

THE JOYS OF  
PASS-ALONG PLANTS

QUICK BREADS  
AND MUFFINS

THE URGENCY OF  
BLACK HISTORY MONTH

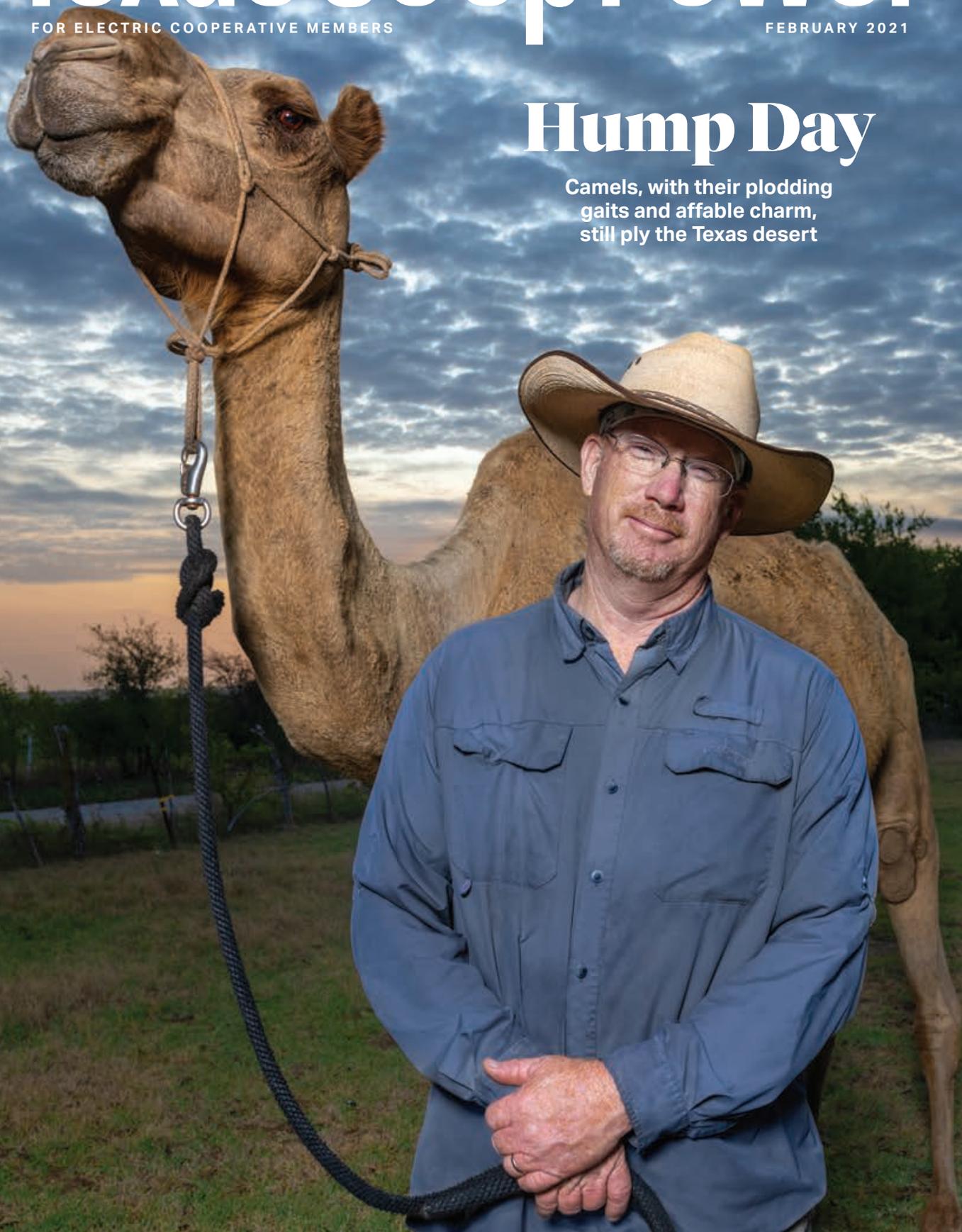
# Texas Coop Power

FOR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE MEMBERS

FEBRUARY 2021

## Hump Day

Camels, with their plodding  
gaits and affable charm,  
still ply the Texas desert



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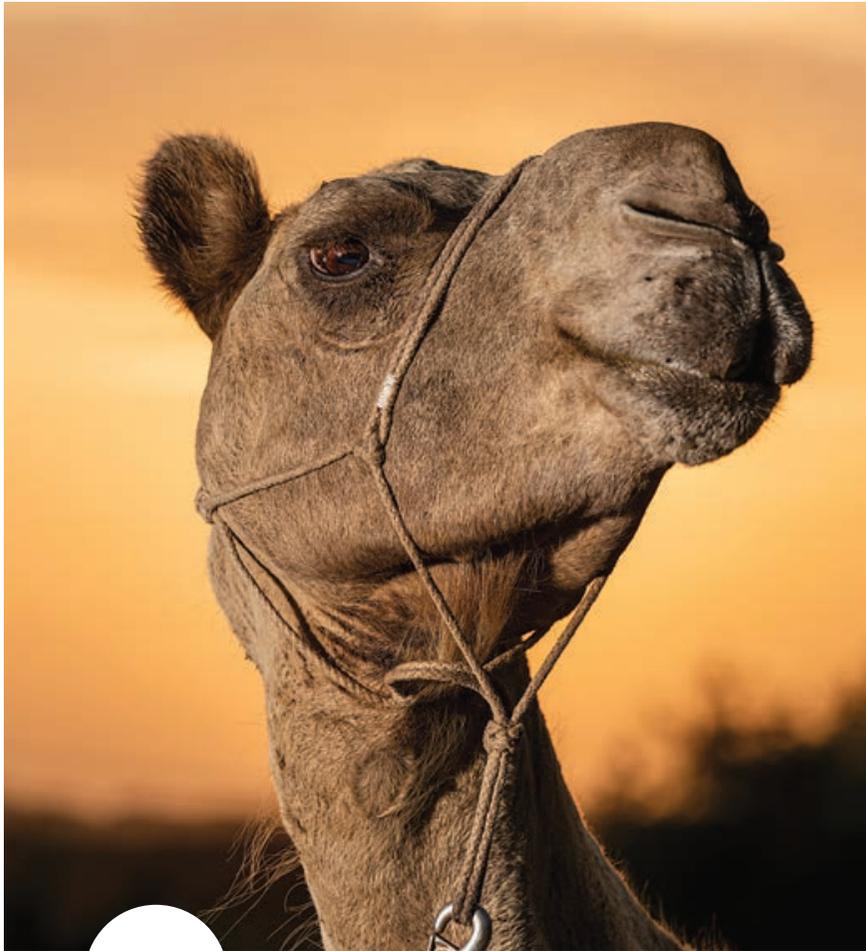


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# February 2021



08

## Every Day Is Hump Day

Camels add unique silhouettes and affable charm to West Texas expeditions.

*By Pam LeBlanc  
Photos by Scott Van Osdol*

## 12 Putting Down Roots

Pass-along plants spread joy, friendship and legacies among gardeners.

*By Sheryl Smith-Rodgers  
Illustrations by Chiara Vercesi*

ON THE COVER  
Doug Baum and Richard,  
one of his camels.

ABOVE  
A face that only a ... no,  
that anybody could love.  
*Photos by Scott Van Osdol*

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Time To Talk About *That*  
*By Michael Hurd*

# No Crapees of Wrath

**JUST A FRIENDLY REMINDER** to resist all temptation to commit crape murder this month. Prune crape myrtles gently—or not at all.

Our February 2020 story *Crape Murder* explains it all. Many gardeners drastically saw off the trees' limbs, thinking it the proper treatment for beautiful blooms later in the summer. Not so.

"The prettiest ones I've seen have never been touched," says horticulturist Greg Grant. "And I mean *never*."



**“In recognizing the humanity of our fellow beings, we pay ourselves the highest tribute.”**

—THURGOOD MARSHALL

## End of the Republic

This month marks 175 years since the formal transfer of authority in Texas from the republic to the state.

The U.S. Congress accepted the Texas Constitution on December 29, 1845, which marked Texas' legal entry into the union. On February 19, 1846, the last president of Texas, Anson Jones, turned over the reins of government to Gov. James Pinckney Henderson.

"The final act in this great drama is now performed," Jones declared. "The Republic of Texas is no more."

**LIVING LARGE** Last July, Austin became the 11th American city and fourth in Texas — joining Houston, San Antonio and Dallas—with a population exceeding 1 million. The last U.S. city to hit 1 million people was San Jose, California, in 2015.



February 18  
**NATIONAL  
DRINK  
WINE DAY**

Texas has more than 500 wineries, according to the National Association of American Wineries. Only four states have more.



**FINISH THIS  
SENTENCE**

YOU'RE NEVER  
TOO OLD TO ...

**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 December prompt:

**I wish I could ...**

Find a cure for COVID-19.

SHERRYION LANE  
MIDSOUTH EC  
HUNTSVILLE

Have just one more day with my dad, Dixie Wheeler. I have so many questions I'd like to ask him.

RODNEY WHEELER  
BLUEBONNET EC  
LYTTON SPRINGS

Fit into the pants I wore before quarantine.

CARYL ZIMMERMAN  
CENTRAL TEXAS EC  
KINGSLAND

Figure out what my cats are thinking when they stare at me.

LAURIE L. REAGAN  
BANDERA EC  
LEAKEY

Give everyone a hug.

MARGARET FONTENOT  
BLUEBONNET EC  
SOMERVILLE

To see more responses, read Currents online.

# Valor Carries On

**THE NAME OF DORIS MILLER**, a U.S. Navy mess attendant from Willow Grove, near Waco, who became a hero during the Pearl Harbor attack in 1941, lives on in schools, roads and community centers around the country.

In 11 years the USS Doris Miller will take to the seas as the first supercarrier named for an African American and the first named for an enlisted sailor.

