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YOUTH TOUR: ANNIE MCGINNIS. BOY: © SIXDAYS | DOLLAR PHOTO CLUB

**ON THE COVER** Kids in the UT Summer Science program explore the plants and animals around Port Aransas. Photo by John Faulk

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## Did It Sign the Declaration?

I enjoyed your article about famous trees of Texas ["Tall Tales," October 2014] and have another tale to add. La Bahia Pecan tree on the Washington-on-the-Brazos Historic Site overlooks the ferry crossing where the Navasota and Brazos rivers meet. Tests by the Forest Service confirm that this tree stood in 1836 when delegates adopted the Texas Declaration of Independence and also revealed that its nearest relatives are in Mexico.

That means that the tree's pecans traveled along La Bahia Road as the settlement of Texas spurred traffic through Texas. Seedlings propagated from this historic tree are now available, thanks to Ellison's Greenhouses, the USDA, the Texas A&M Forest Service, Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative and others. The nuts for the seedlings were picked from the tree using a bucket truck from Bluebonnet Electric.

JIM KOLKHORST | WASHINGTON-ON-THE-BRAZOS  
BLUEBONNET EC

Such a wonderful article. I was born and raised in San Antonio, and those cypress trees on the River Walk are fond memories of my growing up there.

There is a very important oak tree in southeast Texas that should be mentioned. A group of Polish immigrants landed on the coast of Texas in 1854. They headed west and eventually stopped under this giant oak tree on Christmas Eve and celebrated Mass. Thus was born the oldest Polish settlement in the United States: Panna Maria, Texas.

My great-great-grandparents were part of that group. The oak tree and the church they built are still there. My husband and

## Tell Us Another One

I always read my issue of Texas Co-op Power cover to cover and enjoyed the short note in Energy News ["Gnaw News is Good News," November 2014]. It reminded me of my father [right], who was a mailman in downtown San Antonio from 1928 through 1960. As he rose in seniority, he got some choice routes in downtown San Antonio, including the top half of the Milam Building, the first air-conditioned high-rise in America, housing the offices of many wealthy Texas oilmen. Before that, he had the route near the downtown main Post Office, including the Alamo. Just about anything anybody mentioned would elicit the statement, "That reminds me of a joke."

One was, "The man that can come up with a dog-food formula that tastes like a postman's leg will make a million dollars." When he told this joke on television one day, my mother heaved a sigh of relief. "I didn't know he knew any clean jokes," she said.

Thanks for the memory.

CHARLES POSTLEWATE | GRANBURY | UNITED COOPERATIVE SERVICES



I were married there in 1981.

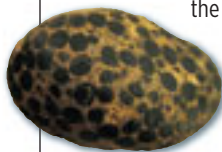
Also, in Highland Village, where I now live, are two of the largest pecan trees recorded in all of North Texas. They are beautiful; hopefully they will continue on with their long lives for many years to come.

VIRGINIA MURPHY | HIGHLAND VILLAGE  
COSERV ELECTRIC

## A Family Heirloom Madstone

I enjoyed the article about madstones ["Deer Camp Folk Medicine," November 2014]. I have a madstone [below] that was passed to me by my mother. A friend gave it to her in 1963.

He told her the treasured madstone had been in his family since the mid-1800s. It is shaped like an egg, has a tan back-ground color



with small round black spots all over it.

On one side, it appears like someone scraped off part of the outside layer to reveal a porous part of the stone. The stone is about 2 inches long and 1¼ inches wide.

Thanks to Gene Fowler for the great story.

MARSHA GREER | TYLER  
CHEROKEE COUNTY EC

My father, who was part Cherokee, passed on to me a madstone that he inherited. The story he told me agreed with the one in your article except he said madstones were only found in the stomachs of albino deer, thus they would be quite rare.

Mine is about the size of a peach pit, lightweight and porous.

Great story, thanks!

MARK RANDALL | MCKINNEY  
GRAYSON COUNTY EC

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## ENERGY NEWS

# Six Easy Ways Kids Can Help Save Energy

January 10 is National Cut Your Energy Costs Day. Touchstone Energy offers six tips that children can use to help their parents trim their electric bills:

1. Turn off all the lights every time you leave the room.
2. Shut down the computer when you are not using it. (If you need help, ask Mom and Dad.)
3. Unplug electronics like cell-phones, video games and TVs when not in use.
4. Remind Mom and Dad to set the thermostat at home to 78 degrees in the summer and 68 degrees in the winter.
5. Don't hold the refrigerator door open for long periods of time.
6. Change the lightbulbs. Help Mom and Dad replace their older lightbulbs with CFLs (compact fluorescent lamps) or LEDs (light-emitting diodes).

## HAPPENINGS

# Connect the Dots

At the end of a long day, January 25, at the Knights of Columbus Hall in Hallettsville, champions are decided in the Texas State Championship Straight Domino Tournament. The winning player's names are added to a list that started in 1954, when dominoes was more of a fixture on kitchen tables and in clubs around Texas.

"Back in the old days, it was a real common game around here," says Glen Bludau, a member of Fayette and Guadalupe Valley ECs who is in charge of the tournament. "We have lots of rural people and country stores, and each one had a dominoes table. And people played a lot at home."

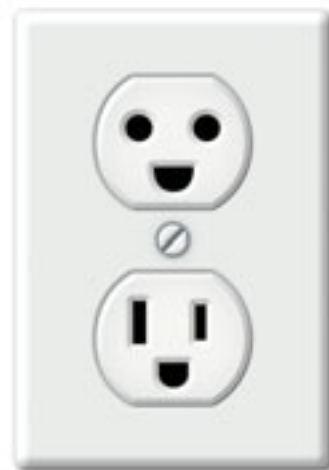
Modern entertainment options might have eroded the prevalence of domino play, but Bludau says close to 180 players this year, some from out of state, are determined to go down in history as Texas state champions.

INFO: [kchall.com](http://kchall.com)

Find more happenings all across the state at [TexasCoopPower.com](http://TexasCoopPower.com)



University of Scranton research shows that just 8 percent of people keep their New Year's resolutions. One suggested reason for failure is that we aim too high. Pledging to quit smoking and lose weight at the same time, or keep a cleaner home and give up wine is more than the willpower portion of most human brains can handle. A year ago, [yestotexas.com](http://yestotexas.com) listed this as its No. 1 New Year's resolution for Texans: Learn to control ourselves around chips and salsa. *Yeah, right.*



DOMINOES: EDD PATTON. OUTLET: © JIM LARKIN / DOLLAR PHOTO CLUB

# Energy Star Savings Reaches \$300 Billion

The Energy Star program, established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in 1992, has helped consumers and businesses save an estimated \$300 billion on utility bills by increasing energy-efficiency standards in more than 70 product categories.

The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association and Touchstone Energy's Together We Save website have focused on helping electric cooperative members make easy improvements, such as Energy Star appliances and compact fluorescents. A 2013 survey by

the Consortium for Energy Efficiency found that 87 percent of households recognized the Energy Star label.

Since its creation, energy efficiencies spawned by the program have mitigated 2 billion metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions, or the equivalent to the annual emissions of more than 420 million cars, according to EPA. Energy Star-rated products deliver the same or better performance as comparable models while using less energy and saving money, the program says.

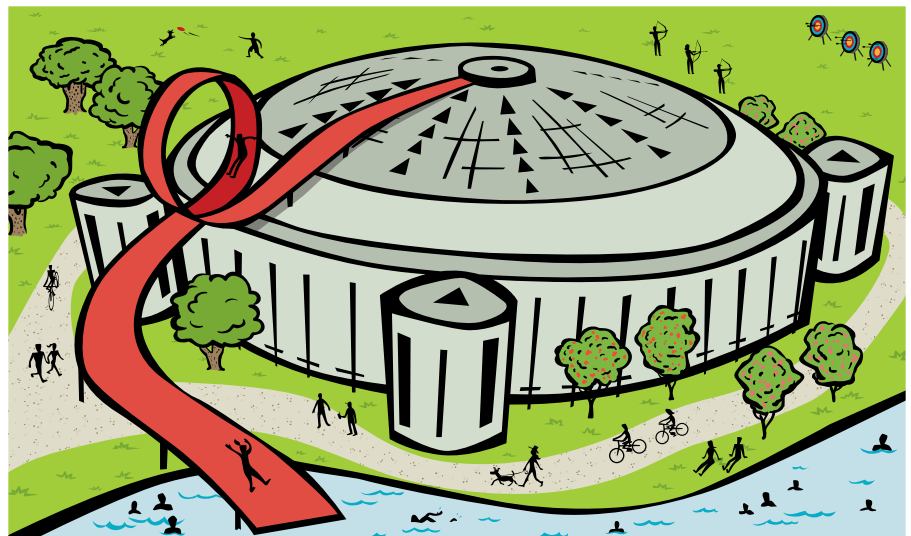
## ON THIS DATE

### Plan of San Diego Uprising

As the Mexican Revolution raged on 100 years ago, an influx of refugees and radicals across the border led to a movement called the Plan of San Diego, intended to violently liberate Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, California and Colorado from U.S. control.

