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November 2020



08

Bat Lodging

A conservationist creates a unique oasis for roving insect hunters in Central Texas.

*By Pam LeBlanc
Photos by Eric W. Pohl*

ON THE COVER AND ABOVE
Dusk sends bats rushing out of a cave at Selah, Bamberger Ranch Preserve to feast on insects.
Photos by Eric W. Pohl

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The International Space Station, controlled entirely in Houston and home to groundbreaking research, turns 20.

By Melissa Gaskill

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By Dan Oko

Tuning Up a BMW

BY LAW, ELECTRIC CARS must emit artificial sounds to alert pedestrians, bicyclists and people with visual impairment. When BMW debuts its i4 sedan for 2021, its sonic signature will be the creation of film composer Hans Zimmer, who won an Oscar in 1995 for his score of *The Lion King* and has been nominated for 10 others.



“When I started counting my blessings, my whole life turned around.”

—WILLIE NELSON



Not Giving an Inch

The U.S. remains one of three countries that does not use the metric system.

The others are Myanmar, in Southeast Asia, and Liberia, on the West African coast.

FINISH THIS SENTENCE

I'M MOST THANKFUL FOR ...

TOP Tell us how you would finish that sentence. Email your short responses to letters@TexasCoopPower.com or comment on our Facebook post. Include your co-op and city. Here are some of the responses to our September prompt: **I can't believe I bought ...**

A 2020 planner.

JANICE SCHWAB
VIA FACEBOOK

My daughter's story about the dent in the car.

JANET MOSLEY
VIA FACEBOOK

Toilet paper for Christmas presents.

DONALIE BELTRAN
CECA
MAY

A Super Bowl XII Cowboys-Broncos ticket for \$32.

CRAIG MASSOUH
PEDERNALES EC
SATTTLER

To see more responses, read Currents online.

Texas has 247 freshwater fish species.

SOUND FISHY? OR ALLURING?



PRIZED SCRIBES

November 1 is National Authors Day. *Texas Co-op Power* writers and editors tell of the authors who have been captivating them lately:

Chris Burrows: **Carlos Ruiz Zafón** crafted enchanting tales about enchanting tales.

Travis Hill: **Claudia Rankine** writes cross-genre poetry that lyrically weaves public engagement and private emotion around today's most relevant themes.

Charles Lohrmann: **John le Carré's** international intrigue has been replaced by **Attica Locke's** fast-moving crime fiction.

Jessica Ridge: **Toni Tipton-Martin** cracks open the culinary canon.

Tom Widlowski: **Elmer Kelton** takes me by horseback to pioneer Texas.



Howard Daniel Jr. and wife Clara with an award presented by Burke.

TCP WEB EXTRA

Read about other co-op members who are making a difference in their communities in TCP's Power of Our People program.

Real Passion, Real People

HOWARD DANIEL JR. of Livingston says everyone is important and that belief would be universal if people knew each other as individuals.

Daniel, a retired Army colonel and longtime member of Sam Houston Electric Cooperative, serves on the board for Burke, an organization that assists more than 10,000 people with mental health needs and developmental disabilities in 12 East Texas counties.

Daniel learned about Burke after his daughter, Marie, was born with a developmental disability. He joined the board in 1999 and has been its chair since 2011.

Under Daniel's leadership Burke has doubled its mental health services capacity, expanded developmental disability services, engaged law enforcement in mental health emergency management, and expanded Burke's reach to provide specialty services for children and veterans.

"I want the best for the people we serve," says Daniel, pastor of Chesswood Baptist Church, "because the people we serve, like my daughter and others, are real people, with real feelings—and they are special."

Daniel believes everybody should help people born with intellectual and developmental challenges. "We need to make them feel good," he says. "The best way to make them feel good is to put the best facilities out there that we can."

Learn more about Burke and Daniel at myburke.org.

To nominate a person who is making a difference in your community, email details to people@texascooppower.com.



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Meadow Oasis

“Thank you, Sheryl Smith-Rodgers, for your Observations, which calmed my pandemic soul. It felt like I was there at the meadow with you.”

CATHERINE NELSON
PEDERNALES EC
SAN MARCOS

Freaks of Nature

I and many other native plant “freaks” have enjoyed our own little refuges of native habitat, experiencing the flora and fauna that used to be so common here—a true reflection of Texas—before the manicured lawn with its plants from Asia, Africa and Europe came to be the standard [*Meadow Oasis*, September 2020].

Regina Levoy
MidSouth EC
Shiro



Thank you for highlighting the story of Jessie Daniel Ames, a compassionate, strong, confident woman who fought for our right to vote in addition to protesting against lynchings of people of color [*Empowering Every Vote*, August 2020].

MARTA LOPEZ
VIA FACEBOOK



Giant Fan

The first time I saw *Giant*, I was very young [*Reel Moments*, September 2020]. It made such an impression on me. I am 63 and have seen it more times than I can count. Thank you for the wonderfully written story.

Daniella Spann
Medina EC
Medina

Movie Critics

It is amazing that so many good movies have been made in Texas. One that was left out, *Secondhand Lions*, was filmed around Austin in 2002 and was, hands down, one of the best movies ever made.

Norris and Pat Croom
Hamilton County EC
Copperas Cove

How can you do a story on films in Texas and not mention *Hud*?

Dan Golden
Houston County EC
Lovelady

TCP 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.

Facebook Twitter Instagram YouTube Pinterest Texas Co-op Power

How could you not include *The Last Picture Show*, filmed in Archer City, written by Larry McMurtry and nominated for eight Academy Awards?

Mark Spurlock
Taylor EC
Abilene

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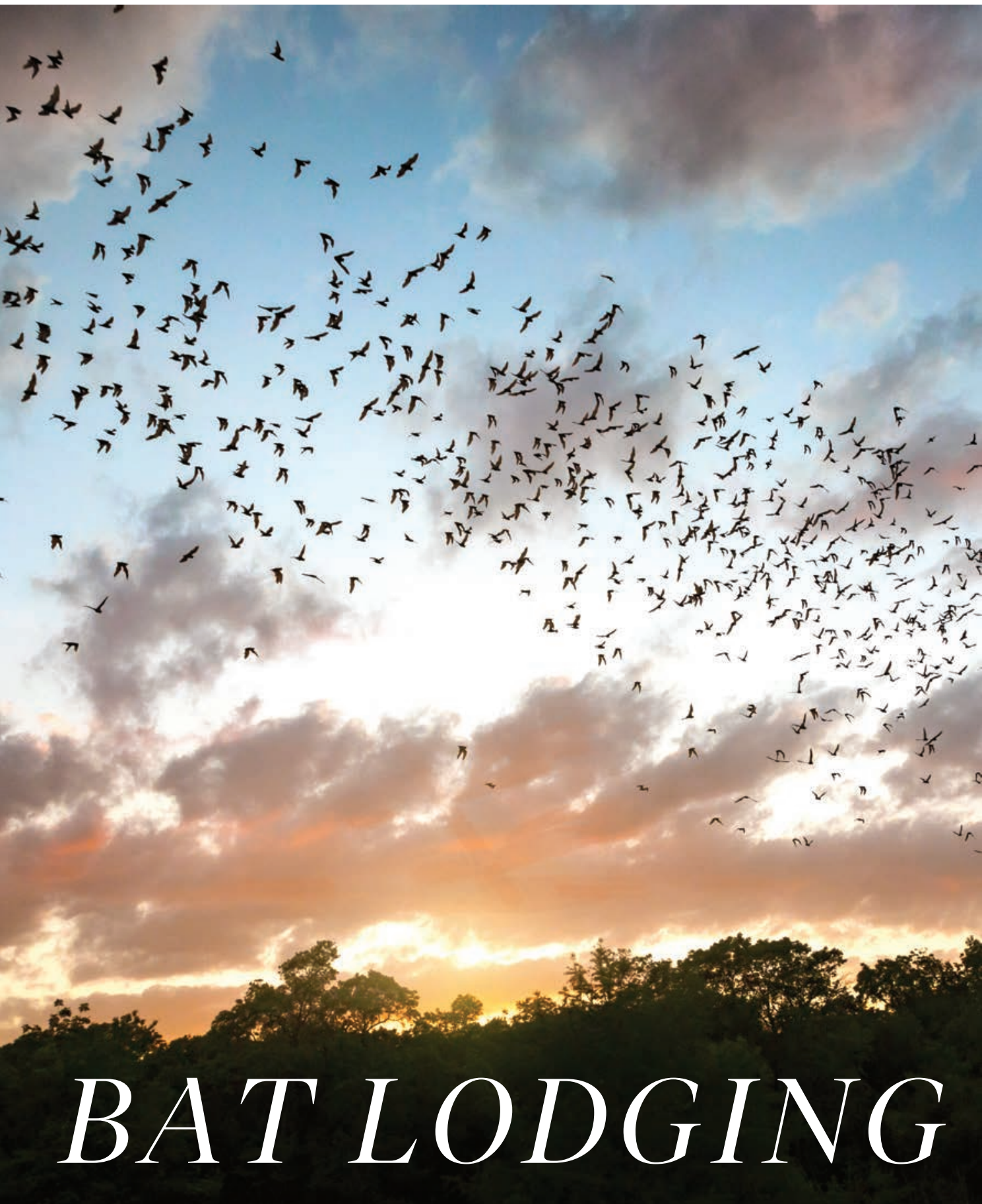
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BAT LODGING



A CONSERVATIONIST creates
a unique oasis for roving insect
hunters in Central Texas

BY PAM LEBLANC • PHOTOS BY ERIC W. POHL

AS DUSK FALLS ON A WARM SUMMER EVENING, I've joined J. David Bamberger and a few close friends at a table about 50 yards from a gaping hole on a hillside at his ranch near Johnson City.

