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42
TEXAS

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Diane Newsome wears custom boots as she watches 42 in Hallettsville.

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NEXT MONTH

Open Hearts Knitting network connects co-op members making red hats to raise awareness of babies born with heart defects.



BOOTS: WYATT MCSADDEN. HAT: TEC. YARN: PICSFIVE | DOLLAR PHOTO CLUB

ON THE COVER A player shows his hand at the 2016 State Championship 42 Domino Tournament in Hallettsville. Photo by Wyatt McSpadden

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Tesla's Grand Visions

Although your item compares today's cellphones and internet with Nikola Tesla's comments of 1926, I feel you missed the point [Currents, *Man of Vision*, November 2016]. Our current technologies are a pale reflection of his vision.

His vision saw the earth as the medium of information transmission. Most likely he saw it being freely available, as were his early desires with such devices as the Wardenclyffe Tower. We have yet to meet his grand visions.

ROBERT IRELAND | TYLER
CHEROKEE COUNTY EC

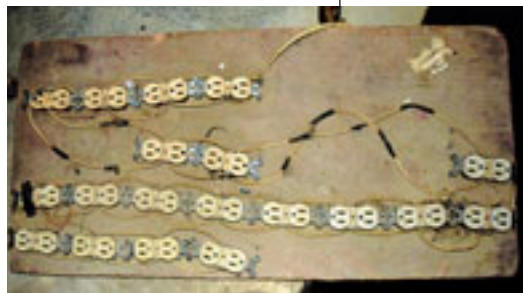
On Cloud Nine

After I read the Blue Angels article [*Angels and Daredevils*, November 2016], I looked up their schedule and found out they will be at Naval Air Station Corpus Christi on April 1. Our 7-year-old would love this show. He makes us eat at our local airport regularly. I hope to get tickets for that show.

JEANIE MUEGGE | FAYETTEVILLE
FAYETTE EC

Staying Connected in Haiti

Electricity is important, especially when the supply is limited. I just returned from doing hurricane assessment work in Haiti. In the town of Jean-Rabel,



Remembering Nelda Laney

Pete and Nelda Laney [*The Capitol Ornament Lady*, November 2016] were members of the International Flying Farmers (still active) and Texas Flying Farmers and Ranchers (disbanded). Nelda was IFF Queen in 1973-74 and would be remembered by many of the current members of the organization.

KAY RIGGAN | RAYMONDVILLE | MAGIC VALLEY EC



power was not regularly available, so a generator was on standby to supply electric power to a church and the associated school.

Near the front of the church was a board [below] that was used by students to charge cellphones. Tracing the power cord, I found two bare wires plugged into a wall outlet. It was not being used because the generator had run out of fuel.

HERB NORDMEYER | CASTROVILLE
MEDINA EC

Editor's Note: Co-ops have helped deliver electricity to more than 140 million people in 43 developing countries, including Haiti. Linemen from

several co-ops in Texas have volunteered to work in Haiti through NRECA International.

Rising Stars

I so enjoyed the article about the linemen [*Line of Duty*, October 2016]. They truly do have a higher calling. I was wondering if the linemen will hold an autographing session, especially for the gentleman on the front cover. After all, they are celebrities.

DIANNE CALAME | MINEOLA
WOOD COUNTY EC

Line of Duty was a wonderful and informative article. I usually read my *Texas Co-op Power* cover to cover, but I must admit my first stop is Recipes.

JESSIE FUGER | PIPE CREEK
BANDERA EC

Rural Internet Service

I have experienced rural internet service that is slow to nonexistent to unavailable to ridiculously expensive [Currents, *Narrowing of Broadband*, September 2016].

Being unhappy with the status quo, I did some research and concluded that a local

provider with line-of-sight service was the route to go. I'm in a low-lying area, so I needed to acquire and erect a 50-foot tower for an antenna. Reception has been vastly superior to the DSL that I had disconnected, and it offers plenty of bandwidth.

ED DOLZEL | PERRY
NAVASOTA VALLEY EC

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

Texas Co-op Power

TEXAS CO-OP POWER VOLUME 73, NUMBER 7 (USPS 540-560). Texas Co-op Power is published monthly by Texas Electric Cooperatives (TEC). Periodical Postage Paid at Austin, TX, and at additional offices. TEC is the statewide association representing 75 electric cooperatives. Texas Co-op Power's website is TexasCoopPower.com. Call (512) 454-0311 or email editor@TexasCoopPower.com. **SUBSCRIPTION PRICE** is \$4.08 per year for individual members of subscribing cooperatives. If you are not a member of a subscribing cooperative, you can purchase an annual subscription at the nonmember rate of \$7.50. Individual copies and back issues are available for \$3 each. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to Texas Co-op Power (USPS 540-560), 1122 Colorado St., 24th Floor, Austin, TX 78701. Please enclose label from this copy of Texas Co-op Power showing old address and key numbers. **ADVERTISING:** Advertisers interested in buying display ad space in Texas Co-op Power and/or in our 30 sister publications in other states, contact Martin Bevins at (512) 486-6249. Advertisements in Texas Co-op Power are paid solicitations. The publisher neither endorses nor guarantees in any manner any product or company included in this publication. Product satisfaction and delivery responsibility lie solely with the advertiser.

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HAPPENINGS

Well-Worn Workhorses

Find more happenings all across the state at TexasCoopPower.com

The Lavaca County Tractor Pullers Association boasts of bringing the “power of the past” alive with its **TEXAS ANTIQUE TRACTOR SHOW & PULL** in **HALLETTSVILLE**. It promises to showcase the machines that helped shape the agricultural world and build Texas’ rural communities.

The event, January 13–14, features a tractor parade and pull, kiddie pull, arts and crafts, and food vendors. Hallettsville is in the middle of the county, and the surrounding area includes members of San Bernard, Guadalupe Valley and Fayette electric cooperatives.

INFO ▶ (361) 772-4619, txtractorpull.com

PHILANTHROPY

BOOK CENTS

JANUARY 15 is the next deadline for public libraries to apply for grants from the Tocker Foundation, which considers requests from libraries serving populations of 12,000 or fewer. Past grants have supported outreach and shut-in programs, adult reading classes, after-school projects and bilingual materials.

In Quitman, home of Wood County Electric Cooperative, the library installed an outdoor digital sign that has rallied the community and spurred new activity.

In Denver City, the library, served by Lea County EC, is developing the Reading Rocks Book Club.

In Sinton, home of San Patricio EC, the library is digitizing its newspaper archives.

The foundation is also taking applications for travel stipends to attend the Texas Library Association’s annual conference April 19–22. That deadline is February 1. Visit tocker.org.



WORTH REPEATING

“If it weren’t for electricity, we’d all be watching television by candlelight.”

— **COMEDIAN GEORGE GOBEL**



\$109.51

BY THE NUMBERS

That would be the monthly cost for one 1,500-watt space heater used 24 hours a day if the electric rate were 10 cents per kilowatt-hour.

ALMANAC

THE DAWN OF FORT HOOD

CAMP HOOD, now called Fort Hood, was activated 75 years ago to help bolster U.S. efforts during World War II.

The temporary camp was named for Confederate Gen. John Bell Hood when it was activated January 14, 1942, barely a month after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. By 1950, it was a permanent Army post and renamed Fort Hood. The 340-square-mile base near Killeen is one of the largest military installations in the world.



ARMY DAY PARADE, CAMP HOOD (1942)

CO-OP PEOPLE

Pony Up

WHAT STARTED OUT as a friendly competition between Linda Forbus at Rusk County Electric Cooperative and Debbie Dane at Deep East Texas EC over who could grow out their hair fastest grew into a way of helping children.

"Within about six months, she sent a text and said, 'You win,' " says Forbus, who decided to keep on growing. "I wanted to donate as much as I could, however long it was going to take."

Four years later, stylist Kayla Yaws of Longview cut Forbus' hair and saved the ponytail to donate.

"It was 9 inches," Yaws says. "We measured it!"

The donation to Wigs for Kids could go a long way toward helping a child feel good. Yaws' salon added the ponytail to a bag of others to be donated.

Forbus' hair "grew out long and beautiful," Dane says. "It matches her personality—beautiful."

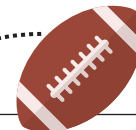


LINDA FORBUS



Did you know?

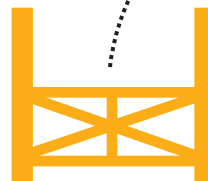
GEN. JOHN BELL HOOD graduated from the U.S. Military Academy in 1853 and served on the Texas frontier. Dissatisfied with his native Kentucky's neutrality in the Civil War, he declared himself a Texan and joined the Confederate Army.



