



A TREASURE AMONG US

Mrs. McCalla is a beloved figure in Wood County, admired for her 44 years of service as a teacher and her countless hours of charitable work at Hawkins Helping Hand.

The Category 4 Galveston hurricane of 1915 came ashore with 130 mph winds, carving an indelible mark on the Texas landscape. That same year and season, albeit more quietly and without fanfare, a new babe was born in the Piney Woods of Hawkins, Texas. And for most of the 94 years following, the infant who grew to be known as Mrs. Jewel Richard McCalla has been a force of nature, purposefully introducing positive reactions into the lives of hundreds in Wood County.

Born on October 2, 1915, Jewel Richard was the daughter of Robert and Estella Richard, who both earned a modest but good living as farmers. Robert coaxed cotton as well as corn, potatoes, peas and other vegetables from the ground with the hard work and determination that farming needed in those days. With earnest effort, he had enough success to purchase a wagon with mule and horse team to pull it. In time, he and Estella, always working, turned their good fortune into helping others with hauling and transportation, and earned respect and thanks from a grateful community.

Looking back, Jewel says, she remembers the demanding work her parents performed to make their farm a success, originally doing it without any high-tech equipment or modern conveniences. In particular, she recalls how thrilled the whole family was when Wood County Electric Cooperative came out to their farm to inquire whether they wanted electricity, and to see how many “drops” or lights they wanted for their house.

Jewel remembers that she and her brother, Oda, begged, “Papa, we want a light in our room too!” And Papa did give them a light.

“That was just something great!” Jewel elaborated. “We did not have to burn any more coal oil lamps.”

While they thoroughly enjoyed the electricity, Jewel says, “We were farmers, so we did not go in for a lot of fancy buying, but when I got a job, I’d use my money to buy things like a radio and eventually a clothes-washing machine.”

As Robert continued with his farming, his daily wagon travels brought him somewhat close to Jarvis Christian College in Hawkins, where the public high school was, too. Determined that his children would have advantages that a strong education brings, he used his wagon to drive Jewel within walking distance every day, and then he scrimped and saved and arranged for her to enroll in college there when she graduated from high school.

Jewel, grateful for the opportunity, became a standout scholar, graduating with a bachelor’s degree in early education.

Of her time at Jarvis, she remembers, “It was comfortable, close to home, and at the same time I was on the campus where I could receive a professional education in an environment I loved.” After graduation, Jewel enrolled in Texas College in Tyler, commuting from Hawkins, ultimately earning her master’s degree.

During those times of commuting, an interesting thing happened to Jewel. Daily, there was a friendly group passing the opposite direction, and she and a handsome young man started looking forward to their daily waves at each other.

And it wasn't long before that young man, M.C. McCalla, decided to come calling on Jewel Richard. Jewel said her Momma wanted to know right off the bat what that young man McCalla was doing coming around. And Jewel says she told her, "Well, he's the man I'm going to marry."

It wasn't long before that prediction came true, and she and M.C. became husband and wife at St. Paul's Baptist Church in Mineola, where Jewel still is a member to this day.

Over their 53-year marriage, both she and M.C. served in various capacities at the church such as teaching Sunday school and singing in the choir. He served as deacon, and she as mother of the church. She says their time with that church and the love of Christ has always been a central part of their lives.

The railroad also became a big part of their life, as M.C. spent his career with Union Pacific, while Jewel started teaching at Fouke Elementary School, and eventually went on to teach at Hawkins. She says she's never really moved, though. "All of my teaching was done

No one epitomizes the Hawkins Helping Hands slogan, 'Caring People Helping Others,' better than the 94-years-young Jewel McCalla, a true community and state treasure.



at Hawkins in Wood County."

But, over her amazing 44 years of teaching, circumstances and attitudes did change, and, she likes to quip, "I was there when they consolidated. I was there when they integrated. And I was there when they renovated."

In those years, she taught fourth grade or reading, and eventually supervised the Hoffman Ready Reading program. Jewel believes reading is the subject that every other educational opportunity hinges on, and "one of the most important subjects to be taught to our children." She adds, too, "Reading is entertaining."

There is no estimating how many children Mrs. McCalla taught over the years, but it's safe to say the number tops 1,000. And asked about memorable students, or ones she thought she really helped, she laughs and tells of one little girl. She said this child needed some extra attention, and Jewel spent quite a bit of time talking away to her. "The whole time, I thought she was just really listening, and when I got through I asked her if she had any questions." Jewel said the response she got just stunned her when the little girl looked right up at her and said with a big smile, "You sure do have on some pretty shoes."

That particular case is not the most shining example of the impact Jewel McCalla has had over the years, but with her humble spirit, that's the tale she was led to tell.

However, Rose Garrett, one of the students in her school, tells it differently. She says of Mrs. McCalla, "She did not just run the ship, she built it and everything." Retired now since 1986, Jewel is still "building ships," but now out in the community. Almost since the day she retired, she began volunteering at Hawkins Helping Hand, a community food pantry and clothing center.