The plan, supposedly written and signed January 16, 1915, in the South Texas town of San Diego, called for an army of Mexicans, Mexican-Americans, African-Americans and Japanese to execute all white males over the age of 16 as part of the insurrection.

A series of raids connected to the Plan of San Diego disrupted transportation and communication starting July 1915 in the lower Rio Grande Valley. Texas Rangers and U.S. troops stepped in to stop the uprising. In all, about 30 raids from July 1915 to July 1916 led to the deaths of 21 Americans and more than 100 Mexicans.



## Astrodome: World's Largest Indoor Park?

One of the latest proposals for the abandoned Astrodome in Houston comes from Harris County Judge Ed Emmett. In August, he proposed turning the former home of the Astros and Oilers—and the world's first dome stadium—into “the world's largest indoor park” and recreation area.

He envisions an air-conditioned facility that could host festivals and other community gatherings, general exercise facilities, hike and bike trails on the upper levels, an amphitheater, a pavilion for concerts and other events, museums and special educational facilities for children, according to the Houston Chronicle. The county-owned Dome also could house sports facilities, such as an archery range or horseshoe pits, he said.

The Dome has seemed destined for demolition since November 2013, when voters rejected a \$217 million bond to turn it into a convention and event center.



*Immersed in*





## Summer programs at the *University of Texas Marine Science Institute* put sea life at youngsters' fingertips

By Eileen Mattei | Photos by John Faulk



**A**board the research vessel *Katy*, 20 boys and girls squat next to buckets holding croakers, crabs and marine animals netted from Redfish Bay off Port Aransas. “What makes some shrimp so big?” asks Annie Dabb, holding a twitching shrimp. A transparent, shapeless comb jellyfish slides through the fingers of Alexis Haynes, 11, who hopes to become a marine scientist. She drops the palm-size jelly, a favorite turtle meal, into a portable aquarium, noting, “It looks like snot.”



As the kids dip out needlefish, tiny flounder and squid, Dana Sjostrom, the *Katy*'s onboard educator, poses questions to direct their curiosity. “What do you notice about the body shape? The color? The shape of the mouth?”

These youngsters are all taking part in one of the five-day Summer Science programs at the University of Texas Marine Science Institute at Port Aransas. The program is designed to immerse students in grades five through eight in hands-on explorations of science. The aim of the course is to ignite each students' curiosity by exposing them to many facets of marine science and by providing the opportunity to talk with scientists actually conducting research. “This is not information transfer,” Sjostrom explains, “It's about making sense of what they're seeing.”

Every morning, the kids observe plants and animals that live in and around Port Aransas. In one session, they study tarpon scales and algae and then dissect a shark. Another time, they explore wetlands, jetty habitats and San José Island beach debris, looking at birds and examining seaweed. Each outing combines research with entertaining activities. The week ends for these apprentice biologists onboard the *Katy*, a floating classroom where the scientific facts intertwine to create a big picture of the environment, revealing how all parts are meshed into the whole.



# Learning

By land and by sea, platoons of summer campers scurry about Port Aransas in search of nature's secrets.

“Listen up,” says Katy Capt. Stan Dignum to the 20 students and their four guide-educators as they climb aboard the 57-foot boat. “I’m Captain Stan. What I say goes. Your life jackets stay zipped up.”

Sjostrom steps up to define the day’s mission. “Your job is to be curious and get excited about seeing things you haven’t seen before. It’s your job to ask questions about how things work.”

The kids are starting to understand the connections and similarities in biological systems and among different creatures. For example, they note a similarity between the growth patterns of tree rings and the growth rings on tarpon scales and then apply the same logic to the growth layers on clam shells. “If you have no idea what you’re looking at, talk about it, draw it,” Sjostrom suggests. “Does it have antennae? Don’t ask me to tell you the name of a fish until you can tell me something about it.”

Sjostrom’s job during the four-hour cruise around the Intra-coastal Waterway and bay combines the tasks of science educator, team captain, deckhand and role model for those considering a career in marine science. Thanks to sessions with experts in plankton, fish migration and ecosystem dynamics, the first four days of Summer Science provide the students a perspective on different habitats around Port Aransas. On the last day, Sjostrom and her crew help the students realize how much more there is to discover and study.

As the Katy surges past the jetty and south into the channel, the students crowd into the bow and spot dolphins frolicking in the water ahead of the boat. A handful of kids squeeze into the pilothouse, seeking both shade and information, fascinated first by the gadgets and then by the job of boat captain. “What’s that thing spinning on top?” asks one student. “Radar,” Capt. Stan answers.

Questioned about the map screen, he moves the cursor around, pointing out jet-ties and points in the ship channel. “The red line is our course. When I move the wheel, it moves with us.” He explains the array of instruments: the green radar screen that shows everything protruding from the water, GPS that shows speed and position, VHF radio, chart plotter, compass and weather station.

Capt. Stan studied marine biology but preferred to work outside instead of spending long hours in the lab. “The Katy gives me the best of both worlds,” he says. Two of the boys say they want to become captains, but Dominic Ford of Port Aransas wants to become a biologist, admitting the job has other attractions: “I can go scuba diving and fishing.” He participated in Summer Science the previous year, and that experience convinced him to return. In fact, several of the students have attended before, and a few signed on for a second session because each week covers a different theme.

Six and one-half miles from the dock, Sjostrom cautions the revved-up kids. “This is a working research vessel, and there



**‘Your job is to be curious and get excited about seeing things you haven’t seen before.**

***It’s your job to ask questions about how things work.’***

are ways to get hurt. No horsing around.” Then she engages the winch to pull in a fine mesh plankton net, which has been towed along the water’s surface. “What do we already know about plankton? Start brainstorming,” she says, pouring the net’s contents into a tub.

Adult guides Catalina Cuellar, Julie Findley and Cathy Harshman give each child a lavender, plastic, handheld microscope. A water sample gets squirted onto each slide. The children squint into the eyepieces.

“I see plankton!” one of the young scientists shouts.

“Tell me about it. Is it moving? Draw it.”

Hunched over the microscopes balanced on small dry-erase boards, the boys and girls use blue and green pens to draw ovals with multiple short legs, squares with legs and antennae, wiggling worm-like shapes, and something that resembles the ridged edge of a coin as seen from the side.

“Do you see brown things that look like coins?” Cuellar asks. “Those are diatoms. Copepods eat them. And who eats copepods?” Several know the answer and call it out: “Small fish.”

Emery Jones, 11, who with the rest of the class pressed algae onto paper earlier in the week, draws seaweed on her board and copies it into her journal.



The program puts students in touch with scientists and Gulf specimens. ‘This is not information transfer,’ says educator Dana Sjostrom. ‘It’s about making sense of what they’re seeing.’

For better viewing, Cuellar guides them to the roofed wet lab where slides under a gooseneck microscope show up on a wall-mounted monitor, magnified 40 to 100 times larger than life. Surprising colors—blue, orange, green—characterize the odd shapes. The crab larva looks like a little alien. “Oh, I see it now. It has one eye in the middle.”

Cuellar, who is working toward a doctorate in marine ecology, says Summer Science kids quiz her about the work she does. “They tell me, ‘I’d like to be a scientist, but it sounds too hard.’ They think there’s a mystery about being a scientist or that it is beyond them. Of course, some are intrigued by the idea of diving for a living or fishing every day. The Summer Science program gets them involved in real science.” Cuellar understands the lure of the deep because scuba diving as a teenager got her involved in marine biology and onto her career path. “You get exposed to the marine environment, and you fall in love.”

In Redfish Bay, the winch hauls in a net filled with creatures that live on and in the bottom mud. Sjostrom pours the mud into boxes with screen bottoms. Three to four kids cluster around each box, sorting through shell fragments and seaweed. “I’ve got a worm on my leg,” announces a girl with blond braids. She learns the wire-thin worms eat everything that falls into the mud, processing nutrients in a process similar to that used by earthworms.

A captivating brittle star waves five thin arms like streamers in the wind. How does it do that? “They put water pressure inside their arms to move them,” Sjostrom explains.

For a closer look, kids use tweezers to put creatures under the gooseneck scope. On the big monitor, a bristly, orange, segmented creature changes colors. “I wonder what that is,” one boy says. “Is it eating the seaweed?” Around him, kids sketch

## Experience the Marine Science Institute

For a self-guided coastal science program, walk the trail and boardwalk at the University of Texas Marine Science Institute’s Wetlands Education Center set on 3.5 acres between the Aransas Pass Ship Channel and the visitors center. Informative signs describe the importance of the marsh here as a filter, storm barrier and nursery for many marine creatures. Landscaped with coastal vegetation (railroad vine can grow 10 inches per day!), the wetlands introduce visitors to sand dunes, black mangroves and great blue herons stalking mullet from the cattails. Docent-led tours are offered twice a week.

Inside, the new Estuary Explorium provides easy, interactive lessons on marine animal migration and metamorphosis, sustainable fisheries, and the effect of water temperature, salinity and seasonal changes on marine animals. Hands-on activities for the youngest scientists include climbing inside a clear dome representing a blue crab egg and “fishing” for keeper red drum.