SPORTS SECTION

Farm Teams

THIS YEAR, THE SUPER BOWL returns to Texas—February 5 at Houston's NRG Stadium. Texas leads the nation in farms and ranches, with 248,800 total, covering 130.2 million acres.



That's the equivalent of 100,153,846 football fields. A football field, including the end zones, is 360 feet long by 160 feet wide and covers 1.3 acres.

A close-up photograph of a hand placing a white domino on a wooden table. Several other white dominoes are already on the table, showing different faces. In the background, a person's face is blurred. A semi-transparent dark circle is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing the text 'THE TOP SPOT' in white serif font.

THE TOP SPOT

Competitions
and camaraderie
make 42 the
state's official
domino game



Deep

in thought, David Boggan of Boerne squints at the last two white dominoes lined up in front of him on the wooden square-topped table. Which one should he play? Boggan flicks his right wrist and tosses one out then leans back in his metal folding chair and locks eyes with his partner. He hopes Sara Beth, his teenage daughter, can throw down a domino that will beat their two opponents.

At nearby tables, similar dramas unfold inside the noisy Hallettsville Knights of Columbus Hall. Help yourself to a kolach and coffee. It's 9 o'clock on a bright March morning, and the 2016 Texas State Championship 42 Domino Tournament has begun. In its 35th year, Hallettsville's event ranks as the state's largest gathering of Texas 42 players. This year's tournament is March 4.

In 2016, 73 teams of two from across the state and a few from New Mexico traveled to this South Texas town with its rich Czech and German heritage to vie for the state title. They're fathers teamed with daughters. Husbands with wives. Grandfathers with grandsons. Best friends, college buds and siblings, too. Whether a working professional or a retired rancher, everyone's clinking dominoes. By nightfall, two weary teams will face off, naming trumps and taking tricks, until one wins.

But wait. What do trumps and tricks have to do with dominoes? Not a thing, if you're playing straight style, which awards points for creating domino chains with end sections that total multiples of five. For Texas 42, though, think bridge or spades played with 28 dominoes.

predecessor of bridge. When their parents found out, the boys were punished but not deterred. Together, the pair invented a similar game using socially accepted dominoes.

Their families loved the game. So did friends. Soon it became popular in nearby Mineral Wells, a resort where Thomas and his father delivered fruit from their orchard. Like small-town gossip, the game spread across Texas, passing from family to family and from generation to generation.

Thus was born Texas 42, named for the maximum number of points a player can win in one hand. Game rules and variations differ by locale, but most share the same objective: Capture enough dominoes with face values of five or 10 (such as blank-five or double five) to win. That's accomplished by playing the highest trump (suit) of the four played dominoes (trick).

Sound complicated? It can be. That is, until you play a few games. Then, "treys," "blanks," "offs," "marks" and other 42 buzz-

words make more sense. Confidence grows when you can study your dominoes and make a bid or pass without help. Win a few tricks, and you've learned the basics of Texas 42, designated by the Legislature in 2011 as the official state domino game.

Story by Sheryl
Smith-Rodgers

Photos by Wyatt
McSpadden

**At the Texas State
Championship 42
Domino Tournament
in Hallettsville, teams
of two duel all day
until one prevails.**



Sara Beth Boggan, above, teamed with father David, right, at the 2016 tournament. “Hallettsville was on my bucket list, but now I can check it off,” David says.

“You don’t have to be a great player to win,” assures Jody Badum, an Austin broadband company owner and president of the National 42

Players Association. “Forty-two combines luck and skill. That’s what keeps people excited about playing the game—they have a chance to win.”

Badum, 44, a Corpus Christi native who’s placed at past state championships but hasn’t yet won, grew up playing 42 with his family. So did James Parvin, 20, a fast-food restaurant manager from Abilene. He’s teamed up with grandfather Jim Smith, 64, to compete for their third year at Hallettsville. “I love this game more than baseball or football,” Parvin says between rounds.

Across Texas, the N42PA sanctions 30 or so tournaments, like Hallettsville’s, that draw serious 42 players. Members acquire points at tournaments to maintain membership and qualify for December’s Tournament of Champions. “Tournaments are a way to get people together who love to play 42,” says N42PA secretary Kent Kopnick, 33, of Austin. He and twin brother Kole meet up regularly with the Austin 42 Club, which hosts games and tournaments at C. Hunts Ice House.

Morgan Scott, 38, owns Hwy 29 BBQ, a member of Pedernales Electric Cooperative, in Bertram. He’s also a member of the Austin 42 Club. “Hallettsville is where people who can really play come to compete,” Scott confides during a break. “There are no easy marks [points] here, just a lot of sharks.”

Mary Ann Dempsey, 72, a member of United Cooperative Services from Tolar, and partner Joyce Pence, 69, a member of Tri-County EC from Granbury, compete in Hallettsville for fun. “If it depends on me winning to pay the electric bill, then I’ll be sitting in the dark,” Dempsey quips.

Past state champ Waymon Carl “Trey” Newsome III, 46, of Mount Vernon brought his entire family to Hallettsville. While he plays, parents Waymon and Diane (sporting her domino-emblazoned Western boots) and wife Jennifer entertain 6-month-old twins Carl and Katie Ann.

Talk about 42 addicts! The Newsomes’ devotion runs so deep that Trey Newsome (dubbed as a baby with the nickname after

42’s three suit) recycled old barn wood to build the Trey-Deuce Domino Saloon, a community game hall served by Wood County EC. For Christmas, he gave his twins personalized dominoes and child-sized game tables. “We play 42 every Friday evening in the saloon,” Newsome says. “Sometimes Saturdays, too.”

Meanwhile, it’s high noon in Hallettsville. Playoffs pause for a catered barbecue buffet. Then games resume. One at a time, teams get knocked out. By 3 o’clock, Boggan and his daughter, clad in matching maroon domino T-shirts, head home.

“Hallettsville was on my bucket list, but now I can check it off,” says Boggan, 59, a communications director with the Boerne Independent School District and a member of Bryan Texas Utilities. “I grew up in Lockhart and watched my parents play 42. I started playing in high school. Then I went to Texas A&M and minored in 42.”

He’s only half-joking. Texas 42 permeates Aggie culture as a popular pastime. Students play the game at wooden tables etched with graffiti at the Dixie Chicken, an iconic hangout in College Station. “I learned how to play in 2000 when I served as a counselor at a Howdy Camp,” says Hallettsville contender Katie Campbell, 36, from Houston, referring to an A&M orientation session.

No matter where you play, chances are good that the dominoes on the table came from Puremco, founded in Waco in 1954 and once the country’s largest domino maker. Nowadays, an overseas company manufactures the marble-like dominoes for Puremco. Online or at the Waco store, you can choose from a variety of



● **“I grew up in Lockhart and watched my parents play 42. I started playing in high school. Then I went to Texas A&M and minored in 42.”** —DAVID BOGGAN

imprinted dominoes and order personalized sets, too.

Puremco’s story and more about 42 can be mined in Dennis Roberson’s *Winning 42: Strategy & Lore of the National Game of Texas*. The author, who played at Hallettsville for years with his father, explains the basics of 42, gives advice for winning, and shares anecdotes from old-timers and celebrities, such as Gov. Ann Richards, journalist Bill Moyers and singer-songwriter Robert Earl Keen.

Another famous 42 fan was President Lyndon B. Johnson, who played to relieve stress. On January 31, 1968, the Viet Cong launched a series of attacks against South Vietnam in what became known as the Tet Offensive. Around the clock, Johnson received updates. Between reports, he played 42 with colleagues. “For one week, there was a constant game of dominoes going in the upstairs living room of the White House,” the late congressman J.J. “Jake” Pickle recalled in a January 1975 interview.

Back in Hallettsville, there’s no time for a supper break. By 9:30 p.m., a dozen tired spectators focus on four exhausted finalists. Austinites Terry Pogue, 53, a firefighter, and Leslie Houston, 38, a technology strategist, partner regularly in

competitions across the state and won the 2014 state title. The pair faces Gary Mobley, 49, who works for a farm equipment company, and daughter Erika Littrell, 22, a softball coach. They live in Saltillo and are members of Farmers EC.

Round after round, Mobley and Houston each rest their chins on one hand and toss out dominoes with the other. Pogue bounces a knee and fidgets in his metal chair. Littrell, poker faced and steely eyed, darts glances at her dad. This is her first tournament.

“I’ve been competing here for 12 years,” Pogue comments between hands. “It took me 10 years to get to the final table.”

Shortly before 10 p.m., the last game ends. First-place plaques and a cash prize go to the new state champs: Pogue and Houston. Mobley and Littrell receive plaques and cash for second place. “Keep playing,” Pogue tells Littrell as the two part ways. “We need young players to keep 42 alive in Texas.”

