

TEXAS CO-OP POWER



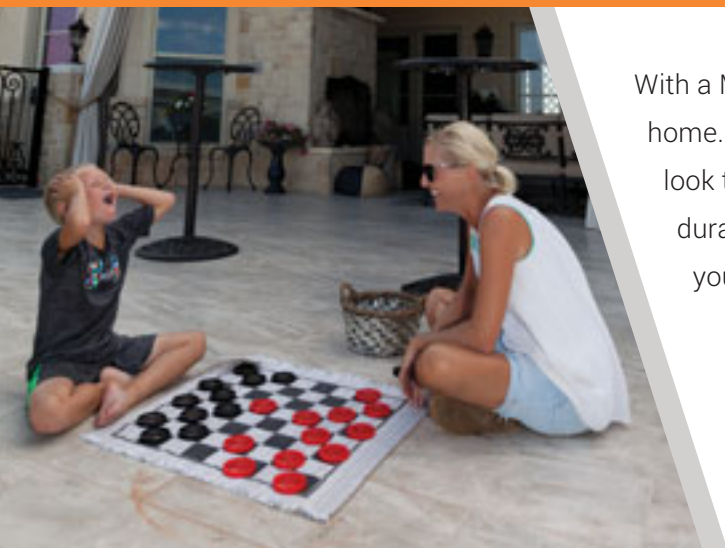
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flowing to members



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Competition at the 2016 Texas Lineman's Rodeo

FEATURES

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TEXAS LINEMAN'S RODEO: DAVE SHAFER. AIRPLANE: JOHN FAULK

ON THE COVER *Greg Mays, an apprentice, has been a lineman at Farmers Electric Cooperative for four years.* Photo by Dave Shafer

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Shell Game

When I order a dozen oysters on the half shell [Cover, August 2016], I expect to get a full dozen, maybe even 13! Still looks pretty tasty.

GARY P. HALE | DRIPPING SPRINGS
PEDERNALES EC

Editor's Note: Several readers noted that the August cover photo did not include a dozen oysters. Photographer Jody Horton explains what happened to the 12th oyster: "I ate it. Greedily and without remorse."

Head Over to Bolivar

I want to suggest to your readers that as long as they're in Galveston [*Seafood Quest: Galveston*, August 2016], to cross over to Bolivar Peninsula—on one of the nation's few last free ferries—to visit our great seafood stops. On the ferry ride to and from, you'll see gigantic freighters pass by, lots of dolphins and cruise ships coming and going.

Galveston's great, but Bolivar is the icing on the cake.

BRENDA BEUST SMITH | HOUSTON

Reel Treat

Just a note to let you know how much I enjoy *Texas Co-op Power*. Even though my body is no longer in Texas (but was for 50 years), my heart is. Stories like the catfish one [*Catfish and Me*, August 2016] bring back such good memories of fishing with my dad.

Many years ago, a little pamphlet was included with my bill, and I still use those recipes on a regular basis.

JAN GASKINS | PULLMAN, WASHINGTON

Here's What Really Counts!

Man, that was a good-looking bunch of oysters from Black Pearl Oyster Bar [Cover, August 2016]. It's a shame they didn't give you a full dozen. I always count my oysters when they set them down, and every once in a while it will be short. From time to time, I get a baker's dozen—but I don't say anything then.

Love that Texas seafood—catching and eating.

RANDY O'DELL | LIBERTY HILL | PEDERNALES EC



I liked the story *Catfish and Me*. That was also the first fish I caught and ate. I am having trouble finding good Southern-fried catfish near San Antonio. My benchmark is Catfish Charlie in Gulfport, Mississippi.

DENNIS VINCENT | BULVERDE
PEDERNALES EC

Global Message

We traveled to Ireland in June and took our *Texas Co-op Power* with us. This picture was taken in Kenmare, County Kerry, on the Emerald Isle. We couldn't resist the backdrop.

CHAMPE AND VIRGINIA MILLER | HUNTSVILLE
MID-SOUTH SYNERGY AND FAYETTE EC



Possum Kingdom

I enjoyed the Possum Kingdom Lake article [*Playing Possum*, July 2016]. The beautiful Hell's Gate can be enjoyed by everyone, as long as you don't step out of your boat onto the shoreline, which is privately owned. Most of the PK shoreline is privately owned or leased, which limits or denies access to many Texans.

KEN KING | DORCHESTER
GRAYSON-COLLIN EC

Keyhole Inspiration

At the time *Keyhole Gardening* [February 2012] came out, we were in the process of moving from Fort Worth to Austin. We built our keyhole garden two years ago, using the reference material we had accumulated, including *Texas Co-op Power* magazine's original story. Most of the stone for the keyhole was collected from our land in Bosque County.

RICHARD AND DENISE JONES | AUSTIN
UNITED COOPERATIVE SERVICES

Farming Locally

All my life I have made farm/organic/natural goodies for sale to the local community from my various farms [*A New Crop of Texas Farmers*, May 2016]. Now, at 71, I no longer can maintain my little farm. It would be nice to be able to sell it to young(er) people—with its already established markets.

CONNIE FRANK | TIMPSON
DEEP EAST TEXAS EC

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Please include your town and electric co-op. Letters may be edited for clarity and length.



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HAPPENINGS

Kids Getting Wily

GHOSTS, GOBLINS, SUPERHEROES, fairy princesses and the like have their way in **WYLIE** on October 27 when downtown merchants present **BOO ON BALLARD** to celebrate Halloween. Kids and families can receive candy and treats, and enjoy music, activities and an illusionist show. Smith Public Library hosts a costume contest for kids and pets.

Boo on Ballard happens 6–8 p.m. just north of Texas Highway 78 in downtown Wylie, about 30 miles northeast of Dallas.

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HISTORY LESSON

Make No Mistake

Sixty years ago and decades before backspace keys did any deleting, Dallas secretary Bette Nesmith Graham used a kitchen blender to start the Mistake Out Company, selling a concoction she invented for typists: Liquid Paper, or white-out.

She sold her first batch in 1956, then sold her thriving business to the Gillette Corp. for \$47.5 million in 1979, a year before her death.



CO-OP PEOPLE

SAFE AND SOUND SINCE '65

JUDY BROWN, a senior accountant at Trinity Valley Electric Cooperative, was recognized at Texas Electric Cooperatives' 2016 safety conference for reaching 50 years without a lost-time accident. "I've managed to walk the stairs, up and down, and never stumbled," jokes Brown, who lives and works in Athens, and has since stretched her safety record to 51 years.

She remembers her first day at New Era Electric Cooperative, which consolidated with Kaufman County Electric Cooperative in April 1997 to form TVEC. "It was a Tuesday, July 13, 1965," she says. "I was just a young, young, young thing. They just put me to work. I certainly didn't figure I'd be here 51 years—or 51 years at any one job."



Did you know?

NESMITH'S SON, Michael, is the original guitar player for The Monkees.



Your Wallet on Standby

AFTER YOU'VE laid waste to zombies, aliens and mr_ghost93 from Kentucky, and switched off your gaming console for the night, your Playstation, Wii or Xbox can do some damage of its own if left plugged in.



Of the total \$1 billion that American gamers pay annually in gaming-related utility bills, \$400 million comes from consoles on standby. A Natural Resources Defense Council report translates that number into 10 billion to 11 billion kilowatt-hours of usage each year.

