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Medina EC lineman Taylor Stacy cuts an 8-foot pizza with an old plow disc.

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**ON THE COVER** Sam and Shelbie Gaddy get cozy in a 1960s pickup at Brazos Drive-In Theatre in Granbury. Photo by Dave Shafer

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## Another Lone Star Flag

The letter *Texas' First Flag* [April 2019] reminded me of the Lone Star flag flown in 1810 over the Republic of West Florida, the short-lived republic (78 days) with St. Francisville, now a city in Louisiana, as its capital.

The single, large white or yellow star in the center of a sky blue field was a symbol of rebellion after the settlers in West Florida rebelled against Spain to set up their own nation before being absorbed into Louisiana and the United States. History is interesting and does repeat, at least occasionally.

JOE WEBB | MARBLE FALLS  
PEDERNALES EC

## Safety Gear Evolution

Thank you for the article *Gearing Up* [March 2019]. Our grandson Mason Harper especially enjoyed seeing these pictures. He is employed by Primoris and wears lots of safety equipment.

LOREAN PULLEY | RIESEL  
NAVASOTA VALLEY EC

## Blues History

I met Lightnin' Hopkins in 1957 at the age of 15 [*Texas: A Blues State*, March 2019]. We would sit on the porch, and by watching his hands, I learned the three chords he used all the time. I was more of a novelty then, but I did play solo at times with the drummer, Joseph Kilpatrick, better known as the Black Spider. Luke "Long Gone" Miles played with us once, and Cleveland Chenier, Clifton's brother, played a washboard with us several times.

Those days are sadly gone,

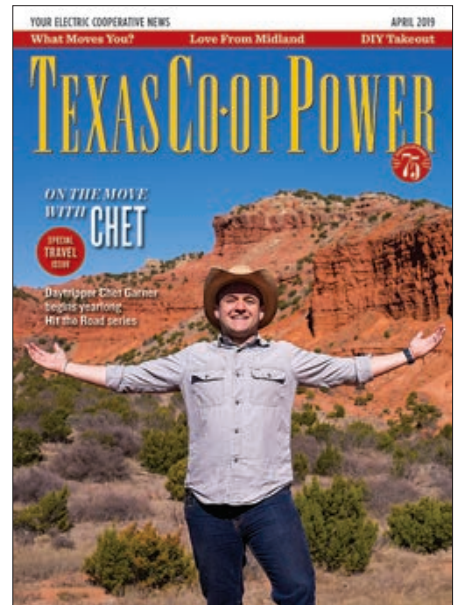
## Chet Garner Hits the Road

Seen other Texas travel shows, but *Daytripper's* the best one. Chet's awesome. ... There's still so much to discover in the greatest state in the country.

JAIME GARZA | VIA FACEBOOK

You have been on the road for years, uncovering gems ... and having fun across our great state—and you do it all with fun and knowledge!

MARTHA HOLLOWAY LANDRY | VIA FACEBOOK



but back then, playing blues with Lightnin' was everything to me.

ROBERT R. COOK | NEW ULM

Back in 1966, a friend of mine found Lightnin' Hopkins playing at a backwoods bar outside Navasota. Later in the year, he was in Austin. He had a gig at a coffeehouse in an alley off 24th Street. He played the blues, quite often fretting with a whiskey bottle. I got to meet him that evening, and the next day I went out and bought an album with his music.

HAROLD LIECK | DEL VALLE  
BLUEBONNET EC



As much as we in Bowie County, particularly De Kalb, would love to claim the blues and folk singer and writer Lead Belly as our own, he was actually born in Mooringsport, Louisiana. Lead Belly did reside in our area for a few years in the 1920s.

Lead Belly wrote many songs during his lifetime. Some are quite familiar, such as *Good Night, Irene; Cotton Fields Back Home; and Midnight Special*. One that was not so well-known was called *De Kalb Blues*, and that may well have depicted his life in our area.

CAROLYN MCCRARY | DE KALB  
BOWIE-CASS EC

## A Hispanic Hero

I am a fifth-generation Mexican American. I was very encouraged and inspired by the Marcelino Serna story and made to feel

proud of my Hispanic heritage [*A Hero in Any Language*, March 2019]. This story is one that will go into my scrapbook of many Hispanic heroes that have influenced me in my life.

ANTHONY BARRON | TERRELL  
TRINITY VALLEY EC

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## HAPPENINGS

# A Day of Czech Treats

Join folks in **EAST BERNARD** on **JUNE 8** as they embrace their Czech heritage with the annual **KOLACHE-KLOBASE FESTIVAL**. *Kolache* are traditional Czech pastries—you might remember our feature story, *The Kolach Trail*, from January 2014—and *klobase* is the Czech word for sausage.

Obviously, food is the central theme of the festival, which includes a kolache-eating contest, but so is music—especially polka—and dancing. Part of the festival is indoors, at Riverside Hall, one of Texas' historic dance halls, which were featured in February's cover story, *Hail the Halls*.

**INFO** ▶ (979) 335-7907, [kkfest.com](http://kkfest.com)



**WEB EXTRAS**  
▶ Find more happenings online.

## BY THE NUMBERS



**Texline**, in the far northwest corner of the Texas Panhandle, is 899 miles from Brownsville, in the southern tip of the Rio Grande Valley.

**The folks in Texline**, members of Rita Blanca EC, are closer to residents in 21 other states—Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah and Wyoming—than they are to fellow Texans in Brownsville.

## ◀ LOOKING BACK AT SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY THIS MONTH



**SINCE 1944**, the year *Texas Co-op Power* debuted, Americans have taken Polaroids, walked on the moon and come to rely on Velcro. These are just a few of the science and technology milestones we remember this month.



### 1940s

**1945** Grand Rapids, Michigan, becomes the first city in the world to fluoridate its drinking water.

**1948** The Polaroid Land camera, invented by Edwin Land and the first to produce finished prints instantly, goes on sale.

**1948** WBAP in Fort Worth becomes the first TV station in Texas.

### 1950s

**1954** The first pocket transistor radio, the Regency TR-1 from Texas Instruments, goes on sale.

**1955** The hook-and-loop fastener, or Velcro, is patented by a Swiss engineer.

**1957** The Soviet Union inaugurates the Space Age with its launch of Sputnik 1, the world's first artificial satellite.

### 1960s

**1965** San Antonio native Ed White becomes the first American to walk in space—during the Gemini 4 mission.



**1967** Texas Instruments creates the first handheld calculator.

**1968** Chemist Spencer Silver of San Antonio invents the low-tack adhesive that changes the world when it's used to create Post-It notes in 1980.



WORTH REPEATING “Texas is big, and Texans are proud of it. Proudful boasts can be made about the countless facets of our greatness without the slightest sacrifice of honesty.”

—JAMES EARL RUDDER, Texan and leader during the Allied invasion of France on D-Day, 75 years ago

TECH KNOWLEDGE

# Get Over It

**IMAGINE HOPPING INTO** a personal flying machine and zipping over traffic to your favorite coffee shop. Seems pretty far-fetched, right?

It might not be. A team from Texas A&M University is working on a vehicle that looks a little like a flying egg with rotor blades mounted near the base and is among the final 10 in a competition called GoFly that drew scientists from 95 countries. The winner of the competition will be announced this fall.

GoFly contest rules stipulate that the personal flying device must be safe, quiet, ultracompact and capable of vertical takeoff and landing. It also must be able to carry a single person for a distance of 20 miles without refueling or recharging.

Moble Benedict, a Bryan Texas Utilities customer, is an aerospace engineering assistant professor and A&M’s team captain. “We want a regular person to be able to fly this thing with minimum flight training,” he told *The New York Times*.

Benedict says he can see personal flying machines becoming a reality within the next 10 years. Great! Will they have cup holders?



FLASHBACK

# CINE ON THE SEA

**While drive-in theaters** evoke nostalgia, they’re still around and drawing moviegoers in Texas, as you’ll learn in our cover story, *Drive In, Chill Out*.

**The first American** drive-in opened 86 years ago this month in Camden, New Jersey. A year later, on July 5, 1934, the Drive-In Short Reel Theater in Galveston became the third U.S. drive-in. The theater was built for \$1,500 right on the beach, with cars facing out to sea over the Gulf of Mexico.

**Admission for a car** and all its occupants was 25 cents. For 10 cents, an adult walk-in could sit in the bench seats at the front—5 cents for kids.

**It operated** for 20 days before a hurricane destroyed it and was never rebuilt.

## LOOKING BACK AT COMMERCE NEXT MONTH ►

### 1970s

**1972** The first digital electronic watch, a Pulsar LED prototype built by Texas engineer George Thiess, debuts. Thiess is a director at HILCO EC in Itasca.



**1974** A universal product code, or bar code, is used for the first time—at a supermarket in Troy, Ohio.

### 1980s

**1983** The Motorola DynaTAC 8000x becomes the first commercial handheld cellphone.

**1984** Apple kicks off a media campaign for its Macintosh computer during Super Bowl XVIII with a commercial invoking George Orwell’s *1984*.

**1984** Michael Dell starts his computer company, then called PC’s Limited, in his dorm room at the University of Texas.

### 1990s

**1991** Multipurpose internet mail extension allows emails to be sent with attachments.

**1997** The first usable-by-anyone portable defibrillator debuts. It instructs the operator on how to use the paddles, automatically applies the correct voltage and sells for \$4,000.