Littrell nods. Odds are, she’ll be back in Hallettsville next year.

Sheryl Smith-Rodgers of Blanco learned 42 basics with the Blanco 42 Club, which has met since the 1950s. She is a member of Pedernales EC.

WEB EXTRAS at TexasCoopPower.com Learn how to play 42 and talk the lingo spoken around the table.



LONG LIVE

TEXAS A&M FOREST SERVICE NURTURES REMAINING LEGACY PINES AND THE WILDLIFE THEY SUPPORT

LOOKING

up from the middle of a stand of mature pine trees reveals strength, beauty and majesty. The blue of the sky pops through the treetops. Breezes sound like whispers. A layer of fallen needles muffles footsteps and amplifies the calls of birds and insects.

At one time, the longleaf pine forest covered more than 90 million acres, beginning in southeastern Virginia and extending

STORY AND PHOTOS BY LADAWN FLETCHER

south to Florida and west to East Texas. Today, only 3.3 million acres remain, with fewer than 45,000 acres in Texas. In much of the region, long-

leaf pine has been replaced by the faster-growing yellow pine or loblolly pine. Maintaining the longleaf legacy while managing these more commercially expedient varieties is among the challenges that the Texas A&M Forest Service faces.

Protecting the ecosystem of every forest in the state is the forest service's mission. Tom Boggus, Texas state forester and director of the Texas A&M Forest Service, leads a staff of 550 that oversees more than 60 million acres of forestland. Only Alaska has more.

Ninety-six TFS offices dot the state, and the agency works with a network of organizations to provide services that range from wildfire prevention to estate planning.

"We leverage ourselves," Boggus says. "We train and equip people in the community so Texans can take care of themselves."

The timber industry also falls under the TFS umbrella. Even though forests make up less than one-third of the state, timber is an important industry. Texas encompasses more than 11 million acres of privately owned productive timberland, and in 2014 the forest sector created a total economic impact of more than \$30 billion as it supported nearly 140,000 jobs.



THE LONGLEAF

Even though East Texas is known for forests, Central and West Texas contain 49.7 million acres of forest. Almost 95 percent of the forestland in the area is privately owned.

TFS' role as manager and conservationist is evident in its efforts to restore longleaf pine. The old growth of longleaf pine forest timber fueled the new growth of the American South: Lumber mills, railroads and entire communities relied on the longleaf.

Now, a drive through the Pineywoods of East Texas most likely features the faster-growing loblolly pine. Just a century ago, the longleaf pine tree was the most prominent and desirable of the species. To help preserve existing stands of longleaf pine, and encourage the planting and growth of more, TFS works with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, National Wild

Turkey Federation, the Nature Conservancy, U.S. Forest Service and other agencies.

All these conservation-focused organizations work closely with


landowners and industry heavyweights such as International Paper to increase longleaf pine acreage and support the wildlife that depends on it. More funding has become available to assist landowners in preserving their forest-based income and to sustain healthy longleaf forest. Successfully managing the timber industry is a shared goal among landowners and support groups.

Simon Winston of Lufkin is one of the landowners who works with TFS. Driving through his tree farm, one sees lush stands of loblolly and longleaf pine in various stages of growth. His timber properties are considered the gold standard for land conservation and management, and his success has been acknowledged with the Leopold Conservation Award, administered through the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department. His well-maintained longleaf pine stands look more like a park than a wild forest. Winston says even before funding and research was shared with landowners like him, he was concerned about conservation.

"Deer, birds, songbirds, ground-nesting birds—they all do better when the property is managed correctly," Winston says.

One controversial component of proper management is the

Longleaf pines, which once dominated East Texas, can grow to more than 100 feet tall and live for 500 years.



**AT ONE TIME, THE LONGLEAF
PINE FOREST COVERED MORE THAN
90 MILLION ACRES, BEGINNING IN
SOUTHEASTERN VIRGINIA AND EXTEND-
ING SOUTH TO FLORIDA AND WEST TO
EAST TEXAS. TODAY, ONLY 3.3 MILLION
ACRES REMAIN, WITH FEWER THAN
45,000 ACRES IN TEXAS.**

use of prescribed burns, which frighten many landowners but are necessary for optimum growth of longleaf pine.

Prescribed burning mimics the important wildfire cycle. A low understory keeps the fires that occur naturally from burning too high or too hot. “It keeps your forest from burning up catastrophically on the timber side,” says Winston, who alternates burning acres on his property. “Plus, it keeps the invasive species down if you are trying to grow timber. If you knock that back, your timber will grow better.”

TFS helps landowners with the important work of developing strategies. “We help them to develop a plan and to help them achieve the goals they want for their land,” Boggus says. “We try to give them land-management tools to help them accomplish their objectives.”

These plans are created at no charge to the landowner, and Boggus says 97 percent of the plans created by his office are implemented by landowners to some degree. To restore the longleaf pine, his office needs to reach contiguous landowners throughout the eastern part of the state.

THE ecosystem in the longleaf pine forest is second only to the Amazon rainforest in biodiversity, and over the past 20 years, funding has begun to catch up with the interest in preserving it. This helps agencies such as TFS collaborate effectively with landowners working to maintain the health of the ecosystem.

Even though it is easy to notice the loss of the towering pine

trees that can grow more than 100 feet tall and live for 500 years, it is often more difficult to see the loss of habitat for hundreds of species of birds, animals and plants.

White tail deer, bobwhite quail, indigo snakes and wild turkeys are all native to longleaf forests, and the restoration of the forest helps maintain a healthy population.

Wendy Ledbetter has been working with the Nature Conservancy on the longleaf initiative for almost 25 years and has seen how working with the landowner’s goals in mind has helped move many stakeholders toward more successful conservation.

“If they are a timber investment management group, they are managing property for clients to achieve a financial return,” Ledbetter says. “While they may have biological objectives and goals, they also have an obligation to meet financial goals. That puts additional obligations on them,” she says. “Within this group, we are trying to find what can we agree on.”

“Within the last several years, the support, funding and attention given to the longleaf ecosystem from federal funding to private funding has increased. Everybody is communicating more, and the resources and knowledge are being shared.”

Pine is still in high demand commercially. The wood from longleaf pine differs from other woods. It is slow to rot, so it was frequently used in boatmaking.

In the early days of the East Texas timber industry, the longleaf tree was valued beyond the wood it produced. For up to 20 years before harvest, a tree could be tapped for resin, which was then distilled into turpentine. Rosin, used to increase the friction between bows and strings on musical instruments and by gymnasts and bowlers to improve their grips, is the material left over after the distillation of the turpentine. Pine tar and pine pitch—made from heating sap drippings—was used to waterproof seams and joints, such as on boats and buckets.

To support the growing industry, timber mills sprang up and spawned new towns. The mills needed a way to transport their forest treasure, and railways—with ties made from the same virgin pine—formed the infrastructure that made it possible.

Conservationists remain optimistic, and those working toward reforestation are hopeful about a return to the glory days of the longleaf pine in Texas. Alan Shadow, plant manager for the National Resources Conservation Service, says it isn’t too late for the longleaf pine.

“It’s never too late for Mother Nature,” Shadow says. “She’s resilient.”

LaDawn Fletcher is a Houston-area writer who enjoys writing about Texas.

WEB EXTRAS at TexasCoopPower.com Check out the Texas A&M Forest Service information portal and its Map My Property app.



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That first crack of thunder sounded like a bomb just fell on Ramshorn Peak. Black clouds rolled in and the wind shook the trees. I had ventured off the trail on my own, gambled with the weather and now I was trapped in the forest. Miles from camp. Surrounded by wilderness and watching eyes. I knew that if I was going to make it through the night I needed to find shelter and build a fire... fast. As the first raindrops fell, I reached for my **Stag Hunter Knife**.

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actual size.



Rating of A+



Energy Savings for Every Season

SAVING MONEY ON UTILITY BILLS through greater energy efficiency is a year-round objective for many co-op members, but the methods for achieving this goal change with the seasons in Texas.

Several factors affect energy efficiency, including weather, the age and condition of your home, and desired comfort levels. During fall and winter months, when it's cooler outdoors, you'll want a warm home as you seek to keep the cold air out. In the spring and summer, the focus is on keeping hot air from infiltrating cool abodes.

Fall and Winter: Keeping Heat In

To maintain a warm indoor environment in chilly weather, there are simple steps you can take to increase energy efficiency.

There's no better time to examine seals on doors and windows for air leaks. Caulk and weatherstrip as needed to seal in warm air and energy savings. Similarly, examine electrical outlets for air leaks, and where necessary, install foam gaskets behind them to prevent drafts.

