

WOMEN'S PUSH FOR  
CARNEGIE LIBRARIES

SCARIEST BRIDGE  
IN TEXAS

READER RECIPES  
A HIT IN NEVADA

# Texas Coop Power

FOR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE MEMBERS

JANUARY 2021

A large brown bear is the central focus of the cover, walking towards the viewer on a rocky, pebbly shore. The bear has thick, brown fur and a dark nose. The background is a soft-focus natural setting with green foliage and water.

## Gotcha!

Pro tips on photographing  
where the wild things are





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# January 2021



08

## Captured!

Take memorable wildlife photos with preparation, research and sleuthing.

*Story and photos by Russell A. Graves*

## 14 Literary Fortunes

Women of the early 20th century wrangled Carnegie grants and libraries for their towns.

*By Melissa Gaskill*

### ON THE COVER

A brown bear at Katmai National Park and Preserve in Alaska.

### ABOVE

A cottontail near Childress, on the southern edge of the Panhandle.

*Photos by Russell A. Graves*

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*By Suzanne Featherston*



# Flying Colors

**ONE OF THE BLACK MARKS** against wind turbines is the number of birds killed by the rotating blades. Black marks, it turns out, could help resolve the problem.

Scientists in Norway found that painting one of the three blades on a wind turbine black reduces avian deaths by 72%.

The paper produced by the Norwegian Institute for Nature Research explains that painting one blade black is believed to create motion smear patterns that birds perceive as moving objects, enabling birds to take evasive action.

Of the more than 60,000 wind turbines in the U.S., Texas has some 15,000—the most of any state.



## Tons of Tomatoes

If you love tomatoes, you have about a week left to enter our recipe contest that celebrates the fruit.

Tomatoes are a big deal in Jacksonville. A *big* deal. The East Texas city has hundreds of huge concrete tomatoes, some weighing 665 pounds, scattered around town as a declaration of its love for the juicy fruit that many people consider a vegetable.



## UPLOADS OF CASH

Parents of K–12 students planned to spend a record \$789.49 per family for back-to-school supplies last fall. Purchases of laptops and computer accessories in anticipation of more online schooling because of the COVID-19 pandemic helped break the record set in 2019 by almost \$100.



# There are 78 snake species in Texas.



We spotlighted rattlesnakes, one of the most common, in *A Snake To Love*, April 2020.



## **TCP** Contests and More

**ON TEXASCOOPPOWER.COM**

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

Tomatoes

### **FOCUS ON TEXAS PHOTOS**

Historic Texas

### **WEB EXTRA**

Learn more about the 30 cities in Texas selected for Carnegie libraries—some of which still exist.



## *Power of Our People*

### A Cupboard Never Bare

**CHRISTINA KUPER** grew up in Indiana, where she watched a neighbor she called Grandma Hiner, though they weren't related, regularly sharing food from her pantry with others.

"I think that's where giving was implanted into my heart," says Kuper, a member of Taylor Electric Cooperative. "Throughout my life I have always tried to give to others."

Thus began a lifetime of charity that included Meals on Wheels, Habitat for Humanity, Girl Scouts food drives and baking for military troops away during the holidays. When a debilitating respiratory disease left Kuper homebound in Hawley, about 10 miles north of Abilene, she refocused her benevolence.

Kuper installed the Hawley Sharing Box, left, at the end of her driveway in 2017. Based on the Little Free Pantry program, itself inspired by the Little Free Library project, Kuper's sharing box makes food, toys, school supplies and toiletries available for anybody—and Kuper stresses *anybody*—driving past 225 12th St., near the edge of town.

Daily updates on Facebook tell what's available and what's needed, and Kuper says the box is stocked almost completely by community donations.

"Kindness is addictive and contagious," she says, "and it should be spread everywhere."

**INFO** ▶ [facebook.com/hawleysharingbox](https://facebook.com/hawleysharingbox)

**TCP POWER OF OUR PEOPLE** To nominate a co-op member who is making a difference in your community, email details to [people@texascooppower.com](mailto:people@texascooppower.com).

## FINISH THIS SENTENCE LIFE WAS BETTER ...

**TCP** Tell us how you would finish that sentence. Email your short responses to [letters@TexasCoopPower.com](mailto:letters@TexasCoopPower.com) or comment on our Facebook post. Include your co-op and town. Here are some of the responses to our November prompt: **I'm most thankful for ...**

The little bitty space where my pets let me sleep in my own bed.

**SUE CALDWELL  
BANDERA EC  
PIPE CREEK**

My health, friends and warm home tonight.

**MATTIE WOODFIN BORDERS  
VIA FACEBOOK**

My beloved brother, Rob, who, 31 years ago in December, donated his bone marrow to me and saved my life.

**ANNE SWEET  
PEDERNALES EC  
GEORGETOWN**

To see more responses, read Currents online.





ERIC W. POHL

### Farrier Finesse

I went to farrier school in 1981, not to become a professional farrier but because I owned nearly 50 head of horses [Why Horses Wear Shoes, October 2020]. Pleased to see more women taking up that profession as brute strength is not as important as understanding the horse you're shoeing.

Ken Wade  
Central Texas EC  
Fredericksburg



I have made these with vanilla wafers for as long as I can remember [Cookie Swap, Bourbon Balls, November 2020].

SHARON STOLL  
VIA FACEBOOK



MEGAN MYERS

### Bat Lodging

“What a great endeavor to improve the planet. Thank you, Mr. Bamberger.”

NANCY GREENHAW  
CENTRAL TEXAS EC  
FREDERICKSBURG

### No Small Potatoes

J. David Bamberger is a hero in the Texas conservation world and has shown us all how being a good steward of the land can enable nature to thrive [Bat Lodging, November 2020]. Pam LeBlanc's coverage of his “chiroptorium” showed Bamberger's persistence and determination as well as his warm, down-home nature.

Yes, J. David, I agree: Your potatoes are, indeed, “terribly important!”

Elizabeth Bowerman  
Comal County Conservation  
Alliance  
Pedernales EC  
New Braunfels

I saw that cave soon after it was built. Love that beautiful ranch and the man who made this real.

Beverly Barnt  
Via Facebook

### Matagorda Connection

My great-grandfather was the assistant keeper there in the 1890s, leaving and then returning as keeper in the early 1900s until his death in 1913 [Matagorda Island Lighthouse, October 2020]. His sister, my great-great aunt, perished with her children at Indianola in the 1875 hurricane.

Bill Reeves  
Pedernales EC  
Georgetown

**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.

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# CAPTURE

Take memorable wildlife photos with





**TWO MINUTES AFTER** I start blowing a predator call, I see movement to the northeast of the cedar tree in which I am hiding. Out of nowhere a sleek coyote takes a step into a clearing where I'd hoped one might and glares in my direction. Everything I planned to make this moment happen materializes 20 yards away: A predator stands in the burnished orange bluestem in perfect afternoon light and remains motionless long enough for me to focus and squeeze the shutter. I capture two frames of 35 mm slide film, and then the animal disappears. Then I notice my heart is pounding.

In that instant I made my first truly memorable wildlife image. It was exhilarating. Even though the scene is three decades old, I can recall it clearly. It was a defining moment in my eventual career as a photographer.

But here's the truth: Initially I didn't know the image was that good. Those were the days before digital photography, when I still had to expose the entire roll of film, ship it to a distant photo lab and wait for the images to return. A couple of weeks passed before I was finally able to look through the cardboard-mounted slips of film and find the coyote. First I thought someone else's pictures had been mixed in with mine. I quickly realized that the slides were indeed my own. In the Northeast Texas wild, everything I'd learned about how to make an engaging wildlife photo clicked.

Since that day, my photographs have appeared on more than 500 magazine covers, and I now guide photo tours all over the world. Recently I took a group to photograph bears in Katmai National Park and Preserve in Alaska.