For more information, visit [utmsi.utexas.edu](http://utmsi.utexas.edu) or call (361) 749-6711.



WATER: © ALEXZAITSEV | DOLLAR PHOTO CLUB



**The research vessel Katy abounds with students experiencing first-hand encounters with plankton, worms and larvae.**

the enlarged images into their journals.

The mud sample shows that water doesn't have to be clear blue to support all kinds of life forms. "When you get a mouthful of salt water, and it's crunchy, you think it's sand. It's not," Sjostrom says. What's crunching are tiny invertebrates.

With the thought of marine invertebrates, snack time brings watermelon.

The third trawl of the net catches free-swimming animals. Laughing gulls hover, hoping for a free meal as Sjostrom pours

**The favorite finds of the day include the *sea horse*, *moonfish* and *ribbonfish*.**

croakers, anchovies, a flounder, ribbon fish, squid, crabs and shrimp into a large tub, scooping them into smaller buckets and the live well. "What I want you to do is look at the fish closely. Open up their mouths," she says.

The kids grasp fish and shrimp and drop them into handheld circle aquariums, made of two squares of Plexiglas that sandwich a 2-inch slice of 6-inch PVC pipe. A gray semi-rectangular sponge is not wearing square pants or squirting water. A boy opens and closes an anchovy's mouth, demonstrating how the wide gape helps it snatch plankton. Cuellar and Sjostrom page through the "Key to Common Inshore Crabs of Texas," trying to identify a specimen.

The final trawl in the ship channel brings up more shrimp and different fish. Why? "Check it out, guys," Sjostrom says. "We have some seaweed that's pretty cool." Holding what looks like a mess of transparent rice noodles, she identifies it as a colonial animal.

Going back to the dock, the kids continue to dip into the tanks,

examining shrimp and tossing dead anchovies to noisy gulls. The junior scientists pay no attention to the water streaming from the holding tank drain, washing over their sneakers or the bright pink of a roseate spoonbill flying astern.

The favorite finds of the day include the sea horse, moonfish and ribbonfish. The high point of the week, the kids agree, was roaming around San José Island. "It's all fun, even cutting up the shark," says Emery. "You have freedom to explore and ask questions."

Eileen Mattei, a member of Nueces and Magic Valley ECs, lives in Harlingen.

**WEB EXTRAS at [TexasCoopPower.com](http://TexasCoopPower.com)** View a slideshow with more photos.



# 2015

## TEXAS SILVER ROUND

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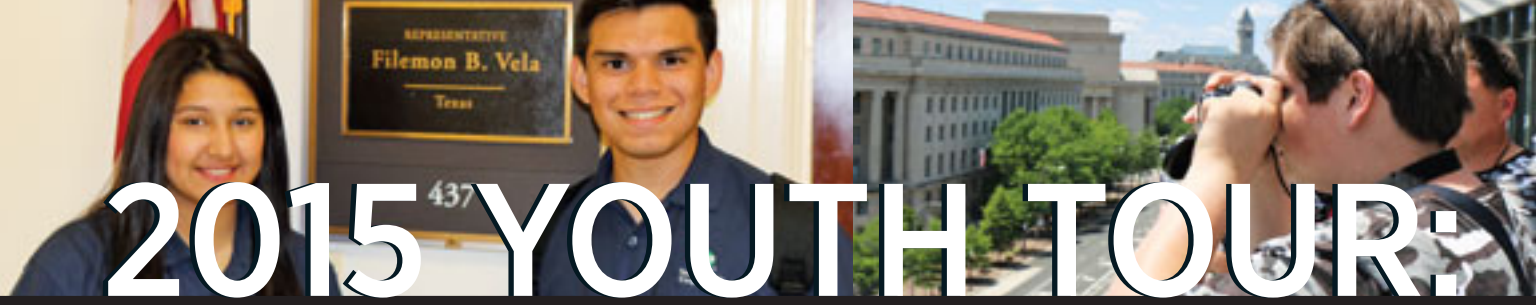
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“Young people should be at the forefront of global change and innovation.” This advice comes from a former United Nations secretary general, who adds, “Let us ensure that all young people have every opportunity to participate fully in the lives of their societies.”

This belief describes the motivation supporting the annual Government-in-Action Youth Tour, which enables students to visit Washington, D.C., and gain a perspective on our national government. With the co-op-supported trip to the nation’s capital, an immersion into American history becomes a memorable reality for a group of more than 100 Texas students each year.

The long-term benefits are significant. The experience provides a better understanding of the world and helps build each student’s confidence. This purpose and mission, as well as an exploration of history and government, outlines a personal framework on which each student can build individual accomplishment.

“I was a country girl, so the entire experience was very impressive to me,” says Kay Joffrion of Coleman, who made the long bus trip to D.C. with the first Youth Tour in 1965. “President Johnson hosted us in the Rose Garden of the White House, and

it was so beautiful, and then we also toured the White House.”

In addition to her memories of the Smithsonian Institution (the Hope Diamond and the first ladies’ gowns made the biggest impressions), the Eternal Flame at President John F. Kennedy’s grave and the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, Joffrion remembers that the competition to win the trip provided valuable experience.

“Competing in the speaking contest was important to me,” she says. “After that experience, I was always confident speaking to a group of people. That really helped me in my career.” After working in human resources with a health care company in Abilene and a subsequent position with the Texas Department of Transportation’s Brownwood District, Joffrion retired to Coleman, where she serves as mayor.

Carrie Campbell, sponsored by Pedernales EC for the 1985 Youth Tour, remembers, “While all the other members of the tour visited our nation’s Capitol, I walked across the street to the Supreme Court. I was permitted to witness oral arguments. I was in awe. My lasting impression of the Youth Tour is the



2014 Government-in-Action Youth Tour participants at the U.S. Capitol



# A NEW DEPARTURE

openness of our government—how ordinary citizens can access justice and impact decision-makers.”

Based on the responses of students taking part in the 2014 Youth Tour, the reviews continue to be enthusiastic after 50 years of the program. The Arlington National Cemetery and the Smithsonian still amaze students. And there are new destinations. Lacey Jesko, from Bailey County Electric Cooperative Association, traveled with the 2014 group and was struck by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, which was dedicated in 1993.

“I knew what the Holocaust was about, but I didn’t have a sense of what those people went through and what they experienced,” she says. “Now I feel like I do, and that makes me appreciate this country even more.”

Responses confirm that travel on this mission with other students enables and empowers youths to build a better understanding of their electric co-op community and their country.

And make new friends along the way.

Charles Lohrmann, editor

## FROM CAPITOL TO CAPITOL

**2015 GOVERNMENT-IN-ACTION YOUTH TOUR**  
June 10–19  
Departs from Austin  
to Washington, D.C.

**SHARE YOUR OWN EXPERIENCE** of the Government-in-Action Youth Tour by sending an email to: [youthtour@texas-ec.org](mailto:youthtour@texas-ec.org).



# Chicago Doctor Invents **Affordable** Hearing Aid **Outperforms** Many Higher Priced Hearing Aids

Reported by J. Page

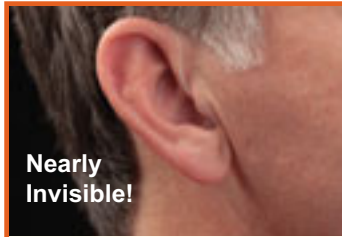
Chicago: Board-certified physician Dr. S. Cherukuri has done it once again with his newest invention of a medical grade **ALL DIGITAL affordable hearing aid**.

This new digital hearing aid is packed with all the features of \$3,000 competitors at a mere fraction of the cost. **Now, most people with hearing loss are able to enjoy crystal clear, natural sound—in a crowd, on the phone, in the wind — without suffering through “whistling” and annoying background noise.**

## New Digital Hearing Aid Outperforms Expensive Competitors

This sleek, lightweight, fully programmed hearing aid is the outgrowth of the digital revolution that is changing our world. While demand for “all things digital” caused most prices to plunge (consider DVD players and computers, which originally sold for thousands of dollars and today can be purchased for less), yet the cost of a digital medical hearing aid remained out of reach.

Dr. Cherukuri knew that many of his patients would benefit but couldn't afford the expense of these new digital hearing aids. Generally they are *not* covered by Medicare and most private health insurance.



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- ✓ Mini Behind-The-Ear hearing aid with thin tubing for a nearly invisible profile
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- ✓ Telecoil setting for use with compatible phones, and looped environments like churches
- ✓ 3 programs and volume dial to accommodate most common types of hearing loss even in challenging listening environments

The doctor evaluated all the high priced digital hearing aids on the market, broke them down to their base components, and then created his own affordable version—called the MDHearingAid® **AIR** for its virtually invisible, lightweight appearance.

### Affordable Digital Technology

Using advanced digital technology, the MDHearingAid® **AIR** automatically adjusts to your listening environment—prioritizing speech and de-emphasizing background noise. Experience all of the sounds you've been missing at a price you can afford. **This doctor designed and approved hearing aid comes with a full year's supply of long-life batteries. It delivers crisp, clear sound all day long and the soft flexible ear buds are so comfortable you won't realize you're wearing them.**

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#### With Our 45 Day Risk-Free Trial

Of course, hearing is believing and we invite you to try it for yourself with our RISK-FREE 45-day home trial. If you are not completely satisfied, simply return it within that time period for a full refund of your purchase price.