### 2000s

**2007** The iPhone is released, revolutionizing cellphones and popularizing touchscreens.



**2018** The University of Texas’ McDonald Observatory in Fort Davis is chosen by NASA as one of three sites nationally to host a facility for its Space Geodesy Project, which aims to help scientists counter the effects of earthquakes, volcanoes, sea level changes and landslides.





# *DRIVE IN, CHILL OUT*

Drive-in theaters, long past their heyday, remain as beacons of nostalgia that offer cinema under a boundless sky



**PERHAPS ANY MOVIE** could have marked the watershed moment of Ryan Smith's young adulthood, but on that midsummer evening in 2002, it was M. Night Shyamalan's *Signs* that colored the mood at the Sky-Vue Drive-In Theatre on the dusty outskirts of Lamesa.

Smith, in his early 20s and fresh out of his first year of law school at SMU, was in West Texas to learn from his grandfather about the family businesses—bits about farming, real estate, oil and gas, and, most notably, the movie theater business. Smith's grandparents, R.A. "Skeet" and Sarah Noret, opened the Sky-Vue in 1948, and he grew up hearing stories about the iconic drive-in, like the time a then-unknown Buddy Holly played atop the projection room or when Albert Noret, Smith's great-grandfather, invented the now-legendary Chihuahua Sandwich, a quintessentially Tex-Mex concoction of homemade chili meat and pimento cheese, shredded cabbage and diced onions between two tostada shells with a side of jalapeño. Yet, despite his family's long history with the theater, Smith had never seen a movie at the drive-in before that evening 17 years ago.

He had just finished helping out with a rush on the concession stand when he grabbed some food for himself and went outside to catch a bit of the movie. Sitting in his car and crunching away on a Chihuahua Sandwich, he felt enchanted by the whole scenario—the collective energy of the moviegoers that surrounded him in lawn chairs and truck beds, the sound of their laughter at the film's tension breakers—and thought, "Man, this has to be preserved and shared."

He gazed through his open sunroof at the stars glowing over the Llano Estacado and waited for the aliens to invade Mel Gibson's on-screen world.

"It was a communal experience, and yet, I was sitting in the privacy of my own vehicle, enjoying dinner," he says today. "It was an experience that I had never had before but had heard about. And I now understand why the experience was so beloved."

Smith never made it back to law

school. He instead felt a calling to deliver the drive-in experience to others. Just over a year after that night at the Sky-Vue, aided by investments from his family, he opened his first theater, Stars & Stripes Drive-In Theatre in Lubbock.

"So that began the journey," he says, "to try to draw inspiration from what my granddad did and share it with [more] people."

Smith, who also owns land in Lyntegar Electric Cooperative's service territory, has since expanded the Stars & Stripes brand with a second location, in New Braunfels, south of Austin, and today his operation accounts for two of fewer than 20 drive-ins open for business in the Lone Star State. Some of these theaters stand as paint-chipped remnants of a bygone era, when the outdoor double feature dominated the cinema experience and some 400 drive-ins dotted the Texas landscape. Others, like Fort



**Lala Watkins prepares for hungry moviegoers at Coyote Drive-In in Fort Worth.**

Worth's Coyote Drive-In, inject a twist of modernity into that paradigmatic pastime of the mid-20th century. But all of Texas' surviving

drive-in theaters share at least one quality: the promise of a singular form of entertainment served with a healthy dose of nostalgia—bolstered by the dedication of theater owners to preserving the pastime.

**THE FIRST DRIVE-IN** theater in the United States opened in Camden, New Jersey, in 1933, and by the late 1950s, there were more than 4,000 drive-ins throughout the country. They were so widespread and popular that to some degree, says D. Vogel, administrative secretary of the United Drive-In Theatre Owners Association, "drive-in movie theaters built Hollywood."

But by 1980, the number of drive-ins had dropped to about 2,400, and a steady decline continued over the ensuing decade,

Whether it's a night out for the whole family or a romantic evening for two under the stars, there's still a drive-in theater in Texas to meet the occasion.



**Coyote Drive-In's big screen set against the vast Texas sky at twilight.**

operators, retirements of aging owners and increased competition from entertainment options like home video and multiplexes.

Hollywood's digital revolution—a shift from 35 mm film prints to digital projection that began in the early 2000s—put the nail in the coffin for some drive-ins. A digital projector with a bulb strong enough to project across a field can cost upward of \$70,000, a prohibitive expense for the mom and pop operations these theaters tend to be. But drive-ins that didn't make the switch would be left without new movies to show.

**TODAY, THERE ARE FEWER** than 400 drive-ins in the U.S. Though their numbers are small, these theaters continue to offer an engrossing experience wholly distinct from their indoor counterparts. A ticket to the drive-in typically provides double-feature entertainment for a lower price than one movie at an indoor theater. The food, also at a reasonable price point, tends to go beyond the standard fare of popcorn, soda and candy. And then there's the freedom granted by the outdoor environment.

"Your options are wide open," Vogel says. "You could just get up and look at the night sky. Or you could just take a quiet stroll around the field and watch families laughing and having a good time together. Or, you could get through the movie simply by taking a little nap until the next one came on."

It's the privilege of providing that experience that keeps many drive-in owners in the game. The defining trait of those who remain,

the result of a combination of factors, including land value increases that made it financially attractive for owners to sell their properties to devel-

#### WEB EXTRAS

► Read this story on our website to see a map of drive-ins operating in Texas and additional photos.

Vogel says, is "a genuine love for this business. That's what it takes."

And that's a love that Jennifer Miller knows well. She's the owner of Brazos Drive-In Theatre in Granbury, one of the oldest drive-ins in Texas. First opened in 1952, Brazos has welcomed moviegoers every year since, closing only for the winter

offseason. Miller is responsible for more than half of that track record.

She's poured her heart and wallet into the theater since she bought it in 1985. She runs the single-screen operation with just a handful of employees and works the concession stand every night it's open. She shelled out the money for the expensive equipment when digital conversion became necessary and set up a minimuseum featuring the drive-in's old film projector and other memorabilia in the vintage snack bar. The 67-year-old has even donned a bunny suit to entertain kids around Easter.

For Miller, the theater isn't about making money. It's about preserving a piece of history and providing family-friendly fun for her patrons. "I just want to be able to make enough money to keep improving it, so everyone can enjoy it. I guess that's my passion, my focus," she says. "If all I do is save the drive-in, then it's been very, very rewarding for me."

The sense of nostalgia is intrinsic to the historic grounds of the Brazos theater. Newer drive-ins, like the Blue Starlite Mini Urban Drive-In in Austin, must work to evoke the feeling. For Blue Starlite owner Josh Frank, that requires more than showing a movie outdoors. "The movie is a part of the experience, but it's maybe 30%," he says.



Nestled in a partially paved clearing behind a Moose Lodge, the Blue Starlite consists of two mobile screens and a scattering of vintage and aging trailers—some of which can be rented for parties—and signage fonts that scream midcentury diner.

“I love nostalgia,” says Frank, who likens his theater more to an interactive show than a simple venue to catch a flick. “It’s about the classic culture, the nostalgia, the ’50s mentality. I would probably open a malt shop before I opened an indoor movie theater.”

The quest to revive a fading era is also what got Sam Kirkland, South Plains Electric Cooperative member, into the theater business. Kirkland grew up working for the Norets at the Sky-Vue in Lamesa, starting in 1957 and into the 1960s. In those years, he says, the theater was “the pride and joy of the town.”

Things had changed, though, by the late ’70s, when Kirkland was driving by the theater one day to find it closed and overgrown with weeds. He decided to clean it up and help the Norets reopen. Within a year, he bought the theater, which he and his wife kept alive until a fire destroyed the snack bar in 2015.

The demise of the Sky-Vue meant

**Right: Cowboy Fred works the box office at Brazos Drive-In. Below: The expansive concession stand at New Braunfels’ Stars & Stripes Drive-In is a main attraction.**

more than the loss of an entertainment attraction for the Lamesa community. It also represented the passing of a place where generations of memories were made, Kirkland says.

“It was a big deal,” he says. “We had a wonderful playground. I kept all of the original toys repaired. Parents would bring their kids to the Sky-Vue and say, ‘These are the same toys I played on when I was your age.’”



Though the Sky-Vue is no more, Kirkland and others are keeping the tradition alive. Hungry theatergoers can still find the famous Chihuahua Sandwich at Midland’s Big Sky Drive-In, where Kirkland is part owner, as well as at the Stars & Stripes in Lubbock. For those who favor libations with their movies, the Coyote Drive-In in Fort Worth serves up beer and wine, often paired with live music before the show, at its canteen—the sort of appurtenances audiences have come to expect from modern theaters.

Whether it’s a night out for the whole family or a romantic evening for two under the stars, there’s still a drive-in theater in Texas to meet the occasion. And it’s sure to outshine a stuffy night at the mall multiplex.

“The drive-in can give you something that the indoors can’t,” Kirkland says, “and that’s freedom.”

Travis P. Hill is a TEC communications specialist. He lives in Austin.







**MAKE  
IT A**

# LARGE

**SOMETIMES YOUR EYES—LIKE THE  
OVERSIZED FOOD ON TEXAS MENUS—  
ARE BIGGER THAN YOUR STOMACH**

**BY JEFF SIEGEL | PHOTOS BY TOM HUSSEY**

**O**n a stage in front of the open kitchen at the Big Texan Steak Ranch and Brewery in Amarillo, an empty table looms above restaurant patrons enjoying warm meals on a rainy fall afternoon. At any moment, the table could become the center of attention—if only someone were to approach the kitchen and announce, “I want to eat the 72-ounce steak.” Once the steak is served, the digital clock on the wall behind the stage will start a 60-minute countdown. Spotlights

will click on. Webcams will broadcast the challenge around the world. And diners in the 500-seat restaurant will look up from their beef and beer to watch and shout encouragement.