A lot has changed since that moment calling up a coyote in Fannin County. A few years after the coyote stepped in front of my lens, digital photography revolutionized how images are made and democratized the medium to the point that even the best equipment made is truly affordable.

Some things have not changed with time and technology. Wildlife is still wild, and the steps required to capture great wildlife images are the same.

LEFT A brown bear atop Brooks Falls in Katmai National Park and Preserve in Alaska anticipates a meal of a spawning salmon. ABOVE Camouflage helps photographers get closer to wildlife.





ABOVE A bobcat approaches near Dodd City in North Texas. BELOW A motion-sensor camera can capture shy animals, such as this badger in Montana.

#### **TCP WEB EXTRA**

Enter online to win a digital copy of *The Big Book of Wildlife and Nature Photography* by Russell A. Graves.

**Here are proven techniques that can help ensure your wildlife images are engaging and dynamic.**

#### **◀ FOCUS ON THE EYES**

You've heard the saying that the eyes are the windows to the soul. That trite phrase holds true for wildlife, too. When planning a photograph, pay close attention to the eyes. Many cameras now include an eye-tracking feature that can automatically detect an animal's eyes and ensure that the focus locks on accurately.

The reason the eyes are of utmost importance is simple: When you look at another person or an animal, you first notice the eyes. That's where you make a connection with the subject. If the animal's tail is out of focus, that's OK. Blow the focus on the eyes, and the image suffers.

#### **▼ GET CLOSE**

There's a popular misconception that wildlife photographers use giant lenses and stand hundreds of yards from their subjects to obtain quality photographs. Nope!

To get really impressive photographs of any animal, you must get close. For larger animals like deer, it is best to be within 50 yards. With smaller creatures like quail, try to get within a few feet.

It is possible to use extreme telephoto lenses to get optically closer, but the more air you shoot through, the less sharp your images will be. Since air is filled with particu-







A bighorn sheep in Montana grazes just a few feet away.

lates, subjects become optically softer as distance increases, so the objects or animals look hazy. It is a good practice in wildlife photography to get as close as you can.

You can achieve the goal of proximity in a number of ways. State and national parks are ideal locations because the animals are accustomed to seeing people and are not as likely to run when they see a photographer. When working in wilder locations, consider including a blind in your setup. Think like a hunter and use the same tools hunters use to get close to wildlife.

#### ▲ LEARN ABOUT YOUR SUBJECT

One essential goal of wildlife photography is to control as many variables as possible. You can't control whether an animal will show up and walk into your line of sight, but you can learn your camera's features, the craft of photography and the basics of composition.

In addition, learn all you can about the species you wish to photograph. By becoming a student of creative photography and a student of wildlife, you'll be more likely to see a particular species.

If you want to photograph mule deer, understand what habitat they prefer and the most likely time to find them. By understanding everything possible about your subject, you will tip the odds in favor of finding your target species.





ABOVE A curious chipmunk in Colorado comes within inches of the camera.  
RIGHT A crane wades among feeding ducks in New Mexico.

### ▲ THINK ABOUT COMPOSITION

Great photographs rely on strong composition. Composition is the arrangement of the elements in a photograph that are visually balanced and pleasing. Typically with wildlife, that means composing them vertically or horizontally and relying on the compositional rule called the rule of thirds. The rule of thirds is a basic guide for where the main interest points in an image should lie inside the frame—a third of the way into the frame vertically and horizontally. This rule discourages centering the subject in the frame.

### ► LIGHTING IS KEY

Another essential consideration for a good wildlife photograph is how it is lit. Natural light looks best during the earliest and latest hours of the day. When the sun is low on the horizon, shadows fall away from the subject and the colors cast by sunlight take on a warm glow. The sun's light is always harshest during the middle of the day. So it is important to be in the field during the beginning and end of the day. Use the middle of the day to review the pictures you shot in the morning or scout for afternoon opportunities. Not only is the light better in early morning and late afternoon, but that's also when wildlife is most active.

What if the weather is overcast? Overcast days are great because the soft, nondirectional light extends your shooting day. I actually prefer to photograph on overcast days.



### DON'T OVERTHINK IT

Don't complicate the process. Photography requires the mastery of a few fundamentals and then doing the same thing over and over so that results become predictable. Today's digital cameras are capable of performing many functions, but the truth is, a thorough understanding of aperture, shutter speed and sensor sensitivity will make more memorable photos.

Wildlife photography is comparable to golf. Golfers play the game knowing they'll never be perfect. Top photographers take the same approach. They pursue the perfect shot, and that addictive pursuit keeps them heading afield. ■



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# LITERARY = FORTUNES

**Women of the early 20th century wrangled Carnegie grants and libraries for their towns**

BY MELISSA GASKILL

**V**ISITORS TO BRYAN IN 1902 walked unpaved streets and bought drinks at one of a dozen saloons. Many carried guns, and it was possible to witness a public hanging on the courthouse lawn. Local women sought to correct the situation and founded the Mutual Improvement Club.

“The ladies of the club were upset with the saloon-town atmosphere and wanted to bring in some culture and learning,” says Rachael C. Altman, manager of Bryan’s Carnegie History Center, housed in the town’s historic library.

Club member Lillie Wilson’s brother-in-law, Thomas W. Stewart, had been introduced to Andrew Carnegie. The Pennsylvania steel magnate was donating money to build libraries, and club leaders urged Wilson to contact Carnegie through her connection. “They were very persistent,” Altman says. Carnegie gave them a grant, and the Bryan Carnegie Library opened in December 1903.

A total of 2,509 Carnegie libraries were built between

1883 and 1929, including about 1,700 in the United States—32 of them in Texas. Many were funded through the efforts of women. Twenty of the original 32 buildings have been lost to demolition or fire, and eight of those surviving 12 remain in use, though not as libraries. Just four original Carnegie Libraries remain open in Texas—in Stamford, Ballinger, Franklin and Jefferson.

Carnegie sold his steel company to J.P. Morgan in 1901 for almost \$500 million, making him the world’s richest man. But “the man who dies rich dies in disgrace,” he said as he gave away \$350 million. Estimates suggest \$60 million went specifically toward libraries because Carnegie believed a free library was the best gift he could give a community. The keystones of the library program required that the facilities be public and free, and Carnegie required recipient cities to invest at least 10% of the grant annually to fund the libraries.

The northeast Texas town of Pittsburg had fewer than 1,500 inhabitants when it received the first Carnegie grant in the state in 1898, using it to build a small library and reading room. It burned down in 1939.



CLOCKWISE FROM OPPOSITE The 1905 Greek Revival-style Carnegie library in Cleburne is today home to the Layland Museum. Steel magnate Andrew Carnegie. A postcard of the Jefferson Carnegie Library.

**TCP WEB EXTRA** See a map of Texas' Carnegie libraries and a slideshow of vintage postcards.



The Dallas, Fort Worth and San Antonio public library associations and the Woman's Club of Houston received grants around the turn of the century. The El Paso Public Library Association received one in 1904. And Clarksville, Waco, Belton, Tyler, Gainesville and Sherman received grants, all thanks to applications from local women's clubs.

Cleburne, south of Fort Worth and now home to a United Cooperative Services office, also built a Carnegie Library thanks to persistent women, in 1905. "A determined committee of ladies from the local women's club decided that the young town needed to become civilized and, we are told, traveled to New York to visit Carnegie's office without an appointment," says Stephanie Montero, manager of the Layland Museum now housed in the building. "He offered them \$10,000, but the committee felt that wasn't enough." Carnegie doubled his offer.

The Greek Revival-style building served as Cleburne's library until 1978, when it became part of the museum. The front entrance and main room feature Ionic columns with ornamental necking, and plaster details decorate interior and exterior walls.

In Northeast Texas, the Jefferson Library Association tried several fundraising strategies before applying successfully for a Carnegie grant. The Jefferson Carnegie Library was built in 1907 and was restored a century later.

