

WOMEN'S PUSH FOR
CARNEGIE LIBRARIES

SCARIEST BRIDGE
IN TEXAS

READER RECIPES
A HIT IN NEVADA

Texas Coop Power

FOR TRINITY VALLEY EC MEMBERS

JANUARY 2021

TRINITY
VALLEY EC
NEWS

SEE PAGE 18

Gotcha!

Pro tips on photographing
where the wild things are





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January 2021



08

Captured!

Take memorable wildlife photos with preparation, research and sleuthing.

Story and photos by Russell A. Graves

14 Literary Fortunes

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

By Melissa Gaskill

04

Currents

The latest buzz

06

TCP Talk

Readers respond

18

Co-op News

Information plus energy and safety tips from your cooperative

29

Footnotes in Texas History

The Scariest Bridge in Texas
By W.F. Strong

30

TCP Kitchen

Vegetarian
By Megan Myers

34

Hit the Road

Upscale Lodging
By Chet Garner

37

Focus on Texas

Photo Contest: Forests

38

Observations

Cook Like a Texan
By Suzanne Featherston

ON THE COVER

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

ABOVE

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

Photos by Russell A. Graves

Flying Colors

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

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

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

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



Tons of Tomatoes

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

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



UPLOADS OF CASH

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

There are 78 snake species in Texas.



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



TCP Contests and More

ON TEXASCOOPPOWER.COM

\$500 RECIPE CONTEST

Tomatoes

FOCUS ON TEXAS PHOTOS

Historic Texas

WEB EXTRA

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

Power of Our People

A Cupboard Never Bare

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

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

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

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

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

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

INFO ▶ facebook.com/hawleysharingbox



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

FINISH THIS SENTENCE

LIFE WAS BETTER ...

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

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

SUE CALDWELL
BANDERA EC
PIPE CREEK

My health, friends and warm home tonight.

MATTIE WOODFIN BORDERS
VIA FACEBOOK

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

ANNE SWEET
PEDERNALES EC
GEORGETOWN

To see more responses, read Currents online.



ERIC W. POHL

Bat Lodging

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

NANCY GREENHAW
CENTRAL TEXAS EC
FREDERICKSBURG

Farrier Finesse

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

Ken Wade
Central Texas EC
Fredericksburg



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

SHARON STOLL
VIA FACEBOOK

No Small Potatoes

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

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

Elizabeth Bowerman
Comal County Conservation Alliance
Pedernales EC
New Braunfels

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

Beverly Barnt
Via Facebook

Matagorda Connection

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

Bill Reeves
Pedernales EC
Georgetown



MEGAN MYERS

TCP WRITE TO US
letters@TexasCoopPower.com

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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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 PUBLISHERS CLEARING HOUSE



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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

TCP WEB EXTRA

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

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

◀ FOCUS ON THE EYES

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

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

▼ GET CLOSE

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

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

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





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

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

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

▲ LEARN ABOUT YOUR SUBJECT

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

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

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



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

▲ THINK ABOUT COMPOSITION

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

► LIGHTING IS KEY

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

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



DON'T OVERTHINK IT

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

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

Bad to the Bone

Full tang stainless steel blade with natural bone handle —now **ONLY \$79!**

The very best hunting knives possess a perfect balance of form and function. They're carefully constructed from fine materials, but also have that little something extra to connect the owner with nature. If you're on the hunt for a knife that combines impeccable craftsmanship with a sense of wonder, the **\$79 Huntsman Blade** is the trophy you're looking for.

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LITERARY = FORTUNES

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

BY MELISSA GASKILL

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

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

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

A total of 2,509 Carnegie libraries were built between

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

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

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



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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CARNEGIE: NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY/SMITHSONIAN; JEFFERSON POSTCARD: COURTESY JUDY AULIK

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

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

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

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

-Jeff Garrett

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

Morgans from the New Orleans Mint

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

The U.S. Treasury Hoard

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

The Great Southern Treasury Hoard

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



Actual size is 38.1 mm

- ✓ Historic Morgan Silver Dollars
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- ✓ Struck and bagged in 1882
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- ✓ Hefty 38.1 mm diameter
- ✓ Certified Brilliant Uncirculated by NGC
- ✓ Certified “Great Southern Treasury Hoard” pedigree
- ✓ Limit five coins per household

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

These gorgeous 1882-O Morgans are as bright and new as the day they were struck and bagged 138 years ago. Coins are graded on a 70-point scale, with those graded at least Mint State-60 (MS60) often referred to as “Brilliant Uncirculated” or BU. Of all 1882-O Morgans struck, *LESS THAN 1% have earned a Mint State grade*. This makes these unopened bags of 1882-O Morgans extremely rare, certified as being in BU condition—nearly unheard of for coins 138 years old.

