

TEXAS CITY DISASTER'S  
SCARS ENDURE

TWO-FISTED WEST TEXAS  
LAW AND ORDER

WEEDS GET THE  
LAST LAUGH

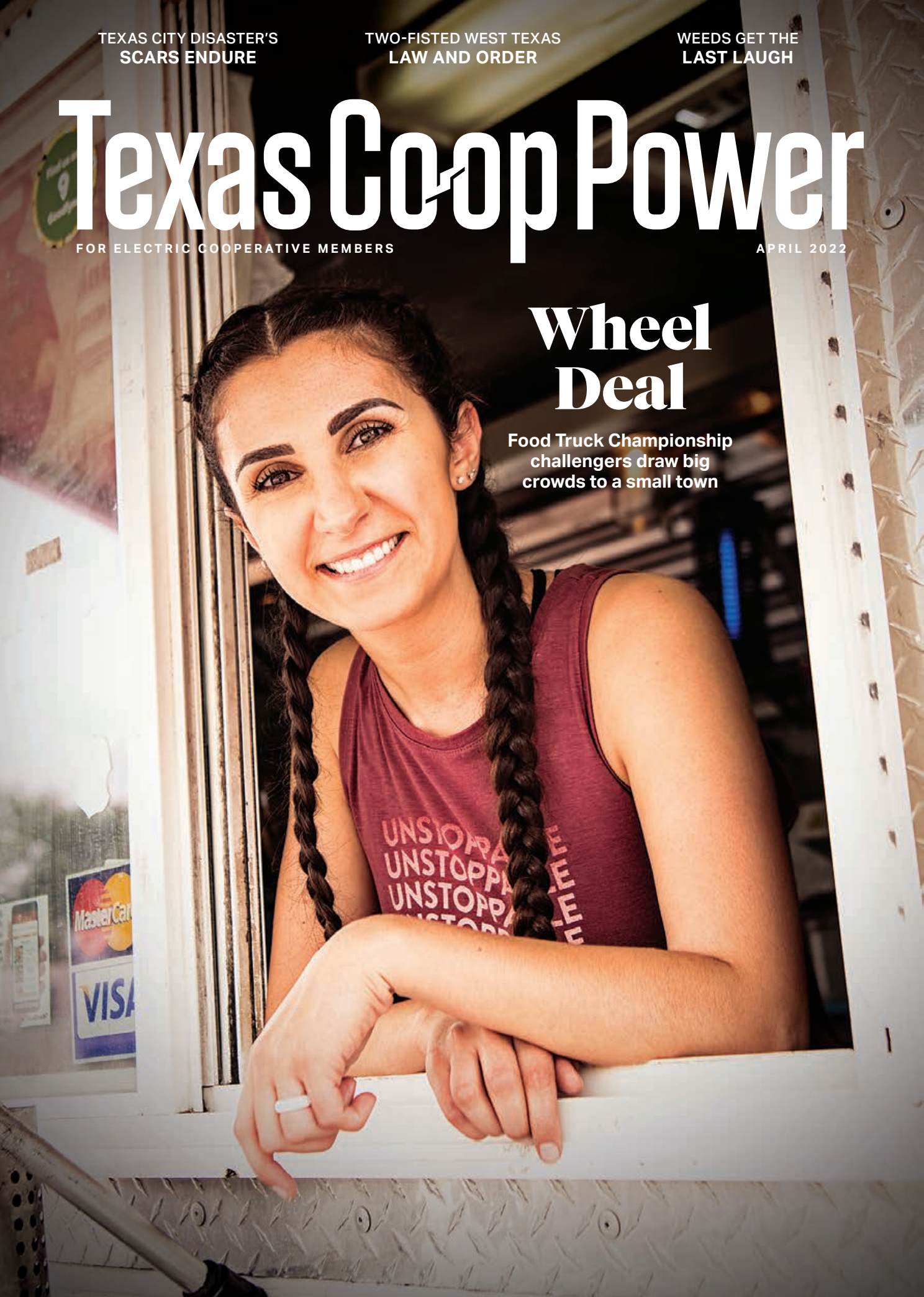
# Texas Coop Power

FOR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE MEMBERS

APRIL 2022

## Wheel Deal

Food Truck Championship  
challengers draw big  
crowds to a small town







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# April 2022



10

## 08 Heroes Next Door

Seventy-five years after the Texas City disaster, those who rushed in haven't been forgotten.

*By Bill Minutaglio*

## Best in Tow

Chefs bring big-time flavor to small-town Graham for the Food Truck Championship of Texas.

*By Amanda Ogle  
Photos by Tom Hussey*

### ON THE COVER

Lyn Sharp awaits the next order in Danibelle's Lebanese Cuisine food truck.

### ABOVE

The crew from Rack Attack Barbecue celebrates winning the grand champion belt.  
*Photos by Tom Hussey*

04

### Currents

The latest buzz

06

### TCP Talk

Readers respond

18

### Co-op News

Information plus energy and safety tips from your cooperative

29

### Footnotes in Texas History

Two-Fisted Law and Order  
*By W.F. Strong*

30

### TCP Kitchen

Brunch  
*By Megan Myers*

34

### Hit the Road

Swinging Through Time  
*By Chet Garner*

37

### Focus on Texas

Photo Contest:  
All Wet

38

### Observations

No Hedging  
*By Sheryl Smith-Rodgers*



# Count on Lineworkers

**ELECTRIC CO-OPS** proudly celebrate their lineworkers, even proclaiming the second Monday in April—April 11 this year—as National Lineworker Appreciation Day.

Co-op members, too, are quick to look up to lineworkers.

When we asked readers to finish this sentence—“The hardest job in the world has to be ...”—Pablo Sanchez, a Magic Valley Electric Cooperative member, was the first to respond:

“Being a lineman during cold weather. Knowing someone is counting on Magic Valley to keep us warm.”



“Genius is 1% inspiration, 99% perspiration.”

—THOMAS EDISON

## FINISH THIS SENTENCE

I REMEMBER  
WHEN A DOLLAR  
COULD BUY ...

**TCP** Tell us how you would finish that sentence. Email your short responses to [letters@TexasCoopPower.com](mailto:letters@TexasCoopPower.com) or comment on our Facebook post. Include your co-op and town.

Below are some of the responses to our February prompt: **The baby of the family always ...**

Remembers things differently.

STEVE AND LISA BOSTON  
VIA FACEBOOK

Gets his way and mom's attention.

SANDRA GONZALEZ  
SAN PATRICIO EC  
BAYSIDE

Had a stomachache when it was time to help with dishes and cleanup after dinner.

MARY ANN CULEY  
TRINITY VALLEY EC  
FRANKSTON

Gets the hand-me-downs.

LORA GRAHAM  
COLEMAN COUNTY EC  
GOLDBUSK

Stays the baby even when he's 6 feet, 2 inches tall; 31 years old; and has his own baby.

SHERRI LENOIR  
NAVASOTA VALLEY EC  
GROESBECK

To see more responses, read Currents online.



## **TCP** *Contests and More*

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### **\$500 RECIPE CONTEST**

Pizza Night

### **FOCUS ON TEXAS PHOTOS**

Motorsports

### **RECOMMENDED READING**

Lineworker Appreciation Day is April 11.

*Line of Duty* from October 2016 tells about the challenges and rewards for these co-op first responders.



*April 7*

## **National Beer Day**

Celebrating is easy: *Texas Feels a Draft* from January 2020 includes a map of 96 craft breweries in mostly rural and suburban Texas.

## **GUARD AGAINST SURGES**

Your electric cooperative reminds you of two ways you can protect electronics in your home from power surges: using power strips that include surge protection and installing a whole-home surge protector.