CO-OPS IN THE COMMUNITY

A Favor for a Feathered Friend

GUADALUPE VALLEY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE teamed up with animal control to free an owl whose foot was tangled in a power line in Seguin. The cooperative de-energized the line, then GVEC lineman Chris Wilson escorted an animal control officer in a lift bucket to reach the bird, which was hanging upside down. The officer contained the bird while Wilson worked with the wire. The rescue took about 45 minutes.

The owl had some damage to its leg, although it was not broken, according to an expert at Last Chance Forever, a raptor rescue organization where the bird was taken for examination and recovery.

“Not many folks realize that wildlife encounters are characteristic of line work, so when they do happen, we take steps to do the right thing to care for the environment,” Tammy Thompson, GVEC manager of corporate communications and public relations, told the *Seguin Gazette*.



ALMANAC

PAN AM DERAILED

On October 27, 1891, Boston capitalists created the Pan American Railway Company with the ambitious goal of connecting Victoria, Texas, with Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Victoria residents eagerly offered \$150,000 for the project.

Almost a year later, 10 miles of line reached the Guadalupe River. With no funds to build a bridge over the river, the project came to a halt. The track was abandoned, and the Pan American Railway, a grand idea 125 years ago, never operated a train.



WORTH REPEATING

“[Electric telegraph] will never be a substitute for the face of a man, with his soul in it, encouraging another man to be brave and true.”

— CHARLES DICKENS

BY THE NUMBERS

PRESIDENT LYNDON B. JOHNSON signed the bill creating the U.S. Department of Transportation on October 15, 1966. Fifty years later, the U.S. has 4,177,074 miles of public roads. Texas has the most. ▶

313,596

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NEEMAN'S DEO



BY TOM WIDLOWSKI PHOTOS BY DAVE SHAFER

Going Above and Beyond

More than 250 electric linemen challenged themselves in tests of skill July 16 at the Texas Lineman's Rodeo in Seguin. Every event demanded that competitors race the clock and pass the scrutiny of the judges, who scored the linemen on proper technique and safety requirements.

When the competition ended, the linemen joined their families to celebrate with a Texas-sized barbecue cook-off.

- 1 From left, Rick Walden, David McDowell and Danny Moss of Farmers Electric Cooperative are the 45-and-older champions.
- 2 Jaice Sheffield of Farmers EC works with a high-reaching tool called a hot stick.
- 3 Hamilton County EC's Rhett Keith hoists son Amos.
- 4 The New Braunfels Utilities barbecue team has high hopes for its brisket.
- 5 The competition includes performing mock rescues of injured linemen.
- 6 Adam Gaston of Trinity Valley EC competes in the apprentice division.

WEB EXTRAS at TexasCoopPower.com See a slideshow and video, and get all of the results from the rodeo.

Line

Co-op linemen head into trouble

of Duty

for the sake of the members



By Tom Widlowski Photos by Dave Shafer

Cramer Basham recalls the day in 2012. Severe weather approached his home in Krum, and he kissed his wife and young daughter before sending them next door to join their neighbors in the safety of a below-ground storm shelter.

Basham would not be joining them to wait out the storm. Instead, he headed directly into the lightning and thunder, ultimately working all night to help calm the chaos. Basham is an electric cooperative lineman at CoServ, and thousands of people in Denton County, just northwest of Dallas, depend on him and his brethren to keep the power on, or get it back on quickly, even in the worst weather.

Linemen perform the duties—sometimes routine but often

physically demanding and always potentially dangerous—that keep the electric grid operating smoothly. When every home, office, school and hospital has electricity, linemen are taken for granted.

That's fine with them.

But when lightning and violent storms tangle power lines, snap poles and destroy transformers, linemen scramble into action, moving systematically across their co-ops' service territories to repair damage. They toil until the power is back on, day and night if they have to.

That's fine with them.

"It takes a special breed to do that job," says Basham, a crew foreman. It's a breed fueled by a fierce commitment to service, much like other first responders—firefighters, police and emer-



gency medical personnel. It's a breed that charges into crisis situations without hesitation.

"I think we're first responders because at every major disaster, we're there," says Don Bland, a lineman at Farmers Electric Cooperative in Greenville, 50 miles northeast of Dallas. In North Texas, tornadoes, floods, ice storms and hurricanes can knock out power to hundreds or even thousands of homes and businesses.

"It takes 75 to 80 years to build all the lines in a system, and a tornado can tear it down in a matter of minutes," says David Nance, a Kyle-based former lineman and current safety specialist with Texas Electric Cooperatives.

David McDowell, a crew foreman, has witnessed many disasters in his 32 years at Farmers EC. Besides working storm recovery in

Changing out equipment atop an electric pole requires teamwork.

the Greenville area, McDowell has assisted neighboring co-ops time and again, whenever trouble calls.

Co-ops regularly collaborate to solve challenges, guided by the Seven Cooperative Principles that form the core values of co-op operations, including Cooperation Among Cooperatives. After all, storms don't respect the boundaries set up by service areas, and all co-op members are equal.

In one dramatic example, when Hurricane Katrina hit Louisiana in 2005, McDowell worked 45 days away from home. He was not alone: Co-ops in 27 states sent workers to Mississippi and Louisiana to repair the electric grid.

McDowell grew up in a lineman family. His grandfather, father

“Linemen are highly trained to do a challenging job that nobody else can do without the physical and mental skills they possess.

The best linemen have another quality to be admired: They have a servant’s heart and want to help people.”

—Billy Harbin, GM
at Lighthouse EC



and four of his uncles were linemen. Both of his brothers also did line work. So McDowell knew he could be called upon at any time to help restore power to members. “That’s part of the life,” he says. “No sooner do you take your boots off, and you’re lacing them back up again.”

His daughters didn’t follow in his footsteps, but they knew the drill. Years ago, when they were little, the phone would sometimes ring as soon as he got home from work. If it was Farmers EC calling, he’d let his girls answer, and they’d pick up the phone and say, “Daddy have to go back out again?”

Countless times, the answer was, “Yes.”

That’s fine with them.

Daddies, husbands and sons spring back into their trucks when they get the call. It’s the lineman way. “They understand that electricity is no longer a luxury,” says Billy Marricle, president and general manager at San Bernard EC in Bellville, 60 miles east of Houston. “Their attitude is: It’s their family that is without power.”

They Have a Servant’s Heart

Electric cooperatives in Texas serve more than 3 million people and maintain more than 379,000 miles of line, and they receive higher scores in the 2015 American Customer Satisfaction Index than investor-owned or municipal utilities.

Linemen tend to be the most visible co-op employees in the community. They drive large trucks that haul poles and spools of wire to worksites. Then they rise high above the landscape, perched in lift buckets that will place them within easy reach of the energized power lines and transformers that need attention.

This public presence also puts linemen within easy reach of co-op members. “I had a lady give me a hug last week,” says Brandan Blunt, a lineman at Farmers EC who had just come off a long week of storm recovery. “I put her lights on that night.”

Not all encounters are so friendly, especially when members grow impatient during an outage. Bland remembers when one woman at a worksite unleashed a barrage of bad language. She knew all the words, he said. “And some I didn’t know.”

Service to the community can exceed linemen’s normal first-responder duties. Linemen sometimes are the first motorists to come across collisions, and when they do, they provide first aid. They’re often credited with saving victims’ lives.

Tools called hot sticks extend the reach of linemen and grant them safe access to energized lines.



The most rewarding part of the job for Farmers Electric Cooperative lineman David McDowell is simple: “Getting electricity to people.”

Because they’re perched high off the ground, linemen can be the first to notice fires. They call 911 and try to rush to the scene to offer assistance.