The Classical Revival brick-and-limestone Carnegie Library in Stamford, north of Abilene, where Big Country EC has an office, features massive Ionic columns and corner pilasters. It hosted high school dances and, during World War II, games and socializing for airmen training nearby.

In Ballinger, south of Abilene, a Carnegie library built in 1911 is on the Texas Forts Trail as well as listed on the National Register of Historic Places and recognized as a State Antiquities Landmark and a Recorded Texas Historic Landmark. The building has continuously served as a library but needed extensive renovations by 1976. "It was in such bad shape the city had already bought another place to build a library then decided to save this one," says library director Carolyn Kraatz.

The Franklin Carnegie Library, north of Bryan, completed in 1914, served as a library through 1918 and then housed school classrooms and public activities until 1984. The building was restored and reopened as a library in May 2009. It originally came into being thanks to then-mayor R.M. Cole, who applied to Carnegie for funds in 1913.

Bryan's library building, designed by a professor at Texas Agricultural and Mechanical College (now Texas A&M University), today houses the Carnegie History Center. It served as a library until 1969 and then was used for city offices, says Altman. Matching handcarved pine stairways, tongue-and-groove pine flooring on the first floor and a decorative pressed metal ceiling all are original. Its restoration in 1999 took place with the help of the Women's Club, a modern incarnation of the Mutual Improvement Club.

Upstairs, the Bryan library hosted Red Cross gatherings during both world wars. The second floor now houses a genealogy research collection, which is free to the public along with access to online search services.

With so much of what people do being dependent on technology today, access to that technology is a crucial service provided by libraries, especially in small towns, says Karin Gerstenhaber of the Tocker Foundation, a nonprofit created in 1964 to support rural libraries in Texas.

"Carnegie felt that building libraries gave people opportunities to advance themselves," she adds. "The libraries provided free access to information, and those buildings were used for so many different purposes that brought people together. They filled a real need." ■



# Discovered! Unopened Bag of 138-Year-Old Morgan Silver Dollars

Unopened for  
138 Years!

## Coin experts amazed by “Incredible Opportunity”

The Morgan Silver Dollar is the most popular and iconic vintage U.S. coin. They were the Silver Dollars of the Wild West, going on countless untold adventures in dusty saddlebags across the nation. Finding a secret hoard of Morgans doesn't happen often—and when it does, it's a *big deal*.

How big? Here's numismatist, author and consultant to the Smithsonian® Jeff Garrett:

*“It's very rare to find large quantities of Morgan Silver Dollars, especially in bags that have been sealed... to find several thousand Morgan Silver Dollars that are from the U.S. Treasury Hoards, still unopened, is really an incredible opportunity.”*

—Jeff Garrett

But where did this unique hoard come from? Read on...

### Morgans from the New Orleans Mint

In 1859, Nevada's Comstock Lode was discovered, and soon its rich silver ore made its way across the nation, including to the fabled New Orleans Mint, the only U.S. Mint branch to have served under the U.S. government, the State of Louisiana and the Confederacy. In 1882, some of that silver was struck into Morgan Silver Dollars, each featuring the iconic “O” mint mark of the New Orleans Mint. Employees then placed the freshly struck coins into canvas bags...

### The U.S. Treasury Hoard

Fast-forward nearly 80 years. In the 1960s, the U.S. government opened its vaults and revealed a massive store of Morgan Silver Dollars—including *full, unopened bags* of “fresh” 1882-O Morgan Silver Dollars. A number of bags were secured by a child of the Great Depression—a southern gentleman whose upbringing showed him the value of hard assets like silver. He stashed the unopened bags of “fresh” Morgans away, and there they stayed...

### The Great Southern Treasury Hoard

That is, until *another* 50 years later, when the man's family finally decided to sell the coins—still in their unopened bags—which we secured, bag and all! We submitted the coins to respected



Actual size is 38.1 mm

- ✓ Historic Morgan Silver Dollars
- ✓ Minted in New Orleans
- ✓ Struck and bagged in 1882
- ✓ Unopened for 138 years
- ✓ 26.73 grams of 90% fine silver
- ✓ Hefty 38.1 mm diameter
- ✓ Certified Brilliant Uncirculated by NGC
- ✓ Certified “Great Southern Treasury Hoard” pedigree
- ✓ Limit five coins per household

third-party grading service Numismatic Guaranty Corporation (NGC), and they agreed to honor the southern gentleman by giving the coins the pedigree of the “Great Southern Treasury Hoard.”

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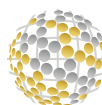
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MESSAGE  
FROM  
GENERAL  
MANAGER

KATHI  
CALVERT

## New Year, Same Principles

**JANUARY IS A GOOD TIME** for us at Houston County Electric Cooperative to reflect on the past year and make plans for the new one while keeping our Seven Cooperative Principles in mind.

2020 had its challenges.

Electric cooperatives across Texas were affected by natural disasters, the COVID-19 pandemic and economic uncertainty. To get through, we leaned on our values of helping one another and caring for the community, just as we have since our founding many years ago.

The past year also had its successes.

Among them, Houston County EC celebrated 81 years of serving you, our consumer-members, with reliable electricity while hopefully improving your quality of life. The annual meeting was not the same without our fish fry. We missed your smiles



and conversations, but we virtually celebrated the members who make our co-op possible with the same enthusiasm.

For 2021, we resolve to maintain the same—or even better—quality of service to our members as we have over the history of Houston County EC.

We will continue to provide reliable electricity, maintain jobs in our community and offer energy-saving information in *Texas Co-op Power* while giving neighborly member service every step of the way.

And as we enter the new year, it's a good time for us to review the Seven Cooperative Principles. These principles are timeless, and we resolve to continue

to uphold them in ways that are relevant for 2021.

**Voluntary and Open Membership:** Cooperatives are voluntary organizations, open to all persons able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial, political or religious discrimination.

**Democratic Member Control:** Cooperatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting policies and making decisions. The elected board of directors is accountable to the membership.

**Members' Economic Participation:** Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their cooperative. Capital is used for the common property of the cooperative to benefit all members. Each member pays their fair share and any excess is ultimately returned in an equitable manner to the membership.

**Autonomy and Independence:** Co-ops are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members. If they enter into agreements with other organizations, including governments, or raise capital from external sources, they do so on terms that ensure democratic control by their members and maintain their cooperative autonomy.

**Education, Training and Information:** Co-ops provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their cooperatives. They inform the general public about the nature and benefits of cooperation.

**Cooperation Among Cooperatives:** Cooperatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the cooperative movement by working together through local, national, regional and international structures.

**Concern for Community:** While focusing on member needs, cooperatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies and activities accepted by their members.

With resolute values like these at the center of all that we do, we are ready to take on the new year. ■





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## 10 Don'ts for Cold Months

**FOLLOW THESE TIPS** to stay safe and save energy during winter.

**1. Don't overstuff your refrigerator.** Stacking holiday leftovers on top of each other and squeezing extra containers of food onto every refrigerator shelf will prevent air from circulating. That forces the appliance's compressor to work harder and use more electricity.

**2. Don't crank the thermostat way up to heat a cold house in a hurry.** Turning the heat up to 90 degrees won't warm a 60-degree house any quicker than turning it up to 67 degrees.

**3. Don't run bathroom and kitchen exhaust fans any longer than you have to.** Flip them on to clear smoke while cooking and steam while showering.

**4. Don't use a barbecue grill or a propane patio heater indoors, even if your central heating system is on the fritz.** This is a fire hazard and can expose you to dangerous levels of carbon monoxide.

**5. Don't stop using ceiling fans.** They can save energy during winter. The trick: Set the spin direction to pull cool air up. Heat rises, so in the winter, the blades should spin clockwise to move warm air toward the walls and down into the room.

**6. Don't let your fireplace suck warm air out of the flue.** Keep the damper closed when not in use and consider getting an insert to help heat radiate into the home.