Miller fired an anti-aircraft gun at attacking Japanese aircraft and then pulled shipmates out of the burning water. He perished in 1943 aboard an escort carrier torpedoed in the Pacific Ocean.



**TCP** *Contests and More*

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Ice Creams and Sorbets

**FOCUS ON TEXAS PHOTOS**

Manmade vs. Nature

**WEB EXTRA**

See writer Sheryl Smith-Rodgers divide lilies and prepare plants to pass along.



COLLAGE SOURCE PHOTOS: COURTESY MCDONALD OBSERVATORY

**He Gave Us the Stars**

“The generosity and vision of William McDonald and Violet Locke McIvor is a great story. Wouldn’t we all welcome an opportunity to go ‘mountain shopping?’”

GERALD BENNETT  
COSERV  
FRISCO

**Alabama’s Role**

While primary control of the International Space Station is in Houston, Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, Alabama, also plays a vital role in its operation [*Out of This World*, November 2020].

Flight controllers in Huntsville schedule the astronauts’ daily activities and provide technical assistance as the astronauts do experiments and perform maintenance or handle emergencies related to the equipment inside the space station.

Linda Brower  
Tri-County EC  
Keller



Yep! And brought over some delicious food [*Burgs in a New Land*, December 2020].

KAYLA WALKER  
VIA FACEBOOK



NASA.GOV

**The Pinnacle**

My husband and I took a week to explore the beaches and fishing villages of South Texas one year. We had heard about the Matagorda Island ferry and rented bicycles for the day [*Matagorda Island Lighthouse*, October 2020].

There were several others on the ferry, but we had all day exploring the island—hardly seeing a soul until returning to the dock. The view of the lighthouse was the pinnacle of that day.

Thank you for bringing that long-lost memory to life.

Joy Connery  
Wood County EC  
Lindale

**Classic Cover**

Huge kudos to photographer Kristin Tyler for the photo of the farrier on the October 2020 cover. It is a classic, reminiscent of the Dorothea Lange Depression photographs.

Merry Langlinais  
Bandera EC  
Medina

**TCP WRITE TO US**

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Austin, TX 78701

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

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# TEXAS MINT

We are excited to announce the release of the 2021 Texas Silver Round – Revolution Series. This is the second release of a four-year series commemorating the battles of the Texas Revolution. Each Texas Silver Round is one troy ounce .9999 fine silver.

The obverse of the high-quality mint strike features Texas' iconic lone star in the foreground. The smooth engraving of the star is framed by a textured topographical outline of the state of Texas. "TEXAS" arches proudly over the top of the round's obverse in large capital letters, with "Precious Metals" presented inversely along the opposite side. The round's mintage year is engraved in the bottom left of the round, just southwest of what would be the Rio Grande bordering Texas and Mexico.

The reverse of the 2021 release displays a scene from the famous Battle of the Alamo. It depicts two Texian soldiers including the American icon, Davy Crockett, attempting to fend off Mexican soldiers attempting to breach the walls of the Alamo.



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## BATTLE OF GONZALES

first in the series ● ● ● ●

The stunning 2020 Texas Silver Round depicts a scene from the Battle of Gonzales, with three Texian revolutionaries defending the famous Gonzales cannon, while brandishing the Come And Take It Flag.

The Texas Silver Round can be purchased in a monster box produced exclusively for the Texas Mint. Packaged in 20 protective tubes of 25 rounds each, the monster box holds 500 1-ounce Texas Silver Rounds. Built from durable cold-rolled steel and finished with a matte black powder coat, the monster box lid features an orange cutout of the state of Texas. Each sealed monster box is secured with a unique serial number and a holographic seal to ensure maximum product protection.

The Texas Silver Round is also available to purchase in a similarly designed and secured mini-monster box, which contains 10 protective tubes of 25 rounds each for a total of 250 silver rounds.



## BATTLE OF THE ALAMO

second in the series ● ● ● ●

The events of this famous battle took place on the days of February 23rd - March 6th, 1836. At the end of a 13-day siege, President General Antonio López de Santa Anna and his Mexican troops reclaimed the Alamo Mission, killing the Texian and immigrant occupiers.



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**D**oug Baum strides through the prickly Chihuahuan Desert of West Texas, a straw cowboy hat shading his face from the sun and a string of five camels sauntering behind him.

I'm perched high atop one of those camels, listening intently as Baum, owner of Texas Camel Corps, points out a canyon wren's nest, stops to inspect a rust-colored millipede marching across our path and then explains the role camels played in the Lone Star State's history.

"Texas is perfect for camels," says Baum, born in the West Texas town of Big Spring. "That point was not lost on the Army when they decided to use camels out here in the 1850s."

That's when the U.S. military imported 75 camels from Egypt, Turkey and Tunisia for use as pack animals. For nearly a decade, the heat-resistant creatures carried water and hauled supplies for the U.S. cavalry at Camp Verde, south of Kerrville.

When the program ended in 1866, the army sold the animals. Some wound up in California; others hauled freight between Texas and Mexico; a few ended up in traveling shows; and some made their way to Austin, where they were kept along Congress Avenue near the river and then sold off a few at a time.

Today Baum, who lives with his menagerie on a farm near Valley Mills, where he is a member of Heart of Texas Electric Cooperative, keeps the camels' history alive by introducing his cartoonish but affectionate creatures at events around the state. I've joined him at Cibolo Creek Ranch, south of Marfa, for an overnight camel-riding trek to learn more about the role they once played in the Big Bend.

I feel like I'm riding a rocking chair strapped to a stepladder that's being dragged down a gravel road. It's both rough and rolling, with the bonus that my camel, Cinco, swings his neck around to give me a big goofy smile now and then.

ABOVE Texas Camel Corps owner Doug Baum throws a saddle on Richard at his farm near Valley Mills.  
RIGHT Richard greets the sunrise.



every  
day is  
hump  
day



**H**e leads treks each spring and fall at Cibolo Creek and delivers members of his eight-camel herd to museums, parks, schools and libraries. He also leads treks in Egypt, where he has a second home, and if you need a camel for a church Nativity, he's the guy to call.



**B**aum first fell in love with camels while working as a professional musician in Nashville in the 1990s, when he played drums for country music star Trace Adkins. He took a day job working at the Nashville Zoo.

"I had zero experience with camels," he says. "Within a week I was absolutely smitten. They're sweet, affectionate, playful and so, so gentle."

They've also got leathery, pie-sized feet; spindly, stiltlike legs; nostrils that squeeze shut to keep out blowing sand; and peach-sized eyes fringed in lush, 3-inch lashes.

Baum stuck with music for a while, but eventually "the camel thing just won," he says. "It was an obvious choice to me."

He moved back to Texas and in 1998 bought four camels, with the idea of using them for educational programs. Two of those camels—Richard and Cinco—are with us on this cool September afternoon, slowing periodically to munch on creosote bushes.

"They teach me what I should be—patient, observant, methodical," Baum says of his camels. "These are things I recognize I lack in myself."

He leads treks each spring and fall at Cibolo Creek and delivers members of his eight-camel herd to museums, parks, schools and libraries. He also leads treks in Egypt, where he has a second home, and if you need a camel for a church Nativity, he's the guy to call.

Part of Baum's mission is to dispel myths about camels. They're not, he says, ornery, smelly beasts that spit at people. Their humps aren't filled with water, either, though a camel can go 10 days or more without a drink. Camel humps—one for dromedaries, two for Bactrians—are filled with fat. (If you're riding a single-humper, you'll sit on a padded seat behind the hump. For a two-humper, you ride between the bumps.) Camels can be downright cuddly, and they don't spit—although llamas, which are closely related, do.

I learn, when Cinco exhales on me, that the stinky part of the stereotype rings true. Camels' awful breath is both



sweet and pungent, like grass clippings mixed with syrup—in part because they chew their cud. They are ruminants and employ three stomachs to process their food. Stand next to one for a few minutes, and you’ll hear that digestive system in action, gurgling and glugging like a clogged drain. Also, they fart—loudly and potently.

Two other guests on the trek, Sue and Randy Howerter, Guadalupe Valley EC members, are equally taken by the animals. Randy, who makes musical instruments, met Baum at a festival in New Braunfels. Sue, a blacksmith, was intrigued, too, and the Seguin couple visited Baum’s farm, where he lives with his family, the camels, five miniature donkeys, a pair of dogs, a flock of chickens, assorted sheep and goats, one horse, and “too many” kittens.

After that the Howerters needed no convincing. They headed to Cibolo Creek Ranch, where we all loaded sleeping bags and pajamas into large canvas saddlebags; climbed aboard our kneeling, straw-colored steeds; and hung on as the animals rose to full height.

ABOVE Doug Baum, walking behind the first camel, leads a trek through the desert at Cibolo Creek Ranch, south of Marfa. OPPOSITE Author Pam LeBlanc perched atop Richard.

“Sometimes you get an attachment to animals,” Sue Howerter says. “It’s the same with camels. They have so much personality and character.”

Before our two-day trip ends, we’ve lumbered a dozen miles across a stark landscape that looks like the backdrop of a John Wayne movie, soaked in a spring-fed creek, eaten a traditional Moroccan meal, sung around the campfire, watched shooting stars streak across the sky and listened to coyotes yip as we snuggled in our tents.

But it’s the camels that get top billing. And that’s just how Baum likes it. ■

# Putting Down Roots

PASS-ALONG PLANTS SPREAD JOY, FRIENDSHIP AND LEGACIES AMONG GARDENERS

**P**aige Eaton faced a bare yard when she and her family moved into their rural home in Wood County in 2006. After hand-prepping her first garden bed, she planted several varieties of daylilies dug up from her sister-in-law's yard down the road. Today those daylilies and many other pass-along plants are the foundation of Eaton's diversified gardens that support pollinators and other wildlife. Now she passes along plants from her yard, too.