San Bernard EC linemen thwarted a crime last year when they noticed an unfamiliar car parked in front of a member’s house. They blocked the car in the driveway, and authorities arrested a suspected burglar.

Several co-ops in Texas have participated in NRECA International, a program that sends linemen to Haiti to help electrify that country and build its first electric co-op.

“What they do is thrilling and satisfying,” says Billy Harbin, general manager at Lighthouse EC in Floydada, 50 miles northeast of Lubbock. “Linemen are highly trained to do a challenging job that nobody else can do without the physical and mental skills they possess. The best linemen have another quality to be admired: They have a servant’s heart and want to help people.”

Nothing Beats Homegrown

A career spent outdoors maintaining the electric grid doesn’t come without significant desk time. It can take five years or more of rigorous training to become a journeyman lineman. That includes classroom instruction in addition to hands-on work in the field.

TEC’s Loss Control program provides lineman and safety training statewide—reaching more than 1,000 students at 53 schools in 2016. TEC also conducts more than 900 safety meetings a year and holds an annual conference for hundreds of linemen to participate in ongoing safety and career education. TEC coordinates the South Plains College Certified Electric Power Lineman Associate and Certified Degree programs. Victoria EC has joined with Victoria College to provide lineman training.

Once hired at an electric cooperative, linemen receive on-the-job training provided by the co-op, often in partnership with TEC’s Loss Control program.

“There is a very high demand for linemen across the U.S.,” says Bobby Christmas, senior executive manager of compliance, safety,

How Linemen Work Their Way Up

Curtis Whitt, TEC Loss Control regional supervisor, explains the general progression of a lineman’s career:

1 Starting Out

Works as a general helper, usually called a groundman.

2 Apprentice

Period of structured and rigorous training, generally lasting at least four years, though it varies by co-op. Most linemen are evaluated throughout their apprenticeship and before they can be considered journeymen.

3 Journeyman

Upon completion of apprenticeship, linemen become journeymen. Some co-ops denote continued progression by classification—Class C, then Class B, then Class A, for example.



loss control and transportation at Guadalupe Valley EC in Gonzales, 70 miles east of San Antonio. “There’s even a higher demand for apprentices seeking to build a career in our field.”

Co-ops have strong connections to their communities, and many co-ops seek to hire employees, including linemen, from their areas. “The biggest challenge for small, rural co-ops like Lighthouse is to recruit and retain young folks who want to make a life in a small-town setting,” Harbin says. “We do our best to recruit locally, concentrating on people with family ties to our community.”

Marricle follows the same approach. “Nothing beats homegrown,” he says. “Homegrown individuals typically already have the bond within their community. The cooperative is generally a well-respected organization, and they want to be a part of it. Our membership has watched them grow up, and they dare not let those folks down.”

Respect the Electricity

Linemen require extensive training because the job is inherently dangerous. They often work 35 feet or more off the ground, either in buckets or after climbing a pole. They use harnesses and special restraints to prevent falls. They wear hard hats, safety glasses and flame-resistant clothing. To prevent electrical contact, they wear rubber gloves—some protect against up to 30,000 volts—and heavy rubber sleeves for when they reach near energized equipment.

But accidents happen. “There are hazards associated with line work that can have devastating consequences if they are not dealt

Linemen use a hand line to raise and lower tools and materials to men on the pole.

with properly,” Harbin says. “The job is not dangerous unless the worker fails to learn and obey the safe work rules required to mitigate the hazards. That’s why we place such great emphasis on safety training: because it truly is a matter of life and death.”

“This is not a business that is very forgiving if you make a mistake,” Christmas agrees. That’s why *Forbes* magazine ranks the profession No. 7 on its list of most dangerous occupations.

“The biggest deal is, don’t get complacent,” says CoServ’s Basham. “Respect the electricity.”

All These Lights Coming On

Bland talks about being atop a pole or in a bucket during a storm, when 40-mph winds are whipping him and lightning is striking all around. He shakes his head and says, “It ain’t a natural thing to do.”

But it’s his calling, so he focuses on the job, which, on stormy nights, entails getting the electricity moving again. The result is rewarding. “Then I see all these lights coming on in houses down there,” he says.

Soon the storm passes, and everybody again has the electricity they have come to expect. Air-conditioning units hum throughout neighborhoods. Video games captivate their players. Dishwashers do the dirty work.

And linemen get to go home and take their boots off—at least for a little while.

That’s fine with them.

Tom Widlowski is the *Texas Co-op Power* associate editor.

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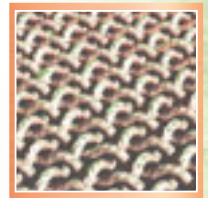
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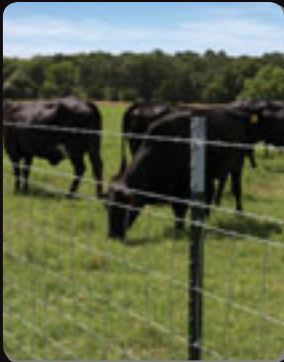


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Common Energy Myths Debunked



CATHERINE LANE | ISTOCK.COM

MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT ENERGY USE are hiding around every corner of your home, and they can take a toll on your utility bills. Don't be fooled by common energy myths.

MYTH: The higher the thermostat setting, the faster your home will heat.

REALITY: You might think that walking into a room and raising the thermostat to 85 degrees will make the room warm up quickly. Not true. Thermostats direct a home's heating, ventilation and air-conditioning system to heat or cool to a certain temperature. Drastically adjusting the thermostat won't make a difference in how quickly you feel warmer—or cooler—than if you set it at a reasonable level.

The Department of Energy recommends setting your ther-

mostat to 78 degrees during summer months and 68 degrees during winter.

MYTH: Opening the oven door to check on a dish doesn't really waste energy.

REALITY: Although it can be tempting to check the progress of that dish you're cooking in the oven, opening the oven door does waste energy. Every time the door is opened, the temperature inside the oven is reduced by as much as 25 degrees, delaying the progress of your dish—and costing you additional money. Try using the oven light and peeking through the window instead.

MYTH: Leaving lights, computers and other electric devices turned on is a good idea. Switching them on and off wears them out more quickly and produces sudden power spikes that negate any energy savings.

REALITY: If there were ever any legitimacy to this idea, there isn't anymore. Switching modern appliances and electrical devices on and off frequently will not reduce their life span, and any power surges that might occur are likely to be miniscule. The bottom line is that if you aren't using an electrical device, it should be turned off.

MYTH: Reducing my energy use is too expensive.

REALITY: Many consumers believe that reducing energy use requires expensive upfront costs, such as purchasing new, more efficient appliances or making construction upgrades to an older home. The truth is, consumers who make small changes to their efficiency habits—like turning off lights when not in use, sealing air leaks and using a programmable thermostat—can see a significant reduction in energy consumption.

Little steps add up. Turning off lights when you don't need them saves energy and money.

REMEMBER: Energy efficiency doesn't have to be difficult. Focus small to save big.



ANDREW RICH | ISTOCK.COM

Turn your kids into safety superheroes by teaching them how to keep themselves and others safe in dangerous situations.

Creative Safety Lessons for Kids

WE ALL KNOW ELECTRICITY PLAYS A MAJOR ROLE in our everyday lives, and it is a powerful resource that should be respected. Unfortunately, our children often do not understand the dangers of electricity.

At your electric cooperative, we encourage you to share electrical safety tips and lessons with your little ones as often as possible. We also understand that their attention spans run short, so here are a few creative ways to get them involved.