## Can a hearing aid delay or prevent dementia?

A study by Johns Hopkins and National Institute on Aging researchers suggests older individuals with hearing loss are significantly more likely to develop dementia over time than those who retain their hearing. They suggest that an intervention—such as a hearing aid—could delay or prevent dementia by improving hearing!

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*“I am hearing things I didn't know I was missing. Really amazing. I'm wearing them all the time”* —Linda Irving, Indiana

*“Almost work too well. I am a teacher and hearing much better now”* —Lillian Barden, California

*“I have used many expensive hearing aids, some over \$5,000. The Airs have greatly improved my enjoyment of life”* —Som Y., Michigan

*“I would definitely recommend them to my patients with hearing loss”* —Amy S., Audiologist, Munster, Indiana



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# King Solomon's Secret Treasure: FOUND

*Ancient beauty trapped in mines for centuries is finally released and available to the public!*

**K**ing Solomon was one of the wealthiest rulers of the ancient world. His vast empire included hoards of gold, priceless gemstones and rare works of art. For centuries, fortune hunters and historians dedicated their lives to the search for his fabled mines and lost treasure. But as it turns out, those mines hid a prize more beautiful and exotic than any precious metal: chrysocolla.

**Prized by the wisest king of the Bible.** Known as the "Wisdom Stone," chrysocolla was considered a powerful talisman of healing and calming energy. Ancient rulers of the Biblical era relied on it for guidance and now this legendary treasure can be yours with our stunning *Earth & Sea Chrysocolla Necklace*. Call today to bring home 325 carats for **ONLY \$49!**

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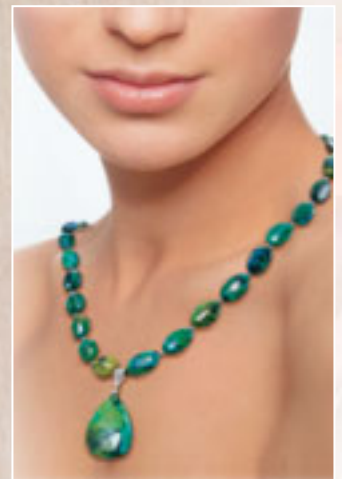
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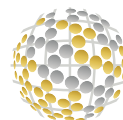
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**It took three years of development and \$26 million in advanced Swiss-built watch-making machinery to create the *Magnificat II*.** Look at the interior dials and azure-colored hands. Turn the watch over and examine the 27-jeweled automatic movement through the exhibition back. When we took the watch to George Thomas (the most renowned watchmaker and watch historian in America), he disassembled the

*Magnificat II* and studied the escapement, balance wheel and the rotor. He remarked on the detailed guilloche face, gilt winding crown, and the crocodile-embossed leather band. He was intrigued by the three interior dials for day, date, and 24-hour moon phases. He estimated that this fine timepiece would cost over \$2,500. We all smiled and told him that the Stauer price was less than \$90. He was stunned. We felt like we had accomplished our task. A truly magnificent watch at a truly magnificent price!

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# Five New Year's Resolutions for Your Home

**1 Clean every appliance in your house.** Your refrigerator's coils can get dusty and clogged, which makes it work harder—and that's an unnecessary waste of energy. The inside of your microwave oven should be spotless; if it's not, then the machine is using energy to "cook" leftover food particles that nobody's going to eat. Even your dishwasher and washing machine need cleaning—inside and out—to prevent mold and clogs.

**2 Snake your clothes dryer vent.** Do this at least twice a year to rid it of lint and debris, which can catch on fire if it clogs the vent and prevents airflow. And be sure to clean the lint screen after each use.

**3 Clear the area around your water heater and your outdoor air-conditioning unit.** Appliances give off heat and take in air. If you've got boxes, suitcases, Christmas decorations or plants stacked up against them, they can't do their jobs efficiently.

**4 Have your heating and air-conditioning systems checked out** by an HVAC professional, who can tell you if they need repairs. Ask the tech to check your filters and change them if they're clogged with dust.

**5 Change the batteries in all of your home's smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors.** If you don't have those devices, move this item to the top of your list of resolutions and install them today.

**Keeping appliances and light fixtures clean saves energy and reduces fire risk. Resolve to set up a regular schedule to keep them all clean and bright year-round.**



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## More Lights, More Comfort

**IF YOU'VE EVER TRIED** to pull a splinter from your finger, you know: The light that comes through windows or from an overhead bulb usually is not bright enough to help you see what you're doing. And it's not bright enough to make cooking, reading or sewing tasks easier.

Think about what you do in each room: Ever wish you could see better while you're doing it?

Add task lighting—extra lights installed right where you focus your attention—in each room: on the countertop where you prepare food; in the bathroom where you shave or apply makeup; in the garage where you work with tools; in your hobby room where you put together scrapbook pages.

Here are the spots where shedding more light can help:

**In the kitchen:** Install small LED lights underneath cabinets to shine directly onto countertops where you chop, blend and arrange food.

**In the bathroom:** Replace the over-the-mirror strip of lights with vertical wall sconces so the light is focused on your face rather than on the mirror.

**In hallways and along staircases:** A common cause of falls at home? Not enough light. Consider theater-style path lighting that goes up every staircase and stays lit 24/7.

**In closets:** Nonfluorescent lighting is more flattering, especially in a roomy closet where you dress and look in the mirror.

**In a hobby room:** Consider whether you sit or stand as you work on your projects, and aim eye-level task lighting right at your workspace.



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# Stay Safe and Warm During a Winter Storm

**LAST YEAR SHOWED US HOW THE POLAR VORTEX** can bring high winds, subzero temperatures and ice to many parts of the country, even those that aren't accustomed to winter weather. This dangerous winter weather can cause hazardous road conditions, downed power lines and extended power outages. Be sure to stay safe before, during and after a winter storm hits.

If power lines go down because of a winter storm, you may be in for a prolonged power outage as utility crews work to get the lights back on.

The National Weather Service tells us that winter storms are deceptive killers because most deaths are indirectly related to storms. Many hazards can remain after a winter storm is gone.

Follow these tips to stay safe and warm during a winter power outage:

Stay inside and dress warmly. Close off unneeded rooms and place draft blocks at the bottom of doors to minimize cold air entering the house. Cover windows at night.



**Dangerous winter weather can cause hazardous road conditions, downed power lines and extended power outages.**

making them difficult to see. Therefore, you and your family should stay indoors if possible.

If you must go outside, use caution and treat all downed and hanging lines as if they are energized. Stay away, warn others to stay away, and immediately contact your utility company if you see downed lines.

Be sure to have a storm preparedness kit ready before a storm strikes to help get you and your family through a power outage. This kit includes: bottled water, non-perishable food, blankets, warm clothing, a first aid kit/medicine, a flashlight, a radio, extra batteries and toiletries.

If you are using an alternative heating source during a power outage, be sure that you know how to use it safely and that you have already gathered all the supplies for it. You should have enough supplies in your preparedness kit to last everyone in your household three to seven days.

SafeElectricity.org

## Replace Windows for Winter Savings

**IF YOU'RE DEALING** with high utility bills that started coming in once the mercury dropped, blame your windows. Or better yet, repair and upgrade them.

Windows cover up holes in your home's walls. If yours are made from just a single pane of glass, they're not going to do a great job of keeping winter outside.



Consider replacing your energy-inefficient, older-model windows with new, double-pane versions that will work twice as hard to keep the cold weather from sneaking into your house.

A few tips as you shop:

▶ Choose windows with low-E glass.

The special coating helps reflect some of the interior heat back into the home to keep cold air out. A bonus: Some window brands don't charge extra for low-E glass. Look for windows that offer the coating as a standard feature.

▶ Ditch your single-pane windows.

The Department of Energy estimates that you could save up to \$500 a year on your energy bills if you replace them with Energy Star-rated, double-pane windows.

▶ When you get new windows, the installers will seal all around the glass and the window frames. Still, that caulking won't last forever. Whether your windows are new or old, recaulk around them every fall to keep the seal fresh.

▶ The same goes for doors. If yours isn't closing properly, or if you feel a cold draft when you walk near it, seal it, too. If it's really bad, think about getting a new one that isn't cracked, warped or poorly fitted. A snugly installed door also keeps energy bills lower.

# Sandia Springs Wetlands

‘Texas People, Texas Places’ book excerpt: A project of pure, uncluttered, non-bureaucratic private enterprise

BY LONN TAYLOR

IN THE FALL OF 2010, ELLEN WEINACHT of Balmorhea went on a birding trip with some friends to the Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge in New Mexico. As she was watching hundreds of sandhill cranes feeding in the wetlands along the Rio Grande, she thought, “I want a place like this at home.” Now she has one. It is called the Sandia Springs Wetlands, and I spent a day last week visiting it with Weinacht and one of the people who helped her create it, David Hedges of Fort Davis.