"I love to give daylilies to friends and co-workers," says Eaton, an employee and member of Wood County Electric Cooperative. "I've even mailed them to Mississippi and Georgia. I feel good about sharing daylilies because they're hardy and can make anyone a successful gardener."

Sharing plants also saves lives—of the green kind, that is. In a yard or garden, plants multiply, often where they're not wanted. Instead of tossing extras, most gardeners prefer to give away what they've thinned out. Are those pass-along plants? Maybe. Maybe not. Definitions vary, depending on the gardener you ask. Traditionally, the term refers to plants that are easy to grow, propagate and pass on as seeds, transplants, divisions, bulbs or cuttings. They're often fragrant and rarely sold in commercial nurseries. They may also bring back fond memories of the giver or places tied to the past.

"Without pass-along plants, most of us would have lost touch with our childhoods," says Neil Sperry, a Texas gardening expert and Grayson-Collin EC member. "There's something special about being given a cutting, division or seed from your grandmother's favorite plant and then sharing it with a young person who's important to you. Some of my favorite pass-alongs are tulips, oxblood lilies, autumn daffodils, resurrection lilies and hardy amaryllis."

**A**ccording to many sources, the phrase "pass-along plants" was coined by the late Allen Lacy, a gardening columnist and author. However, Lacy, who grew up around Dallas, declined the credit when he wrote in a foreword to *Passalong Plants* that the expression



"is not by any means my creation. I have heard it most of my life, possibly at my grandmother's knee."

Another custom among some Southern gardeners also goes back for generations. "When you receive a pass-along, you're not supposed to say thank you or it won't grow," says Marcia Coffman, president of the Mountain Laurel Garden Club in Bracketville and a Rio Grande EC member. "I've actually found the custom to be true. Instead, you should tell the giver, 'Oh, this makes me so happy.'"

If one pass-along can bring happiness, imagine being surrounded by them. Tables covered with pass-alongs can be found at plant sales and swaps, such as seasonal fundraisers jointly hosted by the Denton County Master Gardener Association and the Native Plant Society of Texas in Denton.



“We pot up extra plants from our gardens, like white avens, mealy blue sage and fall asters, and label them,” says Liz Moyer, a member of both organizations. “When I go to plant sales, I always look for pass-alongs because I know they’ll do well in our climate and soils.”

In the Rio Grande Valley, members of the Driftwood Garden Club in Port Isabel give away small potted plants in exchange for donations at a monthly market. Their pass-alongs usually include palms, plumerias and succulents.

“We have a lot of winter Texans who like to take home something unique from Texas that they can show their friends,” says Mary Gorbell, club president and an NEC Co-op Energy member. “One Iowa couple had a Washingtonia palm they got from us. Every summer after they

arrived here, they’d set it under their motor home’s awning. Then they’d take it back home and keep it in their garage over winter.”

Roses also rank among beloved pass-along plants. Becky Smith of Hungerford and fellow members of the Texas Rose Rustlers preserve and share old garden roses that were planted by Anglo settlers at their homesteads and cemeteries. “We host a cutting exchange three times a year,” says Smith, the group’s chairperson. “Our mission is to encourage others to grow these old roses, which have been time-tested to survive and require no spraying or fertilizers.”

Unlike old garden roses, not all plants make suitable pass-alongs. “Years ago someone gave me a Chinese tallow,” recalls Greg Grant, a Smith County extension agent with

## “Later I divided the cacti into 15 pots and passed them along to my children and my sister’s children. It was all we had left of the land that our family had owned since 1889.”

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension in Tyler. “It had lovely fall color, but then I learned how invasive it is. Fortunately, the tree later froze and died. So be careful when people pass along something to you. Check it out before you plant it. Mexican petunias can choke out other plants, but they don’t take over an ecosystem and spread ad nauseam like Chinese privets do.”

Grant, a Deep East Texas EC member, also cautions against scooping up plants from public parks and private property. “If you don’t own the land, then you shouldn’t dig up a plant unless you have the owner’s permission,” he says. “In my hunts for plants, I’ve been known to knock on doors and offer cash.”

When is the best time to plant pass-alongs? “Most are forgiving about being dug up or divided,” Grant says. “So even if you do it at the wrong time of year, they don’t mind because pass-alongs are tough.”

**O**ccasional losses in her gardens motivate Lin Grado, a Wood County master gardener and Wood County EC member, to share some of her plants. “For instance, if something destroys my fall obedient plant, I know I can go to a friend that I gave some to and get more,” she explains. “I know that’s a little selfish, but it’s nice to know I’ve got backups.”

Mention pass-alongs, and potted plants may come up. “I treasure my peperomia, a tropical houseplant that was given to me by the late Ralph Pinkus,” Sperry says. “He’s one of my heroes and was the founder of North Haven Gardens in Dallas. I’ve had that plant for 35 years.”

Though small, a potted cactus matters greatly to Moyer, a member of CoServ, an electric cooperative in Corinth. “Before my grandfather’s farm sold near East Sweden, I dug up some barrel cacti,” she recalls. “Later I divided the cacti into 15 pots and passed them along to my children and my sister’s children. It was all we had left of the land that our family had owned since 1889.

“Sometimes,” she adds, “a pass-along plant is the only thing you have left of someone or something that you held dear.” ■

**TCP WEB EXTRA** Our video shows writer Sheryl Smith-Rodgers dividing lilies and preparing plants to pass along.



### SHARING CACTUSES, SUCCULENTS AND NATIVES

**YEARS AGO**, a friend gave my husband, James, and me a variegated agave with green and gold leaves. I planted it in our adjoining vacant lot that we call the Meadow, and it produced dozens of pups. Along the way many other pass-alongs, including Texas natives, have found homes in our gardens.

Because they’re easy to grow and share, succulents, cactuses and most native plants make ideal pass-alongs. Sedums, succulents also called stonecrops, flourish and spread in gardens. Just break off a stem and stick it in a pot or in the ground. Voilà! You’ve got a new plant. Aloe veras also make good pass-alongs.

Through the years we’ve received a Texas buckeye, Lindheimer’s crownbeard, heartleaf hibiscus, pink mint and bracted passionflower, to name only a few pass-along natives. In turn we’ve gifted Gregg’s mistflower, fragrant mistflower, flame acanthus, Turk’s cap and pearl milkweed vine. I’ve also shared seeds with friends.

As for that agave and its *many* pups, those aggressive spreaders are gone. Lesson learned: Always read up on your pass-along’s growing habits. —SSR



# PRESIDENTS' DAY Window Special!



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### Final Release of Original Silver Eagle Design

Since 1986, the design of the "Silver Eagle" has remained unchanged: Adolph A. Weinman's classic 1916 Walking Liberty design paired with former U.S. Mint Chief Engraver John Mercanti's stunning eagle reverse. But in mid-2021, the U.S. Mint plans to replace the original reverse. This initial release is the FINAL appearance of the U.S. Silver Eagle's original design!

### Collectors are Already Going Wild for This "Final" Release!

For any popular coin series, two dates tend to rise to the top of demand: the first and the last. This coin represents not just the final issue of perhaps the world's most popular silver coin, but also its 35th anniversary — an additional draw for collectors, who are already chomping at the bit, ready to secure as many coins as possible. And it's not just about the special anniversary and "last" that has them excited...

### Higher Values + Slowed Production = DEMAND!

In the last 12 months, average monthly values of silver bullion have increased nearly 38%! At the same time, the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in the U.S. Mint slowing production of freshly struck Silver Eagles. Add in the final issue of the original design, and you have a trifecta of demand that has buyers around the world ready to pounce.

### Timing is Everything

This is a strictly limited release offer for one of the world's most popular silver coins. As the last mintage to feature the original, 35-year-old design, it represents the end of an era at a time when silver values have seen a massive increase. Once word gets out that these 2021

U.S. Silver Dollars can be secured at such a great price, you'll be facing far more competition. Call today and secure yours now ahead of the crowd!

### Just Released — Call NOW!

Collectors around the world are already beginning to secure these coins. Don't wait. Call 1-888-201-7639 and use the special offer code below now, and your 2021 U.S. Silver Dollars will ship directly to your door. Plus, the more you buy, the more you save!

### 2021 American Eagle Silver Dollar BU

1-4 Coins-	\$32.74 ea. + s/h
5-19 Coins-	\$32.65 ea. + <b>FREE SHIPPING</b>
20-99 Coins-	\$32.38 ea. + <b>FREE SHIPPING</b>
100-499 Coins-	\$32.20 ea. + <b>FREE SHIPPING</b>
500+ Coins-	\$31.25 ea. + <b>FREE SHIPPING</b>

### FREE SHIPPING on 5 or More!

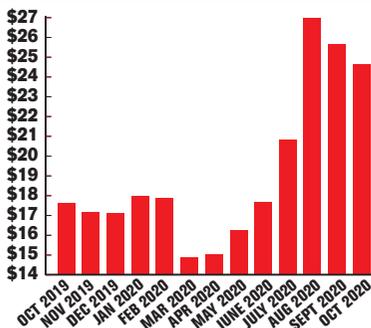
Limited time only. Product total over \$149 before taxes (if any). Standard domestic shipping only. Not valid on previous purchases.

Call today toll-free for fastest service

# 1-888-201-7639

**Offer Code LRE215-01**

Please mention this code when you call.



Silver Trend Chart: Price per ounce based on monthly averages.

GovMint.com • 14101 Southcross Dr. W., Suite 175, Dept. LRE215-01 • Burnsville, MN 55337



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# UPPER CLASS JUST GOT LOWER PRICED

*Finally, luxury built for value—  
not for false status*

Until Stauer came along, you needed an inheritance to buy a timepiece with class and refinement. Not any more. The Stauer *Magnificat II* embodies the impeccable quality and engineering once found only in the watch collections of the idle rich. Today, it can be on your wrist.

The *Magnificat II* has the kind of thoughtful design that harkens back to those rare, 150-year-old moon phases that once could only be found under glass in a collector's trophy room.