**7. Don't use the same thermostat setting when you're away from when you're home.** Decrease the temperature setting by 10 degrees while you are gone to save big.

**8. Don't leave lights on in a room when no one is using them.** Install automatic sensors to help ensure the lights go out when a room is vacant.

**9. Don't continue using old lightbulbs.** LEDs can provide the same amount of light with much less energy.

**10. Don't turn up the water heater temperature.** Keep the setting at 120 degrees to conserve energy and reduce the risk of scalding. ■

## Houston County Electric Cooperative

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### CONTACT US

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To make a payment over the phone  
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For electrical connects, transfers and  
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# TIPS TO AVOID SCAMS



Scammers can threaten you with everything from shutting off power to your home to legal action. Don't fall victim to these types of scams.

Here are a few reminders from your electric co-op.

- Houston County Electric Cooperative employees will never show up at your door to demand payment.
- Never give personal information to an unknown caller or visitor. Real co-op representatives have access to the details they need to service your account.
- Demands for immediate payment by wire transfer, cryptocurrency, gift cards or reloadable cash cards should immediately raise red flags.
- If you think you've been contacted by a scammer falsely representing the co-op, please let us know as soon as possible.




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## Green Chile Cheddar Cheese Soup

- 4 large potatoes**
- 1 small onion, chopped**
- 4 cans (about 7 cups) chicken broth, or 4 bouillon cubes**
- 1 tablespoon salt**
- 1 cup milk, cream or half-and-half**
- 1 can (4 ounces) chopped green chiles**
- 1 cup shredded cheddar cheese, plus more for garnish**
- Pepper, to taste**
- Bacon, cooked and crumbled (optional)**
- Sour cream (optional)**
- Chopped green onion (optional)**

1. Peel potatoes and chop into medium dice. Put potatoes and onion in a slow cooker and add chicken broth to cover, reserving remaining broth. You may substitute water mixed with 4 bouillon cubes. Add salt.
2. Cover and bring to a boil on high, then lower heat and simmer 30 minutes, or until potatoes are just tender. Remove half of the potatoes to a colander or bowl. Mash remaining potatoes in cooking broth with a potato masher or spoon. Return reserved potatoes to cooker along with milk, green chiles and cheese.
3. Let simmer 30–45 additional minutes. Add more salt and pepper to taste. If soup is too thick, add extra chicken broth.
4. Serve with extra shredded cheese, crumbled bacon, sour cream and sliced green onion on top, if desired.

**SERVES 6**

 Find this and more delicious recipes online at [TexasCoopPower.com](https://www.TexasCoopPower.com).





1

# Sharing Success Shines Bright

**YOU'VE PROBABLY SEEN US TALK** about the cooperative difference a time or two in *Texas Co-op Power* or on our social media pages—it's one of the many things we're proud to embody as your electric cooperative. We take pride in knowing that we're just a phone call away, in a local office staffed with your family, neighbors and friends. We also embrace any opportunity to provide for the communities that we live in and serve.

One of the ways that we give back to our communities is through the CoBank Sharing Success program, a matching grant opportunity open to local nonprofit organizations. Designed to support local communities, grants are made possible by Houston County Electric Cooperative's partnership with CoBank, a national cooperative bank serving vital industries across rural America. Since the Sharing Success program began in 2012, CoBank and its customers have made more than \$50 million in donations to groups such as volunteer fire departments and hunger relief programs. CoBank recognized the unprecedented challenges due to the pandemic and increased

the total match grant amount to \$10,000.

This year Houston County EC directors and CoBank's Sharing Success program donated to Houston County S.H.A.R.E., the Backpack Program of Centerville and the SonShine Outreach Center of Madison County.

Houston County S.H.A.R.E. provides assistance to Houston County residents in need. The organization works solely off donations of clothes, household items, toiletries, food items and more. Monetary donations are also welcomed and used for other necessities such as utility bill assistance. Each year, S.H.A.R.E. hosts a Christmas toy drive for over 600 children who otherwise would not have a gift under their tree. The S.H.A.R.E. volunteers turn a section of their warehouse into a Christmas store for parents to select a pair of pajamas and a gift for their child.

The Backpack Program of Centerville, created in 2015, helps students whose parents have limited income. For those students, a backpack is filled every weekend containing two breakfast items, four lunch items, six snacks and two juices. During the





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1. Houston County EC staff with integral members of the Backpack Program of Centerville team. From left, Kathi Calvert, Mike Lane and Stacy Freeman, of HCEC; Jennifer Jeitz, Centerville High School counselor; Becky Matthews, FBC Centerville representative; and Patricia Hammock, the backpack program coordinator.

2. HCEC General Manager Kathi Calvert, left, and Member Services Manager Sarah Goolsby, right, present Cliff Coldiron, Houston County S.H.A.R.E. coordinator, with a check for \$5,000.

3. SonShine Outreach Center representatives accept a donation from Houston County EC at their storefront in Madisonville.

2019–2020 school year, the program provided meals to nearly 45 students.

The SonShine Outreach Center of Madison County is a nonprofit organization that began in a closet at the First United Methodist Church in 1987. Since its incorporation in 2009, it has grown to serve more than 6,000 Madison County residents annually. The center provides many types of assistance, including rent, utility and clothing assistance as well as a food pantry, resale shop and help with prescriptions. It also provides household help to clients who have experienced a disaster and to those fleeing domestic violence.

Although these organizations are not considered cooperatives, their values and principles align similarly. They have an unwavering concern for community, and they are devoted to providing a better way of life for those in need. They cooperate with outside organizations to provide help to others, and they are staffed by volunteers who work for the greater good. For more information about Houston County S.H.A.R.E., contact them at (936) 544-5600. To reach the backpack program, contact Centerville Elementary School in Leon County at (903) 536-7812. The SonShine Outreach Center and Resale Shop is located at 320 N. May St. in Madisonville and can be reached at (936) 348-5282.

For CoBank, partnering with their members to support worthy causes is a great way for them to make a positive difference and fulfill their mission of service to rural America, and Houston County EC greatly appreciates their generosity to our communities. ■

## Statement of Nondiscrimination

**HOUSTON COUNTY ELECTRIC** Cooperative is the recipient of federal financial assistance from the Rural Utilities Service, an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and is subject to the provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended; and the rules and regulations of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which provide that no person in the United States on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age or disability shall be excluded from participation in, admission or access to, denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any of this organization's programs or activities.

The person responsible for coordinating this organization's nondiscrimination compliance efforts is Kathi Calvert, general manager. Any individual or specific class of individuals who feels that this organization has subjected them to discrimination may obtain further information about the statutes and regulations listed above from and/or file a written complaint with this organization; or the Administrator, Rural Utilities Service, Stop 1510, 1400 Independence Ave. SW, Washington, DC 20250-1510; or the Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Ave. SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410; or call (202) 720-5964 (voice or TDD). The USDA is an equal-opportunity provider and employer. Complaints must be filed within 180 days after the alleged discrimination. Confidentiality will be maintained to the extent possible.

### POWER TIP

When you're finished baking, turn off the oven and then open the oven door to let heat radiate into the home rather than exhausting it outside with a fan.

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# Flying Blind

South Texas was home to an early instruments-only commercial flying school

BY EILEEN MATTEI • ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID VOGIN

**IN THE EARLY DAYS** of aviation, pilots flew only when skies were clear. Flyers needed at least a view of the horizon, if not the earth below, or they became disoriented and could not tell if the aircraft was ascending, descending, flying level or turning.

Even in the best conditions, this intuitive flying demanded bold confidence. According to a U.S. Air Force manual, the pioneer pilot would “judge air velocity by the force of wind in his face and the sound of the wind in the aircraft rigging.” The earliest flying instruments gave only primitive indications of direction and altitude.

“I think those early pilots were proud of their seat-of-the-pants flying and wanted to stick to what they already knew,” says Buddy Ude, a recently retired flight instructor in Brownsville.

