

LOCAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE EDITION

FEBRUARY 2015

Eccentric Artist Bob Wade

All Things Chocolate

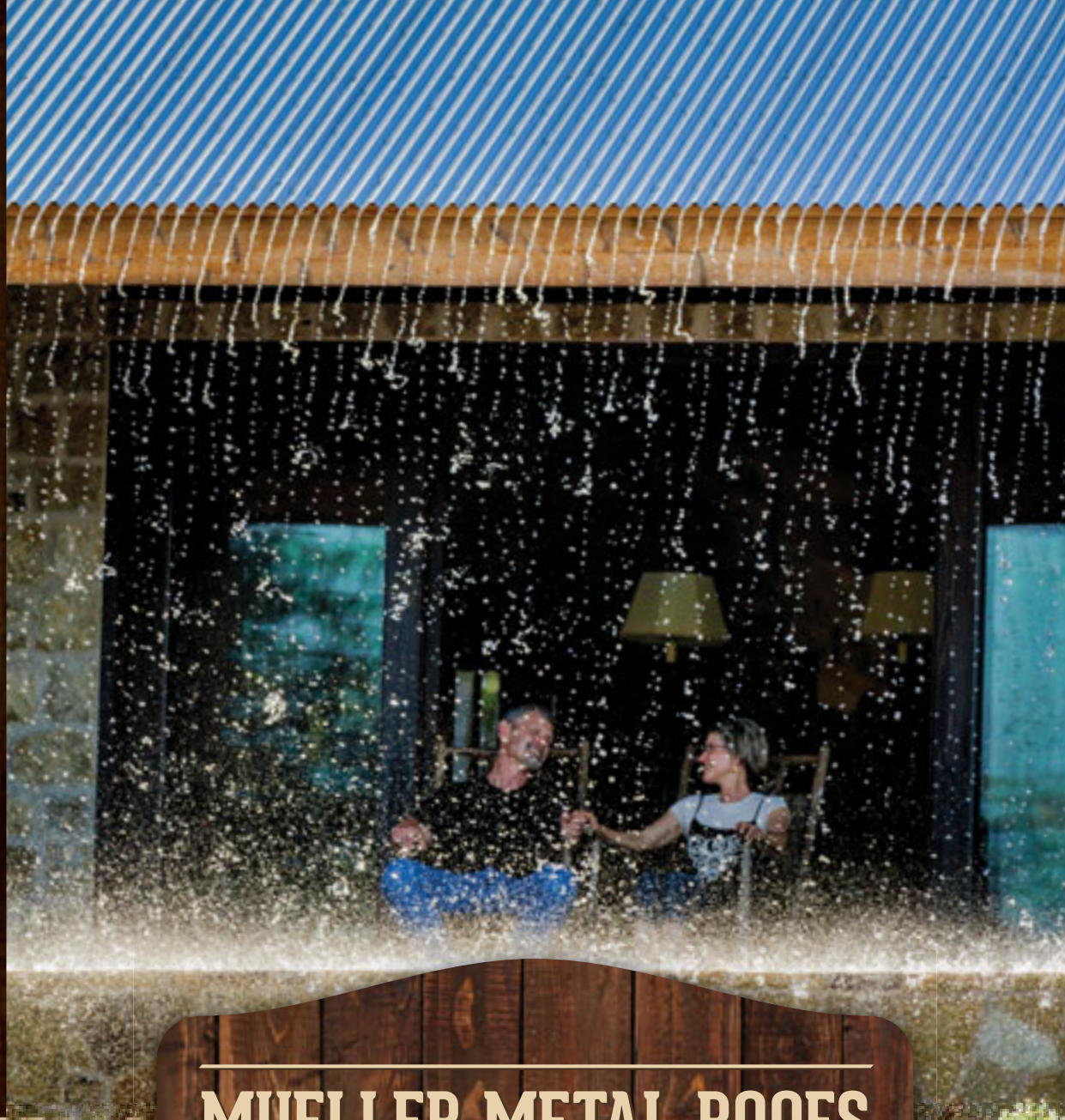
Nacogdoches

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Dino Bob, a creation of artist Bob Wade, sits atop a parking garage in downtown Abilene.

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Around Texas Palestine focuses on foodies with A Taste of New Orleans: Mardi Gras Celebration, February 7, in the Main Street District, Page 36.



DINO BOB: ABILENE CULTURAL AFFAIRS COUNCIL. MASK: FLIPPO | BIGSTOCK.COM



ON THE COVER West Texas painter Mary Baxter captures El Capitan and the Guadalupe Mountains at sunset. Photo by E. Dan Klepper

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Heaven Scent

We have a recommendation for the recipe section of the magazine: Scratch and sniff with each picture. Can't wait to try the pecan recipes ["2014 Holiday Recipe Contest," December 2014].

LYNN MORGAN | GAINESVILLE
COOKE COUNTY EC

You Better Watch Out

Thanks for the article "Naughty Santa" [December 2014].

In 1927, my grandfather had just finished building a new barn, and he brought the family to the new place the day after the bank robbery. They noticed what appeared to be bloodstains on the new barn door. They soon discovered that the bank robbers had apparently stayed in the barn and had built a "fort" out of fresh hay bales.

Later that day, the Eastland County sheriff told my grandmother to be particularly careful about dealing with strangers. When she told him she kept a loaded, 12-gauge, double-barreled shotgun in the house, he suggested that if she heard any suspicious noise, she should shoot first and ask questions later. The next day she heard a knock on the door and called for the person outside to identify himself or she would shoot.

When she didn't hear a reply, she took aim at the door and was about to fire both barrels. Then, deciding to double-check, she looked out the window and there stood the sheriff who had warned her the previous day.

He didn't hear my grandmother call out, and she never heard him announce himself. Fortunately no one was hurt.

JOHN T. WENDE | DALE
PEDERNALES EC

Blast from the Past

I enjoy your publication and thought that you would be a good source of information. I went to a yard sale at an old building that had served as an Army barracks at one time but was scheduled for demolition. Judging from the items for sale, it had been a retail store at some time.

I found and purchased this service meter (pictured here). The yellow tag on top of the meter says, "Property of Taylor Electrical Cooperative." It has a long cord and a duplex ungrounded receptacle on the side. I wonder if this was one of the original service meters used in rural areas.



JIMMY HOLCOMB | BURNET | PEDERNALES EC

Editor's note: Elizabeth McVey with Taylor EC explains that this usage meter, which looks to be 40–50 years old, was used to determine how much electricity a specific appliance was using. These meters were made by Taylor EC's member services department.

We've Been Flagged

"Salute to Nine Flags" [November 2014] was informative, especially for a history buff. Nine flags have flown over Nacogdoches; that's a bunch!

My attention was drawn to the flag with the red arm and sword. I was able to identify eight flags from the article. The "red arm and sword" flag didn't match.

I believe the mentioned "Fredonia Rebellion" flag is misrepresented by the Dimmitt's bloody arm flag of 1835 in the depiction. It was flown over Goliad, not Nacogdoches.

DANIEL JACOBSON | MONTGOMERY
MID-SOUTH SYNERGY

Editor's note: *There is a lot to learn about historic Texas flags. For images of the nine flags that flew over Nacogdoches, go to pictures-of-historic-nacogdoches.com. To see flags of Texas' independence movements, including Dimmitt's Goliad Flag, go to tamu.edu/faculty/ccbn/dewitt/independenflgs.htm.*

Good News

As the community papers for Buda and Kyle (family-owned since 1955), the Hays Free Press and sister paper the News-Dispatch understand what it means to serve readers. Your article "Success Stories" [September 2014] resonated with us.

Our business is not dying, it's thriving. Changes in content delivery (Web, mobile Web, social media) mean hometown papers must adapt, but we continue to provide the "hyperlocal" content readers want: high school sports, business, education, government and all the "regular" news happening in our area. We are also able to interact with our audience because many of our employees live and work here, offering more flexibility and better coverage.

Readers count on community newspapers, and we believe that will be the case well into the future.

KIM HILSENBECK, EDITOR
HAYS FREE PRESS & NEWS-DISPATCH
KYLE AND DRIPPING SPRINGS | PEDERNALES EC

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HAPPENINGS

Meter Readers of a Different Sort

The 29th Annual Texas Cowboy Poetry Gathering celebrates Western folklore with more than 50 performers showcasing the oral tradition of the working cowboy in poetry, stories and music February 27–28 at Sul Ross State University in Alpine.

