

TEXAS CO-OP POWER



Tamale Time

The making—and eating—of tamales signals the start of the season



Trinity Valley EC
Local News
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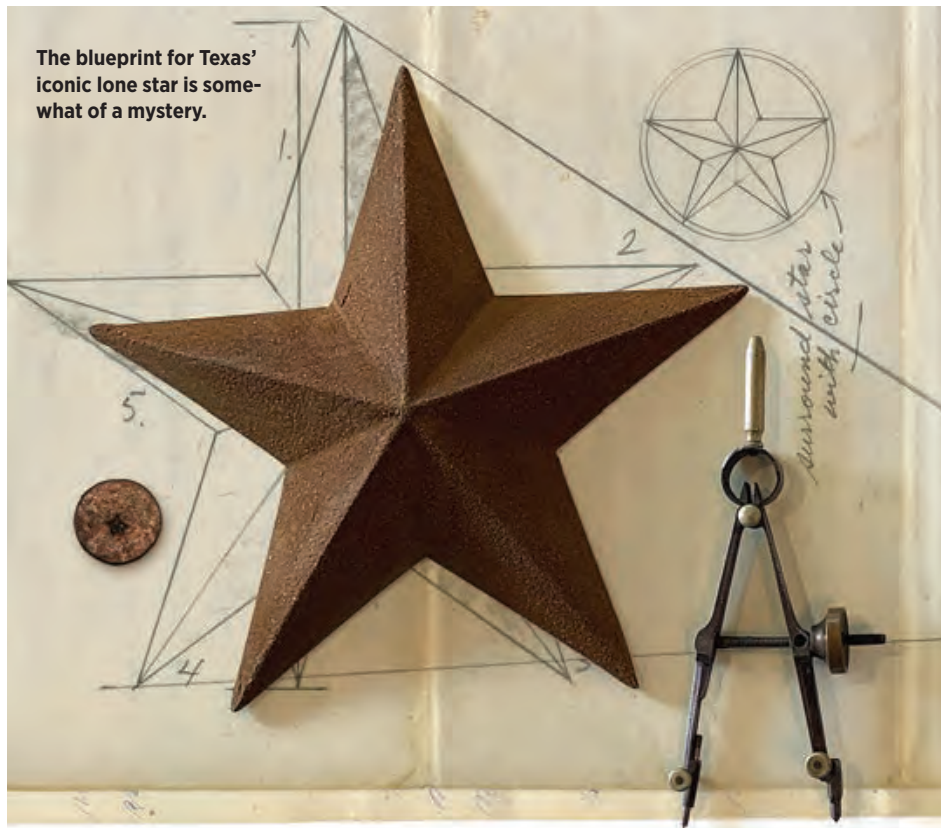
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The blueprint for Texas' iconic lone star is somewhat of a mystery.

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NEXT MONTH

Texas Feels a Draft Craft breweries bring entertainment and economic opportunity to communities.



STAR: JACK MOLLOY. BEER: MAXY M | SHUTTERSTOCK.COM



ON THE COVER Celia Galindo helps continue a tamalada tradition started by her grandmother in 1949 in Brownsville. Photo by John Faulk

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Your VFD Might Need You

In my lifetime, I've been a member of five volunteer fire departments [*Putting Others First*, October 2019]. More than once, I've been the only firefighter responding to a fire or wreck in our district, having to rely on manpower and equipment from a neighboring community to assist.

Chances are good your local volunteer fire department needs you. Check it out—you might be glad you did.

DOUG EARNEST | CHANDLER
TRINITY VALLEY EC

Fateful Connection to REA

My father, Walter Smith, joined the Rural Electrification Administration in 1949 as a young electrical engineer [*Our Fearless Forefather*, August 2019]. By 1951, he was running electric service into the Missouri Ozarks for the REA. Family folklore says that Dad attended an REA conference in Salt Lake City in June 1951 and was scheduled to return home on a flight with his REA co-workers.

However, I was born in Missouri while Dad was at the conference, so when a seat opened up on an earlier flight, the REA group nominated Dad to return home early to greet his newborn son. As a result, Dad was



Remembering Cliburn

In 1959, I was a senior at the El Dorado, Arkansas, high school.

Van Cliburn had just won the International Tchaikovsky

Competition in Moscow

[*Charming the Soviets*, October 2019]. True to his previously scheduled performances, he played to a full house in El Dorado.

DEPHANIE CATES | LIBERTY HILL | PEDERNALES EC



not on United Airlines Flight 610 when it crashed, killing six REA employees, including George Haggard.

I suspect that Mr. Haggard, as a top REA administrator at the conference, probably had a hand in getting Dad on that earlier flight.

ROD SMITH | NEW BRAUNFELS
PEDERNALES EC

Before He Went Uptown

The lanky, bespectacled, rather shy young man strumming a cheap guitar in my Grandmother "Honey" Elliott's rooming house in Pecos in the early 1950s was known to us only as Uncle Joe's helper. Uncle Joe was an entomologist sent by the Texas ag department to inspect the insect population. The easygoing musician was tasked

with catching and counting bugs.

Every evening after supper, we would gather in the kitchen for an impromptu concert. I was about 8, and this was just a normal grandparent visit for me.

A few years later, when he topped the charts, I realized I had spent the summer with Roy Orbison [*Wink's Spectacle*, September 2019]. Ain't Texas grand?

BRUCE BREEN | MCLEAN
GREENBELT EC

Childhood in the Big Bend

As a young kid who grew up in Coleman, we had many wonderful trips to Alpine, Marfa and the Big Bend—great folks and amazing scenery for sure [*Big Bend's Golden Triangle*, September 2019]. My father was a dentist in Coleman for many years and, in the early 1980s, even opened up a small dental office in Alpine for a couple days a week.

TOMMY WHITE | ALLEN
GRAYSON-COLLIN EC

Fit to a Tee

By the Numbers [Currents item about the odds of a hole-in-one, September 2019] had an extra special meaning to me. My 16-year-old grandson Clayton had just gotten a hole-in-one in his Farmington, Arkansas, high school golf tournament.

HELEN MCCAMEY | WILLS POINT
TRINITY VALLEY EC

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Texas Co-op Power

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HAPPENINGS

New Year's Eve Party in Itasca

Three artists with impressive musical bloodlines will provide the entertainment for a **NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY in ITASCA**. Whey Jennings, grandson of Waylon Jennings, was born and raised in Grand Prairie. Thomas Gabriel is the oldest grandchild of Johnny and June Carter Cash. And Cagney Frizzell, named after James Cagney, is Lefty Frizzell's nephew.

Guests are welcome to bring their own food and beverages to the HILCO Civic & Event Center party **DECEMBER 31**.

The event will include a 50-50 raffle and drawings for other items. Tickets start at \$20. For \$40, guests get a meet and greet with the musicians.

HILCO Electric Cooperative built the Central Texas venue last year and hosts about 10 community events per month.

INFO ▶ (214) 212-5798, bit.ly/NYEItasca



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PHILANTHROPY

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Find more information at tocker.org. All applicants must contact Karin Gerstenhaber before applying for a grant. Application deadline is January 15.

ALMANAC

CO-OPS ARE BORN

The cooperative movement turns 175 years old December 21. On that date in 1844, 28 workers opened a cooperative store in Rochdale, England. Initially, the store carried four key items: butter, sugar, flour and oatmeal.

◀ LOOKING BACK AT ARTS AND FASHION THIS MONTH



IN THE 75 YEARS since *Texas Co-op Power* debuted in July 1944, Texas and Texans have left an indelible mark in film, theater, literature and fashion—from Charlie Dunn to Sissy Spacek.

1940s

1945 Charlie Dunn, bootmaker to the stars, begins his career at Capitol Saddlery in Austin.

1948 *Red River*, a fictional account of the first cattle drive on the Chisholm Trail from Texas to Kansas starring John Wayne, is released.

1948 James A. Michener, who spent the final years of his life in Austin, wins a Pulitzer Prize for his book *Tales of the South Pacific*.

1950s

1952 Dancer and actress Cyd Charisse of Amarillo achieves star status opposite Gene Kelly in *Singin' in the Rain*.

1956 Grace Kelly marries Prince Rainier III of Monaco. Her bridesmaids' dresses are designed by Neiman Marcus of Dallas.



1960s

1960 John Wayne's *The Alamo* is released.

1966 Katherine Anne Porter, who was born in Indian Creek, wins the National Book Award and Pulitzer Prize for fiction for *The Collected Stories*.

1968 Poet and artist Consuelo "Chelo" González Amezcua has a solo exhibition at the McNay Art Museum in San Antonio. It's the first time she is recognized for her brand of Texas filigree art.

Elf in Kaufman Has His Own Toy Story

WHEN JERRY REICHERT sees a 2-by-12-by-12-inch board at a construction site, he knows it is likely to end up on the scrap pile. That is fine with him because the scrap fits into his plans for Christmas.

“When I see that piece of lumber,” Reichert says, “I see a toy.” Actually, he sees one of 22 varieties of toys. These comprise the 5,000 wooden playthings made each year by volunteers at Hobby Crafters and distributed to children in North Texas by more than 20 churches and charities.

Reichert and his wife, Wilda, live in Kaufman and have been members of Trinity Valley Electric Cooperative since the early 1970s. Two or three days a week, Reichert, 81, drives more than an hour to the Hobby Crafters workshop in Garland where he holds the unofficial title of head elf. “I took over from the guy who founded it,” Reichert says. “That was 38 years ago.”

