

BLESSING BOXES COMFORT  
CANCER SURVIVORS

ICONIC RECIPES  
OF TEXAS

TAKE A FLYING LEAP  
INTO THE UNKNOWN

# Texas Coop Power

FOR TRINITY VALLEY EC MEMBERS

MARCH 2022

## Irons in the Fire

For millennia, cast iron has been the ultimate utilitarian cookware

TRINITY  
VALLEY EC  
NEWS

SEE PAGE 18





# LIVE LIFE PAIN FREE



PATENTED VERSOSHOCK® SOLE  
SHOCK ABSORPTION SYSTEM



**FREE (\$50 Value)**  
**Corrective Fit Orthotics**  
with every shoe purchase  
*Excludes sandals.*

## Clinically Shown to Relieve Knee Pain

↓ **85%** LESS  
**KNEE PAIN**

In a 2017 double-blind study by Olive View UCLA Medical Center.

## Enjoy the benefits of exercise with GDEFY

- ✓ Ultimate Comfort
- ✓ Renewed Energy
- ✓ Maximum Protection
- ✓ Improved Posture

**gdefy MIGHTY WALK \$135**

**X-WIDE  
WIDTH  
AVAILABLE**

This product is not intended to treat, cure or prevent any disease.

**Men Sizes 7.5-15 M/W/XW**

- TB9024MGS Gray
- TB9024MLU Blue
- TB9024MBL Black

**Women Sizes 6-11 M/W/XW**

- TB9024FGS Gray
- TB9024FGP Salmon
- TB9024FLP Black



## \$20 OFF YOUR ORDER

**Promo Code MQ8CPR5**

**www.gdefy.com**

**Expires June 30, 2022**

**Free Exchanges • Free Returns**

**100% Satisfaction Guaranteed**

**Call 1(800) 429-0039**

Gravity Defyer Medical Technology Corp.  
10643 Glenoaks Blvd. Pacoima, CA 91331



VersoShock® U.S Patent #US8,555,526 B2. May be eligible for Medicare reimbursement. \$20 off applies to orders of \$100 or more for a limited time. Cannot be combined with other offers. 9% CA sales tax applies to orders in California. Shoes must be returned within 30 days in like-new condition for full refund or exchange. Credit card authorization required. See website for complete details.

# March 2022



12

## 08 Cast-Iron Comeback

Versatile, time-tested cookware is reclaiming its spot in home kitchens.

*Story and photos by Russell A. Graves*

## 12 Hope in a Box

A breast cancer survivor sends care packages of recovery aids to women all over the world.

*By Laura Tolley  
Photos by Scott Van Osdol*

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 Inside Track  
*By W.F. Strong*

30

### TCP Kitchen

Texas' Best  
*By Megan Myers*

34

### Hit the Road

Chomping at the Trip  
*By Chet Garner*

37

### Focus on Texas

Photo Contest:  
The Texas Experience

38

### Observations

Just Add Adventure  
*By Pam LeBlanc*

#### ON THE COVER

Cast-iron pizza has the perfect crunch.  
*Photo by Russell A. Graves*

#### ABOVE

Sewing a pocket into the inside of a shirt for the Blessing Box Project.  
*Photo by Scott Van Osdol*



# Rural Reporters Making Waves

**INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY**—March 8—is a global celebration of women's social, economic, cultural and political achievements. You can also mark the occasion March 28, when *Writing With Fire* airs on PBS.

The documentary, a selection of the World Cinema Documentary Competition at the 2021 Sundance Film Festival, profiles *Khabar Lahariya*, a newspaper in rural India run by an all-women newsroom. The paper, whose name translates to “waves of news,” employs journalists from Dalit, tribal, and Muslim communities, whose members have historically been marginalized.

Their coverage of rural issues, corruption and gender violence earned a Courage in Journalism Award from the International Women's Media Foundation in 2021.

“[*Khabar Lahariya*] has broken barriers to establish women as journalists in small towns and villages where newsmakers have long been men, upper caste and well-connected to the political system,” the foundation wrote.



More than

# 200

electric co-ops in the U.S. are developing or planning to deploy high-speed internet services for their members, giving them better access to tele-health services, online learning and remote work and attracting new families and businesses.

## Selena on Celluloid

*Selena*, the film about the Tejano music star from Lake Jackson, came out 25 years ago this month. Jennifer Lopez played Selena, below, in the movie, released March 21, 1997.





## FINISH THIS SENTENCE

THE WOMAN  
I ADMIRE MOST  
IN HISTORY IS ...

**TCP** Tell us how you would finish that sentence. Email your short responses to [letters@TexasCoopPower.com](mailto:letters@TexasCoopPower.com) or comment on our Facebook post. Include your co-op and town.

Below are some of the responses to our January prompt: **This year I'm finally going to ...**

Build those raised garden beds for my wife. Or pay one of the grandkids while I watch and supervise.

RANDALL HALE  
FORT BELKNAP EC  
OLNEY

Travel down different Texas roads.

CHUCK BURGESS  
HEART OF TEXAS EC  
MILANO

Learn to let go of what I can't change.

BARBARA ELLIS  
VIA FACEBOOK

Quit smoking, drinking and cussing while fixing that leak.

JOE TREVINO JR.  
BARTLETT EC  
KILLEEN

Make no resolutions—just do the best I can each day.

LORA HORTON  
VIA FACEBOOK

To see more responses, read Currents online.



## **TCP** Contests and More

ENTER CONTESTS AT  
[TEXASCOOPPOWER.COM](http://TEXASCOOPPOWER.COM)



### \$500 RECIPE CONTEST

Best Burgers

### FOCUS ON TEXAS PHOTOS

Morning Glory

### RECOMMENDED READING

Texas Independence Day is March 2. A stolen stallion might have doomed Mexico during the revolution's decisive battle at San Jacinto in April 1836. Read *Old Whip: A Headstrong Texas Hero* from January 2009 for the full story.



“Wildflowers  
are the stuff  
of my heart!”

—LADY BIRD JOHNSON

# Burrowing Burros

**SCIENTISTS HAVE RECORDED** wild donkeys and horses digging wells in the Sonoran Desert in Arizona to reach groundwater to quench their thirst.

The animals use their hooves to carve out holes up to 6 feet deep, and researchers report in *Science* that the wells serve as oases that provide water for dozens of other species, including songbirds, deer and mountain lions.





## Dead Certain

“No Monterey High School grad would be caught ‘dead’ in a letter sweater with an L on it. That was for Lubbock High, our crosstown rivals.”

JOYCE PHILLIPS  
PEDERNALES EC  
BUDA

## Dogs Changing Lives

Patriot Paws in Rockwall raises and trains assistance dogs for disabled military veterans [*Furred Responders*, January 2022]. The dogs are trained at their kennels and in several men's and women's prisons. This organization has changed the lives of so many veterans and their families.

Lately they have started a program where they take some of their dogs and puppies to police departments (and any organization that requests) to help with stress relief.

Christine Davis  
Farmers EC  
Rockwall

I made the Chicken and Dumpling Soup [*Soups and Stews*, January 2022], and it is incredible. Well-deserved first-place winner.

CYNTHIA LEIGH  
AMAYA  
VIA FACEBOOK

## Slice of Life

For my mother's Christmas gift, I treated her to lunch at Rebecca Rather's place in Fredericksburg, Emma + Ollie [*The Alchemy of Egg Whites*, November 2021]. Rebecca chatted with Mom and me and autographed my copy of her meringue recipe featured in the November issue. It was a wonderful Christmas gift for my 85-year-old mom.

Rhonna Carter  
Hamilton County EC  
Gatesville

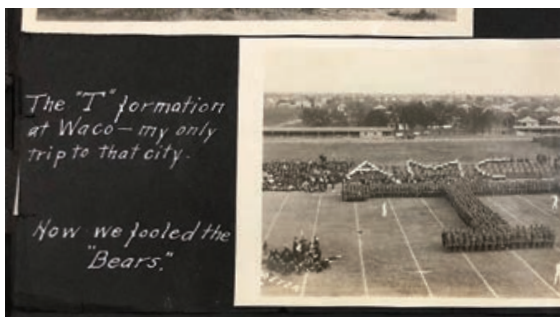
## Traveling Texas

Before Bob and Kelli Phillips [*The Domino Effect*, December 2021], there was Frank X. Tolbert, who wrote a column in *The Dallas Morning News* every week about his travels in Texas called Tolbert's Texas, which ran from 1946 till his death in 1984.