During the day, open curtains or drapes on south-facing windows to let sunlight heat your home naturally. Close window treatments at night for an added layer of insulation.

As the temperature drops, schedule a service appointment for your heating system to ensure that it is operating at an optimal level.

Low-cost or no-cost steps for energy savings include affixing heavy, clear plastic to the insides of your windowpanes to create an additional barrier against cold air. Ensure that the plastic is sealed tightly to the pane to help reduce infiltration.

Use a programmable thermostat to set the temperature as low as is comfortable when you are home (ideally around 68 degrees). When you are asleep or away, turn the temperature down. A downward adjustment of 10–15 degrees over long stretches of time can save about 10 percent a year on heating and cooling costs, according to the Department of Energy.

Spring and Summer: Keeping Your Cool

During warm months, energy savings and efficiency will require different measures, many of which are just as inexpensive.



No matter the season, there is always a way to save electricity around the house.

Close blinds and drapes during the day to keep the sun's warming rays at bay. Where practical, plant trees and shrubs that offer shade in summer and allow sunlight through in winter.

In extremely hot weather, your cooling system works harder to close the gap between the high outdoor temperature and the cool indoor thermostat setting. To lessen the difference and lower cooling costs, set the thermostat as high as you can while maintaining your comfort level.

Using a ceiling fan in conjunction with your air conditioning can allow you to increase the thermostat setting by about 4 degrees with no reduction in comfort. Just make sure to turn ceiling fans off when no one is in the room.

Use a programmable thermostat to adjust the settings a few degrees higher when nobody is home or your family is sleeping.

During the hottest months, it's all the more critical to replace any remaining incandescent lightbulbs with light-emitting diode bulbs. The unwanted heat from the old bulbs affects energy use.

To learn more about additional energy-saving tips and programs, contact your electric cooperative.

Smoke Alarm Safety

ON AVERAGE, EIGHT PEOPLE DIE IN HOUSE FIRES EVERY DAY IN THE U.S.—almost 3,000 people every year, according to the National Fire Protection Association. Although working smoke alarms cut the chance of dying in a fire nearly in half, roughly two-thirds of all house fire deaths still occur in homes without working smoke alarms.

Newer smoke alarm recommendations and technologies provide greater protection than ever before. Unfortunately, many people are unaware of these advances and lack the recommended level of residential smoke alarm protection.

Your electric cooperative has some tips for making sure your smoke alarms are working properly to keep your family safe.

- ▶ Smoke detectors should be installed in every bedroom, outside each sleeping area and on every level of multistory homes.

- ▶ For the best protection, alarms should be interconnected so that they all sound if one sounds. Manufacturers now are producing battery-operated alarms that are interconnected by wireless technology.



STURTI / ISTOCK.COM

Choose hardwired detectors with battery backups over those operated by batteries alone.

electric or have a hush feature to temporarily reduce the alarm sensitivity.

- ▶ If possible, alarms should be mounted in the center of the ceiling. If mounted on a wall, an alarm should be located 6–12 inches below the ceiling.

- ▶ Smoke alarms should be tested once a month, and batteries should be replaced in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions, at least once a year. If an alarm "chirps" or "beeps" to indicate low batteries, they should be replaced immediately.

- ▶ Occasionally dust or lightly vacuum the exterior of the alarm.

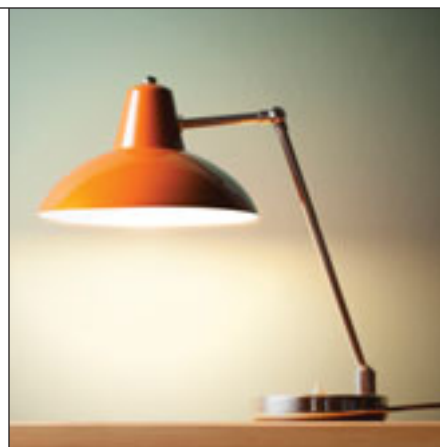
- ▶ Smoke alarms should be replaced in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions, at least every 10 years.

- ▶ Combination smoke alarms that include ionization and photoelectric alarms offer the most comprehensive protection. An ionization alarm is more responsive to flames, while a photoelectric alarm is more responsive to a smoldering fire.

- ▶ Hardwired smoke detectors with battery backups are more reliable than those powered solely by batteries.

- ▶ Choose alarms that bear the label of a nationally recognized testing laboratory.

- ▶ Install smoke detectors at least 10 feet from cooking appliances to reduce nuisance alarms. Alarms installed within 10–20 feet of a cooking appliance must be photo-



MALEPAPASO / ISTOCK.COM

Replacing old lamps with LED fixtures will save you money on your electric bill.

Save on Lighting and Energy

ONE OF THE EASIEST WAYS TO SAVE

money on your electric bill—and do your part for the environment—is to be smarter about the lighting in your house.

Here are five ways to save energy with smarter lighting choices:

- 1. Identify the rooms where your family spends the most time.** Replace the light fixtures—overhead, under-counter and tabletop—with LED fixtures. They can last up to 50 times longer than a lamp or overhead fixture that takes an old-fashioned incandescent lightbulb.

- 2. Buy lighting products that carry a warranty of at least two years.** That goes for LED fixtures, ceiling fans with built-in lights and other products.

- 3. Install ceiling fans.** Choose a combo unit that includes a fan and a light, and have an electrician install it. Ceiling fans move the air around and make rooms feel cooler in the summer and warmer in the winter.

- 4. Use dimmers.** They're not just for mood lighting; they're for energy savings, too. Most dimmers conserve energy.

- 5. This one's not new: Turn the lights off when you leave a room.** Train your family to do the same. Impossible? Install motion-sensing lights or add a timer to your lights so they turn off automatically when nobody's using the room.

Waltz Heard 'Round the World

Classic Texas dance tune named for Westphalia traces origins to Poland

BY CLAY COPPEDGE

ONE OF THE SHORTEST STATE HIGHWAYS in Texas, SH 320, passes through the Falls County town of Westphalia, where you'll find one of the oldest wooden churches in the state, the Church of the Visitation. The first families to settle there came from Westphalia, Germany, in 1879 and named their new home to honor the old homeland.

They finished building a church in February 1884 but received a harsh lesson in Texas weather when a storm blew it down in May. The lessons learned are on display in the current structure, built in 1895 and featuring high, distinctive twin bell towers, each built to accommodate 6 inches of sway.

Those first families were farmers, as are most of the area's present families, and they learned to reckon with the weather. In October 1906, they held the first homecoming and picnic as a way to celebrate the harvest, feast on the bounty and enjoy some music. People in Westphalia have always liked their music.

If you've heard of Westphalia, it's probably not because of the highway, the church or even the homecoming and picnic, which is still going strong 110 years later and draws almost 5,000 people every fall. If the name rings a bell at all, it's probably in connection with the old fiddle classic, the *Westphalia Waltz*.

Cotton Collins, a fiddler with the Lone Star Playboys, heard the tune when he was in Germany with the Army during World War II. The melody followed him back to Texas, where Collins transcribed it for the fiddle and called it the *No Name Waltz*.

Collins played the song with the Lone Star Playboys, but he didn't name that

tune until 1946 after a gig at Westphalia Hall. The band was meeting with hall manager B.J. Lignau to divvy up the evening's proceeds when Collins remarked that the crowd sure liked his *No Name Waltz*. Lignau suggested he call it *Westphalia Waltz*. The song was a bona fide hit when Blue Bonnet Records, a fledgling Dallas label, released it in 1947. The great Texas fiddle master Johnny Gimble played with the band in 1948, and Gimble's version is the one we hear most often today—but Collins got the copyright.

The Lone Star Playboys' popularity waned in the late '40s, but the band remained popular in Central Texas well into the '50s. The band's final recordings, on the Everstate Records label, were under bass player Charlie Adams' name. He had a minor 1953 novelty hit, *Hey, Liberace*, for Columbia Records.

I didn't know any of this until I spent an afternoon with the late Helen Lignau, B.J. Lignau's daughter-in-law, at the Little School Museum and Covenant in Westphalia several years ago while working on a story for the *Temple Daily Telegram*. The museum has a *Westphalia Waltz* display featuring sheet music, a fiddle, a copy of the original Blue Bonnet recording and photos of the band. Most of the information for this story came from Lignau after I asked her what she knew about the song and the band.

She walked me over to the display and pointed to a picture of the Lone Star Playboys, all of whom she knew as a little girl, and rattled off the names of Pee Wee Truehitt, lead singer Hamlet Booker and his



brother Morris—who wrote lyrics for *Westphalia Waltz* that never really caught on—and banjo player Vince Incardona.

Another picture showed steel player Lefty Nason, who joined the Lone Star Playboys in 1947 and supplied the band with its other well-known song, *Steel Guitar Bounce*.