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¹Offer not available in all areas. Discount applied by retailer representative at time of contract execution and **applies to purchase of 4 or more windows and/or patio doors.** Buy two windows and/or doors, get the second two windows and/or doors, of equal or lesser value, 40% off. Discount applied to lowest priced window and/or door products in purchase. Cannot be combined with other offers. Initial contact for a free Window and Door Diagnosis must be made and documented on or before 1/31/21, with the appointment then occurring no more than 10 days after the initial contact. No payments and deferred interest for 12 months available to well qualified buyers on approved credit only. Not all customers may qualify. No Finance Charges will be assessed if promo balance is paid in full in 12 months. Renewal by Andersen retailers are independently owned and operated retailers, and are neither brokers nor lenders. Any finance terms advertised are estimates only, and all financing is provided by third-party lenders unaffiliated with Renewal by Andersen retailers, under terms and conditions arranged directly between the customer and such lender. Central Texas Windows & Doors LLC, d/b/a Renewal by Andersen of Austin and San Antonio. North Texas Windows & Doors LLC, d/b/a Renewal by Andersen of Dallas/Fort Worth and West Texas. "Renewal by Andersen" and all other marks where denoted are marks of Andersen Corporation. ©2021 Andersen Corporation. All rights reserved. ©2021 Lead Surge LLC. All rights reserved. **All sales, marketing and installation of windows is conducted by Renewal by Andersen of Austin and San Antonio, and by Renewal by Andersen of Dallas/Fort Worth and West Texas. All are independently owned and operated affiliates operating in TX.**



MESSAGE
FROM
GENERAL
MANAGER/
CEO

JEFF LANE

Resolve To Be Energy Efficient

IT'S TIME TO MAKE New Year's resolutions. Why not make energy efficiency one of your goals for 2021? Saving energy is not only a good way to save money but also conserves our valuable resources.

Trinity Valley Electric Cooperative is here to help. Every month in *Texas Co-op Power*, we publish timely tips on how to use electricity wisely and safely.

Some of the best ways to conserve energy in January include:

Taking down your Christmas lights. As tempting as it might be to extend the holiday season, there is no need to extend the higher electric bill that might come with all the electric-powered decor.

Turning down the thermostat. You can save about 3% on your energy bill for every degree you drop the temperature.

Switching the direction of your ceiling fans so that they turn clockwise. This pulls cool air toward the ceiling, which in turn pushes the warm air that collects near the ceiling back toward the floor.

Upgrading your fireplace by adding an insert or replacing it with an energy-efficient model.

Traditional wood-burning fireplaces can draw heat out of your home if not used properly, but a few changes can help keep the warmth inside.

Letting the sun shine in through the windows, especially south-facing windows, to take advantage of solar heat gain.

Using space heaters selectively. You can save energy by heating only the room you are in.

Wearing warmer clothes. Putting on a sweater and slippers or wool socks might allow you to lower your thermostat temperature.

Limiting the use of exhaust fans. They suck out all the indoor air your heater has worked so hard to heat.

Eliminating drafts. Cold winter air can sneak in around windows, doors and even electrical outlets. Weatherstripping, insulation and insulated curtains can go a long way toward keeping the warm air in and the cold air out.

For more energy-saving tips this winter or any season, visit texascoopower.com and click on the Energy tab. The news and information there can help you keep your resolution to save energy all year long. ■



DID YOU KNOW?

It takes 50,000 watts to power the 32,256 LEDs on the ball dropped in Times Square on New Year's Eve. In 1907 the original ball had 100 25-watt bulbs.

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WIN
\$100
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 January 29 to receive a \$100 credit on your electric bill. Don't miss out—you could be a winner!



System Inventory Project Making Steady Progress

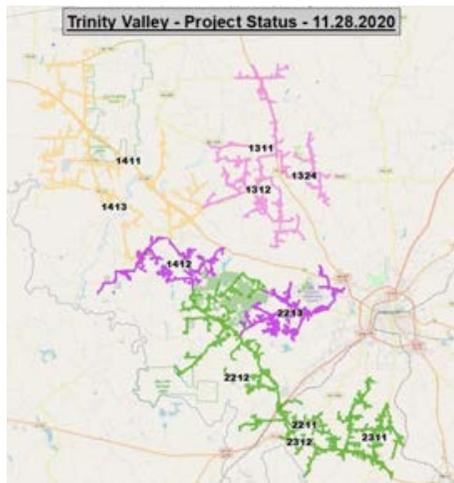
WORK IS CONTINUING AROUND PALESTINE and the southern portion of the Trinity Valley Electric Cooperative service territory as crews from Davey Resource Group work to map each pole and piece of equipment on the TVEC system.