Powered by 27 jewels, the *Magnificat II* is wound by the movement of your body. An exhibition back reveals the genius of the engineering and lets you witness the automatic rotor that enables you to wind the watch with a simple flick of your wrist.

It took three years of development and \$26 million in advanced Swiss-built watchmaking machinery to create the *Magnificat II*. When we took the watch to renowned watchmaker and watch historian George Thomas, he disassembled it and studied the escapement, balance wheel and the rotor. He remarked on the detailed guilloché face, gilt winding crown, and the crocodile-embossed leather band. He was intrigued by the three interior dials for day, date, and 24-hour moon phases. He estimated that this fine timepiece would cost over \$2,500. We all smiled and told him that the Stauer price was less than \$100. A truly magnificent watch at a truly magnificent price!

Try the *Magnificat II* for 30 days and if you are not receiving compliments, please return the watch for a full refund of the purchase price. The precision-built movement carries a 2 year warranty against defect. If you trust your own good taste, the *Magnificat II* is built for you.

**Stauer Magnificat II Timepiece \$399\***

**Offer Code Price \$99 + S&P SAVE \$300!**

You must use the offer code to get our special price.

**1-800-333-2045**

Your Offer Code: **MAG537-08**



Rating of A+

**Stauer®**

14101 Southcross Drive W.,  
Ste 155, Dept. MAG537-08  
Burnsville, Minnesota 55337 [www.stauer.com](http://www.stauer.com)

† Special price only for customers using the offer code versus the price on Stauer.com without your offer code.

Stauer... *Afford the Extraordinary.®*



*The Stauer  
Magnificat II is  
powered by your  
own movement*



- Luxurious gold-finished case with exhibition back
- 27-jeweled automatic movement
- Croc-embossed band fits wrists 6¾"–8½"
- Water-resistant to 3 ATM

## Let's Connect



MESSAGE  
FROM  
PRESIDENT/  
CEO

**DARRYL  
SCHRIVER**

WHEN WE SAY WE LIVE in a *connected world*, most of us think about technology, like our smart phones, tablets and other devices. But when you're a member of an electric cooperative, *connected* means so much more. You are connected to your communities and you are connected to your utility.

We greatly value our connection to you, the members we serve. We'd like to help you maximize the value you can get from Tri-County Electric Co-op through a variety of programs, products and services that we offer our members. For example, when you

register for **online member portal** access, you can monitor your energy use, pay your bill online, set up notifications, view your account information, contact us, update your information and so much more.

When you bookmark our website, **tcectexas.com**, you have immediate access to a wealth of resources and information. Whether you need to understand your bill, transfer your service, find information on the upcoming Annual Meeting, apply for our Youth Tour or Scholarship, report an outage, access your online member portal or see the latest issues of the *Texas Co-op Power* and Member Bulletins, the website is your go-to source for information. 1533700001

When you download **TCEC Connect**, the mobile member app, you can take your member portal on the go to monitor your daily use, pay your bill, report an outage, contact us and more.

When you follow Tri-County Electric Co-op on **Facebook**, you can stay up-to-date on co-op events, like director nominations and elections, and learn new ways to save energy and stay #SafetyStrong around electricity. You can also receive updates on power restoration efforts and on maintenance work scheduled to increase system reliability.

When you sign up for **text and email notifications** you can receive advance notice on system maintenance, billing updates and information on co-op events. You can sign up for notifications on your online member portal or through TCEC Connect.

By connecting with us, you can get real-time updates from your co-op. That's why we want to make sure we have your most current contact information on hand, like your phone number and email. Tri-County Electric Co-op relies on data for every aspect of our operations, and up-to-date contact information helps ensure that we can provide the high level of service that you expect and deserve.

As President/CEO of your cooperative, I make it my goal to make sure members know they can reach out to me with any issues. Last April, we mailed a special election ballot asking the membership's permission to sell our subsidiary. I personally fielded over 1,000 phone calls from members who had questions about the ballot and their cooperative. No matter the question or issue, I am here to serve you.

You are more than a consumer or customer here; You are a member-owner of this cooperative. Tri-County Electric Co-op exists to serve you, our members, and the better we're connected to you, the better prepared we are to answer the call. More than 200 employees are here to take care of you. Reach out by email, phone, social media, or a good old-fashioned letter for any reason.

We are here. Let's get connected. ■



# Tracking your Electric Use

Monitor your daily electric use online

**DID YOU KNOW YOU CAN** track your electric use online? Tri-County Electric Cooperative's newly installed advanced metering infrastructure allows our members to keep an eye on daily kilowatt-hour use through two-way communication smart meters.

We started the system-wide smart meter deployment in August 2019. At the end of December roughly 102,000 meters on our system, or 85 percent, were upgraded to smart meters. Through our Advanced Member Power program, these smart meters provide added value to our members, including the ability to monitor electric use.

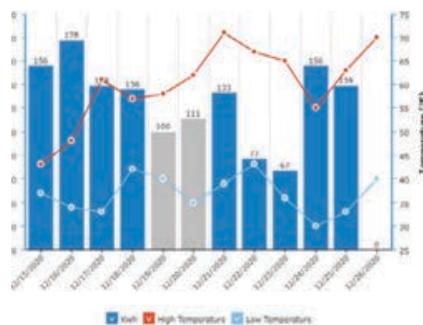
Members can watch their electric use to learn kWh consumption patterns and estimate their monthly bill. This practice will help you know when to conserve energy and see how temperature affects your consumption. Tri-County Electric Co-op offers two convenient ways to monitor your electric use. 800662195

## Online Member Portal

Follow these steps to monitor your electric use online:

1. Visit [tcectexas.com](http://tcectexas.com) and click the grey **Log in** button on the top of the page. If you already have an online account, simply log in with your credentials. If you do not have an online account, click the **Register** button to get started.

2. Once in the portal, click **Daily Usage**. If you have multiple meters, use the drop down menu to navigate through your accounts. The **Daily Usage** page includes a graph with kWh use and a temperature overlay.



Sample graph of daily electric use that can be tracked on the online member portal and TCEC Connect. Data can take 24-48 hours to populate in the graph.

## TCEC Connect

Follow these steps to monitor your electric use on the mobile member app:

1. Open TCEC Connect and log in using your credentials for the online member portal. If you do not have an online account, visit our website and click the grey **Log in** button on the top of the page. Once on the portal login page, click the **Register** button to get started.

2. Once in the app, click the blue **Usage Detail** icon located along the bottom of the screen. This feature includes a graph with kWh use and a temperature overlay.

## Other Features

The online member portal and TCEC Connect help in other ways as well. Here are just a few:

- ▶ View your account information
- ▶ Set up text and email notifications
- ▶ Pay your bill
- ▶ Report an outage

If you need assistance setting up your online member portal or TCEC Connect, your co-op is here to help. Simply visit our website, [tcectexas.com](http://tcectexas.com), or give us a call at 817-444-3201. ■

# I Work for You



## DENISSE RIVERA

**Distribution Engineer**  
Engineering department, Aledo

When Denisse came to Tri-County Electric Co-op on Sept. 30, 2019, she said it was like coming home. After earning her degree in electrical engineering from Texas A&M University-Kingsville, she took a job at Magic Valley Electric Co-op in Mercedes, Texas. Five years later she left the co-op and went to work for a big consulting firm in Fort Worth. She was glad when Tri-County Electric Co-op advertised an opening.

"The consulting firm, they were friendly, but if you asked a question it was like, 'if I help you I'm going to lose money,'" she said. "Here it's, 'Okay, I have this question. Can you help me?' It's a team."

Denisse grew up in Matamoros, Mexico, but her family moved to McAllen and she graduated from Sharyland High School. She was the only female in most of her college classes, but was elected president of the campus chapter of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers.

At Tri-County Electric Co-op Denisse works with distributed generation and solar.

Denisse, a soccer fan, has three dogs, who absorb much of her time and her paycheck. She also loves to cook and stays in close touch with her family. ■

***"I take the members from the process of applying to turning on the system."***

# 2021 Director Nominations

Director Districts 3, 6 and 8 are up for election this year

**TRI-COUNTY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE'S** director nomination process is open for director districts 3, 6 and 8.

**DISTRICT 3**, suburban district currently held by Jorden Wood of Aledo

**DISTRICT 6**, suburban district currently held by John Killough of Granbury

**DISTRICT 8**, urban district currently held by Dr. Jarrett Armstrong of Keller

Eligible members interested in serving on the board of directors are encouraged to participate in the democratic process of the cooperative. 37777001

The board of directors approved and adopted a new set of bylaws, effective November 1, 2020, that include a new nomination process for members interested in serving on the board of directors. Previously, director nominations took place at district meetings. Now, members have two ways to seek nomination to the board of directors: the Committee on Nominations and Qualifications or nomination by petition.

## The Committee

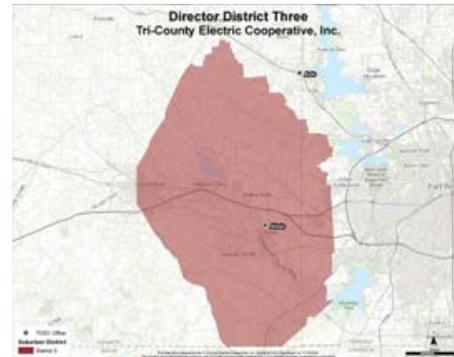
The Committee on Nominations and Qualifications accepts and reviews applications from candidates for each director district scheduled for election each year. Eligible members may seek nomination through the committee by completing the four steps below, including filing an application and necessary documents, gathering 25 signatures from members who reside in the district and submitting an application fee.

The committee, composed of no more than nine members, is nominated by the board and includes one member from each district. Committee members serve for a three-year term, with one-third of the committee up for election each year. The membership elects and confirms appointments of committee members who's terms expire that year at the Annual Meeting. 8001429502

## Petition

Interested and eligible members may bypass the committee through the member petition nomination path. Director candidates must complete the four steps below, including filing an application and necessary documents, gathering 50 signatures from members who reside in the district and submitting an application fee.

