utility lines marked before you begin. This free service prevents the inconvenience of having utilities interrupted and can help you avoid serious injury.

- ▶ Be willing to hire a licensed professional for projects that involve electrical wiring or for work close to electrical equipment.

For more information on home safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.



Don't Sweat Summer Bills

A few simple steps can help you lower your electric bills this summer:

- ▶ Keep blinds or shades closed. When open, the sun can really heat up a room. Turn off the lights when not needed. They add heat just like sunlight does.

- ▶ Clothes dryers are energy intensive and produce heat. Try using a clothesline instead. Run only full loads in your clothes washer and wash with cold water.

- ▶ Look around and see where you think cool air might escape. Any door that can be closed should be closed. That leaves less living space to cool.

- ▶ Consider doing exercise outside. The less movement you do inside, the less heat you produce.

- ▶ Set the A/C thermostat and leave it. Bring in cool morning air with a box fan in a window. Shut windows as the day warms up.

- ▶ If you have a central air system, keep the fan setting in the "on" position instead of "auto." It will circulate the air throughout your home and make it feel cooler.

- ▶ Leave the house for a trip outside or to the library, a store or the movies. When you do go, make sure everything is turned off and items that use standby power—such as electric coffee pots, TVs and computers—are unplugged.

- ▶ If it's cool at night, open the windows and turn the thermostat off. It feels so great to have a nice, cool breeze while sleeping.

Watery World Made Simple



A stock tank pond is easy to create and adds excitement to a home garden

BY SHERYL SMITH-RODGERS

A NEON RED DRAGONFLY FLITTED OVER the knee-high pond and alighted atop a tall, leggy horsetail rush. Another darted over a limestone rock, magically suspended along the pond's curved rim. Beneath the lily pads, silvery mosquitofish, also called gambusia, wiggled through the water.

"Oh, I want one of these!" I exclaimed, mesmerized by the idyllic scene. My husband nodded. No need for a fortuneteller. We would have our own stock tank pond, similar to the one we'd admired at the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center in Austin.

"The stock tank ponds are among my favorite features in our native gardens," says Julie Marcus, senior horticulturalist at the research and education center. "They add such a nice touch. You don't have to bend over to see in the water so they're wheelchair accessible and perfect for older people."

Andrea DeLong-Amaya, director of horticulture, designed the Texas-style, above-ground water features in both the display gardens and naturalistic homeowner-inspiration garden at the Wildflower Center. One galvanized round metal trough measures 8 feet across; the other is 4 feet. Both stand 2 feet tall.

"Stock tank ponds are so easy to put together because they don't require a lot of hardscape building, like an in-ground pond," DeLong-Amaya says. "They're low maintenance, too. You can start with a small tank and try it out to see if you like it."

That's what Pam Penick, an Austin gar-

den blogger, did. "Eleven years ago, I copied the small tank I saw at the Wildflower Center and put in a 3-foot trough," says Penick, who wrote "Lawn Gone! Low-Maintenance, Sustainable, Attractive Alternatives for Your Yard" (Ten Speed Press, 2013).

"Readers loved my pond, and I got a lot of questions about how I constructed it. So I posted step-by-step directions on my blog in 2009 when I made my 8-foot tank for our new yard."

Count us among Penick's inspired readers. Guided by her detailed instructions, my husband, James, and I started our pond project in May 2012. First, we bought a 3-by-2-foot round tank from a local farm supply company. Next came the fun part—shopping for aquatic plants. For most of a morning, we browsed Hill Country Water Gardens and Nursery in Cedar Park and conferred with a helpful saleswoman. After much deliberation, we chose a dwarf water lily, hornwort grass, horsetail rush and lemon bacopa.

Sharp-eyed green herons patrol our neighborhood, so no goldfish, please. Instead, the sales rep bagged up a dozen small mosquitofish, a hardy species that devours mosquito larvae.

Back home, James prepared the backyard pond site and filled the trough with water. Four days later, we arranged our plants, added a rock ledge and gently poured in the mosquitofish. Presto—our own stock tank pond! Bonus: The entire project cost less than \$300.

For the first few weeks, I snuck outside several times a day and hung out by our

pond. There's just something about a watery world that's calming and relaxing—not to mention fascinating. Bent over the side, I'd peer into the water, ogling the mosquitofish and pink water lily blooms. "James!" I hollered one evening, beside myself with excitement. "A baby fish! Oh, there's another one, too! Come see!"

Ever the patient man, my husband stopped his work moving rocks in our garden and joined me. But not for long. "That's nice, Sheryl," he commented before returning to his project.

All summer and into fall, the water lily sent up miniature green pads and yellow-centered blooms. Bees pilfered nectar from the blue bacopa flowers, and wasps sipped water from the galvanized rim. Northern cardinals and white-winged doves flew in for drinks, too.