Dale Burson, a fourth-generation rancher west of Channing and a member of Rita Blanca Electric Cooperative, is one of the performers. The award-winning musician, who taught himself to play guitar, mandolin, banjo and fiddle, has released three albums.

The Poetry Gathering also features a student competition, and the days start off with an authentic chuck wagon breakfast.

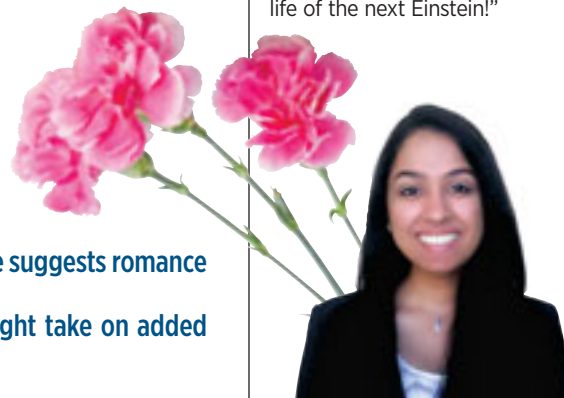
INFO: texascowboypoetry.com, 1-800-561-3712

Find more happenings all across the state at TexasCoopPower.com

WHO KNEW?

From Texas, With Love

Valentine, in far West Texas, isn't the only locale in the state whose name suggests romance—or lack thereof. Consider these towns, where Valentine's Day just might take on added meaning: **LOVING | LOVELESS | ROSE CITY | ROSEBUD | FLOWER GROVE**



CO-OP PEOPLE

Celebrating Valentine's Day With a Big Heart

When students and teachers celebrate Valentine's Day at Liberty High School in Frisco, Aarushi Aggarwal will see to it that their heartfelt gestures reach far beyond their community.

Aggarwal, a CoServ Electric representative on the 2014 Government-in-Action Youth Tour, spearheads a service project called "Love Saves a Life," a carnation sale at her school for Valentine's Day. The proceeds will go to UNICEF and will purchase tetanus shots for mothers and children in Africa.

Aggarwal, 17 and a senior at Liberty, received a \$500 grant from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association and GenerationOn to help fund her project, which will directly help 200 people.

"However, this will also impact the students of Liberty High School since they now know that they have contributed to something bigger, something outside the limits of our city and country," Aggarwal explains on her grant application. "Who knows, we may have saved the life of the next Einstein!"



Sweet Success

Yes, Dublin Bottling Works suffered a major blow in 2012 when it stopped producing Dr Pepper—as it had done since 1891—the result of a lawsuit filed by Dr Pepper Snapple Group.

No, the company didn't end up like an old bottle cap—discarded and bent out of shape.

It created new varieties, made soda using Imperial pure grain sugar and, with 12 flavors available, is on pace to produce 125,000 cases a year. That's not the 300,000 cases a year of the Dublin Dr Pepper the plant was famous for, but it means David didn't buckle under to Goliath. Bottles of Dublin soda are available statewide and in other parts of the country.

Kenny Horton, whose proudly bears the title “head soda jerk” at Dublin Bottling Works, says Dublin Black Cherry, Dublin Vintage Cola and Dublin Texas Root Beer are big hits with customers. They're his favorites, too.

“We're getting some of that cult following that Dr Pepper had before,” Horton says. And the company plans to build a \$3.5 million plant by 2016 that will allow it to modernize and increase production.

ALMANAC

Undone by Chicken Salad

The “Chicken Salad Case” started February 11, 1915, when the Texas Legislature passed an appropriations bill to pay for expenses incurred by former Gov. Oscar Branch Colquitt for “chicken salad and punch,” among other items. The attorney general ruled the appropriation invalid, but Gov. Jim Ferguson signed the bill anyway.

A legal battle ensued, and in June 1916, an appeals court ruled that the Legislature could appropriate for fuel, water, lights and ice necessary for the Governor's Mansion, but not for groceries and other personal needs of the governor.

Ferguson continued to use state funds to buy groceries, an issue that contributed to his impeachment and removal from office in 1917.



To the Margarita

February 22 is National Margarita Day, set aside to toast the lime and tequila concoction that in the 1970s surpassed the martini as the most popular American cocktail.

Who created the margarita? That seems to be as impossible to answer as who makes the best margarita. But what is known is that margaritas' popularity rocketed with the invention that allowed bartenders to serve them up quickly—the margarita machine, created in 1971 by Dallas restaurateur Mariano Martinez.

The blenders at Mariano's Mexican Cuisine couldn't keep pace with the orders for margaritas, so Martinez tried to buy a Slurpee machine from 7-Eleven. The company wouldn't sell Martinez a Slurpee machine, so he bought an old soft-serve ice cream machine. With the help of a chemist friend, Martinez tinkered with the recipe and the machine so it would produce a perfect margarita slush.

Today the world's first margarita machine sits in the Smithsonian Institution.

SODA: RANDALL MAXWELL MARGARITA: © EDOFOTO | DREAMTIME.COM



The reward at the end of a well-established trail in Palo Duro Canyon State Park is a bench and this view of the Lighthouse, a beacon in the desert for many hikers.

LAY LAND

WHETHER YOU PREFER RIGOROUS HIKES OR EASY DRIVES, YOU

OF THE



STORY AND PHOTOS BY E. DAN KLEPPER

he Texas landscape saves its best for those who take the time to stop and watch the rhythms of the natural world unfold. Pausing along the trail to examine the light revealing the details of a leaf, pulling off the roadway and stopping to admire a sweeping view or simply tracking the dawn-to-dusk migration of clouds from a cabin porch allows the observer to savor a rare moment that will never occur in quite the same way again.

Even though the human grasp on discovery and rational thought can explain most of nature's mystery, spending time outdoors still allows us to observe the inexplicable magic of the landscape. The experience is both ephemeral and absolute. To truly enjoy the state's natural landscapes requires patience.

Texans who exit the human-made world and enter the outdoors should do so with an understanding that they have left clock-time behind and are now moving through a world governed by a circadian force. Rain shadows, antelope bucks in battle, frost rings around a full moon, scouring dust devils, hawks kettling in migration: Witnessing these unique events is an opportunity to return to our genesis with eyes wide open. And we can achieve this simply by walking out into a wilder, natural state.

The Texas landscape is as vast and varied as the United States is across much of the rest of the nation. The state presents an amazing variety of ground for everyone who takes the time to explore it. How about sampling a little bit of it all?

PANHANDLE PLAINS

America's Great Plains complete much of their southern expansion in the Texas Panhandle, a region of once-sweeping grasslands and dramatic eroded canyons. This is the home of the Llano Estacado, a semi-

arid plateau covering more than 30,000 square miles. "Llano Estacado" translates from Spanish as "staked or palisaded plain" and may refer to the abrupt drop the Llano makes off the Caprock Escarpment. Here the plains tumble down cliffs and into red rock canyons and fossil-filled valleys populated with antelopes, badgers, prairie dogs and wind-sculpted formations called hoodoos.

Check out the state's most recognized hoodoo, the Lighthouse, a 312-foot high formation with National Natural Landmark status located along Palo Duro Canyon State Park's Lighthouse Trail. The trail is a well-established 6-mile out-and-back where songbirds such as the painted bunting occupy the area's riparian draws.

The final leg of the trail includes a short climb (courtesy of park-installed steps) before arriving at a bench ideal for enjoying your lunch and taking in a terrific view of the Lighthouse. Hoodoos, cliffs and rimrock abound, making a drive through the park an entertaining tax on the imagination.

CAN SHARE IN THE NATURAL BEAUTY OF THE TEXAS TERRAIN

SCAPE



Fallen leaves float among duckweed in East Texas.

EAST TEXAS PINE FORESTS

The coniferous-deciduous woodland, dominating the eastern section of the state, demarcates the edge of a grand forest extending into Louisiana, Arkansas and Oklahoma. Texas' share of this region, the "Pineywoods," offers a fascinating natural world complete with alligators, orchids, cypress swamps and acid bogs. Pockets of native environments can be found in one of several state parks, state forests and the Big Thicket National Preserve.

Huntsville State Park provides an ideal environment for exploring today's East Texas forest. Drop by the park's Nature Center for some of the natural history you might see in the park. Then meander along the Chinquapin Trail surrounding the 210-acre Lake Raven, the centerpiece of the park, where boardwalks assist hikers in crossing wetland areas. Watch for alligators!