Hobby Crafters was founded in 1944 by Dallas physician Arch McNeill, who organized friends and patients to produce toys for underprivileged children. Reichert took over in 1981 at McNeill’s request. “It’s always been strictly volunteer,” Reichert says. “You can look at my checkbook and see for yourself.” Reichert retired in 1997 from his 39-year career selling electronics for Toshiba.

The Hobby Crafters workshop houses 39 machines, including a variety of power saws and sanders, but not every one of the 40 volunteers needs to operate a power tool. “I tell people if they can lay a form on a board and draw a line around it, they’re hired,” Reichert says.

INFO ► hobbycrafters.org



JERRY REICHERT

POWER OF OUR PEOPLE recognizes co-op members who improve their community’s quality of life. Nominate someone by emailing people@texascooppower.com.



1970s

1974 Wichita Falls’ Tommy Tune, actor, dancer, singer, choreographer and director, wins the first of his 10 Tony Awards—best featured actor in a musical, for *Seesaw*.

1974 Cadillac Ranch is created outside Amarillo.



1980s

1980 Comer Cottrell Jr. relocates Pro-Line Corporation, maker of Jheri curl hair products, to Dallas. It becomes the largest black-owned firm in the Southwest.

1981 Sissy Spacek of Quitman wins the best actress Academy Award for her portrayal of Loretta Lynn in *Coal Miner’s Daughter*.

1986 Larry McMurtry of Archer City wins the Pulitzer Prize for fiction for *Lonesome Dove*.

1990s

1990 *Friday Night Lights* by H.G. Bissinger is published. It is adapted into a movie of the same name in 2004 and leads to a widely acclaimed TV series that ran 2006–2011.

1996 The first Texas Book Festival takes place, in Austin.

1997 Arlen isn’t on the Texas map, but when the animated TV series *King of the Hill* debuts, the characters make it feel like it could be the next town over.

2000s



2002 Kendra Scott starts her eponymous jewelry company in a spare bedroom of her Austin home.

2003 Robert A. Caro wins a Pulitzer Prize in biography for *Master of the Senate*, one of four biographical volumes he’s written about Lyndon B. Johnson.

2013 The first episode of HGTV’s *Fixer Upper*, shot in Waco, airs.

A STAR IS BORN



Texas' iconic lone star might trace origins to 1817 Mexican coins

BY CLAY COPPEDGE

A lone star adorns the Texas state flag and the state seal. It appears on the U.S. Mint's Texas commemorative quarter, and it is the state's official gemstone cut. Texas is the Lone Star State because we Texans are proud of our beginnings as an independent republic. According to history and mythology, nothing symbolizes Texas' spirit more eloquently than a lone five-pointed star.

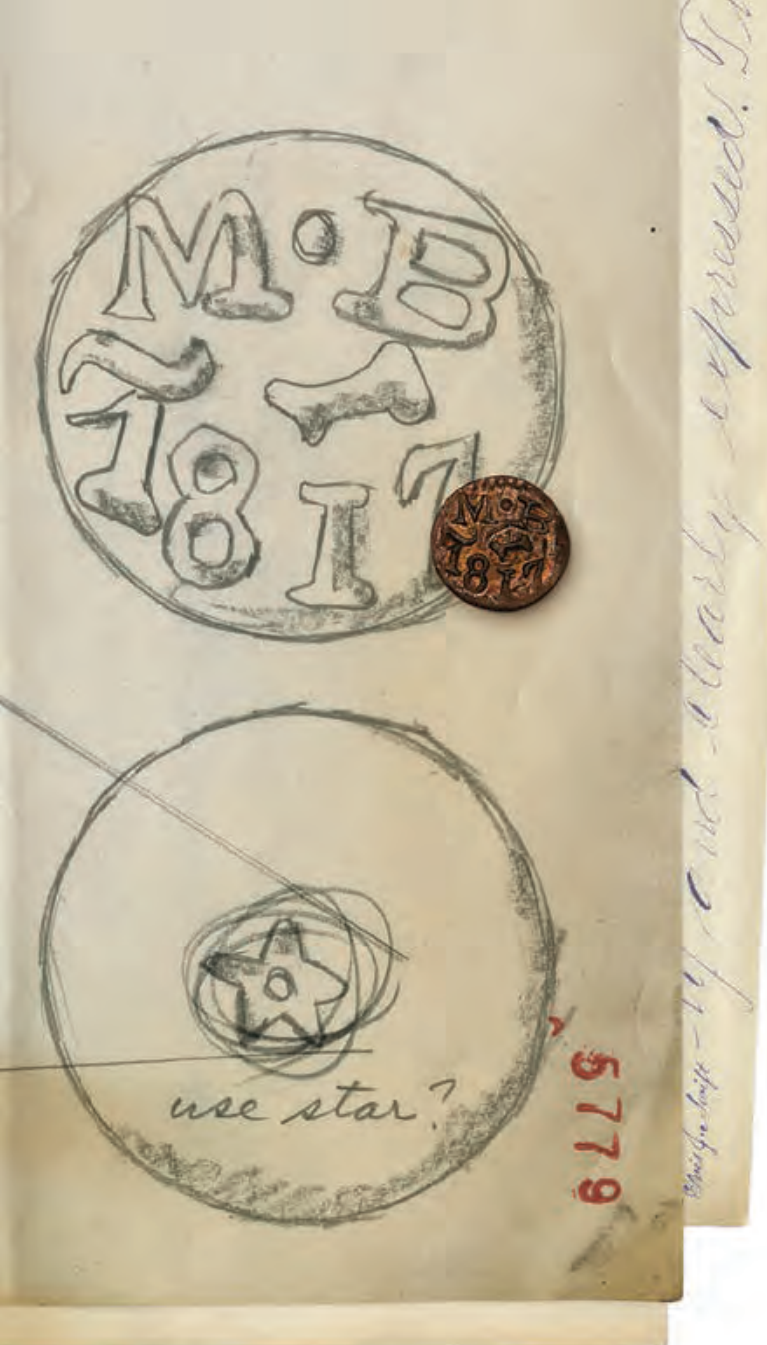
But who first came up with the idea of the lone star, and who was the first person to use the lone star as a symbol of Texas?

A lone star showed up as a symbol of Texas as early as 1819 on the flag of the ill-fated Long Expedition, an early attempt by Anglo Americans, led by James Long, to wrest control of Texas from Spain. That flag, believed to be the first Texas flag to feature a single star, incorporated 13 alternating red and white stripes with a single white star in the upper left corner. Eli Harris, a

frontier Texas printer and a leader of the Long Expedition, believed he invented the symbol and wrote to Texas President Mirabeau Lamar to that effect in 1841. "I established the flag which you now use," he wrote. "I was proud of being the man to establish the star and flag of Texas."

George Childress, author of the Texas Declaration of Independence, adopted a resolution at the general convention of the provisional government in 1836 resolving that "a single star of five points, either of gold or silver, be adopted as the peculiar emblem of this republic." The Texas Congress officially adopted the current lone star flag on January 25, 1839.

According to Houston numismatist James Bevill, the lone star—five-pointed with a dot in the middle—originated with an obscure San Antonio minter in 1817 when the central government in Mexico authorized a series of coins to be minted in San Antonio for local use.



In his 2009 book, *Paper Republic: The Struggle for Money, Credit and Independence in the Republic of Texas*, Bevill wrote that the star on the reverse side of the humble *jola* “brings us back to the very essence of Texas symbolism.” (Jola is Spanish slang for a coin of small denomination.)

Acting Spanish Gov. Manuel Pardo received authorization from Mexico City to strike small copper coins for San Antonio (then known as San Fernando de Bexar) and selected Manuel Barrera, a local merchant and administrator, to produce 8,000 jolas. These were worth $\frac{1}{2}$ real, which would be about a nickel today. The copper jolas measured 15–20 millimeters in diameter with the minter’s initials and “ $\frac{1}{2}$ ” on the obverse, or front of the coin. On the reverse was a five-pointed star with a raised dot in the center.

“It’s hard to say where the influence for a lone star came from,” Bevill says. “These were Spanish coins, after all. We don’t know if the design was done by Barrera or his helper or maybe the *alcalde*. But that was the first time the lone star representing what is today Texas first appeared.”

The Mexican government withdrew Barrera’s authority to mint the coins after about 20 months, possibly because minting coins in 1817 was difficult and the volume required presented a challenge. Barrera would have been using a steel die, or mold, to strike an imprint on the blank copper planchet (metal disc from which coins are made) with a hammer. The authority to mint the coins went to José Antonio de la Garza in 1818.

No records confirm how many jolas Barrera and Garza actually minted, but only nine of the crude coins survived. A collector found five of the nine 1817 jolas in 2004 in a coin shop.

The 1817 jolas preceded the Long Expedition by two years and the Texas revolution by almost two decades. So what did the lone star flag and emblem represent before it represented Texas as an independent republic?

According to Alamo historian and curator Bruce Winders, in vexillology—the study of flags—stars traditionally represented kingdoms or sovereigns until the end of the 18th century, when the star became a symbol of republican ideology and thus a good fit for the fledgling Texas government.

But, Winders noted, before Texas was the Lone Star State, it shared a flag—and a star—with the Mexican province of Coahuila. That flag was green, white and red with two gold stars in the middle of a white stripe.

“Prior to the Texas revolution, the Texas star flew alongside the star of Coahuila because Texas lacked a sufficient population for separate statehood as established by the Constitution of 1824,” Winders wrote in an email. “Officials designated it the Department of Texas and attached it to Coahuila for purposes of governance.”