At 94, she's still going strong, serving as the group's treasurer, and is at the hub of the activity there and an inspiration for all of the other volunteers. But, here again, she describes it humbly, "It's neighbors that keep me going. That's why I like this job. I don't stay home. I just get up and I have some place to go."

Mrs. McCalla has spent her entire life in Hawkins and nearby Fouke, and although she and M.C. did not have children, there are many at Helping Hand and in the community who call her Momma. Reflecting, she says, "I truly appreciate the respect that the children have given me, and for them I hope one day their lives will each shine light and inspiration."

Aristotle said, "Those who educate children well are more to be honored than parents, for these only gave life, those the art of living well."

Lifelong, Mrs. Jewel R. McCalla has dedicated her gifts to teaching from books, as well as leading by good example. She's indeed a precious treasure and prime example of the art of living well.

Jewel R. McCalla has been a member of Wood County Electric cooperative for well over 50 years and has lived her entire life in Wood County and the Fouke and Hawkins communities.

What's That Sound and Smell? Check for CFL Burnout

Most people know the pop and flash that occurs when a standard lightbulb burns out. But you might not be familiar with the slightly more dramatic burnout of a compact fluorescent lightbulb (CFL).

CFLs operate differently from incandescent bulbs, using about 75 percent less energy. They also burn out differently.

As a CFL approaches the end of its life, expect the light to dim. When it does burn out, you'll likely hear a more dramatic pop than with a traditional bulb, and you might smell a distinct odor. The bulb might even produce smoke while the base of the bulb might turn black. None of these things should cause concern. In fact, popping and smoke means the bulb's end-of-life mechanism worked correctly.

To ensure you're using CFLs safely, take two precautions:

1) Before you buy, check the packaging for the mark of an independent safety-testing laboratory, such as Underwriters Laboratories. That label means the bulbs have been tested repeatedly for safety hazards.

2) After the bulb has burned out, don't toss it in the trash. Instead, take old bulbs to a place that accepts them for recycling.

CALLING ALL SCHOLARS

\$15K in College Scholarships To Be Awarded in 2010

Wood County Electric Cooperative (WCEC) is currently accepting applications from area students interested in receiving college scholarship money. There will be 10 \$1,000 scholarships and one \$5,000 scholarship. To be eligible for the \$1,000 scholarships students must be current members or dependents of active members of WCEC. Applicants must write a 450- to 500-word essay describing themselves, their current interests and their plans and goals for the future (educational, professional, personal), and describe why they have chosen their field of study.

In addition to the essays, a completed WCEC application, two letters of reference and a school certification of academic standing should accompany submissions. The judging panel will give weight to the essay, academic achievements, civic participation, extracurricular participation and financial need. The top 10 scores will each win a \$1,000 college scholarship. All funds will be paid directly to the college once the student is enrolled.

The \$5,000 scholarship is reserved for a college junior who has already been accepted and enrolled in an accredited electrical engineering program. This recipient must be a dependent of an active WCEC member, and must submit a 1,000-word topical essay outlining a major challenge they believe to be facing the electricity distribution industry in the future. Funds for this scholarship will also be paid directly to the college and split evenly between the junior and senior years.

These programs are funded entirely by unclaimed capital credit payments returned to WCEC by the state of Texas. All entries must be received at WCEC headquarters by April 1, 2010. Late entries will not be considered.

To enter, students can pick up an application at WCEC headquarters at 501 S. Main Street in Quitman, or download it from: <http://www.wcec.org/community/programs.html>.



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Dollars To Go Further with New Alliance

At Wood County Electric Cooperative (WCEC), we are always looking for ways to stretch our dollars. To that end, we've recently implemented a new way of warehousing that has the potential to save about a half a million dollars annually. This opportunity came about through our relationship with Texas Electric Cooperatives (TEC), of which WCEC has been a member for many years.

TEC is a not-for-profit statewide organization based in Austin and is currently composed of 65 electric distribution cooperatives (like WCEC), and 11 generation and transmission cooperatives. TEC was established in 1941 to act as an advocate for members in matters involving the Texas Legislature, U.S. Congress, and various state and federal regulatory agencies. TEC still does all of those things, but has also expanded over the years to offer other world-class services, including safety and developmental training, publishing this magazine, hazardous waste disposal, equipment repair, various consulting services and procurement/supply chain management.

When appropriate, WCEC has taken advantage of many of these services, which have already resulted in increased value and reduced costs for our members. And now, WCEC is pleased to announce a new alliance with TEC's Utility Supply & Service (US&S) division which will serve to streamline utility supply operations, including reducing inventory and overhead costs, and helping to manage construction costs and cost-intensive maintenance projects.

Beginning January 1, TEC US&S became responsible for all of WCEC's warehouse management and purchasing functions for all utility supplies for line construction materials and plant components. WCEC is the 12th distribution cooperative to join this member-owned organization. With the membership, WCEC not only will achieve cost savings in materials, but the other 11 Texas cooperative members also will see advantages from aggregate savings.

