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MAY 2023

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**TRI-COUNTY
EC NEWS**

SEE PAGE 18



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May 2023



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08 Surf Your Turf

Texas doesn't have the best or the biggest waves, but that's never stopped surfers.

*By Jennifer Simonson
Photos by Kenny Braun*

In a Whole New Light

A Rio Grande Valley museum showcases a transcendental collection of century-old art.

*By Eileen Mattei
Photos by John Faulk*

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By Shane Torno

ON THE COVER

Surfers arrive at the beach on South Padre Island.

Photo by Kenny Braun

ABOVE

Te Deum, the Gelman Stained Glass Museum's largest work, invites contemplation.

Photo by John Faulk



EISENHOWER STATE PARK

A Most Scenic Century

ADVENTURER PAM LEBLANC, a frequent *TCP* contributor, appreciates the splendor of Texas' state parks about as much as anybody: "I don't own a ranch or a big chunk of Texas wilderness, but because of our state park system, I feel like part of this big, beautiful state belongs to me."

Thanks to state leaders 100 years ago, Pam and all Texans can escape to 89 state parks, historic sites and natural areas. The State Parks Board was created in May 1923 to begin setting aside land for parks, and in 1963 it merged with another agency to form the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. Happy trails, y'all.

May 20

National Be a Millionaire Day

Texas has some 650,000 million-aire households, second only to California.

Made in a Shade

Viva Magenta—a nuanced crimson that balances warm and cool—is the color of the year. The hue, announced last winter by Pantone Color Institute experts, was inspired by the red dye derived from cochineals. "This color merges the warmth of the natural world with the endless, rich possibilities of the digital space," says Pantone's Elley Chang. Learn more about the tiny insects called cochineals in our 2019 story *The Bugs That Make You See Red*.



TCP Contests and More

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FINISH THIS SENTENCE

MOM ALWAYS SAID ...

TCP 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 town.

Here are some of the responses to our March prompt: **If I could fly, I would ...**

Finally take down all my Christmas lights.

WILLIAM MARTIN
SAN BERNARD EC
WALLER

Never be stuck in traffic again.

NANCY DABNEY
HILCO EC
HILLSBORO

Really hope I wasn't afraid of heights anymore.

JUDI RAISH
TRI-COUNTY EC
GRANBURY

Hope I could land.

KENNETH BRINSON
WISE EC
PARADISE

Not sit on power lines.

TERRY WOLBRUECK
HEART OF TEXAS EC
MOFFAT

Visit our website to see more responses.

Play It Safe

May is National Electrical Safety Month. It's also when many of us hit the water. Never swim near a boat, marina or launching ramp. Residual current could put anyone in the water at risk of electric shock drowning.

“I've learned that success comes in a very prickly package.”

—SANDRA BULLOCK



Ironing Out the Rough Edges

SOME 1,000 MEN and even more horses and mules trained in San Antonio 125 years ago in preparation for their participation in the Spanish-American War.

By the end of May 1898, Theodore Roosevelt, above center, and his Rough Riders were on their way to Florida before sailing to Cuba, where the future president led the charge up San Juan Hill.

While in San Antonio, the Rough Riders trained at what is now Riverside Golf Course, near the water hazard on the 16th hole.



COURTESY CHET GARNER

'Lonesome' in a Library
 “The Wittliff Collections took us by total surprise. What a gem! This museum within a beautiful campus library offers surprisingly rich, diverse exhibits.”

SARA DUNN
 PEDERNALES EC
 WIMBERLEY

Allies in Aging

A Pet Project [March 2023] resonated perfectly. I have an 18-year-old black beauty named Rhiannan. She was my wife’s loyal companion until my wife passed away over five years ago and has since become very needy and close to me. She is skin and bones but eats well and fortunately does not appear to be in any distress or pain.

I am 82 myself, so we are dealing with aging together. I hope to outlive her so she won’t have to suffer.

Charles L. Glisan
 Pedernales EC
 Cedar Park

We need to honor and appreciate these men who risk their lives every day [First Responders, February 2023].

BETH CHAPMAN
 VIA FACEBOOK

Readers on a Roundup

Kudos to Eric Schlegel for his excellent photography and capturing the voices of the Huebner Bros. Cattle Co. cowhands in this fascinating story [Until the Cows Swim Home, March 2023].

As readers we felt we were moving across the Matagorda and Colorado waters, past the snakes, onto the island and back to the ranch.

Martha Everman Jones
 Victoria EC
 Victoria

Dove Doings

We had a *Lonesome Dove* party 30 years ago. Everyone had to dress as their favorite character of the miniseries/book. My husband dressed as Augustus McCrae, and I dressed as the stone-throwing Janey. My mother dressed as Peach and carried a live chicken under her arm.

Susan Mansell
 Coleman County EC
 Ballinger

CORRECTION

Though the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives had said in 2016 that the deadly 2013 fertilizer explosion in West was triggered by an intentionally set fire, other experts have since raised doubts about that finding [Rise Up West, April 2023].



ERICH SCHLEGEL

TCP WRITE TO US
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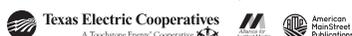
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Please include your electric co-op and town. Letters may be edited for clarity and length.

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TEXAS CO-OP POWER Volume 79, Number 11 (USPS 540-560). *Texas Co-op Power* is published monthly by Texas Electric Cooperatives. Periodical postage paid at Austin, TX, and at additional offices. TEC is the statewide association representing 77 electric cooperatives. *Texas Co-op Power's* website is TexasCoopPower.com. Call (512) 454-0311 or email editor@TexasCoopPower.com.
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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 purchased it 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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YOUR



TURF

Texas doesn't have the best or the biggest waves, but that's never stopped surfers

DURING THE HOT SUMMER months, thunderstorms develop in Central Africa each afternoon like clockwork. If the monsoon is at least partially active, a disturbance can intensify over North Africa as it marches west before being thrust out over the Atlantic Ocean near Cape Verde. Sometimes storms peter out right there, but if the ocean is warm and the conditions are right, a storm can continue its trek across the Atlantic, picking up power along the way until it reaches the Gulf of Mexico.

That's when a small but mighty group of Texas surf enthusiasts break out their boards.

Hurricanes bring world-class waves to the sluggish waters of the Texas Gulf Coast—waves that area surfers sometimes wait years for. When a storm begins tracking on the radar and swell reports look promising, pent-up surfers call out sick, miss family obligations and put plans on hold to head to the nearest beach.

“Most people are driving away from the ocean during hurricanes, but Texas surfers are driving towards it,” says William “Boog” Cram, owner of Ohana Surf & Skate in Galveston.

The existence of a passionate surfing community in Texas might come as a surprise to many—even those who grew up here. But surfing culture in Texas dates back to the 1960s, when the surf craze perpetrated by the Beach Boys, the documentary *The Endless Summer* and Gidget movies swept the nation. Much more recently, a renewed interest in the sport began when the pandemic pushed more people to embrace outdoor activities. Landlocked Texans wanting to escape city lockdowns headed to the beach, rented surfboards and tried their hand at a sport many people don't realize exists here.

“Usually when you tell people that you surf in Texas, the immediate response is: ‘There is surf in Texas?’” says Frank Floyd, longtime surfer and owner of Wind & Wave Watersports in Corpus Christi. That question is often followed up with a curiosity of what it's like to surf in Texas.

Are Texas waves large? No.

Do they have power behind them? Also no.

But can one surf in crystal clear water so beautiful that they forget about the waves? Absolutely not.

Surfing in Texas is not for the faint of heart. The state's 367 miles of coastline have a reputation for producing small, choppy, inconsistent surf in water with a less-than-ideal hue, and the Texans who surf here accept that. There's no false bravado that even the waves are bigger in Texas. What there is among surfers is an unwavering appreciation for the waves in their backyard.

“Texans are extremely enthusiastic about surfing in Texas. We have an amazing culture here,” Brad Lomax says. “To be a surfer in Texas you need to be an optimist with low standards.” A good sense of humor helps, too. Lomax has sold T-shirts that read, “Texas Waves: Slow, mushy and hard to catch” and “Texas Surfing: It is better than it looks.”

Lomax has been surfing the waters of the Coastal Bend since the mid-1960s. Originally from San Antonio, he spent his teenage summers selling T-shirts on the beach in Port Aransas just to live near the ocean. The surfer teen grew into a businessman who never left. After the success of his first Corpus Christi restaurant in 1983, Lomax opened the Executive Surf Club in 1990.