Depending on the age of your child, consider designating an “electronics deputy.” The deputy should be responsible for pointing out electronics in your home that are not in use and for keeping appliances safe from liquids. Reward your deputy for pointing out overloaded outlets or other potentially dangerous situations.

Emphasize the importance of fire prevention with your children, and create a family fire drill plan as an extra precaution. Give your children an incentive by rewarding those who followed the plan and made it safely out of the home during a drill.

A note: Although it is fun and engaging to turn safety into a game, it is important to ensure that your children understand the real risks they are facing if they do not practice electrical safety.

One of the most important safety tips you can give your kids is to avoid any downed power lines. It is best to avoid power lines, transformers and substations in general. A downed power line can still be energized, and it can energize other objects, including fences and trees. Make sure your kids understand the potential dangers of coming into contact with a downed power line or low-hanging wire. Ask them to tell you or another adult if they encounter a downed power line. Then call the co-op and 911.

Here are a few other safety tips you can share with your kids:

- ▶ Never put metal objects in outlets or appliances.
- ▶ Do not overcrowd electrical outlets.
- ▶ Never mix water and electricity.

No matter how you choose to get your kids interested in staying safe around electricity, your co-op is here to help.

What They Do Might Shock You

YOU SHOULDN'T BE SURPRISED if you see your co-op's lineworkers repairing a downed power line or climbing a 40-foot pole to change out broken equipment—even in the worst of weather or the middle of the night. That's their job.

But you might be shocked to hear about some of the other things linemen do in the course of a day's work.

They help stranded motorists. They keep a vigilant eye out for suspicious activities. They help newcomers find their way around. They participate in the activities of local teams and charities. Linemen coordinate the hanging of a banner or flag from the lift buckets of their trucks, if the cause is worthy and you ask them nicely.

They also save lives. In recent years, co-op linemen in Texas have pulled people from fires, rescued them from automobile wrecks and rendered aid during a heart attack. These heroic measures have garnered praise and awards—but to lineworkers, it's just part of the job.

As your neighbors and fellow community members, your co-op's linemen always want to do their share. Even if it has nothing to do with electricity, it has everything to do with the job.

Whether working high in the sky or on the ground, co-op linemen are ready to serve.



CHRISTOPHER BADZIOCH | ISTOCK.COM

Anchored Memories

One Texan relives childhood memories through his grandfather's boat

BY MIKE LEGGETT

ONE LIMB OF RICHARD BAY'S FAMILY TREE is pure mahogany, carefully layered with 23 coats of varnish. "Like a dining room table," he says.

Bay can climb into this particular tree, crank the engine and cruise off across Lake Belton with his grandchildren. He does that, too, thanks to a serendipitous purchase he made a few years back.

At that time, Bay was retiring from his job as an executive with Mrs Baird's Bakeries and thinking about what he wanted to do with the rest of his life. He figured he might want to revisit some of his childhood.

Bay is a native of the Killeen area, where his father's family farmed on land that is now part of the Fort Hood military installation. He spent summers on an island in a Vermont lake, where Bay and his siblings would visit. They loved to ride in a classic Chris-Craft inboard his grandfather, Edmond Richard, kept docked on the private island.

"I was born in 1957, and he bought the boat about the same time," Bay says. "It was always a treat for us to go up there. We were just 3 miles from the Canadian border, and we'd cruise up into Canada on the lake."

But kids grow up, grandparents inevitably grow older, and Bay's grandfather decided to sell the boat in about 1985. The boat, a solid-wood 1949 model with a distinctive enclosed cockpit, passed into other hands and slipped away into history.

"My parents saw it once out beside a barn, but we never knew what happened to it," Bay says.

Years later came Bay's decision to try to find a boat like the one he remembered.

One turned up in Las Vegas, but that didn't work out. Then one turned up for sale in Vermont, and after looking at photos of the boat, he knew he'd struck gold.

"I knew it was his when I saw the pictures because he was a Chevy dealer back then and had installed seats (with arm rests) inside the cabin," says Bay, a member of Hamilton County Electric Cooperative. "I climbed into the cockpit, and there were the chairs. Plus, in a map pocket were two registration cards with my grandfather's name on them."

With some negotiation, his grandfather's boat returned to the family after 30 years. He brought it back to Texas and began restoration work. "At first, my brother and I tried to do it, but it was too big a job," Bay says. "We found a place in Lockhart that does that kind of work and took it there."

Rick Thomson, a Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative member, handled the restoration for Bay at his shop in Lockhart.

"It was fantastic to be able to work on that boat," Thomson says. "You just don't see many of those, especially in Texas."

Thomson, who has been restoring boats for more than a decade, says he liked the fact that Bay searched for a boat like his grandfather's and found the exact boat he had ridden in as a child. "We had a professional painter come in to do the name on the transom, Sweet Memories," Thomson says, noting that the boat was restored to its original factory condition.

"He will be able to pass it on to his grandkids, and they should be able to pass it on to their grandkids," Thomson says.



“It should last a long, long time.”

The result of that work is a boat, with an original sale price of about \$4,000, that is absolutely the vessel Bay remembers from his childhood. Restoring the boat to its former condition took time and care, including the five-plus days that the boat had to spend in the water before the wood soaked up enough water to work properly.

Now Bay, who loves the chugging sound of the sturdy, 158-horsepower inboard when he starts the engine, loves to cruise Lake Belton and hear the “oohs” and “ahs” from people who admire his classic craft. “It was kind of an unbelievable feeling,”

Bay says of finding the boat again after more than 30 years.

Bay’s family likes the water and spends lots of time fishing and cruising there. He owns five boats, including two bass boats and a pair of personal watercraft.

They don’t ski behind the Chris-Craft, though. “We tried that when I was a kid, but it’s so heavy that it puts out a big wake. It’s made more for cruising than anything else,” he says. “I have two young grandkids, and when I took them out, they sat in my lap just like I had sat on [my grandfather’s] lap. That was really emotional.”

Mike Leggett, a member of Pedernales EC, is a writer and photojournalist based in Burnet.

From Paris to the Met

Opera singer from East Texas stirs audiences around the world

BY LADAWN FLETCHER

SINCE NEW YORK CITY'S METROPOLITAN Opera opened in 1883, almost every international singer has performed in its world-renowned productions. When Jay Hunter Morris performed on the Metropolitan Opera stage in the title role of Wagner's *Siegfried*, he joined that rarefied group. His story is more remarkable than many others because the genesis of his career was a dramatic distance away, physically and culturally—in the East Texas town of Paris.

There isn't a hint of East Texas drawl when Morris sings, but he is quick to point out that Paris is where he found his place and his voice. He grew up the son of a preacher who moved the family frequently. He recalls homes in the Houston-area town of Pasadena, a small town in Arkansas and then Fort Worth. When he was 13, Morris' family settled in Paris after the death of his father.

"Paris is home," Morris says.

Typical of many performers with Southern roots, Morris' first exposure to music was in church. "A lot of great singers, not only opera, but pop singers, and especially R&B or soul singers, all grew up singing in the church," Morris says.

Morris first decided that singing would be his profession after he heard Larry Gatlin in concert. What he didn't anticipate was the winding road that would take him to Paris Junior College and Baylor University, then finally to the acclaimed Juilliard School.

Early on, Morris thought he might go into gospel or country music, but he saw an opera when he was 25 and was mesmerized. He found it fascinating to sit in

a 3,000-seat house with a 70-piece orchestra and hear the performers projecting their voices into the enormous space without microphones.

He had discovered his vocation.