When completed in late 2021, the project will allow TVEC engineers, lineworkers and dispatchers to take full advantage of technology tools for speeding up outage response, increasing system reliability and planning future growth.

The inventory involves physically assessing each pole and piece of equipment on the system. That means that at some point over the next year, you are likely to see representatives of DRG and TVEC along electrical rights-of-way in your area.

In many areas, they may be utilizing all-terrain vehicles to access lines away from roadways, and they will need access to TVEC equipment on members' properties.

All crews will wear identifying information, and you may contact us at any time with questions. ■



As of press time in December, workers had completed system inventory work in a large area around the western edge of Palestine as they continue to work their way north.

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OFFICE LOCATIONS

Kaufman District Headquarters

1800 E. Highway 243, Kaufman

Athens District Office

909 W. Larkin St., Athens

Cedar Creek District Office

1012 W. Main St., Ste. 102
Gun Barrel City

Wills Point District Office

582 N. Fourth St., Wills Point

Lobby Hours

Lobbies temporarily closed.
Drive-thru in Kaufman
open 8:15 a.m.-4:45 p.m.

VISIT US ONLINE

tvec.net





TIPS TO AVOID SCAMS



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

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

- Trinity Valley Electric Cooperative employees will never show up at your door to demand payment.
- Never give personal information to an unknown caller or visitor. Real co-op representatives have access to the details they need to service your account.
- Demands for immediate payment by wire transfer, cryptocurrency, gift cards or reloadable cash cards should immediately raise red flags.
- Visit tvec.net/scam-awareness for more tips to avoid being a victim of utility scams



It's Not Too Late for a Heater Inspection

THESE DAYS MANY of us are home most of the time—working, teaching our kids and taking care of a house that's always full. And maybe you've been reluctant to let a service tech into your home to check the heating system.

It's not too late.

Resist the temptation to put off your annual heating, ventilating and air conditioning maintenance check. The weather is probably at its coldest—a good time to ensure your home will stay toasty warm for the remainder of winter.

Here's why heating equipment maintenance is important:

- ▶ If your system is fairly new and still under warranty, you could void that warranty if you skip regular, professional inspections.
- ▶ Small problems with the heating system are cheaper and easier to fix than big ones. The pro who inspects your system every year can find trouble spots before they become major repair jobs.
- ▶ Regular maintenance means fewer repairs and fewer repair bills.
- ▶ A well-maintained system will last longer. Manufacturers estimate that a heating system that is never maintained will last only half of its expected lifetime.
- ▶ A tuned-up heater runs more efficiently, and that can keep your energy bills lower. ■



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TVEC

TRINITY VALLEY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

in focus

Retirement Ahead for Two Longtime TVEC Staffers

Two stalwart Trinity Valley Electric Cooperative leaders—Jerry Woolston and Barry Lummus—have announced retirement plans as the new year begins.



Woolston

Woolston, TVEC's director of technology, has worked at TVEC for 17 years after many years in IT consulting with large businesses.

"I've been in the tech industry since 1995, so 25 years, and I experienced working in several large corporate environments as a consultant," Woolston said. "Most of that was good, but here the culture and people make it superior to anywhere I worked

before. With management that truly cares about the employees and the members, it is a place you can really be effective and make a difference with your work."

For retirement, Woolston and his wife plan to move from their longtime home in Scurry to be closer to family members in the Houston area. There, he said he hopes to find volunteer opportunities as well as making time for a few more cruises.



Lummus

Lummus, a member services supervisor, leaves after 13 years at the co-op. His previous time with TXU gave him a total of 30 years in utility billing and customer service experience.

"Looking back, it has been a really good career," Lummus said. "It just happened really, not a planned career, but I am thankful and humbled to have been part of the co-op as a

member and as an employee. When you have been both, you have a lot of pride in the company and a lot to be proud of."

Lummus said he was looking forward to traveling and spending time with his children and grandchildren.

Tame Midwinter Weather at Home

AS WINTER DOES its worst this January, keep energy costs in check by making your home more efficient. It's easier than you think. Look for these common winter culprits throughout your house:

- ▶ Drafty doors and windows. An easy fix with a big payback is weatherstripping. Caulk or apply weatherstripping around all window and door seams, especially those leading to the basement or attic. Weatherstrip your attic access door.
- ▶ Dirty air filters. Dirty filters make your system work harder to heat air. Aim to change the filter at least every three months.
- ▶ Leaky ducts. A contractor can test your ducts for leakage and repair any problems. Repair visible, accessible leaks with metal tape—not duct tape.
- ▶ Water heater. If your water heater is old or not well insulated, wrap it in an insulating jacket. 30050374001
- ▶ Wood fireplace. Traditional fireplaces pull heated air out of the house when used improperly. When not in use, check that the damper is completely closed. ■



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January Is the Deadliest Month for CO Poisoning

WHAT CAN'T BE SEEN, smelled or heard but is deadly? Carbon monoxide.