Members who select this nomination path will be reviewed and verified. Eligible candidates will be listed on the ballot with the label *Petitioning Candidate*. ■



## The Committee on Nominations and Qualifications

- ▶ Eligible members seeking nomination as a director shall file their applications by the deadline established in the most recent director election schedule, pursuant to the application form provided by the cooperative.
- ▶ Each director applicant shall execute, and attach to the application, the necessary and relevant consent forms provided by the cooperative for reasonable credit and criminal background checks.
- ▶ Each director applicant shall attach to the application the signatures of at least twenty five (25) members whose primary residence is located within the director district for which the applicant seeks.
- ▶ Each director applicant shall also attach an application fee payment of fifty dollars (\$50.00) or other fee as determined by the board to cover the application process.

## Nomination by Petition

- ▶ Eligible members seeking nomination by petition may nominate themselves for a position on the ballot, by returning a petition containing the signatures of fifty (50) members who reside in the district.
- ▶ The petition must be filed with the cooperative by the deadline established in the election schedule and must be on the form as provided by the cooperative.
- ▶ The petition must be accompanied by a candidate application and background check consent forms.
- ▶ Each petitioning director candidate applicant shall also attach an application fee of one hundred dollars (\$100.00) or a fee determined by the board to recover a portion of the election costs.

# Planning your Petition

What it is, where it is and how to use it

**ACCORDING TO OUR NEW CO-OP BYLAWS**, eligible members interested in serving on the Tri-County Electric Cooperative Board of Directors must submit a petition with their director candidate application. Members may seek nomination through the Committee on Nominations and Qualifications, or bypass the committee with a petition. Both nomination paths require a petition with signatures of members who reside within the district.

Members may obtain the petition on our website at [tcectexas.com/director-elections](https://tcectexas.com/director-elections) under **Election Documents**. The website includes information on the nomination process and what needs to be submitted to the co-op.

## Completing the Petition

Director candidates must download the online petition from our website to get started. The first page includes information to help members complete the petition. The second page includes blocks for member information, and director candidates may print as many pages as needed in order to obtain a sufficient number of member signatures.

Director candidates may obtain a list of members within their district by contacting the cooperative via email at [memberrequests@tcectexas.com](mailto:memberrequests@tcectexas.com).

Director candidates seeking nomination through the committee need at least 25 signatures, and director candidates looking to bypass the committee need at least 50 signatures. We recommend gathering more than the minimum in the event a member's signature cannot be verified or is not valid. 800839417

Signatures on each director candidate's petition will be verified using cooperative records. A valid signature means that a member is active, resides in the same district as the director candidate at their primary residence and the entry is legible. Director candidates are encouraged to include the line number for each member signature gathered.

Once the petition is complete and meets nomination requirements, director candidates must submit to the co-op along with the other required documents.

Please give us a call at 817-444-3201 with questions related to the petition or director nomination process. ■

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Visit [tcectexas.com/director-elections](https://tcectexas.com/director-elections) for election documents and additional information.

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# Applications and petitions for director nominations are due by 5 pm on Thursday, March 11, 2021.

For director candidates in districts 3, 6 and 8.

## Committee on Nominations and Qualifications

The Committee on Nominations and Qualifications will meet in March to accept and review applications and petitions from director candidates for director districts 3, 6 and 8. The committee will report back to the membership a slate of nominees by director district.

### COMMITTEE MEMBERS

**Jerry Steven Bartley**, District 3

**Matt Adams**, District 4

**Ramey Keeth**, District 5

**Danny Tuggle**, District 6

**Ranell Scott**, District 7

**Lesley Boone**, District 8

**Robert Gotcher**, District 9

*District 1 and District 2 committee positions are currently vacant.*



The party barn at Warren's Backyard was built new to look old, and it got heating and air conditioning during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Pandemic Persistence

Granbury couple keeps business afloat after a turbulent year

BY BOB BUCKEL, COMMUNICATIONS AND MEDIA REPRESENTATIVE

**LIKE A LOT OF PEOPLE**, Steve and Joni Berry had high hopes for 2020. With deep roots in Granbury and successful careers behind them, they were pursuing their passions.

Joni retired in 2015 after 27 years as a school secretary—10 at Granbury ISD and the last 17 at Tolar High School. Steve put in 25 years with the Arlington Fire Department before stepping down in 2007, then served three terms as precinct 4 Hood County commissioner. When he left that job at the end of 2018, he got a real estate license so he would have something to do when not helping Joni with the family business.

That's Warren's Backyard, a wedding and event venue on the historic, tree-shaded 25-acre property they bought in 2015 from dear friends and neighbors Warren and Dee White. The venue is a labor of love, a picturesque spot for brides and grooms, graduates, family reunions, corporate events and community gatherings. The property, just a quarter-mile from Lake Granbury, had been in White's family since 1872.

With Joni's personal touch overseeing everything from food to music to photography, it had been voted "Hood County's Best Wedding and Event Venue" three years in a row.

2020 was going to be its best year ever.

The Berrys' roots in Tri-County Electric Co-op are as deep as their roots in Hood County. Steve is the third generation in his family to live on the co-op's lines, and Joni, who graduated from Weatherford High School, has never gotten electric service anywhere else.

"They're service-oriented," Steve said. "Middle of the night, those linemen get out and go make sure your power is on. Whenever people are looking at houses, I can't steer them in any direction, but I always tell them Tri-County is very good about delivering a great product."

Service is a hallmark of Warren's Backyard, too.

"I think it goes hand-in-hand with what we did for our professions, me being a fireman and her being a high school secretary," Steve said. "She does a great job of working with the brides and the grooms, and for me, as a fireman you're kind of solution-minded."

They needed every bit of that experience and optimism to get through 2020.

Last February, with the venue booked solid and ready to enter its busiest time, they headed out on a dream vacation: a mid-February flight to San Francisco, then a 15-day cruise to Hawaii and back aboard the luxury liner *Grand Princess*.

The "and back" part got a little complicated.

"We went all over San Francisco before there was any word of an outbreak," Steve said. "The streets were crowded. And we had a wonderful trip to Hawaii – Hawaii is beautiful."

But on day two, as they were returning to San Francisco, a man who had been on their ship two weeks earlier died of COVID-19. 800879322

A worldwide pandemic was erupting, and cruise ships were quickly targeted as both incubators and entry points for the coronavirus. Their ship and its 3,500 passengers spent five days offshore while the cruise line and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) worked out a plan. They were finally allowed to disembark in Oakland, then flown to military bases around the country for treatment or quarantine.

Steve and Joni, along with three other Granbury couples, went to Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, where they were quarantined for two weeks. It was March 24 before they got home – just in time to absorb COVID-19's next punch: the cancellation of virtually their entire year.

It turns out, weddings don't work so well on Zoom, and historic ambience can't be boxed and delivered via a drive-through. Many businesses struggled, but event venues fared worse than most.

"It hit us pretty hard in April," Joni said, noting that five weddings cancelled outright. Many others simply postponed to 2021 – creating a domino effect by soaking up dates that would have likely been booked anyway. The venue shut down for the summer, then a resurgence of the virus wiped out the fall schedule. Finally, they lost seven Christmas parties and even cancelled their traditional New Year's Eve bash.

But they didn't sit on their hands. They added heating and air conditioning to the 3,600 square-foot barn and moved in a huge grain bin from a farm in DeLeon to provide another photo site for brides and other parties. When things open up again, Joni is considering departing from her one-event-per-weekend practice and booking events on consecutive days, just to catch up. 800798254

"I think it will roar back," Joni said. "I really do. It's just getting to that point."

Steve said most of their customers have been extremely understanding.

"They realize it was beyond our control and we realize it was beyond their control," he said. "A lot of people didn't have Christmas with their families, or Thanksgiving. People are frustrated, but deep down, when they take time to really think about it, it's a bigger issue."

But 2020 wasn't through. On Christmas Eve, Joni began showing symptoms of the virus. They both got tested the next day, and sure enough, they both had it. They'd followed every protocol, wearing masks, washing hands and staying home – but still, after surviving the cruise and sitting in quarantine for weeks, they got sick while staying home.

"That was a great present, wasn't it?" Joni laughed. "I guess you can just pass somebody in the grocery store and get it. It's weird."

Steve's paramedic training kicked in. They got immediate care, began a regimen of vitamins and other treatments and stayed hydrated. On day four, they were up and moving around to keep their lungs expanded, and the prognosis was good for a quick recovery. 6001300001

"That's kind of the way 2020's gone," Steve said. "It started out like a ball of fire and everybody had great expectations, and then this. But at the end of the day you keep the faith. It's going to turn around, and 2021 will be better for all of us."

As for 2020? It looks a lot better in the rearview mirror. ■



TOP RIGHT: Steve and Joni Berry at Warren's Backyard, their wedding and event venue in Granbury.  
OTHER PICTURES: Events held at Warren's Backyard over the past five years.  
*Courtesy of Joni Berry.*





**Fired Up**  
February 25

**Scholarship Deadline**  
March 5

## Your Co-op's Community Calendar

### February

6

**A Taste for Education**  
weatherfordisd.com

15

**Presidents' Day**  
Our offices will be closed

25

**Fired Up**  
kellerchamber.com

26

**TCA Legacy Dinner**  
tcaeagles.org

### March

5

**2021 Scholarship applications  
due by 5 pm**  
tcectexas.com/scholarship

24

**"The Long Dirt Road" Awards  
Luncheon**  
kellerchamber.com

25

**Alliance Development Forum**  
metroportchamber.org

**NOTE:** Events are subject to postponement or cancellation due to COVID-19 guidance. Please check the event resource for updates.

**Interested in promoting your event in the next issue of *Texas Co-op Power*?**  
Email [pr@tcectexas.com](mailto:pr@tcectexas.com) with the event name, date and where readers can find more information.