PRAIRIES AND LAKES

As the name implies, the Prairies and Lakes area in the north-central region of the state encompasses rolling prairies (now dominated by agriculture) and fresh lakes. The region, historically covered with approximately 20,000 square miles of the Blackland Prairie, today represents a bucolic agrarian landscape that was once ram-

pant with dinosaurs. Behold the evidence of this turn of events at Dinosaur Valley State Park, where an elbow of the Paluxy River exposes some of the finest dinosaur tracks in the state.

The park's Nature Trail travels above the clear-running Paluxy, through juniper-oak woodlands and around a small open prairie. It will lead you to several dinosaur track sites where giant sauropods, the *Acrocanthosaurus* (a relative of *Tyrannosaurus rex*), and what is believed to be the *Iguanodon* did some trekking of their own—leaving only footprints.

GULF COAST

The 367-mile stretch of the Texas Gulf Coast region combines beaches, dunes, marshes, bays, estuaries, prairies, lagoons and islands to form a nature-rich strip from Boca Chica, the southernmost tip of Texas, to the eastern border with Louisiana. The region features state parks, a national seashore and several national wildlife refuges—all of them open to seasonal visitors, including the endangered whooping crane. The Aransas National Wildlife Refuge is the wintering grounds for North America's largest migratory flock of "whoopers." From late October to mid-April,



The Big Hill west of Lajitas along FM 170 in Big Bend Ranch State Park offers stellar views of the Rio Grande.

AS NIGHT FALLS, STARS POKE THROUGH AN INDIGO SKY, AND THE TRUE ENORMITY OF THE TEXAS LANDSCAPE BECOMES CLEAR.



An angler tries his luck at sundown along Fish Pass in Mustang Island State Park.

you can find crane families feeding in the saltwater marshes of the refuge along with a stunning number of other shorebirds.

The refuge's observation tower provides a rare chance to glimpse whooping cranes. The deck of the observation tower offers a high-altitude view of the extensive saltwater marshes below. The refuge also features a 16-mile driving tour loop, providing opportunity to spot more than 390 bird species as well as javelina, white-tailed deer and bobcats.

BIG BEND COUNTRY

Big Bend Country offers the greatest diversity to outdoors or nature enthusiasts simply because of its sheer size, remoteness and rough-hewn beauty. Two national parks, a federally designated wild and scenic river corridor, all 10 of the tallest peaks in the state, and the largest state park and state wildlife management area in Texas are here. The expanse, an impressive mix of habitats, extends from the Chihuahuan Desert lowlands along the rugged Rio Grande to the

over 8,000-foot peak of El Capitan in the Guadalupe Mountains.

The Chisos Basin, in the heart of Big Bend National Park, offers a breathtaking introduction. Access to one of its best features requires an easy stroll on the Window View trail, where a comfortable respite awaits anyone in search of an inspiring landscape. This paved trail travels around a grassland hill to a view of the Window, the gap in the surrounding mountain walls that opens up to the desert floor below.

The park has provided benches where you can relax and watch the light color the Chisos palisades and the Chihuahuan Desert horizon. As night falls, stars poke through an indigo sky, and the true enormity of the Texas landscape becomes clear.

"I am a nobody," said Juan Diego, the 16th-century visionary who spent much of his life in the natural world. "I am a small rope, a tiny ladder, the tail end, a leaf."

Photographer, author and artist **E. Dan Klepper** lives and works in Marathon.

WEB EXTRAS at TexasCoopPower.com View a slideshow with more photos.

THE SNOOING
CREATIONS OF

DADDY-O WADE

FROM TRUCK
STOP ROOFS TO
SHOPPING MALLS,
AN ECCENTRIC
ARTIST'S QUIRKY
SCULPTURES LEAD
INTERESTING LIVES

BY MELISSA GASKILL

CONSIDER, FOR EXAMPLE, BOB WADE'S SIX 10-FOOT-TALL DANCING FROGS.

The artist created them in 1983 as outdoor décor for Tango, a nightclub in Dallas. When a battle ensued over whether this creation was art or signage, City Hall chose to call it art, and the frogs remained—at least until the club went under and the frogs were auctioned off “just like the barstools and silverware,” Wade recalls.

The amphibian sextet subsequently danced for years atop Carl's Corner, a truck stop served by HILCO Electric Cooperative on Interstate 35 near Hillsboro. Millions of travelers first did a double take when they saw the unlikely figures on the roof. After the novelty wore off, they became landmarks along the interstate, with only a short hiatus to join a statewide sculpture tour curated by Austin's then-Laguna Gloria Art Museum.

The truck stop burned to the ground in 1990, but the frogs were, astonishingly, untouched. The sculptural troop was broken up, as three frogs moved to Houston then later hopped to the roof of a Chuy's restaurant in Nashville. The other three languished across the freeway from the former Carl's Corner at the home of Carl Cornelius himself. They made a brief appearance when Willie's Place opened at the truck stop, but that didn't last, either.

Then, in summer of 2014, the Taco Cabana chain bought the three for a new restaurant at—get this—the old Tango location in Dallas. They were refurbished and hoisted to the roof of a building on the same spot where they started. A happy ending, says Wade.

Much of this saga felt familiar to the artist. In 1978, he created a 40-foot-long, slightly belligerent-looking iguana for the Lone Star Café on Fifth Avenue in New York City. “When the iguana went up on the roof, some people got up in arms and said the lizard was illegal signage,” Wade says. As happened with the frogs in Dallas, Wade's work was declared art, this time in court. The complaints didn't end, though, and the iguana was later dismantled to hunker below the building's roofline. A few years later, Mayor Ed Koch asked someone, “Whatever happened to the iguana?” His people made some calls and, Wade recalls, “Next thing you know, I'm overseeing reinstallation of the lizard, with Texas Gov. Mark White in attendance. It was one of my finest moments.”

Then the café closed in 1989, and the iguana, too, suffered the ignominy of being auctioned off like spare furniture. Yet this story, too, has a happy ending: In 2010, the refurbished reptile was lifted by helicopter to top the hospital building in the Fort Worth Zoo. A documentary about the sculpture, “Flight of the Iguana,” is in production.

Wade also created a 40-foot-tall pair of cowboy boots that, since 1979, has served as a landmark for San Antonio's North Star Mall. An enormous saxophone he built for a club in Houston in 1992 has hubcaps for keys, two beer kegs and a surfboard for the mouthpiece, and an upside-down Volkswagen Beetle for the bell. That club also closed, and the saxophone





has been dismantled—no small feat, Wade points out—and now belongs to Houston’s appropriately quirky Orange Show.

A teardrop trailer topped with a giant replica of Kinky Friedman’s cowboy hat (and cigar) made the rounds during Friedman’s 2006 bid for governor then disappeared before resurfacing in Lockhart. Then there was Dino Bob, another VW-based sculpture that overlooks downtown Abilene.

The sculptures start with electrical conduit and galvanized steel pipes bolted together to form the internal structure. Wade then creates a rough shape using heavy wire mesh, adding finer details with window screen wire as needed. This framework is then covered with spray-on urethane foam insulation, which hardens and can be carved. Structural additions, such as Volkswagen bodies or, in the case of the iguana’s spines, sheet metal, are added along the way, and, lastly, the sculpture is painted.

“Quirky and outsized” describes Wade’s own saga as well as his sculptures. His family moved around for his father’s work in hotels,

living in Galveston, Beaumont and Marfa before landing in El Paso, where teenage Bob joined a hot rod club. He drove his customized 1951

Ford Victoria hard-top convertible to enroll at the University of Texas in 1961, creating a stir when he pulled up at the Kappa Sigma fraternity house. The buttoned-down brothers from Dallas and Houston hadn’t seen anything like the car or its outgoing, long-haired, bearded driver, and dubbed him “Daddy-O.”

Today, the hair has thinned, the beard has turned white, and the car is long gone, but the name sticks. It’s used by most of his friends and the waitstaff at Shoal Creek Saloon in Austin—a building adorned with a giant New Orleans Saints football helmet that Wade built from the carcass of a VW bus. Daddy-O often occupies a table there, effortlessly pouring forth fantastic stories of his sculptures, his photographs and his friends, most of them famous or infamous. One story leads to another, and another and another.

Bob Wade points out his 40-foot cowboy boots at North Star Mall in San Antonio.