As needed, I dipped out fallen oak leaves, pinched off dead lily pad stems and added water from our garden hose. Though not necessary, I sprinkled just a tad of goldfish flakes atop the water.

Soon my mosquitofish—like trained puppies expecting a snack—rushed to see me whenever I showed up. "They love me," I gushed to James, who just rolled his eyes.

Like Penick, I posted how-to instructions on my blog. Later, I learned that photos of our finished project inspired reader Martha Deeringer of McGregor. "I'd never heard of a stock tank pond," she says.

By summer's end, Deeringer had constructed not just one but three stock tank ponds. "My daughter, Lindsay Turner, and I made one for her yard," she says. "Then I made one for the bird blind at the Mother Neff State Park, where I'm a member of the friends group. It's such an easy way to have a water feature with plants, even in a drought. Water gardens are always green and always blooming, except during the coldest part of winter."

I couldn't agree more. And I can't help but wonder, whom will we inspire next?

Sheryl Smith-Rodgers is a frequent contributor. Read her blog at sherylsmithroddgers.blogspot.com.

Web Extras on TexasCoopPower.com

Check out additional hints for this fun, do-it-yourself project, including:

- Recommended native plants
- Basic upkeep
- Tips and photos
- Resources



Mosquitofish thrive below the surface in Sheryl Smith-Rodgers' stock tank pond, and the dwarf lilies, horsetail rush and lemon bacopa add to the plant life in her backyard garden.

STOCK TANK POND BASICS

A healthy container pond requires three types of plants: submerged, marginal and floating. Foliage should cover 60 to 70 percent of the water's surface. Water lilies like to be fertilized monthly.

HOW TO SET UP A POND

DAY ONE: Choose a mostly sunny location that's not directly under trees. Dig out grass and rocks to create a level area wider than your tank. Across the site, spread 1 inch or more of sand or other base material. Tamp down firmly in place. The site must be level. Place the tank on the foundation and level as you slowly fill

it with water. Once the tank is full, allow the water to sit at least three to four days if using tap water so any treatment chemicals can evaporate. However, you may continue with the next steps if using rainwater or well water.

DAY TWO: Arrange cinder blocks as placeholders for plants and rocks for perching. Then set your plants in place. Finally, float your unopened bag of fish in the tank so the temperatures between the bag and pond water can equalize. After a few hours, introduce pond water into the bag, then slowly set the fish free in the pond.

His Heart on His Sleeve

Day of fun in the shallows turns into a most unexpected deeper life lesson

BY SUZANNE HABERMAN

MY HUSBAND LOST HIS SHIRT. MY CLOTHES are drenched. My dog is dry.

The day had not gone as planned.

Earlier, my husband and I arrived at Austin's Zilker Metropolitan Park with our shepherd-mix rescue dog, Dana, hoping to ease her into loving water by seeing other dogs swim. We chose a popular swimming hole on Barton Creek between Barton Springs Pool and Lady Bird Lake. Unfenced and free of charge and rules, "Barkin' Springs" is where the city's counterculture, ruffraff and dog lovers clash.

We enter the fray on the south side of the tributary, where a concrete pad slopes into a blue-green pool that is a melting pot of waders, lovers, children, vagabonds and dogs of every shape, size and color. My husband tosses a tennis ball into a swirl of water below a dam. Instead of fetching, Dana plants her paws on dry ground and pants after her toy.

She loves her ball, but not as much as she hates getting wet.

I kick off my shoes, roll up my blue jeans and step in. The 68-degree spring water almost stings my toes as I navigate over stones to retrieve the ball. Dana whines as it bobs away on the frothy waves. Then helpless, we both watch as a Lab paddles by and gobbles it up. Her ball is lost in a sea of humanity and canines.

In this swirl, a dog must retrieve and defend its toy with zeal. So must the human, we learn. Across the creek, we observe a man interrupt a woman's game by continually snatching up and throwing her dog's toy. The blue heeler can't resist diving in again and again.

Wanting Dana to have the same verve, I find a stray ball and try to tempt her into the water. I tiptoe onto the rock and algae-covered creek bed and wave it in front of her nose. She nips at the ball with bare teeth as she leans over the water as far as she can without getting wet.

A step deeper and I slip, falling all the way down the bank onto my back. In about a foot of water, I am drenched from the shoulders down. Dana stands nearby watching me, nonchalant and dry.