Bevill says the lone star on the jolas might have carried the same symbolism as the flag. “There were Americans in San Antonio de Bexar who thought of Texas as having a separate identity from Mexico,” he explained.

The idea of a Lone Star State might have been a case of Eli Harris and George Childress thinking alike, but Bevill’s research makes it clear that the 1817 and 1818 coins with the five-pointed star and the distinctive raised dot in the middle created the first imprint of a lone star on Texas, the country and the world.

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



BY EILEEN MATTEI
PHOTOS BY JOHN FAULK



MAKING
TAMALES
IS A HOLIDAY
TRADITION,
THOUGH
EATING
THEM NEVER
ENDS

Once upon a time, tamales appeared only at big family Christmas gatherings and special occasions in the Rio Grande Valley. Besides being tasty treats, aromatic tamales link multiple generations with memories of happy times together.

Tamales were already on the menu in Mexico and Central America 7,000 years ago, prepared for ceremonies and armies on the move. Then and now, making tamales—spiced corn dough holding a filling of meats or vegetables or sweet fruits—is a complicated, labor-intensive process. That often prompts a *tamalada*—a lively gathering of friends and family toiling in the kitchen preparing dozens and dozens of tamales.

Starting in 1949, Celia Champion would gather 20–25 female friends and relatives for a tamalada at her Brownsville home as Christmas approached. The women—*tamaleras* for a day—would make as many as 240 dozen tamales. Wearing multicolored smock aprons and white chef hats, they spread out to workstations around the house to peel garlic, grind spices, stir the *masa* (corn dough) and grind up the slow-cooked pork shoulders. Others would spread the masa on softened corn husks, top it with meat or beans and three raisins, representing the three wise men, before snugging the corn husk around it all and freezing the raw tamales.



Family snapshots show the tamalada tradition that Celia Champion started in 1949. Opposite, from left: Champion's daughter, Chickie Samano; great-granddaughter Karolina Rodero; and granddaughter Celia Galindo with a portrait of the family's matriarch.

MAKING TAMALES IS A COMPLICATED, LABOR-INTENSIVE PROCESS. THAT OFTEN PROMPTS A TAMLADA—A LIVELY GATHERING OF FRIENDS AND FAMILY TOILING IN THE KITCHEN PREPARING DOZENS AND DOZENS OF TAMALES.



Left: A Celia Champion tamalada. Above, from left: Tanya, Dora and Ana de Alba sample savory, fresh tamales prepared by De Alba Bakery using family recipes.

Seventy years later, her daughter, Chickie Samano, and her freckled, curly-haired granddaughter Celia Galindo continue the unbroken tamalada tradition. Two original tamaleras (one 104 years old) attended the six-hour work party in 2018, when the fourth generation included a 12-year-old and Champion's great-granddaughter. "Once you are in, it's till death do we part," Samano says.

"When my grandmother was alive, we would go to the Matamoros *mercado* to get the best leaves, meat and spices," Galindo recalls. "Now my cousin Cookie peels the garlic. My friend comes from Seguin with the meat grinder. I grind the spices in a blender." Nevertheless, she treasures her inherited 200-year-old stone *molcajete*, worn shiny from decades of grinding spices.

Champion's original tamalada required arduous labor to make

nearly 3,000 tamales. That prompted another tradition. "After making the first few dozen, we drink planter's punch, and the mariachis arrive. Then the *gritos* [celebratory shouts] get louder," Samano explains. "Mother was a party animal, always cooking. On her deathbed, she made me promise we would keep the tamalada."

But traditions adapt to the times, so the tamalada now gathers in Galindo's catering business kitchen. "The ladies want to do less and party more, so we make about 50–60 dozen tamales," she says. Still, that's 720 tamales. The women and their families eat the tamales at a Christmas Eve open house, on the religious feast of Candelaria on February 2 and later that month during Charro Days, a celebration of binational cultures and traditions.

The tamaleras also meet on January 6, Three Kings Day or the Epiphany, to eat the wreath-shaped sweet bread called *rosca*



Below: A De Alba Bakery tamale with shredded beef and green tomatillo salsa is wrapped in masa and a banana leaf. Bottom: A vegetable Oaxacan tamale at De Alba includes zucchini, corn, carrots, peas, onion and a bit of mozzarella cheese.



de reyes. The three who find baby Jesus dolls in their slices take charge of organizing the next tamalada.

Luis Reyes became part of a tamale-making team as a boy, joining cousins, parents, aunts and uncles, all under the direction of his grandmother. “Tamale making is an all-day activity. The whole family works together before Christmas,” says Reyes, communications manager for Magic Valley Electric Cooperative in Mercedes.

“Now the family is so big we make tamales twice a year,” he says. “My grandmother loves the American tradition of a family Thanksgiving. She blended that with the Mexican tradition of family tamale making, so we have tamales with the turkey at Thanksgiving.”

Rio Grande Valley parents once warned their unruly children: “Behave or the only thing you will unwrap at Christmas will be a tamale.” Sure, Christmas still finds Hispanic families at feasts anchored by mountains of beef, pork, chicken and bean tamales. But people readily acknowledge that making tamales at home is a time-consuming, fading art, while the convenience of buying ready-made ones is priceless. Hundreds of dozens of the foil-wrapped packets of tamales sell on a daily basis at various commercial tamale-making kitchens, like the one the de Alba family runs in Pharr.

Inside De Alba Bakery, smiles of a happy crowd get wider as the tamale aroma envelops them. They know from experience the subtly spiced masa of the tamales is as soft as butter and surrounds a savory filling inside the wrapper. De Alba makes 14 different types of tamales, from perennial favorites pork and chicken to Oaxacan vegetarian and bean or combos like cheese paired with jalapeno, beans, pork or chicken.

To satisfy a sweet tooth, De Alba Bakery makes a fudgy Mexican chocolate tamale that comes with Kahlúa sauce as well as a not-too-sweet vanilla-butter tamale common in central Mexico and a scrumptious raisin and cinnamon tamale. As a bakery, it also has shelves brimming with fresh Mexican pastries: *empanadas*, *conchas* and *hornitos*.

Ana de Alba’s grandmother made tortillas and tamales in a



DE ALBA BAKERY'S CHICKEN TAMALES

20–30 corn husks

4 cups water

5 pounds whole chicken (skinless and cut up)

1 onion, cut in half

6 cloves garlic

1 tablespoon salt

1–1½ teaspoons powdered cumin, to taste

1–1½ teaspoons ground black pepper, to taste

5 pounds prepared De Alba tamale dough (available at dealbakery.com), divided use

1. Soak corn husks in a container of hot water 1–2 hours to make them pliable. Keep them submerged.
2. Boil 4 cups water in a pot. Add chicken, onion, garlic and salt. Reduce to medium-low heat and simmer 30 minutes or until cooked. Remove chicken from broth, cool, debone and shred or cut up. In a blender, mix the leftover broth with 2 tablespoons of tamale dough (also called masa). Pour broth mixture back into pot and add meat, cumin

and black pepper. Stir and simmer 15–20 minutes to thicken the filling mixture.

3. Drain corn husks and stand them in a container with narrow ends up. Husks have a rough and smooth side. Spread dough on the smooth side, starting in the middle, about 3–4 inches from the bottom—the wider end—and then spread to the bottom and sides. This should be a thin layer of dough, about ⅛ inch thick. Spoon 2–3 tablespoons of meat mixture. After spreading meat mixture onto dough, you can add optional ingredients before rolling it. Optional ingredients include corn, squash, roasted peppers and cheese. Roll husk over from one side to the other and overlap. Now fold top of husk down and squeeze bottom of tamale. Every tamale can be individually tied with string or left-over thin strips of husk. Also, tamales can be tied in bundles of a half-dozen.

4. Position tamales, folded part down, in a steamer basket that is deep enough. If not, just lay on basket carefully with folded points facing down. Position basket in pot with 2–3 inches of water and bring to a boil then cover well with tightfitting lid. Lower heat and steam on medium-low for 1 hour. If necessary, add more water during the cooking process but let the tamales steam an extra 15 minutes to make up for lost heat.

5. Turn off heat and let tamales set, covered, 10 minutes before handling to avoid breaking them.

► Makes 20–30 tamales.

COOK'S TIP For better, fresher flavor, uncooked tamales can be kept frozen and cooked as needed.

small San Benito shop in the 1960s. Her parents expanded that into De Alba Bakery in the 1980s and soon after made tamales available year-round. Today, she is CEO of the bakery, which has two Valley locations, an online store and a staff that has spanned four generations of the de Alba family.

“We’re so blessed to have the border next door to get all the quality, natural ingredients we want—corn leaves, dried chile pods and spices,” de Alba says. The kitchen crew makes the masa from scratch, cooking dried corn for one to two hours before grinding it. Spices and chiles are added to the cooked meats and other fillings, which with the masa are fed into equipment that forms the tamales. Hand wrapping the corn husk around the tamale is the final step.

“Our tamales are stuffed with more meat than the industry average,” de Alba says. “Pleasing our customer comes first, and the bottom line takes care of itself.” In the same vein, De Alba Bakery limits what it ships coast to coast from its website and through Amazon. “Some things won’t ship well without preservatives, and we won’t use them.”

The bakery sells about 50–100 dozen daily, but during the hol-

iday season, it switches to double shifts and brings in additional equipment to meet the demand for thousands of dozens of tamales. Orders for 10–20 dozen are common, although some customers request 100–200 dozen tamales for parties.