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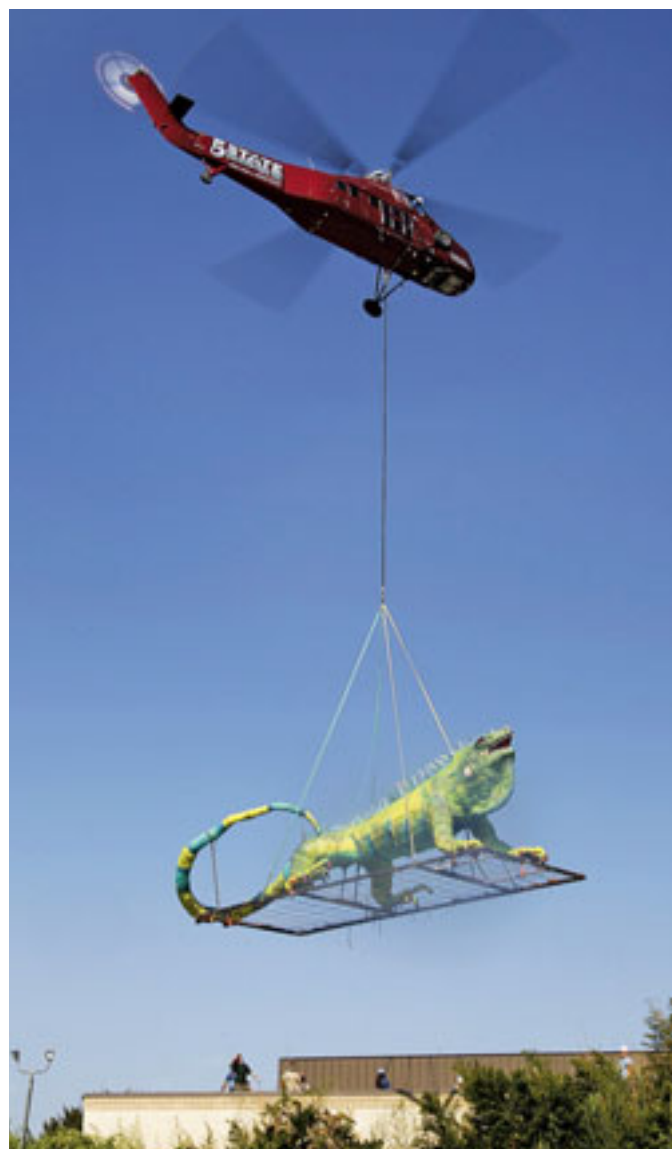
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WADE ALSO ADMITS TO A CONVENTIONAL SIDE: HE EARNED A FINE arts degree from UT and a master's in art from the University of California, Berkeley. He taught art at the university level for 12 years and exhibited his more conventional art in major galleries in Santa Fe and Dallas. His large, colorized canvases of old photographs hang in high-rises, offices, prestigious art museums and homes throughout Texas and beyond, including the royal palace in Monaco. Three belong to the Wittliff Collections at Texas State University in San Marcos.

Wade's photography adds a sense of humor and satire to the Wittliff's Southwestern and Mexican imagery, says curator Carla Ellard. "Wade reinvents vintage photographs and postcards by airbrushing them using transparent layers of acrylic paint and sometimes hand-painting with oil paint. His image of 'Soldadera,' originally taken

"QUIRKY AND OUTSIZED"

DESCRIBES WADE'S OWN SAGA AS WELL AS HIS SCULPTURES.



Daddy-O's dancing frogs, top, and New York iguana, being placed atop a building at the Fort Worth Zoo, have had similarly nomadic existences.

during the Mexican Revolution, brings to light the role of women during a violent time in Mexico's history. His 'Rodeo Cowgirls' is just plain fun—giving new life to a vintage image by adding color."

Austin writer and speaker Dan Bullock, a longtime friend, calls Wade's use of color stunning. "He can turn a black-and-white photograph into an amazing piece. It takes a real steady hand and an incredible eye. His past couldn't have been as wild as he'd like you to believe for him to be able to do that."

Yet the artist cheerfully claims his inner Daddy-O. "It's not so bad to have a nickname to go along with your career," he says. "I'm a little far out, not the average person. Who knows what's around the corner? I get goofy calls all the time."

The latest such call came from Castle Hill Partners, which owns Hope Outdoor Gallery, a wildly painted street art site in Austin, asking for a sculpture. Wade decided to play off the acronym for the gallery, HOG, and the nickname for Harley Davidson motorcycles, hogs. An oversized (of course) motorcycle made out of parts from Harleys and ridden by a javelina (aka a hog) made partly out of beer kegs will be, Wade says, "Daddy-O's latest goofy thing."

Wade prowls postcard shows and junk shops for images to use in his photo murals and odds and ends to incorporate into his sculptures. These finds fill the converted garage and carport that serve as his studio behind the West Austin home he shares with his wife, Lisa. The effect is a kind of a free-form museum of the life and times of Daddy-O.

Old postcards organized by subject fill a closet, boxed canvases line one wall, stacks of photographs cover tables, and shelves overflow with toys, trinkets, memorabilia and doodads. Somehow, Wade seems to know what all he has and where everything is, along with an idea for what to do with most of it.

Wade shows no signs of slowing down, and his words of wisdom to aspiring artists are telling: "Go as fast as you can for as long as you can."

It seems to work for Daddy-O.

Melissa Gaskill is an Austin writer.

WEB EXTRAS at TexasCoopPower.com Find out where you can see Daddy-O's work in Texas.



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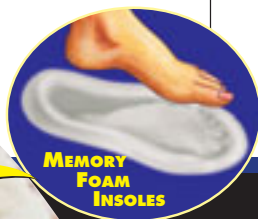
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Whenever you replace any electric appliance—large or small—be sure to select the most energy-efficient model that meets your needs.

Many Ways To Save

AN ENERGY-EFFICIENT HOME IS A COMFORTABLE HOME. For greater comfort and savings, make changes to your home in these areas:

Air Sealing

Sealing gaps is one of the quickest ways to make your home more comfortable and efficient. Reducing wasted airflow can pay off in as little as one year. Caulking and weatherstripping are two simple and effective techniques. Caulk is generally used for openings between stationary components, such as around door and window frames. Weatherstripping is used to seal components that move, such as doors and windows.

Reset Water Heater Thermostat

Most water heaters will heat water to a set temperature and then hold it there. This means that all day and night, the water heater cycles on and off, just maintaining that set temperature. Lowering the setting a few degrees can mean big savings. And chances are that turning down the water temperature won't even be noticeable when you turn on the tap.

Programmable Thermostat

It seems obvious, but just like the water heater maintains a set temperature even when it isn't being used, a thermostat does the same thing for the entire house. Just letting it cool off (or warm up) when there isn't anyone home or awake can save energy and money as well. Without sacrificing comfort, it can also save close to half of what air sealing would save you. This change usually pays for itself in about three years.

Attic and Wall Insulation

The greater the difference between the indoor and the outdoor temperatures, the more energy it takes to maintain a comfortable temperature in your home. Adding insulation between the indoors and the outdoors reduces that energy demand. Depending on where you live, the savings from insulating your walls and attic could be almost double the savings of air sealing. This upgrade pays back in 3½ to 12 years.

Replace Your Refrigerator

Much like a water heater, a refrigerator holds a set temperature that is very different from the air outside of it. It makes sense that a better-sealed, better-insulated refrigerator with better mechanical systems would save more energy. Depending on your previous model, a new Energy Star-certified refrigerator can save up to \$150 per year. One way to test the seal on your refrigerator is to close a dollar bill in the door. If the bill drops when you close the door and let go, you may want to consider fixing the seal or getting a new one. A new energy-efficient refrigerator may pay for itself within 10 years—well under the average lifespan of the appliance. Replacing a damaged seal will pay for itself very quickly.

Water Heaters and Furnaces

The savings from water heaters and furnaces depend a lot on where the house is and what the fuel is. If you live in a cold climate or a warmer one, a new high-efficiency furnace could rival or exceed air sealing for its potential savings. In warmer areas, a high-efficiency heat pump may be the best choice for the home.

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BALD			
PAGE TWO			BATH
			LIFE
DON W -			PAGE TWO
w-4009			LIFE
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			BATH
FAN QM			FRONT
BALD			BATH
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Don't know			BATH
FAN BATH			WASHING

AFCIs—arc-fault circuit interrupters—are installed directly in newer breaker boxes, and are designed to protect against fires caused by arcing faults in home electrical wiring. Arcing faults can be triggered by overloaded circuits, damaged wires, cracked wire insulation, loose or improper connections, faulty electrical equipment and overheated electrical wires.