## Tri-County Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

### CONTACT US

200 Bailey Ranch Road  
Aledo, TX 76008  
**Phone** (817) 444-3201  
**Email** [customer\\_service@tcectexas.com](mailto:customer_service@tcectexas.com)  
**Web** [tcectexas.com](http://tcectexas.com)

**President/CEO**  
Darryl Schriver

**Board of Directors**  
Jordan Wood, Chairman  
Max Waddell, Vice Chairman  
John Killough, Secretary-Treasurer  
Jerry A. Walden  
Steve V. Harris  
Dr. Jarrett Armstrong  
Larry Miller

**24/7**

## Outage Reporting

For information and  
to report outages, please  
contact us.

Online: [oms.tcectexas.com](http://oms.tcectexas.com)  
App: TCEC Connect  
Phone: (817) 444-3201

### ABOUT TRI-COUNTY ELECTRIC CO-OP

Tri-County Electric Co-op owns and maintains more than 9,294 miles of line to provide electric service to more than 94,000 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](http://tcectexas.com)  
[Facebook.com/TCECTexas](https://www.facebook.com/TCECTexas)



COULEUR | PIXABAY

# Broccoli and Cauliflower Casserole

BY JOHN CHENEY  
FORT WORTH

- 1/2 cup dry breadcrumbs
- 1/4 cup and 2 teaspoons grated parmesan cheese
- 1 1/2 teaspoons butter, melted
- 1 1/2 teaspoons Italian seasoning
- 2 teaspoons butter
- 1 cup onion, chopped
- 1 1/4 cups milk
- 2 teaspoons flour
- 1 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 4 oz. cream cheese, cut up
- 16 oz. frozen broccoli florets, thawed
- 16 oz. frozen cauliflower florets, thawed

1. Mix breadcrumbs, 2 teaspoons parmesan cheese, melted butter and Italian seasoning in a bowl.
2. In a skillet on medium heat, melt 2 teaspoons butter and add the onion. Cook until tender. Add milk, flour and pepper. Cook until the mixture bubbles. Add cream cheese and parmesan cheese and stir until melted.
3. Cut up broccoli and cauliflower into bite size pieces and add to the skillet. Mix evenly and spoon into a 2-quart dish. Sprinkle bread crumb mixture on top.
4. Bake at 350°F for 40 minutes, or until lightly browned.

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 [pr@tcectexas.com](mailto:pr@tcectexas.com)

**ONLINE:** [tcectexas.com/recipe-submission](https://tcectexas.com/recipe-submission)

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

Tri-County Electric Cooperative  
Attn: Recipe Submission  
200 Bailey Ranch Road  
Aledo, Texas 76008



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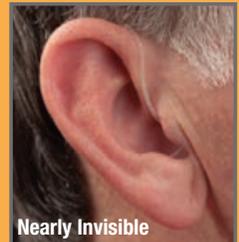
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TCP WEB EXTRA

Listen to W.F. Strong read this story.



# A Name That Sticks

Falfurrias—the butter and the town—emerged from South Texas' King Ranch

BY W.F. STRONG

**TEXAS IS HOME TO MANY** famous brands. Unlike Southwest Airlines, Lone Star Beer and Whataburger, the King Ranch is the only one that evolved from an actual brand. And that ranch helped launch another famous brand, Falfurrias Butter.

In 1895, Richard King's ranching partner, Mifflin Kenedy, sold 7,000 cows to South Texas neighbor Ed Lasater. Dairy cows, Lasater knew, would deliver five times the return on investment as beef cattle. He started with Durham short-horns because that breed could support either a beef or dairy operation. It would be more than a dozen years before he raised the herd of Jersey cattle with

which he created the dairy that launched Falfurrias Butter.

Falfurrias butter was first made in Falfurrias, southwest of Corpus Christi, in 1909, five years after Lasater founded the town. People have wondered whether the butter is named for the town or the town for the butter, but they were both named after Lasater's ranch, which was named for a grove of trees called *La Mota de Falfurrias*. Lasater claimed Falfurrias came from the Lipan Apache language and, loosely translated, meant "land of heart's delight." The truth of the word's origin could not be confirmed, or absolutely refuted, by a Lipan Apache linguist.

The butter was the town's best-known export in those early days, and likely remains so today. Even the town's high school mascot, the Jerseys, was named after the butter's real creators. Indeed, at one point, Falfurrias was home to the largest Jersey cattle herd in the world.

That gave special meaning to the once-popular bumper sticker there: "Watch Your Step, You're in Jersey Country." I'm not sure the author intended the double meaning, but it certainly provided a good deal of local levity until it was discontinued.

Falfurrias remains a popular niche brand of butter. In Texas it is sold at all major grocery stores and some smaller ones, too. It has been quite popular in northern Mexico for generations.

A friend tells me that as a child in Saltillo, he remembers his mother bringing back the *mantequilla dulce de Falfurrias*—sweet butter from Falfurrias—as a special treat for the kids anytime she traveled to Texas.

A Texas Marine in World War II recalled that as he was wading ashore in the battle for Okinawa, a Falfurrias Butter crate bumped up against his leg in the surf, a comforting reminder of home.

Falfurrias Butter outgrew Falfurrias. It became so popular that it was eventually bought by the Dairy Farmers of America, but it is still made in Texas, and sales over the past year have grown 20%. It is made by Keller's Creamery in Winnsboro and has grown at a Texas-sized pace of 40% in recent years.

When you drive through Falfurrias today, on state Highway 285, you can still see the vintage Falfurrias Butter sign on the side of the old creamery. The town newspaper, *Falfurrias Facts*, occupies the building today.

In the interest of full disclosure and ethical transparency, I have to reveal that I am also an export of Falfurrias, and even though I know on which side my bread is buttered, I assure you that it does not affect the veracity of this commentary. ■

# Quick Breads and Muffins

Fruit and chocolate together reward a baking itch

BY MEGAN MYERS, FOOD EDITOR

Some of the first recipes I learned how to make as a child were quick breads and muffins, sourced from a splattered red Betty Crocker cookbook. Their simple preparation makes them easy enough for a baking novice, but they're also dependable, making them a food I turn to again and again whenever I get a baking itch. These muffins are of the big, bakery-size variety, but you can make them in a standard muffin tin if you like.

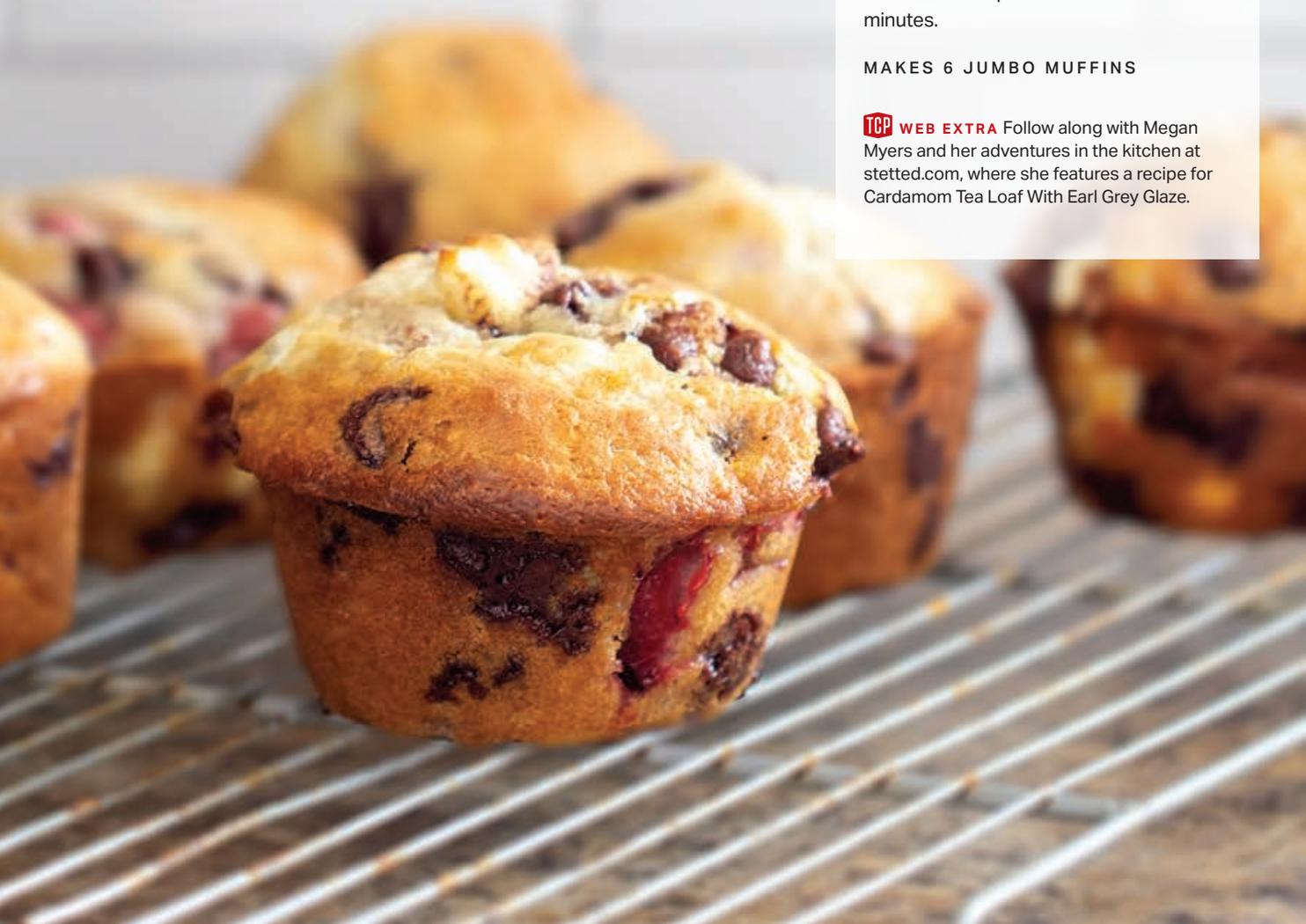
## Strawberry Cheesecake Muffins

**2 cups flour**  
**2 teaspoons baking powder**  
**½ teaspoon baking soda**  
**¼ teaspoon salt**  
**½ cup sugar**  
**2 eggs**  
**¼ cup (½ stick) butter, melted and cooled, plus more for the pan**  
**¾ cup milk**  
**1 cup diced strawberries**  
**3 ounces cream cheese, cut into chunks**  
**1 cup milk chocolate chunks**

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Coat a jumbo (Texas-size) muffin tin with butter and set aside.
2. In a small bowl, stir together flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt.
3. In a large bowl, whisk together sugar and eggs until blended. Whisk in melted butter, then add milk.
4. Stir in flour mixture until just mixed. Gently fold in strawberries, cream cheese and chocolate chunks.
5. Fill muffin cups ¾ full and bake 20–24 minutes.