At the Big Texan, visitors from around the world attempt to eat the restaurant’s legendary steak dinner—4½ pounds of beef plus a salad, dinner roll, baked potato, side of beans and shrimp cocktail. If they can devour everything in an hour, it’s free. During an eight-week period that included Labor Day weekend in 2018, 150 travelers from as far away as Ukraine and Australia took the challenge. Just 14 succeeded.

“Disneyland has Mickey Mouse,” says Big Texan’s Bobby Lee,





whose family has owned the Amarillo landmark for almost 60 years. “And we have the 72-ounce steak.”

Welcome to big food, Texas style. How about a pizza that’s 8 feet across? Or a 3-pound cinnamon roll? Or an eight-decker deli sandwich? Or a hamburger that includes a pound of bacon and a half-pound of cheese? If someone’s going to make such a colossus, you can bet someone will try to eat it.

“It was like, ‘Men of America, all the eyes are upon you,’” says Ed Montana of Amarillo, who finished the Big Texan steak dinner in 38 minutes during filming for the Travel Channel. “I didn’t want to let the side down. I had to finish it because macho men are meat

eaters, right?”

“It’s the wiry little guys you need to worry about when you’re watching someone try to finish the dinner,” Montana says. “The big guys, the 6-8 [tall] ones who look like offensive linemen, they don’t seem to do as well.”

High school and college students seem particularly fond of challenging the specialty of the house. But at Big Texan, more women finish the steak than men, even though more men attempt it.

At Mel’s Country Cafe in Tomball, north of Houston, the Mega

**Kurt Oefinger of Hondo’s Dirt Road Cookers prepares an 8-foot pizza, above, then, with help from Medina Electric Cooperative employees, eases the hot pie onto a stand for slicing.**





Mel Burger, which starts with 1½ pounds of beef, has been on the menu in one form or another since 1994. “I honestly think that when people see how big it is, they feel a need to try and conquer it,” manager Sherry Pierce says. “And it’s just not the people who try to eat it—it’s the people who get excited about seeing people try to eat it.”

**B**ig food, the larger-than-life dishes like the Big Texan’s steak, is not uniquely Texan. It’s not even uniquely American. A decade ago, a group of Spanish chefs combined 32 tons of rice, sausage and seafood to create a monster version of paella, Spain’s national dish.

But many Americans embrace big food enthusiastically. We watch TV shows about it. We visit restaurants to see it—as well as to eat it. Our enthusiasm for big food is not necessarily about gluttony. Rather, it’s about what Texas Tech sociologist Carol Lindquist calls “our culture of abundance.”

“Big food in particular is part of that,” she says, “the idea that bigger is better, a hypermanifestation of our American-ness.”

Our culture of abundance is unique in world history. We are, with a few notable exceptions, the only culture that has never endured famine, which Europeans have suffered through as recently as the 20th century and still occurs in some parts of the world.

“We think that our abundance—that we always have had enough food to eat—is normal,” Lindquist says. “But it’s not. The early European settlers, when they arrived, couldn’t believe what they found, all the wildlife and the forests and the food. It was remarkable coming from the old country, where that hadn’t been seen in centuries. So that’s one reason how our enthusiasm for ‘bigger is better’ started.”

The Mega Mel Burger is seven times taller than the average



**A Dirt Road pizza can feed up to 150 people. Will Schneider, left, a staking technician at Medina EC, digs in.**

mouth can open. The Big Texan steak contains almost three times more calories than the federal government’s

recommended daily allowance. The 20-scoop ice cream sundae at Dallas’ Hypnotic Emporium contains significantly more than the recommended daily allowance of fat.

Wallets take a hit just as diets do. The Mega Mel costs \$24.95. The Mt. Hypnotic sundae costs \$38, which can be refunded if you finish it in less than 30 minutes. The Big Texan steak is \$72, and that’s only refunded if you meet the hour deadline.

But none of that seems to matter.

“I honestly think it’s about the spectacle,” says Kurt Oefinger of Hondo’s Dirt Road Cookers, whose specialty is an 8-foot pizza that starts with 25 pounds of flour and takes two hours to mix. Oefinger travels around the state, pizza oven in tow, creating his giant pies that include 3 pounds of pepperoni, 8 pounds of brisket, 6 pounds of sausage and 30 pounds of cheese. They cost \$800–\$1,500 and can feed as many as 150 people.

“As soon as they see that 8-foot pizza, everyone wants to dive in. But no one ever seems to be able to finish it, and there is always a lot left,” says Kassie Cox, Oefinger’s sister-in-law and an accountant for Medina Electric Cooperative in Hondo, west of San Antonio. “I’m not sure anyone knows exactly how big an 8-foot pizza is. It’s not like many people have seen one before.”

Learn more about writer **Jeff Siegel** at [winecurmudgeon.com](http://winecurmudgeon.com).



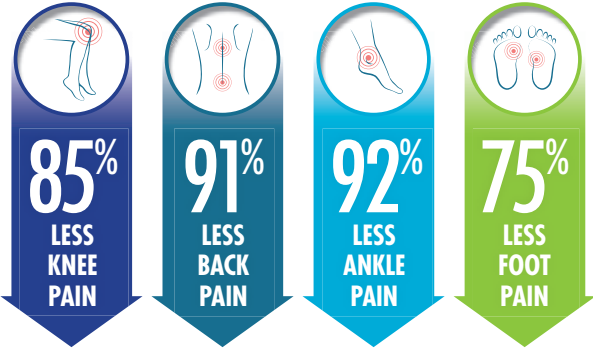
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Dr. Steven Battaglia  
Ear, Nose & Throat Surgeon

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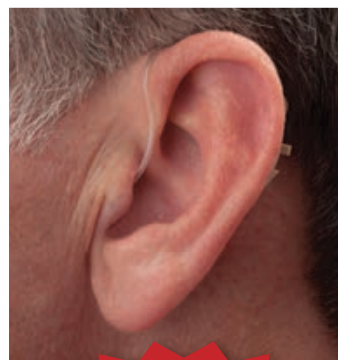
"MDHearingAids are better than expensive clinic hearing aids, which cost thousands more," says retired physician Dr. Robert A.

"I have had five pairs of expensive hearing aids and MDHearingAids are just as good," adds retired neurosurgeon Dr. Brian L.

**Doctors Are Tired of Watching Their Patients Waste Money on Over-Priced Clinic Hearing Aids**  
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## TESTIMONIAL

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TOTAL			

Exp. Date

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature

\_\_\_\_\_

# Simply the Best



## MESSAGE FROM GENERAL MANAGER **KATHI CALVERT**

### IN APRIL, OUR SPARSELY POPULATED AREA CAUGHT THE BRUNT OF SEVERAL STORM SYSTEMS.

It started on April 6, with baseball size hail around the Grapeland community. A week later on April 13, we had three confirmed tornadoes with wind speeds reaching 206 miles per hour around Tadmor and Weches. We were still recovering from the damage when around 1:00 a.m. the following Thursday we were hit with another round of storms, resulting in toppled trees near Keechi, Pleasant Springs, Oakwood, and Elkhart. Devastation faced us in every direction we turned, and our hearts ached for the losses our members suffered.

There was none of the media fanfare that generally accompanies this level of disaster, but after each storm, our first responders went to work. Emergency personnel provided aid to the injured and county officials started clearing roads. Our linemen were right beside them, working to restore power to all those left in the dark. Contract crews were enlisted from other areas of Texas and parts of Louisiana, bringing with them extra bulldozers and track equipment to help reach the unreachable. In the office, members of our dispatch and consumer services teams gave up their days off to assist with customer calls and gather damage information. During the restoration effort, we more than doubled our typical workforce.

The line and right-of-way crews had to deal with challenging terrain, downed trees and saturated ground in remote areas that are difficult to access even under normal conditions. In addition, crews had to work in close proximity to each other. This is not an ideal work situation when energizing power

lines. The process requires coordination, communication and constant focus to ensure every individual is safe. Countless hours resulted in many tired, aching bodies, but we did not incur a single injury throughout the extensive restoration efforts.

After nine straight days, exhaustion and fatigue began to take their toll. But as work continued, the only negative comments heard were about the sheer destruction seen in the volume of downed trees and broken poles. There was never a single grumble about the sixteen-hour workdays, or missing time with friends and family over the Easter holiday weekend. Instead, there was camaraderie and pride.

During these storms, I witnessed teamwork and dedication across the entire organization. I saw leadership-in-action at all levels. On Easter Sunday, when power was finally restored to the last meter, I told our employees that I felt like we had won the Super Bowl. I was so proud of all we had safely accomplished.

Words are inadequate as I attempt to convey the depth of my respect and admiration for the men and women of Houston County Electric Cooperative. This who we are. It's what we are called to do. We get the lights back on regardless of the circumstances, and we do it better than any other company I know.

To our members, know that your Co-op employees are giving you their very best. They are amazing. I am humbled to say I am part of Houston County Electric Cooperative.