The Sandia Springs Wetlands is actually a land restoration project. Four hundred years ago Balmorhea was what the Spanish called a *ciénega*, a marsh. Antonio de Espejo used that word to describe the area when he camped there in 1583 on his way back home from an expedition to New Mexico. The *ciénega* was fed by six springs, now called Phantom Lake, San Solomon, Giffen, Saragosa, and West and East Sandia springs. These springs all rise from a five-hundred-foot-thick layer of Cretaceous limestone that underlies Balmorhea, a layer of rock that is riddled with fissures and caverns that hold water. The largest of the springs, San Solomon, which now empties into the swimming pool at Balmorhea State Park, has historically flowed at about twenty million gallons a day. Phantom Lake spring, several miles west of San Solomon, issues from a cave in a limestone bluff and produces about three million gallons a day. Add in the other four springs, and that’s a lot of water. When Espejo arrived he found the Jumano Indians using it to irrigate fields of corn and beans.

In the 1850s, Mexican settlers from Chihuahua arrived and built irrigation ditches leading from San Solomon spring to their fields. They called their settlement, which clustered around the base of the little ridge that runs just east of present-day Balmorhea, Indio. A large cross on top of the end of that ridge, easily visible from the Carrasco store across the highway, marks the spot today. They probably also gave San Solomon spring its name, which is something of a mystery since there is no San Solomon on the Catholic calendar of saints. The name probably comes from an Indian word that sounded like “San Solomon” to those settlers. In 1896 a post office was established at Indio and the name was changed to Brogado, supposedly in honor of Father Brocadus Ecken, the Dutch Carmelite priest at St. Joseph’s Church in Fort Davis who held services in Indio. The name Balmorhea did not appear on the map until 1906, when a town site by that name was platted between Indio and San Solomon spring by three land promoters named Balcum, Morrow, and Rhea, thus Bal-mo-rhea.

In 1871, Fort Davis entrepreneur and land speculator Daniel Murphy established a farm near San Solomon spring and dug a canal that diverted the water to his vegetable crops, which he sold to the army at Fort Davis. The adjacent landowners objected, and a series of lawsuits that kept the courts busy through most of the 1870s and ’80s resulted in a ruling that Murphy had to share the water with his neighbors. Eventually a network of irrigation canals and ditches grew up around all six springs,



Sandia Springs Wetlands and the nearby farmlands provide a haven for snow geese that winter in the area.

and by the time Lake Balmorhea was built and the Reeves County Water Improvement District Number One was created in 1915, the marshes had been drained and turned into fields and pastures.

Weinacht and Hedges have taken a small step toward reversing that process. They have created three small ponds, fed by the Sandia Canal, and are building a fourth pond the size of the first three combined. When completed, the wetlands will cover about six acres and will provide a habitat for migrating shorebirds. The ponds are easily accessible to the public from County Road 313, which runs south from State Highway 17, just where the state highway turns west after crossing under Interstate 10. There are three inviting picnic tables beside the ponds.

The morning that Hedges and Weinacht and I were there was sunny and pleasantly cool. There had been a severe hailstorm the previous evening, and shredded leaves from cottonwood trees covered the ground around us. Shorebirds were already arriv-

ing. As we sat at one of the picnic tables and talked, a flight of half a dozen or so western sandpipers skimmed over the water and settled on the pond nearest us, immediately standing up in the shallow water and plucking organisms out of it with their long bills. “They are on their way to Alaska, where they nest in the spring,” Hedges said. “I’m surprised that they have any feathers left after last night,” Weinacht said, adding that eight inches of hail had fallen at Saragosa, just up the road. We also saw several families of northern shoveler ducks on the other side of the pond, and as we walked between the ponds, scared up a green-winged teal that was resting in a clump of grass on the bank. She flew off to join a cinnamon teal and a blue-winged teal paddling on the water. These birds, Hedges pointed out, were just the beginning of the spring migration.

The remarkable thing about the Sandia Springs Wetlands is that Ellen Weinacht and her husband, Don, created it themselves, on their own land, with absolutely

no aid from the federal, state, or local government, and they have made it available to the public. When they first got the idea they consulted Hedges and Madge Lindsay of Fort Davis, who are fellow birders and naturalists. Hedges helped them pick the site, using a soil map of Reeves County to locate a patch of clayey soil that would hold water. They have enlisted the Tierra Grande chapter of the Texas Master Naturalists to assist with the planning and development, and the master naturalists have created committees of volunteers to help with water management, interpretation, and plant species. But the project is pure, uncluttered, non-bureaucratic private enterprise, done in the straightforward Texas way. The Weinachts had a good idea and went ahead with it. As the Gary P. Nunn songs says, “When a Texan fancies he’ll take his chances, chances will be taken.”

Excerpted from ‘Texas People, Texas Places: More Musings of the Rambling Boy,’ TCU Press; prs.tcu.edu. (Original column: April 26, 2012)

# Casting Cash Away

The outdoors experience can come with whopping price tags, but it doesn't have to be that way

BY MIKE LEGGETT

ANYTIME WE HEAR SOMEONE START A sentence with, “When I was a kid ...” we can expect a lament on the decline of Western civilization and how kids today just aren't as tough as they should be.

Those among us who grew up eating dirt for lunch—on the good days, we might get a side of rocks—are accustomed to these laments. It's hard, after all, to see past an HD screen on a thousand-dollar computer to the hard times of past generations.

And somewhere along the way from the fantastic '50s of my youth to the “too much is not enough” teens of today, we've slowly acquired an attitude that if an item costs more, it must be better. Perhaps nowhere is that skewed mental state more apparent than the world of hunting and fishing, the world in which I've lived and made my living for most of my adult life.

Here's an example: I paid \$1,100 for my first bass boat. It was an olive green Terry, 14 feet long, with a MotorGuide electric motor and a 20-horsepower Evinrude engine—state of the art in the mid-1970s.

Actually, my first bass boat was a mangled aluminum johnboat nobody else wanted. I paddled that around lakes for years until I actually got a job and decided to splurge on new hardware.

My first rod and reel was a \$12 gift my dad bought mail-order from the Gadabout Gaddis television show that was popular in the 1950s. I loved that outfit. Later I managed to scrape together enough money to buy two rods and reels that collectively might have cost \$75. With that gear, I put thousands of bass into my little green boat.

I now have a rod and reel, a custom rod fitted with a Shimano Calais reel, that would exceed the cost of all of that 1970s equipment. I actually won it in a casting bet with my little brother, and I use it proudly but cautiously lest I lose it overboard.

Folks who hunt and fish have foregone the \$100 deer lease and the rickety old Jeep for \$10,000 hunting estates. They drive there in \$60,000 trucks and shoot \$1,000 rifles fitted with \$1,500 scopes. They aim at quail with \$3,000 shotguns, firing shells that cost \$15 a box at game birds that may run to \$20 each.

It's insane. We're insane. We tell ourselves inflation strikes everywhere and thus it's fine to shell out a little more, and then a little more after that. More is better and better is best.

I keep telling myself this, pretending not to be insane because of my pursuit of new and better equipment. After all, a caught fish and a dead dove are just as caught or dead with a \$100 reel or a \$300 shotgun, but I've convinced myself it feels better if I've paid more for my tools.

I try to stay in the mid range, but right now there are at least a dozen rods and reels in my equipment room. Average price: \$400. And that's not counting maybe 10 fly rods of every weight and at every price point.

Truth is, I never, ever use more than three—the same three—on any fishing trip. I tell myself I'm holding them for my grandkids, but I only have seven of those, so some will have to double up on equipment when I shuffle off this earth.

Still, I think nowhere has the “never





enough” chigger sunk his teeth into our flesh more than in the field of food storage. I’ll be glad to tell you how.

Some of the hardest times we had were keeping food fresh and drinks cold. Try doing that with a Styrofoam ice chest that cost \$6 and was as brittle as a dry cedar twig. First, the lid blew off when you got out on the highway, and a deer rib bone was for sure going to poke a hole through the side before you got home.

Most of us aspired to a Coleman or Igloo hard-sided cooler. That’s what we called them, “hard-sided,” to enhance our cooler ownership status. You could throw one onto a boat to carry drinks and sandwiches or to keep fish from spoiling on a stringer and get home with it intact.

But something has happened in the cooler market in the past decade.

We are now in the age of the high-dollar megacooler—heavy, tough, tested on grizzly bears, hot- and cold-conveying behemoths that my grandfather would have looked at with wonder.

Take to the Internet, and you’ll find a list of these coolers, an even more amazing array than I thought existed. At least four of these brands—Yeti, Brute, Pelican and Icehole—have Texas ties. (Trying saying “Icehole” five times fast.)

Others include K2, Irp, Orca, Grizzly, Galaxy and Engel. There might be more, but you’re going to run out of money long before you strike the end of the list. They all claim to keep ice longer, up to a week in some cases.

Some models sell for close to \$200; others are well over \$1,000. That’s what I said: ONE THOUSAND DOLLARS. You could

use that one as a coffin, I suppose, and come out to the good.