As we nibble chips and salsa, a single bat emerges from the opening. In a flash a hawk swoops down, snatching the fluttering scout in midflight. A few minutes later, with sunlight quickly fading, a few more bats appear. Soon a narrow stream of flapping shapes forms, like a horizontal plume of campfire smoke.

Bamberger, a former door-to-door vacuum cleaner salesman who co-founded the Church's Chicken chain, used his fortune to buy this once-overgrazed property in 1969, paying just \$124 an acre. He named it Selah, Bamberger Ranch Preserve and began nurturing it, removing nonnative species and planting indigenous grasses. The dry, eroded Central Texas landscape sputtered back to life. Today the 5,500-acre oasis features flowing creeks, fields of waving grass and towering trees and serves as a laboratory for land conservation.

It's also got a bat cave, or "chiroptorium," as Bamberger, 92 and still hiking or exploring his property nearly every day, calls it. (The word hasn't made it into dictionaries, but it's a standard at Selah, which itself is a biblical word whose definition is debated but to Bamberger means "to stop, pause, look around and reflect.")

While volunteering as a trustee with Bat Conservation International's Bracken Cave in the 1990s, Bamberger met BCI founder and bat expert Merlin Tuttle, who taught him the environmental benefits the furry, sometimes pecan-sized mammals provide. Bats gobble up tons of insects across the country each night, Bamberger learned, saving farmers more than \$3.7 billion a year in crop damage and pesticide use. Bamberger, a member of Pedernales Electric Cooperative, got the wild idea to lure a bat population to his own ranch by building a bat cave. Constructing a bat habitat, he figured, meshed with his mission to restore rangeland and protect wildlife.

Mexican free-tailed bats emerge
from the chiroptorium—the bat cave
constructed at Selah, Bamberger
Ranch Preserve.



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE J. David Bamberger shows an indigenous grass that thrives at the preserve. Bamberger walks with author Pam LeBlanc. Sunset at the preserve.

TOP WEB EXTRA

Enter online to win Pam LeBlanc's recent book, *My Stories, All True: J. David Bamberger on Life as an Entrepreneur and Conservationist*.

"People laughed at the idea," Bamberger tells me. We met and became friends more than a decade ago, when I first wrote about his work. "When people laugh at you, sometimes you back away," he says. "Most successful people continue on."

After consulting with bat experts, architect Jim Smith designed a 30-by-100-foot, three-domed habitat with a special observation room where scientists and visitors could watch the bats through a plate glass window. They picked an easily accessible spot near water with a clear flight path. Then they went to work building the structure of concrete and gunite, backfilled it with dirt and covered it with native vegetation.

Newspaper reporters flocked to the ranch in 1998 to report the story. Now all he needed was a resident population.

Bamberger hauled in a load of bat guano to make the cave more appealing, but the bats turned up their noses. He brought in a small occupied bat box to lure a population, but the bats didn't stick around. Still, Bamberger persisted.

"If it doesn't work, it'll hold a hell of a lot of wine," he rationalized.

Every once in a while, a few bats would show up. "I'd be about to rapture," Bamberger says. But the stream of bats he dreamed about didn't move in until four years later, after biologists realized that the few bats that discovered the cave were smashing into the observation window. After they boarded up the window, the bats moved in.

"Unbelievable," Bamberger says, telling the story of driving up to the site and discovering the new residents. "Tears are running down my face. I can't believe what I'm seeing. The bats are pouring out."





"PEOPLE LAUGHED AT THE IDEA,"

Bamberger tells me. We met and became friends more than a decade ago, when I first wrote about his work. "When people laugh at you, sometimes you back away," he says. "Most successful people continue on."

He felt vindicated, especially since the *San Antonio Express-News* was printing a story that very week, dubbing the cave "Bamberger's Folly" and noting that he'd spent more to build a house for bats than most people spend building a home for their family.

When he phoned biologist Tom Kunz, though, the bat expert warned that the emergence was likely a fluke and that a migrating group had probably just stopped over temporarily.

But the bats came back. And since they arrived in big numbers in 2002, they have never left. Today the ranch is

home to year-round populations of Mexican free-tailed bats and cave myotis, another type of bat. Thermal imaging scans show that as many as 400,000 individuals pack shoulder to shoulder along the chiropterium walls during the summer and fly out nightly to forage for insects. In the winter the population dwindles to 3,000–15,000.

"Our bats are very strange," says Jared Holmes, staff biologist at Selam, equating the population to the bat version of a wild college fraternity house. While a large maternal population inhabits the space during summer months, it



changes when temperatures drop. “We don’t know if the winter colony is just a bunch of lazy males [from northern populations] that don’t want to fly all the way south or something else,” Holmes says.

The maternal population generally shows up in April or May and remains until the heat eases in September or October. Bamberger built the chiroptorium to hold a million individuals, but biologists today believe the cave’s current population represents full capacity. “If you go in there, it’s wall-to-wall bats, and as [evolutionary biologist] Gary McCracken put it, they are a possum’s crawl off the floor,” Holmes says.

Bamberger likes to say you could run around naked all day and never get bitten by a mosquito at his ranch. And while that’s not quite true, the bats do keep down the insect population at Selah.

“It’s David’s bat cave of dreams,” Holmes says. “We’re lucky David tried it.”

But testing also has shown the cave carries a high load of the fungus that causes white nose syndrome, the disease that has killed millions of bats across the country, mostly in the Northeast. When conditions are right, the fungus blooms, creating an itchy, white, mushroomlike growth on the bats’ faces that wakes them from hibernation. That’s less of a problem in warmer places like Central Texas, where they can still find water and insects year-round, but devastating in colder climates. So far the Selah bats have not shown signs of the disease, but as a precaution, Holmes hopes to pressure-wash the chiroptorium this winter, at

Bamberger overlooks a pond from one of his favorite spots on the preserve.

night while the population is out foraging.

“If we lose bats, we lose ecosystem services—all that free pest control and food for other animals,” Holmes says.

“Bats are in trouble, and we have a very unique opportunity to study how these man-made bat caves can function with fungus and virus and how we can disinfect their habitats. It’s an opportunity to see how we can help bats, and it’s great to have a proven design that we may be able to scale down for smaller colonies.”

Besides, bats don’t deserve their negative reputation, Holmes and Bamberger say. The mammals have long been maligned, equated with evil in old films and described as blood-sucking vermin.

“But everything in the natural world, even things we despise, plays a role in the conservation of planet Earth,” Bamberger says. “From the very beginning of my time here, I knew I wanted to make the ranch something special with Mother Nature. I realized the potential of bats—they would be another thing I could brag about, teach from and demonstrate.

“This is small potatoes, but I think my small potatoes are terribly important.” ■

SACRED STONE OF THE SOUTHWEST IS ON THE BRINK OF EXTINCTION



Centuries ago, Persians, Tibetans and Mayans considered turquoise a gemstone of the heavens, believing the striking blue stones were sacred pieces of sky. Today, the rarest and most valuable turquoise is found in the American Southwest— but the future of the blue beauty is unclear.