An AFCI monitors current flow and can distinguish between normal, working arcs and unwanted, dangerous arcs. When an unwanted arcing condition is detected, it shuts down the circuit. It is important to note that AFCIs do not provide protection against all of the possible circuit faults that can cause fires,

Be sure to call a qualified electrician or your landlord if blowing fuses or tripping circuit breakers are a recurring problem. This means there is something wrong with your electrical system, and it needs to be inspected.

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If your phone is plugged into a charger that's plugged into the wall, it's using electricity. If the phone is fully charged and still plugged in, it's still using electricity. And if you unplug your phone but leave the charger plugged into the wall, that charger is still using electricity.

The U.S. Department of Energy estimates that the average home wastes about \$100 a year on “phantom energy” from electronic devices whose chargers remain plugged in when not in use.

Why waste and pay for energy that you're not using? Simply plug chargers and other digital equipment into power strips, and turn off the power strips when you're not using the devices.

My Uncle's Secret Life

Chance discovery of long-lost relative leads to profound friendship

BY SHEILA ALLEE

WHEN I WAS 15 YEARS OLD, I ACCIDENTALLY discovered what apparently was the family secret. I was going through some old photographs when I ran across one that piqued my interest.

It was a small black-and-white snapshot of three little boys sitting on the front porch of a house. It was an old picture, probably taken in the 1920s. The children were dressed identically in overalls and newsboy caps.

I knew the oldest boy was my father, Doug, and the boy next to him was my Uncle Tracy. But the third boy I had never seen.

"Who's this?" I asked Mom, pointing to the smallest boy in the picture.

"That's Pie," she said, "your dad's brother."

I was startled. I had never heard of an uncle named Pie.

"What happened to him?" I asked.

"He was feeble-minded," Mom said in a matter-of-fact tone. "Your dad took care of him when they were kids. After Dad grew up and left home, his parents sent Pie off to live at the state school in Austin."

Good grief, I thought. How could I have an uncle that no one ever talked about? Dad had never mentioned him and neither had my grandfather or any of Dad's siblings.

I asked Mom if Pie was his real name. No, she said. His given name was Melrose, but somehow he had gotten the nickname Pie. No one remembered how it happened.

That I had a long-lost uncle whom no one ever talked about was stunning news, but I didn't know what to do with the information. I decided it was best to adopt the family code of silence about Uncle

Melrose. But I couldn't forget him.

I thought about him off and on over the ensuing years. I wondered what life was like in a state school. I wondered if he was happy and what he looked like.

As it turned out, many years later I went to work in Austin for the Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation (now known as the Department of Aging and Disability Services).

Texas MHMR, as it was called, ran the 13 state schools in Texas, including the one in Austin, where my uncle supposedly still lived. My job was to be a spokesperson for Texas MHMR.

Shortly after I took the position, I decided it was time to meet Uncle Melrose, who by then was 70 years old. I soon discovered that he was not at Austin State School as I had thought, but at Travis State School, a similar facility east of Austin.

I'm not sure what I was expecting when I went in search of Uncle Melrose—other than I thought he would look like Dad, who was tall, blondish and had incredible blue eyes.

The man who was presented to me looked nothing like my father. He was short and very stooped with scoliosis. He had microcephaly, a condition in which the skull is too small for the brain to fully develop. The result of this disorder was that Uncle Melrose had a smaller-than-usual head and an IQ of 16.

He could say a few words such as "yes," "no," and "I don't know." And he could walk in a staggering, stumbling way.

In short, he looked nothing like my father—except for his eyes. He had the



same ocean blues as Dad. I took one look at his eyes and knew immediately he was Dad's brother.

I don't think he understood what a niece was, but when we were introduced, he took my hand and held it tightly. Since he was not very verbal, we couldn't have much of a conversation, so he showed me the cubicle where he slept. Then we lurched to the dining room where he showed me his special chair that helped his posture when he ate.

When I left that day, I told Uncle Melrose I would be back for another visit. Before I returned, however, I decided I had to tell my dad what I had done. It was with some trepidation that I broke the news to my father. After all, he had never mentioned Uncle Melrose in all the years I had known him. And in a way, I had blown the lid off the family secret.

His response surprised me. "I'm glad you found him," he said and then proceeded to ask me questions about how "Pie" was doing.

In the months and years after my initial visit, Uncle Melrose and I became great friends. We went to McDonald's for burgers and for long rides in the car. I felt a sense of peace when I was around him—this man who had almost nothing but love to offer others. Eventually, he and my father were reunited after 50 years of separation.

I've discovered since that what happened in Dad's family happened in perhaps thousands of families in the United States in the early part of the 20th century. There were no community services for people like my uncle, and there were no schools.

Folks like my grandparents, faced with a teenage boy whose needs they couldn't

meet, had no other option but to place him in an institution. Maintaining familial ties over decades was not easy. It was no wonder that so many families lost touch with their loved ones.

I once asked Dad why Uncle Melrose was a secret. Once again, the response surprised me. "He wasn't a secret, really," Dad said. "It was just that he had been gone so long no one had anything to say about him."

I only got to know Uncle Melrose for 10 years before he died, but he had a profound impact on me. I'm glad I found out about him, glad I couldn't forget him and glad I met him. He was a great guy.

Sheila Allee lives in Austin and is the author of "My Father's Eyes" (SACPress, 2014), which tells the story of her friendship with her Uncle Melrose. It is available on Amazon and at sheilaalleebooks.com.

Feeding Their Fashion Sense

Resourcefulness turned feed sacks into clothing and linens nearly a century ago

BY JUDDI MORRIS

A SIX-WEEK-OLD BABY GIRL IS BEING christened in a country church outside Lubbock. Her mother, my cousin, wears a pink designer dress and a cartwheel hat covered with red roses. Her father wears a suit and hand-tooled boots. But Emma, the baby, is clad in a gown of feed-sack material. The tiny frock is as soft as butter and the color of Guernsey cream. And it is beautiful.

Feed sacks! No way!

After the ceremony, the women in the congregation rave about the baby's christening dress and want to know if it is French. The young mother proudly proclaims, "Emma's dress isn't French. It's the dress my great-great-grandmother made for her first child. And she sewed it from feed sacks. Look, she even unraveled the string that stitched the seams and saved it to crochet a lacy hem on the gown. All the children in our family have been christened in this dress."

Baby Emma's dress was one of many made by rural Texas women who recycled relentlessly during the hardscrabble 1920s and 1930s. They "made do" because money was scarce and hard times were a fact of life. Not a usable scrap of fabric was wasted.

"Use it up, wear it out, make it do or do without" had been a motto since Civil War days. But that didn't mean these women didn't long for pretty things. In those days, the cloth bags that held chicken mash, cattle and horse feed and kitchen staples such as flour and sugar were highly prized for use in quilts, tablecloths, pillowcases, dresses and dolls. Patient women would even rip open tiny Bull Durham tobacco sacks, wash and

bleach then dye them and, several hundred sacks later, piece a quilt using them.

Feed sacks were originally made of plain muslin, but by the 1920s, manufacturers got savvy and printed the cloth in colors, as well as prints, plaids and flowered patterns. As a further enticement to seamstresses, most of the bags were sewn together on a chain-stitch machine, which made the seams easy to open.

Buying feed for animals and people was a necessity, so competition among manufacturers sizzled. Some feed companies sent salesmen out, not to question the farmer about the feed he needed for his livestock, but to ask his wife what she wanted in the way of patterns on the fabric: checks, stripes or flowers.

One woman, who collects vintage feed sacks today, remembers dresses she wore that were sewn from chicken mash sacks.

"During the Depression," she says, "we had a flock of white leghorn hens. Sometimes it was hard to scrape up enough money to feed those cackling biddies. The only bright spot was that the feed came in sacks of pretty prints of pink and blue. After my dad emptied the feed into a container in the chicken house, my mother and I could hardly wait to grab and unstitch those bags, wash and iron them and smooth our dress patterns onto the material. Usually we went along when he bought the chicken feed so we could make sure we got the patterns and colors we wanted.

"By stitching the bags together, we also made large items like sheets, pillowcases and tablecloths. We called those items our 'chicken linens.'"



In some towns, feed or grocery stores managed a feed sack exchange program. If customers had sack material they did not want, they could replace it with another one from a stack on the store shelf for a nominal sum.

But not all feed store merchants were thrilled about the change in sacks. One merchant complained that, “Years ago they used to ask for all sorts of feed, special brands. Now they ask me if I have an egg mash in a flowered percale. It just doesn’t seem right.”