Every manufacturer recommends you chill the ice chest first, by putting it in a cooler or filling it with ice, then adding your load plus ice to keep it cold for several days. Don’t open it or you’ll let in warm air, and your ice will begin melting.

But what good is an ice chest you can’t open without losing your cool? Don’t ask me. And isn’t the freezing point of water still 32 degrees? Beer is still cold whether the ice chest costs \$50 or \$500.

Trust me. I have two of the expensive ones—combined cost about \$700—and a \$50 model in my pickup right now. The ice has melted in every one of them.

Legendary outdoors writer **Mike Leggett** lives in Burnet and is a member of Pedernales EC. Read his blog at [mikeleggettoutdoors.com](http://mikeleggettoutdoors.com).

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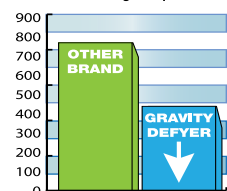
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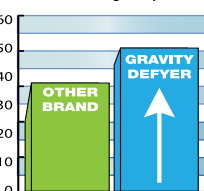
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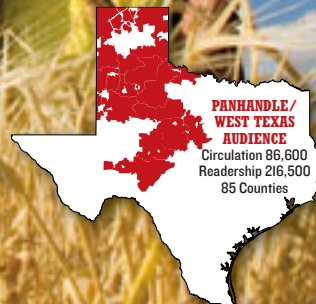
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# Mystery of Spanish Fort

French stronghold near the Red River was site of a decisive defeat of Spanish

BY E.R. BILLS

WHEN YOU SEE THE TOWN OF SPANISH Fort on a Texas map, it jumps out at you. It's tucked into a long bend of the Red River, just north of Nocona.

You believe that the Spanish didn't have any forts that far north. You wonder if the structure is still intact.

First, the fort, which included wooden stockades, entrenchments and a moat, is long gone. Only an historical marker stands to mark its original location.

Second, "Spanish" fort is inaccurate. The fortification was actually a French structure built at the location of a Taovaya Indian village in about 1719. The Taovayas had just moved into the region when the French ventured farther west along the Red River. The French and Taovaya developed a successful trading partnership.

Third, when the only major defense of the fort was mounted in 1759, the attacking forces were actually Spanish, and the fort defenders included a French contingent along with Taovaya, Wichita and Comanche.

When an early Anglo settler visited the ruins 100 years later, he assumed the inhabitants were Spanish. Hence the name "Spanish Fort."

And finally, the Native Americans' rout of the Spanish at the French/Taovaya fortress marked Spain's earliest defeat in Texas, and this defeat helped limit Spanish expansion.

The Spanish Fort played a role in the broader history of 18th-century Texas. That role had its origins about 250 miles south where, in the mid-1750s, the Spanish established Mission San Saba and Presidio San Saba along the San Saba River to look for silver and proselytize the Apache. Not long after the two complexes were completed, the Apaches boasted about their mighty new partners.



When word of a new force in the region reached the Comanches, they marshaled some of their Wichita, Taovaya and Yojuane allies and headed south. On the morning of March 16, 1758, the Comanche and their 2,000-warrior confederacy attacked the mission, massacred most of its inhabitants and torched most of the buildings.

The scantily numbered Spanish garrisoned at Presidio San Saba helplessly witnessed the upstream smoke and gunfire.

When the Spanish sought revenge months later, they discovered an old fortification flying the French colors on the Red River. It was protected by a tributary moat and—to the Spaniards' surprise—manned by Taovaya, Wichita and Comanche Indians armed with French muskets.

The attack on the fort failed. The Spanish retreated hastily, leaving their supply train and cannons behind. The disgraced force traveled 18 days to Presidio San Saba. The Comanche harassed them all the way, and the Spanish never sought further mil-

itary redress, going so far as to abandon the San Saba mission and presidio.

Within a decade, there was no European influence left in the area of Spanish Fort. In 1771, Spanish Louisiana normalized relations with the Taovaya. The Taovayas were decimated by smallpox in the early 1800s, and survivors abandoned the area.

The Comanche remained a force on the Texas Plains until the late 19th century, but the ranks of the Taovaya shrank, and they joined the Wichita.

Today, all that remains of the fort is a historical marker mounted on an 8-foot-tall shaft of red granite in the town square and the Taovayas Indian Bridge across the Red River, connecting Texas FM 677 with Oklahoma State Highway 89.

E.R. Bills is a writer from Aledo.

**For more information** on Spanish Fort, consult the Handbook of Texas online, The Southwestern Historical Quarterly or the West Texas Historical Association.

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## Crowning Touch



WHEN IT COMES TO CASSEROLES, YOU can count on Austin's Crystal Cook [left in inset] and Sandy Pollock for a recipe. This entrepreneurial duo started a business delivering casseroles while wearing frilly aprons and heels, won a spot on the Food Network show "Throwdown With Bobby Flay" and went on to write two cookbooks, "The Casserole Queens Cookbook" and "The Casserole Queens Make-A-Meal Cookbook." These days you can find them in the pages of Woman's Day magazine, where they share casserole-inspired recipes such as this lasagna.

ANNA GINSBERG, FOOD EDITOR

### Zucchini Lasagna

- 2½ tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 1 small onion, finely chopped
- ½ teaspoon red pepper flakes
- 1 pound ground turkey
- 1 can diced tomatoes (28 ounces)
- 3 tablespoons chopped fresh oregano
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 2 medium zucchini
- 1 cup part-skim ricotta cheese, divided
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- ½ cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese (2 ounces)

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees.
2. In a large straight-sided skillet over medium heat, heat 2 tablespoons of olive oil. Add the onion and red pepper flakes and cook, stirring occasionally, until the onion is tender, about 8 minutes. Add the turkey and cook, breaking up any large pieces with the back of a spoon, until brown throughout, 3 to 4 minutes. Add the tomatoes and bring the mixture to a boil. Reduce the heat to medium and simmer until it thickens, about 20 minutes. Stir in the oregano and salt. Let cool.
3. Slice the zucchini lengthwise into thin strips about 1/8 inch thick. Place 5 or 6 zucchini slices, overlapping slightly, into the bottom of an 8-by-8-inch baking dish. Top with 1 cup of

PHOTOS © CLARKSON POTTER



## Recipe Contest: Casseroles



### THIS MONTH'S WINNING RECIPE

JENNIFER RIECK | MEDINA EC

Casseroles have always been the busy cook's best friend, creatively combining ingredients on hand into quick and tasty new dishes. Sure enough, this month our readers showed us that when it comes to casserole ingredients—from cheeseburgers to French toast—the possibilities are endless ... and delicious.

### Chicken and Spinach Pasta Bake

- 8 ounces uncooked rigatoni
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 pack frozen spinach (10 ounces), thawed and well-drained
- 3 cups cooked, cubed chicken breast
- 1 can Italian-style diced tomatoes (14 ounces), undrained
- 8 ounces chive-and-onion-flavored cream cheese
- 6 sun-dried tomatoes, chopped (optional)
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- 1½ cups shredded mozzarella cheese

**1.** Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Prepare rigatoni as directed on the package. Apply cooking spray to an 11-by-7-inch baking pan. Lay the chopped onion in the baking pan and bake for

15 minutes or just until tender.  
**2.** Transfer cooked onion to large bowl. Press the drained spinach dry with paper towels to remove any excess moisture. Add cooked rigatoni, spinach, chicken, diced tomatoes, cream cheese, sun-dried tomatoes and pepper to the bowl with the onion and mix well. Spoon mixture into the baking pan and sprinkle evenly with shredded mozzarella cheese.  
**3.** Bake, covered, for 30 minutes. Uncover and bake an additional 15 minutes.

**COOK'S TIP** This not only tastes delicious, it is also a really pretty dish—especially if you use multicolored rigatoni pasta.

Servings: 12. Serving size: 6 ounces. Per serving: 289 calories, 25.69 g protein, 5.28 g fat, 34.89 g carbohydrates, 5.73 g dietary fiber, 886 mg sodium, 13.26 g sugars, 54 mg cholesterol

### \$100 Recipe Contest

June's recipe contest topic is **Your Heritage Through Food**. Whether you're a sixth-generation Texan or your kin got here as fast they could, it's likely that your ancestors brought their kitchen traditions with them. Share a recipe that reflects your ethnic heritage. The deadline is **January 10**.



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There are three ways to enter: **ONLINE** at [TexasCoopPower.com/contests](http://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.

sauce. Dot with ¼ cup ricotta. Repeat the layers twice, alternating the direction of the zucchini. Top with remaining zucchini and brush the top with the remaining olive oil. Dot with the remaining ¼ cup ricotta and season with black pepper. Top with the Parmesan cheese.

**4.** Bake 50 to 60 minutes, until the

lasagna is bubbling and the top is brown. Let stand 10 minutes before serving.

Servings: 8. Serving size: 5 ounces. Per serving: 231 calories, 16.23 g protein, 14.46 g fat, 8.38 g carbohydrates, 1.84 g dietary fiber, 883 mg sodium, 3.36 g sugars, 57 mg cholesterol

Reprinted from "The Casserole Queens Make-A-Meal Cookbook" by Crystal Cook and Sandy Pollock. Copyright © 2013. Published by Clarkson Potter, a division of Penguin Random House.