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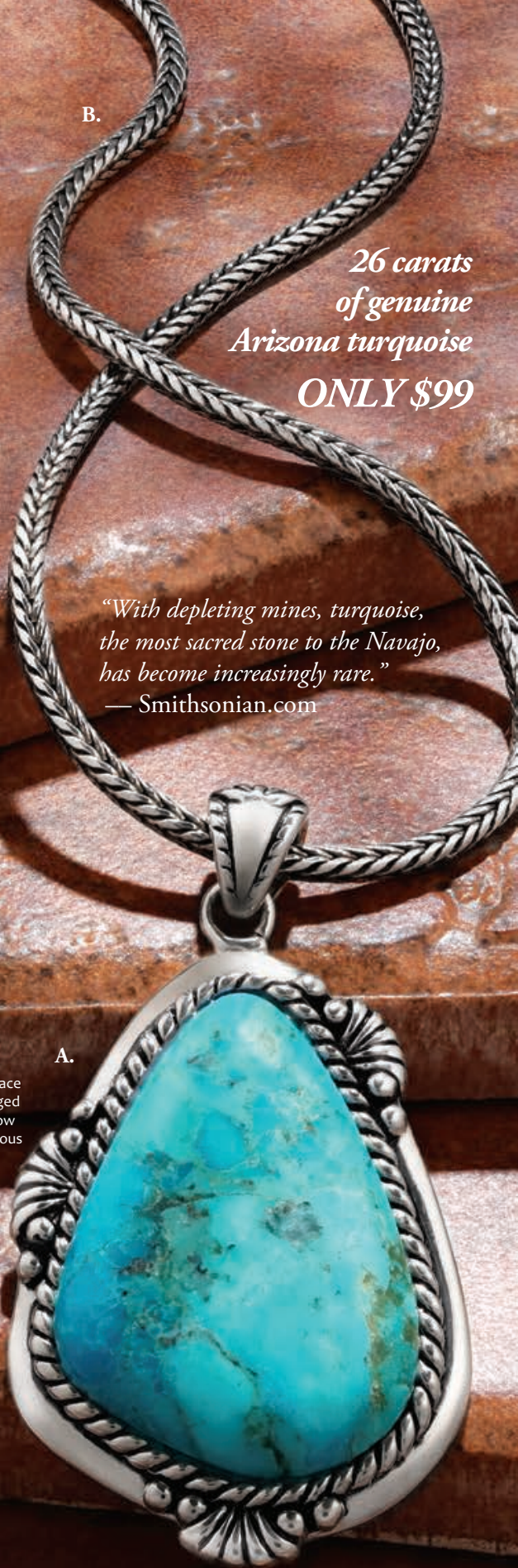
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BY MELISSA GASKILL

OUT OF THIS WORLD

The International Space Station, controlled entirely in Houston and responsible for ground-breaking research, turns 20

IF YOU OR SOMEONE you know recently underwent laser eye surgery, the surgeon likely used technology developed on the International Space Station to track eye movements of astronauts. Surgeons needed a way to follow eye position that doesn't interfere with the procedure, and the space technology proved ideal. The equipment is now used in corrective eye surgeries worldwide.

The space station, the only microgravity laboratory in our known universe, enables research that cannot be conducted anywhere else. As of November 2, scientists have used the orbiting lab continuously for 20 years, conducting more than 2,700 experiments.

All of this science—and in fact every aspect of the space station—is managed at Johnson Space Center, established in 1961 in southeast Houston. Flight control teams of engineers, medical officers and technicians remain on duty there 24/7/365 for the space station.

"I'm not sure people understand what goes on in Mission Control," says John-David Bartoe, who flew on the space shuttle for the U.S. Naval Research Laboratory in 1985 before spending 20 years, starting in 1993, as the space station's research manager. "No astronaut on the station is sitting at a console with a stick flying the space station. That all happens in Mission Control. They are



CLOCKWISE FROM OPPOSITE Astronaut Nick Hague shows materials that were part of an experiment for middle and high school students. James H. Newman works outside the space station. Christina H. Koch conducts a capillary structures experiment.

TCP WEB EXTRA

Learn more about the space station—and watch it pass over your town.



actually controlling the mission.

“People in the space station program office make decisions every day on how to make this thing work,” Bartoe says. “No one had ever done this before, and the brains behind making this thing happen are right there at JSC.”

Bartoe says that when he arrived at Johnson Space Center, his goal was to interest the scientific community in using the space station, which was difficult because it did not yet exist. “We took the philosophy of ‘build it and they will come,’” he says, “and turned out it worked.”

Every single astronaut who has flown to the space station—more than 240 people so far—trained at the Houston facility.

Research on the space station has contributed to a variety of medical advances in addition to the eye-tracking technology. People soon may be able to receive treatments for some types of cancers via a simple injection rather than intravenous infusion, and studies in space contribute to development of medicines targeting specific cancers, muscular dystrophy, Alzheimer’s and other diseases. Advances that help with osteoporosis, stiffening of the arteries and other symptoms of aging spring from research to help protect astronauts from bone loss and cardiovascular problems they can experience in space.

Scientists study colloids, which are mixtures of various particles in a liquid, to create more effective and longer-lasting products. Shampoo, laundry detergent and salad dressing are examples of colloids. On Earth, colloids are hard to study because gravity causes heavy particles to sink and lighter ones to float, but in microgravity, that problem goes away, leading to advances we see on store shelves.

Anheuser-Busch has tested germination and malting of barley on the space station to learn how the grain can be altered to improve its use in brewing, distilling and food production. Goodyear Tire has conducted studies to help produce more fuel-efficient tires, and Adidas uses the space station to research improvements in the process of making insoles.

Agriculture and land management benefit from space station research, too. Farmers can monitor water use with thermal infrared measurements taken of Earth’s surface from the space station, and another instrument indicates how much carbon is stored in forest canopies.

Equipment on the space station also supports disaster monitoring and responses on Earth. Crew members on the space station can adjust sensors in real time in response to natural disasters such as volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, flooding and tsunamis—something satellites cannot do—and relay valuable information to scientists on Earth. Night images taken from the space station help responders check the restoration of electric power after a disaster. Images also help monitor the spread of wildfires and the path of storms so earthbound experts can guide evacuations and rescue operations or the deployment of firefighters.

Researchers in Texas take advantage of the space station for their own work. Larry Kramer, an academic radiologist at the University of Texas Health Science Center in Houston, is working on a study with the Cardiovascular and Vision Laboratory at Johnson Space Center that looks into how space travel affects vision and the brain.

“Vision problems are a major problem for NASA to solve, something they have to worry about as flight duration becomes longer and they contemplate travel to Mars,” Kramer says. “I had experience and was in the right place at the right time.”

The team at Johnson Space Center continually plans experiments, and NASA is flooded with proposals from people wanting to conduct research on the space station, Bartoe says. “A long time ago, the executive director of a national science organization said that research in microgravity is of micro-importance. I think we have clearly proven him wrong.” ■

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Board President

MESSAGE
FROM
BOARD
PRESIDENT

DAN
COURMIER

I ONCE READ that culture eats strategy for breakfast. But if you think about it, you need both. We all have plans, but without strong performance within an organization, you won't be able to accomplish your mission. Your board works hard to lead Houston County Electric Cooperative and provide a member-focused, high-performance culture to carry out our strategy.

Mike Tyson once said, "Everybody has a plan until they get punched in the mouth." While the pandemic has changed our approach, it has not derailed our commitment to a better cooperative. We continue to push forward with our strategy to provide affordable, reliable power. We are moving load to different markets, which will improve reliability and control

costs. As we make these changes, be assured any savings realized will be passed on to our members. We continue planning for the construction of a much-needed office building to provide a safe and efficient work environment for not only our team at Houston County EC but also our community and members. We also remain committed to you, our member-owners, with our capital credits strategy.

During these challenging economic times resulting from the pandemic, the board found it prudent to substantially increase the capital credits retirement to \$5 million, which will be paid in December. The pay-it-back and pay-it-forward model is fundamental to our cooperative principles. We use your resources wisely to provide the best possible service we can,


and we will always return any excess back to you, our owners.

I want to personally thank each individual on our team for their commitment to building on the culture of safety, service, compassion and enthusiasm for providing power for your way of life.





Houston County Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

CONTACT US

P.O. Box 52

Crockett, TX 75835

Local (936) 544-5641

Toll-Free 1-800-657-2445

Web houstoncountyelec.com

General Manager

Kathi Calvert

Board of Directors

Dan Courmier, President

Kennon Kellum, Vice President

Mitchell Huff, Secretary-Treasurer

Mary L. Pearl Adams

William Emmons

Kay Reed

Charles "Chuck" Siems

Grady Wakefield

David Whittlesey



General Manager

MESSAGE
FROM
GENERAL
MANAGER

**KATHI
CALVERT**

OUR ENTIRE WORKFORCE powered forward during the early stages of the pandemic by altering work schedules to maintain the level of service you expect from us. Some employees worked from home, taking their entire workstation with them. We answered member calls just like we were still in the office, and we kept our lobby open for any members who still wished to visit us in person. As critical infrastructure providers, we were able to stay healthy and safe so that we could continue providing you with electricity.