CO is an odorless, colorless gas produced when fossil fuel is burned. It can cause sudden illness and death.

Because more people are inside during the winter months, sometimes resorting to risky heating methods and power sources without proper ventilation, January is the deadliest month for CO poisoning, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

People and pets are susceptible to CO poisoning. Common symptoms are headache, dizziness, weakness, upset stomach, vomiting, chest pain and confusion.

Many households use products that burn fossil fuels, such as gas- and oil-burning furnaces, portable generators and charcoal grills. If used incorrectly, these items can pose a poisoning risk.

Every year more than 400 Americans die from CO poisoning, more than 50,000 visit an emergency room and more than 4,000 are hospitalized.

Keep your family safe from this deadly gas this winter by following these important safety measures.

- ▶ Install battery-operated CO detectors near every sleeping area.
- ▶ If the CO alarm goes off, exit the home immediately and call 911.
- ▶ Check CO detectors regularly for proper function.
- ▶ Have oil and gas furnaces inspected every year by a qualified technician.
- ▶ Have gas water heaters inspected annually by a qualified technician.
- ▶ Ensure that the chimney is checked annually and cleaned if necessary.
- ▶ Check that gas appliances are vented properly.
- ▶ Never use a generator inside the home or garage, even with doors and windows open. Only use generators outdoors and at least 20 feet away from the home.
- ▶ Do not use a charcoal grill, camp stove or other charcoal-burning products indoors.
- ▶ Do not run a vehicle in a closed garage.
- ▶ Do not use a fireplace that isn't vented.
- ▶ Do not heat your house with a gas oven or gas range.
- ▶ Seek medical attention right away if you suspect CO poisoning or feel dizzy, lightheaded or nauseated. ■

New Reader Contest Highlights TVEC Service Territory

AT TVEC WE LOVE to shine a spotlight on the many great people, places and activities around our service territory.

We also enjoy providing co-op insights, updates and information through the pages of Texas Co-op Power.

For 2021 we are introducing the new contest detailed below. Respond with a correct identification of where in the TVEC service area the photo was taken and you could win a \$100 bill credit.

You may also notice that the random account number prize has also been raised to \$100—be sure to check to see if your account number is this month's winner!

Send your answer to contest@tvec.coop or by contacting TVEC Member Services by January 31. One \$100 bill credit winner will be chosen from all correct replies. Look for the winner and correct answer in next month's *Texas Co-op Power*.

Your Generosity in Action

THE TVEC CHARITABLE FOUNDATION recently awarded 61 grants totaling \$155,000. Recipients of the grants include:



Henderson County 4-H Shotgun Sports Bullard, \$1,000

Education in wildlife preservation through shotgun sports as a means to teach leadership and responsibility.



St. Charles Borromeo Catholic Church Food Pantry Frankston, \$2,500

Remodeling current food pantry facility to add a walk-in freezer.



Henderson County Rainbow Room Athens, \$4,000

Provide children with clothes and necessities.



Kaufman Christian Help Center Kaufman, \$5,000

Provide food for low-income, food insecure households (senior adults, disabled, etc) and to stock food pantry.