“Lefty was a Yankee,” Lignau marveled, shaking her head at the very thought. “He was from New Jersey or some place. I don’t know how he ever got in the band.”

Filmmaker Joe Weed interviewed Lignau a few years after I did, and, beginning in 2006, embarked on a five-year journey to find the origins of *Westphalia Waltz*. His 2011 documentary, *The Waltz to Westphalia*, reveals that a Texas fiddle classic named to honor a small Texas town named to honor a German province is

actually a Polish folk song.

Weed also discovered that Collins and the Lone Star Playboys weren’t the first musicians to adapt and record the song. The Walter Fronc Orchestra recorded it under one of the song’s Polish titles, *Pytala Sie Pani*, for RCA Victor in 1930. Polish violinist Ignacy Podgorski recorded it for Columbia Records seven years later.

And, according to Weed’s research, a fiddler from Bremond brought the tune from Chicago to Texas in the late 1930s, almost a decade before the Lone Star Playboys recorded their hit version.

In the end, *Westphalia Waltz* is too universal a tune to belong to just one town or one performer. Like all great music, it belongs to the whole world.

Clay Coppedge, a member of Bartlett EC, lives near Walburg.

Sylvia Mae's Soul Food

A generation later, Jacksonville diner still offers childhood memories

BY CYNTHIA MATLOCK

DRIVING THROUGH MY HOMETOWN OF Jacksonville in East Texas one warm spring day, I decided to detour along Lincoln Street and tour the old neighborhood I visited so often during my childhood in the mid-70s. I was glad to see that one of my favorite spots remained. Back then, we'd called it Miss Melvin's Place. Now, it was freshly painted, with a new sign that read Sylvia Mae's Soul Food, and the parking lot was full. The owner must've passed Daddy's test.

Back during the segregation era, Lincoln Street was typically bustling. On weekends, it was called the "red-light district," says my 92-year-old mother, Connie Nays. "Paycheck money could be spent on gambling, jumping juke joints, bootleg whiskey and other cash-flowing businesses." Good eating places were all around, and one was Miss Melvin's. There was no sign out front, and it sold fish sandwiches and plate lunches.

Tapping my brakes that spring day of my return visit, I was amazed at how the landscape along the street had changed. The businesses had included the general store, the café/pool hall, the drugstore and others, as well as Mr. Polk, who parked his "cab" beside the café to wait for folks who needed a ride.

Now, the street looked like a tornado had swept through and taken away most of the buildings. It made me feel sad.

The change was an unintended effect of integration, after which everyone's green money was good everywhere. There was no longer a need for anyone to go to the back of a café to order a hamburger.

Once anyone could go anywhere to get what they needed, business thinned out in the neighborhood.

Now there are mostly vacant lots, but I was glad to see a new brick church with flashing neon lights, and a brick building with three tenants, including an insurance agent and a beauty shop.

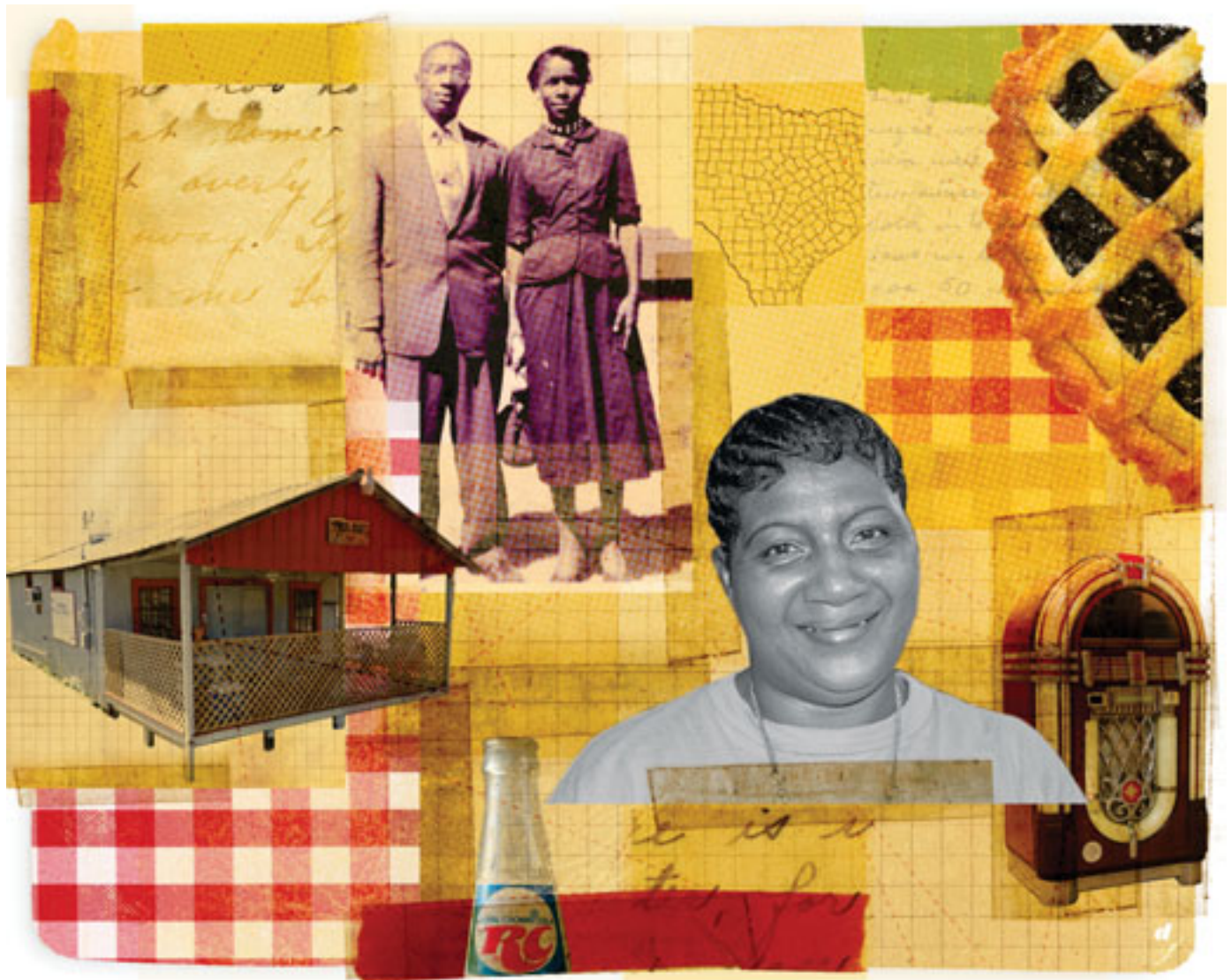
As I approached the next corner, my heart pounded as I saw the building I remembered from my youth, now with a blinking sign that said "Open." I pulled into the still-red-dirt parking lot and reflected on my memories of the busy café.

I was an energetic teenager, raised on a farm outside of Jacksonville. To beat the summer heat, we started our mornings before daybreak. Monday through Friday, my mom cooked a hearty breakfast. After eating, we put on our hats and cool cotton clothing and prepared to select the best vegetables we'd raised for sale. We kept the bruised or overripe vegetables for eating and canning at home.

Saturdays were different. We got to go to town, and my sister and I would ask our parents for money to get a golden-fried fish sandwich. When we entered Miss Melvin's, we knew we would see a crowd of characters from the community.

The screen door's slam announced customers coming in or going out. I'd immediately notice the bright lights flashing on the jukebox. Usually it was playing a blues song. Passing by the red-topped tables with mismatched chairs, my sister and I headed to the bar because sitting at the bar made me feel grown-up.

There were always a few people waiting



and a few people eating, and there was a freedom feeling in the place, like when the teacher leaves the room. I inhaled the mingled aromas of fish and cigarette smoke. Talk was punctuated with bursts of laughter, and all competed with the song from the jukebox.

Someone would always yell, "That's my song!"

Dad gave us \$5 to share since he had to buy gas to drive home. "Two sandwiches. To go," I told the waitress, side-glancing at my sister. I knew it would be a long wait because the cook didn't start any order until you placed it. And she used a cast-iron skillet, not a deep fryer. From the bar, I could see her turning and fixing things through the kitchen door.

When I asked about the drinks, I was told that they only had Pepsi, RC Cola and water. No NuGrape or Fanta orange? I sighed, because our parents forbade brown sodas. So I ordered water.

Our food came out smoking hot and

sacked to go, but I couldn't wait. I signaled my sister to sit down, and it became an "eat here" order.

After observing the various customers and how the waitress handled them all, I just wished I had more money so I could leave her and the cook a good tip.

Now, as I opened the door of my car, I wondered how Miss Melvin's had changed. I entered to check out the food and service of the new owner.