Women who had access to more sacks than they could use added to their butter-and-egg money by selling their extras to neighbors or friends. Feed sacks were often repurposed to make underwear. Because these garments were not to be seen, busy farm women did not always remove the manufacture’s logo and printing on the underwear. Pity the fellow who had his underwear made from a Ralston Purina sack: That logo sported a mule.

This use of feed sacks continued until after World War II. During the war, textiles were scarce, with everything going to the war effort. Feed sacks sometimes were printed with victory slogans and scenes such as raising the flag on Iwo Jima. Others pictured characters from “Gone With The Wind,” “Cinderella” and “Alice in Wonderland” as well as space designs from “Buck Rogers.” Nursery rhyme characters like Bo Peep and Humpty Dumpty were favored for baby clothes, blankets and quilts.

By the 1950s, manufacturers started constructing their sacks from heavy paper and other materials cheaper than cloth. That put an end to feed sack clothing, created due to the shortage of money during the Depression and the shortage of cloth during World War II. During those years, feed sacks made it possible for thousands of resourceful women to create items both pretty and practical that they yearned for but could not buy.

Juddi Morris lives in Gainesville.

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

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

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



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

Turkey Neck, Harris County, TX

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

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

These apple stem cells target your skin's aging cells, and strive to bring back their youthful firmness, and elasticity. As an alternative to the scary surgeries or face lifts that many people resort to, this cream has the potential to deliver a big punch to the loose saggy skin of the neck. **The Dermagist Neck Restoration Cream is available online at Dermagist.com** or you can order or learn more by **calling toll-free, 888-771-5355**. Oh, I almost forgot... I was given a promo code when I placed my order that gave me 10% off. The code was “TXN18”. It's worth a try to see if it still works.

Unlucky Lindy

Famous aviator Charles Lindbergh experienced bumpy flights in 1920s Texas

BY E.R. BILLS

IN 1923, CHARLES LINDBERGH HAD YET to gain international fame as a celebrity aviator. On his first trip to Texas, he piloted a run-down World War I surplus biplane to Texarkana and whimsically touched down just long enough to say he'd been in Texas. A year later, with 250 hours of recorded flight time, he applied to advanced flight school at the Army's Brooks Field air base in San Antonio. While he awaited word in Missouri, his friend Leon Klink invited him on a tour of the Deep South.

Klink, a St. Louis car dealer, owned a yellow World War I surplus Curtiss JN-4C biplane, known as a "Canuck." It was a 90-horsepower, single-engine plane that barely reached 75 mph. Klink wanted Lindbergh to take it for a spin through the Gulf states—and teach him how to fly as they went.

Lindbergh accepted.

The pair took off from St. Louis on January 24. They flew through Kentucky, Tennessee and Florida. Lindbergh learned that he'd been accepted into the Army's flight program and was to report March 15. With a month and a half to spare, Lindbergh and Klink decided to fly to California.

After flying over Louisiana and crossing into Texas, they got lost. Lindbergh misread his map and mistook the Uvalde and Northern Railway along the Nueces River for the Galveston, Harrisburg and San Antonio Railway along the Rio Grande. Lindbergh realized his mistake when the tracks ended at an unmapped town. They were low on fuel. Lindbergh landed in a plowed field near Camp Wood in Real County.

The next morning, they found that the plowed field was not long enough for the loaded craft to take off. Klink climbed out, taking their luggage, the toolbox and the passenger seat with him. If Lindbergh



could get the lightened Canuck off the ground, he would meet Klink at Camp Wood, and they would try their ascent from Uvalde Road, the town's main street.

Uvalde Road had a utility pole on each side, 46 feet apart. The Canuck's wingspan was 43 feet, leaving little margin for error. Lindbergh was confident he could squeeze through.

When the Canuck lurched forward, everyone in Camp Wood (and many residents of Real County) had gathered to watch. The takeoff created quite a show.

As the craft picked up speed, a wheel hit a rut, the Canuck veered, and one pair of wings clipped a telephone pole. Lindbergh lost control and crashed into a hardware store. The store was unoccupied, and Lindbergh and Klink emerged from the wreckage unscathed.

The aviators needed parts from Houston to complete repairs. They stayed at the Fitzgerald Hotel and passed time with Camp Wood locals. After making repairs, they gave folks \$5 plane rides to mitigate

their unforeseen expenses.

Their next landing was at dusk in Brewster County, near Maxon Creek. Daylight revealed an inhospitable landscape littered with sagebrush and cactus. Lindbergh and Klink spent the whole morning and early afternoon clearing a runway.

By the time the Canuck reached the end of the makeshift runway, it was only a few feet off the ground, and the top of a Spanish dagger plant passed through part of a lower left wing. Lindbergh landed immediately.

By the time they again made the necessary repairs, Lindbergh was due at Brooks Field. They doubled back to San Antonio.

Lindbergh graduated from flight school at the top of his class. On May 21, 1927, he became an aviation icon when he piloted the Spirit of St. Louis on the world's first nonstop, transatlantic flight, from New York to Paris.

Today, Lindbergh has a park named after him in Camp Wood, and Klink a street.

E.R. Bills is a writer from Aledo.

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Ancient Aztec Elixir

IN HONOR OF VALENTINE'S DAY, we dedicate this month's recipes to "all things chocolate." My contribution is from the book "Chocolate at Home" by pastry chef Will Torrent, who makes a chocolate drink based on the ancient Aztec version.

Because of its richness and health benefits, the Aztecs referred to cacao as the "food of the gods." The cacao was placed in a mortar and pestle and ground with chile and other spices, then hot water was added to make a drink. You can, of course, use regular chile powder—but if you want something smokier, use a chipotle chile powder.

ANNA GINSBERG, FOOD EDITOR

Aztec Hot Chocolate

- 2 tablespoons light brown sugar, clear honey or agave syrup
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- 3 cardamom pods, lightly bruised
- 1 strip orange peel
- ½ teaspoon chile powder, or more to taste
- Pinch freshly grated nutmeg
- 1½ cups dark or bittersweet chocolate (200 grams), finely chopped
- Ground cinnamon, to serve

1. Pour 2 cups water into a saucepan or pot over low heat. Add the sugar, cinnamon stick, vanilla, cardamom pods, orange peel, chile powder and nutmeg. Bring to a gentle simmer, then remove from the heat and set aside for 30 minutes to allow the spices to fully infuse with the water.
2. Remove the whole spices and orange peel and discard. Add the chopped chocolate to the pan and reheat to just below the boiling point, stirring constantly to smoothly melt the chocolate.
3. Pour the hot chocolate into cups or heatproof glasses and serve immediately with a pinch of ground cinnamon on top.

COOK'S TIP Before serving, blend the hot chocolate using a handheld mixer to make the hot chocolate silky-smooth and create good foam on top.

Servings: 4. Serving size: ½ cup. Per serving: 325 calories, 6.95 g protein, 33.32 g fat, 47.90 g carbohydrates, 6.10 g dietary fiber, 29 mg sodium, 27.56 g sugars, 2 mg cholesterol

"Chocolate at Home" by Will Torrent, Ryland Peters & Small, \$27.95; rylandpeters.com

Recipe Contest: All Things Chocolate



THIS MONTH'S WINNING RECIPE

ROSE OUZTS | DEEP EAST TEXAS EC

Valentine's Day has long been celebrated with chocolate—which comes as no surprise: Eating chocolate releases the same chemicals in the brain that correspond with the pleasures of falling in love. Whether sharing a decadent dessert with your dearest or having it all to yourself, you'll be smitten with this month's winners.



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Chocolate Caramel Bars

- 11 ½ ounces milk chocolate chips
- 2 tablespoons vegetable shortening
- 30 vanilla caramel candies
- 3 tablespoons salted butter
- 1 cup coarsely chopped peanuts

1. Line an 8-inch-square pan with nonstick foil.
2. Melt the chocolate chips and vegetable shortening in a double boiler or a heatproof bowl set above (not touching) simmering water. Stir until chips melt and mixture is smooth.
3. Remove from heat and pour half of the chocolate into the lined pan, spreading evenly. Set aside remaining chocolate and refrigerate lined pan of chocolate until firm, about 15 minutes.
4. In a second double boiler or heatproof bowl, combine caramels, butter and 2 tablespoons water.

Melt over simmering water, stirring constantly. Add peanuts and stir until well blended. Pour into chocolate-lined pan and spread evenly. Refrigerate until tacky, about 15 minutes.

5. Place the reserved melted chocolate back over the simmering water and heat, stirring once or twice until soft enough to spread. Spread evenly over caramel filling. Return to refrigerator and chill until firm (about 1 hour).