“Winter Texans were asking for beef tamales, so we decided to try it,” de Alba says. Dora de Alba, Ana’s mother, who is in charge of tamale quality control and recipe innovation, perfected the beef brisket tamale.

“Mom knew that Mexican women love cooking. She was the first one to provide made-from-scratch masa for sale. That made it simple for women to take prepared masa home and make tamales with their kids without slaving all day,” Ana de Alba says. Making it even easier, De Alba Bakery offers recipes for tamales and other treats in their online blog and stocks cumin, oregano, anise and chiles in the bakery.

“Everybody has become accustomed to eating fresh tamales for lunch and dinner all year long,” she adds. “Tamales are faster than hamburgers and taste better, too.”

Eileen Mattei, a Nueces EC member, is a Texas master naturalist in Harlingen.

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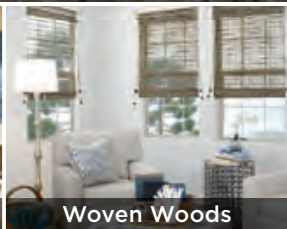


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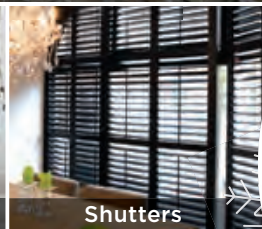
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How Can We Better Serve You in 2020?



MESSAGE FROM GENERAL MANAGER/CEO JEFF LANE

TRINITY VALLEY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE IS KNOWN FOR striving to provide safe, reliable electric service to our members—but we do more than that. One of our goals is to

find ways to help you control your energy costs. That's why we communicate with you about ways we can work together to help ease the burdens on your wallet.

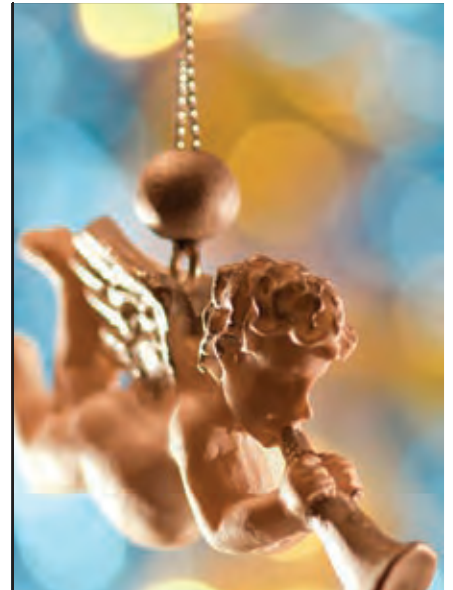
It may seem strange that we encourage you to use electricity efficiently, which actually reduces the number of kilowatt-hours you buy from us. But, as a member-owned cooperative, our focus is on service—not profit. We want to sell you every kilowatt-hour you need—and want you to need every kilowatt-hour you buy.

We continually offer recommendations for energy efficiency improvements and practices and implement procedures and programs to help you manage your electricity consumption. And our energy management adviser is available to provide one-on-one assistance to help you make the most of every energy dollar.

We will continue to focus on energy efficiency in the coming year, but as 2019 winds down, we want to know your energy priorities. How can we serve you better in 2020?

We encourage you to let us know—stop by, find us on social media, give us a call or send an email. However you choose to communicate, we're ready to listen.

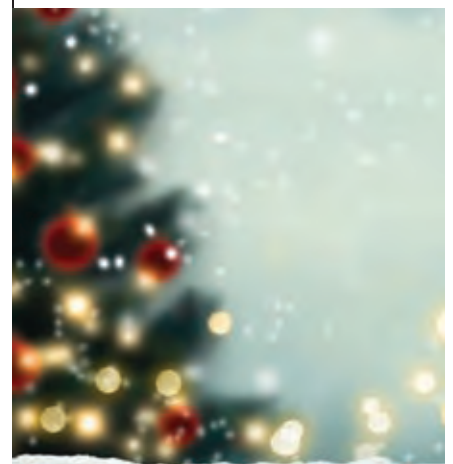
When you have questions about energy efficiency, electric service or any of our products or services, just ask us. When we know what you want, we're in a better position to successfully deliver results. So drop in and see us—we're always glad to hear from you.



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Happy Holidays

The offices of Trinity Valley Electric Cooperative will be closed Tuesday–Wednesday, December 24–25, and Wednesday, January 1, for the holidays.



DORTE STILLER | ISTOCK.COM

Did You Know?

On Christmas Eve 1923, President Calvin Coolidge began the country's celebration of Christmas by lighting the first National Christmas Tree decorated with electric lights.



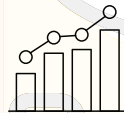
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TVEC to Return \$5 Million in Capital Credits

How Capital Credits Work



At the end of each year, if TVEC has received more revenue than was necessary to cover expenses, the difference is allocated back to members as capital credits based on each member's share of electricity purchased.



When the co-op's financial condition permits, the board of directors may decide to retire, or pay back, some of the capital credits. This year, all outstanding capital credits from 1991 will be retired as well as 2% of all other outstanding capital credits from 1992-present.



Capital credits are returned to current and former members. For current members, this will be applied as a credit on bills mailed in December. Former members will receive a check.

Capital Credits: How You Own the Co-op

WHEN YOU JOINED TRINITY VALLEY

Electric Cooperative, you began investing in the company's electrical infrastructure, equipment, facilities and growth. Member ownership is one of the key differences between co-ops and retail providers, and with each electric bill you pay, your equity in the co-op grows.

As a member-owned co-op, you are the owners, so any operating margin is allocated to each member based on the amount of electricity purchased in the year. It is a fair way to show each member's investment, and the co-op has that capital available to assist in funding growth and important projects to improve reliability and service.

As the co-op's financial condition allows, your elected board members refund these capital credits to members. For 2019, the TVEC Board of Directors has approved the return of just over \$5 million

in capital credits.

This amount will include all remaining credits from 1991, and 2% of all other credits for members from 1992-2018. Members who joined in 2019 have not yet been allocated any credits, and will not see a refund.

Current members will receive their credits on the electric bills mailed in December. Former members will receive a check at the address we have on file.

While credit amounts will vary greatly depending on how long you have been a member and how much electricity you have purchased, the return of capital credits is an important part of the financial stewardship of the co-op.

If you have any questions regarding capital credits, please contact TVEC at 800-766-9576 or memberrelations@tvec.coop.

| ACCOUNT NUMBER | | ACCOUNT NAME | | RATE CLASS | | SERVICE ADDRESS | | METER NUMBER | |
|--|----------|--------------|----------|------------|-------|-----------------------|---------|--------------|---------|
| 12345678901 | | TVEC MEMBER | | 1 1 | | 12000 COUNTY ROAD 123 | | 999999901 | |
| SERVICE | | RDG CODE | | READING | | MULTIPLIER | | KWH USAGE | |
| FROM | TO | NO. DAYS | PREVIOUS | PRESENT | | | CHARGES | | |
| 11/11/18 | 12/11/18 | 30 | 2 | 56438 | 58824 | 1 | | 2388 | 250.38 |
| 0.000000 PCRF ADJUSTMENT (REVERSE SIDE) | | | | | | | | | 0.00 |
| OPERATION ROLLOVER | | | | | | | | | 0.55 |
| CUSTOMER CHARGE (REVERSE SIDE) | | | | | | | | | 40.31 |
| CAPITAL CREDIT REFUND | | | | | | | | | -40.31 |
| TOTAL CURRENT CHARGES DUE 01/07/19 | | | | | | | | | 219.00 |
| PREVIOUS AMOUNT DUE | | | | | | | | | -219.00 |
| THANK YOU FOR YOUR PAYMENT 11/28/18 | | | | | | | | | |
| PLEASE MAIL YOUR PAYMENT 5 BUSINESS DAYS PRIOR TO DUE DATE | | | | | | | | | |
| TO ENSURE TIMELY DELIVERY AND POSTING OF PAYMENT | | | | | | | | | |

Capital credits refunds will be applied to bills mailed in December for members who joined TVEC in or prior to 2018. Former members who no longer have service through TVEC will receive checks at the address on file.

Safety First for Holiday Toys

DECEMBER IS THE MONTH WHEN YOU'RE most likely to buy toys and gifts. Purchase safe ones.

If you're shopping for children, buy toys that are age appropriate. You don't want your gift to spoil a child's holiday or cause it to turn tragic.

Here is a checklist for buying safe toys:

- ▶ Check the minimum age recommendation on the package. Buy a gift that suits a child's age, ability and interest level.
- ▶ Supervise children while they are using electronic toys. After playtime, put the toys away in a dry area out of smaller kids' reach.
- ▶ Teach your children how to use their toys safely. For example, if a toy has a cord that plugs into the wall, teach the child how to safely use electrical outlets. Demonstrate how to unplug by pulling on the plug itself, not the cord.
- ▶ Look for the letters ASTM on the packaging of toys you buy. That means the toy meets ASTM International's rigorous safety standards.
- ▶ Buying toys from thrift shops, flea markets and garage sales will save you a few bucks, but secondhand toys may not adhere to current safety standards and could be dangerous.
- ▶ Keep an eye out for toy recalls online at cpsc.gov.



Ready Your Home for a Winter Break

IF YOU'RE PLANNING TO BE OUT OF TOWN FOR AN EXTENDED TIME DURING THE holidays, take heed of the following recommendations to save some energy and keep your home safe.