In some tales of the theater world, a talented understudy works hard but remains unseen and unknown in thankless roles. Then one night, the star cannot perform, and the understudy steps in at the last moment.

That is exactly what happened for Morris in the 2011 production of *Siegfried*—the star (who was actually the replacement for the original singer, who also had canceled) bailed out less than a week before opening night. *Siegfried* is a role that only two or three tenors in the world can sing—but one of them is Morris. He stepped in with the confidence of someone who had been preparing to make such a splash all his life, even wowing the critics who were skeptical of the newcomer, not just because they hadn't heard of him, but also because his twangy Texas accent suggested an unorthodox background.

"I got a big break," he says with a hint of irony.

The acting is demanding and the show long—five hours—but a critic from *The New York Times* praised Morris' performance as "a real achievement" and commended Morris on his ability to lyrically bend a phrase.

He has been singing the role ever since, reprising it for an almost-hometown audience at the Houston Grand Opera in spring 2016.

Places provide the backdrop for the



Jay Hunter Morris in Houston Grand Opera's production of Wagner's *Siegfried*

people we become, but it is the people around us who shape and mold us. Morris' father continues to influence who he is as a husband, an artist and as a father himself. Now Morris' son inspires him and keeps him focused on what is important.

"My parents instilled in me values that are embedded deeply in faith and in being a good human being above all things," Morris says. "It is more important than how much money you make and what you do for a living.

Morris knows his career is unusual. The places Morris visits and the people he meets allow him to interact with the world in unexpected ways. While touring, he often chronicled his adventures in emails to his family. That correspondence formed the foundation of a laugh-out-loud book called *Diary of a Redneck Opera Zinger* (Opera Lively Press, 2013). Morris describes the

book as "equal parts autobio, inspiration and unrepentant potty humor."

"I seem to be a magnet for chaos," Morris laughs, "and that is where the funny stuff happens."

The book offers a peek at the collision of two vastly different worlds—the rarified air he inhabits in the arts and the earthiness of his upbringing as the son of a clergyman. "This was a collection of emails I sent to my mom and sister, telling them what it is like to be a country boy singing in opera houses all over the world," Morris says.

For all of the travel, accolades and acclaim, Morris maintains that he is just a "small-town guy" who was blessed to find his passion in opera.

Opera, he says, is a way of singing that does not come naturally to many people, including him. "It is a lifetime's work to find

the technique to produce that kind of sound with that kind of volume in a beautiful and elegant way," he says. "I'm still trying."

The disciplined pursuit of the art form is what has driven him for so long. "I love the pursuit of this vocal technique," he says. "It's not easy, but it is great fun to try to figure it out."

Morris' years of training have honed his voice and acting, and he looks forward to the roles that await him. "I did find my passion, and I found an art form that I am just feverishly passionate about," he says. "I've learned that my passion and my training will override and defeat my country accent and my hometown flair. I can overcome that with hard work and good singing. I'm just now ready to do my best life's work, and that is exciting."

LaDawn Fletcher writes about Texas from her home in Missouri City.

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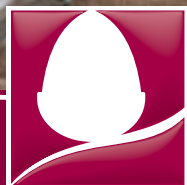
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Customer Rating

ITEM 32879

60603 shown

Customer Rating

ITEM 32

FREE

WITH ANY PURCHASE
PITTSBURGH
6 PIECE
SCREWDRIVER
SET

ITEM 61319/62583/62728
47770/62570 shown



\$797
VALUE

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55120235

US • GENERAL
44" 13 DRAWER
INDUSTRIAL QUALITY
ROLLER CABINET



ITEM 62744/68784 shown
SAVE \$670
Customer Rating
★★★★★

• Weights 245 lbs.
\$359.99
comp at \$1029.99

3/8" x 50 FT. HEAVY DUTY
RUBBER AIR HOSE



Drabira
ITEM 62890 shown
61939/62864/09580
SAVE 33%

\$19.99
comp at \$29.98

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55059946

NOW SUPER COUPON

17 FT. TYPE I A
MULTI-TASK
LADDER

SAVE \$284
Customer Rating
★★★★★



• 300 lb. capacity
• 23 configurations

ITEM 62514
62656
67646 shown
\$119.99
~~\$139.99~~
comp at \$404

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55117229

PITTSBURGH
42" OFF-ROAD/
FARM JACK



ITEM 60698/6530 shown
SAVE 23%
Customer Rating
★★★★★

• 3-1/2 ton capacity
\$45.99
comp at \$59.99

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55117409

MOVER'S DOLLY



ITEM 60497/93888 shown
61899/62939/63195/63096
63098/63097
SAVE 59%

• 1000 lb. capacity
\$7.99
comp at \$19.97

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NOW SUPER COUPON

1500 LB. CAPACITY
MOTORCYCLE LIFT

SAVE \$65
Customer Rating
★★★★★



ITEM 60995 shown
60536/61632
• Lift range: 5'-1/4" to 17"

\$69.99
comp at \$135

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55091980

PREDATOR
GENERATORS
8750 PEAK/
7000 RUNNING WATTS
FARM JACK



ITEM 68303/63096
63095/69671 shown
SAVE \$459
Customer Rating
★★★★★

• 76 dB Noise Level
\$539.99
comp at \$999

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55093343

12 VOLT 15 GALLON SPOT SPRAYER



ITEM 61263 shown
SAVE \$63
Customer Rating
★★★★★

\$79.99
comp at \$133.89

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NOW SUPER COUPON

TILTING FLAT PANEL
TV MOUNT

SAVE 65%
Customer Rating
★★★★★



ITEM 62289
61807 shown
• 176 lb. capacity
• Fits flat screen TVs from 37" to 70"

\$19.99
comp at \$57.37

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55110624

10" PNEUMATIC TIRE



ITEM 69385/62386/62409
62598/63090 shown
SAVE 73%
Customer Rating
★★★★★

Not for highway use.
\$3.99
comp at \$14.99

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55112031

WOW SUPER COUPON
4 PIECE ADJUSTABLE
WRENCH SET



ITEM 905 shown
69427/00890
SAVE 60%
Customer Rating
★★★★★

\$9.99
~~\$11.99~~
comp at \$74.99

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NOW SUPER COUPON

60 LED SOLAR
SECURITY LIGHT

SAVE 52%
Customer Rating
★★★★★



ITEM 62534 shown
69643 shown
Includes 6V, 900 mAh NiCd battery pack.

\$32.99
comp at \$69.99

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55094250

3-POINT QUICK HITCH



ITEM 97216
SAVE \$110
Customer Rating
★★★★★

• 2000 lb. capacity
• 27-3/16" clearance
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comp at \$199.99

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55128558

SPLIT LEATHER
WORK GLOVES WITH
COTTON BACK - 5 PAIR



ITEM 66287 shown
60450/62371/62716/62714
HARDY
Customer Rating
★★★★★

\$5.99
comp at \$10.40

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55096670

COVERPRO
10 FT. x 17 FT.
PORTABLE GARAGE

ITEM 69139/62286/62860
63055/62855 shown
SAVE \$146
Customer Rating
★★★★★

\$179.99
comp at \$326.55

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55105002

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Depression-Era Trek Stars

Eccentrics Wingo, Hoopie and Ralph make their mark

BY GENE FOWLER

“HAS A WAVE OF MILD INSANITY SWEEPED over the American people,” queried *The Shamrock Texan* on August 14, 1929, “or are all these things merely the result of an inordinate craving for publicity?”