Don Pryor  
Bandera EC  
Boerne

## CORRECTION

A photo with *Aggie Standouts* [January 2022] showing Texas A&M University's Corps of Cadets' block Aggie T formation was incorrectly identified. The 1920 photo was taken at a football game against Baylor University at the Cow Palace in Waco, not Kyle Field in College Station. Researchers at Texas A&M's Cushing Memorial Library & Archives found the photo, right, in a 100-year-old scrapbook, confirming the location.



## TCP WRITE TO US

letters@TexasCoopPower.com

Editor, Texas Co-op Power  
1122 Colorado St., 24th Floor  
Austin, TX 78701

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

Facebook Twitter Instagram YouTube Texas Co-op Power

## TEXAS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Chair** Gary Raybon, El Campo • **Vice Chair** Kelly Lankford, San Angelo  
**Secretary-Treasurer** Neil Hesse, Muenster • **Board Members** Greg Henley, Tahoka  
Julie Parsley, Johnson City • Doug Turk, Livingston • Brandon Young, McGregor

**PRESIDENT/CEO** Mike Williams, Austin

## COMMUNICATIONS &amp; MEMBER SERVICES COMMITTEE

Matt Bentke, Bastrop • Marty Haight, Burleson • Ron Hughes, Sinton  
Gary Miller, Bryan • Zac Perkins, Hooker, Oklahoma • John Ed Shinpaugh, Bonham  
Rob Walker, Gilmer • Buff Whitten, Eldorado

## MAGAZINE STAFF

**Vice President, Communications & Member Services** Martin Bevins  
**Editor** Chris Burrows • **Editor-at-Large** Charles J. Lohrmann • **Associate Editor** Tom Widlowski  
**Production Manager** Karen Nejtek • **Creative Manager** Andy Doughty  
**Advertising Manager** Elaine Spruill  
**Communications Specialist** Alex Dal Santo • **Print Production Specialist** Grace Fultz  
**Communications Specialist** Travis Hill • **Food Editor** Megan Myers • **Communications Specialist** Jessica Ridge • **Digital Content Producer** Chris Salazar • **Senior Designer** Jane Sharpe • **Proofreader** Shannon Oelrich • **Digital Media Intern** Sabrina Macias

**TEXAS CO-OP POWER** Volume 78, Number 9 (USPS 540-560). *Texas Co-op Power* is published monthly by Texas Electric Cooperatives (TEC). Periodical postage paid at Austin, TX, and at additional offices. TEC is the statewide association representing 75 electric cooperatives. *Texas Co-op Power's* website is TexasCoopPower.com. Call (512) 454-0311 or email editor@TexasCoopPower.com.

**SUBSCRIPTIONS** Subscription price is \$4.44 per year for individual members of subscribing cooperatives and is paid from equity accruing to the member. If you are not a member of a subscribing cooperative, you can purchase an annual subscription at the nonmember rate of \$7.50. Individual copies and back issues for the previous 12 months are available for \$3 each.

**POSTMASTER** Send address changes to *Texas Co-op Power* (USPS 540-560), 1122 Colorado St., 24th Floor, Austin, TX 78701. Please enclose label from this copy of *Texas Co-op Power* showing old address and key numbers.

**ADVERTISING** Advertisers interested in buying display ad space in *Texas Co-op Power* and/or in our 30 sister publications in other states, contact Elaine Spruill at (512) 486-6251. Advertisements in *Texas Co-op Power* are paid solicitations. The publisher neither endorses nor guarantees in any manner any product or company included in this publication. Product satisfaction and delivery responsibility lie solely with the advertiser. © Copyright 2022 Texas Electric Cooperatives Inc. Reproduction of this issue or any portion of it is expressly prohibited without written permission. Willie Wirehand © Copyright 2022 National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.



Texas Electric Cooperatives  
A Touchstone Energy Cooperative



American Handprint Publications



Plant Faster, Easier With **NEW SUPER PLUGS!**



Pre-cut  
plugs  
are 10x  
bigger!

OR...Plant Your Way With **FREESTYLE PLUGS!**



Cut any size  
plugs from  
sheets!

THE ONE TIME, LIFETIME LAWN SOLUTION!



**SAVE  
OVER  
50%**

**NEW PRE-CUT  
SUPER PLUGS  
now available!**

Stays  
lush and  
green in  
summer

Mow your Zoysia lawn once a month – or less! It rewards you with weed-free beauty all summer long.

# 7 Ways Our Amazoy™ Zoysia Lawn Saves You Time, Work and Money!

## 1 CUTS WATER BILLS AND MOWING BY AS MUCH AS 2/3

Would you believe a lawn could look perfect when watered just once? In Iowa, the state's biggest Men's Garden club picked a Zoysia lawn as "top lawn – nearly perfect." Yet, this lawn had been watered only once all summer to August!

In PA, Mrs. M.R. Mitter wrote, "I've never watered it, only when I put the plugs in...Last summer we had it mowed 2 times...When everybody's lawns here are brown from drought, ours stays as green as ever." *That's how Amazoy Zoysia lawns cut water bills and mowing! Now read on!*

## 2 NO NEED TO DIG UP OLD GRASS

Plant Amazoy *your way* in an old lawn or new ground. Set plugs into holes in the soil checkerboard style. Plugs spread to create a lush, thick lawn, driving out weeds and unwanted growth. Easy instructions included with every order.

## 3 ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY

No weeding means no costly chemicals. Since Amazoy Zoysia lawns naturally resist insects, you'll save money, while helping to protect the environment. You'll never have to expose your family and pets to the risk of weed killers and pesticide poisons.

## 4 FOR SLOPES, PLAY AREAS, BARE SPOTS AND PARTIAL SHADE

You can't beat Amazoy Zoysia as the low-cost answer for hard-to-cover spots, play-worn areas, places that have partial shade and erosion on slopes.

Meyer Zoysia Grass was perfected by the U.S. Gov't, released in cooperation with the U.S. Golf Association as a superior grass.

## 5 IT STAYS GREEN IN SPITE OF HEAT AND DROUGHT

"The hotter it gets, the better it grows!" Plug-in Zoysia thrives in blistering heat, yet it won't winter-kill to 30° below zero. It just goes off its green color after killing frosts, and begins regaining its green color as temperatures in the spring are consistently warm.



Thrives from partial  
shade to full sun.



Plant it from  
plugs.

## 6 CHOKES OUT CRABGRASS AND WEEDS ALL SUMMER

Your established Amazoy Zoysia lawn grows so thick, it simply stops crabgrass and most summer weeds from germinating!

## 7 NOW 3 WAYS TO START YOUR AMAZOY ZOYSIA LAWN!

1) **Freestyle plugs** come in uncut sheets containing a maximum of 150 - 1" plugs that can be planted up to 1 ft. apart. Freestyle plugs allow you to make each plug bigger and plant further apart – less cutting and planting – you decide.

2) **New Super Plugs** come pre-cut into individual 3"x3" plugs ready-to-plant (minimum 1 per 4 sq. ft.). They arrive in easy to handle trays of 15 Super Plugs. Save more time and get your new lawn even faster!

3) **Amazoy Approved Seed-As** The Zoysia Specialists for 60+ years, we finally have a Zoysia seed available that meets our standards and homeowners expectations. Learn why at [zoysiafarms.com/mag](http://zoysiafarms.com/mag) or by phone at 410-756-2311.

### Your Assurance of Lawn **SUCCESS** Amazoy Zoysia Grass is **GUARANTEED**

Guaranteed to grow new green shoots within 45-60 days or we'll replace it **FREE** – for up to 1 year – just call us. Guarantee is valid on one order at a time, typically the most recent. We **ONLY** ship you hardy field grown genuine Amazoy Zoysia grass harvested direct from our farms. Easy planting and watering instructions are included with each order.