As aviation evolved and more Americans realized its potential for travel and mail, it became clear that weather could no longer stand in the way. A new breed of “blind” pilots soon allowed commercial aviation to really take off—and many got their start in South Texas.

By 1929, Charles Lindbergh, then Pan American Airways’ technical adviser, established the first air-mail service between Brownsville and Mexico City, an 11-hour round trip.

Meanwhile U.S. Army pilots William Ocker and Carl Crane demonstrated the basics of instrument flight, then called “needle-ball-air-speed blind flying.” To fly safely in cloudy conditions, an instrument pilot had to keep a needle centered on a specific track on a ball attached to the instrument panel. If the needle was correctly aligned, then the pilot knew the craft was flying straight and level. Ocker and Crane’s research and tests appeared in the world’s first instrument flight manual, *Blind Flight in Theory and Practice*, published in 1932.

Following Lindbergh’s successful flight from Mexico City, Pan Am made the Brownsville airport the hub of its Latin American operations by mid-1929. With the new instrument technology, the airline established the Pan American Airways Blind Flying School. The school today is commemorated by a historical marker in front of the Brownsville South Padre Island International Airport.

With the airline’s fleet of Ford and Fokker tri-motor aircraft at risk and lucrative airmail contracts

on the line, Pan Am’s chief engineer, Andre Priester, asked D.C. Richardson and Edward Snyder to operate the instrument flying school for the airline’s pilots. The men transformed the Brownsville airport, with its white Mediterranean-style terminal and two runways of gravel, sand and salt, into the foremost site for training commercial pilots in instrument flying.

Snyder developed an innovative instrument introduction for pilots. First he spun blindfolded trainees on a revolving chair, so they would realize that their innate “seat-of-the-pants” orientation was useless without visual cues. The next disorienting step was to isolate the subject in a box with a turn and bank indicator mounted on a swivel. This confusing experience aimed to convince pioneer pilots of their need for instruments.

Between 1929 and 1955, Brownsville’s blind flying school drilled hundreds of pilots to ignore the input from their eyes and sensations from their inner ears, forcing them to understand the imperative of trusting their instruments. Blindfolds and spinning chairs disappeared by 1951, but the pilots still learned that they could rely on flight instruments to tell them if they were flying level, in the right direction, and at an established speed in good and bad weather.

Instrument flying allowed commercial aviation to really take off, but popular culture exerted influence as well. In the 1930s pilots were marketed as American role models and heroes. Youngsters read novels with titles such as *Flying the U.S. Mail to South America* and *The Mail Pilot of the Caribbean*. Author Lewis E. Theiss wrote 12 such books with the support of Pan Am.

In practice, instrument flying not only made flight safer but also dramatically expanded domestic and international air travel for passengers and shipping. With more accurate instruments such as artificial horizons, altimeters, rate of climb indicators and directional gyroscopes, blind flying became more precise and reliable.

“The pioneers of instrument flight were up for a challenge,” says Bob Carter, who is based in the Rio Grande Valley and has been an instrument-rated pilot for 20 years. “Flying blind was cutting edge. Learning to trust their instruments, not their senses, showed how much they wanted to fly.” ■







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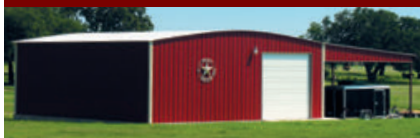


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ITEM 64263/68998/63248/64080/63091 shown

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18277304 **LIMIT 2 - Exp. 2/12/21**