## **Have You Heard?**

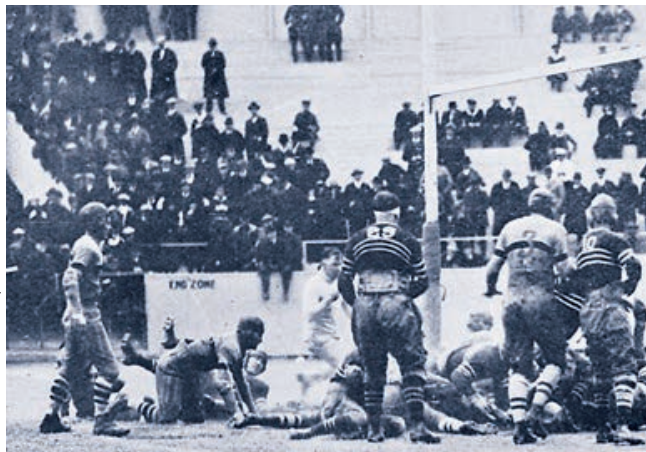
Before the Industrial Revolution, roughly 1760–1840, the principal sources of loud noise were thunder, church bells and cannon fire.



## **Emergency Tax Break**

**TEXAS MERCHANTS** will participate in a sales tax holiday for emergency preparation supplies this month, allowing tax-free purchases of items that can alleviate hardships after natural disasters like hurricanes, flash floods and wildfires.

More than a dozen products, such as portable generators, hurricane shutters, batteries and fire extinguishers, can be purchased without incurring sales tax April 23–25. Details are available at [comptroller.texas.gov](http://comptroller.texas.gov).



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### Not Fade Away

I grew up on an Iowa farm about 20 miles south of where Buddy Holly and the others met their end [*A Glimpse of Buddy Holly*, February 2022]. I was 11 then. We didn't learn of the crash until we got to school. All the girls were crying, dashing in and out of the restroom to wash their tears away, only to cry even more as others came through the doors and were told of the crash. Some were so upset they even went home.

Doug Siskow  
Pedernales EC  
New Braunfels

That's when they  
made barbed com-  
ments [*Joined by  
a Fence*, January  
2022].

CHUCK BURGESS  
VIA FACEBOOK



COURTESY CHET GARNER

### Aggie Standouts

“The lore of the 12th Man is always inspirational. Big kudos to the editors who made sure the story started on Page 12. How perfect.”

JULIA TRIGG CRAWFORD  
LAMAR ELECTRIC  
DIRECT

### Royal Recollection

Our Stephenville neighbor June Shannon was personally invited by Queen Elizabeth II to visit her in Austin in 1991 [*Her Majesty's Visit*, February 2022]. What do you take the queen to welcome her to Texas? A pecan pie, of course. June baked a pie and enjoyed it with her majesty over tea. June, our Stephenville High School English teacher, was selected to read her poem *Happiness Is* at the queen's silver jubilee in London in 1977. There they became friends, sharing a love for country life.

Suzan Garner  
CECA  
Mullin

### Telling Good Stories

We subscribe to several state and national, globally recognized magazines, many of which get quickly scanned and recycled. *Texas Co-op Power* is one that I read cover to cover and look forward to.

Thank you, Texas Electric Cooperatives, for your support of journalism and for understanding the importance of a good story.

Abbie and Charles Cotrell  
Bandera EC  
Waring



WRITE TO US

letters@TexasCoopPower.com

Editor, Texas Co-op Power  
1122 Colorado St., 24th Floor  
Austin, TX 78701

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

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# Finally . . . a better mobility solution than Scooters or Power Chairs.

The **Zoomer's** versatile design and 1-touch joystick operation brings mobility and independence to those who need it most.

If you have mobility issues, or know someone who does, then you've experienced the difficulties faced by millions of Americans. Simple tasks like getting from the bedroom to the kitchen can become a time-consuming and potentially dangerous ordeal. You may have tried to solve the problem with a power chair or a scooter but neither is ideal. Power chairs are bulky and look like a medical device. Scooters are either unstable or hard to maneuver. Now, there's a better alternative . . . the Zoomer.

***My Zoomer is a delight to ride! It has increased my mobility in my apartment, my opportunities to enjoy the-out-of-doors, and enabled me to visit the homes of my children for longer periods of time. The various speeds of it match my need for safety, it is easy to turn, and I am most pleased with the freedom of movement it gives me.***

Sincerely, A. Macon, Williamsburg, VA

After just one trip around your home in the Zoomer, you'll marvel at how easy it is to navigate. It is designed to maneuver in tight spaces like doorways, between furniture, and around corners. It can go over thresholds and works great on any kind of floor or carpet. It's not bulky or cumbersome, so it can roll



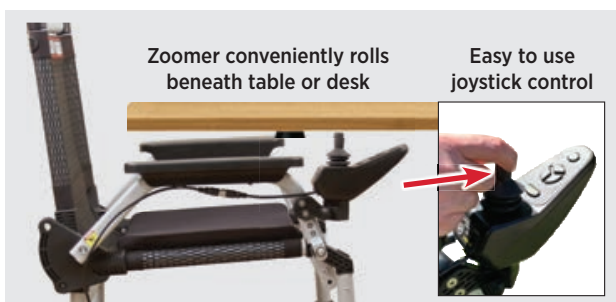
right up to a table or desk – there's no need to transfer



Folds to 12" in seconds

to a chair. Its sturdy yet lightweight aluminum frame makes it durable and comfortable. Its dual motors power it at up to 3.7 miles per hour and its automatic electromagnetic brakes stop on a dime. The rechargeable battery powers it for up to 8 miles on a single charge. Plus, its exclusive foldable design enables you to transport it easily and even store it in a closet or under a bed when it's not in use.

Why spend another day letting mobility issues hamper your lifestyle? Call now and find out how you can have your very own Zoomer.



**Now available with sporty two-arm lever steering (Zinger Chair)**



**Ready to get your own Zoomer? We'd love to talk to you.**

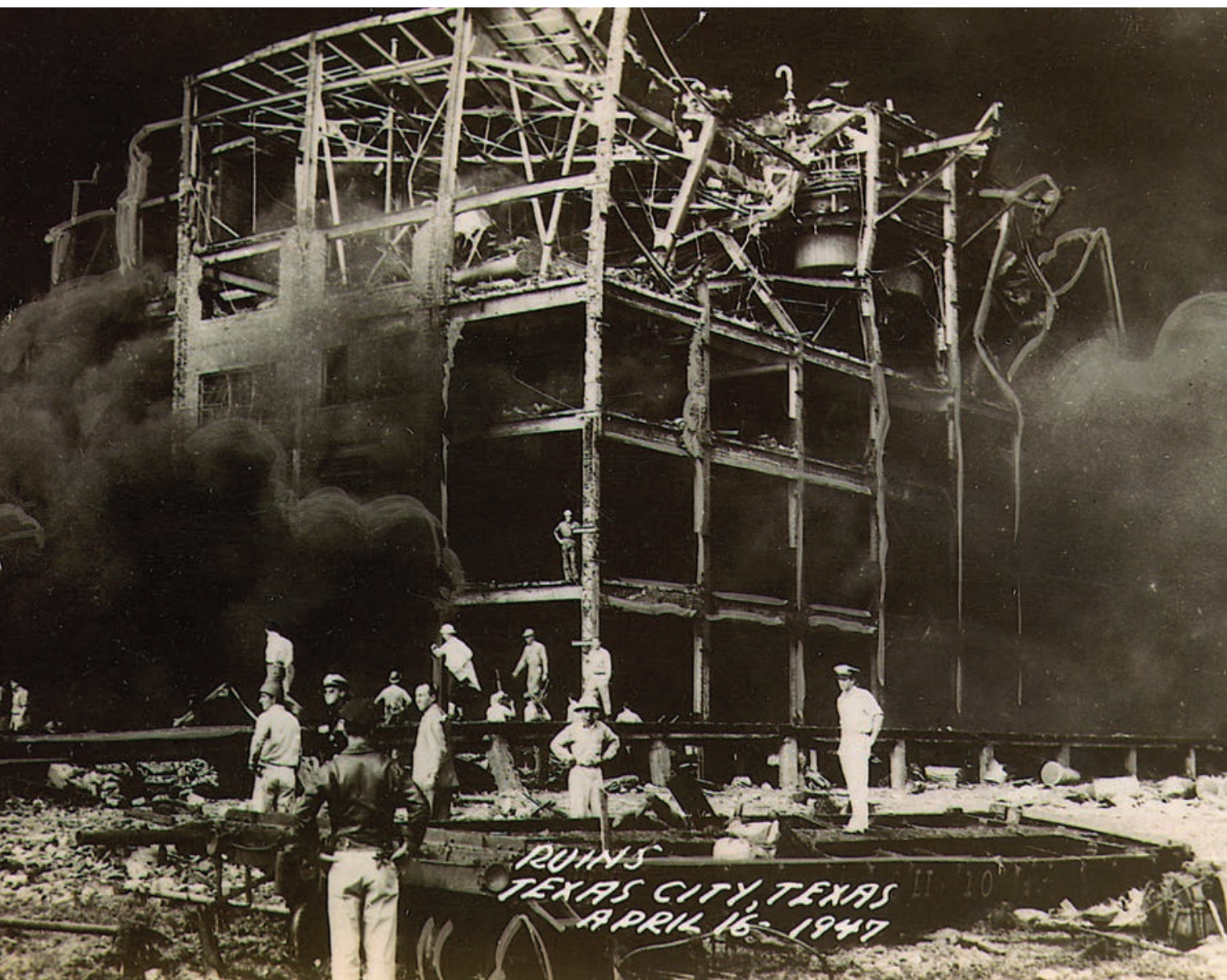
Call now toll free and order one today! **1-888-223-7165**

Please mention code 116683 when ordering.