©2022 Zoysia Farm Nurseries, 3617 Old Taneytown Rd, Taneytown, MD 21787

**ORDER TODAY - GET UP TO  
1000 FREESTYLE  
PLUGS - FREE!**

Freestyle Plugs You decide how big to cut the plugs. Each grass sheet can produce up to 150-1 in. plugs. Plant minimum 1 plug per sq. ft.					
Max Plugs	Free Plugs	Grass Sheets	Your PRICE	+ Shipping	SAVINGS
300	—	2	\$32.50	\$17.00	—
500	+100	4	\$52.50	\$20.00	25%
750	+150	6	\$70.00	\$25.00	36%
1100	+400	10	\$99.00	\$36.00	44%
2000	+1000	20	\$170.00	\$60.00	53%

Super Plugs Precut plugs 3 inches by 3 inches READY TO PLANT Packed in trays of 15 Super Plugs. Plant minimum 1 plug per 4 sq. ft.					
Super Plugs	Free Plugs	Trays	Your PRICE	+ Shipping	SAVINGS
15	—	1	\$25.95	\$14.00	—
60	+15	5	\$95.00	\$27.00	35%
95	+25	8	\$120.00	\$38.00	48%
120	+30	10	\$135.00	\$45.00	53%
180	+45	15	\$190.00	\$60.00	56%

**EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO START AND MAINTAIN A CAREFREE BEAUTIFUL ZOYSIA LAWN**

**Zoysia Farm**  
NURSERIES

Improving America's Lawns Since 1953  
3617 Old Taneytown Rd./Taneytown, MD 21787

PLANTING TOOLS • PLANT FOOD • WEED AND PEST CONTROLS • ORGANIC PRODUCTS  
SOIL TESTS • GARDEN GLOVES • EDGING AND MORE... ALL AVAILABLE EXCLUSIVELY AT:

**[www.ZoysiaFarms.com/mag](http://www.ZoysiaFarms.com/mag) OR 410-756-2311**

Harvested Daily from Our Farms and Shipped to You the Same Day the Plugs are Packed

Amazoy is the Trademark Registered U.S. Patent Office for our Meyer Zoysia grass.

Savings shown over aggregate base price and shipping

Promo Code  
**5892**





# ***Cast-Iron Comeback***

Versatile, time-tested  
cookware is reclaiming its  
spot among home chefs





## ***From inside my home,***

I could smell the wood smoke wafting across the lawn. It's a delightful blend of post oak and some fruitwood, and just the aroma makes me hungry.

With my smoker keeping a steady temperature of 350 degrees, I preheat a seasoned, 9-inch cast-iron skillet. Because it's an all-metal piece of cookware, I don't have to worry about plastic handles or Teflon coatings getting ruined by the heat.

Soon I've placed some homemade dough, tomato sauce, cheese and pepperoni in the skillet and back into the smoker. The woodsmoke-infused pizza will taste great, and the crunch provided by the cast-iron pan will give the pizza the texture I'm after.

Fifteen minutes later I have (at least in my estimation) pizza perfection, and it was made possible by a piece of cast iron handed down through my family over a couple of generations.

Cast-iron cookware is the ultimate utilitarian piece for the home chef, and while it's been used for nearly 2,000 years in one iteration or another, the venerated cookware is making a comeback because of its versatility and durability.

OPPOSITE Cast iron gives cornbread a crust you can't get in a baking dish.  
ABOVE The cookware can be used on the stovetop or in the oven—paths to a perfect egg.



## Old Reliable

**C**ast iron is a combination of iron, steel and carbon alloys blended in a forge to make iron that's tough and resilient enough to last decades.

Once molten, the steel is poured into a mold of compressed sand, and when cooled, the sand is shaken loose to reveal the nearly finished pan. Once the pan goes through a process to trim off the excess metal and polishing, it's ready for seasoning and use.

The Chinese first used cast iron for cooking nearly 2,000 years ago, and over time the iron casting process has been used to build cannons, architectural elements like bridges, and art. The technology eventually made its way to the Americas.

Colonial Americans used cast iron extensively for cooking, and as American settlers moved west, the cookware made its way across the plains and mountains on the back of chuck wagons.

"The chuck wagon cook is part of our Western heritage," says Kent Rollins, a chuck wagon cook, educator and YouTube personality. Rollins has been a cowboy and cook all his life, so he's got the hard-earned bona fides to have the attention of nearly 2 million subscribers. "If cast iron was good enough for ol' Cookie to take on the trail, it's good enough for me. We have some old cast equipment that's close to 100 years old or older, and it still holds up. If you take care of it, it will never wear out."

As cowboys and cattle peppered the plains in the great cattle drives of the 1880s, the need for portable food preparation was paramount. Camp cooks used Dutch ovens to prepare stocks, stews and even bread. Dutch ovens are pots with a large, flat lid that allows for the even distribution of coals across the top, so that heat comes from both the top and the bottom of the vessel. That even heating is essential for creating bread and cobblers—a staple of chuck wagon cooks everywhere. It's the same oven that Rollins recommends to first-time cast-iron cooks.

He says that if you have a 12-inch skillet and a 12-inch Dutch oven, you can cook just about anything. New cast-



iron cooks should start with cornbread to learn to control the heat from the coals, Rollins advises. Once you've mastered cornbread, other dishes become simple.

The versatility of the Dutch oven makes it a valuable piece of cookware.

"You get what you pay for," Rollins advises. "I always look for cast iron that's made in the USA. It's a bit higher priced than cast iron made elsewhere, but it's a lifelong investment, and it will give you something back every time you cook out of it."



OPPOSITE William Graves, the author's brother, slow-cooks red beans in a cast-iron Dutch oven over a campfire. RIGHT New potatoes are seared before being roasted.

## Cooking Up a Story

**T**he post-World War II era brought change to American kitchens. Pans made from newer and lighter materials and with nonstick coatings were appealing, pushing cast iron mostly out of favor.

But in the 21st century, cast iron has made a comeback, earning favor among professional and home chefs everywhere. Aside from its durability, cast iron heats more evenly and holds heat more efficiently than just about every other type of cookware. The simplicity of its design enhances the material's functionality.

In years past, the 9-inch frying pan and the Dutch oven were among the most common cast-iron pieces. But because of the resurgence, many manufacturers now offer skillets of all sizes, a variety of Dutch ovens, and myriad accessories and baking pans. As such, the demand for cast-iron cookware is still a niche of the total cookware market, but it's indeed gaining steam. Even small manufacturers like the Fredericksburg Cast Iron Co. see the potential for bringing a new pan to the marketplace.

"We initially introduced a 10-inch skillet with a smooth, hand-seasoned nonstick cooking surface, which is created using a handcrafted method of finishing and polishing," says Jay Mallinckrodt, founder of the boutique crafter of cast-iron skillets that was established in 2021. "This new approach resulted from the frustration of using so-called modern cookware that wore out quickly and a desire to avoid intimidating rough, coarse and sandpaperlike cast-iron surfaces that proliferate the ironware market. Our result is heavy-duty cast-iron cookware that is 100% made in Texas and can last for generations.

"Very few high-quality cooking products in the market today can be purchased for less than \$200," Mallinckrodt says. "A good cast-iron pan will not only cook your meal, but it will also bring families and friends together. That pan also becomes an heirloom piece and will last for generations."

Wild game chef Jesse Morris, who has cooked in high-end restaurants and hotels in Dallas, swears by cast iron. He advises that any protein you cook in cast iron benefits from the controlled crisping and searing that it provides. Beyond that, he says, cast iron adds to the story of a meal.

"There is an allure of cooking with well-made pans," Morris says. "Cooking is full of romance, and it tells a story. When you take the time to make something special and you're using a grandparent's old skillet or Dutch oven that has been well seasoned and made smooth from years of stirring, it helps add to that story." ■

**TCP** Enter online to win a skillet from Fredericksburg Cast Iron Co.



## Seasoning and Caring for Cast Iron

BY RUSSELL A. GRAVES

There's something about the flavor when you cook on cast iron that brings food like bacon and eggs alive. I also love cast-iron cornbread, which has a great crust on the bottom, and that brings a flavor that you can't replicate.