**MAKES 6 JUMBO MUFFINS**

**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 Cardamom Tea Loaf With Earl Grey Glaze.





## Blackberry Muffins

JANET STEPHENS  
BOWIE-CASS EC

Sour cream makes these blackberry muffins wonderfully tender. Fresh or frozen fruit works equally well, but Stephens recommends letting frozen berries thaw and drain overnight to remove excess moisture.

- 2½ cups flour**
- 1 cup sugar**
- 1 tablespoon baking powder**
- ½ teaspoon baking soda**
- ½ teaspoon salt**
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon**
- 2 eggs**
- 1 cup sour cream**
- ½ cup (1 stick) butter, melted and cooled**
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract**
- 1 teaspoon milk**
- 1½ cups (5–6 ounces) blackberries, fresh or frozen**

**COOK'S TIP** If using fresh berries, cut them in half vertically. If using frozen berries, thaw, drain excess liquid and pat dry, then toss in 1 tablespoon flour before adding to batter.

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Line 18 muffin cups with paper liners or coat with nonstick spray and set aside.
2. In a small bowl, whisk together flour, sugar, baking powder, baking soda, salt and cinnamon. In a large bowl, combine eggs, sour cream, butter, vanilla and milk and stir until smooth. Mix in flour mixture until just combined. Fold in blackberries, taking care not to crush the fruit.
3. Divide batter among muffin cups and bake 17–20 minutes. Let cool in pan 5 minutes, then remove to a wire rack to cool completely or enjoy warm.

MAKES 18 MUFFINS

[MORE RECIPES >](#)

\$500 WINNER

## Chocolate Banana Bread

BECKY YOUNG  
COSERV



This banana bread variation has a delightful swirl of chocolate running through it. Don't skip the pecans and sugar on top, which caramelize and pair well with the banana flavor. If the nuts brown too quickly during baking, tent the bread with foil during the last 20 minutes to prevent burning.

MAKES 1 LOAF



- 2 cups flour**
- ¾ teaspoon baking soda**
- ½ teaspoon salt**
- 1 cup sugar**
- ¼ cup (½ stick) butter, softened, plus more for the pan**
- 1½ cups mashed banana (about 4 bananas)**
- 2 eggs**
- ⅓ cup plain yogurt**
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract**
- ½ cup semisweet chocolate chips**
- ½ cup chopped pecans**
- 1 tablespoon raw sugar or brown sugar**

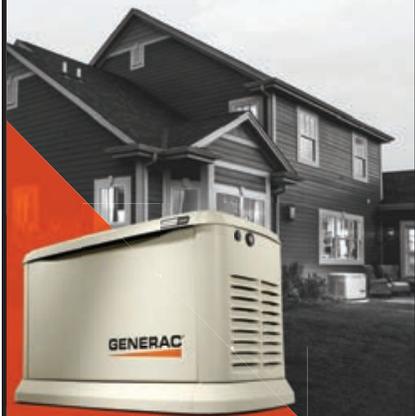
1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Coat an 8.5-by-4.5-inch loaf pan with butter and set aside.
2. In a small bowl, whisk together flour, baking soda and salt. In a large bowl, beat sugar and butter together until smooth. Mix in mashed banana, eggs, yogurt and vanilla. Add flour mixture to wet ingredients, stirring until just combined.
3. Place chocolate chips in a small bowl and melt in the microwave for 1 minute, then whisk the chocolate smooth. Cool slightly and stir in 1 cup of batter, mixing until no streaks remain.
4. Spoon batters alternately into prepared pan, then swirl with a knife to marble. Top with chopped pecans and sugar.
5. Bake 60–70 minutes, until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean. Cool in pan 10 minutes, then remove from pan to a wire rack to cool completely.

## TCP \$500 Recipe Contest

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## Almond Poppy Seed Bread

LEAH MERCER  
CECA

Fragrant, moist and perfect for teatime, this bread is a cinch to make. It keeps well, so you can enjoy slices throughout the week and freeze the second loaf for later—or wrap it up for a pretty housewarming gift.

**COOK'S TIP** If you want a topping, whisk together ¼ cup orange juice, ¾ cup powdered sugar, ½ teaspoon vanilla extract, ½ teaspoon butter extract and ½ teaspoon almond extract until smooth. Pour glaze over cooled bread.

**Shortening, butter or nonstick spray, for the pans**

**3 eggs**

**2½ cups sugar**

**1½ teaspoons salt**

**3 cups flour, plus more for the pans**

**1½ teaspoons baking powder**

**1½ cups milk**

**1⅞ cups vegetable oil**

**1½ tablespoons poppy seeds**

**1½ tablespoons vanilla extract**

**1½ tablespoons almond extract**

**1½ tablespoons butter extract**

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease and flour two loaf pans and set aside.

2. In a large bowl, beat eggs lightly, then whisk in sugar and salt. In a small bowl, combine flour and baking powder. Add alternately with milk and oil to egg mixture.

3. Stir in poppy seeds and vanilla, almond and butter extracts. Pour into prepared pans and bake 60 minutes or until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean.

MAKES 2 LOAVES

## Great Balls of Fire Cornbread

GINGER CLARDY  
BANDERA EC

Cornbread qualifies as a quick bread, and this version adds cheese and jalapeño pepper for the perfect dinner accompaniment.

**Butter, for the pan**

**1 cup cornmeal**

**¾ cup flour**

**2 teaspoons baking powder**

**1 teaspoon baking soda**

**½ teaspoon salt**

**2 eggs**

**1 cup whole kernel corn**

**1 cup buttermilk**

**1 cup grated cheddar cheese**

**¼ cup seeded, chopped jalapeño pepper**

**3 tablespoons olive oil**

1. Butter an 8- or 10-inch cast-iron skillet and place it in the oven as it preheats to 400 degrees.

2. In a large bowl, stir together the cornmeal, flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt. In another bowl, lightly beat eggs, then stir in corn, buttermilk, cheese, jalapeño and oil. Add to dry mixture and stir until just barely combined.

3. Remove hot skillet from oven, pour in batter, then bake cornbread 25 minutes or until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean.

SERVES 8



**TCP WEB EXTRA** So many options for baking bread—and breaking bread—online. Visit our website for more than 100 bread and muffin recipes.

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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.

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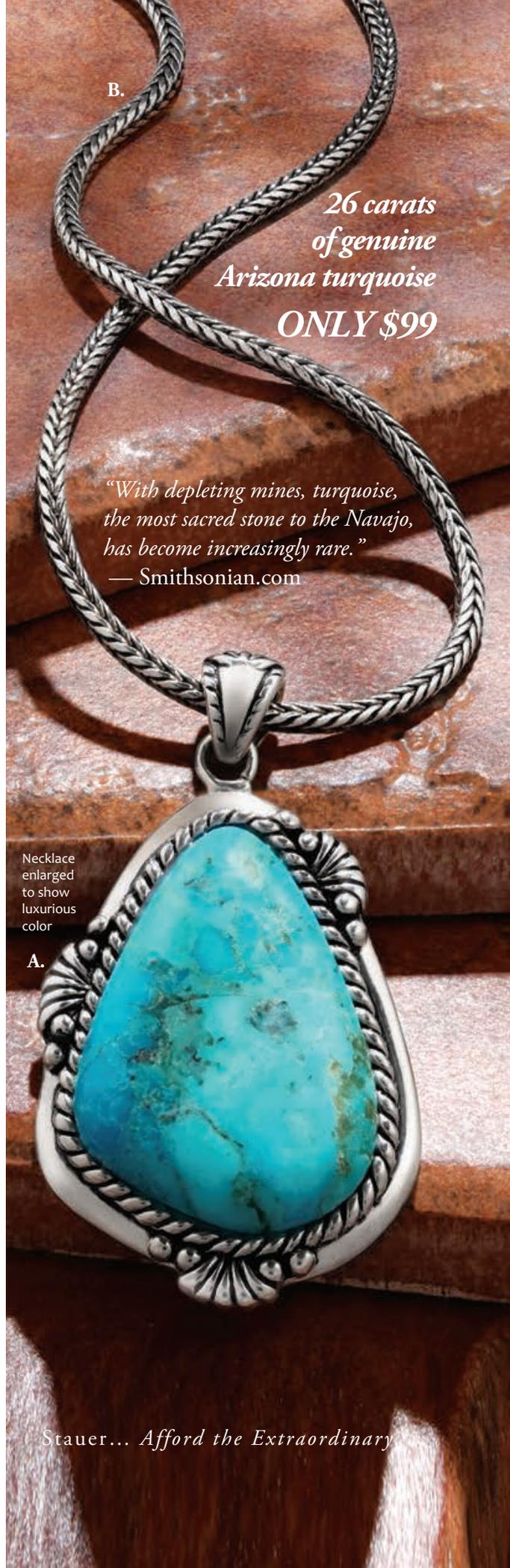
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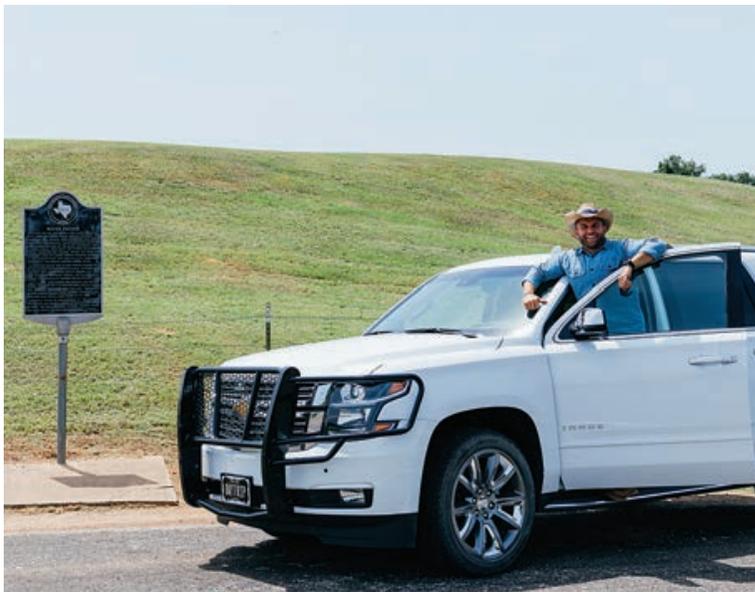
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COURTESY CHET GARNER