The Zoomer and Zinger Chairs are personal electric vehicles and are not medical devices nor wheelchairs. They are not intended for medical purposes to provide mobility to persons restricted to a sitting position. They are not covered by Medicare nor Medicaid. © 2022 Journey Health and Lifestyle

85032



# Heroes Next Door

Seventy-five years after the Texas City disaster, those who rushed in haven't been forgotten

BY BILL MINUTAGLIO

SEVERAL YEARS AGO, I received a message that just didn't seem right: An indomitable and indestructible Texan, someone so brave it felt like he could live forever, had passed away.

He was a former soldier who had fought in some of the deadliest moments of World War II. And then, after surviving the ravages of battle, he and others had stared down what some have called the greatest human-made tragedy of 20th-century America—an event that came to be called the Texas City disaster.

COURTESY WOODSON RESEARCH CENTER, FONDREN LIBRARY, RICE UNIVERSITY



Curtis Trahan had lived through so many things that it wasn't all that unusual to assume he could march on and on. But his family let me know that he had indeed succumbed. They wondered if I would speak at his memorial service.

Of course, I agreed—while knowing it would be virtually impossible to give proper tribute to him and all the other ordinary folks in Texas City who displayed unyielding courage, empathy and humanity during the most profound tragedy imaginable.

Tall and soft-spoken, Trahan was mayor of the small port town near Houston on April 16, 1947. That morning, as kids and families gathered to watch firefighters tackle what seemed like a small fire on a dock, there was suddenly a massive explosion.

It was what some imagined an atomic bomb blast to be like. Others simply thought that Judgment Day had abruptly arrived.

The earth rumbled and shuddered, oceangoing ships were heaved out of the water, buildings collapsed, airplanes were sucked from the sky—and hundreds of men, women and children instantly perished. Almost every member of the Texas City Fire Department was killed in the blink of an eye. Dozens and dozens of people were never seen again.

The final numbers were debated, but it appears that the Texas City disaster killed as many as 500. It's possible that more died but were never accounted for, and another 5,000 were injured. Dozens of human remains went unidentified.

Despite unrelenting fires, carnage and chaos, hundreds of people, including Trahan, raced to the scene. They organized rescue efforts, comforted the wounded and asked for help from lawmakers in Austin and Washington. They refused to sleep, marshaled volunteers and demanded answers for the pained community. So many Texans and more than a few souls from out of state stayed for weeks and months on end to treat the victims, donate blood, clear the rubble and help families search for loved ones.

The FBI arrived to investigate whether it had been some sort of attack. Soldiers were sent to restore order. Frank Sinatra agreed to do a fundraiser. Hundreds of cars, homes and buildings needed repairs. The financial toll, in today's dollars, would reach into the billions. Scientists were in awe at how the detonations were felt dozens of miles away

**It was what some imagined an atomic bomb blast to be like. Others simply thought that Judgment Day had abruptly arrived.**

in Houston and even registered on measuring devices in other states.

The blast was ultimately deemed an

accident. One theory held that a carelessly tossed cigarette had set fire to tons of ammonium nitrate fertilizer sitting in the hold of a ship. It was, ironically, fertilizer that the United States was sending to Europe to nourish war-ravaged farms and speed the healing of a decimated continent.

Investigations and court cases would stretch on for years, circling around whether or not more could have been done to warn the good people in Texas City that the bags and bags of fertilizer were not just lifesaving—they were also deadly.

Ammonium nitrate was already well-recognized by then to be both a powerful fertilizer and explosive. Bombmakers used it in World War I, and later, terrorists also sought it out. The compound was used by Timothy McVeigh to blow up a federal building in Oklahoma, and in 2013, there was an explosion at a fertilizer facility in West, Texas, that led to 15 deaths.

Now, as another aching anniversary for the Texas City disaster approaches, I think of the last conversation I had with Trahan. For many long years, he had watched as the stricken city rebuilt bit by bit. Businesses eventually reopened, the freighters came back, and school classes and church services resumed.

But for Trahan and others, the wounds from the Texas City disaster never went entirely away. He and many more had seen too much, endured so much, for the mental and even physical scars to truly vanish.

We sat in his little home, and he talked about how he had first moved to Texas City because he thought it would be a quiet place to raise a family. That he had run for mayor so that anyone from any race or background would be treated the same.

He said that when hell on earth came to his little town, he simply did what he had to do. What he believed most people would do: You race to rescue your neighbors. You pull them from the rubble. You give them balm, hope and resolve.

And then Trahan waved his hand and suggested quietly that he hadn't done anything that merited remembering.

Later, when I spoke at his memorial service, I tried to convey the essence of that final visit with Trahan. How a disaster can reveal both courage and humility—and how you often don't have to look very far to find everyday angels.

Some reside right next door. ■

The Texas City explosion, so powerful it blew two planes out of the sky, killed as many as 500 people in April 1947.





# BEST IN TOW

## Chefs bring big-time flavor to small-town Graham for the **Food Truck Championship of Texas**

After parking my car across from a feed store, I make my way up Fourth Street in Graham toward the downtown square. It's a little after noon, and the area is buzzing with activity. Live music rattles through the streets up ahead, and I pass a group of people heading back to their vehicles, toothpicks in hand. "Scrumdiddlyumptious!" one of them says, patting his stomach in satisfaction. I get excited.

Forty-two food trucks are competing today in the Food Truck Championship of Texas, an annual contest that has been held in Graham since 2015. Admission is free for all guests, who can also enjoy live music, an artisan showcase, children's activities and a late-night concert at the Young County Arena after the food.

Up for grabs are numerous awards, bragging rights and the coveted \$10,000 grand championship prize for the best food truck—crowned by a panel of expert judges. The stakes are high for competitors who arrive from hundreds of miles away—rigs in tow—in a test to be the best. This year's event is June 4.

For folks like me, choosing what to eat is the real food truck challenge. And we can't lose.

As I approach the competition, my mouth waters and my nostrils are filled with the scent of fried seafood—no doubt coming from the combination of Mac's Cajun Shack, Catch Me If You Can Southern Creole and Blazin Cajun—all positioned near Fourth and Oak streets and serving dishes such as seafood pot pie, gumbo, shrimp and grits, boudin egg rolls, crawfish, and smoked alligator.

In a nearby building, judges Debbie Workman, a chef and restaurateur; Ched Pagtakhan, a chef, culinary arts teacher and food truck owner; and Dante Ramirez, a restaurateur and catering consultant, sample fare from all 42 trucks.

CLOCKWISE, FROM TOP LEFT Folks in line ponder the menu at one of the 42 food trucks. Brandon Anderson of Rack Attack Barbecue displays his team's grand champion prize. Attendees dig in. An entry labeled with a number for anonymous judging.





FROM LEFT Merle takes in the sights and scents. Corn dogs proved hard to pass up. OPPOSITE, FROM TOP Shaved ice makes a hot ride nice. Event volunteer Jayne Beale shows off the grand champion belt.



Picked-at plates litter tables across the room, each dish assigned a number to make the entries anonymous.

"I really like that egg roll," Pagtakhan says.

Workman agrees. "The texture was good and flaky. And that pizza, No. 37, was so delicious and unique."