Before you cook on cast iron, there's one simple step required: Season the pan. You may wonder why. It's pretty simple: When you season a cast-iron pan, you help protect the metal, and add a little bit of nonstick properties to the cast iron. So as you use your pans over and over, the cookware becomes more and more seasoned.

To start the process, a good washing is in order. I use a stiff dishwashing pad and scrub it as best I can. You'll hear some people say that you shouldn't put soap and water on a cast-iron pan, and while that's true after they've been seasoned, when refurbishing a pan, you'll want to try to get all the dirt and grime off it.

After a good washing, place the pan on a stovetop set to medium heat to evaporate all the water. After a slow cooldown, wipe the pan with a towel to make sure all the moisture is gone.

Next, use some sort of cooking oil (I use shortening) and rub down the entire pan. While coating, preheat your oven to 350 degrees. When the pan is coated, place it in the oven on the middle rack and let it heat evenly for a couple of hours. Once the pan is cooled, you should have a properly seasoned pan. Regular use will continue the seasoning process, and the pan will darken over time.

To clean cast iron, simply wipe it down with a dry towel. If you need to scrub the pan, just reseason it in the oven.





POWER OF OUR PEOPLE

# HOPE IN♥A BOX





## A breast cancer survivor sends care packages of recovery aids to women all over the world

**T**he large, unadorned box that arrived on Kim Carpenter's doorstep contained just a few simple items—a big shirt with inside pockets, a long pillow, personal notes of encouragement. But it meant the world to her.

Carpenter had just been through several grueling months of chemotherapy for her breast cancer and was about to undergo a double mastectomy. She felt lost and confused.

"Then you see that box and open it. It's exciting because you know somebody cares enough to send you something that will be helpful," Carpenter says, choking back tears as she recalls that day in January 2021. "It is a blessing, even though it's just a pillow and a shirt and a few other things. It's hope in a box."

Carpenter, who lives in Brookshire, west of Houston, is one of more than 6,700 women who have received a care package from the Blessing Box Project, founded by breast cancer survivor Dawn Compton, a San Bernard Electric Cooperative member who lives in nearby Bellville. And the community of supporters is growing.

Compton's work is rooted in her own experience. She recalls crying all the way home from the doctor after learning she had breast cancer in March 2018. Through the tears, she prayed, asking for the strength to help others in their fights—though she wasn't exactly sure what that meant. She says she's always been a helper. Her motto: Do as much as we can for as many as we can for as long as we can and then rest.

"I was crying and I said: This is not my choice, so it's yours. I will do what I'm supposed to do," Compton says she told God. "I will open every door I'm supposed to go through. Put me in front of whoever needs me, who needs to hear my story."

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT Blessing Box Project founder Dawn Compton, who often gets help from volunteers. Gabby Smith irons for Blessing Box. Tinley Malota, Compton's granddaughter, and Tinley's aunt, Madi Compton, sew shirts. Belle Ary helps ready a shipment. Kim Carpenter, a recipient of a Blessing Box, sews for the cause.

To keep busy, Compton started knitting caps for women who lost their hair during chemotherapy. As she worked on each one, she prayed for the person who would wear it.

When she found out she would have to undergo a double mastectomy, she scoured the internet for information about what to do after the operation.

She found instructions for making a special shirt to wear and a pillow. The oversized men's shirt called for adding two pockets on the inside to hold lengthy drains that are attached to the breast removal site. The long pillow "hugs" the upper torso, providing comfort as the patient sleeps, rides in vehicles and does other activities.

"I just started out making a couple of pillows to keep my sanity," she says. "Now, it's my life."

Compton also found support through Facebook pages for women undergoing breast cancer treatment. After posting about the two shirts and pillow she made for herself, she got a private message from a Fort Worth woman asking if she would do the same for her. Compton did and sent it to the woman in a box. The woman thanked her online, which prompted several more requests.

Compton kept sewing, and the requests kept coming in. While unloading boxes one day at the post office, a friend asked her what she was doing. Compton explained, and the woman offered to help, as did others. Her first sewing group met in nearby Nelsonville.

"We thought we were knocking the world apart doing 50 boxes that day!" she says.

Her "pink sewing tribe" has since grown and meets on alternating Saturdays at churches in Bellville and Hempstead to make items for Blessing Boxes. On one Saturday, the women met to assemble contents for 125 boxes. They ended up filling 132.

"Everybody just does their own thing," Compton says. "I couldn't do this by myself anymore."

She gets help from beyond her sewing posse. Thrift stores donate collared men's button-down shirts. Volunteers in several other states make pillows and mail them to her, and an elderly woman in nearby Industry contributes about 30 handmade pillows a month. The owner of a dry cleaner has even pressed shirts for the project.

Supporters make other items for the boxes: One crafts pocket crosses with a short Bible verse, and another makes small prayer quilts. Compton also gets pens, socks, keychains and more. "I send out whatever comes in," she says.

Compton declines payment for the items, but she will accept postage costs if the recipient can cover it. Some pay more. People donate items, prompting Compton's daughter to create an Amazon wish list for donations.

Compton has shipped the boxes all over the United States, to Puerto Rico and to several other countries, including South Africa, Afghanistan and Australia.



#### HOW TO HELP

To send donations or find other ways to help the Blessing Box Project, go to [blessingboxproject.com](http://blessingboxproject.com).

#### TCP POWER OF OUR PEOPLE

To nominate a co-op member who makes a difference in your community, email details to [people@texascooppower.com](mailto:people@texascooppower.com).

“What has really struck me is the kindness I see,” she says. “People have no one, then they open their box and they are moved to tears because someone cares. It’s the difference between walking alone scared to death and knowing somebody is behind you saying you can do this.”

Carpenter felt cared for when she received her box.

After her surgery, it hurt to lower her arms all the way down to her sides. But the pillow eased her pain by wrapping around her front and tucking under her arms so she didn’t have to close them against her body. The shirt held the drains that she called annoying.

Carpenter also was moved by the personal messages written on the pillow and the pockets inside the shirt. The notes told her people were praying for her and that she was strong enough to make it through this ordeal. All Blessing Box Project shirts and pillows have similar messages.

Now, after chemo, surgery and radiation, Carpenter says she’s doing great and helps out when she can with Blessing Boxes—mostly stuffing pillows since she isn’t a seamstress.

“It’s neat to have a bunch of women together working to bless other ladies,” Carpenter says. “It’s amazing what Dawn has done with this project. She’s motivated; she’s hardworking.”

Compton is well known around Bellville for her passion for and commitment to the Blessing Box Project and other community activities, said John Spiess and Lari Samford, employees of San Bernard EC.

“She is extremely active and supportive of a lot of things in our community,” Samford says.

Spiess’ wife, daughter and granddaughter volunteer with the Blessing Box Project.

“Dawn is very much a strong Christian woman, and she puts that into her Blessing Box effort. It’s like a ministry [for her],” says Spiess, who has known Compton since they were in school together. “She was always real sweet, very humble and passionate about what she does. What you see is what you get—beautiful on the inside as well as the outside.” ■

**“People have no one, then they open their box and they are moved to tears because someone cares.”**



TOP Cancer survivor Susan Scott revels in the company of other volunteers while sewing pillows. ABOVE Erika Guerrero adds pillows to Blessing Boxes.



# SLAM DUNK SAVINGS



**\$999 OFF** PLUS  
**YOUR BATHROOM REMODEL** MONTHLY  
PAYMENTS AS LOW AS **\$149**

**UPGRADE YOUR OUTDATED BATHROOM IN AS LITTLE AS A DAY**



Master Plumber • Mark Williams  
License # 37134

- Replacement Showers
- Replacement Tubs
- Tub to Shower Conversions
- Tub & Shower Combos
- Walk-in Tubs
- Accessibility Systems
- Factory Trained & Certified Installers
- Made in the USA

**CALL NOW 972.544.6083**  
591 Benjamin's Way • Lewisville, TX 75057



MILITARY DISCOUNT  
SENIOR DISCOUNT  
FIRST RESPONDERS DISCOUNT  
HEALTHCARE WORKER DISCOUNT

Valid only for new product replacement customers who purchase products and have them installed through Zintex Remodeling. Not valid with any other offer or promotion. Repairs to existing products including parts and service excluded. Prior sales excluded. Other restrictions may apply. See local exclusive dealer for details. \*\*Third party financing is available for those customers who qualify. ©2022 Zintex Remodeling. Expires 4/30/2022.