Set the thermostat to 50 degrees. This is a happy midpoint that avoids wasting energy to warm an empty house while still preventing damage to pipes and plants. If sub-20-degree days are forecast for while you are away, drip faucets.

Turn off your electric water heater at the breaker or set it to the lowest temperature possible.

Unplug all small appliances. You'll reduce the risk of a house fire and save a bit on your electric bill.

Don't broadcast your travel plans on social media. Instead, share photos from your trip after you return.

If you set a timer for lights and sprinklers, make sure to switch up the times over the days you'll be gone so it's not obvious to any onlookers that the house is empty when lights go on at 6 p.m. every day like clockwork. If possible, stagger several timers that control different lights, to approximate the natural movement of someone through a house.

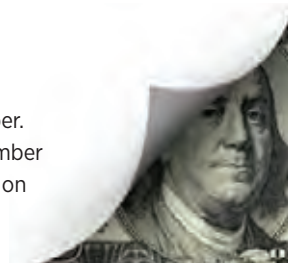
Close blinds and curtains. Don't advertise your belongings to any would-be house burglars. 59737001

Be strategic about putting out post-holiday recycling and trash. If there are a lot of boxes from new gadgets or other expensive electronics, wait until you get back to put them out so they're not sitting outside in full view for days. Or have a trusted neighbor set them by the curb on the appropriate day.

Place a hold on mail and newspaper deliveries, and ask a neighbor or friend to pick up any packages from your porch.

Win \$25 Just for Reading

Somewhere, hidden on Pages 18-23, is a TVEC account number. Read closely. If the account number is yours, contact the Member Services Department by December 31 to receive a \$25 credit on your electric bill. Don't miss out—you could be a winner.





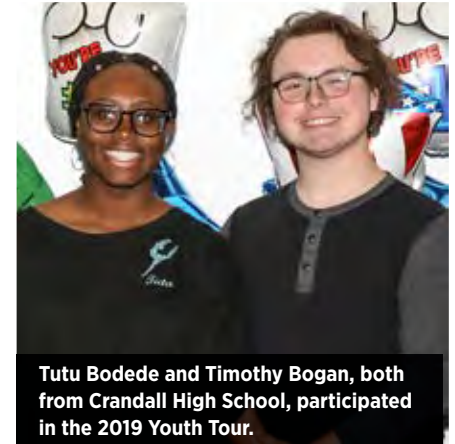
MERRY, BRIGHT AND EFFICIENT HOLIDAY LIGHTING

Decking the halls doesn't have to take a toll on your energy bill! Keep your holiday lighting merry, bright and energy efficient with LED light strands.

- Consider replacing older light strands with new ENERGY STAR LED® lights. LED strands are 70 percent more efficient and last 10 times longer than the age-old standard bulbs.
- You can get the look of cozy lighting with LEDs. Just look for "warm white" on the label.
- Unlike older light strands, LED lights give off virtually no heat, making them safer for kids and pets (and reindeer).
- Save energy by setting a timer for outdoor lighting and decorations. Program the timer so the lights turn on in the evening and turn off later at night when you typically go to sleep.

Source: Dept. of Energy

2020 Youth Tour Contest Entry Open



Tutu Bodede and Timothy Bogan, both from Crandall High School, participated in the 2019 Youth Tour.

Two local teens will again be chosen to represent Trinity Valley Electric Co-op as part of the Government-in-Action Youth Tour. The summer trip brings together civics education and tourism as participants spend nine days in Austin and Washington, D.C., meeting lawmakers, visiting historical sites and getting acquainted with 1,800 other future leaders.

"Throughout the trip, the history of the United States is put on full display for all to see," said 2019 Youth Tour winner Timothy Bogan. "Seeing how Americans, through all of the good and bad in our history, have come together to forge this great nation through blood, iron and willpower is amazing."

The tour starts with two days in Austin, with museum tours and a visit to the Texas Capitol. A flight to Washington leads to a busy schedule of experiences meant to make this a trip of a lifetime.

"I would encourage any classmate to apply," Bogan said. "To stand in the capital city of the most powerful nation in the history of the world will fill a person with such pride, hope for the future and determination I can't adequately put it into words."

Visit tvec.net for entry forms and details or contact Laura Melton at meltonl@tvec.coop.



FRANCISREPORTER | ISTOCK.COM

Cool Off Your Winter Energy Bill

YOU'VE BUDGETED FOR HOLIDAY GIFTS, MEALS, MAYBE A VACATION—BUT WITH MONEY tight, that doesn't leave much room for energy efficiency upgrades at home. Does that mean you're powerless to lower your electric bill? Not at all. Keep your energy bill cool this winter with these tips and tricks.

Drape delivery. Are you using your curtains to retain heat? Open drapes and shades to catch free solar heat during the day. Close them at night to keep the heat inside.

Got tape? Though not as durable as foam or vinyl, you can use nonporous tape (first-aid cloth tape, for example) to keep cold air from infiltrating your home. Tape is good for blocking corners and irregular cracks, and can be used at the top and bottom of a window sash, door frames, attic hatches and inoperable windows.

Pull the plug. Unplug any appliance or electronic device that you don't regularly use. Most devices use electricity anytime they are plugged in even if they are off.

Be a fan of fans. Run ceiling fans on low and reverse the rotation to blow air up in winter. This keeps warm air circulating without cooling you.

Flue flux. Be sure your fireplace damper is tightly closed anytime the fireplace is not being used.

Free your vents. Your heating, ventilating and air conditioning system will have to work twice as hard if your air vents are blocked by rugs, furniture or drapes. Keep them clear to allow air to flow freely.

Get caulking. Add caulk or weatherstripping to seal gaps around leaky doors and windows.

Garage drain. Leave your garage door down. A warmer garage in winter will save energy.

Rug relief. Have a spare rug? Use it to cover bare floors for added insulation.

Bundle up. Slip on some fuzzy socks and a sweater and lower the thermostat. You can save 5% for every degree you drop your thermostat between 60 and 70 degrees.

Smart food. When cooking, keep lids on pots and let hot food cool off before placing it in the refrigerator.

There are other ways to conserve energy, too. Remember, you don't pay for what you don't use. When you're not watching TV or using lights, computers or other electronics, turn them off.



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Member Donations Making a Difference

THE TVEC CHARITABLE FOUNDATION recently awarded four grants totaling \$11,000. Recipients of the grants include:



Jake E's Riding Roundup
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**Alzheimer's Coalition of
Henderson County, 4,000**



**Henderson County 4-H Shooting
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**The Salvation Army,
Malakoff, \$4,000**

Founded in 2013, the TVEC Charitable Foundation is an independent, nonprofit organization. The foundation was created to serve the community and help improve the quality of life for residents in our service area. **The foundation is funded entirely by donations from TVEC members who participate in Operation Round Up.** For more information, please call 1-800-766-9576 or visit tvec.net.

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Lazarus the Bug

The wonders of ironclad beetles seem to include an ability to return from the dead

BY SHERYL SMITH-RODGERS

MY HEART SANK. A TINY FORM LAY motionless at the watery bottom of a metal bucket I kept under our air conditioner's drain line. I plunged my hand into the water and scooped up the lifeless thing.

"Oh, you poor baby," I murmured, right away recognizing that I'd brought up a Texas ironclad beetle. "I'm so sorry." Gently, I laid the insect on a nearby rock. I nudged the beetle's body with my index finger. No response. Not even a twitch from a mangled leg. Darn, the bucket had claimed yet another casualty. Or had it?

This amazing species ranks high among my beetle favorites. An inch or so long, the Texas ironclad beetle (*Zopherus nodulosus haldemani*) can be found across Central and East Texas and into northeastern Mexico. It poses no threat to you or your garden. The markings on its top side remind me of an inkblot personality test. After comparing the spots of numerous ironclads, I would venture to say that, like snowflakes, no two are exactly the same.

Surprisingly, an ironclad's striking coloration actually blends in well with tree bark, where biologists believe the beetle begins its life cycle as an egg laid in a crevice. I found little information about the ironclad's larval and pupal stages. Adults feed on lichens and fungi that grow on oak, elm and pecan bark.

Though I've never tested this characteristic (nor will I ever), the ironclad's external shell is extremely hard, hence its name. Collectors who pin insects for display know this firsthand. Ask some, and they'll explain how they have to drill a small hole into a dead ironclad's wing

before they can insert a pin. (Yes, beetles have wings, and many can fly. But not ironclads—their wings are fused shut.)

I was impressed when I read how the ironclad's nearly indestructible shell and flexible six legs inspired engineers with BAE Systems to build a prototype suspension for combat vehicles. That system, developed in 2016, uses a bendable titanium alloy. After suffering an explosion, the alloy can pop back into shape.

This hardy insect can deploy another survival tactic. Many's the time I've picked up an ironclad beetle, only to have it curl up its black legs and play dead. Its black pair of clubbed antennae even disappear by tucking into little recesses on its head, thus protecting those sensitive appendages. Once, I startled an ironclad, and it immediately froze into a dead position with its legs crisscrossed. Once the beetle feels safe, it unfolds its legs and continues on its way. The death-feigning ability, performed by many organisms when threatened, is called *thanatosis*.

When I returned to check on my waterlogged beetle, I found a living ironclad beetle, ambling around the bucket. I searched for the deceased ironclad but could not find a carcass. This led me to believe that my beetle had avoided a watery demise. I rejoiced and relocated Lazarus, as I christened him, to a shrub in our backyard. Had my beetle really come back to life after drowning?