“My friends and I all had jobs, but we also surfed as much as we could, so we called ourselves the Executive Surf Club,” he says. “I wanted to open a place with a vibe where everyone could come together—guys from the refinery, old ladies, surfers, everyone—and unwind after a long day of work.”

There's no missing the surf vibe when walking into the brick building originally built in the 1800s. Surfboards line the walls, hang over the bar and are used as tables.

Fifteen years after opening the Executive Surf Club, Lomax along with a good friend, surfing legend Pat McGee, opened the Texas Surf Museum next door. Before it closed in September, the institution told the story of the evolution of Texas surfing with photos, vintage memorabilia, newspaper clippings, short videos and more than 30 legendary surfboards.

Galveston also draws surfers despite its similarly less-than-stellar waves. The continental shelf along the barrier island is long and shallow, creating small swells. The wimpy waves are welcoming for newcomers to the sport. Every summer, children in surf camps can be seen on the beach practicing pop-ups and in the water riding waves with a face full of concentration, arms up, hands pointed

OPPOSITE FROM TOP Rachel Gore takes on a wave at Isla Blanca Park on South Padre Island. A classic woody, the most iconic of surfmobiles.

Where To **HANG 10** in Texas

1 Surfside Beach Just south of Galveston, in Brazoria County, you'll find a variety of waves, including big swells, for a range of skill levels.

2 Matagorda Peninsula Specifically, where the Colorado River empties into the Gulf. The strong waves there, thanks to the area's deep ocean floor, are best for experienced surfers.

3 Port Mansfield Jetty The cut that separates North and South Padre islands is incredibly isolated but has arguably the best waves in the state—for seasoned surfers.

4 South Padre Island Jetties The gentle beach-break waves here, where the continental shelf drops off dramatically, are great for longboarding—from beginners to pros.

5 Boca Chica Beach Just a little farther south, Boca Chica is known for occasionally producing barreling waves when the swells are strong. With sometimes serious undertow, this beach is for the best of the best.



toward the shore—just like they're taught. The shallow water, relatively flat sandy bottom and lack of rocks make area beaches a great place to learn.

"If you can surf here, you can surf anywhere," Cram says from his surf shop in Galveston. "When you can master the wave here, you can take those skills to any waves around the world."

Cram started surfing in Galveston in the early 1970s after inheriting a hand-me-down surfboard from a friend's older brother. He and a friend would ride bikes 1 mile to the 47th Street break, between them holding the 9-foot board weighing close to 40 pounds. He has been surfing and skateboarding the island ever since. In 2005, Cram opened his brightly colored, Hawaii-style surf and skate shop across from one of Galveston's most popular surf spots—



the Pleasure Pier. His team teaches surfers to catch a wave even in the worst conditions.

While the beaches near Galveston are perfect for newbie surfers, as one travels south along the coast, the waves become bigger and more powerful. This is because the shallow continental shelf of the Gulf gradually deepens near the southern point of South Padre Island.

Beaches with the best waves, like Port Mansfield Jetty, are often in secluded areas requiring four-wheel-drive vehicles. Because of that, most surfers stick to their local beaches for an afternoon surf session. Weather patterns can change quickly and never last long. When the perfect conditions don't arrive, surfers make do.

"Texas gets some great quality surfers because we have to make something out of nothing," Floyd says.

When traveling, Texas surfers tend to have the most fun of anyone in the water, Floyd says. They appreciate waves that other surfers might take for granted, knowing that they're probably better than the waves at home. Unless, of course, a hurricane is on its way.

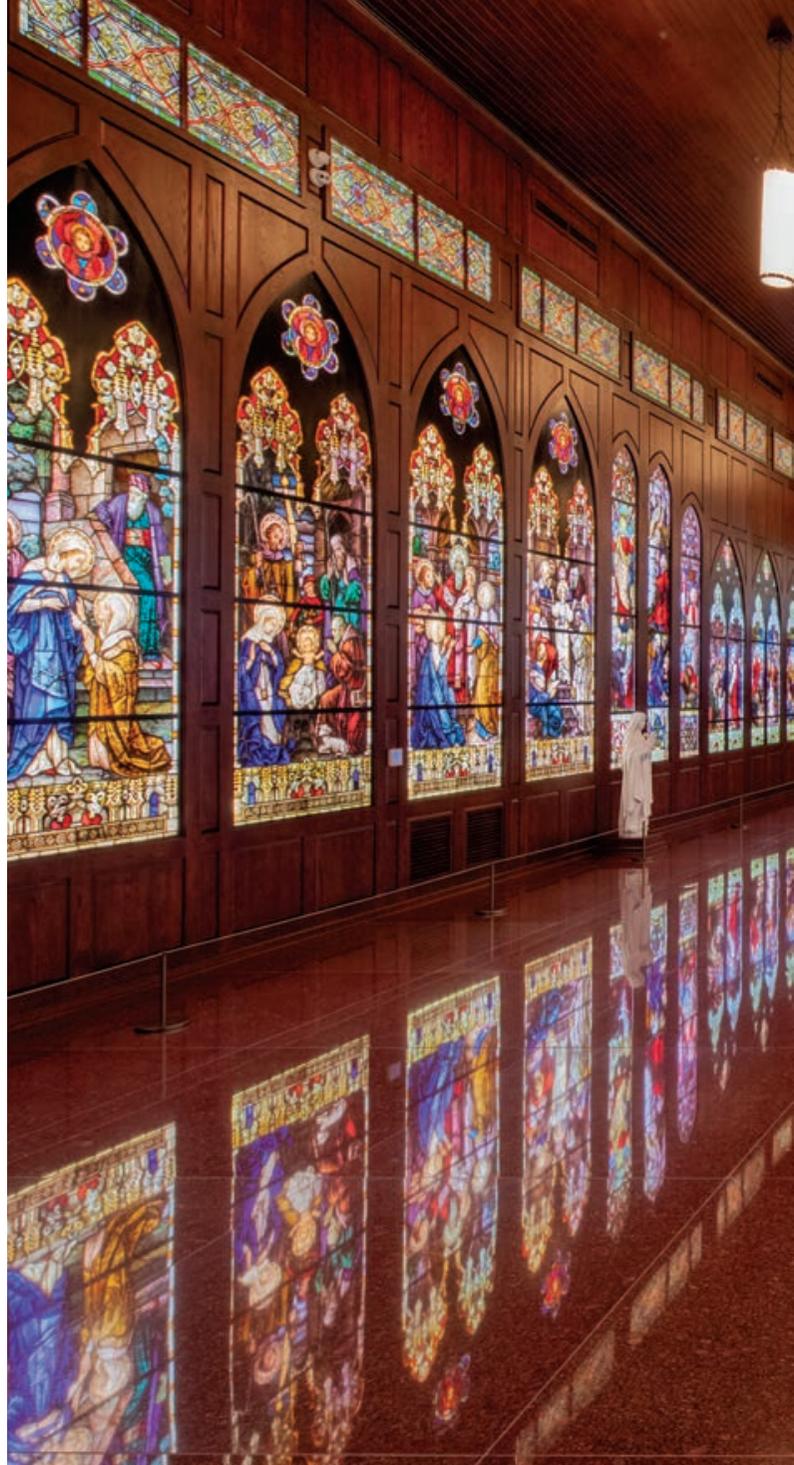
"We have to work at getting good in Texas," he says. "Then we can go anywhere." ■

CLOCKWISE FROM OPPOSITE PAGE Catching a wave off Port Aransas. Aarin Hartwell, with baby Brixton, is founder of SPI Sessions, a surf and water sports shop on South Padre Island. Brad Lomax has been surfing the waters of the Coastal Bend since the mid-1960s. A board, a bike and, down the road, a beach. Henry Fry's surfboards were some of the first made in Texas, in the 1960s.

