

Register Now | Sign In | E-mail preferences

NEWS ENTERTAINMENT HOOKEM.COM CLASSIFIEDS CARS HOMES JOBS

HOME	NEWS	BUSINESS	SPORTS	LIFE	OPINION	WEATHER	TRAFFIC	MULTIMEDIA	BLOGS	CUSTOMER SERVICE	
SHOPPING											

Home > Opinion

## Let us dry clothes outside without fear of an HOA

*Others say: Anna Hanks Local Contributor*

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR »

- ▶ [Get out of war; Afghans' support; Rules of the road](#)  
6:10 p.m. Sunday
  - ▶ [Rethink contracts; Water lag; Pedestrian trouble](#)  
Saturday, March 24
  - ▶ [Unhelpful restrictions; Church choices; Artist appreciation](#)  
Friday, March 23
- [More Letters to the Editors](#)

### COMMENTARY »

- ▶ [Adopt a 10-1 council plan](#)  
6:06 p.m. Sunday
  - ▶ [Residents satisfied now](#)  
6:05 p.m. Sunday
  - ▶ [Young: Time to reconsider validity of insanity defense for soldiers](#)  
Friday, March 23
- [More Commentary](#)

### RECENT EDITORIALS »

- ▶ [Residents' dignity, Texas' honor at risk](#)  
Saturday, March 24
  - ▶ [Be a hero for a good cause at Cap 10K](#)  
Friday, March 23
  - ▶ [Police keep peace during busy SXSW](#)  
Thursday, March 22
- [More recent editorials](#)

### MORE ON STATESMAN.COM »

- ▶ [MAMAs Austin aims to help women attorneys balance work, motherhood](#)
  - ▶ [Clear Rock Homes hosts Beltorre model home grand opening](#)
  - ▶ [Spanish Oaks offers golf course living at its finest](#)
  - ▶ [Builder strikes gold with green townhomes in Central Austin](#)
  - ▶ [Partners in Building is expanding to new communities](#)
  - ▶ [David Weekley hosting a Build on Your Lot seminar](#)
  - ▶ [David Weekley unveils new model, floor plans, home sites](#)
- [More](#)

Commenting  
unavailable on some

Updated: 7:36 p.m. Wednesday, March 14, 2012  
Published: 7:00 p.m. Wednesday, March 14, 2012

E-mail | Print | Share | Larger Type

One of my earliest childhood memories is of hanging out laundry with my grandmother.

Early on humid Houston mornings, my East Texas-born grandmother would haul a load of wet wash down her back steps and out to her laundry line. There, she would methodically hang it on a double clothesline that was far too high for me to reach. Most days, we'd bring the laundry in when it was perfectly damp for ironing dry. Other days, she'd be forced to snatch it away from the raindrops in that semi-tropical city.

On the days when water fell out of the sky, my grandmother would bring the laundry back into the house, and sadly stuff it into her tumble dryer. When my grandfather would return from his shift at Shell, she'd sadly shake her head at the need for the noisy contraption. She was not a fan.

Living in a tiny house in Central Austin, I keep my washer in the house, but the dryer is in our garage. Most of the year, the clothing never even makes it to the dryer, as I prefer to hang it on the line. Using my grandmother's sturdy vintage clothespins, I hang out my wash nearly every day. It usually dries in a matter of hours.

I've casually mentioned my devotion to hanging out my wash to a number of my girlfriends. Their usual reaction: telling me how much they'd love to be able to hang out their own laundry, but that their homeowner's association prevents it. (Often, HOAs will fine residents for rule infractions.)

As my former college roommate, freshman year laundry guru and (now) busy local Realtor Lisa Tyrrell points out, most HOAs don't allow line drying.

Prohibiting line drying is a really bad thing, especially as estimates indicate that tumble dryers consume 6 percent of an average home's electricity—about the same as a refrigerator. In contrast, lighting uses around 8 percent of the average home's energy.

We're in the middle of a major public discussion about the possibility of Austin Energy raising the cost of our electricity, as well as perhaps setting a minimum fee for residential customers.

It's ludicrous that we're having a discussion about raising electric rates while non-governmental organizations have the power to regulate something as simple and harmless as line drying.

Why on Earth should people in the City of Austin — and in the State of Texas — be prevented from doing something that's beneficial to the planet, harms no one, and provides a tiny dollop of exercise and fresh air?

This is especially problematic in the summer. During those months, even some people who might like to do otherwise are forced to dry their clothing by putting it in a heated metal box. In turn, this heated metal box is often located inside of the larger box that you are trying to cool: your house.

Tumble dryers first became prevalent after World War II when they became part of the postwar vision of "better living through electricity." My mother recalled that in the late 1940s, when the first homemaker



Site
  Web
  Archive
 Web Search by **YAHOO!**

### SHARE THIS PAGE WITH YOUR FRIENDS

14 41 4 0

[Tweet](#) [Share](#)

### ARNOLD GARCIA »

▶ [Johnson stood up and got Texans to recognize our Independence Day](#)  
Thursday, March 1

[More Arnold Garcia](#)



### ALBERTA PHILLIPS »

▶ [Tell Central Texas about the woman who raised you](#)  
Saturday, March 17

[More from Alberta Phillips](#)



### JODY SEABORN »

▶ [Liberty isn't free of medical bills](#)  
Saturday, March 24

[More from Jody Seaborn](#)



### LATEST AP TEXAS NEWS »

- ▶ [CPS tackling backlog of cases in Austin, W Texas](#)  
11:21 a.m.
  - ▶ [Rare Honus Wagner card could fetch \\$1.5 million](#)  
Updated 11:18 a.m.
  - ▶ [Texas 7' member among 2 to get sentences reviewed](#)  
11:06 a.m.
- ▶ [AP NEWS: Texas | Nation | World | Sports | Biz](#)

### Subscribe - \$2.00 per week

Accurate, complete local news, plus coupon savings, delivered every Sunday



## articles

As part of a technology change, commenting will not be available on some articles for a number of months. [Read more about the change here.](#)

in her Pasadena neighborhood got a tumble dryer, the neighborhood kids were invited over to see the newfangled marvel of the wash tumbling dry behind a glass window.