That happened in October 2015. Now fast forward to August 2018, when I spotted a lifeless ironclad beetle at the bottom of an orange bucket that I now keep under



the same AC drain line. The beetle had likely been submerged all night. With sadness, I retrieved it and laid it on a plaid pillowcase in our garage. With its legs folded up and its antennae tucked out of sight—and its normally bright white hue turned blackish gray—my friend certainly looked dead. Feeling hopeful, I was determined to document what I observed.

Gradually, the beetle's bright white color returned. Its legs opened, and its antennae reappeared. While I snapped photos, Lazarus 2, beautifully patterned and vibrantly alive, clambered around. Hallelujah!

I snooped around for scientific studies that would explain my beetle's miraculous recovery. I couldn't find any. Based on related studies, possible explanations include: Some beetles can either slow down their

metabolism while immersed or they can store oxygen beneath their wings. As for the shell's bluish black color in "death" and return to normalcy when revived, I'm stumped.

A week after Lazarus 2, I found a third ironclad at the bottom of a bucket. This time, I took a photo to prove I'd found a drowned beetle at the bottom of a water-filled bucket. Then I fished it out. Like the two others before, its bright white hue had turned blackish. Poor thing.

This one's normal color returned more quickly. Still, the beetle seemed door-knob dead—until I nudged one leg, and it moved. With my smartphone, I shot a brief video of the beetle slowly reviving. "He's alive!" I exclaimed off camera. Miracle or not, I rejoiced yet again.

Blanco writer **Sheryl Smith-Rodgers** plans to add a screened cover to the bucket.



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Nixon's Attack on Co-ops

President tried to block co-op loan program

BY ELLEN STADER

CO-OP LIFE HAS NEVER BEEN EASY. DURING the early decades of rural electrification, cooperatives in America had to defend themselves from special interests, with private electric companies and politicians often leading the charge.

Possibly the highest-profile attack on co-ops began just after Christmas in 1972. The Nixon administration directed the U.S. Department of Agriculture to announce that, effective January 1, 1973, it would deny funds already authorized by Congress for the Rural Electrification Administration's upcoming fiscal year and then terminate the agency's direct loan program. For 36 years, this program had enabled the REA to offer loans to co-ops at 2% interest.

President Richard M. Nixon's plan was to replace the federally funded REA loans with commercially backed loans that would be offered at 5% interest. This move, designed to cut more than \$200 million in federal spending, would gut the rural co-op system by impounding the federal funds already allocated to hundreds of electric and telephone co-ops. In addition to taking away the loans that had been approved, this action would more than double the interest rates others would have to pay on new loans.

Robert D. Partridge, then-general manager of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, said the action would "wipe out many of the more than 1,000 rural electric systems and ... threaten the welfare of millions of consumers who depend on them." Many co-ops would no longer be able to offer service to people in outlying areas. That same winter, co-op systems across the



President Nixon approves a new REA direct loan program as, from left, William Erwin, assistant secretary of agriculture; David Hamil, REA administrator; and Earl Butz, secretary of agriculture, look on.

country were suffering severe damage from ice storms, but they were left without access to the emergency funding customarily offered by the REA.

Co-ops didn't take the new policy lying down. On January 23, three weeks after the USDA's announcement, 1,400 electric co-op representatives from the 46 states across the country with electric cooperatives (including 135 Texans) converged on Washington, D.C. Participants traveled to the Rural Electric Rally to persuade their representatives in Congress to restore the REA direct loan program.

Lawmakers rode to co-ops' rescue with legislation that would allow the REA to extend loans in the full amount authorized each year. They also estab-

lished the Rural Electrification and Telephone Revolving Fund that allowed for a standard interest rate of 5%, plus a special interest rate of 2% for those eligible. The Senate and House bills both passed quickly, and the fate of co-ops hung on Nixon's pen.

Finally, on the REA's 38th birthday—May 11, 1973, exactly 19 weeks after first issuing the order that would have crippled the agency out of his "concern for the nation's economy"—Nixon signed the new legislation implementing a modified direct loan program for the REA. Ironically, this new arrangement resulted in greater co-op financing than ever.

More than \$1.2 billion was made available to rural electric and telephone co-ops in 1973, the highest amount of loans granted in the program's history. The REA administrator's report from that year notes, "Fiscal 1973 was a remarkable year in the history of the Rural Electrification Administration."

Ellen Stader is a writer in Austin.

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Cookies & Candies

THIS RECIPE FOR CARAMEL POPCORN graced the pages of our magazine in December 1997, but its nostalgic, Cracker Jack appeal is timeless—especially this time of year. The original recipe calls for margarine, but use butter for the best flavor. To balance the sweetness and create an eye-catching, gift-worthy mix, I up the salty crunch with pecans (or use your favorite nut) and pepitas. For a kick of spice, add a pinch of cayenne to the sugar syrup, or use Picosos Hot Chile Peanuts (made in Helotes). You can pop your own kernels in a neutral vegetable oil or use store-bought popcorn.

PAULA DISBROWE, FOOD EDITOR

Caramel Popcorn

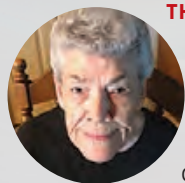
- 1 cup (2 sticks) butter
- 2 cups firmly packed light brown sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup light corn syrup
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon vanilla extract
- 6 quarts popcorn (about 1 cup unpopped kernels)
- 12 ounces roasted salted peanuts
- 1 cup roasted salted pecans or cashews
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup roasted salted pepitas

1. Preheat oven to 250 degrees.
2. Melt the butter in a large, deep pan. Stir in the sugar, syrup and salt and bring to a boil. Boil 5 minutes without stirring. Remove from heat and stir in baking soda and vanilla (mixture will foam).
3. Pour the mixture over the popcorn and nuts in a large roasting pan and use a rubber spatula to combine until the ingredients are thoroughly coated.
4. Bake 1 hour, stirring every 15 minutes. Transfer the hot mixture

CONTINUED ON PAGE 32

Retro Recipes

Cookies & Candy



THIS MONTH'S RECIPE CONTEST WINNER

SUE WEST | WISE COUNTY EC

These cookies will make your house smell like Christmas while baking and will please young and old when served. Spices, citrus zest and a crackled top with sugar coating—these treats meld all the holiday flavors into one delicious whole.

Cinnamon Crackles

- ½ cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, softened (no substitutions)
 - ½ cup shortening
 - 1 cup sugar
 - ½ cup packed brown sugar
 - 1 egg
 - 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
 - ½ teaspoon almond extract
 - 2½ cups flour
 - 1 tablespoon ground cinnamon
 - 2 teaspoons baking soda
 - 2 teaspoons cream of tartar
 - 2 teaspoons ground nutmeg
 - ½ teaspoon salt
 - 2 teaspoons grated orange zest
 - 1 teaspoon grated lemon zest
- Additional sugar for rolling cookies

1. Cream butter, shortening and sugars thoroughly in a large bowl. Add egg and extracts; mix well.
2. In a separate bowl, combine flour, cinnamon, baking soda, cream of tartar, nutmeg, salt and zests. Add by heaping spoonfuls into butter and sugar mixture and stir until combined (or use the low setting on an electric mixer).
3. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Put about ½ cup sugar into a bowl. Shape dough into 1-inch balls and roll in sugar. Place balls 2 inches apart on an ungreased baking sheet. Bake 12–15 minutes or until cracked and very lightly browned. ▶ Makes 6 dozen cookies.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 31

to waxed paper to completely cool. Store in an airtight container. ▶ Makes about 6 quarts.

Browned Butter Cherry Almond Chocolate Chip Cookies

MARIAN EVONIUK | PEDERNALES EC

This “everything” cookie will keep you coming back for more. The cookie has a crunchy texture from the almonds and oats, but then you get a bite with chocolate or a tart cherry and know you’re going to eat another one (or two).

- ½ cup sliced almonds
- 2 cups flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ½ cup (1 stick) unsalted butter
- ½ cup coconut oil
- ¾ cup sugar
- ¾ cup packed light brown sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 cups rolled oats
- 1 cup semisweet chocolate chips
- ½ cup tart dried cherries
- ½ cup shredded sweetened coconut

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Place almonds into an 8-by-8-inch baking dish and toast until light golden brown, about 8 minutes. Remove and set aside.
2. While almonds are toasting, stir together flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt in a medium glass mixing bowl and set aside.
3. Place butter into a 10- or 12-inch light-colored heavy skillet and cover with a see-through lid. Heat on medium until butter is a soft brown color and emits a nutty aroma, about 5 minutes. Remove from heat, stir in the coconut oil and pour into a large glass mixing bowl. Include the browned bits on the bottom of the pan. Let stand 10 minutes.
4. Add the sugars to the butter and oil mixture using an electric mixer on medium speed until just blended. Add the eggs and beat until well blended, about 1 minute. Stir in the vanilla. Gradually stir in the combined dry ingredients followed by the rolled oats, chocolate chips, cherries, coconut and toasted almonds.



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May's recipe contest topic is **Spring Celebrations**. Send your favorite dish for showers and graduations. The deadline is **December 10**.

ENTER ONLINE at TexasCoopPower.com/contests; MAIL to 1122 Colorado St., 24th Floor, Austin, TX 78701; FAX to (512) 763-3401. Include your name, address and phone number, plus your co-op and the name of the contest you are entering.