**JUST  
RELEASED**  
NEW Coins for 2022



**5 Countries,  
5 Pure Silver  
Coins!**



# Your Silver Passport to Travel the World

## *The 5 Most Popular Pure Silver Coins on Earth in One Set*

**T**ravel the globe, without leaving home—with this set of the world's five most popular pure silver coins. Newly struck for 2022 in one troy ounce of fine silver, each coin will arrive in Brilliant Uncirculated (BU) condition. Your excursion includes stops in the United States, China, South Africa, Australia and Canada.

### **We've Done the Work for You with this Extraordinary 5-Pc. World Silver Coin Set**

Each of these coins is recognized for its breathtaking beauty, and for its stability, even in unstable times, since each coin is backed by its government for weight, purity and legal tender value.

**2022 American Silver Eagle:** The Silver Eagle is the single most popular coin in the world. 2022 represents the first full year of release of the Silver Eagle's new Eagles Landing reverse design, introduced midway through last year to honor the coin's 35th anniversary. Struck in 99.9% fine silver at the U.S. Mint.

**2022 South African Krugerrand:** The Krugerrand continues to be the best-known, most respected numismatic coin brand in the world. 2022 is the 5th anniversary of the first silver Krugerrand. Struck in 99.9% fine silver at the South African Mint.

**2022 China Silver Panda:** Since its first issue, the China Panda coin series has been one of the most widely collected series ever, highlighted by one-year-only designs. This 2022 Panda features its first-ever privy mark honoring the coin's 40th anniversary. Struck in 99.9% fine silver at the China Mint.

**2022 Australia Wedge Tailed Eagle:** Introduced in 2014, the Wedge-Tailed Eagle is the first-ever collaboration between U.S. Mint designer John Mercanti and a foreign mint. With a new design for 2022, it's struck in 99.9% fine silver at the Perth Mint.

**2022 Canada Maple Leaf:** Since 1988, the Silver Maple Leaf's elegant design has made it a highly sought-after bullion coin. The 2022 coin features anti-counterfeit security technology—radial lines and a microengraved maple leaf with the number "22". Struck in 99.99% fine silver at the Royal Canadian Mint.

### **Exquisite Designs Struck in Precious Silver**

These coins, with stunningly detailed designs and gorgeous finishes that speak to their country of origin, are sure to hold a revered place in your collection. Plus, they provide you with a unique way to stock up on precious fine silver. Here's a legacy you and your family will enjoy, and cherish. Secure yours now!

### **SAVE with this World Coin Set**

You'll save both time and money on this world coin set with **FREE shipping** and a **BONUS** presentation case.



**2022 World Silver 5-Coin Set \$199 + FREE SHIPPING**

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

*For fastest service call today toll-free*

**1-888-201-7070**

**Offer Code WRD168-02**  
*Please mention this code when you call.*

 **SPECIAL CALL-IN ONLY OFFER**



**GOVMINT.COM®**

GovMint.com • 1300 Corporate Center Curve, Dept. WRD168-02, Eagan, MN 55121

GovMint.com® is a retail distributor of coin and currency issues and is not affiliated with the U.S. government. The collectible coin market is unregulated, highly speculative and involves risk. GovMint.com reserves the right to decline to consummate any sale, within its discretion, including due to pricing errors. Prices, facts, figures and populations deemed accurate as of the date of publication but may change significantly over time. All purchases are expressly conditioned upon your acceptance of GovMint.com's Terms and Conditions ([www.govmint.com/terms-conditions](http://www.govmint.com/terms-conditions)) or call 1-800-721-0320; to decline, return your purchase pursuant to GovMint.com's Return Policy. © 2022 GovMint.com. All rights reserved.





**RENEWAL**  
by **ANDERSEN**  
FULL-SERVICE WINDOW & DOOR REPLACEMENT

# 31-DAY SALE

## windows & doors

When we say this sale ends on March 31<sup>st</sup>, we mean it! **You only have 31 days to get this discount, along with special financing or an extra 3% off!**<sup>1</sup>

There are limited appointments available. Please call today to book your visit.



**Sale ends March 31<sup>st</sup>!**

**SAVE \$300**  
on every window<sup>1</sup>

**SAVE \$825**  
on every patio door<sup>1</sup>

★ **EXTRA 3%** ★  
★ **Discount** ★  
when you pay for your whole project with cash or check<sup>1</sup>

OR

**NO NO NO** for 1  
Money Down Payments Interest year<sup>2</sup>

**Call to book your FREE Window and Door Diagnosis**



**RENEWAL**  
by **ANDERSEN**  
FULL-SERVICE WINDOW & DOOR REPLACEMENT

**Austin**  
**512-298-1858**  
**Dallas/Fort Worth**  
**469-606-5229**

**San Antonio**  
**210-961-9990**

**TopWindowSolution.com**

<sup>1</sup>Subject to availability, on a total purchase of 3 or more. To qualify for discount offer, initial contact for an appointment must be made and documented on or before 3/31/22 with the purchase then occurring on or before 4/10/22. 3% cash discount for payment in full by cash or check applied at time of sale. <sup>2</sup>No payments and deferred interest for 12 months available from third-party lenders to well qualified buyers on approved credit only. No Finance Charges will be assessed if promo balance is paid in full in 12 months. Products are marketed, sold and installed (but not manufactured) by Renewal by Andersen retailers, which are independently owned and operated under 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. See complete information and entity identification at [www.rbaguidelines.com](http://www.rbaguidelines.com). ©2022 Andersen Corporation. ©2022 Lead Surge LLC. All rights reserved.





MESSAGE  
FROM  
GENERAL  
MANAGER/  
CEO

JEFF LANE

## Send Solar Swindlers Packing

**SOLAR ENERGY IS BOOMING** as many homeowners turn to harnessing the sun's rays to produce their own electricity using residential solar panels.

But with the increasing popularity of solar power, some businesses are taking advantage of the surge in consumer interest. While many solar companies are genuine and truly want to help consumers with a successful solar installation, there are bad actors to watch out for.

Here at your co-op, we have been contacted with some very unfortunate stories where the cost of the solar installation was so high that it will not likely pay for itself within the expected life of the panels, or the installation was not done properly to maximize the benefit of having the system.

While the concept is simple, solar power generation systems are complex. And just like any other major purchase, it can really pay to do some homework before taking the plunge. Your initial considerations should include whether other investments in energy efficiency make more sense for your home and budget. In many cases, upgrading to a heat pump HVAC system or adding insulation can give significant energy savings without the potential downsides of owning and maintaining a solar installation.

If you decide solar panels are right for your home, consider these tips before installation to avoid getting swindled:

Talk to an energy adviser at Trinity Valley Electric Cooperative first. We want you to feel confident about any decisions you make about your home energy use, especially decisions about generating energy at home.

Collect quotes from at least two solar companies to ensure you're getting a competitive deal. As with any major purchase, research is key, so thoroughly read customer reviews for each of the solar vendors and check that they're listed on the website of the Texas Solar Energy Society, [txses.org](http://txses.org).

If you speak to a solar vendor and they use high-pressure tactics—like an offer that's only good for 24 hours—run! Any reputable solar company will recognize that you need time to review a proposal and consider your decision.

If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. So if a solar company is making promises that sound unachievable and outlandish, they probably are. Remember, if you have any questions, you can always count on your electric co-op for advice.

Finally, when it's time to review and sign a solar contract, make sure the language is clear and easy to understand. Ensure any verbal promises are included in writing in the contract.

Going solar is a major decision that can cost tens of thousands of dollars, so do your homework first. ■



### DID YOU KNOW?

Lighting accounts for about 15% of an average home's electricity use, and a typical household can save more than \$200 in energy costs per year, compared to incandescent bulbs.