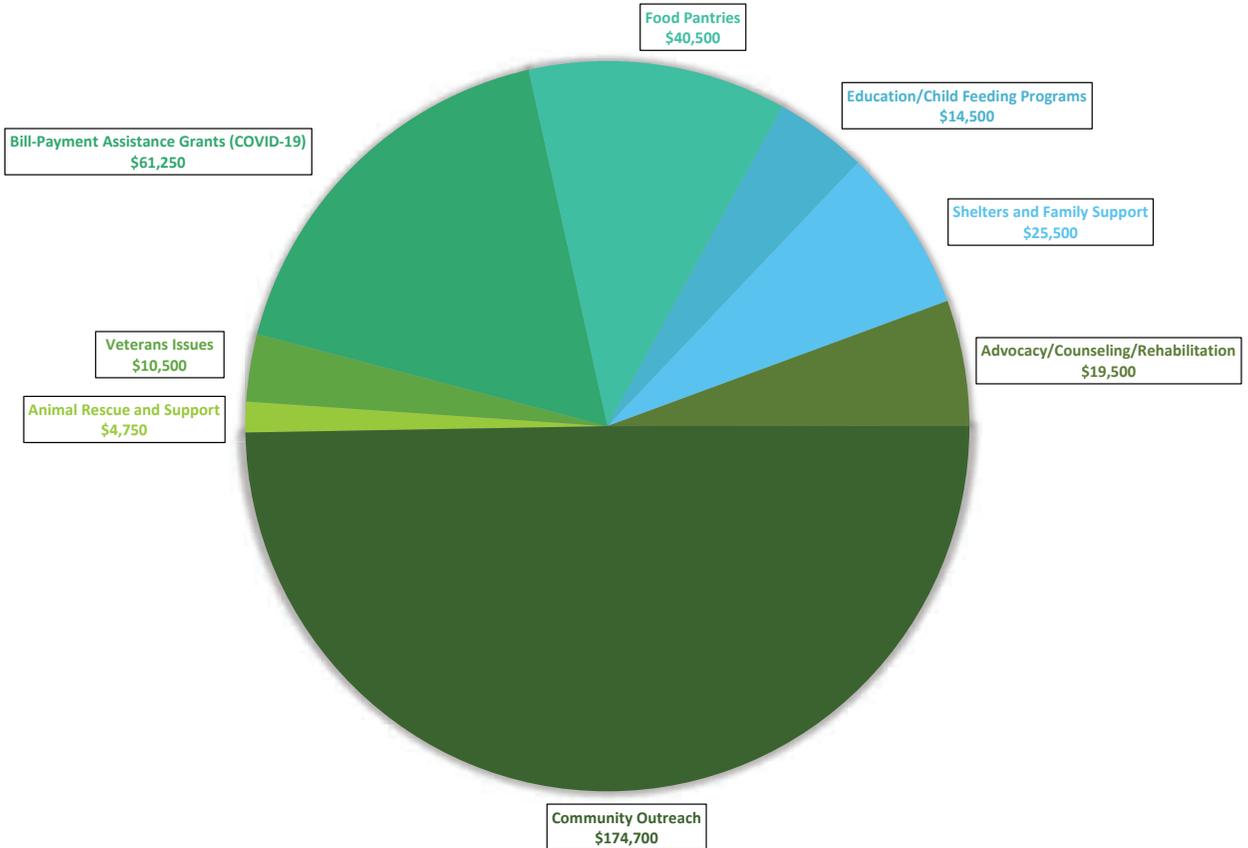
Local Fire Departments \$2,500 each

Grants totaling \$142,500 were made to local and volunteer fire departments within the TVEC service territory.

COVID-19 Food Pantry Assistance \$4,000

Grants totaling \$4,000 were made to area agencies in support of food pantries for TVEC members.

GRANTS AWARDED IN 2020



Flying Blind

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

BY EILEEN MATTEI • ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID VOGIN

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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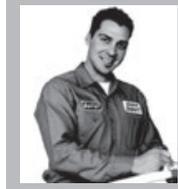
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A D V E R T I S E M E N T

Clogged, Backed—up Septic System...Can anything Restore It?

DEAR DARRYL: My home is about 10 years old, and so is my septic system. I have always taken pride in keeping my home and property in top shape. In fact, my neighbors and I are always kidding each other about who keeps their home and yard nicest. Lately, however, I have had a horrible smell in my yard, and also in one of my bathrooms, coming from the shower drain. My grass is muddy and all the drains in my home are very slow.



Dear Darryl

My wife is on my back to make the bathroom stop smelling and as you can imagine, my neighbors are having a field day, kidding me about the mud pit and sewage stench in my yard. It's humiliating. I called a plumber buddy of mine, who recommended pumping (and maybe even replacing) my septic system. But at the potential cost of thousands of dollars, I hate to explore that option.

I tried the store bought, so called, Septic treatments out there, and they did Nothing to clear up my problem. Is there anything on the market I can pour or flush into my system that will restore it to normal, and keep it maintained?

Clogged and Smelly – El Paso, TX

DEAR CLOGGED AND SMELLY: As a reader of my column, I am sure you are aware that I have a great deal of experience in this particular field. You will be glad to know that there IS a septic solution that will solve your back-up and effectively restore your entire system from interior piping throughout the septic system and even unclog the drain field as well. **SeptiCleanse® Shock and Maintenance Programs** deliver your system the fast active bacteria and enzymes needed to liquefy solid waste and free the clogs causing your back-up.

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SeptiCleanse® Shock and Maintenance Programs are designed to work on any septic system regardless of design or age. From modern day systems to sand mounds, and systems installed generations ago, I have personally seen SeptiCleanse unclog and restore these systems in a matter of weeks. I highly recommend that you try it before spending any money on repairs. SeptiCleanse products are available online at www.septicleanse.com or you can order or learn more by calling toll free at 1-888-899-8345. If you use the promo code "TXS12", you can get a free shock treatment, added to your order, which normally costs \$169. So, make sure you use that code when you call or buy online.