5. Using a metal scoop (cookie-size for small cookies, ice cream-size for giant cookies), drop cookie dough 2½ inches apart on a parchment-lined baking sheet. Bake 10–12 minutes, until edges are a light golden brown. Remove and allow cookies to cool on baking sheet 5 minutes before enjoying. ▶ Makes 18–24 cookies.

COOK'S TIP Dried cranberries or raisins can be substituted for the cherries.

Chocolate Lemon Balls

CHRISTINE HENDERSON | GUADALUPE VALLEY EC

"A few years back, I visited Italy and fell in love with their chocolate and lemon candies," Henderson says. "This is my reimagined version of the flavors I found there."

- 1 cup white chocolate chips
- ½ cup finely chopped slivered almonds
- ½ cup finely crumbled lemon cookies
- ½ teaspoon lemon extract
- 1 cup semisweet or dark chocolate chips
- Sugar sprinkles (any color)

1. Put the white chocolate chips into a heatproof bowl and microwave on 50% power 30 seconds, then take it out and stir. Continue microwaving in 30-second intervals at 50% power, stirring as needed. Once the pieces are mostly melted, remove from the microwave and let the remaining bits melt as you stir. This should take about 1–2 minutes. (Don't try to cook at higher power, which creates a less spreadable consistency.)

2. Once the white chocolate is melted, add the chopped almonds, cookies and lemon extract to the white chocolate and stir until smooth. Let sit 1–3 minutes, until a doughlike texture develops.

3. Wearing plastic disposable gloves or wetting your hands so the dough doesn't stick to them, form dough into 1-inch balls, rolling them in your hands until they are nicely rounded. Place balls on waxed paper in a sealed plastic container (single layer) and freeze 1 hour or longer.

4. Melt semisweet or dark chips using

the same method as the white chocolate chips. Place a wire cookie rack over a cookie sheet. Remove lemon balls from the freezer. Drop a lemon ball into the liquid chocolate mixture and quickly turn to coat. Use a fork to remove the dipped balls and place on wire rack. Repeat with each ball until done. Then cover with sugar sprinkles.

5. Refrigerate chocolate lemon balls on the rack for about 15 minutes. Cover and refrigerate until ready to eat, at least 15 minutes more. Remaining balls should be kept in a cool place in an airtight container. ▶ Makes 20 balls.

COOK'S TIP Cookies and almonds can be pulsed together in a food processor. Don't use lemon sandwich cookies.

WEB EXTRAS

▶ Read these recipes on our website to see the original Caramel Popcorn recipe from December 1997 and find a recipe for I Almost Ate Fruitcake Cookies.



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Deserts

TEXAS SETTLERS HAVE FOR MILLENNIA braved the harsh terrain of the Chihuahuan Desert. It's the kind of place where you shake out your boots before wearing them and look twice before stepping (or sitting). Enjoy the terrain where yucca, creosote, mesquite, agave and ocotillo dot the landscape and mountains loom in the distance. **GRACE FULTZ**

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

▲ **KAY BELL**, Nueces EC: "The century plant, havard agave, grows in the higher elevations of the Chihuahuan Desert in the Big Bend."



▲ **J. REAGAN FERGUSON**, Central Texas EC: "Enjoying a peaceful sunset in Guadalupe Mountains National Park."

▼ **MARK HOLLY**, Bandera EC: "It was a beautiful spring day in one of my favorite national parks, Big Bend."



▲ **MIKE PRESTIGIACOMO**, Bartlett EC: "Once upon a time—a tree."

▼ **MATTHEW CROTWELL**, Guadalupe Valley EC: "Nighthawk awaiting dusk for feeding time."



UPCOMING CONTESTS

| | |
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| MAY FAIRS AND CARNIVALS | DUE JANUARY 10 |
| JUNE STATE PARKS | DUE FEBRUARY 10 |

Enter online at TexasCoopPower.com/Contests.

Pick of the Month Celtic Angels Christmas

Marshall December 19

(903) 934-7992, memorialcityhall.com

A quintet of singers from Ireland highlights a show that includes instrumentalists and Irish dancing. The set list includes traditional Christmas carols and Irish favorites. The event is part of the premiere season for the Memorial City Hall Performance Center, built in 1907 and former home to municipal offices and courts.



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December 7

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Frisco Hope for the Holidays Masquerade, (972) 977-6064, melodyofhope.org/gala

Hubbard Magnolia & Mistletoe: A Victorian Christmas, (254) 625-0258, hubbardcity.com

Johnson City Lamplight Tours of LBJ's Boyhood Home and a Frontier Christmas, (830) 868-7128

Rusk Cherokee Craft & Trade Fair, (903) 268-1598

Santo Community Christmas Craft Show, (940) 659-3990

Taylor Mistletoe Market, (512) 666-9003, artoffcenter.com

Dripping Springs [7-8] Redbud Artisan Market, (512) 660-3328

Keller [7-8] Keller High School Indianettes Craft Show, (925) 708-7383, indianettes.com/craft-show

December 7
Taylor
Mistletoe Market



8

Fort Worth Woman's Club Holiday Open House, (817) 335-3525, thewomansclubfw.com

Moody Mother Neff Christmas, (254) 853-2389



ELLEN FULLER with **WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA**, a nationwide organization that places holiday wreaths on veterans' graves.
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Palo Pinto Frontier Christmas,
(940) 769-2600, palopintohistory.com

Ransom Canyon Christmas Tour of Homes,
(806) 829-2637, ransomcanyonchapel.com

13

Cuero [13-14] Christmas in Downtown,
(361) 485-8008, cueromainstreet.com

Levelland [13-14] South Plains Showdown,
(806) 894-4161, malleteventcenter.com/events

Chandler [13-15] Night in Bethlehem,
(903) 849-6042, nib.wlbcc.com

14

Athens Wreaths Across America,
(903) 670-1031,
wreathsacrossamerica.org/tx0725

Burnet Christmas at Old Fort Croghan,
(512) 756-8281, highlandlakesofburnetcounty.com

Chappell Hill Garden Club Christmas Home Tour, (713) 562-6191

Gainesville All That Glitters Holiday Home Tour, (940) 668-8900, mortonmuseum.org

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

Sanger Sanger High Craft Show,
(940) 206-0007

Waxahachie YMCA 5K Santa Run,
(469) 309-4045

15

Stonewall 50th Annual LBJ Christmas Tree Lighting, (830) 644-2252

December 28-January 2
South Padre Island
New Year's at the Beach



19

Seguin Third Thursday in Downtown Seguin,
(830) 379-0730, seguindba.org

Anson [19-21] Texas Cowboys' Christmas Ball, (325) 696-9040, texasccb.com

New Braunfels [19-22] The Nutcracker,
(830) 627-0808, brauntex.org

21

Boerne Winter Solstice Celebration Circle,
(830) 537-4212, visitboerne.org

Morgan Mill Live Nativity, (214) 793-9698,
morganmillumc.com

28

South Padre Island [28-Jan. 2] New Year's at the Beach, (254) 681-2354,
singlesinagriculture.org

31

Fredericksburg Countdown to 2020,
(830) 997-7521, fbgtx.org

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Camp Street Blues

Historic venue fuels memories of Crockett's musical legacy

WITH CREDITS TO BURN DURING MY senior year at the University of Texas, I enrolled in a class on the history of rock 'n' roll, expecting to listen to Led Zeppelin and ride an easy A into the burnt orange sunset. When the professor played a song from a scratchy blues record from 1926 by an artist I had never heard of, I realized I was in for more than I bargained for. The class turned out to be tough, but it set fire to my blues-loving soul.

That track was *Match Box Blues* by Blind Lemon Jefferson. It was a raw, visceral song with a clanging guitar and haunting vocals. I had never heard anything like it, and when I learned Jefferson was from Texas, I was hooked. My love for the blues drove me to East Texas and historic Camp Street in Crockett.

When I found Camp Street, a few blocks from the Houston County Courthouse square, I wasn't sure if I was in the right spot until I noticed a mural of Jefferson painted on a brick wall. Next to Jefferson were more musicians, including T-Bone Walker, Big Mama Thornton and Sam "Lightnin'" Hopkins, who all played in Crockett when it was a stop for blues artists traveling the Chitlin' Circuit between Houston and Dallas.

In the 1930s, Camp Street hummed as one of the most vibrant business districts in East Texas. Both sides of the street were lined with businesses: a beauty parlor, an all-night laundry, a shoe repair shop and a juke joint named the Jolly Joy. And there in the middle of the action, you'd find the Starlight—now called Camp



Chet Garner and Pipp Gillette on the front porch of Camp Street Café in Crockett.

building with its red sheet metal exterior and large front porch was built in 1931 by a local rancher named V.H. "Hoyt" Porter. On the porch were three doors: Through the middle door was a barber-shop and through the left door, a pool hall. Through the right door was a café and taxi stand that featured a dice table and bar. On any given night in the 1940s, you might find bluesman Lightnin' Hopkins playing for tips. In the '50s or '60s, you might find B.B. King or Fats Domino enjoying a beer after a show at the nearby Paradise Inn.

The café was closed for many years, but in 2008 it got a second chance. Porter's grandsons, Guy and Pipp Gillette, bought the property and turned it into a listening room to honor Crockett's musical legacy. Since then, this small stage has hosted artists including Michael Martin Murphy, Kinky Friedman and Ruthie Foster.

Street Café, the town's only remaining blues-era stalwart.

The quaint

On the night of my visit, Pipp, a singer and songwriter himself, was scheduled to perform.