IN A WHOLE NEW LIGHT

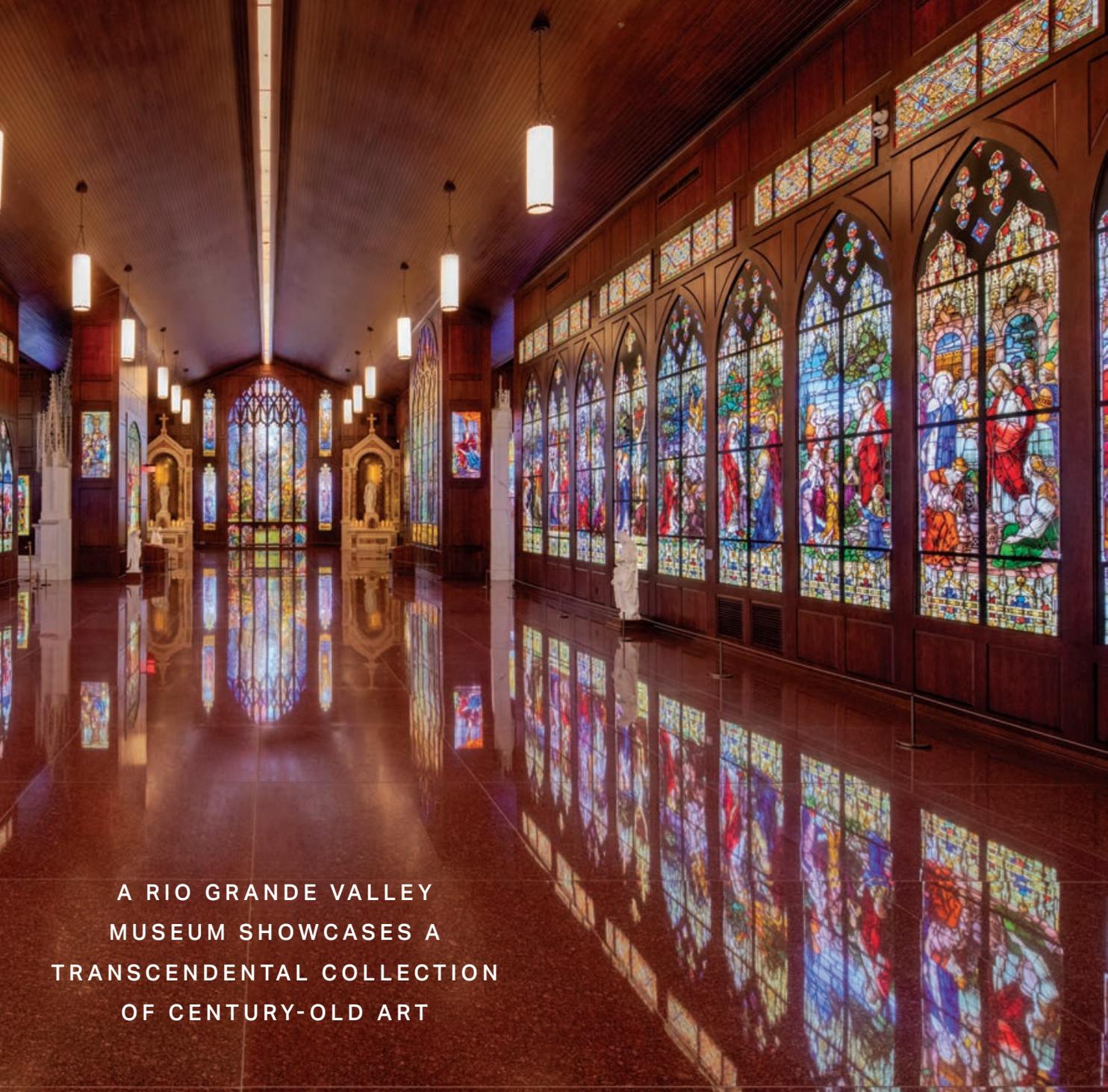


ABOVE The museum boasts eight Tiffany stained-glass windows depicting the Beatitudes, or blessings, including Blessed Are the Merciful. OPPOSITE A navelike passage illuminates works from now-closed churches.



I PULL OPEN THE DOOR of the Gelman Stained Glass Museum and step inside a kaleidoscope. More than 150 stained-glass windows and their reflections in the highly polished red granite floor immerse me in light, color and space. Then my eyes and brain begin to separate the profusion of shapes and colors into windows of religious scenes ranging from 10 to 25 feet tall, illuminated by what seems to be heavenly light.

Inside a gray stone building just off the highway in the heart of San Juan, in the Rio Grande Valley, the narrow, cross-shaped space is cool and dim. Most of the stained-glass windows in the museum, which opened in November 2021, originally graced now-closed East Coast churches, where they had been dedicated as memorials to departed loved ones. In their safe, new climate-controlled home, the complex LED arrays that backlight all the windows provide



A RIO GRANDE VALLEY
MUSEUM SHOWCASES A
TRANSCENDENTAL COLLECTION
OF CENTURY-OLD ART

a steady, otherworldly glow that compensates for variations in the thickness of the glass and paint amid the absence of natural light.

About 30 years ago, an auction catalog prompted Lawrence Gelman, an Edinburg anesthesiologist, to go to Atlanta, Georgia, to view a stained-glass window as it was being repaired. He later phoned in his winning auction bid and purchased the 4-by-7-foot landscape. “There’s something about the vividness of colors when light passes through stained glass,” Gelman says.

Captivated by the art, Gelman delved into the history and mastery involved, collecting more and more stained-glass windows until he had enough to fill a museum, which he chose to locate in San Juan, near the Basilica of Our Lady of San Juan del Valle. That shrine annually receives more than 1 million

visitors, an audience primed to appreciate Gelman’s collection.

“Dr. Gelman wanted to replicate a sacred, transcendental experience,” says Miriam Cepeda, the museum’s director.

He has succeeded, no question.

Created between 1880 and 1910 by 12 master glasswork artists and studios of the art nouveau era, the works comprise the largest American museum collection of stained-glass windows. And with 71 Louis Comfort Tiffany windows, the Gelman has the largest collection of Tiffany glass windows in the U.S. Other noted glass artists represented here include John La Farge, Mary Elizabeth Tillinghast and those at J&R Lamb Studios—the oldest continuously operating glass studio in the nation, dating to 1857.

Cepeda gives me a quick explanation of stained glass. Traditionally, stained glass was actually painted glass.



WITH 71 LOUIS COMFORT TIFFANY WINDOWS, THE GELMAN HAS THE LARGEST COLLECTION OF TIFFANY GLASS WINDOWS IN THE U.S.

The glass panels are supported and joined by flexible channels of lead called comes—and, in some cases, by copper foil. Tiffany Studios popularized the use of opalescent glass and layered glass to achieve shimmering, flowing colors for landscapes. Looking closely, I notice that even the faces and hands of Christ, the apostles and other religious figures have been painted onto the glass.

MANY OF THE WINDOWS represent biblical scenes, such as the Nativity, flight into Egypt, Good Shepherd, and Madonna and child, as interpreted by the artists. But La Farge's works here mostly portray medieval scenes.

The vivid jewel tones of Franz Mayer's stained-glass windows contrast with the luminous blues and greens of Tiffany Studios' masterpieces, such as the *Te Deum*. The museum is just one glorious work of art after another.

An eye-catching group of eight Tiffany windows portrays angels as stern warriors and loving guardians presenting the Beatitudes—sayings attributed to Jesus. These windows adorned a private mausoleum, out of the public eye for 108 years, until Gelman put them on display.

Similar memorial inscriptions evoke a bygone time, such as "To the Glory of God and in Loving Memory of Charles Chamberlain Gay 1835–1913." One narrow window honors the memory of three women who died in the wreck of a ship called the Paul Jones in January 1899 in the Gulf of Mexico.

The small but magnificent north chapel shimmers with windows rich in pastels. In the south chapel, a large pipe organ and an electronic organ, backed by superb sound systems, enhance the sensory feast. The museum hosts orchestral and chamber music concerts and has been the setting for weddings, workshops and secular celebrations.

The museum chose not to add interpretive displays to the windows, instead providing guests a compact map with QR codes that, with a click of your phone camera, link to in-depth descriptions of the windows, their artists and their techniques. The map also identifies the marble altars, statues and mosaics throughout the building.

La Casa del Vitral, an art studio in Edinburg, took on the restoration of the century-old windows and installed the glass art in the museum. They also made replicas of several windows held in other museums.

Admission to the Gelman Museum is by appointment only, made through its website, gelmanmuseum.org.

Once visitors are inside, benches invite sitting and contemplating. Subtle light washes over me while I listen to recorded voices raised in Gregorian chant. Peace and beauty. ■

The Good Shepherd, baptism of Jesus and flight into Egypt are among the biblical stories portrayed in stained glass framed by red oak paneling.



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How To Rock a Walking Stick

An essential part of a gentleman's wardrobe



In the 17th century, the walking stick overtook the sword as an essential part of a gentleman's wardrobe. Though it was primarily used as a decorative accessory, it could also function as a weapon if necessary. For men of the era, these walking sticks were a statement piece, and a way to communicate their wealth and refinement.