**SUPER COUPON** ★★★★★ (9920)

**BRAUN** ★★★★★ (9920)

**5000 Lumen 4 ft. LED Hanging Shop Light**

**\$19.99**  
~~\$24.99~~

**Save 20%**

Compare to 64410

18282783 **LIMIT 4 - Exp. 2/12/21**

**SUPER COUPON** ★★★★★ (4418)

**CENTRAL PNEUMATIC** ★★★★★ (4418)

**3 Gallon, 100 PSI Oil-Free Air Compressors**

**YOUR CHOICE**  
**\$39.99**  
~~\$54.99~~

**Save 59%**

Compare to Porter-Cable PCFP02003 \$99.82

ITEM 60637 61615 shown

Use Online & In-Store

18288238 **LIMIT 3 - Exp. 2/12/21**

**SUPER COUPON** ★★★★★ (5551)

**HaulMaster** ★★★★★ (5551)

**40" x 72" Moving Blanket**

**\$3.99**  
~~\$4.99~~

**Save 60%**

Compare to Pratt Retail Specialties HMOVBVLN \$9.98

ITEM 69504/62336/47262 shown

18293476 **LIMIT 4 - Exp. 2/12/21**

**SUPER COUPON** ★★★★★ (1833)

**U.S. GENERAL** ★★★★★ (1833)

**30", 5 Drawer Mechanic's Cart**

**\$199.99**  
~~\$239.99~~

**Save \$630**

Compare to Snap-on KRBC10TBPS \$830

ITEM 64061, 64722, 64030, 64721, 64031, 64720, 64729

18299193 **LIMIT 1 - Exp. 2/12/21**

**SUPER COUPON** ★★★★★ (4169)

**PITTSBURGH** ★★★★★ (4169)

**Click-Type Torque Wrenches**

**1/4" Drive** (ITEM 61277/63881)  
**3/8" Drive** (ITEM 61276/63880)  
**1/2" Drive** (ITEM 62431/63882 shown)

**YOUR CHOICE**  
**\$9.99**  
~~\$19.99~~

**Save 88%**

Compare to Husky H2DTWA \$89.97

18302617 **LIMIT 4 - Exp. 2/12/21**

**SUPER COUPON** ★★★★★ (2220)

**VIKING** ★★★★★ (2220)

**4 AMP High Frequency Battery Charger/Maintainer**

**\$27.99**  
~~\$39.99~~

**Save \$83**

Compare to Snap-on EEBM500A \$111

ITEM 63350

18307038 **LIMIT 2 - Exp. 2/12/21**

**SUPER COUPON** ★★★★★ (861)

**PREDATOR** ★★★★★ (861)

**9000w Max. Starting Extra Long Life Gas Powered Generator**

**\$649.99**  
~~\$699.99~~

**Save \$2,279**

Compare to Honda EM6500SXK2AT \$2,929

ITEM 63971/63970 shown

18307328 **LIMIT 1 - Exp. 2/12/21**

**SUPER COUPON** ★★★★★ (7838)

**0.30 cal. Ammo Box** ★★★★★ (7838)

**\$349**  
~~\$599~~

**Save 65%**

Compare to RangeMaxx 1312-92 \$9.99

ITEM 63135/61451 shown

18309762 **LIMIT 4 - Exp. 2/12/21**

**SUPER COUPON** ★★★★★ (3979)

**PREDATOR** ★★★★★ (3979)

**6.5 HP (212 cc) OHV Horizontal Shaft Gas Engine**

**\$99.99**  
~~\$124.99~~

**Save \$230**

Compare to Honda GX200UT2QX2 \$329.99

ITEM 60363/69730 shown

18322020 **LIMIT 2 - Exp. 2/12/21**

**SUPER COUPON** ★★★★★ (6303)

**200 Lumen LED Super Bright Flip Light**

**\$1.99**  
~~\$2.99~~

**Save 60%**

Compare to Premier SW-SWITCH-12/24 \$4.99

ITEM 64763/64189/63922 shown

18332534 **LIMIT 4 - Exp. 2/12/21**

**SUPER COUPON** ★★★★★ (2512)

**BADLAND** ★★★★★ (2512)

**2500 lb. Capacity Electric Winch with Wireless Remote Control**

**\$59.99**  
~~\$69.99~~

**Save 29%**

Compare to Ironton 54123 \$84.99

ITEM 61297/63476/61840 shown

18334482 **LIMIT 2 - Exp. 2/12/21**

**SUPER COUPON** ★★★★★ (7260)

**HaulMaster** ★★★★★ (7260)

**18" x 12", 1000 lb. Capacity Hardwood Mover's Dolly**

**\$7.99**  
~~\$10.99~~

**Save 62%**

Compare to Buffalo Tools HOFDOLLY \$21.29

ITEM 61899/63095/63096/63097/63098 shown

18337182 **LIMIT 4 - Exp. 2/12/21**

**SUPER COUPON** ★★★★★ (684)

**COVER PRO** ★★★★★ (684)

**10 ft. x 10 ft. Portable Shed**

**\$129.99**  
~~\$164.99~~

**Save \$70**

Compare to ShelterLogic 70833 \$199.99

ITEM 56184/63297 shown

18338681 **LIMIT 1 - Exp. 2/12/21**

**SUPER COUPON** ★★★★★ (1350)

**WARRIOR** ★★★★★ (1350)

**18v Lithium-Ion 3/8" Drill/Driver Kit**

**\$24.99**  
~~\$29.99~~

**Save 68%**

Compare to Ryobi P215K \$79

ITEM 56122/64118 shown

18343692 **LIMIT 2 - Exp. 2/12/21**

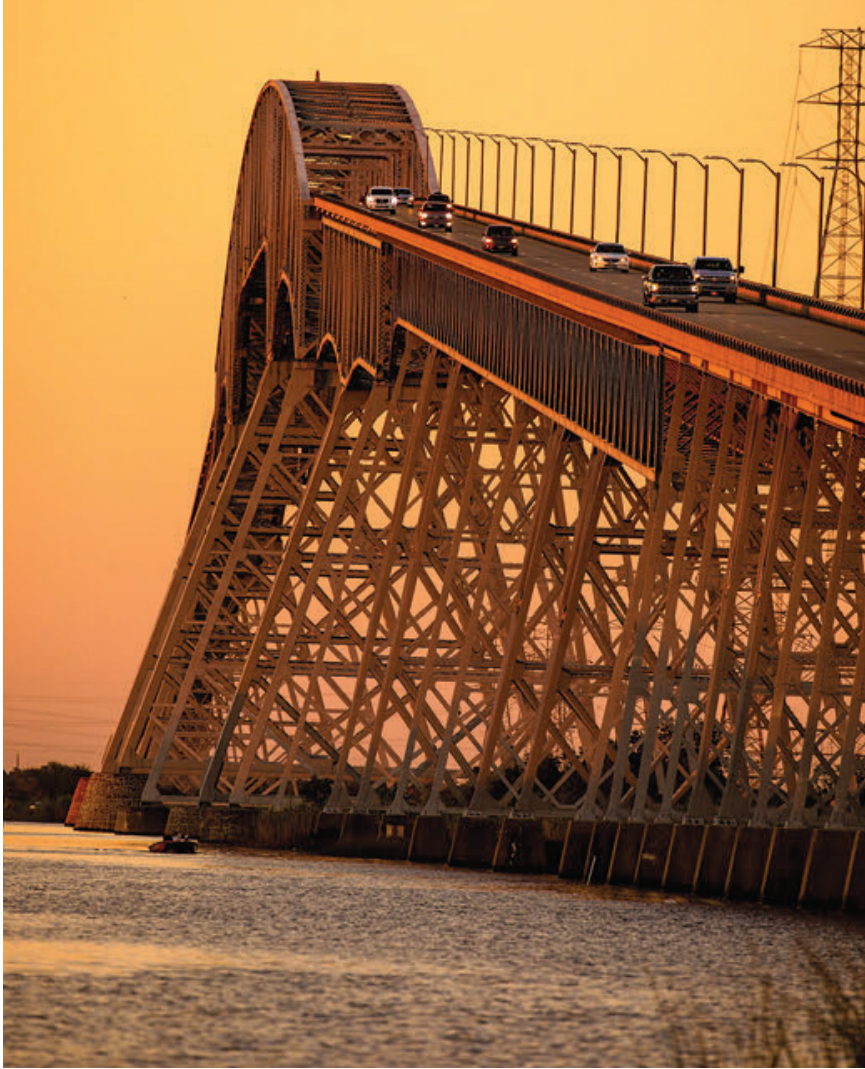
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**TCP WEB EXTRA**  
Listen to W.F. Strong  
read this story.



# The Scariest Bridge in Texas

The steep Rainbow Bridge connecting Port Arthur and Orange is a nightmare for some

BY W.F. STRONG • PHOTO BY ROBERT SEALE

**THERE'S MORE THAN ONE** Texas bridge that can be especially troubling for those with gephyrophobia—fear of crossing bridges. The U.S. 90 bridge over the Pecos River can certainly give you the willies. The Corpus Christi Harbor Bridge can give you pause if you're hit with the outer bands of a tropical storm when you're on it. Some of those five-stack interchanges in Dallas and Houston can cause a palpitation or two.

But, in my opinion, the scariest bridge in Texas is the Rainbow Bridge between Port Arthur and Orange, on Texas Highway 73. It offers a triple threat. You can

see it coming from a long way off. It has a steep ascent and descent. And it rises frighteningly high over water. These are the things gephyrophobics most dread.

The Rainbow Bridge is scary enough today, with two lanes for one-way traffic southbound, but it used to be much worse. It is 20 stories tall, and drivers had to put up with two narrow lanes carrying cars and loaded 18-wheelers in two directions. When it was completed in 1938, it was the second-tallest bridge in the U.S., second only to the Golden Gate Bridge. (The Veterans Memorial Bridge, built just yards away and completed in 1990, car-

ries one-way traffic northbound.)

As you arrived near the top of the Rainbow Bridge, all you could see was sky in the daytime and the stars at night. You had to have faith that the pavement would be there when you drove over the hump, and that was enough to make some folks take a 30-mile detour. Local driver's education teachers often made students navigate over that bridge on their first day of class.

Originally it was called the Port Arthur-Orange Bridge. I long believed that the Rainbow Bridge name came from Norse mythology, wherein the rainbow bridge connects heaven and earth. But no. In 1957 the North Port Arthur Lions Club had a naming contest, and 6-year-old Christy McClintock submitted the winning entry—Rainbow Bridge. She said it looked like a mechanical rainbow. You will agree if you are there near sunset and see it illuminated in the shimmering hues of the evening. McClintock earned a \$50 U.S. savings bond as her prize.

Why was the bridge, with 177 feet of vertical clearance, built so tall? It crossed an important ship channel and builders wanted the tallest ship in the Navy at the time, the USS Patoka, to be able to pass easily beneath it, pulling a dirigible.

The Rainbow Bridge was more than an engineering marvel. It was also a magnet for teenagers in the night. The high school kids in the area used to climb up into the catwalks. One of those students was destined for worldwide fame. It is said that she used to sit up there high above the moonlit waters of the Neches River and sing in her passionately raw style. I'm sure you've heard of her. Janis Joplin? Her biographer, Myra Friedman, said Joplin would sing up there under the great Texas sky and "scorch the stars." But that's a whole other story.

The tallest ship in the Navy never did pass beneath the Rainbow Bridge. Seems a shame. Somewhat like a bride having planned a perfect wedding, but the groom never showed. ■

# Vegetarian

Creative blends of vegetables and seasonings make for hearty meals

BY MEGAN MYERS, FOOD EDITOR

My family is always looking for more ways to add vegetables to our meals, especially with two growing kids at the table. One way that works for us is to create make-it-yourself bowls that allow each of us to choose our own vegetable and sauce. My husband and I like this carrot-ginger dressing, which can be enjoyed with roasted veggies, as in this recipe, or with a simple salad.