### Creamy Creole Turkey Bake

ALI ALLIE | COSERV ELECTRIC

- ⅔ cup chopped onion
- ⅔ cup chopped celery
- ⅓ cup chopped green pepper
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon butter
- ¼ pound mushrooms, sliced
- 4 ounces light cream cheese, softened
- 1 can stewed tomatoes (8 ounces), drained
- 1½ teaspoon Creole seasoning
- 4 ounces fettuccine, cooked according to package directions
- 2 cups cooked, cubed turkey
- ⅓ cup grated Parmesan cheese

**1.** Preheat oven to 325 degrees.  
**2.** In a medium nonstick skillet over medium-high heat, sauté the onion, celery, green pepper and garlic in butter 4–5 minutes or until the vegetables are crisp-tender. Add the mushrooms and sauté 2 minutes more. Remove from heat.  
**3.** In a large bowl, blend the cream cheese, tomatoes and Creole seasoning. Fold in the vegetable mixture, cooked fettuccine and turkey.  
**4.** Apply vegetable cooking spray to a 9-inch square baking dish and pour the mixture into it. Sprinkle Parmesan cheese over the top. Bake 30 minutes or until bubbly.

Servings: 12. Serving size: 4 ounces. Per serving: 424 calories, 66.38 g protein, 11.46 g fat, 6.26 g carbohydrates, 1.10 g dietary fiber, 1,421 mg sodium, 2.06 g sugars, 130 mg cholesterol

### Cheeseburger-All-the-Way Casserole

CHUCK BURGESS | HEART OF TEXAS EC

*"This dish is easily customized—add mushrooms, use sweet pickles or a different cheese, etc.—though my family insists: 'Don't change it!'"*

- 1½ pounds lean ground beef
- ½ cup diced onion
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 2 cups sliced baby spinach leaves
- 1 can baked potato with cheddar and bacon bits soup (18.8 ounces)
- 2 tablespoons cornstarch
- 2 tablespoons mustard
- 1½ teaspoons salt

- ½ teaspoon pepper
  - 1 cup beef broth
  - 1 large egg, beaten
  - 1 cup grated cheddar cheese
  - ½ cup grated pepper jack cheese
  - 1 large tomato, thinly sliced
  - 1 cup sliced dill pickles, drained
  - 1 pie crust, room temperature
  - 1½ teaspoons sesame seeds
- Cooking spray

1. Preheat oven to 425 degrees.
2. In a medium skillet over medium heat, cook meat and onion in oil until meat is browned, about 5 minutes. Drain off liquid. Stir in spinach.
3. In a medium bowl, mix together soup, cornstarch, mustard, salt, pepper, broth, egg and cheeses until blended. Stir in the meat mixture.
4. Pour half into an 8-by-10-inch oven-proof baking dish. Place tomato slices evenly over top. Spread pickle slices evenly on top of tomato layer. Pour remaining mixture on top and spread evenly.

5. Place pie crust on top and shape edges to fit baking dish. Flute edges and cut 4 slits in crust. Lightly apply cooking spray to crust and sprinkle with sesame seeds. Cover edge of crust with foil to prevent overbrowning.
6. Bake 25–30 minutes, removing foil for the last 10 minutes. Turn on high broil for the final 2 minutes until lightly browned. Remove from oven and serve hot.

Servings: 12. Serving size: 6 ounces. Per serving: 353 calories, 18.04 g protein, 19.55 g fat, 19.23 g carbohydrates, 2.29 g dietary fiber, 884 mg sodium, 1.39 g sugars, 69 mg cholesterol

### Crème Brûlée Texas Toast

STACY CHAPMAN | BLUEBONNET EC

- 2 tablespoons light corn syrup
- ½ cup butter (1 stick)
- 1 cup brown sugar (light or dark)
- 10 slices Texas Toast
- 5 eggs
- 1½ cups half-and-half
- 1 teaspoon vanilla

- 1 tablespoon orange liqueur
- ½ teaspoon salt

1. Grease a 9-by-13-inch baking pan. In a saucepan, combine corn syrup, butter and brown sugar. Simmer until mixture reaches a syrupy consistency, then pour into baking pan. Cut bread in half diagonally and lay slices on top.
2. Whisk eggs, half-and-half, vanilla, orange liqueur and salt together. Pour over bread, and cover and refrigerate overnight.
3. When you are ready to cook, preheat oven to 350 degrees. Bake 45 minutes.

**COOK'S TIP** This can be made using a variety of types of bread. Slices of French bread work well, and so do torn pieces of focaccia bread.

Servings: 10. Serving size: 1 slice toast. Per serving: 256 calories, 4.34 g protein, 14.69 g fat, 25.57 g carbohydrates, 0 g dietary fiber, 175 mg sodium, 22.32 g sugars, 130 mg cholesterol

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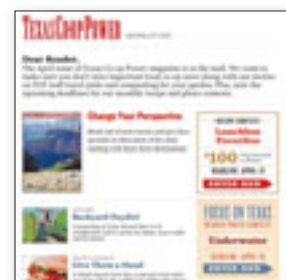


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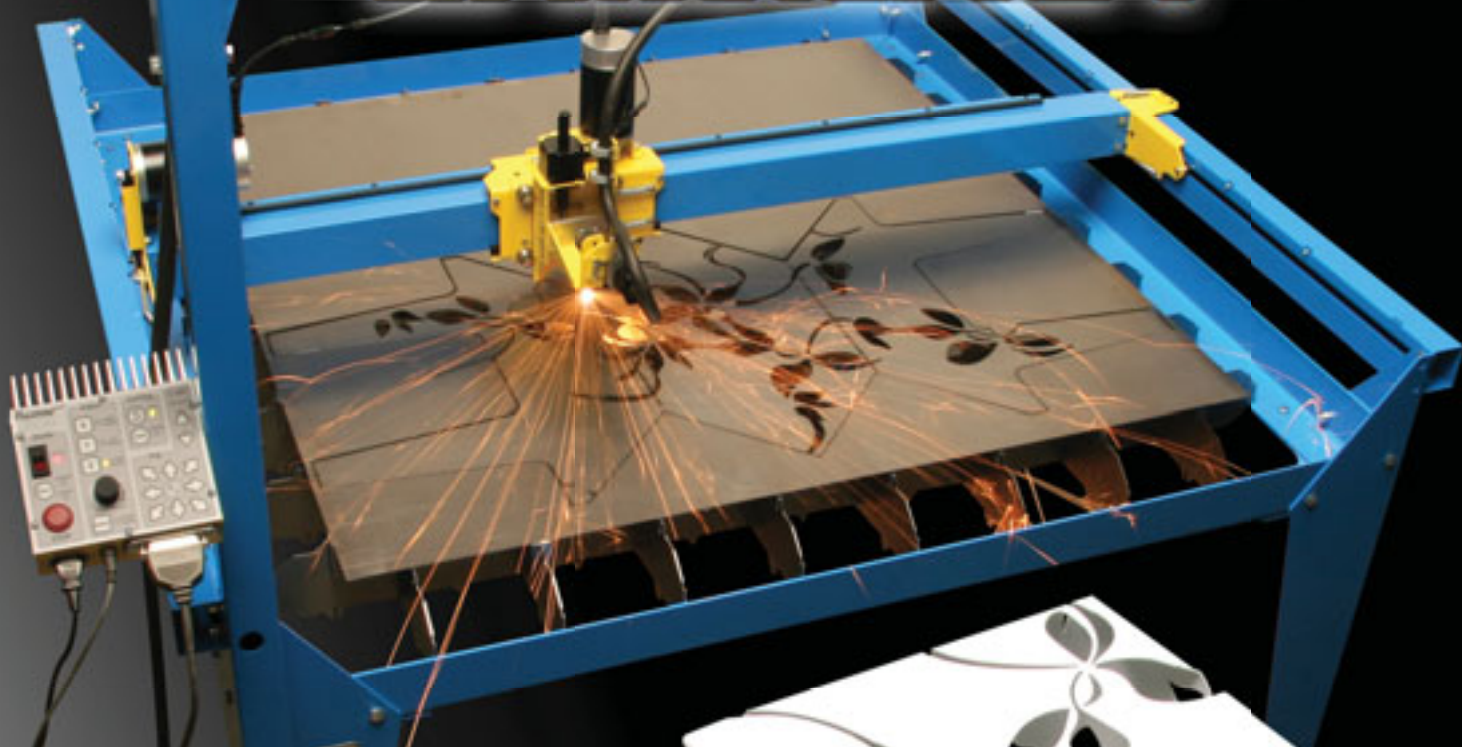
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**-Dennis Cordova, Amateur Metalworker**



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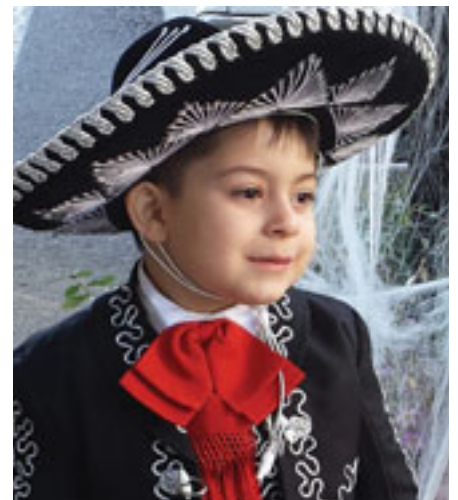
## Hats

THERE'S NO NEED TO PASS THE HAT; your photo contributions were plentiful. From furry to fabulous, you threw your hats into the ring—and, man, did they turn some heads!  
**GRACE ARSIAGA**

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◀ **RONNIE BAKER**, Guadalupe Valley EC: 'Mama, don't let your puppies grow up to be cowdogs.'