We understand the importance of having an office in the community we serve, staffed with local people whom you know and people who can assist you when you need us the most.

We power forward to maintain Houston County EC—past, present and future.



#powerforward

24/7

**Outage
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Number**

For information and
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TOLL-FREE
1-800-970-4232

ABOUT HOUSTON COUNTY EC

HCEC owns and maintains more than 5,100 miles of line to provide electric service to more than 15,000 members in Anderson, Angelina, Cherokee, Freestone, Houston, Leon, Madison, Trinity and Walker counties.

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or speak with a member services

representative, press 2.

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Para hablar con un representante que habla español, presione 4.

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houstoncountyelec.com





Accounting and Human Resources

WE STRIVE TO keep our cooperative in a financially secure position for our members, employees and greater community. An independent accounting firm audited HCEC's financial statements for the fiscal year that ended June 30. The opinion expressed by the auditors provides our members with the highest level of assurance in the financial integrity of your cooperative.

We focus on internal controls, financing and investing decisions, and day-to-day processes. We ensure your cooperative's employees have the resources they need so they can take care of you.

BALANCE SHEET

AS OF JUNE 30,	2020	2019
Net Utility Plant.....	\$ 89,642,393	85,846,583
Investment in Assoc. Organizations.....	\$ 17,784,777	16,913,846
Current and Accrued Assets.....	\$ 19,510,351	15,457,427
Deferred Debits.....	\$ 792,844	1,478,216
Total Assets	\$ 127,730,365	119,696,072
Patronage Capital	\$ 76,250,330	74,357,544
Long-Term Debt.....	\$ 40,874,311	34,453,438
Current and Accrued Liabilities.....	\$ 10,567,898	10,848,260
Deferred Credits.....	\$ 37,826	36,830
Total Liabilities	\$ 127,730,365	119,696,072

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS

Sale of Electric Power.....	\$ 40,848,282	41,851,772
Total Revenue.....	\$ 40,848,282	41,851,772
Purchased Power	\$ 23,975,187	26,602,372
Operations and Maintenance	\$ 6,578,915	6,078,309
Consumer and Customer Service	\$ 1,083,230	991,319
Administrative and General.....	\$ 2,105,460	2,166,437
Depreciation	\$ 4,299,366	5,062,964
Taxes.....	\$ 69,434	71,715
Interest	\$ 1,107,193	926,062
Other Deductions.....	\$ 70,188	296,104
Total Expense	\$ 39,288,973	42,195,282
Operating Margins (Loss)	\$ 1,559,309	(343,510)
Nonoperating Revenue - Interest.....	\$ 495,704	483,446
Nonoperating Margins - Other.....	\$ 119,464	104,958
Other Capital Credits.....	\$ 917,695	854,121
Total Margins.....	\$ 3,092,172	1,099,015

powering forward: people

EMPLOYEES

JUAN ARVIZU	LINEMAN HELPER	BOBBY HUTCHERSON	SERVICEMAN
JASON AVERY	MAINTENANCE ASSISTANT	AURORA IBARRA	CASHIER
JASPER BARNETT	UTILITY ARBORIST I	TIM JOHNSON	SERVICEMAN
RILEY BARRETT	2ND CLASS LINEMAN	CHERRY KELLUM	AP/PAYROLL CLERK
JEREMY BOBBITT	CONSTRUCTION CREW FOREMAN	SONJA KEY	CONTROLLER
TREVOR BROOKS	2ND CLASS LINEMAN	KELBY KOEHLER	COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST
JEFF BROWN	1ST CLASS LINEMAN	MIKE LANE	CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER—DISTRIBUTION
DUANE BURLESON	SUBSTATION FOREMAN	ALLEN LAWRENCE	CONSTRUCTION CREW FOREMAN
BRENDA BYRD	OPERATIONS CLERK	JASON LEBLANC	GIS-DESKTOP TECHNICIAN
KATHI CALVERT	GENERAL MANAGER	PERRY LITTLE	LINE INSPECTOR
KYLE CAMPBELL	LINE STAKING TECHNICIAN	RANDY LIVELY	CONSTRUCTION CREW FOREMAN
SAUL CHAVEZ	LINEMAN HELPER	ELLIOTT MARSHALL	UTILITY ARBORIST I
CASEY CORRY	WAREHOUSEMAN	DAVID MCKINNEY	1ST CLASS LINEMAN
CODY CURRIE	VEHICLE MAINTENANCE SUPERVISOR	RUTH MILLHOUSE	MEMBER SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE
JUSTIN CURRIE	1ST CLASS LINEMAN	STEVE MILLHOUSE	ENERGY SOLUTIONS SPECIALIST
DONNY DAVIS	3RD CLASS LINEMAN	CLIFF MOORE	SERVICEMAN
JAMES DRISKELL	3RD CLASS LINEMAN	ANDREW MORGAN	1ST CLASS LINEMAN
CODY DUKE	3RD CLASS LINEMAN	ERIN PEMBERTON-HORACE	CASHIER-MEMBER SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE
LYNNE ERICKSON	HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER	SHANNON PICKENS	DISPATCH SUPERVISOR
EFFRAIN FAJARDO	UTILITY ARBORIST II	BRANDON QUILLIN	2ND CLASS LINEMAN
DAN FEDAK	1ST CLASS LINEMAN	RUSSELL RIVERS	SERVICEMAN
KEITH FERGUSON	WAREHOUSEMAN	CLINT ROSSER	3RD CLASS LINEMAN
CURTIS FRANKLIN	3RD CLASS LINEMAN	LEE ANN SCHROEDER	DISPATCHER
STACY FREEMAN	CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER—TRANSMISSION	DEAN SHUPAK	MEMBER SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE
JEREMY FRIZZELL	HEAVY CONSTRUCTION FOREMAN	CARLA SMILEY	DISPATCHER
CHARLIE GARDNER	STAKING-FIELD SERVICES MANAGER	JOSEPH SMOLDAS	2ND CLASS LINEMAN
KRAIG GOOLSBY	CONSTRUCTION CREW FOREMAN	MEGAN SPELLMAN	SENIOR BILLING ANALYST
SARAH GOOLSBY	MEMBER SERVICE MANAGER	LOWELL STAGNER	1ST CLASS LINEMAN
HANNAH GOYENS	DISPATCHER	SHELBY VANCE	NETWORK ADMINISTRATOR
JOHN GOYENS	2ND CLASS LINEMAN	GARY WHITE	CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER
CODY HAMMONS	MEMBER SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE	DOUG WHITEHEAD	1ST CLASS LINEMAN
DAVID HILDEBRAND	SERVICEMAN	LARRY WICKERSHAM	RIGHT-OF-WAY FOREMAN
HUNTER HOLLIS	1ST CLASS LINEMAN	FREDDY WILSON	PURCHASING-WAREHOUSE MANAGER
DAVID HOWARD	METER DATA MANAGER		

EMPLOYEE SERVICE AWARDS



CHARLIE
GARDNER
40 YEARS



ALLEN
LAWRENCE
35 YEARS



JEFF
BROWN
30 YEARS



MIKE
LANE
30 YEARS



RANDY
LIVELY
30 YEARS



ELLIOTT
MARSHALL
30 YEARS



CASEY
CORY
25 YEARS



CLIFF
MOORE
20 YEARS



LARRY WICKERSHAM
10 YEARS

5 YEARS



DUANE
BURLESON



BRANDON
QUILLIN



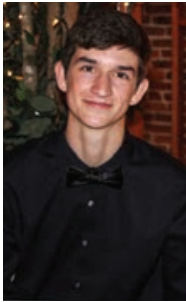
MEGAN
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GARY
WHITE

powering forward: communities

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**Madison
Crader**

Elkhart ISD



**Logan
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**Hunter
Luce**

Grapeland ISD



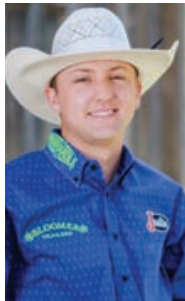
**Taylor
Morgan**

Centerville ISD



**Hunter
Parrish**

Kennard ISD



**Tristan
Sullivan**

Centerville ISD



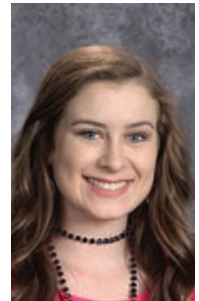
**Asa
Surface**

Madisonville ISD



**Colby
Tullos**

Lovelady ISD



**Jamie
Welch**

Latexo ISD



Houston County EC donated 31 iPads to Apple Springs ISD this year. The iPads, which were in excellent condition, no longer had an operating system accepted by the programs Houston County EC employees use daily. Lawanda Williamson, ASISD's technology coordinator, said that the elementary students really enjoy learning on the iPads because they're so easy to navigate.