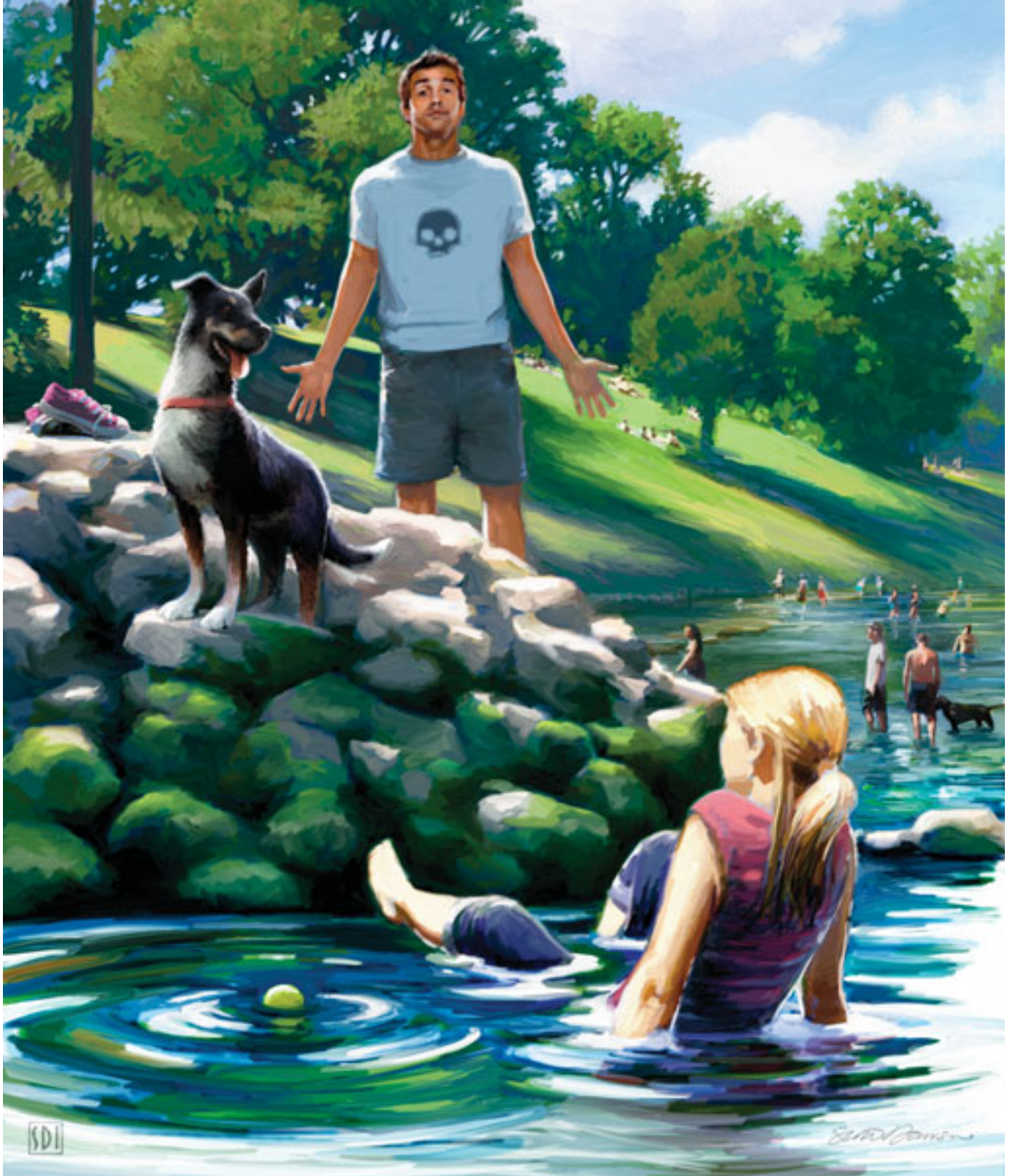
Regaining my bearings, I look to my mate for sympathy. Instead, his face says, "Let's go." Blue heeler and company have swum to our side, and my husband is sizing up the man insisting on fetch while the dog's owner is trying leave. She just isn't fast enough to get between her dog and the insensitive stranger.

I'm struggling to put on socks and Converse over my wet feet when I see the stranger fling the toy into the deep one last time. He cackles and dances on the sidelines as the blue heeler scrambles after.

Now, my husband steps between the man and the dog long enough for the woman to leash her pet and leave. I'm still fumbling with my shoelaces, impaired by wet jeans and pruny fingers.

The stranger fixes a wild eye on his interceptor. Wet from swimming, the man shivers and chatters nonsense through what remains of his teeth. Water drips from rivers of gray-streaked curls onto his slender body. He steps closer, and my husband lifts his left arm in defense.

Still approaching, the man makes a final plea. It's incoherent to me, but my



husband drops his stance.

“You want my shirt?” he asks with disbelief.

“Yeah, man,” the stranger replies plainly, rubbing his bare chest. “I’m freezing.”