Dismayed, the Panhandle editors noted the unusual behavior of a few fellow Texans. One man was rolling a hoop from Texas City to New York City. A Rio Hondo resident pushed a peanut up Pikes Peak—with his nose. Two Galvestonians, otherwise apparently sane, played a running game of croquet all the way to NYC.

As the Great Depression continued in the 1930s, the shenanigans only got worse—or more fun, depending on one’s perspective. Abilene restaurateur Plennie L. Wingo tried to walk backward around the world. San Benito produce-man Brown White advertised for someone to ride his “giant turtle” from Brownsville to New York. Though a dozen tortoise-wrangler wannabes responded, there is no evidence that anyone attempted the trip. San Benito cowboy Ralph Sanders, however, did ride a bull named Jerry from Brownsville to New York.

Bill Williams won a \$500 bet when he nudged a peanut up Pikes Peak with his athletic proboscis. Williams wore out 21 pairs of gloves and custom kneepads crafted by a harness maker. The effort took 22 days and 184 peanuts.

A friend dared Texas City’s Harm Bates “Hoopie” Williams to undertake his eccentric trek. Made of steel and named Irma “for a certain girl in Texas,” Hoopie’s hoop measured 48 inches around and featured an inch-wide tread. Harm rolled her along with a bamboo pole enhanced with a steel crossbar because those specifications met the requirements of the International Association of Hoop Rollers. It took six months to roll Irma to NYC, and the hoop was 2 inches smaller afterward. Hoopie lost

15 pounds himself. In 1934, he announced that he would drive a car backward from Houston to New York, but there is no record that he actually completed the feat.

Hoopie’s backward motoring might have been inspired by the colossal reverse stroll of Wingo. Like many Americans struggling with hard times, Wingo’s Abilene restaurant was failing, and he was facing bankruptcy. Wingo explained the logic of his response to the nation’s turmoil in his 1982 autobiography, *Around the World Backwards* (Eakin Press, 1982). “With the whole world going backwards,” he wrote, “maybe the only way to see it was to turn around.”

Wingo bought special glasses with rearview mirrors and then commenced a rigorous training regimen with a chiropractor who had advertised that he could prepare anyone to accomplish any physical task. “He felt it was against nature and didn’t even know if it was possible,” Wingo recalled, “but he was game to help me.”

Putting his best foot backward on April 15, 1931, Wingo headed for the East Coast. He financed the trip by selling postcards along the way. At Boston Harbor, he backed ceremoniously down the gangplank to extend his trip across the Atlantic Ocean.

In Istanbul, his peculiar locomotion got him thrown in the pokey. Authorities would not allow him to continue the sojourn into Asia, so Wingo returned to the U.S. and then walked backward to Fort Worth, where he arrived on October 24, 1932. He wore



out 13 pairs of shoes and lost 36 pounds.

San Benito cowboy Sanders, on the other hand, gained weight on his journey from Brownsville to New York aboard a bull named Jerry, who also bulked up while grinding down seven sets of steel shoes. After betting another cowboy that he could ride a bull to New York faster than the other cowboy could drive a goat-powered wagon, Sanders trained Jerry for 95 days before setting out on May 12, 1930. (The goatpoke gave up south of the Red River.) Two hundred fifty-four days later, Sanders rode Jerry down Broadway, presenting New York City Mayor Jimmy Walker with a 52-inch pair of steer’s horns.

“I just wanted to ride a bull,” the 28-year-old cowboy told *The Associated Press*. “It’s something that ain’t been done before on such a large scale. Bull riding sure is healthful, though. I feel better than I’ve felt in five years.”

Gene Fowler is an Austin writer who specializes in history and popular culture.



holiday GIFT GUIDE

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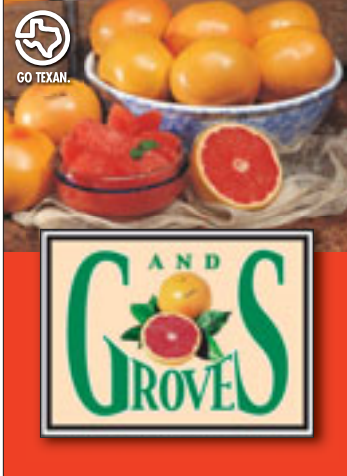
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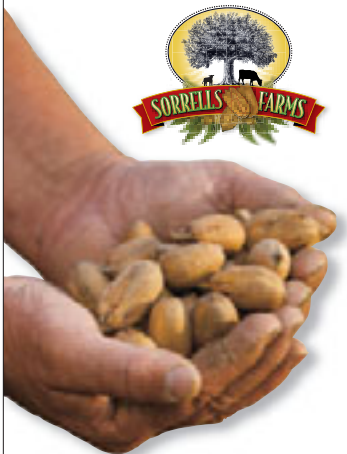
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Staff Favorites

FAVORITES ARE DISHES WE RELY ON TO feed our friends and families, so they're steeped in memories. During a family visit to Minnesota, I asked my brother what he wanted for dinner. He chose the iconic Southern meal Chicken and Dumplings from *Real Cajun*, my first cookbook with New Orleans chef Donald Link.

PAULA DISBROWE, FOOD EDITOR

Chicken and Dumplings

DUMPLINGS

- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano, crumbled
- ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1 scant teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1 scant teaspoon salt
- 1 large egg
- ½ small onion, finely minced
- 2 tablespoons (¼ stick) butter, melted
- ½ cup whole milk

CHICKEN STEW

- ½ cup all-purpose flour
- 1 whole chicken, cut into 8 serving pieces
- 1 tablespoon salt, plus more as needed
- 1 teaspoon ground black pepper, plus more as needed
- ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper (or other ground chile pepper)
- ¼ cup vegetable oil
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 1 stalk celery, chopped
- 1 medium carrot, chopped
- 1 jalapeño pepper, stemmed, seeded and minced
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped thyme leaves
- ½ cup dry white wine
- ⅓ cup (½ stick) butter
- 8 cups chicken broth
- 2 tablespoons olive oil, divided use
- 6 ounces cremini mushrooms, stemmed and sliced

1. DUMPLINGS: Whisk together flour, baking powder, oregano, cayenne, black pepper and salt. In a separate bowl, whisk together the egg, onion, melted butter and milk. Stir wet ingredients into dry ones just until blended. Chill batter at least 30 minutes.

Recipes

Staff Favorites



THIS MONTH'S RECIPE CONTEST WINNER

VERONICA LABAY | CONTROLLER

The staff was seduced by this meatloaf named after Labay's husband, Denny Muhlstein, who discovered the recipe.

"By sharing it, I hope to bring smiles to many dinner tables," Labay says.

Denny's 1950s-Style Meatloaf

- 1½ pounds ground beef
- ½ pound ground pork sausage (seasoned or not)
- 2 eggs, lightly beaten
- 1 cup fine breadcrumbs
- 1 large clove garlic, pressed
- ½ cup minced sweet onion
- ¼ cup minced green bell pepper
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano, crumbled
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- Freshly ground pepper to taste
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1 package dry onion soup mix
- ½ cup milk
- 1 can (6 ounces) tomato paste, divided use
- 2-4 strips bacon, cut in half (optional)

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Combine ground beef, pork sausage, eggs, breadcrumbs, garlic, onion, bell pepper, oregano, salt, pepper, Worcestershire sauce, soup mix, milk and half the tomato paste. Gently mix only until combined. Do not overmix or the mixture will become tough.
3. Form into a loaf. Cover with the remaining tomato paste. Weave the bacon strips over the top.
4. Bake 1 hour. Allow the meatloaf to rest 15 minutes before slicing to serve. Serves 6.