In September, Houston County Electric Cooperative sent three separate crews, consisting of 13 HCEC linemen, to provide assistance to Jasper-Newton and Deep East Texas electric cooperatives after Hurricane Laura surged through their territories, leaving tens of thousands of their members in the dark. The linemen include Juan "BB" Arvizu, Trevor Brooks, Jeff Brown, Donny Davis, Dan Fedak, Kraig Goolsby, Hunter Hollis, Randy Lively, Brandon Quillin, Joseph Smoldas, Lowell Stagner and Doug Whitehead.

Thank you to these men for leaving their families to go and help those in need.



Happy Thanksgiving

Our offices will be closed Thursday-Friday,
November 26-27, in observance of the holiday.



ANYAIVANOVA | ISTOCK.COM



APAKSOY | ISTOCK.COM

Creamy Creole Turkey Bake

- 2/3 cup chopped onion**
- 2/3 cup chopped celery**
- 1/3 cup chopped green pepper**
- 1 clove garlic, minced**
- 1 tablespoon butter**
- 1/4 pound mushrooms, sliced**
- 4 ounces light cream cheese, softened**
- 1 can (8 ounces) stewed tomatoes, drained**
- 1 1/2 teaspoons Creole seasoning**
- 4 ounces fettuccine, cooked**
- 2 cups cooked, cubed turkey**
- 1/3 cup grated Parmesan cheese**

1. Preheat oven to 325 degrees.
2. Sauté vegetables and garlic in butter until crisp-tender. Add mushrooms and sauté 2 minutes more. Remove from heat.
3. Blend cream cheese, tomatoes and Creole seasoning. Fold in vegetable mixture, cooked fettuccine and turkey.
4. Pour mixture into a 9-inch-square baking dish and sprinkle with Parmesan. Bake 30 minutes or until bubbly.

SERVES 6



YOUR GUIDE TO Thanksgiving



We know that the holidays can be hectic, so we put together a quick guide full of recipes, some with an unusual spin on the traditional Thanksgiving meal, to help you during your planning process.

SALADS

Bacon and Brussels Sprout Salad

FOR THE DRESSING:

- Juice of one lemon
- Juice of one orange
- 2-3 tablespoons apple cider (not vinegar, just regular apple cider for sweetness!)
- 1 shallot, minced
- ½ cup olive oil
- ½ teaspoon salt and pepper to taste

FOR THE SALAD:

- 4 dozen Brussels sprouts
- 1 cup almonds
- 6 slices cooked bacon, crumbled or chopped
- 1 cup grated Parmesan cheese (Asiago or Gruyère are also good)

1. Combine the lemon juice, orange juice, apple cider and shallots in a small bowl. Add the olive oil in a steady stream and whisk for a minute or two, until it looks creamy.
2. Pulse the almonds in a food processor until finely chopped.
3. Toss the Brussels sprouts, almonds, bacon, cheese and dressing together. Serve immediately or within a few hours of tossing.

SERVES 10

COURTESY OF
PINCHOFYUM.COM

APPETIZERS



Cranberry Brie Tarts

- 1 tablespoon salted butter, melted
- 2 cups fresh cranberries
- 2-4 tablespoons brown sugar, use more or less to your taste
- ¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 2 sheets (1 box) frozen puff pastry, thawed
- 2 wheels (16 ounces) Brie, each cut into 12 slices (leave the rind on)
- ⅓ cup fig preserves
- 1 egg, beaten
- Coarse sugar, for sprinkling
- Fresh thyme, for serving

1. Preheat the oven to 425 degrees. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. In a medium bowl, combine the butter, cranberries, brown sugar and cinnamon.
3. Cut each sheet of puff pastry into 6 rectangles. Spread each rectangle with about 1 teaspoon fig preserves, leaving a 1/4-inch border. Top with 2 slices of brie and then mound the cranberries over the brie, pressing them into the brie to adhere slightly.
4. Fold the edges of the pastry inward to enclose the brie. Brush the edges of pastry with beaten egg and sprinkle with coarse sugar.
5. Transfer to the oven and bake for 15-20 minutes or until the pastry is golden and the brie melted. Top with fresh thyme. Serve and enjoy!

SERVES 10

COURTESY OF HALFBAKEDHARVEST.COM

Spiced Nuts

- 1 cup pecans
- 1 cup walnuts
- ½ cup cashews
- ½ cup almonds
- ¼ cup maple syrup or light brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon chopped rosemary
- 1 tablespoon chopped thyme or sage
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt divided

1. Preheat the oven to 300 degrees. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. In a large bowl, combine all ingredients except for ½ teaspoon kosher salt (reserve). Toss to combine, then place on baking sheet.
3. Bake for 25-30 minutes, or until golden brown and fragrant. Remove from oven and immediately sprinkle with remaining ½ teaspoon kosher salt. Let cool (they'll crisp up during this time), then serve immediately or store in an airtight container.

NOTES: You can substitute brown sugar for maple syrup. Just note that maple syrup will result in a smoother final product, while brown sugar will create more textural contrast on the nuts.

Spiced nuts will remain crunchy for up to 1 week.

COURTESY OF
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SIDES



Baked Mac and Cheese

- 1 pound elbow macaroni**
- 2–3 slices white bread, toasted**
- 7 tablespoons butter, divided**
- 2 tablespoons flour**
- 1 can (12 ounces) evaporated milk**
- ½ cup whole milk**
- 1 teaspoon ground mustard**
- 1½ pounds cheddar cheese, grated**
- 8 ounces American, Gruyère, or any other smooth melting cheese, grated or cut into chunks**
- 2 eggs, beaten**

1. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. Pour the macaroni into a large bowl, cover with hot water and stir in a big pinch of salt. Let the noodles soak for about 30 minutes while you prep the other ingredients.
2. Melt 2 tablespoons of the butter. Pulse the bread through a food processor and add the butter. Set aside.
3. Melt the butter in a large saucepan. Add the flour and cook, stirring constantly, until light golden blond. Add the evaporated milk and whole milk, very slowly, whisking constantly to achieve a smooth, thick sauce. Stir in the mustard. Bring to a simmer over medium heat. Remove from heat to add the cheeses and stir until melted. Season to taste.
4. Whisk about 1 cup of sauce with the eggs in a separate bowl (to increase the temperature of the eggs gradually). Once combined, add that egg mixture to the rest of the sauce. Add the drained macaroni and stir to combine. Pour into a greased rectangular or square baking dish.
5. Top with the breadcrumbs, cover with foil and bake for 30 minutes. Remove foil and bake for another 5 minutes to get the breadcrumbs toasty. Serve with salt, pepper, hot sauce or whatever you like with your baked mac and cheese.

SERVES 10

COURTESY OF PINCHOFYUM.COM

Spiced Up Corn

- 2 cans (30 ounces) whole kernel corn**
- 1 medium red bell pepper**
- 1 medium green bell pepper**
- 1 medium onion**
- 4 tablespoons butter or margarine**
- 1 block (8 ounces) cream cheese, cubed**
- Salt and pepper to taste**

1. Dice red and green bell peppers and onion. Melt butter in a saucepan and add peppers and onion. Sauté until cooked.
2. Drain corn and add to saucepan along with cream cheese. Cook for 7–10 minutes, stirring often on medium heat until mixture is creamy.

SERVES 6

15-Minute Homemade Orange Cranberry Sauce

- 1 pound fresh or frozen cranberries**
- 1 cup freshly squeezed orange juice**
- ½ cup pure maple syrup (or honey)**
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract**
- 1 tablespoon whiskey, bourbon, brandy or scotch (optional)**
- Zest of 1 orange**

1. Add cranberries, orange juice, maple syrup, vanilla extract and bourbon to a small pot and place over medium high heat.
2. Once mixture begins to boil, cover, reduce heat to low, and cook 10 minutes or until the sauce becomes thick, coating the back of a spoon. You may notice a popping sound; this is the cranberries bursting, so don't worry.
3. After 10 minutes remove the lid and allow cranberries to simmer a few minutes to thicken the sauce up. If you are using frozen cranberries, this may take a bit longer.
4. Once the sauce is thick, remove from heat and set aside to cool. Refrigerate until ready to serve, then garnish with orange zest.