In one move, my husband pulls off the T-shirt he had won at a mixed martial arts competition and hands it to the stranger. “Here,” he says, gruff and still at a distance.

The man’s eyes grow wide as he takes it. He giggles as he hangs the XL shirt on his bony frame, pointing to the skull silhouette decal, showing everyone who will look.

“Let’s go,” my husband says aloud. This time, I’m on my feet and Dana’s on her leash.

We three—husband shirtless, me soaked, Dana dry—walk away in silence.

The day had not gone as planned. We’d embarked hoping for a doggy swimming lesson; we left with a lesson in humanity.

A way up the trail, I venture a whisper. “That was one of your favorites.”

“I think when someone asks for your shirt,” my husband says, shrugging his bare shoulders, “you gotta give it to ‘em.”

Suzanne Haberman is a staff writer.

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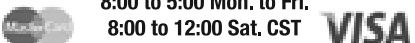


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Big Hunt, Big Game

Presidential contender William Jennings Bryan was the real target during an 1899 hunt for 'wild' panther outside Austin

BY DAVID LATIMER

WHETHER A HOAX SERVED UP FOR THE newspapers or an elaborate practical joke on one of the country's most famous politicians, the scene must have been something to behold. A hunting party of 100 men on horseback and 50 barking dogs set out from Austin to the hills—or “mountains,” as the newspaper tells it—west of the city on December 27, 1899, trailing a panther.

The guest of honor was William Jennings Bryan, who planned to secure the Democratic Party nomination for another run at the presidency. Former Gov. James Hogg led the hunters, his nearly 300 pounds astride a white horse, blowing away on his hunting horn as they headed into the rough country of scrub oak and prickly pear that lay between Austin and the little community of Oak Hill.

Hogg had been a strong backer of Bryan in the 1896 presidential campaign. Bryan also needed the support of Texas political kingmaker “Colonel” Edward M. House of Austin.

Bryan had been nominated in 1896, at the age of 36, a populist David out to slay the moneyed Goliaths, the northeastern bankers and hard money men who kept the farmers perpetually in debt. Although he lost to William McKinley, Bryan remained popular in his own Midwest and in what was then the solid Democratic South. Texas support was critical in regaining the Democratic nomination. Certainly for this reason, as much as for the mild winters, Bryan moved to Austin in November 1899 and stayed into April.

The day after the expedition, the Austin Daily Statesman reported under the headline, The Big Panther Hunt:

“They returned ... with a live panther in their possession, having captured the same during the day. The ... sport was reported as being quite lively throughout.”

Although the article hints that the prey was something less than a ferocious wild beast that had been “cooped up” and



released as the hunters approached, the description of the hunt remains epic:

“The dogs took his trail at once, and after two hours rambling through heavy undergrowth and many acres of prickly pear came upon the panther, who had been forced to take refuge in a small tree. The dogs at once attacked him and during the melee several of them were knocked down ... After about an hour's skirmishing between the dogs and panther it was decided to attempt to capture the panther alive, and this was done by means of roping, and the beast was brought back to town in captivity.”

That might have been the end of the story, except as the years went by more details emerged. Bryan returned to Austin in March 1916, after losing the 1900 and 1908 presidential elections, to lecture at the University of Texas. The Austin American chose the occasion to recall the panther hunt with the added detail that the animal had been kept in a cage at a Con-

gress Avenue saloon, where it was returned after the hunt.

Then, 24 years after the event and on the eve of yet another visit by Bryan, a letter appeared in the February 1, 1924, edition of the Austin American. The letter, written to Bryan by one of the hunt organizers, finally let the cat out of the bag, so to speak. The truth was that the entire incident was an elaborate, Texas-sized snipe hunt:

“After about a five-mile chase the dogs treed the panther and you all came up under the tree. There, upon a high limb, crouched the animal. Somebody, who was not in on the practical joke of which you were the principal victim, suggested that the cat be shot. Gov. Hogg and Weed objected however.

“Presently, you remember, that Gov. Hogg insisted in showing you some scenery nearby and led you away. When you came back the panther was gone.”

David Latimer is an Austin writer and instructor at Austin Community College.



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August Issue

Refreshing

Deadline: June 10

September Issue

Energy

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Take It Outside!

In Texas, the first day of summer comes and goes without much fanfare. Officially, the first day of the season occurs around June 21 and is marked by the summer solstice, or what we in the Northern Hemisphere call “the longest day of the year.”

Of course, by late June it’s likely you’ve already spent a lazy day at the lake, attended a pool party or gathered with friends on a balmy evening. In any case, June is a great month to take the party outdoors and enjoy the weather before the mercury rises mercilessly.

I’m including a personal favorite appetizer recipe from my friend Susan, a member of Fayette EC, who throws amazing summer parties on her ranch.