It's time for us to step away from the magic of post-war appliances. We need to stop seeing baby blankets billowing in the breeze as a mark of not being able to afford a tumble dryer, and start seeing it as a way to ease the burden on our natural resources.

Money is an issue, too. While reports vary on the specific savings of a laundry line, nearly everyone agrees it's cheaper than using a mechanical dryer.

I thought my devotion to line drying was a personal issue, so I was surprised to find there's an international "Right to Dry" movement, fighting for the right of people to be able to legally line dry their clothing. A documentary on this issue called "Drying For Freedom" will premiere at the Eco Focus Film Festival in Athens, Ga., at the end of March.

Given the probability of this Austin Energy rate hike, we need to guarantee that everyone in Austin has the option of choosing solar drying on a nice sunny day. Preventing legal line drying only benefits the makers of tumble dryers and chemical dryer sheets.

Texas needs to join Florida, Utah, Maine, Vermont, Colorado and Hawaii in not letting housing groups prevent people from using clotheslines.

Since I've become passionate about this issue, I've started seeing clotheslines everywhere. On the South By Southwest trade show floor, Sounds Australia has set up their booth to resemble a typical Australian backyard, complete with a mock-up of that country's iconic "Hills Hoist" solar dryer. They're distributing the music of showcasing Australian bands on a USB stick that doubles as a giant clothespin.

I'll be adding that giant clothespin to my basket after SXSW, then whistling a few bars of, "I comes from a land down under ..." when I pull my sheets off the line.

I just hope that someday more of my girlfriends can do the same thing without fear of being fined by their HOA.

The SXSW trade show ends today.

---

Share this article:

---

User comments are not being accepted on this article.

### NEWS

[Local](#)  
[Virtual Capitol](#)  
[Williamson](#)  
[State](#)  
[Crimetracker](#)  
[StatesmanWatch](#)  
[Obituaries](#)  
[Database Central](#)

### Nation

[World](#)  
[Lottery](#)

### BUSINESS

[Technology](#)  
[Personal Finance](#)  
[Area Employers](#)  
[Employment](#)  
[Real Estate](#)  
[AP Business](#)

### OPINION

[Insight](#)  
[Ben Sargent](#)

### SPORTS

[Longhorns](#)  
[Longhorns Gameweek](#)  
[Aggies](#)  
[HS Football](#)  
[High School](#)  
[Recruiting](#)

### Outdoors

[Golf](#)

### Area Pro Teams

[NFL](#)

[NBA](#)

[MLB](#)

[AP Sports News](#)

### LIFE

[Style](#)

[Travel](#)

[Gardening](#)

[Green](#)

[Health & Medical](#)

[Raising Austin](#)

[Books](#)

[Faith](#)

[Life Guide](#)

[Weddings](#)

[Season for Caring](#)

### WEATHER

### TRAFFIC

[Traffic Cameras](#)

### MULTIMEDIA

[Collective Vision](#)

[Interactives](#)

[Galleries](#)

### BLOGS

### ENTERTAINMENT

[A-List](#)

[Events](#)

[Music](#)

[Movies](#)

[Television](#)

[Arts](#)

[Recreation](#)

[Spas/Salons](#)

[Food/Drink](#)

### MOBILE/RSS

[Statesman](#)

[Austin360](#)

[iPhone application](#)

[RSS](#)

### CLASSIFIEDS

[Cars](#)

[Homes](#)

[Jobs](#)

[Find Austin Jobs](#)

[Merchandise](#)

### CUSTOMER SERVICE

[Member Center](#)

[E-mail Newsletters](#)

[Subscribe to the paper](#)

[Sign up for the eEdition](#)

[Subscriber Services](#)

[Where to buy the Statesman](#)

[Buy Photos](#)

[Readers Panel](#)

[Careers at the Statesman](#)

[Internships](#)

[Newspapers in Education](#)

[News tips](#)

[Reader rewards](#)

[Site map](#)

[Ethics Policy](#)

### ADVERTISE

[Print](#)

[Online](#)

[Classifieds \(Print & Online\)](#)

[eTearsheets](#)

[Newspaper Ads](#)

### MARKETING

[Community Development](#)

[DoGood](#)

[Glossy](#)

[Concert series](#)

[Marketing](#)

[Readers panel](#)

[Special Sections](#)

### AFFILIATED SITES

[Ahora Si](#)

[Hookem.com](#)

[Bastrop Advertiser](#)

[Cedar Park Citizen](#)

[Lake Travis View](#)

[Leander Ledger](#)

[Pflugerville Pflag](#)

[Round Rock Leader](#)

[Smithville Times](#)

[Westlake Picayune](#)

Copyright © 2012 All rights reserved. By using Statesman.com, you accept the terms of our visitor agreement. [Please read it.](#)  
[Contact Statesman.com](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [About our ads](#)