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Don't delay: Our must-have Santa Fe Walking Stick was one of our best-selling items this past year. Because of this, we can only offer 723 walking sticks at this price with this ad! See why Stauer is becoming one of America's fastest-growing sellers of walking sticks today!

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— Steven, Arlington, VA



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— Chas, Placida, FL

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**DARRYL
SCHRIVER**

PRESIDENT/
CHIEF
EXECUTIVE
OFFICER

MEMBER FOCUSED

MAY IS ALWAYS a cheerful month full of celebrations – Mother’s Day, graduations, Memorial Day and more – each with their own special purpose. The landscape has greened up, spring sports are in full swing, kids are looking forward to the first day of summer, and many are planning summer getaways.

Over the past 26 months we have been working through the aftereffects of Winter Storm Uri, which included the bankruptcy of our wholesale power supplier, Brazos Electric Power Cooperative. We are on our third month of procuring electricity from the ERCOT grid outside of Brazos, and members are starting to experience bill relief for the first time since Winter Storm Uri. Natural gas prices soared, causing electric prices to rise. I have been saying “we are in this together” the entire time, and I truly mean that. You, me, the board of directors, the employees – we are all in this together. We are fighting the same fight and feeling the same effects of Uri and the Brazos bankruptcy. As your President/CEO, I have put your best interest at the forefront and continue to work toward the best solution with the least impact. 800944873

As a not-for-profit, member-owned electric provider we truly care about you. We strive to take care of you every day by providing safe, reliable and competitive electric and customer service. This is more than our mission, and every employee here at the co-op has you in mind as the priority. Your co-op is constantly looking for ways to improve and find new ways to be involved. This year, we are planning to attend community events throughout our service territory to speak with members. We hope to see you and your family at our first event, the Roanoke Roundup on Saturday, May 6.



LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The 88th Texas Legislative session convened on January 10 and runs through May 29. So far, hundreds of bills have been drafted, filed, and read. Here at Tri-County Electric Co-op, we have been advocating hard for Senate Bill 1983 (Sen. Robert Nichols, Jacksonville) and House Bill 4590 (Rep. Angelia Orr, Itasca). This legislation relates to costs incurred due to Winter Storm Uri and provides bill relief to electric cooperative consumers. If the bills pass, funds will go directly to you as the end consumer. No utility, including Tri-County Electric Co-op, will use these appropriated funds for anything aside from providing rate relief to consumers.

BRAZOS HARDSHIP FUND

A ratepayer hardship fund was established as a result of the Brazos bankruptcy to help low-income residential members offset the costs incurred during Winter Storm Uri.

Tri-County Electric Co-op members may be eligible for the program if your household income is below 150% of the federal poverty level based on 2023 poverty guidelines; you qualify for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

Documentation needed for your application:

- A full version of a recent billing statement that includes your service address, account number, account holder’s name.
- Documentation that you or someone in your home participates in a qualifying program, or proof of household income. Examples of accepted documentation is available at brazoshardshipfund.com.

Program eligibility lasts for one year and members can renew yearly as long as eligibility requirements are met. For more information and to apply, please visit brazoshardshipfund.com or call 844-770-8549 (operational hours are 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m., Monday – Friday). 655000002



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

MEMBER ENGAGEMENT EVENTS

Tri-County Electric Cooperative will be attending existing community events in our service territory communities in an effort to reach more of our membership. This will provide you with one-on-one access with employees across departments in your co-op. Win bill credits and take home freebies when you visit our bright red tent and register. Current members will take home an exclusive gift if you show us your bill.

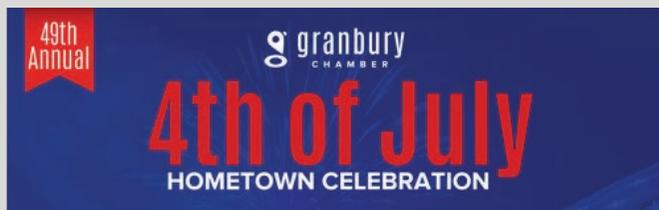
Check out the upcoming events below and find an event that's near you!

UPCOMING EVENTS



MAY 6

Oak Street
Roanoke, Texas



July 1-4 200 West Pearl Street
Granbury, Texas

PARKER COUNTY PEACH FESTIVAL

July 8 Historic Downtown
Weatherford, Texas

Dove Ridge event center, winery, and vineyard feels like the Texas Hill Country - in the heart of Parker County

BY BOB BUCKEL, COMMUNICATIONS CONTENT SPECIALIST

VINES WINES & WEDDINGS

When you think of the pioneers who settled this part of Texas, the picture that springs to mind isn't usually a boutique winery or an elegant wedding venue.

But when Joey and Janan Benefiel carved a vineyard and event center out of the brush on a rocky hillside northwest of Weatherford, they channeled the same spirit that powered the farmers who cleared these fields with their own hands.

Today, they can stand in the upstairs window of the soaring event center and point out the homesteads dotting the countryside, in the heart of Tri-County Electric Co-op's original service area. Descendants of many of those pioneer families are still around, but new houses are springing up everywhere. Agriculture today is usually a few cattle, hay fields or a big garden.

For the Benefiel family, agriculture is grapes. About half of the grapes that feed Dove Ridge Winery come from this hillside. The tasting room sits at the base of a rocky bluff crowned by the event venue, accessed by a road that winds up through the vines.

It looks like the Hill Country - or even Italy, Spain or Portugal - and it feels like it has always been there. Joey and Janan smile as they tell the story, but it was not an easy journey.



CEDAR, STONE AND WINE

Joey, a master plumber, sold his business in 2018. But in January 2014, when he and Janan bought 56 acres off FM 730, those skills, equipment and crew were essential.

That Valentine's day, he hauled a table, chairs and a grill up the hill, brought a bottle of wine and some flowers, cooked steaks - and showed Janan where the wedding venue would be. 46811001

Turning that dream into reality was anything but romantic.

"Little did I know what I was getting into,"

Joey laughs. "It took me and another guy two days to go 40 feet, taking turns with the jackhammer, just to get the plumbing in."

Janan's brother, Vance Timm, is a contractor; he and Joey had worked together for years. Their combined experience built the event center, a stone and brick building with floor-to-ceiling windows looking out over the treetops in every direction.

Janan's experience included floral design, 20 years in health care as a patient advocate, and the business side of the plumbing company. All of it comes in handy as she manages the books and arranges weddings and other events.



Joey's sister, Patti Bush, is a partner in the winery – making it a true family business.

But Joey and Janan's son, Forrest, was the catalyst.

While earning a degree in biochemistry, he worked at a couple of North Texas vineyards, graduating from the University of North Texas just as his parents decided to put in a vineyard.

"It was perfect timing," he said.

His dad had always wanted to grow grapes, and had experimented with home wine-making kits. But if Joey dipped his toe in that water, his son dove in head-first.

Forrest is the winemaker for Dove Ridge, and the award-winning product reflects his training, talent and experience.

He oversees the entire process, monitoring everything with spreadsheets that show sun and rain, pH levels, brix (sugar) levels, when the vines were pruned, sprayed and picked – and the entire fermentation process.

"When you really look at it, it's like any other agriculture," Janan said. "You're farmers. You're relying on the weather and the rain and all that. We're just grape farmers."

"Wine making? It's an art and a craft."

"It's also a lot of science," Forrest added.

PLANTING WITH A JACKHAMMER

In 2017, two weeks before the wedding venue opened, Joey and a helper set out to plant grapes. They started at the top with a nine-inch auger, and ended up back on the jackhammer. They would go down two-and-a-half feet, backfill the hole with topsoil and plant a vine. 8004244701

"The vines really struggle in that area, but the quality is just phenomenal," Joey said.

An elaborate drip irrigation system makes sure the vines have enough water to survive the brutal Texas summers. Tanks below hold 8,000 gallons, feeding miles of pipe and tubing.

With grapes in the ground, Janan started booking weddings. They hosted 42 in 2017 – their first year – then 75 the next year and close to 100 in 2019. They had 120 events booked for 2020 when the COVID-19 pandemic shut them down.

"We lost a lot of business," Joey said.

Restrictions subsided, and they were able to resume weddings in June. But the tasting room shut down for six months. "Nobody was buying curbside wine," Joey said.

By fall, they were back in business, doing tastings and selling bottles. But the coming winter held another surprise.