\$100 Recipe Contest

February's recipe contest topic is **Ragin' Cajun**. Do you *laissez les bon temps rouler* (let the good times roll) with jambalaya, étouffée or gumbo? The deadline is **September 10**.

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.

2. **CHICKEN STEW:** Place flour in a large bowl. Season chicken with salt, pepper and cayenne, then toss with flour. Reserve the remaining dredging flour. In a large, deep skillet over medium-high heat, fry the chicken in vegetable oil until golden brown, about 10-12 minutes, then transfer to a plate.
3. Discard half the frying oil. Add onion, celery, carrot, jalapeño, garlic and thyme, and season with salt, pepper and cayenne. Cook, stirring, until vegetables are tender, about 8 minutes.
4. Add wine, wait 20 seconds, then add butter, stirring until melted. Add reserved flour and stir until vegetables are evenly coated. Add chicken broth, stir gently and bring to a simmer.
5. Heat 1 tablespoon olive oil in a separate skillet over medium-high heat. Sauté half the mushrooms until crisp and browned, 4-5 minutes. Add cooked mushrooms to the vegetable mixture and repeat with remaining oil and mushrooms. Add chicken to the stew and simmer until fork-tender, periodically skimming fat, about 1 hour 15 minutes.
6. Preheat oven to 450 degrees. Transfer stew to a large, ovenproof skillet and simmer. Use a tablespoon to scoop the dumpling batter and scrape onto the stew. Bake until dumplings are lightly golden, about 20 minutes. Allow the stew to cool slightly before serving. Serves 6.

From *Real Cajun: Rustic Home Cooking from Donald Link's Louisiana* (Clarkson Potter, 2009) by Donald Link with Paula Disbrowe, used with permission

Husband's Delight

TAYLOR MONTGOMERY | DIGITAL FIELD EDITOR

"I have to credit my momma for this recipe. I believe she pulled the recipe from an old Southwestern Bell fundraising cookbook from the '80s."

- 1 bag (12 ounces) egg noodles
- 1½ pounds ground beef
- 1 can (14.5 ounces) peeled and diced tomatoes, with juice
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 1 tablespoon white sugar
- 1 teaspoon hot sauce (optional)
- 1½ cups sour cream
- 3 ounces cream cheese, softened to room temperature

- ½ small white onion, finely chopped
- 1½ cups cheddar cheese

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Boil the egg noodles in salted water according to package directions, usually about 8-10 minutes. Drain and set aside.
3. In large skillet, brown the ground beef. Some of the fat can be drained, but it's best to leave it in. Add the can of tomatoes, tomato paste, salt, sugar and hot sauce, and simmer 15 minutes.
4. In separate mixing bowl, combine sour cream, cream cheese and onion. Mix well until smooth.
5. Spread half the egg noodles on the bottom of an ungreased 9-by-13-inch baking dish. Layer next with the meat mixture, then the cream mixture. Top with remaining noodles, then completely cover the noodles with cheese. Pack down with a spoon.
6. Bake 25 minutes, until the cheese is melted and slightly browned. Serves 6-8.

Turkey Chili

CHARLES LOHRMANN | EDITOR

"Even though this recipe defies the conventions and traditions of Texas chili by starting with turkey and including beans, it makes for a satisfying and nutritious meal."

- 1 pound ground turkey
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon red chili powder
- 1 teaspoon cumin
- 1 can (15 ounces) diced tomatoes
- 1 can (16 ounces) black beans, drained
- 1 can (16 ounces) kidney beans, drained
- Salt to taste
- Pepper to taste
- ½ cup chopped cilantro

1. Brown the turkey in a Dutch oven or soup pot over medium-high heat, then drain fat, if desired. Transfer the meat to a bowl and set aside.
2. Heat the olive oil in the same pot, add the onion and sauté until softened, about 5-7 minutes. Add the garlic and reduce heat to low. Stir the cooked turkey into the onion mixture, then stir in the chili powder and cumin.
3. Add the tomatoes, black beans, kidney

beans, and salt and pepper, and stir to combine. Add a can of water if needed, or use chicken broth to thin.

4. Raise the heat to medium and simmer 10 minutes. Stir in the cilantro and simmer an additional 10 minutes, then serve. Taste and adjust seasonings as desired.

Chocolate Whiskey Cake

PAULA DISBROWE | FOOD EDITOR

The flavors of this dense, super-rich cake meld and deepen upon standing for a day. Black pepper and cloves lend a delightful gingerbread fragrance, and the mini chocolate chips dissolve, creating a fudgy texture.

- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (1 $\frac{1}{2}$ sticks) unsalted butter, cut into 1-inch pieces, plus more to grease the pan
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup plus 3 tablespoons unsweetened (not Dutch process) cocoa powder, divided use
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups strong brewed coffee
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup whiskey
- 1 cup granulated sugar

- 1 cup dark brown sugar
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons baking soda
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- $\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon ground cloves
- 3 large eggs
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1 cup mini chocolate chips

1. Place an oven rack in the center of the oven and preheat to 325 degrees. Grease a 10-inch springform pan, then dust with 3 tablespoons cocoa powder, tapping out excess.

2. Heat the butter, coffee, whiskey and remaining cocoa powder in a heavy medium saucepan over low heat until the butter is melted, whisking occasionally. Add the sugars and whisk until dissolved. Remove from heat and transfer the mixture to a large bowl to cool.

3. While the chocolate mixture cools, whisk together the flour, baking soda, salt, black pepper and cloves in a medium bowl. In a separate bowl, whisk

together the eggs and vanilla.

4. Whisk the eggs into the cooled chocolate mixture until combined. Add the flour mixture and whisk until smooth (but don't overmix), then stir in the chocolate chips.

5. Pour the batter into the prepared pan, set on a baking sheet and bake until a wooden pick inserted into the center comes out mostly clean, about 50 minutes–1 hour.

6. Cool the cake in the pan on a wire rack. (If you're going to leave the cake in the pan overnight, cover it with a dish towel so it doesn't dry out.) Using the tip of a knife, loosen the cake from the pan, then remove the outer ring. Wrap the cake in plastic so it doesn't dry out. After a day, store it in the fridge, where it will last up to a week.


From *Cowgirl Cuisine: Rustic Recipes and Cowgirl Adventures from a Texas Ranch* (William Morrow, 2007), used with permission

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Creepy Crawlies

WE PUT A BUG IN YOUR EAR when we asked what critters creep around your part of Texas. Which of these might have you buzzing?
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WEB EXTRAS at TexasCoopPower.com Don't bug out just yet. Find more creatures that go jump in the night online.

◀ **SHELLY BORGFELD**, Pedernales EC: "After putting three large dogs in their place, this guy stopped long enough to smile for the camera."

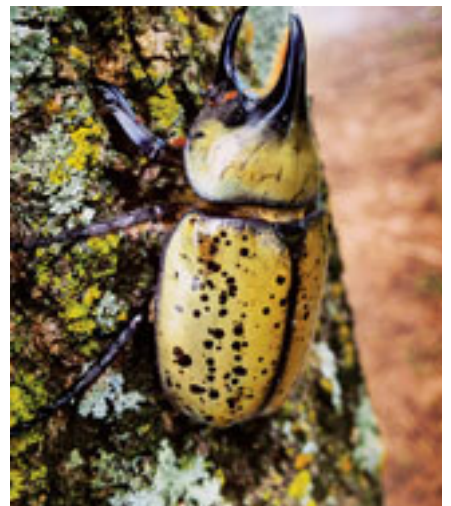


▲ **K.P. WILSKA**, United Cooperative Services: This pretty green anole was spotted in Keller.