## Roasted Vegetable Farro Bowls With Carrot-Ginger Dressing

**1 cup farro**  
**1 head cauliflower, chopped**  
**1½ cups diced butternut squash**  
**1 head broccoli, chopped**  
**½ cup plus 2 tablespoons olive oil, divided use**  
**¾ cup chopped carrot**  
**¼ cup diced onion**  
**¼ cup rice vinegar**  
**1 tablespoon grated fresh ginger**  
**½ teaspoon salt**  
**¼ teaspoon pepper**

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Cook farro according to package directions. Drain excess liquid if needed.
2. While the farro is cooking, spread cauliflower and squash onto a rimmed baking sheet and put broccoli into a bowl. Drizzle 2 tablespoons olive oil over the vegetables. Put baking sheet into oven and roast 10 minutes, then add broccoli and give the vegetables a stir. Roast for another 10 minutes, until vegetables are softened and starting to caramelize.
3. While vegetables are cooking, make the dressing. In a food processor or blender, combine ½ cup olive oil, carrot, onion, rice vinegar, ginger, salt and pepper and process until completely smooth. Taste dressing and adjust seasoning if needed.
4. Divide farro and vegetables among 4 bowls with dressing on the side.

**SERVES 4**

**TCP WEB EXTRA** Follow along with Megan Myers and her adventures in the kitchen at [stetted.com](http://stetted.com), where she features a recipe for Roasted Carrot and Fennel Soup.







## Instant Pot Greek Spanakorizo With Herbed Cashews

KATHERINE SUAREZ  
COSERV

This Greek dish is a great way to get started using an Instant Pot.

**COOK'S TIP** To make this dish without an Instant Pot: In Step 3 increase the water to 3 cups and add it and the rest of the ingredients into a large saucepan. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat to medium-low, cover and simmer for 18 minutes. Remove from heat and let stand 5 minutes, then fluff with a fork before serving.

**2 cups jasmine rice**  
**2 tablespoons plus 1 teaspoon olive oil, divided use**  
**¼ cup cashews**  
**2 teaspoons Greek seasoning, divided use**  
**2 tablespoons fresh dill, divided use**  
**½ medium yellow onion, sliced**  
**4 cloves garlic, minced**  
**2 cups water**  
**1 bag (12 ounces) frozen spinach, thawed and drained**  
**Juice of 1 large lemon**  
**Salt and pepper, to taste**  
**Feta cheese crumbles, for garnish**

1. Rinse the rice until water runs clear, drain and set aside. Set a small sauté pan over medium heat. Add 1 teaspoon of olive oil and the cashews to the pan and toast until golden brown, stirring occasionally. Remove the pan from heat and stir in 1 teaspoon Greek seasoning and a pinch of dill. After removing cashews from the pan, give them a rough chop and set aside.

2. Set an Instant Pot to sauté and add 2 tablespoons olive oil and the sliced onion to the cooker's inner pot. Stir to coat onion and cook until softened, stirring

\$500 WINNER

## Roasted Vegetable Enchiladas

NANCY DENNIS  
BARTLETT EC



Who doesn't love enchiladas? This simple recipe features roasted vegetables for the filling and the sauce. If you have extra filling, use it to make more enchiladas or serve it as a side.

**SERVES 4**



**3 red bell peppers, quartered, seeds and stems removed**  
**2 zucchini, cut into 1-inch chunks**  
**2 yellow squashes, cut into 1-inch chunks**  
**½ yellow onion, cut into 1-inch chunks**  
**1 jalapeño pepper, halved, seeds and stem removed**  
**2 cloves garlic, skin on**  
**Olive oil, for drizzling**  
**8 ounces light sour cream**  
**1 teaspoon ground cumin**  
**2 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro, divided use**  
**Salt and pepper, to taste**  
**6–7 corn tortillas, warmed**  
**1 cup queso fresco, crumbled**

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Spread the vegetables and garlic onto a baking sheet and drizzle with olive oil. Roast vegetables 25–35 minutes, until slightly browned. Stir every 10 minutes, checking on garlic and bell peppers, and removing garlic once soft and bell peppers once skin is browned and beginning to peel.

2. Place the bell peppers in a bowl and cover for 10 minutes. Set aside the rest of the vegetables. Once peppers are cool enough to handle, remove the skins from the peppers and the garlic.

3. Place the bell peppers, jalapeño, garlic, sour cream, cumin and 1 tablespoon cilantro in a food processor or blender and purée until smooth. Add salt and pepper.

4. Spread a large spoonful of the sauce in an 8-by-8-inch baking dish. Roll into each corn tortilla about ¼ cup of the roasted vegetables and a sprinkling of cheese and place carefully in the dish. Spread the remaining sauce over the top.

5. Bake enchiladas 20–25 minutes. Top with remaining cheese and cilantro and serve.

## TCP \$500 Recipe Contest

**TOMATOES** DUE JAN 10

What's more perfect for summer than tomatoes? No matter how you slice them, we want your best tomato recipe. Enter at [TexasCoopPower.com/Contests](http://TexasCoopPower.com/Contests) by January 10.

CONTINUED >

## RECIPES CONTINUED

occasionally. Add garlic and sauté for about 1 minute, being careful to not burn it.

**3.** Add the water, spinach, rice, rest of the dill and 1 teaspoon Greek seasoning into the Instant Pot. Stir, place the lid and set to high pressure for 1 minute, then let rest for 15 minutes to allow the pressure to release naturally. Release excess pressure if needed before removing lid. Stir in lemon juice and salt and pepper. Sprinkle the top of the spanakorizo with cashews and cheese before serving.

**SERVES 8**

### Mujadara

SHANNON SKAALURE  
TRI-COUNTY EC

Lentils are a great ingredient for meatless meals, and this staple Middle Eastern dish is an excellent option. Even though cooking the onions down takes time, the results are worth it. Serve topped with



yogurt or labneh—strained yogurt—if you like.

**4 tablespoons olive oil**  
**2 large onions, thinly sliced**  
**Salt, to taste**  
**4 cloves garlic, thinly sliced**  
**1 teaspoon ground cumin**  
**¼ teaspoon ground allspice**  
**Pinch ground cayenne pepper**  
**Large pinch dried thyme, oregano and/or rosemary**  
**5 cups vegetable broth**  
**1 cup green, brown or red lentils**  
**¾ cup rice**  
**1–2 tablespoons lemon juice**  
**Pepper, to taste**

**Pinch red pepper flakes, for garnish**  
**Chopped fresh herbs, for garnish**

**1.** Heat olive oil in a large, deep skillet over medium heat, then add onions. Add a pinch of salt and sauté until the onions turn golden brown, 15–45 minutes, stirring often so they don't burn. Transfer half of the onions to a plate, leaving remaining half in the skillet.

**2.** Add garlic to skillet and sauté until fragrant, about 1 minute, then add cumin, allspice and cayenne and sauté a few seconds to toast the spices. Stir in herbs and broth, bring to a simmer, and add salt to taste.

**3.** Add in lentils, cover and simmer with lid cracked until lentils are almost done (25–30 minutes for green and brown lentils, 15–20 minutes for red). Stir rice into the pot and continue to cook until everything is tender, 15–20 minutes. Close lid completely if it looks too thick while cooking.

**4.** Add lemon juice and salt and pepper to taste. Top with reserved onions and garnishes.

**SERVES 8**

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**GO TEXAN.**

**TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
COMMISSIONER SID MILLER**



## Hit the Road

### Event Calendar

Fairs, festivals, food and family fun! Pick your region. Pick your month. Pick your event.

With hundreds of events across Texas listed every month, [TexasCoopPower.com](http://TexasCoopPower.com) has something for you.

**TCP Plan now**  
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# 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.

On a recent trip to Tucson, we spoke with fourth generation turquoise traders who explained that less than five percent of turquoise mined worldwide can be set into jewelry and only about twenty mines in the Southwest supply gem-quality turquoise. Once a thriving industry, many Southwest mines have run dry and are now closed.