'WEATHER IN A GLASS'

Freezes, heat and drought have always been challenges to agriculture in this part of Texas. Winter Storm Uri, in February 2021, took it to a new level.

"We lost about 1,500 vines," Janan said. "Those were our oldest, most established vines. We had planted them in 2014 and the trunks were as big around as your arm. It was like losing kids. It was very emotional because we'd all been on our hands and knees planting those."

In 2022, heat and drought claimed more. The vineyard is now back up to about 9,000 vines – of nine different varieties – as they continue to test and see which varieties are the most productive for this soil and this area.



L-R: Joey Benefiel, Janan Benefiel, holding Patti's granddaughter Colette, Michaela Norton, Jorden King, Zulema Chavez, Forrest Benefiel, Patti Bush and Nicolle Boyd.



“Each grape can typically do about one to two tons per acre, whereas some of them that we grow can do three to five tons,” Forrest said. “One tiny little corner of this vineyard here, right out in front, can actually produce about five tons per acre.

“It’s just so unpredictable,” Janan added. “That’s weather in a glass, right there.”

Weather controls when the grapes are harvested and consequently, when the wine making process starts – usually late July or August. Red grapes are fermented along with the skins to achieve the desired color, then the wine is filtered out.

“The first seven days sets the wine on its course,” Forrest said. “Once it gets past that, there’s only so much you can do.”

The wine is fermented in thousand-liter tanks – about 1,300 bottles. When a tank is finished, the winemaker begins analyzing flavor and blending to achieve the perfect profile.

It’s a steady 60 degrees in the winery – a popular spot for workers to duck in out of the summer heat. That illustrates how vital the power supply is from Tri-County Electric Co-op.

“We never lost power during the [February 2021] winter storm,” Janan said. “We have always received amazing service from Tri-County – from the engineering department when we first coordinated power, to the workers who installed the lines, everyone has been polite, professional and very friendly.

“We love working with a company that hasn’t lost touch with its customers.”

‘WINE SNOBS’ NOT ALLOWED

Customer relationships are a key at Dove Ridge Winery, too. When they decide on a new blend, as Forrest calculates which wines to add, and how much, customer input reigns supreme.

“We love that we still have that personal touch,” Janan said. “We can get to know our customers and really talk to them about the wines and see what they like. It gives Forrest great input when they can say, ‘We love this, we love that it’s layered, with profiles, we love that it has Petite Sirah in it.’ Those are things he’s just using like a little computer.”

The winemaker’s art requires a computer and a crystal ball, Forrest said. 800937138

“You never know how it’s going to be after they bottle it,” he added. “Everything is about anticipating changes, trying to see into the future.”

Dove Ridge is considered a “boutique winery” because it produces less than 5,000 cases a year. But its wines have won numerous awards at the Teksom and Lone Star competitions. In 2021, the Dove Ridge Sangiovesi took double gold at Teksom.

The entire process is done in-house: growing the grapes, crushing and fermenting them, then blending and bottling the wine. In the tasting room, people can glimpse the entire spectrum.

“Really, nobody needs to be snooty about wine,” Janan said. “A good wine is whatever a person prefers – your preference, your palate. Everything is going to taste different to everyone.”

As a scene for celebrations, the place has come a long way since Joey and Janan held that Valentine’s Day dinner nine years ago. This past March, Forrest and his fiancé Sarah Potts celebrated their wedding on the same hilltop – but with better views.

A vivid reminder that with hard work, dreams do indeed bear fruit. ★

DIRECTOR NOMINATIONS

BY ANNIE WATSON, ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT OF COMMUNICATIONS

DEMOCRATIC MEMBER CONTROL is one of the seven cooperative principles that makes our business model special. Tri-County Electric Cooperative is governed and regulated by a board of directors that equitably represents our diverse communities. Each director who sits on the board is a member of the co-op. As a Tri-County Electric Co-op member, you have the opportunity to vote on those who represent you in the board room each year. 168900102

This year director districts 1, 2 and 4 are up for election. Director nomination applications for members seeking nomination by committee were due on Thursday, March 9. The Committee on Nominations & Qualifications report is below. The deadline for members seeking nomination by member petition was Thursday, April 13, and will be reviewed by the cooperative attorney. The approved slate of candidates will be published in the June *Texas Co-op Power* magazine.

2023 ELECTION

While director candidates are nominated from those in their district, every member can vote in the director election. Under the co-op business model, every member is entitled to an equal vote – one member, one vote. We partnered with Survey and Ballot Systems, a third-party election service, again this year to conduct the election. You can expect to receive your official 2023 election ballot on the back of the September *Texas Co-op Power*. If you have a valid email on file with the co-op, you will also receive an email with a personalized link to your ballot on September 1 inviting you to participate in the election. We encourage you to review the email on file by logging in to your online member portal at tcectexas.com. 3198100001

Director Elections will begin in September. Watch for more info in future *Texas Co-op Power* issues.

COMMITTEE ON NOMINATIONS & QUALIFICATIONS REPORT

The Committee on Nominations & Qualifications met on Monday, March 13, to accept and review applications from members seeking nomination to the board. The Committee reviewed four applications and recommended the following candidates to the board of directors:

DISTRICT 1

Kevin Ingle, incumbent

DISTRICT 2

Margaret Koprek, incumbent

DISTRICT 4

Jerry Walden, incumbent

David Miller, nomination candidate

2023 COMMITTEE ON NOMINATIONS AND QUALIFICATIONS MEMBERS

Jeffrey Bass, District 1 | **Christin Bugaj**, District 2 | **J. Steven Bartley**, District 3, Chairman | **Randy Marshall**, District 4 | **Ramey Keeth**, District 5 | **Danny Tuggle**, District 6 | **Ranell Scott**, District 7 | **Paula Baron**, District 8 | **Wayne Parkman**, District 9





Tasha Carte I work for you

If you ask Tasha Carte to pick the best thing about working at Tri-County Electric Cooperative, she'll have a tough time.

Working with members, the four-day week, being close to home, CARES, co-workers – there's a lot to like. But she'd probably go with "family-friendly."

A Northwest High School graduate, Tasha grew up in the area; her parents are Tri-County members. Now, her life centers around her family: husband Brandon and their two boys, ages nine

and six. A busy mom, she juggles school activities, ballgames in multiple sports, homework, meals, bedtimes and more.

"It's hard, but I wouldn't trade it," she said. "I'm very grateful this company is family-friendly – some days I feel like I barely get any sleep and here I am again. But they're flexible. 444496005

"I've never had a job that was so family-oriented," she added. "They put your family first."

After six years in the medical field, Tasha started at Tri-County in February 2020. She trained in Azle, then went to Keller just as lobbies shut down due to COVID. Currently she's in "e-coms" – processing applications, calling members back, responding to emails.

She finds the stress level is actually lower at Tri-County.

"I like my job," she said. "You get some upset members, but for the most part they're pleasant. I love working with people."

CARES – the co-op's charitable arm that helps employees and members in times of need – is a big thing.

"A lot of people don't see that – what we do for our members – but it's great to be part of that."

Tri-County Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy Cooperative

CONTACT US

200 Bailey Ranch Road
Aledo, TX 76008
Phone 817-444-3201
Web tcectexas.com

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Darryl Schriver

Board of Directors

Max Waddell, District 9 - Chairman
John Killough, District 6 - Vice Chairman
Margaret Koprek, District 2 - Secretary/Treasurer
Kevin Ingle, District 1
Jorden Wood, District 3
Jerry A. Walden, District 4
Steve V. Harris, District 5
Sommer Portwood, District 7
Michael Sivertsen, District 8

24/7

Outage Reporting

For information and to report outages, please contact us.

Online: oms.tcectexas.com
App: TCEC Connect
Phone: 817-444-3201
Text: OUTAGE to 25069

ABOUT TRI-COUNTY ELECTRIC CO-OP

Tri-County Electric Co-op owns and maintains more than 9,900 miles of line to provide electric service to more than 105,000 members in Archer, Baylor, Denton, Foard, Haskell, Hood, Jack, King, Knox, Palo Pinto, Parker, Stonewall, Tarrant, Throckmorton, Wilbarger, and Wise counties.