I found a room packed with people at small square tables enjoying wine (it's BYOB) and munching on snacks from a counter in the back. When Pipp took the stage, a hush fell over the crowd. For the next hour or so, Pipp played one song after another, woven together with his stories and meandering thoughts. The experience epitomized why I love a good listening room, as the only sounds coming from the crowd were applause and laughs at Pipp's jokes.

As I enjoyed the show, I imagined the room in decades past, as the greatest blues legends played guitar and told stories of the road. I left feeling anything but blue.

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

 **WEB EXTRAS** ▶ Read this story on our website to see Chet's video of his visit to Camp Street Café. Also, for more about the blues, read *Texas: A Blues State* in our March 2019 issue.

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PREDATOR BEATS HONDA

2000 WATT SUPER QUIET INVERTER GENERATOR



| 4.7 hours | RUN-TIME | 3.4 hours |
|-----------|---------------------|-----------|
| 2000 | MAX. STARTING WATTS | 2000 |
| 1600 | RUNNING WATTS | 1600 |
| 61 dB | NOISE LEVEL | 59 dB |
| 48 LBS. | WEIGHT | 45.6 LBS. |
| 1.2 GAL. | TANK SIZE | .95 GAL. |
| 3 | OUTLETS | 3 |
| YES | OVERLOAD PROTECTION | YES |
| 79.7 cc | ENGINE SIZE | 98.5 cc |
| YES | LOW OIL ALERT | YES |
| YES | PARALLEL CAPABLE | YES |
| YES | POWER SAVER | YES |



PREDATOR 2000
NOW \$449.99
SAVE \$559
ITEM 62523

COMPARE TO HONDA EU2000i
PRICE \$1,009
HONDA EU2000i
*HONDA EU2000i stated specs
22105872

LIMIT 1 - Coupon valid through 2/1/20

HARDY

POWDER-FREE NITRILE GLOVES
PACK OF 100
• 5 mil thickness

SAVE 59%
COMPARE TO VENOM \$14.97
MODEL: VEN4145

ITEM 97581, 37050, 64417, 64418, 61363, 68497, 61360, 61359, 68498, 68496 shown
NOW \$5.99
~~\$7.99~~



LIMIT 1 - Coupon valid through 2/1/20

PITTSBURGH

RAPID PUMP® 1.5 TON LIGHTWEIGHT ALUMINUM FLOOR JACK
• Weighs 33 lbs.

SAVE \$91
COMPARE TO K TOOL \$151.42
MODEL: KT163094

ITEM 64552/64832/64980/64545 shown
NOW \$59.99
~~\$79.99~~



LIMIT 1 - Coupon valid through 2/1/20

SUPER COUPON

4 PIECE ANTI-FATIGUE FOAM MAT SET
• Each pad measures 25" x 25"

SAVE 65%
COMPARE TO NORSK \$19.99
MODEL: 001119346

ITEM 40187
61607/62389/94635 shown
NOW \$6.99
~~\$8.99~~



LIMIT 1 - Coupon valid through 2/1/20

SUPER COUPON

TWO TIER EASY-STORE STEP LADDER
• 225 lb. capacity

SAVE 40%
COMPARE TO WERNER \$33.88
MODEL: S322A-1

ITEM 67514
NOW \$19.99
~~\$29.99~~



LIMIT 1 - Coupon valid through 2/1/20

*Original coupon only. No use on prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase or without original receipt. Valid through 2/1/20.

FREE

OVER 5,000 5 STAR REVIEWS
SUPER BRIGHT LED/SMD WORK LIGHT/FLASHLIGHT
• Super-Strong, Ultra-Lightweight Composite Plastic
• Magnetic Base & 360° Swivel Hook for Hands-Free Operation
• 3 AAA Batteries (included)
• 144 Lumens

ALL IN A SINGLE SUPER POWERFUL LIGHT
COMPARE TO PERFORMANCE TOOL \$1352
MODEL: W2364
ITEM 63878/63991 64005/69567/60566 63601/67227 shown



22093079

LIMIT 1 - Coupon valid through 2/1/20

Cannot be used with other discounts or prior purchases. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 2/1/20 while supplies last. Limit 1 FREE GIFT per customer per day.

20% OFF

ANY SINGLE ITEM*

22099786

LIMIT 1 coupon per customer per day. Save 20% on any 1 item purchased. *Cannot be used with other discounts. Coupon or any of the following items or brands: Harbor Freight Club membership, Extended Service Plan, gift card, open box item, 3 Day Parking Lot Sale item, compressors, floor jacks, sales, storage cabinets, chains or cables, trailers, welders, Admiral, Ames, Bauer, Central Machinery, Crafts, Craftsman, Dayton, Diamondback, Eastwood, Empire, Harbor Freight, Iron, Jupiter, Lynxx, Pexon, Predator, Fagallator, Viking, Vulcan, Zurich. Not valid on prior purchases. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 2/1/20.

NEW U.S. GENERAL

30" 4 DRAWER TECH CARTS
• 12,600 cu. in. of storage
• 580 lb. capacity

SAVE \$740
COMPARE TO Snap-on BLUE-POINT \$880
MODEL: KRBC10T8PC

Item 56387, 64096, 56386, 56392, 56393, 56394
NOW \$179.99
~~\$139.99~~



LIMIT 1 - Coupon valid through 2/1/20

THUNDERBOLT

ALKALINE BATTERIES AA, AAA - 24 PK
• Also available in C - 6 pk, D - 6 pk, and 9 volt - 4 pk sizes

SAVE 66%
COMPARE TO ENERGIZER \$14.94
MODEL: 551413526

Item 92404 shown
NOW \$7.99
~~\$4.99~~



LIMIT 4 - Coupon valid through 2/1/20

COVERPRO

10 FT. x 17 FT. PORTABLE GARAGE
• 1000 lb. capacity

SAVE \$120
COMPARE TO SHELTER LOGIC \$290.75
MODEL: 76377

ITEM 62859/63055/62860 shown
NOW \$169.99
~~\$109.99~~



LIMIT 1 - Coupon valid through 2/1/20

10" PNEUMATIC TIRE

SAVE 50%
COMPARE TO FARM & RANCH \$8.09
MODEL: FR1055

ITEM 69385/62388/62409/62698/30900 shown
NOW \$3.99
~~\$5.99~~



LIMIT 4 - Coupon valid through 2/1/20

WARRIOR

29 PIECE TITANIUM DRILL BIT SET
• 1/8" - 1/2" sizes

SAVE 83%
COMPARE TO DEWALT \$68.14
MODEL: DW1369

ITEM 5889/62281/61637 shown
NOW \$10.99
~~\$18.99~~



LIMIT 4 - Coupon valid through 2/1/20

Lynxx

40V LITHIUM-ION 14" BRUSHLESS CHAIN SAW
• 14" bar

SAVE \$44
COMPARE TO KOBALT \$199
MODEL: KCS120-07

ITEM 64715/64478/43207 shown
NOW \$154.99
~~\$179.99~~



LIMIT 1 - Coupon valid through 2/1/20

CENTRAL PNEUMATIC

3 GALLON, 100 PSI OIL-FREE AIR COMPRESSORS
• Air delivery: 0.6 CFM @ 90 PSI

SAVE \$59.99
COMPARE TO PORTER-CABLE \$98.62
MODEL: PCFPD2003

ITEM 69269 97080 shown
ITEM 61615/60637 95275 shown
NOW \$39.99
~~\$98.62~~



LIMIT 1 - Coupon valid through 2/1/20

HaulMaster

72" x 80" MOVING BLANKET
• 72" x 80"

SAVE \$70%
COMPARE TO BLUE HAWK \$19.99
MODEL: 77280

ITEM 69505/62418/66537 shown
NOW \$5.99
~~\$8.99~~



LIMIT 5 - Coupon valid through 2/1/20

HaulMaster

18" x 12" MOVER'S DOLLY
• 1000 lb. capacity

SAVE \$10.99
COMPARE TO BUFFALO TOOLS \$22.99
MODEL: HFDOLLY

ITEM 60497
61899/62399/63095/63096/63097/63098 shown
NOW \$7.99
~~\$10.99~~



LIMIT 5 - Coupon valid through 2/1/20

CENTECH

3-IN-1 PORTABLE POWER PACK WITH JUMP STARTER
• 1000 lb. capacity

SAVE 44%
COMPARE TO SUPER START \$89.99
MODEL: SS001

ITEM 38391/62376/64083/56349/62306 shown
NOW \$49.99
~~\$59.99~~



LIMIT 1 - Coupon valid through 2/1/20

PITTSBURGH

1 TON CAPACITY FOLDABLE SHOP CRANE
• Boom extends from 34" to 45"
• Crane height adjusts from 69-5/8" to 82"

SAVE \$90
COMPARE TO GOPLUS \$229.99
MODEL: GP-101040150

ITEM 69512/61858 shown
NOW \$139.99
~~\$189.99~~



LIMIT 1 - Coupon valid through 2/1/20

HaulMaster

4 PIECE, 1" x 15 FT. RATCHETING TIE DOWNS
• 400 lb. working load

SAVE 69%
COMPARE TO KEEPER \$22.80
MODEL: 5505

ITEM 60405/63056/63057/63150/56668/63094 shown
NOW \$6.99
~~\$12.30~~



LIMIT 1 - Coupon valid through 2/1/20

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+

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month for Internet

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month for Internet

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- ✓ Includes One TV, Add More for \$5
- ✓ Includes Voice Remote

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