We found a limited supply of turquoise from Arizona and snatched it up for our **Sedona Turquoise Collection**. Inspired by the work of those ancient craftsmen and designed to showcase the exceptional blue stone, each stabilized vibrant cabochon features a unique,

one-of-a-kind matrix surrounded in Bali metalwork. You could drop over \$1,200 on a turquoise pendant, or you could secure 26 carats of genuine Arizona turquoise for **just \$99**.

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COURTESY CHET GARNER

## Upscale Lodging

The Tarpon Inn embodies the historical vibe of Port A

BY CHET GARNER

**TEXANS HAVE ALWAYS** been good at telling fish stories, but the Tarpon Inn in Port Aransas can out-exaggerate even the saltiest fisherman. This beachy hotel has been giving Mustang Island visitors a place to rest their heads and share their stories since 1886.

I traveled to the coast to enjoy that golden time when the weather turns colder and “island time” slows to a standstill. After walking the quiet streets of Port Aransas, I found myself standing in front of the long, two-story building with its porch and balcony that run from end to end. Folks sat in red rocking chairs, soaking in the relaxed pace of life in Port A.

I expected the smile I received when I stepped into the small lobby, but I did not expect the lobby’s decor. Covering the walls from the base of the windows to the ceiling are more than 7,000 tarpon scales, each signed and dated by a proud angler. In the early 1900s, these colossal fish were so plentiful that Port Aransas was nicknamed “Tarpon, Texas.” When a guest caught one, they noted the catch’s size and weight on a scale removed from the fish, then signed and pinned the silver-tipped trophy to the lobby wall.

I scanned the walls and found that most of the anglers were from Texas. Some scales recorded fish that were well over 6 feet long, while others bragged that the fish was caught using only “light tackle.” I found one scale safely behind glass and inscribed with the name Franklin D. Roosevelt, who traveled to Port Aransas in 1937 while serving his second term as president. During this trip he reeled in a 5-foot-1-inch, 77-pound tarpon and added its scale to the wall.

I walked out eager to see if there were any tarpons swimming in the nearby Gulf. ■

ABOVE Chet points out the tarpon scale signed by President Roosevelt in 1937.

**TCP WEB EXTRA** See Chet’s video from the Tarpon Inn and check out his Explorations 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.

## JANUARY

01

**Austin [1-31] Fortlandia,** (512) 232-0100, [wildflower.org/event/fortlandia](http://wildflower.org/event/fortlandia)

09

**Brenham Johnny Cash Tribute by Bennie Wheels,** (979) 337-7240, [thebarnhillcenter.com/events](http://thebarnhillcenter.com/events)

12

**Seguin Seguin Chamber Virtual Centennial Celebration,** (830) 379-6382, [seguinchamber.com](http://seguinchamber.com)

14

**Amarillo [14-16, 21-24] Little Women,** (806) 355-9991, [amarillolittletheatre.org/current-season](http://amarillolittletheatre.org/current-season)

15

**San Angelo [15-16] Texas State Federation of Square & Round Dancers Nominating Meeting and Dance,** (432) 685-3226, [pbsrda.com](http://pbsrda.com)

16

**Brenham Uptown Swirl in Downtown Brenham,** (979) 337-7580, [downtownbrenham.com](http://downtownbrenham.com)

17

**Hallettsville State Championship Domino Tournament,** (361) 798-2311, [kchall.com](http://kchall.com)

22

**Amarillo [22-23] Beethoven’s Fifth & Project Trio,** (806) 376-8782, [amarillosymphony.org](http://amarillosymphony.org)

28

**New Braunfels Neal McCoy,** (830) 627-0808, [brauntex.org](http://brauntex.org)



30

**Bandera Grace Lutheran Wild Game Dinner,**  
(830) 796-3091,  
gracebandera.weebly.com/  
wild-game-dinner-2021

**Brenham Bob Wills' Texas Playboys Starring Jason Roberts,** (979) 337-7240,  
thebarnhillcenter.com/events

**Nocona Mardi Gras Ball,**  
(940) 825-3526,  
facebook.com/  
mardigrasnoconastyle

## FEBRUARY

02

**Austin Samin Nosrat,**  
(512) 474-5664,  
thelongcenter.org

03

**Bandera [3-6] Cowboy Mardi Gras,** (830) 796-4849,  
11thstreetcowboybar.com



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### Pick of the Month

#### South Texas International Film Festival

Edinburg, January 22-31  
(956) 383-6246  
stxiff.com

The festival goes online this year. Visitors to stxiff.com can watch all film selections free and on-demand, access panels for insight from guests and directors, participate in workshops, and meet celebrities virtually. The festival will feature productions from the Rio Grande Valley and more than 20 countries.

### TCP Submit Your Event

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

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Tan (247)						
Black (101)						
#369908	S 6-7 (212)	M 7½-8½ (213)	L 9-10 (214)	XL 11-12 (215)		
Mens'						
Tan (247)						
Black (101)						
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CHEROKEE COUNTY EC  
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**SABINE BREDOW**  
PEDERNALES EC  
Bald cypress trees covered in Spanish moss in the world's largest cypress forest—around Caddo Lake in deep East Texas.

**MIKE PRESTIGIACOMO**  
BARTLETT EC  
The forest *and* the trees.

**TREY WATSON**  
DEEP EAST TEXAS EC  
"Drone photo of my forested property in the East Texas summer."

## Upcoming Contests

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- DUE FEB 10** Manmade vs. Nature
- DUE MAR 10** Night Life

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

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





## Cook Like a Texan

Memorable readers' recipes now delight diners in Nevada

BY SUZANNE FEATHERSTON  
ILLUSTRATION BY MITCH BLUNT

I MIGHT NOT LIVE IN TEXAS anymore, but sometimes I still cook like a Texan.

Thank you, *Texas Co-op Power* readers, for teaching me about Southern cooking. Through the monthly reader recipe section, I learned about flavors and techniques that will stay with me forever.

When I joined *Texas Co-op Power* in 2011, I was thrilled to find out that the editorial staff participated in recipe testing for the recipe contest.

Every month the food editor would send out selected submitted recipes, and the editorial staff would race to pick out the most appealing ones to prepare for a panel of co-workers. We did not have a professional test kitchen, but we were a realistic representation of Texas home cooks.

Contestants showed their culinary acumen with instructions as simple as melting Velveeta into almost anything to the more meticulous, such as stuffing upright rigatoni noodles for Butternut Squash and Gorgonzola Rigatoni Pasta Pie With Fried Sage (July 2016).

Sometimes if I was late in choosing, I'd wind up preparing a more technical or time-consuming recipe, like the Red Velvet Cupcake in a Jar (November 2012) that took me three hours to make. At other times recipes picked me, like the Blueberry-Lime Jam (June 2012) because I owned a hot-water bath canner.

For the Chili Cook-Off contest of 2013, Jenny Sparks of Trinity Valley Electric Cooperative shared a recipe for Venison Chili that uses ground venison, chipotle peppers and hot chocolate mix. Being the only staff member with venison in my freezer at the time, I lucked out with that one. Not only did it win the contest, but it also became a favorite in my recipe repertoire. I make it mostly for company, often using beef instead of venison and adding beans (controversial, I know) to make it stretch. People love the sweet and smoky flavors, and I love telling them about *Texas Co-op Power*.

Several other Texas recipes and concepts made their way into my cooking routine, thanks to the magazine. Sweet and Savory Sprouts (March 2017) with pancetta or bacon and maple syrup, it turns out, is good hot or cold. Aunt Sharn's Saag (July 2011) is a yummy way to use an overabundance of greens such as spinach from the garden, and it freezes well.

The experience also exposed me to using nontraditional ingredients in pesto, such as beans as in the Cannellini Pesto Pasta Sauce (March 2012) and pecans instead of pine nuts as in Texas Pecan Pesto (March 2012).

These and many other *Texas Co-op Power* recipes are now folded into my binder, so I can continue to cook like a Texan. ■





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