From segregation. To integration. To modernization.

As I entered the café, all races were dining together. The menu included down-home cooking such as meatloaf, chicken and dressing, oxtails, smothered pig feet and, of course, fried fish. The new owner, Sylvia, had posted blue "Like us on Facebook" signs on the tables.

The place still seemed small and cozy. Sylvia made me feel like I had just walked into her kitchen and sat down. In a few minutes, she brought me my plate. The

macaroni and melting cheese, fresh purple hull peas and hot-water cornbread were delicious. It looked like the building still holds cooks and owners who passed the test Daddy always gave us kids.

My daddy would gather his unsold vegetables from the farmers market, and then we'd sell them up and down the streets. I'd help work with the customers. He always reminded us that customer service is just as important as the product. Daddy would say, "Now listen, chirren: You may have only one chance to keep a customer." Then he would watch to see how we handled customers. That was our test.

After cleaning my plate and finishing off my unsweetened tea at Sylvia Mae's, I left satisfied. I had entered wondering: Which would win this time, customer service or the product? I've found, even in changing times, it takes both.

Cynthia Matlock manages a small cattle ranch outside of Whitehouse with her husband.

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Gem of the century meets deal of the century. With its remarkable rarity and unique gemstone qualities, it's no wonder that experts have dubbed it, "the gemstone of the 20th century." In recent years, top-quality tanzanite gems have fetched higher prices at auction than rubies, emeralds or diamonds! But because we buy direct and use our own designers, we are able to offer you this rare beauty for **ONLY \$59!**

What makes tanzanite so irresistible to jewelers and gem experts? Part of its appeal is the beautiful violet blue color. Tanzanite is also trichroic—which means that three different colors are visible when the stone is viewed from different angles.

"This ring is unbelievable. I've owned some spectacular high-dollar gemstones in my life and this ring will compete with any of them!" —Katharine, Shreveport, LA

Henry Platt, past president and chairman of Tiffany & Company, called Tanzanite "The most important gemstone discovery in over 2,000 years."

A gemstone found only one place on earth, means supply is extremely limited. Get your hands on the *Karatu Tanzanite Ring* before they're gone!

Your satisfaction is 100% guaranteed. Experience the rare beauty of the *Karatu Tanzanite Ring* for two months. If you're not completely awestruck, simply send it back within 60 days for a complete refund of the sale price. We want you to feel like you got the deal of the century!

With over 4,000 sold, we currently have less than 2,000 in stock!

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The Gemstone Worth Staking Your Reputation On

From show stopping reds and vivid blues to deep
greens and fragile pinks, tourmaline is the chameleon
of the gem world. This gemstone comes in such a dazzling range of
colors that its name literally means "mixed gems."

This stone is of such high quality that famed gemologist George Frederick Kunz
staked his reputation on it. Walking into the offices of one of the biggest jewelers on
5th Avenue with green tourmaline in tow, he convinced the owner to purchase it. It was
this interaction that led to Kunz becoming the company's resident gem expert for 53 years.

Like Kunz, we know a winner when we see it, so we created the **Chameleon Tourmaline
Necklace**. We've gathered 340 carats of tourmaline in shades of blue, green, pink, and gold. The
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86648595

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4-1/2" ANGLE GRINDER

drillmaster

ITEM 60625 shown
95578/69645

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

\$9.99

comp at \$20.26

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12,000 LB. ELECTRIC WINCH WITH REMOTE CONTROL AND AUTOMATIC BRAKE

BADLAND

ITEM 61256
61889
60813 shown

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comp at \$752.99

86589980

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PREDATOR ENGINES

ITEM 60363/69730
ITEM 68121/69727 shown
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\$119.99

comp at \$328

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A. HOT DOG
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B. PANCAKE
ITEM 95275 shown
60637/61615

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WOW SUPER COUPON

72" x 80" MOVING BLANKET

HaulMaster

ITEM 66537 shown
69505/62418

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

\$5.99

comp at \$17.97

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WOW SUPER COUPON

SOLAR ROPE LIGHT

ITEM 62533/68353 shown

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

\$9.99

comp at \$29.97

86587817

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ITEM 61609/67831 shown

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

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comp at \$952.99

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WOW SUPER COUPON

MOVER'S DOLLY

HaulMaster

ITEM 60497/93888 shown
61899/62399
63095/63096
63098/63097

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

\$7.99

comp at \$19.97

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ITEM 69227/62116
62584/68048 shown

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

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HIGH LIFT RIDING LAWN MOWER / ATV LIFT

PITTSBURGH

ITEM 61523 shown
60395/62325/62493

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

\$89.99

comp at \$179.99

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WOW SUPER COUPON

12 VOLT MAGNETIC TOWING LIGHT KIT

HaulMaster

ITEM 63100

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

\$9.99

comp at \$34.95

86597724

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69265/62344

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ITEM 42292 shown
69594/69955

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The New London School Explosion

Disaster caused by natural gas leak claimed nearly 300 lives—mostly students—in 1937

BY CYNDY IRVINE

DURING THE 1930S, AS THE GLOOM OF THE Great Depression lingered across America, East Texas experienced a financial boom because of the discovery of oil. The new-found resource brought a population surge and unexpected prosperity.

New London became home to one of the richest rural school districts in the nation. A modern facility for grades K–11 (there was no 12th grade) was completed in 1932. The campus encompassed busy oil derricks and pipelines, and included an elementary school, a junior/senior high school, a gymnasium and the first-in-the-area lighted stadium for Friday night football games.

No expense was spared. Yet, to save \$300 per month, school officials decided to tap into a residue line of Parade Gasoline Company and obtain free natural gas, then considered a valueless byproduct from the oil wells. The oil companies had no use for the gas, and siphoning some of it from a pipeline for homes and businesses was a common money-saving practice. At that time, natural gas had no distinctive odorized additive.

Unknown to anyone, an estimated 64,000 cubic feet of natural gas leaked from a faulty connection and accumulated in the basement beneath the junior/senior high school building. At 3:17 p.m. on Thursday, March 18, 1937, as high school classes were about to adjourn, the machine shop teacher flipped a switch to turn on a power sander.

The switch ignited the gas, and the building exploded with a force that could be felt for miles. The main school building's walls and roof collapsed, crushing victims in a massive pile of debris.

Hundreds of people rushed to the scene and began digging through the rubble. Desperate parents struggled to find their children. Rescue workers, including nurses and doctors, law enforcement, oil field roughnecks and Texas Rangers, rushed to



the site. Buildings in the area were converted into morgues and field hospitals. Floodlights were set up, and rescuers searched for victims through the night. Seventeen hours after the blast, the site was clear. The grief-stricken community reeled in shock.

Of the 500 students and 40 teachers in the building, approximately 294 died in the explosion, making it the third-deadliest disaster in Texas history. Only the 1900 hurricane in Galveston, in which 6,000–8,000 people perished, and the 1947 Texas City ship explosion, which claimed 576 lives, killed more people.

Every family in New London was affected. Ten days later, when classes resumed in the gymnasium and makeshift tents, only about half of the original students were in attendance. A new building, which would become today's West Rusk High School, opened its doors two years later. Many New London residents would not recover from the tragedy. Some moved away; some never spoke of it.

The world shared the community's grief. Hundreds wired their condolences. Funds for a monument were donated, and in 1939, a 32-foot tall granite cenotaph was erected near the site. The names of the

victims are engraved around its base.

Parents filed charges of negligence, but all lawsuits were eventually dismissed, and no individual was found to be liable or directly responsible. The Texas Legislature mandated that all utility gas be odorized so that leaks can be more easily detected; other states and countries followed suit. Today, natural gas and propane emit the distinctive rotten-egg odor of the harmless but pungent chemical mercaptan.

The London Museum opened in 1998 across from the explosion site on Texas Highway 42. Visitors can view a collection of photographs and newspaper clippings, telegrams and letters of condolence, transcripts of survivor accounts and personal artifacts gathered from the wreckage.

The museum also offers a working 1938 soda fountain and small café. Volunteers, including head docent John Davidson, whose older sister died in the explosion, are dedicated to promoting awareness of the tragedy and keeping alive the memories of those who died that day.

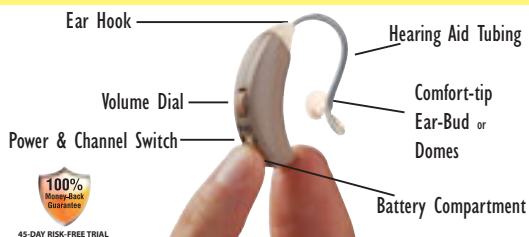
"There is an old saying," says Davidson, "'No one is ever dead, truly dead, until no one remembers them and no one speaks their name.' We remember."