▼ **DEBBIE GRIFFIN**, Wood County EC: Her oldest grandson, Johnny, makes his first visit to the Alamo.



▲ **MARIA HERNANDEZ**, Navarro County EC: Liam Miguel, 4, is dressed in his charro outfit for Halloween.

▼ **APRIL LISTER**, Greenbelt EC: Her 14-year-old Chihuahua, Chipper Roo, is in disguise.

### UPCOMING CONTESTS

APRIL IN BLOOM	DUE JAN 10
MAY HEROES	DUE FEB 10
JUNE SLOW DOWN	DUE MAR 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](http://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.



▲ **HAROLD AND SHELLEEN STEELE**, Karnes EC: Rebecca Steele holds her dwarf Roborovski hamster, Tulip, wearing an earbud as a French beret.





**Pick of the Month**  
**Czech Music Festival**

**Ennis** [February 7]

(972) 875-7959, enniszechmusicfestival.com  
Five polka bands play all afternoon and late into the night. Food and raffle drawings accompany the dancing. Dress is casual, but this would be a fine time to put on your *kroj* (traditional Czech attire).

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**January**

**6**

**Bonham** Sam Rayburn Day Open House, (903) 583-5558, visitsamrayburnhouse.com

**Cleburne** [6-10] Johnson County Junior Livestock Show & Youth Fair, (817) 790-0151, jclaa.net

**9**

**Fort Stockton** [9-10] Pecos County Livestock Show, (432) 336-2541

**10**

**Bastrop** [10-11] Chili Cook-Offs, (512) 844-6668, bastropchamber.com

**Brenham** [10-11] Annual Antiques & Collectibles Show, (979) 865-5618, ruraltexasantiquesshows.com

**15**

**Austin** [15-17] Travis County Livestock Show and Youth Fair, (512) 278-8498, traviscountyyouthshow.org

**Nacogdoches** [15-18] Pulpwood Queens Book Clubs' Girlfriend Weekend, (903) 601-2725, beautyandthebook.com

**16**

**Kingsland** [16-17] Quilt Show, (325) 423-1934, barbsquills.com

**17**

**Emory** Eagle Fest, (903) 473-3913, rainscountychamberofcommerce.com



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**Johnson City** First Baptist Church Chili Cook-Off, (830) 868-7252, johnsoncity-texas.com

**Wellington** Collingsworth County Livestock Show, (806) 447-2313

**Victoria** [17-18] Comic Con, (361) 485-3215, victoriacomicon.org

## 21

**Fredericksburg** [21-23] Texas Aquaculture Association Conference & Trade Show, (830) 377-5943, taaconference.com

## 22

**Snyder** Writers' League of Texas Program: Texas Writes, (325) 573-5572, scurrycountylibrary.com

## 23

**Navasota** [23-25] Go Texan Days, (936) 825-2843, navasotagrimeschamber.com

## 24

**Perryton** Josh Abbott Band Concert, (806) 435-6575, ptinchamber.com

**Presidio** Big Bend Ranch State Park Star Party, (432) 358-4444, tpwd.state.tx.us

February 6  
**Robstown**  
"Celebrate Coastal Quilting"  
Quilt Show



## 28

**Pearsall** Writers' League of Texas Program: Texas Writes, (830) 334-2496, writersleague.org

**Longview** [28-29, February 4, 5, 7] JA SuperBowl, (903) 297-2202, jaeastexas.org

**Eastland** [through March 16] Our Lives, Our Stories: America's Greatest Generation, (254) 965-6190, ctfac.com

## 31

**Palacios** Deutschburg Seafood Benefit, (361) 920-1517

## February

### 6

**Robstown** [6-7] "Celebrate Coastal Quilting" Quilt Show, (361) 387-9000, corpuschristiquilters.com

**Hondo** [6-8] St. Valentine's Day Motorcycle Massacre, (210) 601-1932, massacrerally.com

**Marble Falls** [6-8] SparrowFest Retreat, (512) 965-2473, sparrowfest.org

**San Angelo** [6-14] "Last of the Red Hot Lovers," (325) 949-4400, angelotheater.com

### 7

**Washington** [7-8] Light in the Dark, (936) 878-2214, ext. 246, tpwd.state.tx.us

## 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!

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# Turkey Trottin'

A visit to the Caprock Canyons territory

BY E. DAN KLEPPER

LIKE MANY RURAL COMMUNITIES ACROSS the Panhandle, the town of **TURKEY** (population 410) still depends on an all-volunteer fire department, the best food in town can be found at a family-owned and -operated café (Galvan's), and a room at the local hostelry (the Hotel Turkey, built in 1927) can usually be secured at a moment's notice.

Main Street, not surprisingly, is especially quiet on Sundays, and fried catfish, prepared by local volunteer groups such as the Lions Club, often serves as proxy in the town's unofficial motto, "Love Turkey, Eat Fish," particularly on fundraising nights.

Turkey also is the boyhood haunt of country swing king Bob Wills. The town's annual celebration, Bob Wills Day, attracts diehard fans of western swing, the musical style that once dominated charts and rural radio stations throughout the 1930s. A nostalgic sense of the '30s still lingers in Turkey, particularly along its edges. Here, tidy streets end, plowed fields begin and red dirt farm-to-market roads lead you across the region's agrarian backyard, through the broken rangeland of caprock country, and out of this century altogether.

A 10-minute drive east from Turkey along Texas 86 takes you to **QUITAQUE** (pronounced "kitty-kway" by some and "kitt-a-kway" by others), a community established in 1865 by Comanchero trader José Piedad Tafoya. Tafoya built a trading post here to exchange goods with the Comanches, and transactions often swapped ammunition for stolen livestock.

Quitaque is the gateway to Caprock Canyon State Park (home to the official Texas state bison herd) and the Caprock Canyons Trailway, a 64-mile multiuse hiking, biking and equestrian trail. The trailway, composed of the remaining berm of the abandoned Fort Worth and Denver South Plains Railway Line, is divided into six trail sections from 5 to 17 miles in length. It hosts eight trailheads accessible from farm-to-market roads and state high-



The Oxbow Trail is a 10-mile section of the Caprock Canyons Trailway, a 64-mile multi-use hiking, biking and equestrian path.

ways, crosses 46 bridges and rolls over farms and brushy ranchlands before passing through Clarity Tunnel (home to migratory Mexican free-tailed bats), then climbs up and over the caprock escarpment on a 7 percent grade.

In addition to Turkey and Quitaque, the region offers plenty of other day-tripping destinations all within a few hours' drive from Lubbock, including the community of **MATADOR**. Matador served as post office location for the historic Matador Ranch during the late 19th century and, today, hosts the restored Matador Hotel.

Built in 1914 and officially opened a year later as the Carter Hotel, this two-story mash-up of Prairie and Spanish Colonial Revival architecture occupies a small lot and garden along Matador's Main Street. During its first decade, the hotel's amenities included laundry service, a bellhop, manicured gardens and an ice cream parlor that occupied the entire length of the lobby.

The hotel had 15 rooms but only one bath with an oak-rimmed bathtub measuring 9 feet long (25 cents a bath). In the 1920s, the name was changed to Hotel

Matador, and several decades later, barber Warren Clements bought the property, replacing the ice cream parlor with a barbershop featuring a tin ceiling and wall-to-wall beveled mirrors.

Today, it serves as an eight-room bed-and-breakfast with modern conveniences such as private bathrooms and wireless Internet. The hotel's luxurious Circle Cross Heritage Suite replaced the barbershop but retains its wall-to-wall mirrors and white tin ceiling. The suite is also the former location of the oak-rimmed tub, and in its place the owners have installed a bathtub big enough for two.

Feel free to leave your hat on.

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

**IF YOU GO** City of Turkey [turkeytexas.net](http://turkeytexas.net),  
Bob Wills Day [bobwillsday.com](http://bobwillsday.com), Caprock Canyons Trailway and Caprock Canyons State Park [tpwd.state.tx.us/caprockcanyons](http://tpwd.state.tx.us/caprockcanyons),  
Quitaque Chamber of Commerce [quitaque.org](http://quitaque.org)

**WEB EXTRAS at TexasCoopPower.com**  
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<sup>†</sup>Comparison based on average 4G speeds, comparison will vary based on actual speed.

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