SERVES 6 (ABOUT ¼ CUP EACH)



DESSERTS



Pumpkin Dessert Bars

- 1 can (15 ounces) pumpkin**
- 1 can (12 ounces) evaporated milk**
- 1 cup white sugar**
- ½ cup brown sugar**
- 4 eggs, beaten**
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon**
- ¼ teaspoon salt**
- ¼ teaspoon ginger**
- ½ teaspoon cloves**
- 1 box (15-ounces) yellow cake mix with pudding**
- 2 sticks butter, melted**

1. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. Mix the pumpkin, evaporated milk, white sugar, brown sugar, eggs, cinnamon, salt, ginger and cloves in a large mixing bowl. Pour mixture into a 9-by-13-inch pan.
2. Sprinkle dry cake mix over top and pour melted butter evenly over the top.
3. Bake for about 1½ hours or until the middle is set.

SERVES 20

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to tables or desks. The controls are right on the steering lever so it's simple to operate, and its exclusive footrest swings out of the way when you stand up or sit down. With its rugged yet lightweight aluminum frame, the **Zinger** is sturdy and durable yet convenient and comfortable! What's more, it easily folds up for storage in a car seat or trunk. Think about it, you can take your **Zinger** almost anywhere, so you don't have to let mobility issues rule your life. It folds in seconds without tools and is safe and reliable. It holds up to 275 pounds, and it goes up to 6 mph and operates for up to 8 miles on a single charge.

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Sweet on Crab Apples

Tart fruit from the uncommon native trees makes for enduring memories

BY SHERYL SMITH-RODGERS

JEFFERY SWIERC thinks of his late mother whenever he's tending her 1940s pressure cooker filled with cherry-sized Texas crab apples. Growing up, he'd watch her turn the mouth-puckering fruit into tasty jelly every fall. Years later he still follows the same recipe passed down to his mother, Lorrane Swierc, by his grandmother and great-grandmother.

"We used to help Mother pick crab apples from two big trees on our ranch, but they rotted and died more than 15 years ago," recalls Jeffery Swierc, who lives with his brother, Zachary, on property they inherited in northeastern Kendall County, which is served by Pedernales Electric Cooperative.

When their great-grandfather Emil Kuebel bought the original 1,280-acre ranch in 1883, Texas crab apples—also called Blanco crab apples—thrived in Kendall, Kerr, Blanco and Gillespie counties. Their abundance inspired such local names in southwestern Blanco County as Crabapple Road, Crabapple Creek and Crabapple School. In Gillespie County, German settlers established the community of Crabapple along a different Crabapple Creek and built their own Crabapple School, which still stands on Lower Crabapple Road north of Fredericksburg.

Native only to the Edwards Plateau, the thorny and thickly branched Texas crab apple forms dense thickets from underground roots and can reach a height of 15 feet. In April they bear fragrant pink or white flowers that produce hard, yellow-green fruit.

For 20 years David Winningham, a Bandera Electric Cooperative member, has germinated and sold Texas crab apples at his Natives of Texas nursery midway between Medina and Kerrville. "Crab apples make a great accent tree because of their thick foliage," he says. "In the spring they're covered with flowers and in the fall with fruit."

Wilson Blackburn, a Pedernales EC member who lives on the Kendall County family farm where he grew up, remembers when Texas crab apples were common. "Then screwworms were eradicated in the 1960s," he says, referring to the parasite that decimated cattle and reduced deer populations from the 1930s into the 1950s. "So as white-tailed deer increased, crab apples began to die out."

Deer still get blamed for the shrinking number of crab apples in the Hill Country. "Seedlings don't have a chance because deer come along and browse

them," says Robert Edmonson, a biologist with the Texas A&M Forest Service in Johnson City.

Both wild and cultivated crab apples stand little chance of surviving without protection. "I recommend placing cages at least 4 feet tall around trees to keep them from being browsed and deer rubbing the trunks," says Edmonson, a Pedernales EC member. "These cages can serve a dual purpose in that any seed that falls inside the area will be protected from browsing."

Years ago on the Swierc ranch, an uncle fenced off the family's last crab apple motte. The enclosure, constructed of steel wire mesh and T-bar stakes, guards more than 20 shrubby trees. A few put on fruit but not enough to make jelly. So Jeffery Swierc replenishes his crab apple supply from trees on a neighbor's ranch.

"When the apples are ripe, we put tarps under the branches and shake the trees," he explains. "That's the easiest way to collect the crab apples. You can't climb the trees because they're too thorny."

Swierc boils the apples for half an hour on the stove. Using a wooden pestle, he presses the juice from the soft fruit through a vintage metal ricer, a cone-shaped sieve designed for mashing potatoes. "A gallon of fruit, which makes four dozen half-pint jars, calls for 7 cups of juice and 9 cups of sugar. I also add a little red food coloring, like Mother always did."

Starting in the late '70s, Lorrane Swierc faithfully made and donated crab apple jelly to her church's fall bazaar in Blanco. The jars, labeled with her name and "Wild Crabapple Jelly," never failed to sell out. "I helped Mother make it for the last time in October 2005," Jeffery Swierc says. "She was 86 years old. The following January, she passed."

In her honor he continued the tradition of donating crab apple jelly to the church's annual fundraisers. Sadly, the bazaars were canceled for good in 2019. Though he misses the event, Swierc plans to continue jarring his jelly, labeled under his name, to give to family and friends.

"Whenever I drive by our Blanco crab apples, I always think how lucky I am to have a part of my family's legacy," he says. "We're going to continue to preserve and take care of the trees for the next generation." ■



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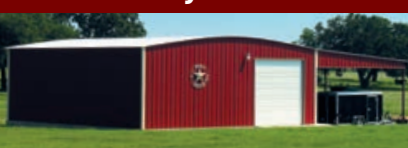


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Toeing the Line

How a Washington connection helped Texas keep a 900-square-mile slice of New Mexico

BY W.F. STRONG • ILLUSTRATION BY TRACI DABERKO

YOU CAN NEVER underestimate the value of a good friendship forged early in life. If not for one such friendship, Texas would be more than 900 square miles smaller.

Before I get to the friendship, come with me up to the northwest corner of the Panhandle, where Texas meets Oklahoma and New Mexico. If you look closely at a map, you see that the border between Oklahoma and New Mexico doesn't meet up exactly with the border between Texas and New Mexico. The northern Texas border continues 2.3 miles west before heading straight south, essentially notching into New

Mexico. That jog is the result of a mistake some have called the worst survey error in U.S. history.

In truth, that land should have gone to New Mexico. The border between Texas and the New Mexico Territory was to be exactly along the 103rd meridian, same as the border between Oklahoma and New Mexico.

John H. Clark was hired to do the Texas survey in 1859. He started from the south and surveyed northward until he ran out of access to water. He figured: No problem, I'll just go up to the north end of Texas and work my way down and connect to this spot.

Clark started again northwest of present-day Dalhart, at a spot that was a couple of miles to the west of where he should have been. He headed south, marking his way, until Native Americans ran him off. He was just 70 miles from connecting the line to where he left off in the south, so he connected the dots on the map and turned in his work. Sadly, he never would have connected with his earlier starting point. He would have missed it by more than a mile to the west. His northern starting point was 2.3 miles west of where it should have been, and his southern corner was nearly 3.8 miles west of the correct point. The error amounted to an extra 603,348 acres, or 942 square miles, for Texas.

By the time New Mexico was set to achieve statehood, state leaders knew about the error and slipped a clause into the statehood legislation that said that the eastern boundary would be the true 103rd meridian. Thus, New Mexico would get its land back. Nobody seemed to be paying attention to the state's intentions except John Farwell, an original investor in the XIT Ranch in Texas. He realized that the XIT would lose hundreds of thousands of acres—and mineral rights—if the New Mexico plan went through.

Farwell had been good friends with President William Howard Taft during college at Yale University. He went to see his old buddy and explained the predicament. Taft summoned powerful men to his office and told them the Clark border would be the legal border when New Mexico became a state, or it would remain a territory.

And that is how a survey error, along with an old friendship, made Texas almost a thousand square miles bigger than it was supposed to be. Once again, it's about who you know. ■

Cookie Swap

Get to know people and recipes with a sweet exchange

BY MEGAN MYERS, FOOD EDITOR

Cookie swaps are a wonderful way to get your sugary holiday fix while learning a bit about the other swappers. I feel like you can tell a lot about people from what kinds of cookies end up on the table, whether there are classic thumbprints or delicate macarons. Because bourbon balls don't require baking, they are a perfect treat to make while your other holiday cookies have their stint in the oven. While I use graham crackers here, vanilla wafers or gingersnaps are also options. Go with your favorite—or whatever you already have on hand.

Bourbon Balls

2 cups crushed graham crackers
1¼ cups powdered sugar, divided use
1 cup finely chopped pecans
2 tablespoons cocoa powder
1 teaspoon cinnamon
¼ cup bourbon
2 tablespoons pure maple syrup

COOK'S TIP To make these nonalcoholic, use apple juice in place of the bourbon.