Cyndy Irvine is a San Antonio native.

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Breakfast for Dinner



ANDREW ZIMMERN

TO KICK OFF THE NEW YEAR, WE'RE serving breakfast at the end of the day. I can eat huevos at any hour, and the habit is shared by my friend Andrew Zimmern, chef, writer and host of the Travel Channel's *Bizarre Foods*. "Everyone—whether you're 5 or 50 years old—loves the moment when the rules go out the window, and French toast and bacon hit the dinner table," he says. "Chilaquiles with homemade salsa roja is my favorite way to break the rules."

PAULA DISBROWE, FOOD EDITOR

Chilaquiles With Fried Eggs

SALSA ROJA

- 4 cups water
- 4 ancho chile peppers
- 2 tablespoons safflower oil
- 1 small white onion, minced (about 1 cup)
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 2 chipotle peppers in adobo sauce
- 4 cups diced tomatoes in their juice
- Salt to taste

SALSA VERDE

- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 small onion, minced
- 2 jalapeño peppers, stemmed, seeded and minced
- ½ pound tomatillos, husked, rinsed and quartered
- 3 tablespoons fresh cilantro leaves
- 1 ripe avocado
- 2 tablespoons fresh lime juice

TORTILLA STRIPS

- 12 fresh corn tortillas
- ⅔ cup safflower oil, or more as needed
- Salt to taste

CHILAQUILES

- 2 tablespoons safflower oil
- 4 eggs
- 1 cup cotija cheese or queso fresco

CONTINUED ON PAGE 32



FOOD: MADELINE HILL; ZIMMERN: STEVE HENKE

Recipes

Breakfast for Dinner



THIS MONTH'S RECIPE CONTEST WINNER

CARLY TERRELL | UNITED COOPERATIVE SERVICES

We'll take our eggs and breakfast sausage in enchilada form any time of day. Terrell says this recipe is a family favorite for breakfast, brunch or dinner. Feel free to substitute ham, chorizo or sautéed vegetables for the sausage.

Breakfast Enchiladas

- 1 pound breakfast sausage
- Pinch each salt, pepper and ground cumin to taste
- 1 green bell pepper, chopped
- ½ red onion, diced
- 1 cup button or cremini mushrooms, stemmed and sliced
- 8 flour tortillas
- 2 cups shredded cheddar or Monterey Jack cheese
- 6 eggs, beaten
- ½ cup milk
- 1 can (10 ounces) diced tomatoes and green chiles, slightly drained
- Jalapeños, thinly sliced, for garnish
- Green onions, thinly sliced, for garnish
- Lime wedges for garnish
- Salsa or hot sauce for garnish

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Coat a 9-by-13-inch baking dish with non-stick spray.

2. Cook breakfast sausage in a skillet over medium heat. When the sausage is about halfway cooked, add the seasonings, vegetables and mushrooms.

Continue cooking until the sausage is cooked through and the vegetables and mushrooms are softened. Remove from heat and cool slightly.

3. Prepare enchiladas. Spoon a healthy amount of sausage mixture into the center of each tortilla and top with a tablespoon of cheese. Roll tortilla snugly and place seam-side down in the baking dish. Repeat, using the remaining tortillas and filling. (Keep the ends of each enchilada "open," or unstuffed, so the egg mixture can seep in.)

4. In a medium bowl, whisk together the eggs and milk with an additional pinch of salt and pepper. Fold the tomatoes and chiles into the eggs, stir to combine, then pour the entire mixture over the filled tortillas. Gently jiggle the dish to help the egg mixture distribute evenly.

5. Cover the baking dish with foil and bake 30 minutes, then remove foil and top with remaining shredded cheese. Continue to bake, uncovered, another 10–15 minutes, until cheese is melted and bubbling. Remove from oven and let sit about 10 minutes. Serve with the garnish of your choice. Serves 4–6.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 31

1 ripe avocado, diced

1 red onion, minced

1. **SALSA ROJA:** Bring water to a boil. Toast ancho chiles in a small pan over medium heat, then remove. Place chiles in a bowl, cover with boiling water and let sit 30 minutes. Remove, trim away stems and seeds, and set aside.

2. Pour safflower oil into a medium pan. Add onion and garlic and cook 10 minutes over medium heat until caramelized. Add the soaked and cleaned anchos, cumin, chipotles in adobo sauce and tomatoes. Cook over medium heat until sauce has reduced by about 30 percent, about 10 minutes.

3. Remove from pan and let cool. Purée the salsa in a food processor or blender. Season with salt and set aside.

4. **SALSA VERDE:** Combine garlic, salt, onion, jalapeños, tomatillos and cilantro in a food processor and pulse to form a chunky paste.

5. **TORTILLA STRIPS:** Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Cut tortillas into 2-inch strips, then place on a cookie sheet and bake 5 minutes to dry slightly. Remove. Reduce oven to 300 degrees.

6. In a large skillet (a 12-inch cast iron works well) over medium heat, add safflower oil to a depth of ⅛ inch, roughly ⅔ cup. When oil is hot, fry the tortilla strips in batches until crisp, about 2–3 minutes. Drain on a paper towel and season with salt. Discard oil and wipe out the pan.

7. **CHILAQUILES:** Return the skillet to high heat and add safflower oil. When very hot, add 2 cups salsa roja and bring to a simmer. Add tortilla strips, turning to coat. Cook briefly, adding more salsa as needed to keep the dish saucy. Spill contents of the pan onto an ovenproof platter and cover with aluminum foil. Place in oven 5–10 minutes.

8. While chilaquiles are in the oven, fry eggs until the whites are set, but the yolks are still runny.

9. Remove the chilaquiles from the oven. Divide onto plates and garnish each portion with cheese, avocado, onions and a fried egg.

10. Chop avocado and fold with lime juice into the salsa verde. Serve immediately with chilaquiles and eggs. Serves 4.

\$100 Recipe Contest

Spectacular Sandwiches is the theme for June's recipe contest. How do you honor the Earl of Sandwich and his classic food combo? We'll keep your secret between you, the readers and two slices of bread. The deadline is **January 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.

Bacon and Poblano Migas

SANDY WOLFF | PEDERNALES EC

Bacon and poblano peppers create a savory, not-too-spicy dish that's easy to assemble and hearty enough to serve for dinner. Migas are endlessly versatile, so feel free to adjust the ingredients to your liking.

- ½ pound bacon
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 large fresh poblano pepper, stemmed, seeded and chopped
- 6 corn tortillas, torn into bite-size pieces
- 1 can (10 ounces) diced tomatoes and green chiles, drained
- 2 cups grated cheddar jack cheese
- 6 eggs
- 1 cup half-and-half

1. Fry bacon until crisp, then drain, cool and crumble. Grease a 9-by-13-inch baking dish with cooking spray. Scatter the bacon evenly over the bottom of dish.

2. Sauté the onion and poblano until the onion is clear; drain and spread evenly over bacon. Then layer the tortillas,

tomatoes and chiles, and cheese over the vegetables.

3. Beat the eggs and half-and-half together until well-blended, then pour over ingredients in baking dish. Refrigerate the mixture overnight, or bake immediately 25–30 minutes at 350 degrees until bubbly and brown. (If refrigerated overnight, the casserole might take a bit longer to bake.) Serves 4.

Spinach and Mushroom Frittata

DANICA GOODE | GUADALUPE VALLEY EC

This take on a frittata is an easy-to-assemble egg bake.

- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 12 large eggs
- ¼ cup fat-free half-and-half
- ½ cup finely chopped onion
- 4 ounces baby portabella mushrooms, stemmed and thinly sliced
- 6 ounces fresh spinach, stemmed and coarsely chopped

Cremini mushrooms are also called baby portobello or baby bella.

- 4 ounces shredded Swiss cheese
- ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- ½ teaspoon sea salt

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease a 9-by-13-inch baking dish with olive oil.

2. Whisk the eggs and half-and-half together in a large mixing bowl. Add the remaining ingredients. Stir to combine, then pour into the prepared baking dish.

3. Bake 45–50 minutes, or until eggs have set and top is lightly browned. Serves 6–8.

COOK'S TIP For the best flavor and texture, allow the frittata to rest 10 minutes before serving. Serve with your favorite fresh salsa for an extra kick.

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WEB EXTRAS at TexasCoopPower.com Join us for more go-to-meetin' photos—they're online, so no need to dress in your Sunday best.