## No Small Wonder

One mile around, it's no wonder that Graham calls its business district "America's largest downtown square." About an hour south of Wichita Falls and home to the Young County Courthouse and about 9,000 residents, Graham comes alive each June, when the chefs pull into town.

The smell of beef cooking on a flattop makes my stomach rumble as I approach Big Kat Burgers, but I press on, wanting to see all my options before diving in. A long line for Happy Dogs Corn Dogs tempts me, as does the mega line for Cousins Maine Lobster's fresh lobster rolls.

Maya Justice, who is at the event with friends, recom-

Up for grabs are numerous awards, bragging rights and the coveted **\$10,000 grand championship prize** for the best food truck—crowned by a panel of expert judges.

mends Bada Bing Wood Fired Pizza, and several people are buzzing about the fried alligator from Crawldaddys Cajun Kitchen.

"To be able to have pad thai and a Maine lobster roll at the same time here in Graham, America, is incredible," says Grant Ingram, executive director of economic development with the city of Graham. "It's so hard to pinpoint a favorite because the variety of trucks we're able to attract in north central Hill Country is amazing."

I decide the best approach here is sampling smaller items from multiple trucks, and I hop in line at Treviños Craft Smokehouse truck and wait.

"That Dr Pepper pulled pork taco from the Gypsy Kit truck is oh-em-gee," says Jenny French, who's behind me in line at Treviño's. She and her husband, Ken, came to support their neighbors, the Treviños, at the championship and are getting their fill like everyone else. "I wanted that





Maine lobster, but the line is so long,” Ken says. “I’ll never know how it tastes.”

I grab a pulled pork taco on a homemade tortilla and head for a table on the courthouse lawn for my first bite of the day. The tender pulled pork and soft tortilla hit the spot on this hot day, and after perusing a few craft booths, I hit the streets again to walk it off and make room for more samples.

The growing line at Addie Cakes & Lily Pies gets my attention, and dessert sounds like just the thing after walking three laps around the square. Toe-tappin’ tunes fill the air, making my wait for a white chocolate Key lime cheesecake more enjoyable. The tart yet sweet treat is perfect for summertime and makes waiting in line feel like a no-brainer.

While visiting with more foodies, I hear lots of chatter about a chicken sandwich on a biscuit. I have to have it, so I make my way to the Bite My Biscuit truck—the 2016 grand champion—for the Nashville hot fried chicken sandwich on a buttermilk biscuit with honey coleslaw and pickles. The \$5 dish is the perfect size (and price) for an event like this, and upon trying the spicy, buttery, delicious concoction, I see why everyone is talking about it.



The Big Kat Burgers crew.

## The Trucks in This Story

- Addie Cakes & Lily Pies, Paradise
- Bada Bing Wood Fired Pizza, San Angelo
- Big Kat Burgers, Fort Worth
- Bite My Biscuit, Fort Worth
- Blazin Cajun, Graham
- Catch Me If You Can, Tyler
- Cousins Maine Lobster, Houston
- Crawdaddys Cajun Kitchen, Bridgeport
- Gypsy Kit, Wichita Falls
- Happy Dogs Corn Dogs, Gainesville
- Mac’s Cajun Shack, Fort Worth
- Rack Attack Barbecue, Burleson
- Sakura Southern Seoul, Wichita Falls
- Treviños Craft Smokehouse, Jacksboro
- Yatai Food Kart, Fort Worth

## 2021 Winners

- Grand Champion** Rack Attack Barbecue
- Best Signature Dish** Pokey O’s
- People’s Choice** Daddy Bob’s Smokewagon
- Best Food Truck Spirit** Blake’s Snow Shack
- Best Food Truck Design** Sakura Southern Seoul
- Best Menu** Cousins Maine Lobster
- Best Dessert Dish** Addie Cakes & Lily Pies
- Best Barbecue Dish** Smokin 3 C’s
- Best International Dish** Yatai Food Kart
- Best American Dish** Bite My Biscuit





Judges, from left, Ched Pagtakhan, Debbie Workman and Dante Ramirez experienced a day of tasting and hearty discussions.

## There's the Beef

**F**ull and satisfied, I grab a chair and wait for the awards ceremony.

"To go through 40-plus plates and taste them all and go through each one on uniqueness, presentation and flavors, it's tough," Ramirez announces. "This was difficult for us."

The audience cheers and whoops for each winner, including Bite My Biscuit for that tasty Nashville hot fried chicken biscuit, Yatai Food Kart for their signature ramen dish, Addie Cakes & Lily Pies for their pecan praline cheesecake, Cousins Maine Lobster for the best menu award, and Sakura Southern Seoul for best food truck design.

As the emcee inches closer to announcing the grand champion, the crowd grows quiet. "The 2021 Food Truck Championship grand champion: Rack Attack Barbecue with their dino beef rib and taking home a check for \$10,000." The crowd erupts in applause as the Rack Attack team roars with excitement, hugging each other as they claim their prize and a professional wrestling-style belt emblazoned with "2021 Grand Champion."

It was Rack Attack Barbecue's first time competing in the event, so a championship win makes owner Brandon Anderson, who opened the business in March 2018, ecstatic.

"This is the first time I've ever presented food that I've made to real chefs and real food critics, so it's a big deal for us," he says. "I'm really happy."

Anderson knew they'd won something when they were dispatched to the awards ceremony, and as the ceremony progressed, they knew through the process of elimination that grand champion was a possibility—as astonishing

**"To be able to have pad thai and a Maine lobster roll at the same time here in Graham, America, is incredible."**

as that seemed. "I still can't believe it," he says after the ceremony. "We've worked so hard."

Anderson says he thought the winning dish might relate to Texas, which inspired him to serve a beef rib—what he calls "king in Texas."

"I figured everyone would want to try it, so we smoked them, pulled the meat off the bones and served it on top of smoked mashed potatoes," he says.

It worked. "Their dish was very unique," Pagtakhan says. "The doneness on the smoked beef rib was perfect, the flavor was balanced, and the smoked mashed potatoes was a perfect pairing."

Unfortunately, Rack Attack Barbecue ceased operations a few months after the 2021 Food Truck Championship, so this year's showdown will have a new grand champion in addition to plenty of friendly competition and delectable grub up for grabs.

Gina LeGrand, owner of Addie Cakes & Lily Pies, which won the best dessert category last year, will be ready. "I hope we continue our winning streak—or maybe win overall," she says. "Winning the grand prize with a dessert is challenging, but how incredible would that be?" ■



# April is **FREE** **WINDOWS MONTH** at Renewal by Andersen.<sup>1</sup>

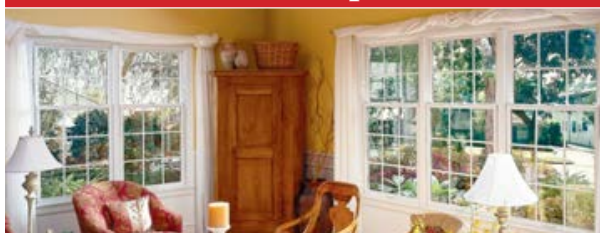


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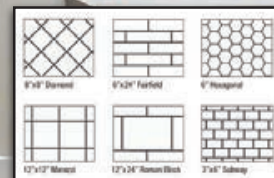




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## Lineworkers Provide Power to Our Way of Life

**IF YOU WERE ASKED** to associate an image or a person with Houston County Electric Cooperative, I bet you would picture a lineman. Among the most visible employees of the co-op, lineworkers work tirelessly to ensure our community receives uninterrupted power 24/7.

Line work is one of the most dangerous professions in the U.S., requiring detailed tasks while in close contact with high-voltage power lines. Regardless of the time of day, in stormy weather or other challenging conditions, lineworkers must climb 40 feet in the air, often carrying heavy equipment to get the job done.

Line work isn't glamorous. The job requires years of specialized training, ongoing education and dedication. Equally important for lineworkers at co-ops—and what sets them apart—is a deeply held sense of service and commitment to the community. Our linemen sacrifice for our members. They miss family birthdays, holidays and anniversaries to ensure we have power. That's why co-ops set aside the second Monday in April each year to celebrate and recognize the men and women who work around the clock to keep the lights on.