With the new relationship, TEC will retain material and equipment inventory, with more common items housed and

maintained at a TEC-run warehouse onsite at WCEC. This process reduces WCEC's expenses, as the items are not paid for until they are pulled from inventory. TEC also warehouses big-ticket items common to all cooperatives, at facil-



From left: Gary Daniels, Danny Rodgers, Marcus Folmar and Robert Sherman expertly set up the new TEC-run warehouse at WCEC to ultimately add efficiencies and cost savings.

ities in Georgetown and across Texas, and all the member cooperatives draw from this inventory.

Another added benefit of the warehouse transition to TEC has been the divesting of many regulatory chores related to storage and reporting on equipment that contains potentially toxic or regulated chemicals. This decreases some of the potential liabilities for WCEC, while decreasing the man-hours associated with compliance.

To the average member, this transition should be pretty much seamless and unremarkable, but we wanted to tell you about it, as it underscores our foremost mission of keeping electricity affordable.

"At WCEC we take our commitment to our members very seriously and are always seeking ways to reduce cost and add value where we can," said WCEC CEO/General Manager Debbie Robinson. "We believe this newest relationship with TEC will give us an extraordinary tool to modernize the way we warehouse, will drive efficiencies, and ultimately assist us in serving our members even better."

YOUTH TOUR 2010

Visit Washington, D.C., on Us!

Wood County Electric Cooperative, Inc., (WCEC) is calling all eligible teens between the ages of 15 and 19 to apply for the 45th annual Government-in-Action Youth Tour. Would you like an all expense paid trip to our nation's capital? If so, here's your chance to compete to participate in a memorable event. WCEC is looking for one outstanding student to experience a guided tour of Washington, D.C., June 10-18, 2010. The trip will include airfare, transportation while in Washington, hotel rooms, food costs and tours of many exciting, educational and inspiring sites.

It's simple to enter. To be considered, candidates must submit a 450- to 500-word essay. This year's topic is timely and important and is devoted to conservation. Essayists should write about everyday electrical consumption, describing three tips consumers can use to reduce their electric bills, while also lessening negative impacts on our environment. The essays will be judged on composition, neatness, original-

ity and knowledge of the subject.

The winner, to be announced in March, will receive an all-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C., and will travel with students from across Texas. This group, upon arriving in Washington, will join approximately 1,500 Youth Tour participants from across the country.

This tremendous learning opportunity will include tours of national treasures such as Mount Vernon, the Air & Space Museum and various historical sites and memorials. One day will be dedicated to touring the Supreme Court, the Library of Congress and Capitol Hill.

"I'd encourage every eligible student to submit an essay for a chance to be a part of this tremendous opportunity. This trip is an enriching experience that will offer unsurpassed learning and leadership opportunities that can be applied daily, and used for a lifetime," said Debbie Robinson, CEO and General Manger of WCEC.



2010 GOVERNMENT-IN-ACTION YOUTH TOUR RULES AND ELIGIBILITY

- Submit an essay not to exceed 500 words, outlining three practical energy saving tips.
- Essay entries should be mailed to:
Wood County Electric Cooperative, Inc.
Attention: Youth Tour 2010
P.O. Box 1827
Quitman, TX 75783
- Entries must be received at WCEC on or before March 1, 2010. Entries received after that date will be disqualified.
- Contestant must be a high school student between the ages of 15 and 19.

- Contestant must be a dependent of a Wood County Electric Cooperative member with permanent resident status in WCEC service area.
- No name should appear on the essay. On a separate cover sheet, the contestant should include: Student essayist name, name and address of parent/guardian who is a member of WCEC, contact telephone number and WCEC account number.
- Reference materials from various sources, including libraries and the internet should be used, but the essay should be in the student's own words.



Win a Home Energy Makeover Worth Up to \$10,000 !

Be one of four co-op members to win up to \$10,000 worth of energy-efficient improvements to their homes.

Each winner will receive up to \$10,000 in energy-efficient home improvements that will save money for years to come. Home improvements will be based on what demonstrates the best examples of energy-efficiency and may include such things as:

- Upgraded heating and cooling systems
- Energy-efficient water heaters
- Improved insulation and weatherization
- Energy-efficient appliances

Enter Today

Entering is easy and only takes a few minutes online. Go to www.texascooppower.com for complete contest rules and an online application, or mail the completed entry form below to Texas Co-op Power Home Energy Makeover, 1122 Colorado St., 24th Floor, Austin, TX 78701. The deadline to enter is March 10, 2010. All mailed applications must be postmarked by March 10, 2010 to qualify. All online applications must be received by midnight on March 10, 2010.

Name: _____ Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Square Footage of Home: _____ Year Home Was Built: _____

Name of Your Electric Co-op: _____

Would you like to receive contest updates and special offers from sponsors via e-mail? Yes No



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