◀ **PATTI FESTA**, CoServ: A church on Maui in Hawaii

▼ **MONNI WARREN**, Grayson-Collin EC: One of the many beautiful churches on Isla Mujeres, Mexico



▲ **MARVIN PATTERSON**, Brookston: Forest Chapel Chicota United Methodist Church in Lamar County



▲ **GEORGE LITRELL**, Grayson-Collin EC: Setting for a wedding

◀ **AMBER ENGEL**, Jackson EC: Daughter Bailey Engel, 10, found this church in Vanderbilt and thought it made a perfect photo.

UPCOMING CONTESTS

MAY TEXAS ROCKS	DUE JANUARY 10
JUNE ROAD TRIP	DUE FEBRUARY 10
JULY PLAY BALL!	DUE MARCH 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 Harpeth Rising

Cleburne January 27

(817) 489-4840, songbirdlive.com

At Songbird Live Theatre, three classically trained musicians play original music on cello, banjo and violin, lyrically rooted in the singer-songwriter tradition and wrapped in three-part vocal harmonies reminiscent of Appalachia and medieval Europe.

January

7

Farmersville Farmers & Fleas Market, (972) 784-6846, farmersvilletx.com

13

Fort Stockton [13-14] Pecos County Livestock Show, (432) 336-2541, pecos.agrilife.org

14

Garland Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Parade and March, (972) 381-5044, garlandtxnaacp.org

Grapevine [14-15] Butchering & Curing Workshop, (817) 410-3185, nashfarm.org

15

McAllen Marathon, (956) 681-3333, mcallenmarathon.com

17

Lufkin The Pines Theater: Tenore, (936) 633-0349, thepines.visitlufkin.com

18

Galveston The Jackie Robinson Story, 1-800-821-8194, thegrand.com

19

Crockett The Texas Tenors, (936) 544-4276, pwfaa.org

21

Edna Brackenridge Winter Carnival & Snow Day, (361) 782-5456, brackenridgepark.com

Tyler Jackie Evancho, (903) 566-7424, cowancenter.org

January 14-15
Grapevine
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Van Horn Culberson County Stock Show, (432) 283-8440

Fredericksburg [21-22] Hill Country Gem & Mineral Show, (830) 456-5419, fredericksburgrockhounds.org

22

Hallettsville State Championship Domino Tournament, (361) 798-2311, kchall.com

24

Corpus Christi Blacklock's Introduction to Birds of South Texas, (361) 852-2100, stxbot.org

South Padre Island [24-28], Winter Outdoor Wildlife Expo, (956) 761-6801, spibirding.com

25

Amarillo [25-26] *Saturday Night Fever*, (806) 378-3096, panhandletickets.com

27

Jasper Annual Chairman's Banquet, (409) 384-2762, jaspercoc.org

Denton [27-29] Black Film Festival, (469) 573-0799, dentonbff.com

Jefferson [27-29] Quilt Show, (903) 926-6695, jeffersonquiltshow.com

28

Orange Pippin, (409) 886-5535, lutchet.org

Emory [28-29] Rains County Eagle Fest, (903) 473-3913, visitrainscounty.com

Clifton [28, Feb. 4-5, 10-11] *Doublewide, Texas*, (254) 675-2278, bosqueartscenter.org



January 28-29
Emory
Rains County
Eagle Fest

February

3

Lubbock Mike Farris & the Roseland Rhythm Revue in Concert, (806) 770-2000, ttu.edu

Lockhart [3-4] Hot Rods and Hatters Car Show and Festival, (512) 657-4616, hotrodsandhatters.com

4

Big Spring Big Spring Symphony Presents *Winter Wonderland Concert*, (432) 263-8235, bigspringssymphony.com

Lake Jackson Abner Jackson Plantation Site Tour, (979) 297-1570, lakejacksonmuseum.org

Surfside Beach Beach Marathon, (409) 539-5150, surfsidemarathon.com

Nocona [4, 16-18] Mardi Gras Nocona Style, (940) 825-3526, nocona.org

Submit Your Event!

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

Saturday April 8
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ANNUAL
Bluebonnet
TRACTOR RIDE



Saturday June 10
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The Baron's Burg

Brilliant, resilient spirit of Bastrop is on full display

BY GENE FOWLER

IF IT HADN'T BEEN FOR "BARON" DE Bastrop, namesake of the Colorado River town 30 miles east of Austin, there might not even be a Texas.

When Stephen F. Austin's father, Moses Austin, petitioned Spanish authorities in San Antonio de Bexar to establish Texas' first American colony in about 1820, he was refused. The self-styled baron, a Dutch immigrant named Philip Hendrik Nering Bögel, successfully interceded.

I learned about the colorful baron at the **Museum & Visitor Center of the Bastrop County Historical Society**, which opened in 2013 in a restored former city hall built in the 1930s. By Bastrop standards, that is considered recent construction.

The town was platted in 1832 where the Camino Real, or Old San Antonio Road, crossed the Colorado River. Davy Crockett, museum exhibits relate, spent the night here on his way to the Alamo in 1836.

Longleaf pine and other types of wood in the area created a thriving timber industry. A lattice screen, rescued from the charred mid-19th-century home of a Bastrop timber tycoon, was decorated by slaves in patterns similar to Adinkra textiles and Ashanti architecture of Ghana.

Much of the timber came from the Lost Pines, the nation's westernmost stand of loblolly pines, at **Bastrop State Park** and adjacent areas. Museum exhibits chronicle the tragic Bastrop County Complex Fire of 2011. The worst wildfire in Texas history, it claimed two lives and burned more than 30,000 acres and nearly 1,700 homes. Three scorched pines and a torched saxophone testify to the conflagration's wrath. Six solid 10-by-10-inch loblolly columns, cut from trees burned in the fire and donated by Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative, anchor the museum exhibits.

The Hidden Pines Fire of 2015 and recent floods further engaged the resilient



spirit of Bastrop. Multimedia artist Maria Montoya-Hohenstein makes art from found objects damaged in the blaze. She calls the process "arteology."

Montoya-Hohenstein is a member of the **Lost Pines Art League**, which in December opened the Lost Pines Art Center and Reflective Sculpture Garden, a 1.25-acre site that repurposed a 100-year-old cottonseed mill.

A rainwater collection system provides water for the site's sculpture garden "river" modeled on the lower Colorado River, with a plantscape that reflects the changing geography as the river flows to the sea.

Bluebonnet EC also contributed to the community with a recent \$30,000 grant to help restore the 1889 **Bastrop Opera House**. Helmed by thespian Chester Eitze for 30 years, the playhouse offers a lively bill of drama, melodrama and musicals.

A kinder incarnation of fire forges artwork at **Deep in the Heart Art Foundry**, established in 1980 and owned and operated by artist Clint Howard since 1999. Visitors can tour the foundry by appointment Monday through Friday and watch its 43 employees immortalize artists' clay, wax

Maria Montoya-Hohenstein and her "arteology"—using recovered dog tags—in Bastrop.

or stone sculptures in bronze.

First Friday Art Walk is a prime time to experience Bastrop. The sound of music wafting from Pickin' on the Porch at **Larry-Land Music** draws walkers to The Crossing, a rustic collection of shops and eateries between Main Street and the river. "We welcome anybody who wants to play, from beginners to pros," says owner Larry Wilson. Wilson's shop walls are covered with mementos like his 1930s Old Kraftsman guitar signed by Willie Nelson.

Back on Main Street, even Bastrop law offices become tourist attractions as visitors pose for photos beneath the old-timey hand-painted shingle of fifth-generation Bastropian Joe Grady Tuck.

What does it say?
"Honest Lawyer."

Gene Fowler is an Austin writer who specializes in history.

WEB EXTRAS at TexasCoopPower.com



See a slideshow that captures Bastrop's art scene.

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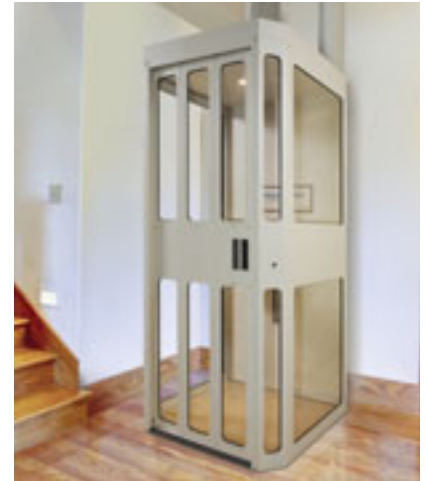
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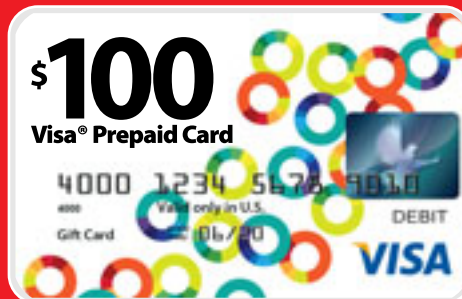
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