Bite-sized chunks of chicken are marinated in a mixture of Sriracha hot sauce and lime, sprinkled with brown sugar, baked and put under the broiler.

ANNA GINSBERG, FOOD EDITOR

Susan’s Sriracha Bacon Chicken Bites

- 4 small boneless, skinless chicken breast halves (6 ounces each or about 1½ pounds total)
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoons fresh lime juice
- 2 tablespoons Sriracha sauce
- ½ teaspoon cumin
- 16 slices bacon
- ⅓ cup packed light brown sugar

- Cut each chicken breast into large, bite-size (about 1-inch) chunks and put them in a 1-gallon zipper bag.
- Stir together oil, lime juice, Sriracha and cumin and pour over the chicken. Let marinate for about an hour.
- Cut each bacon slice into two pieces and drape each piece over and around a chicken cube, securing with a

toothpick. Arrange wraps on a flat surface and sprinkle evenly with brown sugar.

- Spray top rack of a broiler pan with high-temperature grilling spray and arrange chicken wraps on top. Adjust the oven rack so that the chicken sits about 6 inches under the broiling element.
- Bake at 350 degrees for 25-28 minutes or until chicken is cooked through.
- When chicken is cooked, set oven to broil and broil for about 3 to 6 minutes, watching carefully all the while, until sugar starts to brown and edges of bacon are crisp.

Servings: 16. Serving size: 2 pieces. Per serving: 127 calories, 12 g protein, 5.5 g fat, 5.2 g carbohydrates, trace dietary fiber, 265 mg sodium, 4.9 g sugars, 35 mg cholesterol

 **Cook's Tip:** For a lighter version, try turkey bacon. For crispier bacon, use precooked bacon.



Susan's Sriracha Bacon Chicken Bites

DAWN HODGES | SAN BERNARD EC

Party Food/Dips Contest Winner: *In keeping with the tradition of summer entertaining, we asked readers for their favorite party foods and dips. Thank you for your overwhelmingly enthusiastic response! These are four of our staff's picks (though we liked quite a few of the others).*



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Bacon/Lettuce/Tomato Bites

- 20 cherry tomatoes
- Salt
- ¼ cup finely chopped green onion
- 10 slices thin-sliced bacon, cooked and crumbled
- ½ cup finely chopped lettuce
- ⅓ cup mayonnaise

- Cut the tops off of the tomatoes and scoop out the insides. Salt each cavity and invert over paper towels for 15 minutes.
- Combine green onion, bacon, lettuce and mayonnaise. Fill each tomato with the mixture and refrigerate. Serve within one hour.

Servings: 10. Serving size: 2 tomatoes. Per serving: 116 calories, 4.6 g protein, 10.6 g fat, 0.8 g carbohydrates, 0.2 g dietary fiber, 319 mg sodium, 0.2 g sugars, 12 mg cholesterol



Cook's Tip: Use the largest cherry tomatoes you can find.



\$100 Recipe Contest

November's recipe contest topic is **Seafood**. What's your favorite way to eat from the sea? Fried shrimp? A crab boil? Broiled redfish? We'd like to see your favorite ways to cook seafood. The deadline is **June 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.

Layered Goat Cheese Spread

- 16 ounces goat cheese, softened
- 24 ounces cream cheese, softened
- 1 cup pesto
- ¾ cup julienned, sun-dried tomatoes
- ¾ cup dry-roasted peanuts, chopped

- Line a medium bowl with plastic wrap, leaving a bowl's width of plastic overhanging all around.
- In a separate bowl, mix together goat cheese and cream cheese and divide into thirds. Form one-third into a disk big enough to fit in the bottom of the prepared bowl.

- Spread half of the pesto over the cheese mixture. Scatter half of the tomatoes over the pesto, then half of the peanuts over the tomatoes.
- Form second third of cheese mixture into a disk big enough to completely cover the pesto layer. Repeat pesto, tomato and peanut layering. Form remaining cheese into disk to completely cover pesto layer.
- Fold plastic wrap over the top layer of cheese to cover. Press down, cover with something flat such as a plate and weight the top. Refrigerate at least 2 hours.
- To unmold, gently peel back the plastic wrap, exposing the goat cheese. Place a serving plate, bottom up, over the top of the bowl, then invert the bowl over the plate.
- Carefully remove the bowl from the cheese mold. Pulling down on plastic while lifting the bowl will help. Carefully pull the plastic off the molded cheese. Wipe any cheese smudges off of the plate. Let cheese sit at room temperature at least 30 minutes before serving. Serve with crackers, baguettes or crostini.