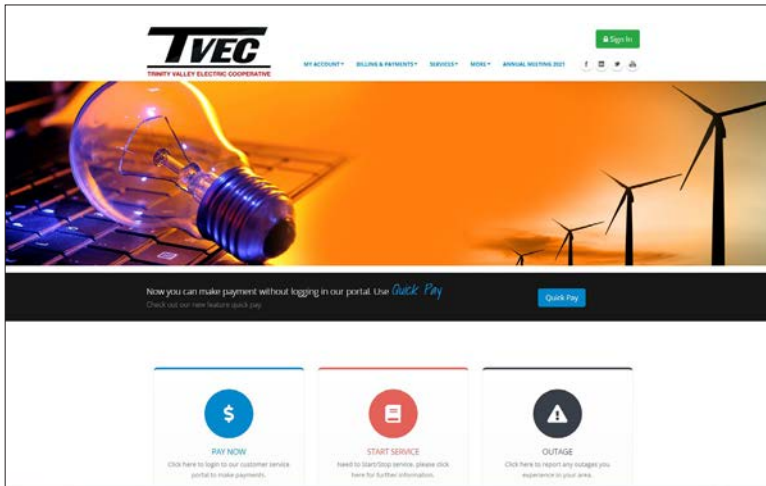


### POWER TIP

The Department of Energy recommends a temperature setting of 35–38 degrees for the fresh food compartment of a fridge and zero degrees for the freezer.







## TVEC Member Portal Gets a New Look

WITH MORE THAN 10% of web traffic at tvec.net going through to our TVEC Member Portal, we know that having a useful and usable interface for managing your electric service account is important for many of you.

And if you needed any motivation to check it out, the Member Portal is now redesigned to give you more options and a fresher look that is better than ever.

For mobile users in particular, the TVEC Member Portal is now much better suited for navigation on your phone or tablet, with larger buttons and clearer menus.



The redesigned TVEC Member Portal interface at tvec.net offers new ways to view usage, an improved Quick Pay function and more.

has been expanded for easier viewing, allowing you to add or change your alerts settings easily.

We want your electrical usage and billing information to be easy to find and easy to use.

Along with the new TVEC Member Portal, check out the myTVEC mobile app for simple account management from your mobile device. ■

## Trinity Valley Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy Cooperative 

### CONTACT US

1800 E. Highway 243  
Kaufman, Texas  
Local (972) 932-2214  
Toll-Free 1-800-766-9576  
Web tvec.net

### Board of Directors

Howard Tillison, Chairman, District 6  
Carolyn Minor, Vice Chairwoman, District 1  
Jo Ann Hanstrom, Secretary, District 4  
Jerry Priest, District 2  
Paul Weatherford, District 3  
Edward Reeve, District 5  
Jack Endres, District 7

### General Manager/CEO

Jeff Lane

**24/7**

## Outage Hotline Numbers

For information and to report outages, please call us.

**TOLL-FREE**  
1-800-967-9324

**AUTOMATED ASSISTANCE**  
1-800-720-3584

### ABOUT TRINITY VALLEY EC

TVEC operates in Anderson, Dallas, Henderson, Hunt, Kaufman and Van Zandt counties.

### 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

Monday–Friday, 8:15 a.m.–4:45 p.m.

### VISIT US ONLINE

tvec.net







## Know What's Below by Calling 811

**SPRING IS JUST** around the corner, and there's no better time to get outside and enjoy the fresh air. Perhaps you're making plans for a new garden or a lawn makeover. However you're planning to revamp your backyard escape, remember to keep safety in mind for all projects—especially those that require digging near underground utility lines.

Most of us never think about the electric, gas, water and other utility lines below ground, but hitting any of those while digging is not the reminder you'll want—trust us! Trinity Valley Electric Cooperative reminds all members who plan a digging project to call 811 at least three business days before starting. Or you can submit a request online by visiting [texas811.org](http://texas811.org).

### How It Works

After you call 811 or submit your request online, all affected utilities will be notified of your intent to dig. It may take the utilities a few days to get to your request, so be patient. The affected utilities will send someone out to mark buried lines with paint or flags. Before you break ground, confirm that all the involved utilities have responded to your request. If you placed your request by phone, use the process explained by the 811 call center representative. If you submitted your request online, refer to your 811 center ticket to confirm everything.

By taking this important step before you break ground on your project, you help protect not only yourself but our community. Disrupting an underground utility line can interrupt service, cause injuries and cost money to repair, so remember to call 811 first and know what's below.

### Dig Safely

Once you get the go-ahead, remember these safe digging practices:

- ▶ Use appropriate digging equipment for the type of hole you're digging.
- ▶ Don't ever attempt to move a utility line.
- ▶ If something goes wrong, call 911. ■

## Going the Extra Mile

Did you know electric cooperatives maintain more miles of power lines per consumer and acquire less revenue than other types of electric utilities?

Even though they serve fewer consumers and acquire less revenue (per mile of line), electric co-ops always go the extra mile, maintaining a tried-and-true record of delivering safe, reliable electric service to the members they serve.

### Electric Cooperatives

Number of consumers served: 8

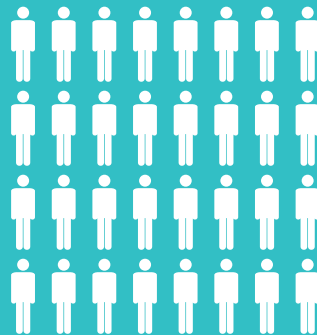


Revenue:

**\$19,000**

### Other Electric Utilities

Number of consumers served: 32



Revenue:

**\$79,000**

*Sources: EIA, 2016 data.  
Includes revenue and consumer  
averages per mile of line.*



TRINITY VALLEY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE





## Do a 3-Step HVAC Test

**AS WE EASE TOWARD SPRING**, it can be easy to put off thinking about the long hot days of summer that are sure to come. But just like the gardeners prepping seedlings on the windowsills, now is the time to consider preparations for what is ahead. 60161199003

Before performing this test, the outdoor temperature should be above 80 degrees. Set your thermostat well below the room temperature to ensure the system runs long enough for the test.

1. Using a digital probe thermometer, measure the temperature of the air being pulled into the air conditioning filter.
2. Measure the temperature of the air blowing out of a vent.
3. Subtract the vent output temperature from the filter intake temperature. There should be a difference of about 17–20 degrees. If the difference is less than 17 degrees, check the coolant level. If the difference is greater than 20 degrees, check your ductwork for restrictions.

Your HVAC system is essential to keeping your home comfortable. If it breaks down, the equipment can be expensive to repair or replace. With a little maintenance, you can add years to your system's operating life. ■



## March Challenge: Save More Energy

**SPRING IS NEARLY HERE.** While you're waiting for warmer weather, challenge yourself and your family to spend the last days of winter saving energy, even though it might still be frosty outdoors.

Consider making a game out of saving energy: Challenge your children to compete with each other to form energy-saving habits and to "catch" each other wasting energy.

Create a checklist for the contest and dream up a great prize for the winner. Some challenges:

**Turn off** the light every single time you leave a room.

**Unplug appliances** like TVs and computers at bedtime.

**Don't leave** phone chargers plugged in when there's no phone attached.

**Switch off** bathroom fans once the steam has cleared after a shower.

**Wear sweaters** and socks around the house so you can set the thermostat a bit lower.

**Open exterior doors** only to enter and exit the home; don't hold them open if you're not ready to walk through.

**Turn off the TV** and sound system when no one is watching TV. Don't leave the entertainment system powered up all day for background noise.

**Take quick showers** instead of baths to conserve the energy it takes to heat water.

**Open blinds** to let in the warm sunshine when the weather is cold and close the blinds to block heat when it's hot outside.

**Keep the refrigerator** door closed. Open it only briefly to retrieve food so the cold air stays in.

**Do homework** next to a window with natural light instead of turning on a light.

**Turn off** the water when brushing teeth to save water. ■



# GO BEYOND THE CARD.



**Download the Co-op Connections  
app to save today!**

## Local Feature: Sweet Tee/Print To Suit

Owner: Emily Golden

Location: 209 W. Mulberry St. Kaufman (Kaufman Square)

Sweet Tee and Print To Suit are companion businesses in Kaufman with something for everyone. Sweet Tee is a Texas boutique with trendy clothing, gift items and specialty T-shirts. Print to Suit offers custom printing, embroidery and promotional products, along with sportswear and gift items.