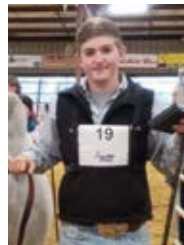
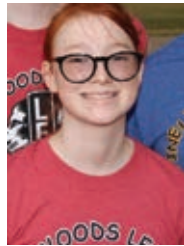


Every morning during storm restoration, crews would gather to load materials, fill their water coolers, and go over the instructions for the day. Our warehouse yard, which is used to only holding our fleet of work vehicles, was easily doubled with vehicles of all sorts waiting to start their day.



# ETREYS

## Congratulations to the 2019 ETREYS Delegates and Youth Director!



2019 Delegates & Youth Director:  
*left to right, top to bottom.*

- Aaron Barclay, Kennard HS
- Khushi Bhatt, Crockett HS
- Katie Bradshaw, Crockett HS
- Sydnee Craven, Latexo HS
- Nathan Lyons, Hudson HS
- Lizbeth Marquez, Elkhart HS
- D'Aarion Moreland, Kennard HS
- Bryce Owens, Elkhart HS
- Makerra Pope, Kennard HS
- Caitlyn Pyle, Kennard HS
- Angel Schave, Latexo HS
- Meredith Tuggle, Crockett HS
- Caleigh Wiley, Kennard HS
- Mikey Curry, Youth Director, Kennard HS



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## Houston County Electric Cooperative

P.O. Box 52, Crockett, TX 75835

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Kathi Calvert

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FIND US ON FACEBOOK

# LEON COUNTY'S 44<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL FUNTIER DAYS

**FOR 43 YEARS, FOLKS HAVE GATHERED MID-WAY BETWEEN HOUSTON AND DALLAS** to celebrate the Fourth of July the ‘good-ole-fashioned way’ with a parade, music, food, and fireworks. Held in Centerville, Texas, “Funtier Days” originated in 1975 as one of a three-part program of events staged by Leon County to earn the Bi-Centennial Flag. When the festival brought in somewhere near 2,000 attendees, city leaders decided to make it an annual celebration. They realized that organized events like this offered an opportunity for visitors to experience

the hometown hospitality of Leon County while enjoying entertainment they might not get in urban areas. In the past, activities have included a marathon run, a kid’s Talent Show, antique car shows and quilt shows. Attendees at this year’s 44th anniversary can expect the same wide variety of activities like a beauty pageant, a dog show, a home and garden fair, an arts and crafts flea market, and even a 42 tournament. Although the festival has evolved over the years, one thing remains the same: The camaraderie and patriotism that fills the air while celebrating our great Nation and those who have sacrificed so much for us to be able to attend events such as the Leon County Funtier Days.



1



2



3



6



5



4

1. Kortnie Ellis and Wade Neyland riding in the parade boasting the American and Texas flags. 2. Kortnie Ellis, 2018 Pageant Queen, and Presley Noey, 2018 Miss Tiny. 3. Fireworks display over the Centerville High Football Stadium. 4. An old fashioned cattle drive is held during the parade. 5. Young parade-goers wave as an antique tractor drives by during the parade. 6. Guests enjoying some knocker ball at the CHS Football Field. There is fun for all ages at the Leon County Funtier Days!





## 44th Annual Leon County Funtier Days Schedule July 2019 | Centerville Texas

<b>July 3rd</b>		11:30 A	Great American Turtle Race (Courthouse Lawn) Horse Shoe Pitching (Courthouse Lawn)
8A - 1P	Home & Garden Fair Entries Due (Methodist Church Centerville)	12 P	Sack Races, Three Legged Races, Stick Horse Race (Courthouse Lawn)
4 P	Miss Leon County 4th of July Scholarship Pageant	12:30 P	Tricycle Race, Egg Toss, & Whip Popping Contest (Courthouse Lawn)
5 P	Jamming for Christ Ice Cream Social (Cowboy Church of Leon Co.)	1 P	42 Tournament (Leon County Annex   Great Room)
9:30 P	July 4th Dance (Leon Co. Expo Center)	1:30 P	Chamber Community Awards (Main Stage   Courthouse Lawn)
<b>July 4th</b>		2 P	Washer Pitching (Courthouse Lawn)
7:30 A	Stu's Country Mile 5K & Kids Fun Run (Courthouse Lawn)	TBA	County Musical
9 A	Trade Show Vendors Open (Courthouse Lawn) July 4th Home & Garden Exhibits Open (Methodist Church Centerville) Petting Zoo Open (Courthouse Lawn)	7 P	Knocker Ball (Centerville HS Football Field)
		9P	Fireworks Show (Centerville HS Football Field)
10 A	Parade (Line up @ 9 A) Antique Car & Tractor Show (Leon County Appraisal Dist.)	<b>July 4th - 6th</b>	
		7:30 P	Hat Brand July 4th Rodeo (Leon Co. Expo Center)
11 A	Dog Show (Courthouse Lawn)		

# INTRODUCING *your newest HCEC team members*



**Donny Davis**  
Lineman's Helper



**Cody Duke**  
Lineman's Helper



**Curtis Franklin**  
Lineman's Helper



**Shannon Pickens**  
Dispatch Operator



**Clint Rosser**  
Maintenance Assistant

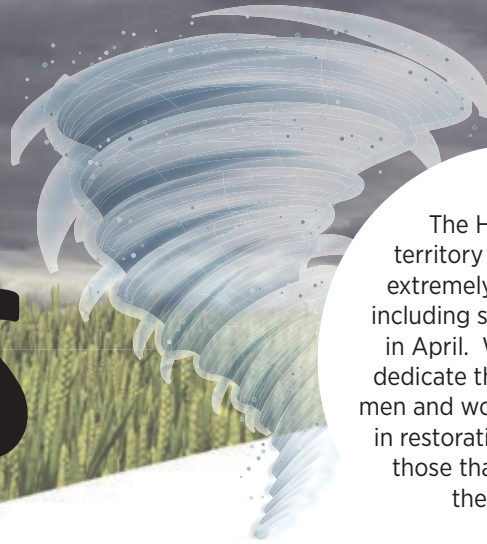


**Carla Smiley**  
Cashier/Dispatch Operator



**Joseph Smoldas**  
3<sup>rd</sup> Class Lineman

# STORM CHASERS



The HCEC service territory was faced with extremely harsh weather, including several tornadoes, in April. We would like to dedicate these pages to the men and women who assisted in restoration efforts and to those that suffered from these storms.

Tornadoes and severe weather struck the HCEC territory, causing massive power outages to nearly 73% of all meters served. The first round of storms, including three tornadoes, tore through the service area on Saturday, April 13th producing the majority of the damage to Leon and Houston County. By Wednesday, April 17th, at approximately 5 p.m., the number of power outages had been reduced to zero, but in the early hours of Thursday morning, another round of severe weather hit. Over the next few days, crews worked from sunrise late into the night until around 11 a.m. on Easter Sunday, when word was received that all meters had been restored.

For eight straight days, nearly 100 HCEC employees and contract crews assisted in the restoration efforts. We are extremely grateful for the kindness we received from our members during the devastating time. Many members voiced their appreciation on our Facebook page, and some chimed in that our linemen were their “real-life heroes.” We think those words best describe our team at Houston County Electric Cooperative. Real-life heroes putting members first every day. It’s what we do.

## TORNADO TRACKER

	Tornado #1 - Weches	Tornado #2 - Weldon	Tornado #3 - Tadmor
Rating	EF-3	EF - 2	EF - 1
Est. Peak Wind	140 MPH	130 MPH	90 MPH
Path Length	15 Miles	3.85 Miles	.30 Miles
Width	800 Yards	100 Yards	75 Yards
Duration	22 Minutes	5 Minutes	2 Minutes

*preliminary data provided by the National Weather Service*

**WE ♥ OUR MEMBERS**

**Joshua Swanberg** Great work! Proud of my electric company. You all rallied hard and thanks to the crew and the people that came into town to help with the storm damage. Have a Happy Easter all.

**April Langford** So grateful to each and every one of you for the time you have sacrificed and the work you have done. Don't know what we would do without all of you and hope we never have to find out!! God Bless you all, Happy Easter, and hoping you all get some well deserved rest!!!

**Toni Stennett** Y'all have some amazing linemen! Thank you for doing what you do for the rest of us. And a HUGE thank you to the men that were out working 75 between Buffalo and Centerville as they took the time to pull my husbands truck out of the mud off the road!!! 🙏🙏🙏 praying for your men as they work tirelessly these last couple of weeks for your customers. It is more than appreciated!

**Boyd Farm** Thank y'all so much for what you do for us. We are beyond blessed to have each and everyone who is sacrificing their time and efforts to get the power back on! I pray Jesus sends his best angels to watch over and protect you!

**Seleta Beddo** Stay safe out there. Thank you for all your hard work.

**Holly Holcomb Lovell** Thank you thank you thank you!! ❤️❤️❤️ I really thought it would be days before we got it back and would have been happy about that even. The fact that it's back on at our place is amazing. Thank you guys so much for ALL that you do!! And whatever timeline it is, we know you are all working so hard.

**Rebecca Doty Lawhon** These workers are wonderful! Thank you so much. Words cannot express how THANKFUL we are to you.

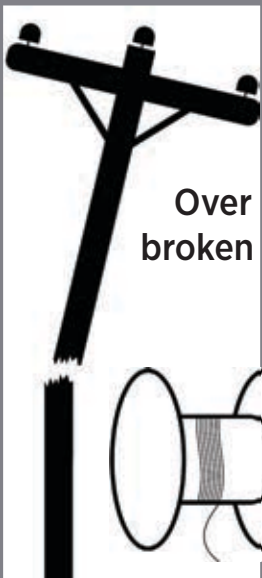
**Pam Lee** You guys do a great job... scary job! Thanks for getting our electricity back on this morning. You keep us safe, warm and cool in the worst of circumstances. Many prayers for all of you and much appreciation.