Servings: 40. Serving size: 1 ounce. Per serving: 139 calories, 4.4 g protein, 9.7 g fat, 4.4 g carbohydrates, 0.9 g dietary fiber, 258 mg sodium, 2.6 g sugars, 23 mg cholesterol

GAIL PATTERSON | COOKE COUNTY EC

Spinach-Stuffed Jalapeños

- 25 jalapeños
- 8 ounces cream cheese, softened
- 1 pound frozen spinach, thawed and drained
- 1 pound pasteurized processed cheese spread
- 1 can (13.5 ounces) tomatoes and green chilies, undrained
- 1 teaspoon onion powder
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 pound bacon

- Cut peppers in half lengthwise and remove seeds and veins. To reduce spiciness, soak in cold salt water for 20 minutes.
- Mix together cream cheese, spinach, processed cheese, tomatoes and chilies, and spices. Stuff the peppers with the cheese mixture and place on baking sheets.
- Cut bacon slices in half. Lightly pan-fry and drain. Place one piece on top of each stuffed pepper and secure with a toothpick.
- Bake at 350 degrees for 20 to 30 minutes or until bacon is browned and stuffing is bubbly.

Servings: 25. Serving size: 2 pepper halves. Per serving: 203 calories, 7.2 g protein, 15.7 g fat, 9.6 g carbohydrates, 3.1 g dietary fiber, 526 mg sodium, 5.6 g sugars, 36 mg cholesterol

RITA MORROW | BIG COUNTRY EC

Smoky Salmon and Peanut Appetizer

- 8 ounces cream cheese, softened
- 2 teaspoons finely chopped onion
- 1 teaspoon prepared horseradish
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice

- 1 teaspoon Liquid Smoke
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 can (16 ounces) salmon, drained, bones removed and flaked
- ½ cup chopped peanuts or pecans
- ¼ cup finely chopped parsley

- > Beat cream cheese in a medium bowl until fluffy. Blend in onion, horseradish, lemon juice, Liquid Smoke and salt. Stir in salmon.
- > Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate at least 1 hour to firm up slightly. Place in a serving bowl and sprinkle with nuts and parsley.
- > Serve with crackers, chips or toasted French bread slices.

Servings: 24. Serving size: 1 ounce. Per serving: 81 calories, 5.8 g protein, 47 g fat, 1.0 g carbohydrates, 0.3 g dietary fiber, 171 mg sodium, 0.3 g sugars, 18 mg cholesterol

PHYLLIS BUSCH | GUADALUPE VALLEY EC

Mom's Ultimate Cheese Dip

- 1½ cups diced tomato
- 1 cup diced onion
- 4 ounces chopped pimientos, undrained
- 8 ounces canned, chopped green chilies, drained and rinsed
- 4 to 8 ounces jalapeños, drained, rinsed (if pickled) and chopped

- 1 can (8 ounces) diced mushrooms
- 1 can (14.5 ounces) cream of mushroom soup
- 2 pounds processed cheese
- ¼ pound Monterey Jack, shredded
- 1 can (13 ounces) evaporated milk

- > Combine tomato, onion, pimientos, green chilies and jalapeños in large saucepan. Bring to a gentle boil and cook, stirring often, for about 10 minutes. Vegetables will release some liquid as they cook.
- > Drain about half of the liquid off (about 2½ tablespoons). Reduce heat to low and add mushrooms, soup and both cheeses. Cook, stirring constantly, until cheeses melt. Add milk slowly until mixture reaches desired consistency.
- > Put dip in a slow cooker set on warm and serve with tortilla chips.

Servings: 32. Serving size: ¼ cup. Per serving: 128 calories, 6.6 g protein, 6.3 g fat, 6.3 g carbohydrates, 0.8 g dietary fiber, 611 mg sodium, 3.4 g sugars, 29 mg cholesterol

KATHRYN BOLTON | FARMERS EC

Web Extra on TexasCoopPower.com

Check out hundreds more recipes in our archives.

10TH ANNUAL HOLIDAY RECIPE CONTEST



2010 Holiday Recipe Contest \$3,000 Grand Prizewinner Sharon Fabianke shows off her Better than a Fruitcake Cheese Ball. Get the recipe at TexasCoopPower.com.

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Go to TexasCoopPower.com for details and official rules.

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Enter online at TexasCoopPower.com. Each entry MUST include your name, address and phone number, plus the name of your Texas electric cooperative, or it will be disqualified. Specify which category you are entering, Sweet, Savory or Pecan Pie, on each recipe. Send entries to: Texas Co-op Power/Holiday Recipe Contest, 1122 Colorado St., 24th Floor, Austin, TX 78701. You can fax recipes to (512) 763-3401. Up to three entries are allowed per co-op membership. Each should be submitted on a separate piece of paper if mailed or faxed. Mailed entries can all be in one envelope. No email entries will be accepted. For official rules, visit TexasCoopPower.com. **Entry deadline: August 10, 2014.**

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▲ **Terry Batts** of CoServ Electric sent this shot of playful pup Shiloh.