**10 % Off**  
**In-Store Purchases**



# Look Up Before You Plant

**SPRING IS A** good time to plant shade trees, which eventually will grow up and out and cast some nice shade on your house, keeping it cooler during the summer.

But beware of where you plant. Tree branches can conduct electricity, creating a possible shock hazard for utility workers who need to service overhead power lines that are too close to towering trees.

Do some homework about the trees you've chosen before you plant them. Know how tall and wide each one will grow. That way you can plant it in a spot where, when it's fully grown, it will still be at least 10 feet away from a utility pole and overhead wires.

Here are a few other smart springtime cautions:

- ▶ Call your electric cooperative and 811 before you dig a hole to plant a tree—just to make sure you won't interfere with underground lines on your property. That one is not only a safe practice; it's the law.
- ▶ Don't use a ladder within reach of a power line.
- ▶ Hire a professional to prune any tree branches that are near overhead wires. That's not a job for a do-it-yourselfer. ■



## Tips for Adjusting to Daylight Saving Time

**DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME** begins at 2 a.m. Sunday, March 13, and many people dread losing an hour of sleep as they spring clocks forward.

For most folks, settling into new routines after a time change takes several days, but for others, it can be dangerous. One study showed that fatal accidents increase the Monday after a time change.

**Adjusting to the change can be hard, but a few tips from The Old Farmer's Almanac can help.**

**Get enough sleep.** Even though it might be tempting to stay up later to make use of the extra daylight, going to bed at the same time can help you stay energized. So can getting about eight hours of sleep before and after the transition.

**Wind down before bedtime.** Turn off the TV and put away the phone, tablet or computer about an hour before going to bed. Those electronics emit light that stimulates the brain and hinders melatonin production. Turning them off also helps cut back on electricity use.

**Establish a healthy dinnertime routine.** Don't change your dinner-time to adjust for the time change. Eat at the same time or earlier a few days before and around the time change.

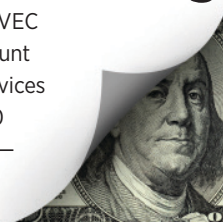
**Get some sunshine.** Light from the sun helps regulate the body's internal clock, so go outside in the days after the time change and get some sunshine. Using an alarm clock with a light can help you wake up with more ease too.

**Sneak in a nap.** If you have trouble getting enough sleep at night, take a short nap—about 20 minutes—to help balance your sleep deficit. Ward off sleepiness by going outside and soaking in some sunlight for a few minutes.

Starting the adjustment process a few days ahead of the time change can help you slip into daylight saving time gracefully. ■

## Win \$100 Just for Reading

Hidden somewhere on Pages 18–25 is a TVEC account number. Read closely. If the account number is yours, contact the member services department by March 31 to receive a \$100 credit on your electric bill. Don't miss out—you could be a winner.







TVEC ENERGY  
MANAGEMENT ADVISOR

CHRIS WALKER, BAP

The Energy Advisor:

## Tech Solutions Put Power in Your Hands

**HAVING A MONTH BETWEEN** electric bills can sometimes lead to questions like “How did I use this much electricity?” Over the course of a few weeks, a cold weather event or other high usage period can be hard to remember. Monthly bills also mean a long gap during which you may not catch a problematic appliance, HVAC unit or electrical issue that could be using more energy than it should be.

But if you ever watched *G.I. Joe*, you may have it etched in your mind that “knowing is half the battle.”

Joe may be overstating the case somewhat, but knowledge certainly helps in making energy decisions.

Thankfully, if you want to get a handle on your electricity usage there are tools available to make that easy.

For overall electricity usage and account management, Trinity Valley Electric Cooperative has a few options to get information into your hands. The TVEC Member Portal on [tvec.net](http://tvec.net) and the myTVEC mobile app are your first stops for making sense of your energy budget.

Within both platforms you can see your usage history, combined with weather data and billing history and take advantage of the easiest online payment options.

And in both locations, you can set up what may be your most powerful tech tool – email or text alerts to keep you up to date on your energy usage, bill due date or a notification to let you know if your account information has been changed.

If you want an even more in-depth view of your home’s energy usage, there are some other tools available.

The simplest of these is a Kill-A-Watt Electric Monitor or similar device, which start at about \$20. These single-plug electric meters can check the electricity usage of a single appliance or device. Over the course of a day or week, you can see exactly how much it costs to watch TV, keep the refrigerator running or other tasks.

On a larger scale, there are whole-house monitoring tools available that learn your home’s energy patterns and alert you to possible problems quickly. While most of these devices aren’t as accurate as a true meter, they are good at showing how much of your usage goes to the major mechanical systems in your home.

Over the course of my career, I have visited many TVEC members to help identify the causes for excess energy use, and in many cases the culprit was easy to find with the right tools.

Knowledge really is power, and modern technology can give you a lot of information for a reasonable cost. ■

## **TVEC** TRINITY VALLEY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE **Energy Quiz**



**Which uses more electricity, making a pot of coffee or using a laptop computer for six hours?**

- A. Coffee Uses More.
- B. Laptop Uses More.
- C. They are about the same.

**Win \$100!**

Send your answer and contact information to [contest@tvec.coop](mailto:contest@tvec.coop) or contact TVEC Member Services by March 31. One \$100 bill credit winner will be chosen from all correct replies. Look for the correct answer in a future **Texas Co-op Power** magazine.

## February Energy Quiz: Phantom Loads

**MOST OF OUR MODERN GADGETS**, appliances, toys and entertainment devices have a little energy secret.

With power lights glowing and other internal parts running, they are often using some power even when they are turned off.

The easy solution is to use a power strip to turn off all electricity to those devices when not in use. Smart power strips let you decide which devices should receive constant power.

Congratulations to Catharine Wilkinson of Frankston who correctly answered our January quiz and won a \$100 bill credit. ■

# **TVEC**

## **Charitable Foundation**

### **Your Generosity in Action**

## **Operation Round Up Spotlight: Backpack Programs**

**PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS** HAVE a reputation for making the most of minimal resources in the classroom. At many area school districts, teachers are also putting the same effort into making sure students are taken care of in what may be difficult circumstances at home.

Your Operation Round Up dollars go to support several backpack programs, which provide for students' nutritional needs when school is out.

"Food-insecure students are defined as kids who may not have enough to eat at home, and who rely on school for the bulk of their nutrition," said Rachael Manley, a teacher in Wills Point. "Every Friday, students receive four meals, two breakfasts, a few snacks and drinks. And when there is a long weekend, they are provided additional food."

Some backpack programs also provide some basic toiletry needs and school supplies.

Thank you participating TVEC members for your generosity. ■

## **February 2022 Grants**

Eustace Intermediate School Bulldog  
Backpack Hygiene Program - \$4,887.67

Wills Point Junior High  
Backpack Program - \$2,000

Still Waters, Kaufman - \$2,500



Wills Point teacher, Rachael Manley, accepts a TVEC Charitable Foundation grant of \$2,000 from Joy Long, TVEC public relations representative.



### **Hit the road!**

Hey, Chet here! Join me at the all-new **TexasCoopPower.com** to learn about Texas travel.





# TRIGGER THE BUTTERFLY EFFECT

*Happiness takes flight in shimmering abalone  
and gleaming sterling silver for **just \$49!***

- Shimmering abalone in .925 sterling silver
- 1 1/3" drop & 1 1/4" wide Butterfly Pendant

## Abalone Butterfly Effect Collection

A. Butterfly Pendant ~~\$199†~~..... **\$49** +s&p Save \$150

B. 18" sterling silver chain..... \$59 +s&p

Butterfly Pendant & Chain ~~\$258†~~ ..... \$59 +s&p Save \$199

C. Butterfly Earrings ~~\$199†~~..... \$59 +s&p Save \$140

**Butterfly Pendant, Chain & Earrings ~~\$457~~ \$99 +s&p Best Value!**

Call now and mention the offer code to receive your special discounts.