**Karan Butler** So very thankful for all the sacrifice, hard work, and dedication to Houston County residents that HCEC symbolizes. We appreciate all that each of you do for us!





# STORM STATS:



Over 120 broken poles

APPROXIMATELY 48,000 FEET OF WIRE REPLACED  
That's over 9 miles!



84 pairs of hands working to restore power to our members.



Crews worked over 4,000 hours in 8 days.



15,000 meters affected out of 21,000.



Over 600 sack lunches packed.

# Bad Moon Waning

Superstition's grip on our family may finally be slipping

BY CLAY COPPEDGE

IN OUR HOUSE, WHEN I WAS GROWING UP, even the most innocuous nonevent came laden with portent and prophecy. If you dropped a knife, it meant a man was coming to the house. Drop a spoon, a woman was on her way. (Forks, apparently, were gender-neutral.)

If your left palm itched, it meant you were about to come into money. An itchy foot meant you would soon walk on new ground. An itchy back sent mixed signals because it foretold either a whippin' or a huggin'.

That was about it for good omens.

My mother's world, formed in her Appalachian childhood of the 1930s and carried intact to the flatlands of Lubbock, was short on good-luck omens but full to the brim with bad ones. Even though she could have told me it was good luck to wear two shoes at all times, she chose instead to tell me I was hexed if I didn't.

One of her strictest superstitions was the practice of sitting down for at least 10 seconds when one of us went back into the house to retrieve something. Mama always reminded us to sit down and count to 10 before coming back out. And, for God's sake, please leave the house through the same door you entered!

To this day, I believe Mama had a hand in writing the Creedence Clearwater Revival song *Bad Moon Rising*. Literary as well as superstitious, she would actually say things such as, "It's an ill wind that bodes no good" as a portent of stormy weather, or "The spirits are restless" to justify skipping a trip or to forbid me from an otherwise justifiable pleasure.

At some point, I'd had enough. It riled me that Mama was well-read and smart about so many things but insisted on divining the shape of things to come through birdsongs or how you handled your silverware. "Superstition ain't the way," I'd tell her in my more civil complaints, quoting Stevie Wonder. Other times I flat-out mocked her.

Once, when she was looking for something in the back of the silverware drawer and accidentally pulled the whole drawer out and every fork, knife and spoon hit the floor with a teeth-rattling clatter, I wailed in mock terror: "Oh no! The whole town is coming to our house! And it's a mess!"

Mama explained why that was not funny while I picked up and washed every piece of the cursed silverware. As fate would have it, some folks from church dropped by that very evening. Mama explained how their unexpected arrival was a divine message meant for me and me alone: *Don't mock your mama*.

My dad managed to stay neutral on these issues. He always sat down when he had to go back in the house, and I never once saw him walk around with one shoe on and one shoe off. "I don't have infinite knowledge of the universe," he explained when I asked him why he put up with it. "It doesn't hurt anything and, besides, why take chances?"

Why, indeed?

Soon after I left home and started living on my own, it came as a stunner when I found myself sitting down for at least 10 seconds whenever I had to go back inside the house, and I never once went around





with one shoe on and one shoe off for more than five seconds. Even as a parent, I sometimes evangelized much in the style of my mother.

One day when my daughter was 8 or 9, I actually chastised her for walking around the house half-shod. Bad luck, I explained, walking around with one shoe on. She had heard this nonsense before, but now she challenged me with, “Explain yourself.”

And so I did, or at least I started to, but my voice faltered under my daughter’s calm, unblinking stare. She crossed her arms, tapped her foot, rolled her eyes and waited for me to finish.

Trying to regain a measure of authority, I concluded with, “Hey, we don’t have infinite knowledge of the universe. It might

be true. Why take chances?” but my voice trailed away as soon as I realized I’d just quoted each of my parents from their side of the issue, not mine.

My daughter put the matter into perspective, much as I once tried to do. “Don’t be such a drama dude, Dad. I’m just looking for my other shoe. OK? I don’t need to know all about the universe for that.”

I spied her other shoe and fetched it so she wouldn’t have to, but I was beaming inside, thinking, “Ah, that’s my girl!”

Later, I interpreted the incident as a personal breakthrough—an omen! The bad moon of superstition was waning now. A jinx was broken. *Hallelujah!*

Knock on wood.

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

# D-Day's Texas Legend

James Earl Rudder, an Aggie from Eden, led a Ranger battalion in the perilous invasion of France 75 years ago

BY GENE FOWLER

WHEN DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER REVISITED the beaches of Normandy 20 years after D-Day, he stood on a promontory called Pointe du Hoc and marveled at the bravery and accomplishments of the Allied forces. The former president, who had given the “let’s go” order for the massive force to cross the English Channel for the June 6, 1944, invasion of German-occupied France, spoke of one heroic phase of the operation conducted by specially trained Rangers who, he said, “could do anything.” The battalion’s ascent up the 100-foot cliffs and disabling of German artillery, Eisenhower recalled, was a “very dramatic piece of personal courage.” The hard-won defeat of the Germans entrenched on those cliffs was a key component to the invasion’s success.

This month, as we mark the 75th anniversary of D-Day, one of the most important figures we honor was a Texan—Maj. Gen. James Earl Rudder. Rudder, then a lieutenant colonel, led the 2nd Ranger Battalion in the invasion. “No soldier in my command has ever been wished a more difficult task than that which befell the 34-year-old commander of this Provisional Ranger Force,” wrote Gen. Omar N. Bradley, commander of the U.S. Army during the invasion, in his 1951 autobiography, *A Soldier’s Story*. “Lieutenant Colonel James E. Rudder, a rancher from Brady, Texas, was to take a force of 200 men, land on a shingled shelf under the face of a

100-foot cliff, scale the cliff, and there destroy an enemy battery of coastal guns.”

Born in the Concho County hamlet of Eden in 1910, Rudder grew up when old-timers still spun tales of the Civil War, Texas Ranger exploits and driving cattle up the trail. Raised in a hardscrabble home without electricity, Rudder excelled as a high school football player and earned a chance at higher education when a coach for John Tarleton Agricultural College arranged a partial “milk cow scholarship.” The Lions Club donated a 2-year-old Jersey heifer, which Rudder milked daily, trading the milk at Tarleton’s dining hall for reduced prices for his meals.

Rudder completed his education at Texas Agricultural and Mechanical College, where he played football and participated in ROTC. In June 1941, as war raged in Europe, he was called to active duty.

By November 1943, Rudder had earned the rank of major and commanded the

2nd Ranger Battalion. With his men, he boarded the Queen Elizabeth bound for the British Isles and—eventually—the coast of France. This would be what biographer Thomas M. Hatfield describes as Rudder’s “rendezvous with history” in *Rudder: From Leader to Legend*.

As Rudder boarded a troopship to cross the Eng-

lish Channel the afternoon of June 5, among an armada of thousands of vessels, the coming dangers were obvious. “What better way to die,” the Ranger commander said



JAMES RUDDER





**Some of Rudder's Rangers and German prisoners after the assault on the cliffs at Pointe Du Hoc.**

objectives on D-Day: disable six long-range 155 mm guns the Germans had installed on Pointe du Hoc; cut off a coastal road behind the point; and take out additional big guns at the nearby Pointe et Raz de la Percée. Allied bomber planes hammered the German positions before the landing, and the USS Texas served as the flagship for battleships, which blasted Nazi fortifications.

Despite the heavy shelling from Allied ships and bombers, Rudder's Rangers were under constant German fire as they ascended the cliff via expandable steel lad-

ders and rocket-propelled grapnel hooks with ropes attached. Suffering nearly 60% casualties, the soldiers later used the ladder sections as stretchers to evacuate the dead and wounded. Rudder himself, though shot in the leg and wounded in the chest and arm by an errant Royal Navy round, refused to evacuate for additional treatment. Rudder's men achieved their mission even though it took three days for the Rangers and other Allied forces to hold the area. One Ranger called his commander "one of the greatest men that ever lived." Another said, "Seeing [him] in command saved our day. He was the strength of the whole operation in spite of his wound. Under his leadership, miracles seemed possible."

Back home after the war, Rudder served

in a short, inspiring speech, "than to die for your country." Rudder's Ranger battalion had three

as mayor of Brady for six years. When Gov. Allan Shivers needed someone to reform the General Land Office after a scandal, he called on Rudder. From 1959 to 1970, the last 11 years of his life, Rudder served as president of Texas A&M University. He brought race and gender integration to the university, made the Corps of Cadets a voluntary organization, and improved the university's facilities and academics.

The memories of Pointe du Hoc and the men he led remained sacred to the Ranger commander. On a return visit to France in 1954, Rudder marveled at their heroic accomplishments. "Will you tell me how we did this?" the man from Eden asked. "It was crazy then, and it's crazy now."

Author **Gene Fowler** specializes in Texas travel and history.