## Caddo Monuments

Centuries-old sacred mounds remain from a Native American culture that thrived near Nacogdoches

BY CHET GARNER

**EVEN THOUGH DETAILS** of some events in Texas history are always debated, the origin of the state’s name not so much. Native Americans called the Caddos have a word, *Taysha*, that means friend, which the Spanish translated into *tejas* as the name for the region and the people.

The Caddo Nation once stretched from Northeast Texas to Missouri. Roughly 25 miles west of Nacogdoches, the Pineywoods open onto a grassy field marked by three earthen mounds. Twelve hundred years earlier, I might have encountered a Caddo community of up to 150 grass houses and 900 people. Now a visit to Caddo Mounds State Historic Site there allows a glimpse into this ancient and sophisticated community. A tornado destroyed the site’s permanent visitor center in 2019, but a temporary headquarters offers tours.

A tour guide brought the entire site to life. The first mound is the burial mound, where Caddo leaders were interred with supplies for the six-day journey into the afterlife, where they became stars—in the celestial sense. The second mound is a ceremonial, low platform that served originally as a stage. Across Texas Highway 21 is the temple mound, which was the largest and site of religious ceremonies and worship. I felt like I was looking at the Texas version of the pyramids of Giza. These mounds were the ceremonial center of the region.

Archaeologists have excavated parts of the site and learned details about the farming and trading the Caddos practiced centuries ago. The Caddos followed sophisticated social, religious and political systems that helped them thrive for 500 years. The site inspires present-day Caddo people to bring ancient practices back to life and preserve the culture that gave Texas its name. ■

ABOVE Chet at the temple mound, the largest at Caddo Mounds State Historic Site.

**TCP WEB EXTRA** See Chet’s video from Caddo Mounds State Historic Site 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.

## FEBRUARY

04

**Frisco [4–7] World Olympic Gymnastics Academy Classic and Liukin Invitational,** (972) 497-4800, woga.net

**San Angelo [4–21] Stock Show,** (325) 653-7785, sanangelorodeo.com

05

**Kerrville [5–6, 12–14, 19–21] Villainous Company,** (830) 896-9393, caillouxperformingarts.com

06

**Kerrville [6–March 19] America the Beautiful: Women Artists of the West National Exhibition,** (830) 896-2553, museumofwesternart.com

07

**San Marcos Half Marathon, 10K and 5K,** (210) 722-4548, toursanmarcos.com

11

**Nocona [11–13] Mardi Gras Nocona Style,** (940) 825-3526, nocona.org

**Beaumont [11–14] Mardi Gras of Southeast Texas,** (409) 721-8717, mardigrastx.com

12

**Lufkin Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus Live!,** (936) 633-5454, angelinaarts.org/performing-arts-series

**Luckenbach [12–13] Hug-In and Valentine Ball,** (830) 997-3224, luckenbachtexas.com

**Port Lavaca [12–13] February Frenzy,** (361) 726-5126, stsda.org

**McKinney [12-14] Third Monday Trade Days,** (972) 562-5466, [thirdmondaytradedays.com](http://thirdmondaytradedays.com)

**Fredericksburg [12-14, 19-21, 26-28] 9 to 5,** (830) 997-3588, [fredericksburgtheater.org](http://fredericksburgtheater.org)

13

**Mesquite Be Mine at the Ranch,** (972) 216-6468, [visitmесquitetx.com](http://visitmесquitetx.com)

14

**El Paso Marathon,** (915) 534-0600, [elpasomarathon.org](http://elpasomarathon.org)

**McKinney Krewe of Barkus Virtual Dog Parade,** (972) 547-2660, [artinstituteofmckinney.com](http://artinstituteofmckinney.com)

19

**Fredericksburg [19-21] Trade Days,** (210) 846-4094, [fbgtradedays.com](http://fbgtradedays.com)

20

**Houston Creole Heritage Festival,** (281) 888-4153, [houstoncreolefest.com](http://houstoncreolefest.com)

**Gruene [20-21] Old Gruene Market Days,** (830) 832-1721, [gruenemarketdays.com](http://gruenemarketdays.com)

26

**Junction [26-27] Freezer Disc Golf Tourney,** (512) 557-2482, [junctiontexas.com/disc-golf](http://junctiontexas.com/disc-golf)

27

**Mesquite [27-28] Texas Fly Fishing and Brew Festival,** 1-800-541-2355, [txflyfishingfestival.org](http://txflyfishingfestival.org)

MARCH

05

**Grapevine First Friday at the Farm,** (817) 410-3185, [nashfarm.org](http://nashfarm.org)

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The blade is full tang, meaning it doesn't stop at the handle but extends to the length of the grip for the ultimate in strength. The blade is made from 420 surgical steel, famed for its sharpness and its resistance to corrosion.

The handle is made from genuine natural bone, and features decorative wood spacers and a hand-carved motif of two overlapping feathers—a reminder for you to respect and connect with the natural world.

This fusion of substance and style can garner a high price tag out in the marketplace. In fact, we found full tang, stainless steel blades with bone handles in excess of \$2,000. Well, that won't cut it around here. We have mastered the hunt for the best deal, and in turn pass the spoils on to our customers.

**But we don't stop there.** While supplies last, we'll include a pair of \$99, 8x21 power compact, binoculars and a genuine leather sheath **FREE** when you purchase the **Huntsman Blade**.

**Your satisfaction is 100% guaranteed.** Feel the knife in your hands, wear it on your hip, inspect the impeccable craftsmanship. If you don't feel like we cut you a fair deal, send it back within 30 days for a complete refund of the item price.

**Limited Reserves.** A deal like this won't last long. We have only 1120 **Huntsman Blades** for this ad only. Don't let this beauty slip through your fingers. Call today!

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*"The feel of this knife is unbelievable...this is an incredibly fine instrument."*

— H., Arvada, CO

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# Saddles

Saddle up, and let's hit the trail. This month our readers show off their well-worn and well-loved riding gear. Made of traditional leather or lighter-weight synthetics, saddles are passed down through families and remind us of hard work and the spirit of the Old West.

GRACE FULTZ



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP

**JODY BRODHECKER  
PEDERNALES EC**  
Saddles too dear to part with.

**TERRY SUELTMAN  
PEDERNALES EC**  
"This was the 'little partner' of a cowgirl who rode up to us with her dog in the pouch."

**BEATRICE LUSK  
CHEROKEE COUNTY EC**  
"Debra riding Freckles."

**ANNE BARCAK  
SAN PATRICIO EC**  
The Glasscock brothers water their horses while working cattle, circa 1960.



## Upcoming Contests

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

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.



## Time To Talk About *That*

Black History Month takes on a sense of urgency this year

BY MICHAEL HURD  
ILLUSTRATION BY TRACI DABERKO

**BLACK HISTORY MONTH** is a singular, isolated observance drawn out through February to recognize African American contributions to America’s formation and image. For generations the great majority of those feats were ignored by the writers of history texts, but now the recognition comes through literature and several weeks of ceremonies, seminars, marches, parades and assorted TV programs.

Even so, the prevailing feel can be obligatory and condescending—as though the subject dare not be broached during the other 11 months of the year. “Oh, we can talk about *THAT* in February!”

So, here we are again, time to talk about *THAT*, but Black History Month 2021 has a different feel from its 95 predecessors, even a sense of urgency given the social upheaval of 2020. There is an

increased interest in Black history as a way of understanding how and why we have arrived at this point of social reckoning, as a country, through an examination of the evolution of the African American community.

Historian Carter G. Woodson created Black History Week in 1926 as a natural extension of the cultural and intellectual Harlem Renaissance, with its cast of exceptional creative talents—Alain Locke, Langston Hughes and others—pushing for racial equality by extolling the realities of post-slavery African American life in the U.S. Woodson emphasized a need to recognize the achievements of African Americans.

Woodson chose February because of the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln (February 12) and Frederick Douglass (February 14), two men who were revered and celebrated in Black communities. By the 1970s the annual celebration had gained widespread popularity and was nudged to cover the entire month. Black History Month has been both hailed as an uplifting force and maligned as racially polarizing, a phenomenon that is currently more pronounced than the desegregation efforts of the 1960s.

Woodson never thought the study of Black history should be confined to one week. He established Black history education programs that would cover a full year of study, a “Black History Year.” Further, he welcomed the future when a designation of any kind regarding the study of Black history was no longer necessary.

So it was heartening last year when the Texas Education Agency OK’d high schools providing African American Studies as an elective course, a major positive step.

Welcome to the contemporary “New Negro” movement with more diverse voices and a new iteration of Black History Month for wider, rapt audiences acknowledging that Black history is American history.

Let’s talk about *THAT* ... every day. ■

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