Linemen may be the most visible employees at Houston County EC, but equally critical is the team of highly skilled professionals working behind the scenes.

Dispatchers are the first to answer the call when you need assistance. Warehouse personnel ensure we have the materials necessary to build and restore service. Member service professionals are always standing by to answer questions, while our information technology experts continually monitor our system to safeguard sensitive data. And these are just a few of the folks who work together to ensure we can deliver the service and reliability you expect and deserve. Without them, our linemen wouldn't be able to provide power for your way of life.

Our dedicated linemen are proud to represent HCEC, and they deserve all the accolades that come their way on Lineworker Appreciation Day.

Any time you see a lineman, I hope you'll join me in thanking them for their service. And remember, you have a team of dedicated professionals working at the co-op whose commitment to service runs just as deep. ■





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To check your account balance or make a payment using the automated system, press 3.

To speak to a member services representative regarding your account, press 4.

Para hablar con un representante de habla español, presione 5.

To connect, disconnect or transfer service, press 6.

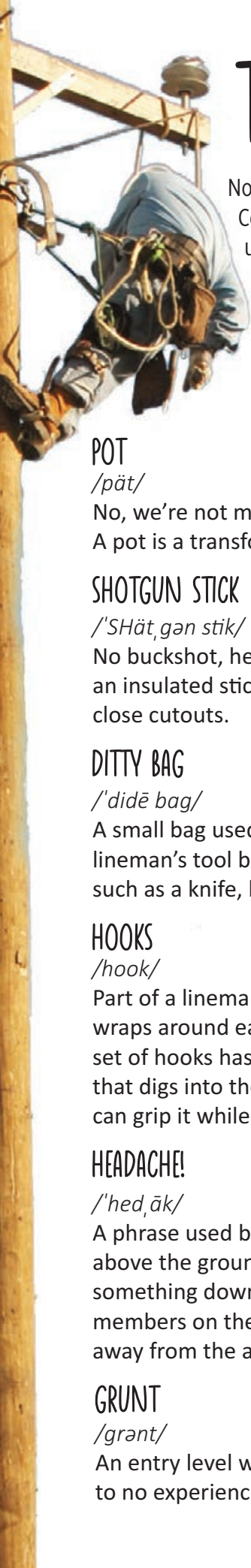
To report outdoor lighting issues or other nonemergencies regarding your electric service, press 7.

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# THE SLANG BEHIND THE SWITCH

Not only is there a tremendous amount of work involved in keeping the lights on for Houston County EC members, there's a Webster-sized dictionary of jargon that our linemen learn and use daily. Chances are, if you've ever been near a line crew while they were changing out a transformer, or connecting a new service, you've heard them use some lineman lingo. Below are a few popular terms they use while on-the-job! After learning some terms, let us know if you're ready to grab your hooks and guts to hang a pot!

CELEBRATE WITH US:  
LINEMAN APPRECIATION DAY  
IS APRIL 11<sup>TH</sup>!

## POT

/pät/

No, we're not making soup in the field!  
A pot is a transformer.

## SHOTGUN STICK

/'SHät, gän stik/

No buckshot, here. A shotgun stick is an insulated stick that Linemen use to close cutouts.

## DITTY BAG

/'didē bag/

A small bag used that hangs on a lineman's tool belt that holds his tools, such as a knife, hammer, pliers, etc.

## HOOKS

/hook/

Part of a lineman's climbing gear that wraps around each of their legs. Each set of hooks has gaff, a sharp spike, that digs into the pole so that they can grip it while climbing up.

## HEADACHE!

/'hed, āk/

A phrase used by someone working above the ground when they drop something down. It warns crew members on the ground to step away from the area.

## GRUNT

/gränt/

An entry level worker with little to no experience.

## CANT HOOK

/kant hook/

A hinged metal hook at the end of a long handle that grips a utility pole to help turn it.

## GUTS

/gät/

If you've ever seen linemen working and using a 6 foot long orange rubber tube, that weighs around 8-10 lbs, to cover an exposed power line, you've seen guts! This is insulated to protect our linemen from energized lines. *Guts are also what it takes to be lineman!*

## BELLS

/bel/

A dead-end insulator at the end of the line. Our linemen definitely aren't having choir practice!

## TAKE OFF

/tāk ôf/

This has nothing to do with vacation days! A take off is the start of a line that comes off a main line.

## TAP

/tap/

A tap refers to a branch off a main line to reach additional meters.

## GOAT HEAD

/gōt hed/

We're not talking about a vocal farm animal! A goat head is a metal plate that is placed at the top of a pole where the ground string is attached and helps hold tension.





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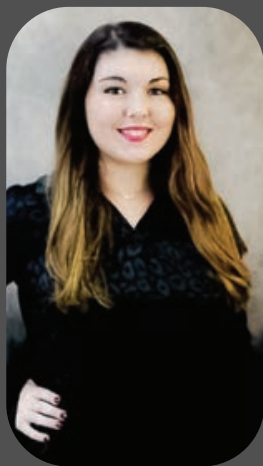
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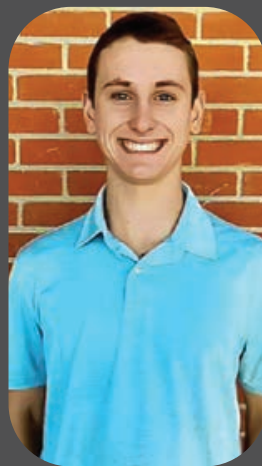
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Garrelts  
LATEXO HS



Marlee

Lasiter  
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Hayden

Lee  
GROVETON HS



Trinity

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CROCKETT HS



Preston

Mooneyham  
KENNARD HS



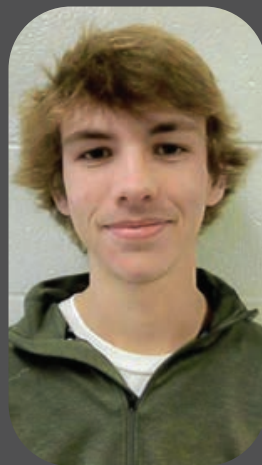
Kassandra

Plotts  
GROVETON HS



Caitlyn

Pyle  
KENNARD HS



Braden

Rowell  
HUDSON HS



Abigail

Taylor  
SLOCUM HS





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## Spring Storm Safety

**BEWARE: SPRING CAN USHER IN** more than April showers. From now through the summer months, thunderstorms can quickly roll in and tornadoes can touch down, most often during the afternoon and evening hours, according to researchers at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's severe storms laboratory.

Follow these tips to keep you and your home safe when tornadoes and severe thunderstorms come your way.

Remove diseased and damaged tree limbs before storm season begins.

Listen to local news or National Weather Service broadcasts to stay informed about tornado watches and warnings.

If you are in a mobile home, immediately head to a sturdy shelter. Mobile homes, especially hallways and bathrooms, are not safe places to take shelter during tornadoes or other severe winds.

Designate a family meeting place for shelter during and after a storm. If possible, go to your home's basement, a small interior room or under stairs on the lowest level. Have a battery-operated weather radio handy along with emergency supplies.

Unplug electronics. Avoid using electrical equipment and corded telephones while lightning is in the area.

Remember that there is no safe place outside during a severe storm. If you are caught in a storm while driving, switch on your headlights, try to safely exit the roadway and park. Stay in the vehicle with your seat belt on, and turn on the emergency flashers until the heavy rain ends. If thunder and lightning are occurring, avoid touching metal or other surfaces that conduct electricity in and outside the vehicle.

As a storm moves in, move or secure lawn furniture, trash cans, hanging plants and anything else that the wind can turn into a projectile.

Stay safe after a storm. Remain indoors at least 30 minutes after the last clap of thunder. Stay well away from downed power lines and avoid flooded areas. Power lines could be submerged and still live with electricity. ■

## Safely Restore Power at Home

**YOU CAN GET** power flowing safely in your home after a short-circuit or tripped breaker by following some simple steps. Your home has an electrical service panel that contains fuses or circuit breakers, which interrupt power to specific circuits in case of a short-circuit or overload.