◀ Pee-Wee, the family dog, is in 'timeout' for naughty behavior; submitted by **Rebecca Steele** of Karnes EC.

Rita Berry of Hamilton County ECA took this photo of Spanky, her boxer, after it found its way into black mud. ▼



Upcoming Contests

August Issue: Refreshing *Deadline: June 10*

September: Energy **October: Family**

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.

In the Doghouse We know from experience that being in the doghouse doesn't always have to involve a dog—or a doghouse. We're happy to see that our readers realize that, too. Good readers!

Web Extras on TexasCoopPower.com

Come. Sit. Now check out more 'In the Doghouse' photos.



▲ Coleman County EC member **Lisa Jones** shared this photo of her boyfriend, **Troy Abernathy**, getting an earful from his grandmother, **Claudia Rutherford**, 94.

Tonya Williams of Pedernales EC says son **Carter** doesn't seem to mind being in the doghouse at all. ▼



Pick of the Month

25th Annual Texas Blueberry Festival

Nacogdoches [June 14]
(936) 560-5533, texasblueberryfestival.com

This family-friendly, free event celebrates the annual blueberry harvest. Visitors will find music, competitions, a pet parade, kids' bounce park and more at the only state-sanctioned blueberry festival in Texas.



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June

10
Victoria [10-14] Victoria Bach Festival, (361) 570-5788, victoriabachfestival.org

11
Dripping Springs Burke Center for Youth Fun-Raiser, (512) 858-4258, theburkecenter.org

12
Abilene [12-14] Children's Art & Literacy Festival, (325) 677-1161, abileneccac.org/calf

13
Gonzales Main Street Concert: Kevin Naquin & Ossun Playboys, (830) 672-2815, tourgonzales.com

Lubbock [13-14, 20-21, 27-28] Lubbock Moonlight Musicals presents "Oliver!" (806) 638-5706, lubbockmoonlightmusicals.org

Boerne [13-15] Boerne Berges Fest, (820) 428-8778, bergesfest.com



June 20 Stonewall
Peach JAMBoree and Rodeo

13
Marble Falls [13-15] Marble Falls Soapbox Classic, (830) 693-2815, adultsoapboxderby.com

14
Athens Paul's Journey in Concert, (903) 676-2492, athenstx.org

East Bernard Czech Kolache-Klobase Festival, (979) 335-7907, kkfest.com

Florence Friendship Festival, (254) 289-0523, florencechamberofcommerce.org

Jacksonville Tomato Fest, (903) 586-2217, jacksonvilletexas.com

Palestine Dogwood Jamboree, (903) 723-6291, dogwoodjamboree.org



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20

Burnet [20-21] Burnet County Area Fair, (512) 734-1251, burnetcountyfair.com

Stonewall [20-21] Peach JAMboree and Rodeo, (830) 644-2735, stonewalltexas.com

San Antonio [20-22] Mesquite Art Show, (210) 508-9844, mesquiteartshow.com

21

Bellville Summer Music Fest, (979) 865-5995, austincountyfair.com

Canyon Lake Party for the Pantry, (830) 964-3003, crrcofcanyonlake.org

Fredericksburg Wine Road 290: Vino al Pastor, (830) 868-2321, wineroad290.com

Hye Winner Winner Chicken Dinner! (830) 392-0246, garrisonbros.com

Lewisville Best Little Brewfest in Texas, (972) 219-3401, blbfit.com

Quitman [21-22] Lake Fork Catfish Classic, (903) 473-4165, lakeforksa.com

26

Luling [26-29] Watermelon Thump, (830) 875-3214, watermelonthump.com

27

Bremond [27-28] Polski Dzień (Polish Day), (254) 746-7636, bremondtxas.org

28

Bandera Riverfest, (830) 796-4447, banderariverfest.com

Johnson City Art Walk on Nugent Street, (830) 868-9290, johnsoncity-texas.com

July

3

Granbury [3-6] Old Fashioned 4th of July Celebration, (817) 573-1622, granburrychamber.com

4

Leon Valley Leon Valley Independence Day Parade, (210) 682-2400

The Colony Liberty 5K, 10K & 1-Mile Fun Run, (972) 625-1106, libertybythelake.com

Castroville [4-5] July 4th Celebration, (830) 538-9838



June 28
Bandera
Riverfest

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A stay at the Hangar Hotel is a journey to another time and place

BY EILEEN MATTEI



Jim Brandvik flies into Fredericksburg every few weeks to grab a bite at the Hangar Hotel's Airport Diner. Brandvik, a member of Bandera Electric Cooperative, pilots his home-built plane out of the San Geronimo Airpark west of San Antonio.