OFFICE LOCATIONS

Aledo
200 Bailey Ranch Road, Aledo 76008

Azle
600 NW Parkway, Azle 76020

Granbury
1623 Weatherford Highway, Granbury 76048

Keller
4900 Keller-Hicks Road, Fort Worth 76244

Seymour
419 N. Main, Seymour 76380

IT PAYS TO STAY INFORMED

Find your account number in pages 18-25 of *Texas Co-op Power*, and you will receive a \$20 credit on your electric bill. Simply contact one of the offices listed above and make them aware of your discovery!

VISIT US ONLINE

tcectexas.com
[Facebook.com/TCECTexas](https://www.facebook.com/TCECTexas)

PHOTO SUBMISSION THIS IS HOME

Submit a photo of what home means to you for the chance to be featured in the August issue of *Texas Co-op Power*!

Full details at tcectexas.com/photo

Photos due by May 26, 2023

country pie

BY MELINDA JACKSON
GRANBURY

CRUST

- ½ cup Hunt's Tomato Sauce
- ½ cup breadcrumbs
- ¼ cup chopped onions
- 1 ½ tsp of salt
- 1 lb. ground beef
- ¼ cup chopped green peppers
- ⅛ tsp oregano

FILLING

- 1 ⅓ cup minute rice
- 1 ½ cup Hunt's Tomato Sauce
- ½ tsp salt
- 1 cup water
- 1 cup grated cheddar cheese

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. Combine all ingredients for the crust.
3. Pat crust mixture into a greased 9" pie plate. Pinch 1" flutings around the edges.
4. Combine rice, tomato sauce, salt, water, ¼ of cheese.
5. Spoon rice mixture onto the crust. Cover with aluminum foil.
6. Bake for 25 minutes.
7. Uncover and sprinkle top with remaining cheese. Return to oven and bake uncovered for 10-15 minutes.

ENJOY!

TRI-COUNTY ELECTRIC CO-OP MEMBER RECIPE SUBMISSION FORM

MEMBER _____

CITY _____

EMAIL or PHONE NUMBER _____

RECIPE NAME _____

SUBMITTING YOUR RECIPE:

EMAIL: Please include the above information with your recipe and send to communications@tcectexas.com

ONLINE: tcectexas.com/recipe-submission

MAIL: Please detach and submit this form with your recipe and mail to:

Tri-County Electric Cooperative
Attn: Recipe Submission
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Aledo, Texas 76008



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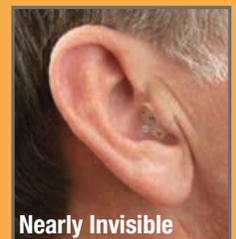
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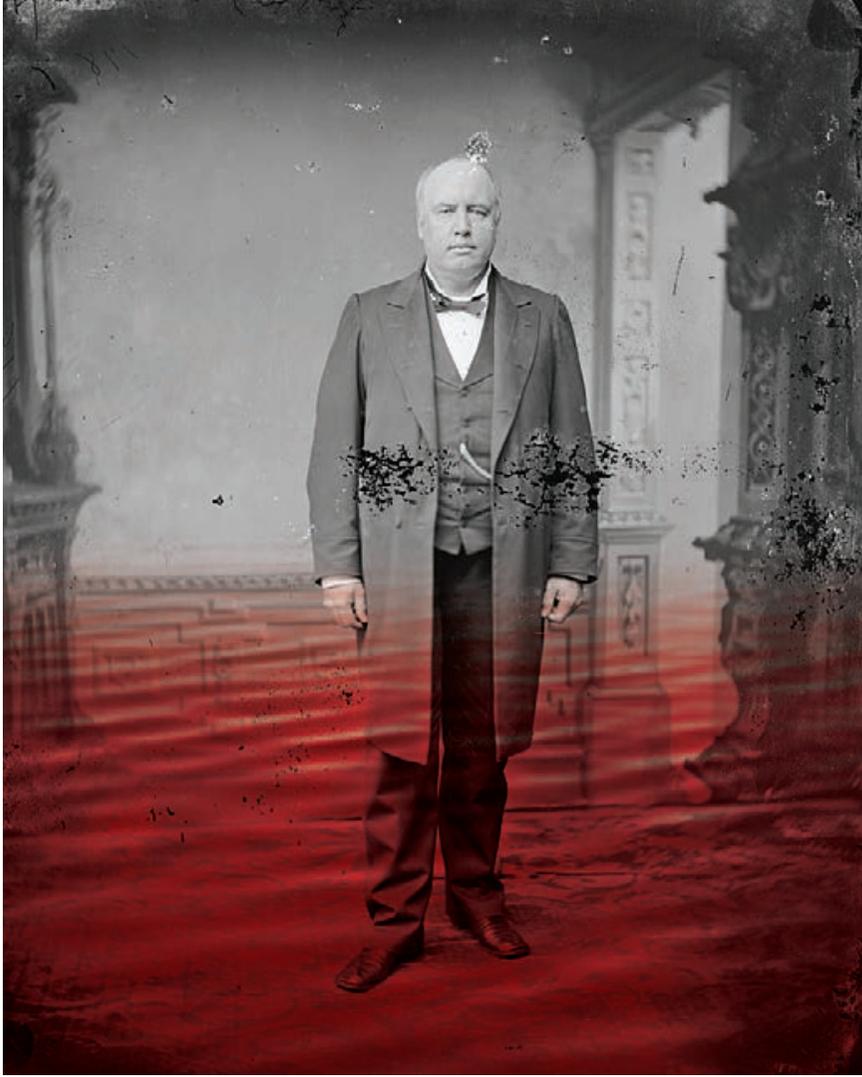


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Redwater Christening

East Texas residents washed away their sins—and their town's original name

BY W.F. STRONG

GO EAST OF DALLAS on Interstate 30 past Sulphur Springs until you reach U.S. Route 67. Take that east and before you reach Texarkana, you'll arrive in a little town of about 1,000 named Ingersoll. Well, it *was* called Ingersoll.

The name was unofficially changed to Redwater about 10 years after its 1875 founding—a change that was made official by the post office almost a decade after that.

Founders of the town admired Robert Green Ingersoll and decided to name their town after him. You may have never heard of Ingersoll, but that's only

because you didn't live in the late 1800s in America.

Back then, Ingersoll was one of the most famous people in the nation. He was friends with presidents and Mark Twain. He was a giant among politicians of the day, and any Republican who wanted to succeed at the national level needed and lusted after Ingersoll's endorsement—and his oratorical talents.

Had he wanted to, he would have made a formidable candidate for the presidency himself, except for the little problem of his nickname: the Great Agnostic.

Despite Ingersoll's reputation as a free-

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



thinker and anti-religious zealot, he was widely liked.

His central creed was this: "Happiness is the only good. The place to be happy is here. The time to be happy is now. The way to be happy is to make others so."

Ingersoll, a devoted reader of Shakespeare and, ironically, the Bible, was known as the most brilliant wordsmith of his age. He mesmerized audiences with his genius for creating poetic oratory. His voice was captivating in tone, and his articulation was flawless.

Ingersoll was ahead of his time. The New York native who served as the 16th attorney general of Illinois after commanding a Union cavalry regiment in the Civil War was an outspoken abolitionist and supported voting rights for Black people and women.

But Ingersoll's fame died with him, in 1899. It seemed he would be confined to the century that had defined him.

Even in Texas. A revival meeting was held in the early 1890s in the East Texas town that was named for Ingersoll, and it was a mighty successful one.

That week 110 people were baptized, or "born again," in the community. It suddenly became thoroughly devout and could not suffer the indignities of living under the name of a famous agnostic. So they agreed to rename the town Redwater, after a well that had recently been dug there was found to yield red water. Perhaps they also saw some religious significance in the name. In the Old Testament's telling, God parted the Red Sea to save Moses and the Israelites.

That's how Ingersoll became Redwater and one more reason that the man himself became, as *The Washington Post* called him in 2012, "the most famous American you never heard of." ■

Berries

Make a grand entrance with your favorite diminutive delights

BY MEGAN MYERS, FOOD EDITOR

Berries have long been my favorite kind of fruit. Not only are they wonderful eaten out of hand, these versatile little gems shine in recipes of all kinds. For these cornmeal pancakes, blueberries are combined with jalapeño for a tart, sweet, slightly spicy topping.



Cornmeal Pancakes With Blueberry Jalapeño Sauce

PANCAKES

- 1 cup self-rising flour**
- 1 cup cornmeal**
- 2 tablespoons sugar**
- ½ teaspoon baking powder**
- 1 cup buttermilk**
- 2 eggs**
- 4 tablespoons (½ stick) butter, melted, plus more for the pan**

SAUCE

- 1½ cups blueberries**
- 2 tablespoons sugar**
- 1 jalapeño, seeded and diced**
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice**

1. PANCAKES In a large bowl, stir together flour, cornmeal, sugar and baking powder. Whisk in buttermilk and eggs until smooth. Let batter rest while you make the sauce.