### If this happens:

1. Unplug all affected appliances.
2. Switch off power at the main switch.
3. Try to determine the cause of the problem and correct it if possible (an overloaded circuit, a faulty plug, etc.).
4. Switch the circuit breaker that's off back to the "on" position. If you have fuses instead of breakers, replace the fuse that has a broken metal strip with a new fuse of the same rating—typically 15 amperes. Never use anything other than a fuse to replace a fuse; doing so could cause a fire.
5. Restore power at the main switch.

If circuit breakers trip or fuses blow repeatedly, contact a qualified electrician to assess the problem and make repairs. ■



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# Scissortail Signals

Flamboyant scissor-tailed flycatchers signal spring's arrival and our environs' health

BY BRENDA KISSKO • ILLUSTRATION BY LAURINDO FELICIANO

**GROWING UP ON** a West Texas ranch, my sister and I kept our eyes peeled for the first signs of spring as we anticipated summer, a most magical time when there was no school and endless days filled with swimming in tanks, rolling in cottonseed and helping dad feed the livestock. The scissor-tailed flycatcher was always our sign that spring had arrived.

The scissortail, also known as the Texas bird of paradise, is easy to identify by its long, forked tail and the radiant salmon color under its white-edged black wings. They inhabit the south-central U.S., including nearly all of Texas, which is home to around 72% of the entire scissortail population during breeding season, March to August. The birds favor savanna habitats—warm, flat grasslands with scattered trees—and are often seen on utility poles and fences.

Scissortails are showoffs. In general, males have longer tails and more intense plumage colors. A long tail is an indicator of health, and males like to show it off with aerial demonstrations like backward somersaults.

That iconic tail makes the birds easy to spot for novice birders like Caleb Helsel, a student at Hill Country Middle School in Austin and a founding member of the Austin Avocets, a group of young birders. One summer he kept a tally of every scissortail he saw. The marks he made in his notebook added up to more than 200.

"There's so many cool birds out there, and there's always more to learn about them," Helsel says.

"Pay attention to the birds. It's a good way to spend your time."

Helsel enjoys birding so much that he has learned to bird by ear, meaning he can identify a bird just by the sounds it makes, and he maintains a checklist of the birds he's seen on eBird, an online platform managed by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology that allows people to report bird sightings and share photos and recordings. Helsel has many birding mentors, including the internationally renowned Texas birder Victor Emanuel.

Emanuel founded Victor Emanuel Nature Tours in 1976, leading birding and nature tours across the globe. On his 70th birthday, a flock of around 70 scissortails sang to him at Hornsby Bend Bird Observatory in Austin. He remembers it as one of

his most memorable interactions with the species.

"The scissortail is one of the most beautiful and striking birds in the world," Emanuel says. "By studying birds and nature, you get connected to the world in a way that you aren't ... with other hobbies. Sharing something in nature is a very powerful experience."

During breeding season, most scissortails return to the same area they migrated to the previous year. No wonder seeing one perched on the telephone wire in front of our house every summer was like seeing an old friend.

Females lay up to three nests each breeding season, and each nest typically has three to five eggs, white with reddish-brown spots, that take two weeks to hatch. It takes at least a year for those long tail feathers of up to 12 inches to come in.

The birds, which eat flying insects like beetles, grasshoppers and crickets, are important to ecosystems. "Scissortails are great indicators of the ecosystem's health, and as those populations decline, the health of the land is declining, and that's going to start affecting us," says Jim Giocomo of the American Bird Conservancy.

There are 4 million fewer scissortails now than there were in 1966—a population loss of about 31%—according to data compiled by the U.S. Geological Survey. Though the species is not listed as endangered, conservation advocacy network Partners in Flight estimates a further 50% of the population could be lost in the next 37 years if landowners don't make changes.

The list of threats to the scissortail includes pesticides and loss of native grasslands, says Cliff Shackelford, state ornithologist for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and a member of Deep East Texas Electric Cooperative.

"Texans don't hear the sweet whistle of the bobwhite across much of Texas anymore due to the drastic change to our grasslands and how we treat those grasslands" Shackelford says. "Hopefully the scissortail won't be the next to disappear." ■

**TCP** Listen to scissortail songs and calls with this story online.









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**TCP** Listen as W.F. Strong narrates this story on our website.



# Two-Fisted Law and Order

Judge Roy Bean made the rules and found fame in his remote corner of West Texas

BY W.F. STRONG

**IN THE BIG BEND TOWN** of Langtry, Judge Roy Bean opened a saloon on the railroad right-of-way. It was 1882, and even though he was squatting, the railroad allowed him to stay. Bean named his bar the Jersey Lilly after actress Lillie Langtry.

When trains stopped for water, the passengers could order a drink at the Jersey Lilly. But Bean never had change, so if a customer paid a dollar for a 25-cent beer, he wouldn't get the other 75 cents. If he complained, Bean fined him 75 cents for disturbing the peace.

Bean had proclaimed himself the "law west of the Pecos" and preferred his own interpretation of the law. When he re-

ceived new state statutes every two years, he burned them. Once he sentenced a young man to hang but left the jail unlocked the night before the hanging so the condemned could escape.

In Bean's early years, he lived in San Antonio, where he found success with a saloon but sold the business to pursue opportunities in the railroad camps of West Texas. He gained notoriety when he took the law into his own hands.

When Bean held court in the Jersey Lilly, he would assemble a jury and swear the members in. The case would be presented, the verdict determined and sentencing pronounced quickly. Often the

sentence for misdemeanors was a round of drinks for the jury. He was very patriotic about Texas, too. He often preceded sentencing with words like: "You have offended the great state of Texas by committing this crime on her sacred soil."

One of his most famous cases had to do with a man who fell to his death off a bridge in Langtry. Bean found \$40 and a pistol on the man's body and fined him \$40 for carrying a concealed weapon. That was enough to get him buried.

Bean rose to international prominence when he organized a world heavyweight boxing championship between Bob Fitzsimmons and Peter Maher in 1896. Prizefighting was then illegal in Texas.

At first, the fight looked like it might be held on the sly in El Paso, but the governor sent 25 Texas Rangers over there to make sure it didn't happen. Then it seemed like it might be held in Juarez, but the governor of Chihuahua sent troops to prevent a fight there. Finally Bean sent a telegram to the promoter saying they could have it in Langtry—actually, right across the river on a Rio Grande sandbar, miles from any authority that would stop it.

So a menagerie of unlikely associates, boxers, gamblers, Texas Rangers, high rollers and spectators of all stripes boarded a train bound for parts unknown. The destination was kept a secret. Bean met them at his railside saloon, sold them beer at the exorbitant price of a dollar apiece and then escorted them across a pontoon bridge to the Mexican side of the river.

Fitzsimmons knocked out Maher after 95 seconds, so the fight was over before the spectators could settle in. But the big winner—as ever—was Bean. He became known worldwide as the man who made the fight possible. ■



# Brunch

Crowd-pleasing additions for this much-anticipated meal

BY MEGAN MYERS, FOOD EDITOR

Hosting brunch is one of my favorite things to do for friends. Whether for a group of four or 30, embracing the sweet and savory sides of brunch always gets my creativity in the kitchen going. This month I've taken a spin on the classic bagel breakfast and turned it into a scrumptious smoked salmon turnover. Pre-made puff pastry keeps it incredibly easy so you can put the dish together in a snap.

## Smoked Salmon Turnovers

**1 sheet prepared puff pastry, thawed if frozen**  
**3 ounces smoked salmon**  
**4 ounces cream cheese, softened**  
**2 tablespoons chopped fresh chives**  
**1 egg**  
**1 tablespoon water**  
**1 tablespoon everything bagel seasoning**

**COOK'S TIP** Everything bagel seasoning can be found in most grocery stores, or make your own blend with sesame seeds, poppy seeds, salt, dried minced garlic and dried onion flakes.

1. Preheat oven to 425 degrees and line a baking sheet with parchment. Place puff pastry on a lightly floured surface and gently roll out to a rectangle, approximately 9 by 14 inches.
2. Roughly chop salmon and place in a bowl. Add cream cheese and chives and stir until evenly mixed, breaking up the salmon more as you stir.
3. Cut the puff pastry into 8 equal pieces. Add about 2 tablespoons filling to each piece, then fold pastry over to form a triangle. Press edges to seal and crimp with the tines of a fork. Repeat with remaining pastry and filling. Place filled turnovers on prepared baking sheet.
4. In a small bowl, whisk together egg and water, then brush over the tops of the turnovers. Sprinkle bagel seasoning evenly over the turnovers. Bake 15–18 minutes, until puffed and golden brown. Let cool slightly before serving.