**“There are so many people in the co-ops of Texas who do extraordinary things for other people.”**

—NANCY JOHNSON, whose Little Hats, Big Hearts program builds awareness of congenital heart defects.  
*Texas Co-op Power*, February 2017

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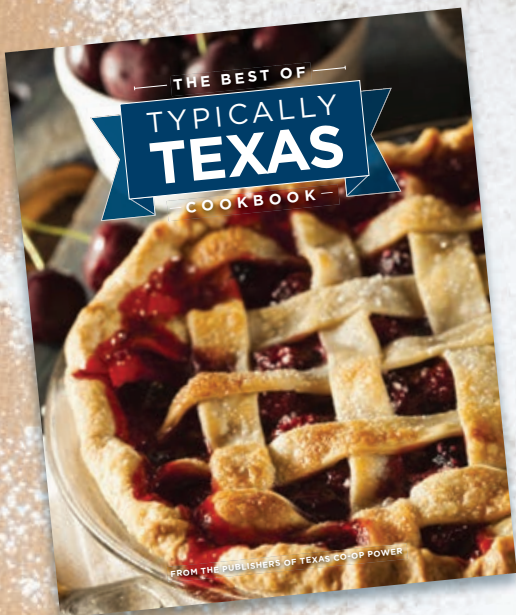
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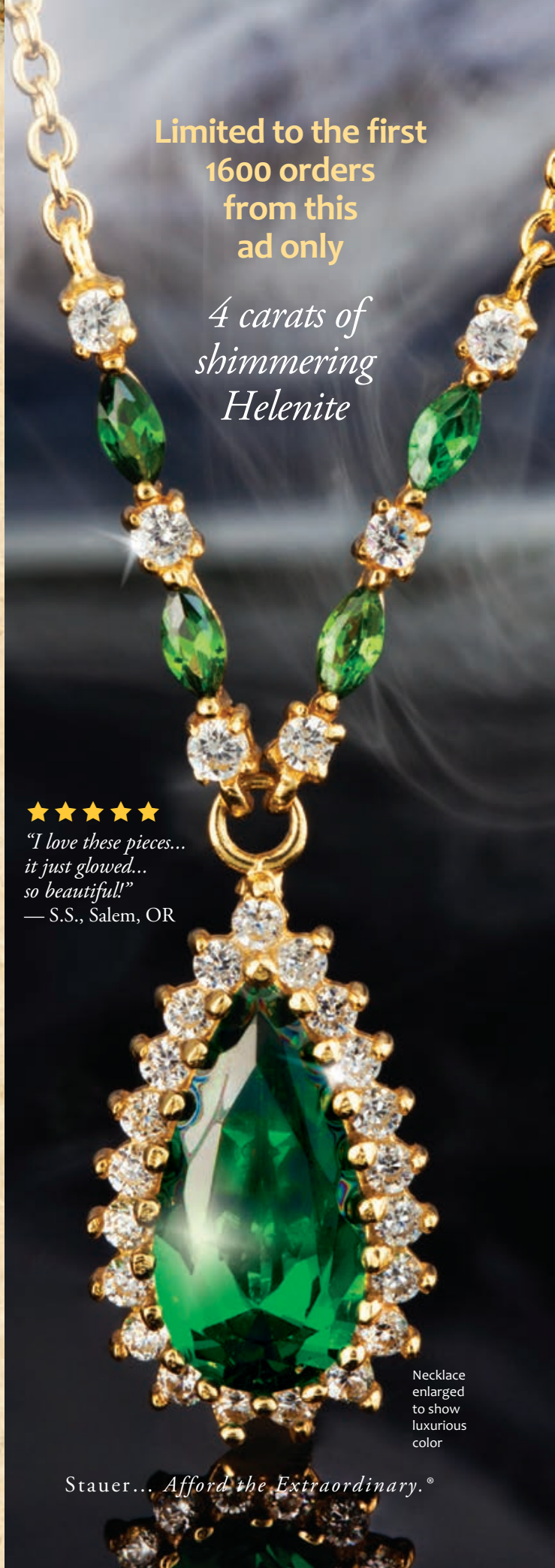
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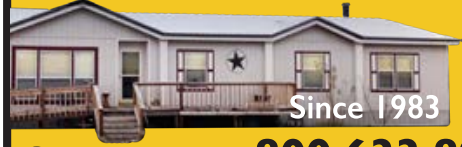
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# The Nylon Campaign

*Texas Co-op Power* has defended electric cooperatives against gossip and graft since 1944

BY ELLEN STADER

A NEFARIOUS FIGURE STROLLED INTO Washington, D.C., toting a suspicious satchel filled to overflowing with contraband. In black top hat and tails, he swaggered toward the U.S. Capitol, a stogie clenched in his teeth. At least, that's how a cartoon, titled *A New March on Washington*, portrayed him in the May 1946 issue of *Texas Co-op Power*.

And when this cad arrived in the Capitol, what happened?

He doled out nylon stockings to lawmakers' wives.

The cad was Ham Moses, president of Arkansas Power and Light, an investor-owned utility. He offered the contraband to the wives of congressmen who would vote for an amendment—one prohibiting the Rural Electrification Administration from making loans to help generation and transmission cooperatives.

The scene was depicted as a cartoon, but it actually happened. Why was this payoff made of nylon? At the time, nylon stockings made a better bribe than a briefcase full of gold. In 1942, manufacturer DuPont had diverted its production to support the war effort. World War II robbed women of their cherished nylons, and the moment they began to sell again in 1946, stores were overwhelmed in nationwide riots. The payola was well-received, but the amendment failed.

"It's almost unbelievable what the power companies will stoop to in their effort to kill us off," responded Clyde Ellis, executive manager of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

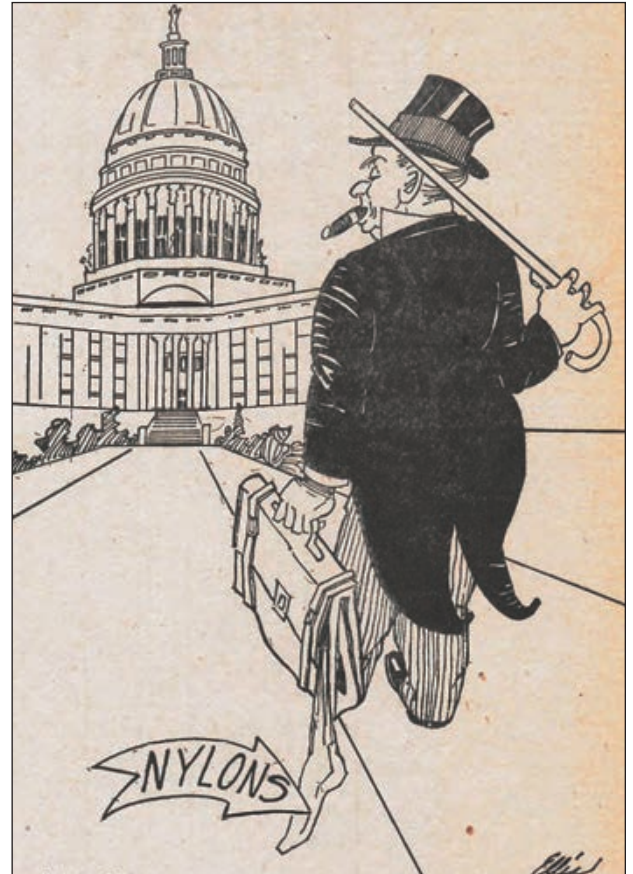
Long before this nylon campaign, the investor-owned utilities lobby already had thrown propaganda, bribery and legislative attacks at electric co-ops, with land grabs

and lawsuits to come. *Texas Co-op Power* articles from 1951 to 1991 document attacks from investor-owned utilities, lobbyists, legislators and even journalists from *The Wall Street Journal* and *The Associated Press*. After realizing its mistake in refusing to electrify rural America in the 1930s, private power spent decades taking swings at the co-ops that met the challenge instead. The resulting David-and-Goliath scenario has played out repeatedly, making for strange stories.

Take, for example, the brief and brutal feud between U.S. Sen. W. Lee "Pappy" O'Daniel of Texas and George W. Haggard, the first editor of *Texas Co-op Power* and then manager of the statewide electric cooperative association.

O'Daniel was something of a Goliath, himself. Years of radio popularity, a stint as governor of Texas and six years in the Senate had accustomed him to saying whatever he wanted—and in 1947 he called the co-op system "communistic."

Haggard fired back an indignant stone from his sling that flew to newspapers around the country via an Associated Press story: "This false and vicious charge ... is a studied insult to the 160,000 patriotic, substantial tax-paying farm and ranch families of this state who receive electricity through the REA cooperatives."



He attributed O'Daniel's smear to three motives: "profound and abysmal ignorance" of the way co-ops operated; the tendency of O'Daniel's congressional allies "to denounce everything that is for the general welfare of the American people as 'communistic'"; and O'Daniel's impending reelection bid.

Haggard then dealt the final blow, saying, "This looks like an effort to persuade the private utility interests, which hate the rural electrification program, to make a sizeable contribution to his campaign chest."

And though O'Daniel would later level the communist charge at other targets, including many of his own Senate colleagues, Texas electric co-ops never heard from him again.

Ellen Stader, a former *Texas Co-op Power* communications specialist, is a writer in Austin.

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Enter online at [TexasCoopPower.com](http://TexasCoopPower.com). Each entry MUST include your name, address and phone number, plus the name of your Texas electric cooperative, or it will be disqualified. Specify which category you are entering, Sweet or Savory, on each recipe. Mail entries to: *Texas Co-op Power/Holiday Recipe Contest*, 1122 Colorado St., 24th Floor, Austin, TX 78701. You can also fax entries to (512) 763-3401. Up to three total entries are allowed per co-op membership. Each should be submitted on a separate piece of paper if mailed or faxed. Mailed entries all can be sent in one envelope. No email entries will be accepted. For official rules, visit [TexasCoopPower.com](http://TexasCoopPower.com). **Entry deadline: June 10, 2019.**



**2018 GRAND PRIZEWINNER**  
Sherry's Shrimp Clemenceau  
Sherry Zawadzki | Heart of Texas EC  
Get the recipe at [TexasCoopPower.com](http://TexasCoopPower.com).