6. Lift from pan and cut into 1-inch squares. Keep refrigerated until ready to serve.

Servings: 30. Serving size: 1 bar. Per serving: 143 calories, 2.49 g protein, 7.95 g fat, 15.31 g carbohydrates, 0.77 g dietary fiber, 74 mg sodium, 12.42 g sugars, 6 mg cholesterol

\$100 Recipe Contest

July's recipe contest topic is **Spicy Foods**. From a mild heat to four-alarm blaze, it's no secret that Texans love their fiery food. Chili, curry, zesty barbeque rubs—how do you turn up the heat in the kitchen? The deadline is **February 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.

Ice Cream Sandwich Dessert

SUSAN BRASHIER | SAN BERNARD EC

"This versatile recipe can be made with regular-sized ice cream sandwiches or the miniature size. Also, you can mix and match ice cream flavors, or make your own hot fudge topping."

- 19 ice cream sandwiches
- 1 jar hot fudge topping

(12 to 16 ounces), softened

- 12 ounces nondairy whipped topping
- 1 cup salted peanuts, coarsely chopped

1. Line the bottom of a 13-by-9-inch baking dish with ice cream sandwiches, trimming to fit if necessary. Top with half the hot fudge, half the nondairy whipped topping and half the peanuts. Repeat, layering remaining sandwiches,

hot fudge, topping and peanuts.

2. Freeze for several hours or until very firm. Thaw about 10 minutes before serving.

COOK'S TIP Depending on the brand of fudge topping, you may need to soften it a bit in the microwave. To do this, follow directions on package for heating, but heat only until soft. Do not let it get too hot.

Servings: 20. Serving size: 5.5 ounces. Per serving: 131 calories, 2.58 g protein, 5.67 g fat, 18.70 g carbohydrates, 0.78 g dietary fiber, 142 mg sodium, 4.33 g sugars, 0 mg cholesterol

Chocolate-Covered Cherry Cake

TIFFANY BLAIR | COLEMAN COUNTY EC

- 2 ¼ cups all-purpose flour
- 1 ½ teaspoons baking soda
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1 cup sugar
- 3 large eggs
- ⅓ cup vegetable oil
- 2 teaspoons almond extract
- 1 can cherry pie filling (21 ounces)

GLAZE

- 2 tablespoons milk
 - 1 tablespoon corn syrup
 - ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
 - 1 ½ cups powdered sugar
- Fresh cherries for garnish (optional)

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Generously grease and flour a 12-cup Bundt pan.
2. In a large mixing bowl, mix all the dry ingredients well. In another bowl, mix together 1 cup water, eggs, oil, almond extract and about half the cherry pie filling.
3. Add the egg mixture all at once to the dry ingredients. With an electric mixer, beat at low speed until blended. Increase speed to medium and beat 2 minutes. Pour half of the batter into the pan.
4. Carefully spoon the remaining cherry pie filling over the batter in the pan, keeping pie filling from touching the sides of the pan. Top with remaining batter.
5. Bake 35-40 minutes or until top springs back when touched and cake pulls away from the sides of the pan.

Cool on a wire rack for 10 minutes. Remove cake from pan and glaze while still warm.

6. GLAZE: In a small bowl, combine milk, corn syrup and vanilla, and mix well. Stir in powdered sugar until smooth. Thin with a small amount of additional milk if too thick to pour. Glaze cake evenly over top and sides. Garnish with fresh cherries, if desired.

Servings: 12. Serving size: 1 slice. Per serving: 349 calories, 4.90 g protein, 7.56 g fat, 66.64 g carbohydrates, 2 g dietary fiber, 380 mg sodium, 31.94 g sugars, 46 mg cholesterol

Salted Dark Chocolate Truffle Cookies

BRENDA BUSTILLOS | UNITED COOPERATIVE SERVICES

“Chocolate and peanuts equal a match made in heaven! These cookies are inspired by my love for dark chocolate, peanuts and peanut butter, and the delectable combination of all things sweet and salty.”

- 1½ cups dark chocolate chips
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter
- 1 tablespoon creamy peanut butter
- ¼ cup all-purpose flour
- ¼ teaspoon baking powder
- 2 large eggs
- ½ cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon Mexican vanilla extract
- ¼ cup mini chocolate chips
- ⅔ cup coarsely chopped roasted and salted peanuts
- 1 teaspoon fresh orange zest
- ½ teaspoon coarse sea salt

Additional dark chocolate chips for decoration (optional)

1. Melt chocolate chips, butter and peanut butter in microwave. Stir until smooth. Set mixture aside.
2. In a small bowl, combine flour and baking powder. In large bowl, whisk eggs and sugar until blended. Slowly stir in the chocolate mixture and vanilla, then stir in flour mixture.
3. Stir in mini chocolate chips, peanuts and orange zest. Refrigerate dough 15 minutes.
4. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Scoop rounded tablespoons of dough onto ungreased baking sheet. Sprinkle each dollop lightly with sea salt.
5. Bake 11 or 12 minutes or until outsides are slightly cracked. Do not over-

bake; the cookies will continue to bake while cooling. Cool on baking sheets for 3 minutes, then remove cookies to wire racks to cool. Cookies should be soft and gooey in center.

6. Melt additional chocolate chips for a drizzle decoration, if desired.

Servings: 12. Serving size: 2 cookies. Per serving: 336 calories, 6.40 g protein, 20.14 g fat, 30.17 g carbohydrates, 4.70 g dietary fiber, 199 mg sodium, 18.82 g sugars, 34 mg cholesterol

Chocolate Peanut Butter Pie

MARY ALLEN | PEDERNALES EC

- 1 cup peanut butter (smooth or crunchy)
- 7 ounces sweetened condensed milk
- 1 deep-dish prepared pie crust, baked golden brown
- 1¼ cup sugar
- ½ cup all-purpose flour
- 3 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder
- ⅛ teaspoon salt
- ¼ cup butter (½ stick)
- 3 egg yolks
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

TOPPING

- 1 cup sugar
- 8 ounces cream cheese, softened
- 16 ounces nondairy whipped topping

1. In a mixing bowl, mix peanut butter and condensed milk until smooth. Spread in pie crust.
2. In a large saucepan, combine sugar, flour, cocoa powder, salt and just enough water to make a paste.
3. In another saucepan, combine butter and 2 cups water and bring to a boil.
4. Beat egg yolks in a separate bowl and add to sugar mixture. Mix well. While mixing, slowly add hot butter/water mixture to sugar mixture. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly, until thick. Remove from heat. Add vanilla and mix well.
5. Pour over peanut butter mixture in pie crust. Let cool completely.
6. **TOPPING:** Beat the sugar and cream cheese until smooth. Fold in the whipped topping. Cover pie with topping.

Servings: 16. Serving size: 1 slice. Per serving: 456 calories, 7.18 g protein, 24.44 g fat, 49.05 g carbohydrates, 1.57 g dietary fiber, 196 mg sodium, 37.02 g sugars, 58 mg cholesterol



DO YOU KNOW BEANS ABOUT COCOA?

Cacao (pronounced *ka-KOW*) is the South American evergreen tree. **Cocoa** (pronounced *KOH-koh*) is the product made from fermenting and drying the edible parts of the tree's pods and beans. Raw cacao beans are processed to make cocoa powder and cocoa butter—and, ultimately, **chocolate**.

Pie Crust Scrap Pastries with Peanuts

BETSY KUEBLER | FARMERS EC

- 8 ounces leftover pie dough scraps or 1 roll refrigerated roll-and-bake pie dough
- ¼ cup butter (½ stick), softened
- ½ cup sugar
- 1 cup semisweet chocolate chips
- ⅔ cup chopped roasted and salted peanuts

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Line a large baking sheet with a sheet of parchment.
2. Lay pieces or unroll the pie dough onto a sheet of parchment paper, then piece together or trim to make a 9-inch square.
3. Spread softened butter across pie dough. Sprinkle evenly with sugar. Sprinkle chocolate chips and chopped peanuts across entire surface.
4. Roll dough into a firm log. Chill log for about 15 minutes or until firm enough to slice.
5. Slice log into ½-inch thick rounds. Arrange rounds on prepared cookie sheet.
6. Bake 13 to 15 minutes or until pastries are golden. Let stand 5 minutes before serving. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Servings: 18. Serving size: 1 pastry. Per serving: 171 calories, 1.99 g protein, 10.70 g fat, 18.76 g carbohydrates, 1 g dietary fiber, 112 mg sodium, 10.87 g sugars, 8 mg cholesterol

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SAVE 60%

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LOT NO. 65570/61884
62370

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Frozen

TEXANS ENJOY MANY BEAUTIFUL, lazy summers, but the icy wonderland of a winter storm is truly a sight to behold. Sparkling icicles, frozen lanes and snowy wildlife make for some spectacular scenery. Let's review our frosty favorites.