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CENTRAL PNEUMATIC **3 Gallon, 100 PSI Oil-Free Air Compressors** **YOUR CHOICE** **Save 59%**

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\$199.99 ~~\$239.99~~

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ITEM 64061, 64722, 64030, 64721, 64031, 64720, 64629

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

PITTSBURGH **Click-Type Torque Wrenches** **LIFETIME WARRANTY** **Save 88%**

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Compare to Husky HD2TWA \$89.97

ITEM 61277/63881, 61276/63880, 62431/63882 shown

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

VIKING **4 AMP High Frequency Battery Charger/Maintainer** **Save \$83**

\$27.99 ~~\$39.99~~

Compare to Snap-on EEBM500A \$111

ITEM 63350

Use Online & In-Store

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

PREDATOR **9000w Max. Starting Extra Long Life Gas Powered Generator** **Save \$2,279**

\$649.99 ~~\$699.99~~

Save 65%

Compare to RangeMaxx 1312-92 \$9.99

ITEM 63971/63970 shown

ITEM 63969/63968 CALIFORNIA ONLY

Compare to Honda EM6500SX2KAT \$2,929

Wheel kit and battery sold separately.

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

Bunker Hill **0.30 cal. Ammo Box** **Save \$5.99**

\$34.99 ~~\$5.99~~

Save 65%

Compare to RangeMaxx 1312-92 \$9.99

ITEM 63135/61451 shown

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

PREDATOR **6.5 HP (212 cc) OHV Horizontal Shaft Gas Engine** **Save \$230**

\$99.99 ~~\$124.99~~

Compare to Honda GX200U2QX2 \$329.99

ITEM 60363/69730 shown

ITEM 68121/69727 CALIFORNIA ONLY

Use Online & In-Store

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

200 Lumen LED Super Bright Flip Light **Save 60%**

\$1.99 ~~\$2.99~~

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

ITEM 64723/64189/63922 shown

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

BADLAND **2500 lb. Capacity Electric Winch with Wireless Remote Control** **Save 29%**

\$59.99 ~~\$69.99~~

Compare to Ironlion 54123 \$84.99

ITEM 61297/63476/61840 shown

Use Online & In-Store

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

HaulMaster **18" x 12", 1000 lb. Capacity Hardwood Mover's Dolly** **Save 62%**

\$7.99 ~~\$10.99~~

Compare to Buffalo Tools HDFOOLLY \$21.29

ITEM 61899/63095/63096/63097/63098 shown

Use Online & In-Store

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

COVER PRO **10 ft. x 10 ft. Portable Shed** **Save \$70**

\$129.99 ~~\$164.99~~

Compare to ShelterLogic 70833 \$199.99

ITEM 56184/63297 shown

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

WARRIOR **18v Lithium-Ion 3/8" Drill/Driver Kit** **Save 68%**

\$24.99 ~~\$29.99~~

Compare to Ryobi P215K \$79

ITEM 56122/64118 shown

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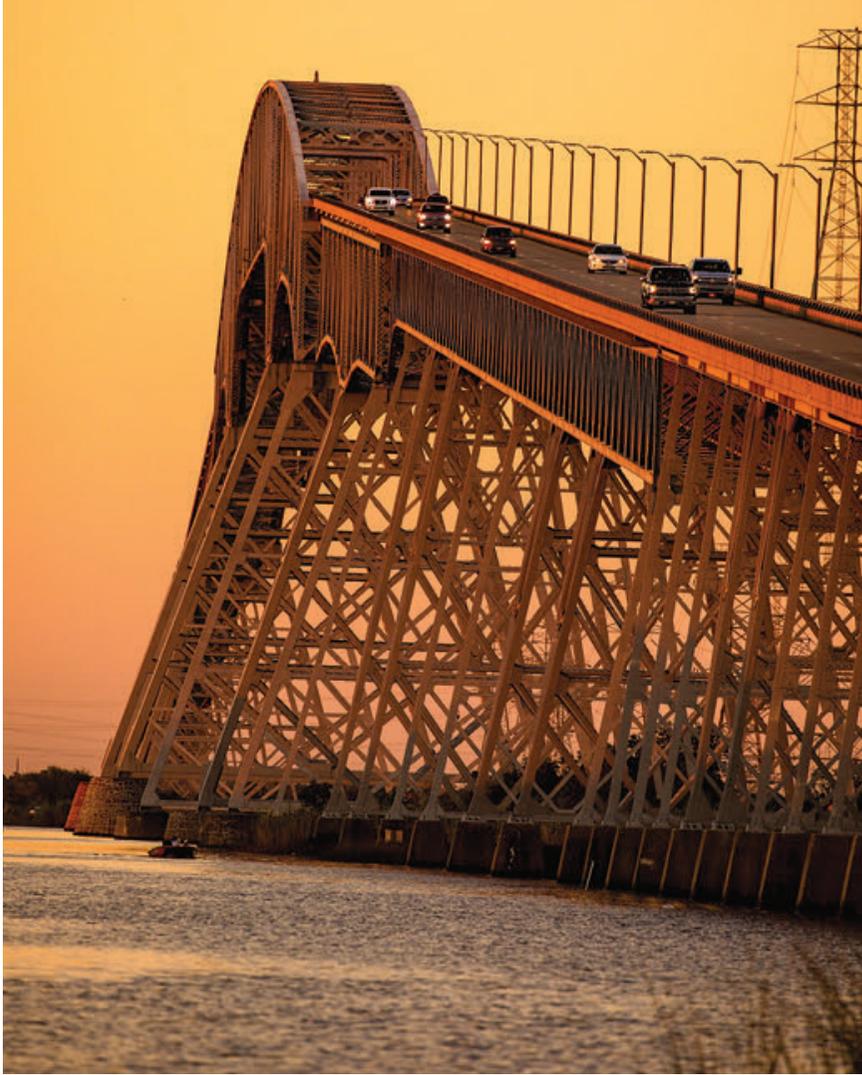
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TCP WEB EXTRA