▶ **STEPHANIE AMBROSIA**, Bluebonnet EC: Honeybee coated with pollen



▲ **NOELIA RIOS**, Nueces EC: Toad in a water bowl



▲ **BERNY DUKE**, Wood County EC: Duke spotted this eastern Hercules beetle while doing yardwork.

UPCOMING CONTESTS

FEBRUARY BARNs	DUE OCTOBER 10
MARCH IN MOTION	DUE NOVEMBER 10
APRIL BIRDS	DUE DECEMBER 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 Hill Country Western Showcase

Blanco November 4-5

(830) 833-5708, buggybarnpinemooretown.com

The showcase takes place at Pine-Moore Town, a replica of an Old West main street, and is held by the Buggy Barn Museum, a member of Pedernales Electric Cooperative. Re-enactments, demonstrations, vendors and music are among the featured attractions.



October

7

Dublin [7-8] Threads of Texas Quilt Show, (254) 646-2396

Frisco [7-8] Amateur BBQ Cook-Off and Fundraiser, (940) 395-0226, campcraigallen.org

Sattler [7-9] Cruisin' Canyon Lake Getaway Weekend, (215) 630-6883, cruisincanyonlake.com

8

Bandera Grace Lutheran Church Oktoberfest, (830) 796-3091, gracebandera.org

Quihi Sausage Supper, (830) 426-4636

Spring Woodlands Area Quilt Guild Auction, (936) 321-2511, waqg.org

Tyler Bulbs & More Fall Conference & Sale, (903) 590-2980, txmg.org/smith

13

Driftwood The Friends Foundation Barbeque, (512) 592-1345, thefriendsfoundation.org

October 22
Palestine
Hot Pepper
Festival & Parade



14

Canton [14-15] Texas Star Quilters Guild Show, (903) 848-0891, texasstarquilters.wix.com/tsqg

15

Carthage Cajun Fiesta, (903) 692-3308

Clifton Bosque County Art Club Show, (254) 675-3724, bosqueartscenter.org

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Liberty Hill Sculpture & Art Celebration,
(512) 525-4123, lhsculptures.com

Lone Oak Oak Tree Festival, (903) 662-5116,
loneoaktx.gov

Kerrville [15-16] Chalk Festival,
(830) 895-5222, kerrvillechalk.org

16

**Yoakum Holy Cross Lutheran Church Luther-
fest,** (361) 293-3033, holycrossyoakum.org

21

**Castroville Medina County Women's
Conference,** (830) 741-6180

Bryan [21-23] Brazos Valley Fair & Rodeo,
(979) 821-1408, brazosvalleyfair.com

22

Giddings Halloween Festival at the Depot,
(979) 542-3455, giddingstx.com

Howe Fall Festival, (903) 532-3320,
howeisd.net

Madisonville Texas Mushroom Festival,
(936) 348-9333, texasmushroomfestival.com

Palestine Hot Pepper Festival & Parade,
(903) 723-3014, visitpalestine.com

Stonewall Barbecue on the Pedernales,
(830) 868-7128, nps.gov/lyjo

23

Zuehl Community Harvest Festival Dinner,
(830) 914-2168

28

Flatonía [28-30] Czhilispiel, (361) 865-3920,
visitfayettecounty.com

29

Edinburg Los Muertos Bailan,
(956) 383-6246, edinburgarts.com



**Georgetown Heritage Oaks Annual Arts
& Craft Fair,** (512) 591-7696

31

Edna Halloween on Main, (361) 782-3122,
cityofedna.com

**Nacogdoches Millard's Crossing Ghost
Tour,** (936) 564-7351

November

3

**Plano [3-5] Lone Star African Violet Council
Convention,** (972) 398-3478, lsavc.org

5

Mineola Pedal for Paws Bike Ride,
(903) 638-6902, mineolapedalforpaws.com

6

Industry Honor Our Veterans, (512) 217-2140

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A New Trail in Texas

The Fannin County Quilt Barn Trail is the largest in the state

BY RUTH GLOVER

FOR AN EXCEPTIONAL COMBINATION OF folk art and back-road scenery, follow a quilt barn trail from Bonham, the Fannin County seat, northeast of Dallas.

Perhaps you remember a “crazy quilt” stitched together from unmatched pieces of fabric by one of your relatives. Quilts sometimes follow the Texas Star pattern, one of the designs you’ll see on this tour.

The concept of the quilt barn started in the Northeast and Midwest, where folks enlarged quilt blocks from bed size to barn size. Once the design was final, they painted the design directly on the building or attached full-size sections to create monumental folk art on their barns and other structures. When multiple structures in an area feature such artwork, it forms a trail. Recently, quilt barn trails began to appear in Texas.

The Fannin County Quilt Barn Trail owes its existence to Patti Wolf, who, after retiring from her career at Merck pharmaceutical company, helped establish a volunteer effort to contribute to the community. In 2012, she visited the Bonham Public Library and found photographs of quilt barn trails in other states. Wolf immediately thought about how Texas is home to a population of talented quilters and speculated that quilt barns would be as scenic as bluebonnets by the roadside. She proceeded to round up farmers and townspeople to create vibrant quilt block designs for tourists and locals to enjoy.

To take advantage of the vision realized by Wolf and her crew, stop by the Fannin County Chamber of Commerce to pick up an information packet that includes a list of 50-plus quilt barns sites in Bonham and around the county. You also can visit Fannin County’s website to download the list of locations for the quilt blocks and their titles, which include Card Trick and Goose Tracks.



The countryside becomes an art gallery along the Fannin County Quilt Barn Trail.

Most visitors begin their tour of the quilt barn trail with a 30-minute walking tour around Bonham. You’ll find blocks of Starry Night, Contrary Wife and Amish Diamond. Amish Diamond is an intricate design painted in navy blue with a white background, and it looks like it was inspired by a Dresden china dinner plate.

While walking around Bonham, notice the community’s architecture, including the buildings that house Granny Lou’s Bed and Breakfast and the Carleton House Bed and Breakfast. Both businesses combine comfort with nostalgia and are decorated with distinctive quilt blocks on their buildings. Look for attorney Michael Evans’ office close to the square for the Bow Tie quilt block.

After your walking tour, allow an hour for the driving tour. Look for the perfectly aligned geodesic block on the side of the Fannin County Multi-Purpose Complex, with its white background and autumnal colors of yellow, orange and brown. Watch for a double-sided quilt block on Texas Highway 78.

Once you’ve seen the quilts, check in

with Tim Meek, longtime Bonham resident who learned about quilt blocks from his sister, Connie Estes. Estes’ interest in quilt barn blocks inspired Meek to research quilt barn trails and create his own quilt block.

He used duct tape to define a design on a 4-by-4-foot plywood panel. “I like the contrasting colors of the yellow and bright blue,” he says. “We had fun making the block, but hanging the dang thing took a little more effort than I expected.”

The tour—which the creators bill as the largest quilt barn trail in Texas—winds through Fannin County and lets you enjoy Bonham and tiny Ivanhoe, as well as the rural scenery along the route. The colorful quilt barns stand as testament to an emerging creative tradition and the community’s spirit.

Ruth Glover, a member of Farmers EC, lives in Sachse. Her most recent book is a travel memoir, *Gift of the Suitcase*.

WEB EXTRAS at TexasCoopPower.com

 See a slideshow and directions for making a quilt block online.

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