GRACE ARSIAGA

WEB EXTRAS at TexasCoopPower.com You can see more if you go online. Hope you're cool with that.



▲ **DOROTHY CLARK**, Southwest Texas EC: A late spring freeze zaps her peach crop.



▲ **RICHARD BROWNE**, Deep East Texas EC: Colorful berries are locked in a layer of ice.

► **PEGGY JONES**, Bowie-Cass EC: A barn light casts a warm glow on a puddle during a surprise Christmas ice storm in Mount Pleasant.

► **LINDA CORTELYOU**, Upshur Rural EC: Snow and ice cover everything, and these hungry birds work hard to get the frozen seeds loose.



▲ **JOHN GAVIN**, Comanche EC: He captures the view from his front yard on Hog Mountain in May, Texas.

UPCOMING CONTESTS

MAY	HEROES	DUE FEB 10
JUNE	SLOW DOWN	DUE MAR 10
JULY	MY FIRST CAR	DUE APR 10

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

“Our Lives, Our Stories: America’s Greatest Generation”

Eastland [January 28–March 16]

(254) 965-6190, ctfac.com

Americans born in the 1910s and 1920s were decisively shaped by their experiences during the Depression and World War II. This traveling exhibition at the Eastland Museum draws on stories and memories gathered to help us understand who those Americans were and who we are.



MARINE: MINNEAPOLIS STAR TRIBUNE | COLLECTION MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY. DRAGON: © BOYSODA | DOLLAR PHOTO CLUB

February

7

Crockett “Let’s Hang On” Frankie Valli Tribute, (936) 544-4276, pwfaa.org

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

12

Lajitas [12–14] Chihuahuan Desert Bike Fest, (432) 371-2727, desertsportstx.com

13

Lamar [13–14] LaMardi Gras, (361) 729-6445, lamarvfd.com

14

Buda Run for the Love of It, (210) 392-5790, athleteguild.com

19

Austin [19–22] QuiltCon, (503) 847-9418, quiltcon.com

20

Gilmer [20–22] Upshur County Goes Hog Wild Hunting Tournament, (903) 843-2413, gilmerareachamber.com

21

Abilene Rescue the Animals Annual Fur Ball, (325) 677-7722, rescuetheanimals.org

Beaumont Free Family Arts Day, (409) 832-3432, amset.org



February 21
San Antonio
Asian Festival

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

Cedar Creek Health and Safety Fair,
(512) 303-1393, cedarcreekumc.org

New Braunfels We Love Vegetables,
(830) 620-3440, txmg.org

San Antonio Asian Festival, (210) 458-2300,
texancultures.com

22

Harlingen Ms. South Texas Senior Pageant,
(956) 216-5992, mssouthtexassr.com

San Angelo Buffalo Soldier Heritage Day,
(325) 481-2646, fortconcho.com

Brownsville [22-March 1] Charro Days
Fiesta, (956) 542-4245, charrodaysfiesta.com

25

Brenham [25-28] Fortnightly Club Book
Sale, (979) 830-0340

26

Huntsville [26-28] Shotgun Fred
BBQ Showdown, (936) 661-4204,
shotgunfredbbq.com

Victoria [26-March 1] Livestock Show,
(361) 576-4300, victorialivestockshow.com



February 28
Gainsville
North Texas
Farm Toy Show

27

La Grange [27-28] Best Little Quilt Show
in Texas, cvquiltguild.com

Navasota [27-28] Texas Birthday Bash,
(936) 825-6475, texasbirthdaybash.com

Waco [27-28] Heart of Texas One Stop Shop
Hop, (254) 741-6988, heartoftexashop.com

28

Gainesville North Texas Farm Toy Show,
(940) 736-9966

Kyle Plum Creek Watershed Clean Up,
(512) 262-3939, kylepard.com

March

1

Neches [1-8] 1836 Chuck Wagon Race,
(903) 721-9111, 1836chuckwagonrace.com

5

Nacogdoches [5-8] Big Nac Music
Festival, 1-888-653-3788, bignac.com

6

Cypress [6-7] Quilted Roads of Texas,
(713) 870-1315, whqq.org

Submit Your Event!

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

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Nature and History in Nacogdoches

Ratcliff Lake trails, gardens at university and artifacts from Texas' first town beckon visitors

BY MELISSA GASKILL

THE ROAD NARROWS TO TWO LANES, AND tall pines on either side glow a golden green in the late afternoon sun. Nacogdoches merits a visit for its natural beauty alone—languid, tea-colored streams, soaring piney-wood forests, wildflower-carpeted meadows—not to mention the fact that East Texas is one of the few regions of the state that has been saved from the current drought.

Area parks make it easy to enjoy the inviting outdoors, and one of my favorites, **Ratcliff Lake Recreation Area**, features a 45-acre body of water with fishing piers, swimming beach and boat ramps. I indulge in one of my favorite activities: hiking the 1.5-mile Tall Pines and the Four C National Recreation Trail, which begins (or ends, depending on your perspective) here.

Even though the Four C trail totals 20 miles, shorter hikes and leisurely strolls are easy, thanks to multiple access points off county roads. The trail passes through the 3,000-acre **Big Slough Wilderness Area**, home to swaths of virgin forest and marshy areas dotted by beaver and alligator ponds, then crosses several creeks and sloughs, finally terminating with a panoramic overlook at Neches Bluff.

For those who want to experience the great outdoors with less effort, Stephen F. Austin State University's **Mast Arboretum** is the ticket. Multiple paths wind through its 19 acres along Lanana Creek. Visitors will find a range of attractions, including a honeybee hive, fountains and hundreds of different plants. I like to lounge on one of the many benches to soak up the beauty and appreciate the sheer height of the trees. The nearby **Ruby M. Mize Azalea Garden** harbors more than 7,000 azalea bushes, a veritable riot of color in early spring.

The 42 acres of the SFASU **Pineywoods Native Plant Center** can be explored by way of seven trails that range from one-tenth of a mile up to about a mile. (All of these trails comply with federal Americans with Dis-



The 37-acre Millard's Crossing Historic Village contains a collection of reconstructed buildings, including the 1840 Watkins Log House.

abilities Act access guidelines.) The native plants include a variety of trees: Look for oak, hickory, sugar maple, dogwood, redbud and sweetgum, as well as rare and endangered native plants such as Neches River rose mallow, Winkler's white fire-wheel and trailing phlox. The center is a great spot for bird-watching or just wandering and day-dreaming.

Besides its natural beauty, Nacogdoches holds another important claim to fame: history. At the visitors center on the main square, I picked up a brochure describing an historic downtown walking tour, which takes in a 1,000-year-old Caddo burial mound, a circa-1897 land office, Texas revolutionary bivouacs, and historic cemeteries and homes. Other historic stops include the **Sterne-Hoya House Museum Library**, which is an 1830-era frame residence still occupying its original site, and the **Durst-Taylor Historic House and Gardens**. The Durst-Taylor house is the second-oldest dwelling in town and home to a number of influential historic figures through the years.

Millard's Crossing Historic Village contains a

collection of historic structures moved here from various sites in Nacogdoches County, including a log cabin, parsonage, corn crib, country store and schoolhouse. Take a guided tour or just pick up a walking tour map and wander on your own. The town's historic heart—and the centerpiece of the SFASU campus—is the **Stone Fort Museum**, a recreation of the home of Don Antonio Gil Y'Barbo.

In 1772, Spain abandoned its mission at Nacogdoches, forcing area inhabitants to move to San Antonio. Y'Barbo, a Spanish trader, led some of the more independent-minded settlers back here in 1779, building his home and making Nacogdoches Texas' first official town (as opposed to a mission).

Melissa Gaskill is an Austin writer.

IF YOU GO SFASU Arboretum and gardens, (936) 468-2408, sfasu.edu/stonefort; Millard's Crossing Historic Village (936) 564-6631, millardscrossing.org; Ratcliff Lake Recreation Area, (936) 655-2299, recreation.gov; Nacogdoches Convention and Visitors Bureau, (936) 564-7351, visitnacogdoches.org



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