2. SAUCE In a small saucepan, combine blueberries, sugar, jalapeño and lemon juice and stir well. Set over medium heat and cook 5 minutes, stirring occasionally and mashing blueberries with the back of a spoon. Turn heat to low and let simmer while you cook the pancakes.

3. Warm a nonstick skillet over medium heat. Add a small amount of butter to the pan and swirl to coat.

4. Stir the 4 tablespoons melted butter into the batter. Scoop ¼ cup of batter and pour into the prepared pan, repeating as allowed for pan size.

5. Cook pancakes until edges are dry and bubbles appear (1–2 minutes), then flip and cook an additional 2 minutes. Remove to a plate and repeat until all the batter is used. Serve immediately with warm sauce.

MAKES 1 DOZEN PANCAKES

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



Strawberry Burfee

SHUBHADA KORE
PEDERNALES EC

This burfee, an Indian dessert similar to fudge—also spelled burfi, barfi, barfee or borfi—is a wonderfully easy treat. Top it with coconut, sprinkles or chopped nuts for festive flair.

- 1 cup strawberries**
- 1 cup almond flour**
- 1 cup brown sugar**
- ½ cup desiccated coconut**
- 1 tablespoon butter**

COOK'S TIP Desiccated coconut can be made by pulsing shredded coconut in a food processor until finely chopped.

1. Wash, trim and purée strawberries until smooth. Set aside.
2. In a nonstick pan over low to medium heat, roast almond flour for 5 minutes or until it is lightly browned and aromatic. Pour into a bowl and set aside.
3. Return the pan to the heat and add strawberry purée and brown sugar. Cover and cook 2–3 minutes on low to medium heat.
4. Once the berry and sugar mixture is bubbling, remove lid and stir in almond flour and coconut. Mix well, then stir in butter. Cook on low, stirring constantly, until mixture comes together into a dough, about 5–6 minutes. It will be somewhat sticky, with excess moisture cooked off.
5. Let the mixture cool slightly and then spread onto greased parchment or into a buttered square pan, using a spatula to shape into ½-inch thickness. Let cool completely and slice into squares or diamonds to serve.

SERVES 8–10

[MORE RECIPES >](#)

\$500 WINNER

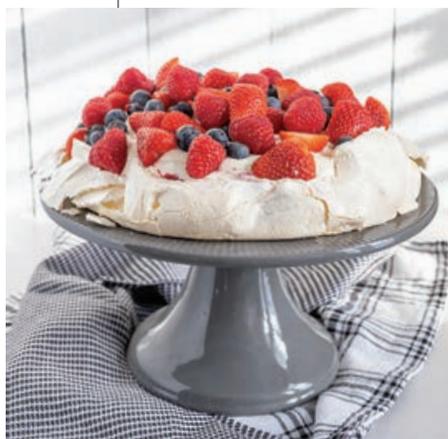
Berry Burst Pavlova

JUANITA GUERRA
MAGIC VALLEY EC



Pavlovas are always impressive on the table, especially when layered with a creamy filling and fresh fruit. Make sure not to open the oven during baking and cooling so the pavlova dries fully.

SERVES 12



PAVLOVA

- ¼ cup fresh or frozen berries of choice**
- ¾ cup egg whites at room temperature (about 6 eggs)**
- 1 cup superfine sugar**
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch**
- 1½ teaspoons cream of tartar**
- ½ teaspoon lemon or almond extract (optional)**

FILLING

- ¼ cup fresh or frozen berries of choice**
- 8 ounces cream cheese, softened**
- 1 can sweetened condensed milk (14 ounces)**
- ¼ cup lemon juice**
- ½ teaspoon lemon or orange extract**
- 1 pound mixed fresh berries**

1. **PAVLOVA** Preheat oven to 240 degrees. Draw an 8-inch circle on a sheet of parchment and set aside.
2. Microwave berries for 1 minute, smash with a fork and drain off any excess liquid. Set aside.
3. In a large bowl, whisk egg whites using an electric mixer on low until soft peaks form, 5–6 minutes. Continue to whisk, adding sugar 1 tablespoon at a time, waiting 15 seconds between each addition. Once all the sugar is added, increase mixer speed to high and whisk meringue to stiff peaks and until mixture is smooth. Sift in cornstarch and cream of tartar, add extract (if using), and whisk to incorporate.
4. Drop the heated berries into five areas on top of the mixture and fold in lightly with a spatula to create swirls.
5. Place a small amount of meringue onto each corner of a baking sheet and set the parchment, pencil side down, on top of it, sticking the corners down. Scoop the meringue onto the parchment, using the spatula to spread and fill the circle shape evenly. Bake 1½ hours, then turn oven off and let the meringue cool with the door closed for at least 2 hours.
6. **FILLING** Microwave berries 1 minute, smash with a fork and drain off any excess liquid. Set aside.
7. In a medium bowl, beat the cream cheese until fluffy. In another bowl, mix together the condensed milk, lemon juice and extract until smooth. Add to the cream cheese and whip until smooth and fluffy. Drop the heated berries into five areas on top and fold in lightly to make swirls.
8. To assemble, carefully transfer the cooled pavlova to a serving plate. Spread the filling into the middle and top with fresh berries.

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BEANS DUE MAY 10

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Raspberry Bread Pudding

JANELLE NIX
NUECES EC

Excellent for breakfast or dessert, this bread pudding is bursting with tart raspberries. It's topped with a creamy vanilla sauce, which Nix's mother has been making for decades.

BREAD PUDDING

- 1 loaf French bread
- 3 eggs
- 2½ cups half-and-half
- 1 cup sugar, divided use,
plus 2 tablespoons
- ½ cup brown sugar
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 2½ cups fresh raspberries
- ¼ cup water
- Zest of 1 small orange
- Butter for the pan

VANILLA SAUCE

- ½ cup sugar
- 2 tablespoons cornstarch
- Dash of salt



- 1½ cups half-and-half
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 tablespoons (¼ stick) butter

- 1. BREAD PUDDING** Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Slice bread into ½-inch cubes to yield 5 cups of cubes and spread onto a baking sheet. Bake 7–10 minutes, until dry. Set aside.
- In a large bowl, whisk together eggs, half-and-half, ½ cup sugar, brown sugar, vanilla and salt. Fold in the toasted bread, coating evenly. Let soak for 30 minutes.

3. Place the raspberries in a bowl. In a small saucepan over medium heat, combine water, orange zest and ½ cup sugar, stirring to dissolve sugar. Cool syrup slightly, then pour over raspberries and stir to coat.

4. Lightly coat a 9-inch square baking pan with butter. Pour ¾ of the bread mixture into the pan, then spoon raspberries and syrup over the top. Add remaining bread mixture, then sprinkle on 2 tablespoons sugar. Bake 50–60 minutes, until center is set.

5. VANILLA SAUCE While the bread pudding is baking, make the sauce. In a small saucepan, whisk together sugar, cornstarch and salt. Whisk in half-and-half, then set over medium heat. Cook, stirring constantly, until mixture thickens and coats the back of a spoon, about 10–15 minutes. Remove from heat and whisk in vanilla and butter until blended and smooth. Serve on top of the bread pudding.

SERVES 8



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COURTESY CHET GARNER

Underwater Wonderland

At Mammoth Lake Texas, it's what's inside that counts

BY CHET GARNER

I WAS WALKING like an awkward, eager duck with all my gear shaking like heavy tail feathers behind me. Mammoth Lake Texas attracts divers from all over the country, and I understood why as soon as I submerged myself into its strange underwater menagerie.

You can use your fingers to count the number of inland scuba diving destinations in Texas. Some offer a natural glimpse of spring-fed pools (like San Solomon Springs at Balmorhea State Park), and others offer swims through sunken objects. Mammoth Lake in Clute mixes the natural and artificial to create an underwater amusement park.

Below the depths of this 65-acre lake lie more than 150 objects ranging from small sculptures to the entire fuselage of a C-130 cargo plane. With a reservation and a current dive license, visitors can rent gear and embark on the most unusual underwater scavenger hunt in the state—in the largest and deepest dedicated scuba lake in Texas. Most attractions are in 35–40 feet of water, but a deeper hole reaches down to 75 feet.