Listen to W.F. Strong
read this story.

The Scariest Bridge in Texas

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

BY W.F. STRONG • PHOTO BY ROBERT SEALE

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

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

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

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

ries one-way traffic northbound.)

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

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

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

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

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

Vegetarian

Creative blends of vegetables and seasonings make for hearty meals

BY MEGAN MYERS, FOOD EDITOR

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

Roasted Vegetable Farro Bowls With Carrot-Ginger Dressing

1 cup farro
1 head cauliflower, chopped
1½ cups diced butternut squash
1 head broccoli, chopped
½ cup plus 2 tablespoons olive oil, divided use
⅔ cup chopped carrot
¼ cup diced onion
¼ cup rice vinegar
1 tablespoon grated fresh ginger
½ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon pepper

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

SERVES 4

TCP WEB EXTRA Follow along with Megan Myers and her adventures in the kitchen at stetted.com, where she features a recipe for Roasted Carrot and Fennel Soup.





Instant Pot Greek Spanakorizo With Herbed Cashews

KATHERINE SUAREZ
COSERV

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

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

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

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

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

\$500 WINNER

Roasted Vegetable Enchiladas

NANCY DENNIS
BARTLETT EC



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

SERVES 4



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

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Spread the vegetables and garlic onto a baking sheet and drizzle with olive oil. Roast vegetables 25–35 minutes, until slightly browned. Stir every 10 minutes, checking on garlic and bell peppers, and removing garlic once soft and bell peppers once skin is browned and beginning to peel.
2. Place the bell peppers in a bowl and cover for 10 minutes. Set aside the rest of the vegetables. Once peppers are cool enough to handle, remove the skins from the peppers and the garlic.
3. Place the bell peppers, jalapeño, garlic, sour cream, cumin and 1 tablespoon cilantro in a food processor or blender and purée until smooth. Add salt and pepper.
4. Spread a large spoonful of the sauce in an 8-by-8-inch baking dish. Roll into each corn tortilla about ¼ cup of the roasted vegetables and a sprinkling of cheese and place carefully in the dish. Spread the remaining sauce over the top.
5. Bake enchiladas 20–25 minutes. Top with remaining cheese and cilantro and serve.

TCP \$500 Recipe Contest

TOMATOES DUE JAN 10

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

CONTINUED >

RECIPES CONTINUED

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

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

SERVES 8

Mujadara

SHANNON SKAALURE
TRI-COUNTY EC

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



yogurt or labneh—strained yogurt—if you like.

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

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

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

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

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

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

SERVES 8

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**TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
COMMISSIONER SID MILLER**