**SERVES 8**

**TCP** Follow along with Megan Myers and her adventures in the kitchen at [stetted.com](http://stetted.com), where she features a recipe for Blueberry Coffee Cake.





## Whole-Grain Cinnamon Rolls

MOLLY BRET  
COSERV

Overnight cinnamon rolls are perfect for a make-ahead brunch, and this recipe uses wheat flour to help balance the sweetness. Don't worry if any filling falls out as you shape the rolls; you can sprinkle it on top in the pan.

### ROLLS

- 1 cup milk, warmed to about 100 degrees**
- 1 packet instant yeast**
- $\frac{2}{3}$  cup sugar or honey**
- 2 cups whole-wheat flour**
- 2–2½ cups all-purpose flour, plus more as needed, divided use**
- 2 eggs**
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup (1 stick) butter, softened and cut into chunks**
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon salt**
- 1–2 cups prepared cream cheese frosting**

### FILLING

- 6 tablespoons ( $\frac{3}{4}$  stick) butter, softened**
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup sugar**
- 2 tablespoons ground cinnamon**

**1. ROLLS** In a large bowl or the bowl of a stand mixer, combine warmed milk, yeast and sugar. Let rest 5 minutes, then gradually mix in wheat flour, 2 cups all-purpose flour, eggs (one at a time) and butter. If using a stand mixer, start speed at low and then turn to medium, mixing until a soft dough is formed. Add additional flour as needed to prevent sticking. Sprinkle in salt and

\$500 WINNER

## BLT Strata

BARBARA REISS  
PEDERNALES EC



Perfect for using up leftover bread, this strata has all the flavors of a classic BLT sandwich. Make sure to chill it for at least an hour, or overnight, to ensure the bread soaks up the custard.

**SERVES 6**



- 6 ounces thick-cut bacon, cut into small pieces**
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup chopped onion**
- 1 cup halved cherry tomatoes**
- 2 cups baby spinach or arugula**
- 6 ounces day-old bread, such as sourdough or challah, cut into cubes**
- 6 eggs**
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup milk**
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon salt**
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon pepper**
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup packed shredded Gruyère or white cheddar**

- 1.** Grease a 2-quart baking dish and set aside.
- 2.** In a large skillet over medium heat, cook bacon until crisp. Drain bacon on a paper towel-lined plate and pour off all but 1 tablespoon of fat.
- 3.** Sauté onions in the same skillet over medium heat until they begin to soften and become translucent, 3–5 minutes. Add halved tomatoes and increase heat to medium-high. Cook, scraping up any browned bits in the pan, until onions have started to caramelize and tomatoes have softened. Stir in the spinach until wilted, then remove the pan from heat. Stir the bacon into the onion mixture.
- 4.** Add half the bread cubes to prepared baking dish, then top with half of the onion mixture. Repeat with remaining bread and onion mixture.
- 5.** In a large bowl, whisk together eggs, milk, salt and pepper, then pour evenly into the baking dish. Sprinkle cheese over the top, then cover with foil and refrigerate at least 1 hour and up to overnight.
- 6.** When ready to bake, remove strata from the refrigerator and preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Bake uncovered 40–45 minutes, until lightly browned on top.

## TCP \$500 Recipe Contest

**PIZZA NIGHT** DUE APRIL 10

What makes your pizza irresistible? Submit your recipes on our website by April 10 for a chance to win \$500.



CONTINUED >

## RECIPES CONTINUED

mix a few minutes more. Gently knead dough into a ball and place in a large greased bowl. Cover and let rise 1–2 hours or until doubled in size.

**2.** Once dough has risen, place it on a lightly floured surface. Roll dough into a 12-by-18-inch rectangle.

**3. FILLING** Spread softened butter over the surface of the dough. In a small bowl, combine sugar and cinnamon, then sprinkle over the dough evenly.

**4.** Roll up dough on the long end, then cut into 12 rolls. Lightly grease a 9-by-13-inch baking dish and place rolls cut-side up in the pan. Sprinkle any excess filling over rolls, then cover dish tightly and chill overnight.

**5.** When ready to bake, remove rolls and let rise 1–2 hours or until puffy. Preheat oven to 375 degrees and bake rolls 20–25 minutes. Let cool slightly and then top with prepared frosting.

**SERVES 12**



### Tex-Mex Bacon and Egg Squares

MARILYN BURGESS  
TRINITY VALLEY EC

Easy to make and crowd-pleasers, these squares are ideal for those who love the combination of chiles and cheese. Serve as is or with guacamole, sour cream or additional hot sauce.

**2 cans (10 ounces) whole green chiles, drained**  
**8 ounces grated sharp cheddar cheese**

**6 slices thick-cut bacon, cooked and cut into bite-size pieces**

**6 eggs**

**Dash of hot sauce**

**Salt and pepper**

**1.** Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Lightly coat an 8-by-8-inch baking dish with cooking spray. Arrange chiles evenly in the dish, then sprinkle on cheese and bacon.

**2.** In a bowl, beat together eggs, hot sauce, and salt and pepper, then pour evenly into the dish. Bake until eggs are firm and cheese has melted, 25–30 minutes. Cool 5 minutes, then cut into squares to serve.

**SERVES 9**

**TCP** Find more recipes to punch up your brunch at [TexasCoopPower.com/food](https://www.texascooppower.com/food), where you can search through nearly 1,000 recipes.

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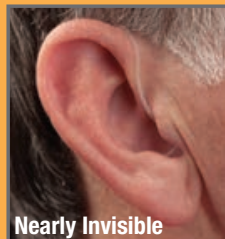
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COURTESY CHET GARNER

## Swinging Through Time

The Regency Bridge is the state's last drivable suspension bridge

BY CHET GARNER

I COULD FEEL MY ENTIRE vehicle swaying as I cruised, ever so carefully, across the last drivable suspension bridge in Texas. I felt like a squirrel on a power line, but instead of being 30 feet above the ground, I was 75 feet above the Colorado River. To make matters even more tense, I could hear the wooden boards flexing and creaking beneath my tires.

I was deep in the northern Hill Country for this adventure of driving across the Regency Bridge, part road and part roller coaster. The bridge is truly the last of its kind and may only still exist because it connects two quiet gravel roads with very little traffic.

The Regency Bridge was built in 1939 to link the rural communities of San Saba and Mills counties and spans more than 400 feet from bank to bank. The drivable surface consists of planks suspended by metal cables, earning it the nickname Swinging Bridge.

Yes, it really swings. And in its 83 years of existence, it's seen everything from buggies to cattle drives to electric cars.

I was about halfway across when I realized the bridge is so narrow that I could only see the road in front of me and the metal cables out each of my side windows. It left me with a really beautiful view of the expansive Colorado River basin marked by high limestone bluffs. I had to constantly remind myself to keep my eyes on the road or else my trip was going to meet a very abrupt end.

Those who might be nervous to cross should know that the Texas Department of Transportation has done multiple inspections and overhauls—the most recent in 2021. I survived my trip and had so much fun, I immediately turned around and did it all over again. ■

ABOVE Chet braves the Regency Bridge high above the Colorado River.

**TCP** See Chet's crossing of the Regency on our website. Watch all his Texplorations on *The Daytripper* on PBS.



## Know Before You Go

Call ahead or check an event's website for scheduling details.