1. In a large bowl, mix together graham cracker crumbs, 1 cup powdered sugar, pecans, cocoa and cinnamon.
2. Whisk together bourbon and maple syrup, then add to dry ingredients. Stir together until everything is evenly moistened. If the mixture looks too dry, add more bourbon and syrup, a small amount at a time. The mixture should clump easily when squeezed.
3. Form mixture into small balls by hand. On a flat surface, roll balls in remaining ¼ cup of powdered sugar and then place them on a waxed paper-lined plate or tray. Chill to let the flavors meld before serving.

MAKES 2 DOZEN COOKIES

TCP WEB EXTRA Follow along with Megan Myers and her adventures in the kitchen at stetted.com, where she features a recipe for Raspberry Jam Cookies.





Chocolate Chip Ginger Wheels

NANCY FILER
COSERV

These big cookies are a great option for mailing to friends and family thanks to molasses, which keeps the treats soft and tender. For the ones you keep for yourself, Filer recommends wrapping each baked cookie individually in plastic wrap to freeze and enjoy as desired.

- 1 cup (2 sticks) butter, softened**
- 3 teaspoons baking soda**
- 2 teaspoons ground ginger**
- 2 teaspoons cinnamon**
- 1 teaspoon dry mustard**
- 1 teaspoon instant coffee**
- 1 teaspoon ground cloves**
- ½ teaspoon salt**
- 1¼ cups sugar, divided use**
- 1 cup molasses**
- 1 egg**
- 4¾ cups flour**
- ¾ cup milk**
- 1 cup semisweet chocolate chips**
- 1 cup chopped nuts**

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees and line two cookie sheets with parchment.
2. In a large bowl, cream butter, baking soda, ginger, cinnamon, mustard, coffee, cloves and salt. Blend in 1 cup sugar, then molasses and egg.
3. Mix in the flour, alternating with the milk. Stir in chocolate chips and chopped nuts. The dough will be somewhat sticky.
4. Measure a scant ¼ cup of dough and place on parchment-lined baking sheet, spacing cookies 2 inches apart.

CONTINUED >

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Mocha Wedge Cookies

MELISSA SEXSON
PANOLA-HARRISON EC



This recipe was inspired by Sexson's grandmother, who baked butter cookies with a light raspberry glaze. "I love the combination of chocolate and coffee flavors, so I came up with these cookies, which my family and friends all love," Sexson says. If you can't find espresso powder, use ground espresso.

MAKES 16 COOKIES



COOKIES

- 1 cup (2 sticks) butter, softened**
- ¼ cup sugar**
- ½ cup packed dark brown sugar**
- ⅛ teaspoon salt**
- 2½ cups flour**
- ⅓ cup mini semisweet chocolate chips**

TOPPING

- ½ teaspoon espresso powder**
- ⅛ teaspoon cinnamon**
- 1½ tablespoons hot water**
- 3 tablespoons light corn syrup**
- Sparkling or sanding sugar**

1. Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Coat two 8-inch round cake pans with nonstick spray and set aside
2. **COOKIES** In a large mixing bowl, cream butter, sugar, brown sugar and salt. Incorporate flour in thirds, using a sturdy spoon to mix. The dough will be crumbly.
3. Once the flour is mixed in, use your hands to continue mixing dough together and forming clumps with your hands. Mix in chocolate chips by hand.
4. Remove dough to a clean surface and knead for a few minutes until dough is evenly moistened and holds together well. If needed, sprinkle on 1 teaspoon of water to moisten.
5. Divide dough into halves and press each into a prepared cake pan, making sure to create an even layer all the way to the edges. Use a fork to prick holes over the surface of the dough.
6. Bake 25–30 minutes, until golden brown on top, rotating pans halfway through. Remove pans and immediately invert onto a clean cutting board. As soon as rounds are turned out, cut each into 8 wedges.
7. **TOPPING** In a small bowl, combine espresso powder and cinnamon. Whisk in hot water, then corn syrup. Using a pastry brush, brush each cookie wedge lightly with syrup mixture. Sprinkle each with sparkling or sanding sugar, then cool completely.

TCP \$500 Recipe Contest

HERBS DUE NOV 10

Fresh herbs can elevate almost any dish. From basil to rosemary and dill to mint, we're looking for your best recipes using herbs. Enter at TexasCoopPower.com/Contests by November 10.

RECIPES CONTINUED

5. Pour remaining $\frac{1}{4}$ cup sugar into a shallow bowl or onto a rimmed plate. Wet the bottom of a glass with water, then dip glass into sugar. Press the glass onto each cookie to flatten slightly, leaving sugar on the cookies. Bake 12–15 minutes.

MAKES 2 DOZEN LARGE COOKIES

Lemon Bonbons

LONNA RANADA
COSERV

These tender cookies, first made by Ranada's mother, have a burst of lemon flavor thanks to the easy frosting. Be sure to sift the powdered sugar before measuring to remove any large lumps, which can make the cookies and frosting thicker than desired.

COOKIES

$1\frac{1}{4}$ cups flour

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup cornstarch



$\frac{1}{2}$ cup powdered sugar
1 cup (2 sticks) butter
1 teaspoon almond extract

FROSTING

1 tablespoon butter, softened
2 cups powdered sugar, divided use
2 tablespoons lemon juice
1–2 teaspoons heavy cream

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. **COOKIES** In a large bowl, mix together flour, cornstarch and powdered sugar. Cut in butter using a pastry blender or two butter knives, much like mixing a pie crust. Once mixture resembles coarse

sand, sprinkle in almond extract, then continue mixing until dough forms large clumps.

3. Scoop dough into small balls and place on cookie sheets. Bake 10–12 minutes, until edges just begin to brown. Let cookies cool on cookie sheets for 5 minutes before removing to a wire rack to cool completely.

4. **FROSTING** Mix softened butter with $\frac{1}{4}$ cup powdered sugar, then blend in lemon juice. Add remaining sugar a little bit at a time, then blend in cream. For a thinner glaze, add more cream until frosting reaches desired consistency. Frost cooled cookies, then let frosting set before serving.

MAKES 2 DOZEN COOKIES

TCP WEB EXTRA Don't stop swapping. We have nearly 900 recipes in our archive, including dozens for cookies. Help yourselves.

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Required



Road Trip Relics

The U-Drop Inn still entices travelers to pull off Route 66 in Shamrock

BY CHET GARNER

TEXANS LOVE a good road trip.

With the advent of the automobile in the early 20th century, road-tripping became a pastime as important as baseball and barbecue. With the completion of Route 66, the Mother Road of America, road trippers needed rest stops to refuel gas tanks and stomachs. The U-Drop Inn Café in Shamrock stood ready to serve.

The first time I saw the U-Drop Inn, I was traveling the Texas stretch of Route 66 that slices across the Panhandle. Fifteen miles west of Oklahoma, I found the High Plains town of Shamrock, known for the tallest water tower in Texas. But another tower, a cream-colored column with glowing green neon atop an art deco gas station, caught my attention. It was the U-Drop Inn and Tower Station, one of the iconic stops along historic Route 66. The distinctive architecture even inspired a building in *Cars*, the Pixar animated feature about a forgotten highway town.

Built in 1936, the Tower Station was open 24 hours a day and connected with U-Drop Inn Café, which also kept long hours to serve weary travelers. The U-Drop became famous as the best stop between Oklahoma City and Amarillo. Even Elvis Presley dropped in on occasion. The diner no longer offers food but now serves visitors a glimpse into the past. I roamed through, wishing I could park at a booth and order a blue-plate special.

The rest of the building is now a visitors center catering to folks from all over the world who travel the Mother Road. The world map was cluttered with pushpins noting visitors from more than 100 countries. To them, Route 66 and classic stops like the U-Drop Inn signify freedom—the sort of freedom that can only be found on the open road. ■

ABOVE The Tower Station and U-Drop Inn as it looks today.

TCP WEB EXTRA See Chet's video from the U-Drop Inn Café in Shamrock and check out his Texplorations on *The Daytripper* on PBS.

Know Before You Go

Some events may have been affected by COVID-19. Call or check an event's website for scheduling details.