## Standout Summer Sides

IT'S HARD TO IMAGINE A POTLUCK, backyard barbecue or any summer cookout without a big roasting pan of baked beans. This recipe, which appeared in this magazine in July 1955, shows that the old-world combination of sweet add-ins (molasses, brown sugar and ketchup), salty pork fat and beans is pretty timeless. Feel free to double this recipe (you'll need a large roasting pan) if you're feeding a team or want leftovers. Regardless, consider the contributor's suggestion for a quick lunch: Spread leftover beans on buttered bread, top with a slice of cheese, and broil until warm and bubbly.

**PAULA DISBROWE**, FOOD EDITOR

### Old-World Baked Beans

- 2½ cups navy beans
- 1 quart water
- 1 large onion, finely chopped
- ¼ pound salt pork or bacon (cut into ½-inch slices)
- 2 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
- ⅓ cup molasses
- ¼ cup plus 2 tablespoons light brown sugar
- ¼ cup ketchup
- 2 tablespoons Dijon mustard (or 1 teaspoon ground dry mustard)
- 2 tablespoons hot sauce
- 1 tablespoon salt
- ½ tablespoon ground ginger

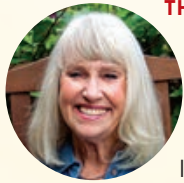
- 1.** Rinse beans and place them in a large roasting pan or Dutch oven. Cover with water and soak overnight.
- 2.** Drain beans, add 1 quart water and simmer over medium-low heat, covered, until skins are easily pierced (do not boil). Bury the onion, salt pork or bacon, and garlic in beans.
- 3.** Stir together the molasses, brown sugar, ketchup, mustard, hot sauce, salt and ginger, then stir the mixture into the beans. Continue

CONTINUED ON PAGE 32



# Retro Recipes

## Standout Summer Sides



### THIS MONTH'S RECIPE CONTEST WINNER

SHARON BROWN | PENTEX ENERGY

"This is my signature dish, and I never serve it without multiple recipe requests," Brown says. She makes it a day early to allow flavors to blend. It keeps in the refrigerator a week. Feel free to adjust the lime juice and cilantro to taste. "For large groups, I triple the recipe and serve it in a big bowl," she says. "People flip out!"

### Southwest Couscous Salad

- 1½ cups water
- 1 cup uncooked couscous
- 2 cups canned corn with red and green peppers, drained
- 1 can (15 ounces) black beans, drained
- ¼ cup chopped tomato (or 6-8 cherry tomatoes, halved)
- 2 tablespoons thinly sliced green onions
- ½ bunch cilantro, chopped
- ⅓ cup olive oil
- ¾ cup fresh lime juice
- ¼ teaspoon garlic powder
- ½ teaspoon cumin
- ⅓ teaspoon cayenne
- Salt, to taste
- Lettuce leaves, for serving (optional)
- Cilantro sprigs and lime slices, for garnish (optional)

**1.** Bring water to boil in a medium saucepan, remove from heat and stir in the couscous. Let the couscous stand 5 minutes, then fluff with fork and let cool.

**2.** In a large bowl, combine the corn, black beans, tomato, green onions and cilantro. Use a rubber spatula to fold in the couscous.

**3.** In a small jar with a lid, combine the olive oil, lime juice, garlic powder, cumin, cayenne and salt, and shake well to combine. Pour the dressing over the couscous and toss to coat.

**4.** Cover and refrigerate 1 hour or longer to allow flavors to blend. Line serving platter with lettuce leaves, spoon couscous mixture over leaves and garnish with cilantro and lime slices, if desired. ▶ Serves 12.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 31

to simmer the beans, covered, until they're very tender, about 2–2½ hours, or bake them in a 250-degree oven.

▶ Serves 12–14.

**COOK'S TIP** For added flavor, add bay leaves (fresh or dried), 1 teaspoon ground coriander or 2 teaspoons fresh chopped thyme or rosemary to the mix. Feel free to substitute Great Northern or cannellini beans for navy beans.

### Crazy Stupid Corn

GAIL PATTERSON | PENTEX ENERGY

When you're looking for a warm, creamy comfort side, this mix of fresh vegetables, corn, hominy and bacon is a perfect partner for grilled sausages or burgers, or a fresh salad with grilled bread. Patterson suggests adjusting the seasonings to suit your preferences. For added heat, consider adding fresh chopped jalapeño or serrano peppers, or a pinch of cayenne.

- 6 slices thick-cut bacon, cut crosswise into thin strips
- ¼ cup (½ stick) butter
- 1 red bell pepper, chopped
- 1 yellow bell pepper, chopped
- 1 orange bell pepper, chopped
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 4 cloves garlic, chopped
- 12 ounces cream cheese
- 2 cans (15 ounces each) yellow corn, drained
- 2 cans (14 ounces each) creamed corn
- 2 cans (15 ounces each) white hominy, drained
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- 1 teaspoon granulated garlic
- Heavy cream, as needed

**1.** Cook the bacon in a large, deep skillet or Dutch oven over medium-high heat until crisp.

**2.** Use a slotted spoon to transfer the bacon to a paper towel-lined plate and set aside, reserving bacon fat in the pan.

**3.** Add the butter to bacon drippings and stir until melted. Add the peppers, onion and garlic and stir until softened. Add the cream cheese, reduce heat and cook until almost melted and smooth. Add the corn, creamed corn and hominy and stir to combine. Season with salt, pepper and



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### \$2,500 Holiday Recipe Contest

November's issue will feature winners of the 15th annual **Holiday Recipe Contest**. Share the dishes that make your holiday gatherings so special. Send us your best ORIGINAL recipes in the Savory Dish or Sweet Dish category, and your recipe could appear in *Texas Co-op Power* and win you a cash prize. The deadline is **June 10**. See complete rules at [TexasCoopPower.com](http://TexasCoopPower.com).

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.





granulated garlic. Cook, stirring frequently, until cream cheese is fully melted and mixture is smooth. Stir in reserved bacon. Thin the mixture with cream if it seems too thick. Adjust seasonings as desired and serve warm.

► Serves 8.

## Pecan Potato Salad

JANE MORGAN | UNITED COOPERATIVE SERVICES

Cooking potatoes in broth and combining them with bacon, sautéed onions, sour cream and pecans creates a rich, German-style salad with a Texas flair. This salad (served warm or at room temperature) would be right at home with grilled brats and cold beer.

- 2 pounds small red potatoes (about 2 inches in diameter)
  - 3 cups beef or chicken broth
  - 5 slices bacon, cut crosswise into ¼-inch strips (about ¼ pound)
  - 2 tablespoons butter, divided use
  - 1 medium onion, chopped
  - ½ teaspoon sugar
  - 1½ tablespoons chopped fresh parsley leaves, plus extra for garnish
  - ½ cup chopped pecans
  - ½ cup sour cream
- Salt and pepper, as desired

1. In a large saucepan, combine potatoes with broth and simmer until just tender, about 20 minutes, then drain and cool briefly.
2. While the potatoes are cooking, cook the bacon in a medium-sized heavy skillet over medium heat until crisp. Use a slotted spoon to transfer the bacon to a paper towel-lined plate, reserving bacon drippings in the pan.
3. Add a tablespoon of butter to the bacon fat, then add the onion and cook, stirring, until tender. Transfer onion to a mixing bowl.
4. When the potatoes are cool enough to handle, thinly slice them and combine with onions. Add the sugar, parsley, pecans, sour cream and remaining butter to the warm potatoes and toss gently to combine. Season with salt and pepper, top with reserved bacon, and garnish with parsley or dill. ► Serves 6–8.

**COOK'S TIP** To perk up the flavor of this salad a bit, add a tablespoon or two of white vinegar to

the potato and onion mixture before tossing it with the dressing. For a nuttier flavor, lightly toast the pecans (and allow them to cool) before adding them to the salad.

## Cucumbers and Sour Cream

JANE MORGAN | UNITED COOPERATIVE SERVICES

When made with care, this cool, creamy and crunchy combination elevates just about anything (especially lamb burgers). “My mom would make this side dish in the summer to serve with grilled meat,” Morgan says. “It was always a delicious contrast that tasted like summer.” Note that the cucumbers need to drain for an hour, so plan accordingly.

- 4 small, firm cucumbers
  - 1 small red onion, thinly sliced
- Salt (about ½ teaspoon for each cucumber)
- ¾ cup sour cream
  - 2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
  - 1 teaspoon sugar
  - 3 tablespoons fresh minced dill (or 1 tablespoon dried)

1. Peel the cucumbers, halve lengthwise, scoop out the seeds and cut them into thin slices.

2. Combine the cucumber slices, onion and salt in a large bowl and toss to combine; transfer mixture to a colander and drain 1 hour.

3. In a separate bowl, combine the sour cream, vinegar, sugar and dill.

4. Rinse the cucumber mixture to remove salt, then drain and pat dry with paper towels to remove excess moisture. Fold the cucumbers and onions into the sour cream mixture, taste and adjust seasonings as desired, and refrigerate at least 30 minutes before serving.

► Serves 3–4.