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SACRED STONE OF THE SOUTHWEST IS ON THE BRINK OF EXTINCTION



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

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

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

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

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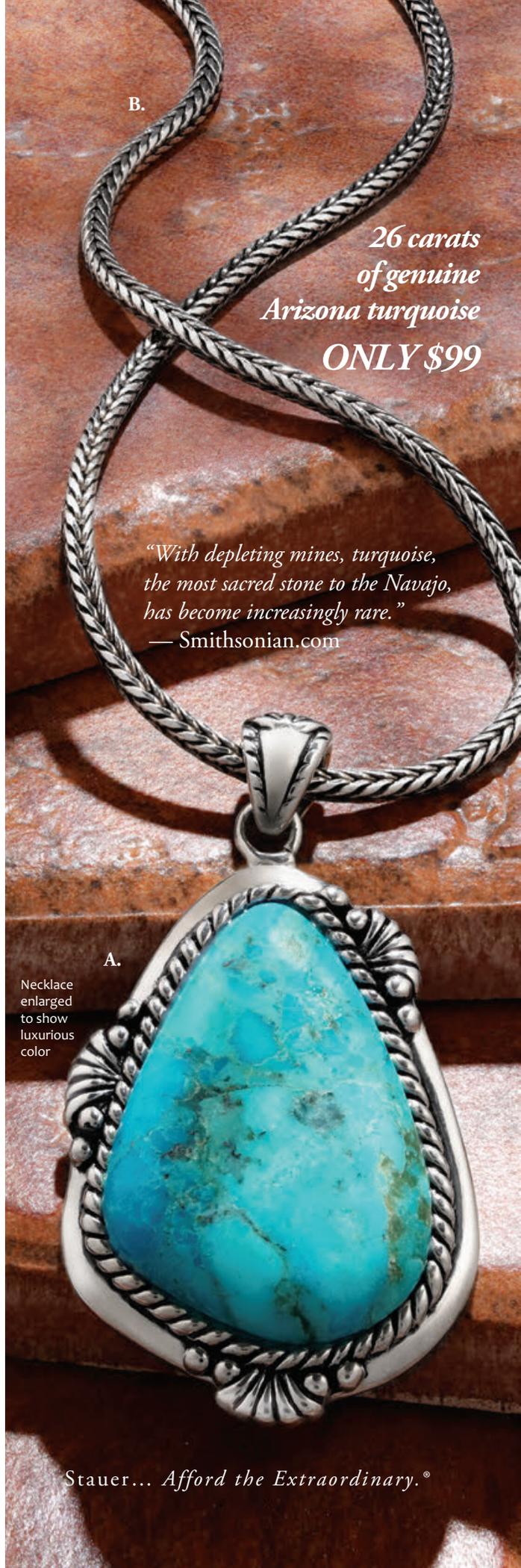
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A.

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COURTESY CHET GARNER

Upscale Lodging

The Tarpon Inn embodies the historical vibe of Port A

BY CHET GARNER

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Know Before You Go

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

JANUARY

01

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

09

Brenham Johnny Cash Tribute by Bennie Wheels, (979) 337-7240, thebarnhillcenter.com/events

12

Seguin Seguin Chamber Virtual Centennial Celebration, (830) 379-6382, seguinchamber.com

14

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

15

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

16

Brenham Uptown Swirl in Downtown Brenham, (979) 337-7580, downtownbrenham.com

17

Hallettsville State Championship Domino Tournament, (361) 798-2311, kchall.com

22

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

28

New Braunfels Neal McCoy, (830) 627-0808, brauntex.org

30

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

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

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

FEBRUARY

02

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

03

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



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Pick of the Month

South Texas International Film Festival

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

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

TCP Submit Your Event

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

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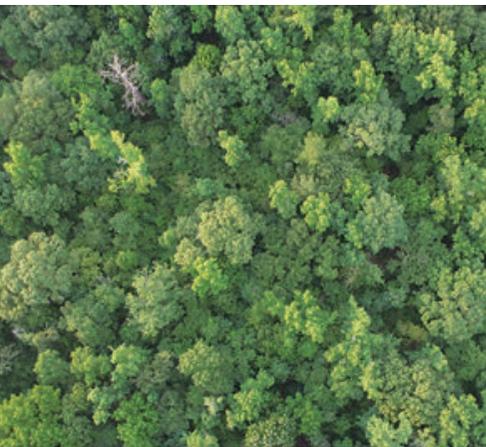
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Forests

Deep and mysterious or sunlit and dreamy, Texas forests call to us. Forests provide a serene setting for active fun like picnicking, camping, hiking, bird-watching and more. We have five beautiful national forests and preserves to check out right here in the Lone Star State, so what are you waiting for?

GRACE FULTZ



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT

ANNA RUSSELL
CHEROKEE COUNTY EC
 "This part of Colorado was once part of Texas."

SABINE BREDOW
PEDERNALES EC
 Bald cypress trees covered in Spanish moss in the world's largest cypress forest—around Caddo Lake in deep East Texas.

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

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

Upcoming Contests

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

Enter online and review submission rules at TexasCoopPower.com/Contests.

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



Cook Like a Texan

Memorable readers' recipes now delight diners in Nevada

BY SUZANNE FEATHERSTON
ILLUSTRATION BY MITCH BLUNT

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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