NOVEMBER

07

Corpus Christi Harbor Half Marathon, (361) 884-6561, harborhalf.com

Kerrville Kerr County Market Days and Hill Country Swap Meet, (830) 459-6198, kerrmarketcdays.org

New Braunfels Fall Walk, (830) 660-4935, my.ava.org/find-an-event.php

Tyler [7-8] Texas Rose Fall Horse Trials, (903) 882-8696, texasrosehorsepark.com

Georgetown [7-15] Field of Honor, (951) 834-3301, georgetowntxfieldofhonor.org

10

Bryan Messina Hof U.S. Marine Corps Ball, (979) 778-9463, messinahof.com/events

11

Grapevine Paint Your Pet, (817) 442-8463, messinahof.com/events

Ozona Veterans Day Appreciation Banquet, (325) 392-2827, ozona.com/eventscalendar

12

New Braunfels [12-14] Shop, Crop & Craft, (830) 221-4011, heirloompro.com

13

Palestine [13-Dec. 27] The Polar Express, (855) 632-7729, texasstaterailroad.net

14

Denison Holiday at the Market, (469) 712-9122, downtowndenisonfarmersmarket.com

Kingsbury Pioneer Flight Museum Wings and Wheels Fly-In, (830) 639-4162, pioneerflightmuseum.org

Santa Fe Heritage Festival, (409) 925-8558, santafetexaschamber.com

Tyler [14-15] North Texas Hunter Jumper Club Year-End Show, (903) 882-8696, texasrosehorsepark.com

Corsicana Christmas Tree Lighting and Fireworks Display, (903) 654-4850, visitcorsicana.com

Alpine [20-21] Artwalk, (432) 294-1071, artwalkalpine.com

Giddings [20-21] Texas Word Wrangler Book Festival, (979) 542-2716, texaswordwrangler.com

Fredericksburg [20-22] Fredericksburg Trade Days, (210) 846-4094, fbgtradedays.com

Ingram [20-21, 27-28, Dec. 4-5, 11-12] Inspecting Carol, (830) 367-5121, hcacf.com

Jacksonville Cherokee Craft & Trade Fair, (903) 268-1598, jacksonvilletexas.com

Seguin Texas Hold 'em Poker Tournament, (830) 379-0933, texagedu.org/texasholdemtournament

Tyler [21-22] Dallas Hunter Jumper Scholarship Circuit Year-End Show, (903) 882-8696, texasrosehorsepark.com

Lake Jackson [26-27] Turkey Trot 5K, (979) 285-2501, lakejacksonturkeytrot.com

MORE EVENTS >

TCP Submit Your Event

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

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TRISH RAWLS

Fredericksburg Getaway Contest

Enter online for a chance to win a two-night getaway in picturesque Fredericksburg, including a half-day wine tour, museum passes and gift certificates for great local restaurants.

TCP Enter Today

TexasCoopPower.com/Contests

(Required by 39 USC 3685)

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c. Total Paid and/or Requested	1,694,365	1,721,961
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f. Total Distribution	1,705,163	1,732,613
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h. Total	1,706,161	1,733,218
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Karen Nejtek, Managing Editor
Date
October 1, 2020

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Pick of the Month

American Legion Anvil Shoot

Hamilton, November 11
(254) 386-3992
facebook.com/cunningham222

American Legion Cunningham Post 222 has held this event every November 11 since 1918, when World War I ended. It involves exploding gunpowder that has been placed between two stacked heavy anvils, which sends the anvil on top flying. Anvil shoots were once a common way for pioneers to commemorate holidays, elections and other special occasions.

NOVEMBER EVENTS CONTINUED

27

Granbury Night of Lights

Christmas Parade,
(817) 573-5548,
visitgranbury.com

Abilene [27-28] Thanks-

giving Throwdown,
(325) 673-4233,
abilenevisitors.com/calendar

Fredericksburg [27-29]

Peddler Show,
(512) 358-1000,
peddlershow.com

Fredericksburg [27-29]

Trade Days Thanksgiving Show, (210) 846-4094,
fbgtradedays.com

Jefferson [27-28, Dec. 5, 12, 19, 26] Christmas

Express, 1-866-398-2038,
jeffersonrailway.com

Llano [27-Dec. 31] Starry

Starry Nights Lighted Christmas Park,
(325) 247-5354,
llanostarrystarrynights.com

28

Comfort Christmas in

Comfort, (830) 995-3131,
comfortchamber.com

DECEMBER

01

Amarillo [1-3] Farm

and Ranch Show,
1-800-827-8007,
ideagroup.com/amarillo

02

Alpine Christmas in

Alpine, (432) 837-2326,
visitalpinetx.com/christmas

03

Cameron Christmas

Drive-Thru Parade,
(254) 697-4979,
cameron-tx.com

Columbus Ladies Night

Out, (979) 732-8385,
columbus-texas.org

Jacksonville Christmas

Parade, (903) 586-2217,
jacksonvilletexas.com

La Grange Schmecken-

fest, (979) 968-3017,
visitlagrangetx.com

New Braunfels Wassail-

fest, (830) 221-4000,
since1845.com

04

Fredericksburg First

Friday Art Walk Fredericksburg, (830) 997-6523,
visitfredericksburgtx.com

La Grange [4-6, 10-13,

17-23] Trail of Lights,
(979) 968-5658, friends-of-kreischewbrewery.org

05

Fredericksburg Holiday

Home Tour, (830) 990-8441,
pioneer-museum.net

Fredericksburg Kinderfest,

(830) 990-8441,
pioneer-museum.net

Grand Saline Salt City

Christmas, (903) 962-5631,
grandsalinemainstreet.com

Kerrville Kerr County

Market Days and Hill Country Swap Meet,
(830) 459-6198,
kerrmarket.days.org

Extremes

Extreme environments, animal behaviors and weather are to be expected, and Texans rise to meet any challenge.

GRACE FULTZ



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP

TOMMIE CALFEE
PEDERNALES EC

A winter scene on Onion Creek.

AMBER LADYMON
FARMERS EC

"Our neighbor was burning his field. This is one of my favorites that I got."

JENNIFER CARMACK
HEART OF TEXAS EC

Carmack's son Cyress took this photo of a large thunderhead on the horizon.

JESSICA RAMOS
SOUTH PLAINS EC

"A sunny, warm day takes an extreme turn filled with hail and rain."



Upcoming Contests

DUE NOV 10 **Diners**

DUE DEC 10 **Storms**

DUE JAN 10 **Historic Texas**

Enter online and review submission rules at [TexasCoopPower.com/Contests](https://www.texascooppower.com/contests).

TCP WEB EXTRA See Focus on Texas on our website for more photos from readers.



Fresh Perspective

An ardent conservationist resurfaces as a 'meat angler'

BY DAN OKO
ILLUSTRATION BY NIC JONES

ALONG THE BRACKISH shallow lakes off Matagorda Island in the Gulf of Mexico, I'm scanning for redfish fins. Restless mullet keep distracting me, their schools pulsing in the shallows, when all I want is a keeper red.

I'm armed with light spinning tackle, and my friends are spread across the flats. It is an undeniably beautiful day. I spotted herons, egrets, flamingo-pink spoonbills and surfacing dolphins as we crossed the salt. Adding a stout redfish for dinner would make the day even better.

I have not always been what's sometimes referred to as a "meat fisherman," but 20 years in Texas have taught me that redfish on the half shell, prepared over coals and sprinkled with Cajun spice mix and drizzled with oil and lemon, is a treat every angler should enjoy. Before I moved south,

I could be found stalking trout in the riffle lines of Rocky Mountain streams, fly rod in hand, either standing astern in a drift boat or moving like a slow-motion hunter along the bank.

As an ardent conservationist, I don't know what to say about my trajectory from catch and release to deadly hunter except that I believe in abiding the law of the land, and ultimately, fishing purely for sport lacks a certain zest. Rather than debating whether fish feel pain, let's just say my thinking has evolved.

I know plenty of saltwater anglers who prefer fishing with flies, and I have watched redfish hit crab patterns, clouser minnows and popping foam shrimp. But in the name of efficiency and simple camaraderie, I fish conventional tackle when I'm on the Gulf Coast. Whether I am pursuing assorted stream fish or ocean species, the joy I experience remains rooted in the same nitty-gritty details: the attention paid to subtle signs and structure where fish might lurk, the anticipation when a well-placed cast brings the bite, the pulse-pounding joy of the hookup and the epic relief of bringing a fish to hand.

Which returns us to this patch of Matagorda Bay, where I attempt to wade with the stealth of a prowling cat. Through polarized lenses, I glimpse the prize—a bronze bruiser suspended in a few inches of water. I've got a speckled soft-plastic bait, which lands a few feet from my target. I reel slowly, then rest a beat. The movement puts the red on high alert.

He chases down the lure, and I raise my rod to set the hook. A fight ensues that lasts minutes but feels like hours. With a 20-inch red in my net, I look around and spot my friends on the boat. The sun is setting. Dinner will be fresh fish after all. ■



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