PICTURE YOURSELF IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC, relaxing in a 1940s U.S. Army Air Forces officers' quarters with Glenn Miller's "Moonlight Serenade" playing in the background. In reality, you are in Fredericksburg at the **HANGAR HOTEL**, immersed in nostalgia while surrounded by 21st-century comforts.

From the outside, the 50-room hotel resembles a plain-Jane, Quonset hut hangar, complete with private planes parked on the Gillespie County Airport apron only 120 feet from the palm-fringed entrance. But inside, you begin a sentimental journey: Staff wearing flight-crew uniforms welcome you while eight clocks overhead mark the time in Honolulu, San Francisco, Denver, New York, London, Rome, Sydney and, of course, Fredericksburg. Tropical greenery peeks around stacks of vintage tan luggage and club chairs covered in bomber-jacket leather. The wooden radio console, a poster featuring the China Clipper winging over the waves and the big-band soundtrack nudge you deeper into a bygone era.

The romance of yesteryear lingers in the khaki-walled guest rooms where an

army-olive blanket rests at the foot of crisp, white-striped sheets on a rattan-accented mahogany bed. Comfy, distressed-leather easy chairs bracket the window and its small electric candle. Even the bathroom is a retro vision in black and white tiles.

Dick Estenson, a private pilot and former NASA engineer, decided a nostalgic World War II-themed hotel fit well with his passion for flying and the National Museum of the Pacific War 3 miles away. People are surprised the Hangar Hotel was built in 1995, he says, taking pride in the research and attention to detail that have attracted couples of all ages for romantic getaways. "I want people to go away feeling like they had a good time. That's what is gratifying: guests who are content." Contentment is audible: Guests have been heard humming "Bali Ha'i" from the 1949 Broadway musical "South Pacific."

Sturdy rocking chairs on the upper and lower porches invite laidback watching of sunsets and planes landing and taking off yards away. The Officers Club bar, a cozy space with red leather chairs and a fireplace, is ideal for sipping champagne cocktails and talking for hours.

Start the morning with breakfast next door at Estenson's Airport Diner, a 1940s vision of chrome counter stools and red booths where you can eat breakfast, including homemade biscuits, all day. Pilots and their families fly in to lunch on Bomber Burgers or hot roast beef sandwiches and visit Fredericksburg and tour the museum dedicated to World War II in the Pacific.

The museum's subdued lighting creates a solemn atmosphere befitting the courage and sacrifice of soldiers, sailors and airmen. Through photographs, documents, combat-scarred tanks and ships, and mesmerizing multimedia map tables, the exhibits give both broad and intimate perspectives on the conflict in the Pacific. From Lt. Col. James H. Doolittle's surprise bombing raid on Tokyo in 1942 to the battles of Midway, Guadalcanal and Iwo Jima, the dominant theme is individuals fighting as a nation for victory, for freedom.

In the evening, the Cabernet Grill, just half a mile away across the highway, glories in its new Texas cuisine and long list of Texas wines. Diners can enjoy the spinach salad with Rio grapefruit and pecans, and entrees such as Angus tenderloin kabobs, sided with three-cheese grits or maple chipotle sweet potato mash, or the savory buffalo enchiladas with green chile cream.

To end the night memorably, stroll the short distance back to the hotel. Ahead you will see candles twinkling in the windows and the large sign with an airplane nose-art pinup girl saying, "I sleep like a baby." And you do. The sound of a small plane taking off during the night flows into your dreams where you are smiling through some enchanted evening.

Eileen Mattei is a Harlingen writer.

Info: (830) 997-9990, hangarhotel.com, visitfredericksburgtx.com.

Web Extras on TexasCoopPower.com

- Watch a video about fly-in lunching.
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Available in whole and half sizes from 8-15, this intricately sculpted, custom-designed ring is an exceptional value at just \$199*, and you can pay for it in 5 easy installments of just \$39.80. To reserve your "Spirit of Texas" Diamond Ring, complete with a custom case and Certificate of Authenticity, and backed by our 120-day unconditional guarantee, send no money now; just mail the Reservation Application. But hurry... this is a limited-time offer!



Bold Texas icons stand out on both sides

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Bold Black Onyx

18K Gold Plating

Engraved with "Texas Pride"

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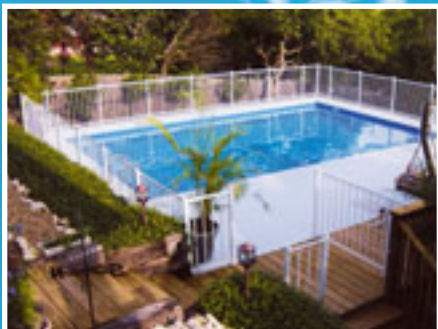
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