I was joined by a knowledgeable divemaster, Alex Amaro, who took us on an epic expedition through a World War II submarine and a fighter jet. There's even a life-size sculpture of a Columbian mammoth marking the spot where fossils were found when this was just a sand pit. My favorite stops were the decommissioned rides from Six Flags AstroWorld, which owner Jason Burlison bought and submerged.

All around us were bass, perch and turtles that seemed to be enjoying the sunken treasures as much as I was. Unfortunately we didn't get a glimpse of the 7-foot paddlefish that call the lake home—just another reason to come back. ■

ABOVE Instructor Alex Amaro, giving the diving OK sign, with Chet and Todd White, producer of *The Daytripper*.

TCP Follow along as Chet goes sightseeing underwater. See the video on our website and check out all his Texplorations on *The Daytripper* on PBS.



Know Before You Go

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

MAY

07

Ennis Cinco de Mayo, (972) 878-4748, visitennistexas.com

09

Amarillo [9–10] Fiddler on the Roof, (806) 378-3096, amarillociviccenter.com

11

South Padre Island [11–13] Shallow Sport Owners Tournament, (956) 233-9489, shallowsporttournament.com

Abilene [11–14] Western Heritage Classic, (325) 677-4376, westernheritageclassic.com

12

Johnson City Movies at the Memorial, (830) 868-7111, johnsoncitytx.org

Saint Jo Sporting Clay Event, (817) 296-3104, saintjosportingclay.com

Boerne [12–13] Hand-made Market, boernehandmademarket.com

Coolidge [12–13] Mesquite Tree Festival, (254) 203-6198, facebook.com/mesquitetreefestival

Lindale [12–13] Piney Woods Wine Festival, (903) 881-5103, visitlindale.com

McKinney [12–13] Y'all Had To Be Here Live, (214) 769-0645, thecomedyarena.com

Ingram [12–June 23] Of the Earth: Metal and Wood, (830) 367-5121, hcaf.com

13

Brenham T. Graham Brown, (979) 337-7240, thebarnhillcenter.com

Brownwood Lake Brownwood Bash, (325) 784-5223, tpwd.texas.gov

Fort Davis Mile-High Mountains Fest, (432) 426-3337, tpwd.texas.gov

Fredericksburg Cherry Mountain School Open House, (830) 685-3321, historicsschools.org

Mesquite Historic Mesquite Inc. Preservation Month Open House and Porch Party, (972) 216-6468, cityofmesquite.com

Texarkana Dragon Boat Festival, (903) 798-3211, texarkanadragonboat.com

The Woodlands Buzzfest, (281) 364-3010, woodlandscenter.org

Victoria Mother's Day Brunch, (361) 573-3734, goldencrescentcasa.org

18

Corsicana Yesterday & Today: The Beatles Experience, (903) 874-7792, corsicanapalace.com

Giddings [18-20] Lee County Fair, leecountyfairtx.com

19

Grapevine [19-21] Main Street Fest, (817) 410-3185, grapevintexasusa.com

Plano [19-21] Texas Mineral and Fossil Show, (972) 941-5840, planoeventcenter.org

MORE EVENTS >

TCP *Submit Your Event*

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

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www.kerrvillefolkfestival.org



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Pick of the Month

Cinco de Mayo Celebration

Cleburne, May 7
 (817) 645-2455
 cleburnechamber.com

This festive celebration will feature vendors and Mexican dishes, plus ballet folklorico, dancing horses, live music, a custom car show, kids' zone and *luchadores* from Advanced Pro Wrestling.

26

McKinney [26-27] Erica Rhodes, (214) 769-0645, thecomedyarena.com

Bandera [26-28] Memorial Day Weekend Stampede, banderaprorodeo.org

Fredericksburg [26-28] Crawfish Festival, fbgcrawfishfestival.com

Kerrville [26-28] Texas Masters of Fine Art and Craft Invitational Exhibition, (469) 223-4162, texasmasters.com

27

Brenham Gunhild Carling, (979) 337-7240, thebarnhillcenter.com

New Braunfels [27-28] Randall King, (830) 606-1281, gruenehall.com

MAY EVENTS CONTINUED

19

Richardson [19-21] Wildflower Arts and Music Festival, wildflowerfestival.com

20

College Station Troubadour Festival, troubadourfestival.com

Hico Texas Steak Cook-off, (254) 485-4984, texassteakcookoff.com

La Grange Pat Byrne, (979) 968-9944, thebugleboy.org

Jefferson [20-21] Train Show, (903) 665-3733, visitjeffersonstexas.com

21

Fredericksburg The Moanin' Frogs, fredericksburgmusicclub.com

25

Grapeland [25-27] Memorial Day Gospel Bluegrass Festival, (936) 687-2594, salmonlakeresort.com

Kerrville [25-June 11] Folk Festival, (830) 257-3600, kerrvillefolkfestival.org

28

Lewisville Fiesta Charra, (972) 219-3401, visitlewisville.com

31

Navasota [31-June 10] Grimes County Fair, grimescountyfair.com

JUNE

01

Fredericksburg [1-4] Hill Country Film Festival, (866) 224-7714, hillcountryff.com

02

Hillsboro [2-3] Bond's Alley Art Festival, (254) 582-5499, hillsboromainstreet.org

03

Fredericksburg Car Fest, (830) 456-2735, fredericksburgcarfest.com

04

The Colony Take on the Heat Triathlon, (214) 370-9010, visitthecolonytx.com

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1 LARRY ALFORD
PEDERNALES EC

A great blue heron takes flight at Cypress Falls in Wimberley.

2 CRYSTAL MARTIN
FARMERS EC

Blue Angels soar over Pensacola Beach, Florida.

3 FAIN ZIMMERMAN
VICTORIA EC

A female ruby-throated hummingbird and thistle plant.

4 RACHEL SPENCER
CENTRAL TEXAS EC

"The turkeys here on the ranch are very busy in the fall. On this day they were flying across one of our creeks to find more food."



Upcoming Contests

- DUE MAY 10** Night Sky
- DUE JUN 10** Helping Out
- DUE JUL 10** Golden Hour



Enter online at TexasCoopPower.com/contests.

TCP See Focus on Texas on our website for more Taking Flight photos from readers.



TCP Try your hand at working through the maze to reach the dewberries. See the solution online.

sharp thorns, so I wear thick leather gloves. However, you cannot pick delicate berries with rigid gloved hands, so I cut off the glove tips of my thumb and index finger on my right hand.

Since I'll be kneeling or lying in the pasture, I also wear thick long-sleeved shirts and heavy long pants, which are quite uncomfortable in the May heat and humidity.

I've discovered that these berry vines love the same environment as poison ivy, and often the two plants intermingle. Since I'm focused on berries, I sometimes miss the signature three leaves of poison ivy until I am neck deep. Thus, I keep a trash bag in my supplies so I can change out of and isolate exposed clothes.

Another hazard lurking in the berry patch is the diamondback rattlesnake. The warm spring days are a holiday for them, and a step in any direction is a leap of faith. So before plopping down in the bushes, I probe with a walking stick and listen for the warning rattle.

I have been chased from a berry patch by wild hogs more than once. That's why I keep a pistol on me, though I've never had to use it.

If it's been a wet spring, you can expect good berries but also lots of mosquitoes. Ticks and chiggers are also common pests, so I apply a high-grade bug repellent. I am fair skinned, too, so I wear a large hat and sunscreen to guard against the sun.

I often wonder why no one in my family enjoys the berry picking as much as I do. Oh, they eat them, but they have quit coming with me on the harvest adventure. Once I even offered to get my 15-year-old son out of school early to tag along with me, but he said he had homework. Odd for a Friday. ■

Crawling With Trouble

Harvesting wild dewberries takes patience, will—and an armory

BY SHANE TORNO
ILLUSTRATION BY
CHANELLE NIBBELINK

DEWBERRIES GROW WILD in the scrub brush country of South Texas, and as a child I would pick them with my grandparents. Most of what we picked we ate immediately, but often we would collect enough for my grandmother to bake a cobbler that she served warm, topped with vanilla ice cream—South Texas springtime perfection.

Over the years, I have found very few locations where wild dewberries grow, and they tend to be hard to access. When I do find berries to pick, I am careful to outfit myself properly.

Usually I pick them as they trail along the ground or climb among taller pasture weeds. I have to get on my hands and knees, sometimes even lying on the ground to pick them. Mind you, dewberry vines are covered in thousands of short,

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