## APRIL

### 08

**Brenham The Isaacs,**  
(979) 337-7240,  
thebarnhillcenter.com

**Kerrville Montopolis:**  
**The Living Coast,**  
(830) 315-5483,  
thearcadialive.org

**Canton [8-9] Antique Tractor/  
Truck Show and Swap Meet,**  
(214) 837-8861

**Corsicana [8-9] Texas  
State Camping Squares,**  
(832) 877-6534,  
texasstatecampingsquares.com

**Kerrville [8-10, 15-16,  
22-24] For Such a Time  
as This,** (830) 896-9393,  
caillouxperformingarts.com

### 09

**Grand Saline Main Street  
Festival,** (903) 962-3122,  
grandsalinemainstreet.com

**Newcastle Crawfish and  
Cannons,** (940) 549-0401,  
goodnightlovingrun.com

**New Braunfels [9-10]  
Folkfest,** (830) 629-6504,  
texashandmadefurniture.com

**Stanton [9-10] Old Sorehead  
Trade Days,** (432) 756-2006,  
stantontex.com

**Quintana [9-May 8] Spring  
Fling,** (979) 480-0999,  
gcbo.org

### 12

**Paris [12-14] Lamar County  
Junior Livestock Show  
& Sale,** (903) 784-7984

### 15

**Alpine [15-17] Big Bend  
Gem and Mineral Show,**  
(432) 244-9503



16

**Grandview [15-17] Antique Alley Texas**, (817) 666-5024, facebook.com/antiquealleytexas

**Lufkin The Queen's Cartoonists**, (936) 633-5454, angelinaarts.org

**San Marcos Easter Egg Hunt & Festival**, (214) 641-5841, heritagesanmarcos.org

20

**Corpus Christi [20-24] The Birdiest Festival in America**, (361) 852-2100, birdiestfestival.org

21

**Lake Jackson [21-24] [title of show]**, (979) 230-3000, onstage@brazosport.edu

22

**Brenham Billy Joel Tribute by Brett Cline**, (979) 337-7240, thebarnhillcenter.com

**Henderson [22-23] East Texas Antique Tractor & Engine Club Show and Pull**, (903) 646-3769, north-texas-antique-tractor-and-engine-club.org

**Coleman [22-24] Great Western Trail Days**, (325) 669-2292, greatwesterntraildays.com

**New Braunfels [22-24] Car Club Swap Meet**, (830) 708-1372, newbraunfelsareacarclub.com

23

**Burton Cotton Gin Festival**, (979) 289-3378, tescottonginmuseum.org

**Fredericksburg Luckenbach Bluegrass Festival**, (830) 997-3224, luckenbachtexas.com

MORE EVENTS >

## TCP Submit Your Event

We pick events for the magazine directly from TexasCoopPower.com. Submit your July event by May 1, and it just might be featured in this calendar.



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## Pick of the Month

**An Evening With Renée  
Elise Goldsberry**

Lufkin, April 30  
(936) 633-5454  
angelinaarts.org

Goldsberry, who won Tony and Grammy awards for her inspired performance in *Hamilton*, brings a four-piece band and a complement of backup singers to the Temple Theater.

## APRIL EVENTS CONTINUED

23

**Karnack Earth Day  
Paddling Flotilla**,  
(903) 736-3063,  
tinyurl.com/2022flotilla

**Lake Jackson Kids  
Reel Big Fish Event**,  
(979) 297-4533,  
visitbrazosport.com

**La Porte San Jacinto Cele-  
bration**, (281) 479-2431,  
thc.texas.gov

**Wimberley Pie Social**,  
(512) 965-2662,  
wimwic.org/pie-social

**Bryan [23-24] Bryan-  
College Station Friends  
of the Library Spring Book  
Sale**, (979) 209-5600,  
friendsbcs.org

**Granbury [23-24] Wine  
Walk**, (817) 573-5548,  
granburywinewalk.com

24

**Marble Falls [24-30] Paint  
the Town**, (830) 693-4449,  
hlcarts.com/ptt-2022-event

28

**Kerrville Symphony  
of the Hills: Primitive  
Echoes**, (830) 792-7469,  
symphonyofthehills.org

**Freeport [28-30] River-  
fest**, (979) 233-6061,  
brazosport.org

**Turkey [28-30] Bob Wills  
Day**, (806) 336-1471,  
bobwillsday.com

29

**Fort Davis [29-30] Dark  
Skies Festival**,  
(512) 475-6763,  
mcdonaldobservatory.org

**Gun Barrel City [29-30]  
Gun Barrel Quilters Guild  
Annual Quilt Show**,  
(903) 391-3241,  
gunbarrelquiltersguild.org

**Fredericksburg [29-May 1,  
6-8, 13-15] Lend Me a  
Tenor**, (830) 997-3588,  
fredericksburgtheater.org

30

**Surfside Beach Old  
Guys Surf Reunion**,  
(979) 233-1531,  
surfsidetx.org

**Waxahachie Bling Bang  
Bash Designer Bag Bingo &  
Gun Raffle**, (972) 937-1455,  
casaofelliscounty.org

**Nacogdoches [30-May 1]  
Multicultural Festival**,  
(936) 564-7807,  
sacredheartnac.org/mcf

MAY

01

**Surfside Beach Market in  
the Park**, (979) 233-1531,  
visitbrazosport.com

05

**Fredericksburg [5-8] 175th  
Anniversary Grand Finale  
Weekend**, (830) 997-6523,  
175th.org



# All Wet

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FARMERS EC

"Kicking up some waves on a fun summer day."

**2** MARK HOLLY  
BANDERA EC

Horses enjoy a pond in a field of bluebonnets.

**3** PAUL LAUDER  
FARMERS EC

"Cruising in a vintage 1960s automobile-boat."

**4** ERIKA ORDOG  
BRYAN TEXAS UTILITIES

Raindrops.



## Upcoming Contests

- DUE APR 10** Motorsports
- DUE MAY 10** Light and Shadow
- DUE JUN 10** Hometown Pride



Enter online at [TexasCoopPower.com/contests](https://TexasCoopPower.com/contests).

**TCP** See Focus on Texas on our website for more All Wet photos from readers.





## No Hedging

Waging a battle—but losing the war—against vengeful hedge parsley

BY SHERYL SMITH-RODGERS  
ILLUSTRATION BY ANDREA COBB

I NEVER SUSPECTED a thing. As I pulled and yanked, I had no clue that the weeds I sought to eliminate planned a revenge I'd never forget.

"You better stop," my husband warned as I worked that spring evening in what we call the meadow, our adjoining lot turned nature preserve. "You're going to overdo it."

"I'll be fine," I retorted, bending down to pull another and another and another.

James rolled his eyes and left me knee-high in firewheel, prairie verbena, Engelmann's daisies, Texas stars and—horror!—common hedge parsley. The introduced species did not belong among our native beauties. So I was determined to get rid of them.

Honeybees flitted among the wildflowers as I used my right arm to tug out

another slim stem of hedge parsley. Their tiny flowers and fernlike leaves reminded me of their carrot cousin, Queen Anne's lace. Their bright white umbels also made them easy to target in my execution march across the meadow.

Occasionally I surveyed my progress, which was not impressive. I sighed. Hundreds more of the intruders swayed in the breeze, taunting my efforts. I knew it would take hours more to pull them all. But I kept going.

At least I'm making a dent, I convinced myself. There won't be as many next year.

But I knew the truth. Next year, *beaucoup* of their sticky seeds (that latch onto fur and socks) would germinate by the thousands. No matter what, hedge parsleys would flourish as they always have. The only difference, I would soon learn, was I'd never declare war against them again.

Just a few days later, on the road for a trip, my right shoulder began to ache. Gingerly, I rotated my upper arm and brushed off the pain. Yeah, it'd go away. I'd be OK.

But I wasn't. The week after we got home, James drove me to our medical clinic.

"I did the same thing," said the nurse practitioner as she checked my shoulder and arm. "I scrubbed floors by hand one afternoon. Then I stirred hot chocolate at the football stadium's concession stand. Took six months for my shoulder to heal."

"Six months," I echoed.

"Sure did," she said. "Don't worry." She patted my shoulder. "You'll get better. Just give it some time."

I did. Six months later, though, my right shoulder still reminded me of how I sinned in the meadow. Would it ever truly heal?

In the meantime, I dreaded the next spring. I could already envision the hedge parsleys waving their leaves in victory, sense their roots snaking deep into the soil.

Somehow I *had* to ignore them. Because, trust me, revenge of the hedge parsleys is for real. Just ask me and my right shoulder. ■





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Watching live and recorded TV anywhere requires an internet-connected Hopper w/ling or Hopper 3 and compatible mobile device. On Hopper Duo, there is no live TV streaming for DISH Anywhere.

### Smart Remote w/ Voice and Google Assistant



Requires internet-connected Hopper, Joey, or Wally device. Customer must press Voice Remote button to activate feature. Google is a trademark of Google LLC.



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