**COOK'S TIP** Feel free to substitute an equal amount of fresh mint or tarragon for the dill.

### WEB EXTRAS

► Read these recipes on our website to see the original Old-World Baked Beans recipe from July 1955.

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# Feedin' Time

FURRY, HOOFED AND FEATHERED FRIENDS are hungry to see what's on the menu at feedin' time. **GRACE FULTZ**

**WEB EXTRAS** ▶ See Focus on Texas on our website for more photos from readers.

▼ **JENNY BOYD**, Cherokee County EC: "Donkey feedin' time."



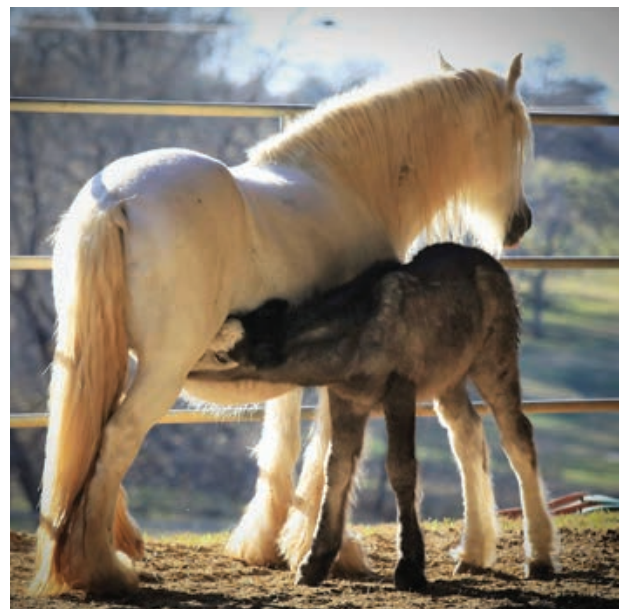
▲ **DUB AND JODY MCLAUCHLIN**, Farmers EC: "This filly is enjoying some deer corn, quick to not let any of the pasture calves share."



▲ **CHARLES ASCHENBECK**, Jackson EC: A squirrel hangs from a bird feeder before indulging in a meal of tasty sunflower seeds.



▲ **LORI RUTHERFORD**, Deep East Texas EC: "I took this photo after finding this nest full of babies in our grapefruit tree."



▲ **LINDA WOODS**, Bluebonnet EC: Arwen feeds from Aaronn. Both are gray gypsy vanners.

## UPCOMING CONTESTS

OCTOBER	GIVING BACK	DUE JUNE 10
NOVEMBER	UP THE CREEK	DUE JULY 10
DECEMBER	DESERTS	DUE AUGUST 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.





## Pick of the Month Garden Tour

**Celina** June 8  
(214) 957-3655, celinagardenclub.org

The tour offers a showcase of at least eight private gardens, farms and wineries in Celina and Weston in North Texas. Food will be available at most venues, including freshly prepared appetizers, shaved ice, fruit, ice cream and jarred items to take home.

## June 7

**Jacksonville** Tomato Fest Classic 4-Man Scramble, (903) 541-4700, jacksonvilletexas.com/tomato-fest

**Abilene** [7-8] Stars Over Abilene 25th Annual Quilt Show, (325) 665-2724

**Bonham** [7-8] Highway 82 Yard Sales, (903) 583-9830, visitbonham.com

**Kerrville** [7-8] Shakespeare in the Park, (830) 896-9393, playhouse2000.com

**San Antonio** [7-9] Texas Folklife Festival, (210) 458-2224, texasfolklife festival.org

## 8

**Bandera** Bandera Rodeo Club Youth Summer Series Rodeo, (830) 431-1030, banderarodeoclub.com

**La Grange** Art Stroll, (979) 968-3017, visitlagrangetx.com

## 14

**Boerne** [14-16] Berges Fest, (830) 249-7277, bergesfest.com

## 15

**Brenham** Summer Sip Wine Walk, (979) 337-7580, downtownbrenham.com

**Fredericksburg** Meusebach Creek Historic School Open House, (830) 997-7896, historicsschools.org

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**Palestine Dogwood Jamboree:**  
*Star Spangled Country*, (903) 729-7080,  
dogwoodjamboree.com

**20**

**Stonewall [20-22] Annual Peach JAM-boree**, (830) 644-2735, stonewalltexas.com

**21**

**Bremond [21-22] Polish Festival Days**, (254) 883-7279, bremondtxas.org

**22**

**Hillsboro Elm Street Rod Run Classic Car Show**, (972) 291-2958,  
roadsideamericatx.com

**25**

**Seguin Taste of Seguin**, (830) 303-6612,  
silvercenterseguin.com

**29**

**Columbus Country Market**, (979) 732-8385,  
columbusfmtx.org

**Wylie Bluegrass on Ballard**, (972) 516-6016,  
wylitexas.gov

**Belton [29-July 7] 4th of July Celebration**, (254) 939-3551, rodeobelton.com



July 4-6  
Fort Davis  
Coolest Fourth of July

**July**

**3**

**Spring Branch Hill Country Fun Fest**, (210) 488-8063, springbranchtennis.com

**Waxahachie [3-4] Crape Myrtle Festival and Parade**, (469) 309-4045,  
waxahachiecvb.com

**4**

**Aubrey Freedom Fest**, (940) 390-9184,  
peaceoftherock.org

**Boerne Fourth of July Fireworks**, (830) 249-3644, visitboerne.org

**Kerrville Robert Earl Keen's Fourth on the River**, (830) 257-8233, kerrvilles4th.org

**Lakehills American Legion Post 410 Fourth of July Parade**, (830) 751-3711, alpost410.com

**Stephenville Fourth of July Celebration**, (254) 918-1295, recipro.stephenvilletx.gov

**Fort Davis [4-6] Coolest Fourth of July**, (432) 426-3015, fortDavis.com

**6**

**Tye Independence Day Celebration**, (325) 695-8253, cityoftyeedc.org

## Submit Your Event!

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

## AROUND TEXAS EVENT CALENDAR

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# Lowly Activities in Arlington

Top O' Hill Terrace was a tearoom atop an underground gambling hideout

GANGSTERS, GAMBLING, PROSTITUTION and illicit liquor. These things spark images of Chicago or New York in the 1920s. However, right here in the Lone Star State, deeds involving such salacious elements were part of the day-to-day operations of an unassuming tearoom on an unassuming hill halfway between Dallas and Fort Worth. While the location looks different today, visitors can still step back in time to when Top O' Hill Terrace was "Vegas before Vegas."

In 1926, Arlington residents Fred and Mary Browning decided that Fred's plumbing career lacked the excitement they desperately wanted. Amid the growing success of horse racing at Arlington Downs, the Brownings decided to get in on the action.

When they purchased a tearoom along the old Bankhead Highway, authorities had no idea the couple had plans beyond the teacup. The Brownings immediately began renovations, moving the tearoom to construct a network of underground rooms and tunnels. The additions included a casino, restaurant, an office and five doors at which every patron had to use passwords to gain access. There were two-way mirrors, secret staircases and fake doors, all designed to make Top O' Hill raidproof. With the front gate a quarter-mile down the drive, patrons had ample time to hide the evidence and run into the garden to sip tea if police showed up. It was a cover so believable that many folks visited the tea garden without any knowledge of the illegal activities just beneath their feet.

The Brownings' reputation grew as quickly as their bank account. The casino took in \$50,000-\$100,000 every night and attracted countless celebrities, including



**"Officer" Chet Garner and associates revisit Top O' Hill Terrace's shady past.**

Bonnie and Clyde and John Wayne. The couple invested their cash

into a swimming pool and air conditioning, two luxuries that were extremely rare at the time. Fred's newfound connections led him into horse racing, most notably with his horse Royal Ford, whose foal Heelfly beat the legendary thoroughbred Seabiscuit in 1940. He also stepped into professional boxing, employing his facilities to manage and train boxers like Lou Brouillard and "Slapsie Maxie" Rosenbloom. Yet the Brownings' very success would soon become a curse.

Top O' Hill gained an influential enemy in J. Frank Norris, pastor of Fort Worth's First Baptist Church and an ardent supporter of Prohibition. Norris vowed to shut down the establishment and return it to the realm of respectability. His prophecy became a reality in 1947 when Texas Rangers led a successful raid on Top O' Hill. In 1956, Bible Baptist Seminary bought the property and transformed it into a Baptist college.

On my first guided tour, I expected to walk dark hallways and feel the breath of

notorious Texas gangster Benny Binion on my neck. Instead I found the bright and bustling Arlington Baptist University with few remnants of the former days of Top O' Hill. Soon after buying the property, the new owners tore down the tearoom and replaced the casino with a cafeteria. The stable and pool have been incorporated into daily student life, and unless you know the stories, you could miss the stable and pool completely. What does remain is the tea garden and one 50-foot escape tunnel, where creative visitors can imagine men in pinstriped suits and women in flapper dresses stuffing gambling chips into their pockets to the muted sounds of a jazz band.

While visitors can no longer throw \$20 down on the roulette table, the cost of a tour is well worth the money. And while almost every Texas town has its stories of forbidden back alleys or underground operations, no Prohibition-era story is as Texas-sized as that of Top O' Hill Terrace.

Chet Garner shares his Texplorations as the host of *The Daytripper* on PBS.

 **WEB EXTRAS** ▶ Read this story on our website to see Chet's video of his visit to Top O' Hill Terrace.





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- We Consider Anything Of Value On Trade

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