**1-800-333-2045**

**Offer Code BYC207-01**

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

**Stauer®** 14101 Southcross Drive W., Ste 155, Dept. BYC207-01,  
Burnsville, Minnesota 55337 [www.stauer.com](http://www.stauer.com)



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



**FREE \$2 Bill!**



Based on an 1818 painting that depicts John Adams, Thomas Jefferson and Ben Franklin presenting a draft of the Declaration of Independence

**Special Offer for New Customers Only Ages 18+**

**Dept. 5YD418**

**ORDERS MUST BE RECEIVED  
WITHIN 30 DAYS**

**YES!** Please send me the following:

QTY	DESCRIPTION	TOTAL
1	\$2 Note (limit 1)	<b>FREE!</b>
	Shipping	<b>FREE!</b>
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>FREE!</b>

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Please print clearly

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Apt # \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to:



**Littleton  
Coin Company®**  
Serving Collectors Since 1945

**Dept. 5YD418**  
1309 Mt. Eustis Road  
Littleton NH 03561-3737

## Get a Rarely Seen Uncirculated \$2 Federal Reserve Note **FREE!**

Get a seldom-seen \$2 bill in Uncirculated condition **FREE!** Depicting Thomas Jefferson on the face and the famous painting *Declaration of Independence* on the back, \$2 notes make up less than 1% of all paper money issued by the Federal Reserve. And if you find one in circulation, it won't be in this new condition!



### These exciting \$2 bills...

- Depict Thomas Jefferson, author of the Declaration of Independence and 3rd U.S. president, on both face and back
- Make up less than 1% of all U.S. currency notes printed
- Are rarely found in circulation

### Order Within 30 Days to Receive Your \$2 Note **FREE** – Plus **FREE** Shipping!

Why are we offering such a great deal? Because we're so sure you'll like this **FREE** \$2 Note that you'll enjoy receiving other popular coins to preview in your home. You'll receive a handpicked trial selection of fascinating coins from our No-Obligation Coins-on-Approval Service, from which you may purchase any or none of the coins – return balance in 15 days – with option to cancel at any time. To receive your **FREE** \$2 Federal Reserve Note, mail attached coupon now.

**Mail Coupon Today! For Faster Service  
Visit: [LittletonCoin.com/Specials](http://LittletonCoin.com/Specials)**

©2022 LCC, Inc.

## Bank C.D.'s Due? CALL US NOW

**1-800-359-4940** TEXAS  
TOLL-FREE  
www.mattsonfinancialservices.com

**BLAKE MATTSON, CFP™**  
Signal Securities, Inc., 5400 Bosque, 4th Floor, Waco, TX 76710  
*Serving Customers All Over Texas*

All C.D.'s are insured to \$250,000 per institution by the F.D.I.C.  
All C.D.'s are subject to availability. Securities offered  
thru Signal Securities, Inc., Member FINRA/SIPC  
700 Throckmorton, Ft. Worth, TX 76102. (817) 877-4256.

**PERMA-ROOF®**  
from Southern Builders

## Steel Mobile Home Roofing



Since 1983

High energy bill?  
Roof rumble?  
Leaks?

**MOBILE HOME  
ROOFOVER  
SYSTEMS**

Contact us at **800.633.8969**  
or **roofover.com**

**TCP Gift Shop**

**TCP Shop now**  
TexasCoopPower.com/shop

**Low Cost Pole Barns**

26' x 48' x 10'  
3 Sides Enclosed

**Call now for our best pricing!**

Hay/Horse Barns, Shops, Decks, Concrete Work and Pad Sites

**Call Ron: 512-367-0428**

**ARK-LA-TEX**  
SHOP BUILDERS

"WE GOTCHA COVERED"  
SHOPS • BARNs • CABINS • WWW.SHOPSBUILT.COM

**830-730-0515**

8670 IH 35 N NEW BRAUNFELS, TX



**BUILDINGS OF ALL SIZES**

Shops • Garages • Barns • Equipment Sheds • Barndominiums

**WE MAKE DREAMS COME TRUE!**

Price includes all labor and materials with 4" steel reinforced concrete slab with moisture barrier, one 10'x10' heavy duty roll up door, one 3 foot steel entry door, concrete aprons, electric slab \*(Dirt may be extra)

## 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.

This fast-acting bacteria multiplies within minutes of application and is specifically designed to withstand many of today's anti-bacterial cleaners, soaps and detergents. It comes in dissolvable plastic packs, that you just flush down your toilets. It's so cool. Plus, they actually Guarantee that it restores ANY system, no matter how bad the problem is.

**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 "TXS15", 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.

**TCP Marketplace**  
Across Town | Across Texas

Advertise in Texas Co-op Power Marketplace  
Elaine Sproull (512) 486-6251  
advertising@TexasCoopPower.com



# 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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Huntsman Blade \$249\***

Offer Code Price Only **\$79** + S&P **Save \$170**

**1-800-333-2045**

**Your Insider Offer Code: HUK723-01**

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

**Stauer®** 14101 Southcross Drive W., Ste 155, Dept. HUK723-01  
Burnsville, Minnesota 55337 [www.stauer.com](http://www.stauer.com)

\*Discount is only for customers who use the offer code versus the listed original Stauer.com price.

**California residents please call 1-800-333-2045 regarding Proposition 65 regulations before purchasing this product.**

- 12" overall length; 6 1/2" stainless steel full tang blade
- Genuine bone handle with brass hand guard & bolsters
- Includes genuine leather sheath

**EXCLUSIVE  
FREE**

Stauer® 8x21  
Compact  
Binoculars  
—a \$99 value—  
with purchase of  
Huntsman Blade



**BONUS!** Call today and you'll also receive this genuine leather sheath!



**Rating of A+**



**What Stauer Clients  
Are Saying About  
Our Knives**

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

— H., Arvada, CO

Stauer... *Afford the Extraordinary.®*



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



# The Inside Track

Railroads scattered—and united—early communities across the state

BY W.F. STRONG • ILLUSTRATION BY TRACI DABERKO

**THE EARLIEST TEXAS** towns took hold alongside protected bays (Galveston and Corpus Christi) and riverbanks (San Antonio and El Paso). But by the late 1800s, railroads were planting the seeds that raised towns. More than any other technology, trains ushered Texas into the industrial age.

The railroads got a slow start in Texas, but an attractive funding program allocated the railroad companies more than 10,000 acres of land and a \$6,000 loan for every mile of track.

Towns developed along railroads for many reasons—one being that every 20 miles or so, steam locomotives required water. So water depots were built as needed, regardless of whether a favorable place for a town to prosper was nearby.

The far West Texas town of Valentine is such a case. The stop for the water depot was given that name because a railroad crew arrived there on Valentine's Day 1882. Some say, however, that the town was named for John Valentine, a major stockholder in the railroad. Both could be true (a twofer, you might say). The town of 130 or so people still exists, and the post office does a booming business for, you guessed it, Valentine's Day.

Some towns sprang up haphazardly because a construction camp lasted long enough for communal roots to grow. Langtry, along the Mexico border, was such a place. A tent town developed where the railroad builders lived while the project was underway, and the town was named for George Langtry, a railroad engineer for the Southern Pacific.

But Judge Roy Bean, famous as the Law West of the Pecos, rewrote that history to suit his own narrative. He sold worldwide the fiction that he had named the town for Lillie Langtry, the British American actress. He was so successful in selling this myth that she stopped to visit the town shortly after Bean died.

Abilene was created by the construction of the Texas and Pacific Railway line, with cattlemen and developers collaborating to establish a cattle market similar to Abilene, Kansas (for which Abilene was named). They needed room to build the cattle market, so the railroad bypassed Buffalo Gap, a more established community, prompting many in Buffalo Gap to relocate, since the railroad lines were the lifeblood of commerce in those days. Alongside those tracks on the first day of lot selling, the First Presbyterian Church was founded, and that prophesied the reputation of Abilene as having more churches per capita than any other town in Texas, not to mention three Christian colleges.

In 1860 the Houston and Texas Central Railway built a line through East Texas and created a depot that would become College Station. The school that would become Texas A&M University opened its doors in 1876. The next year the U.S. Postal Service designated the town College Station because that was the name of the railroad passenger depot. The railroad is still there, bifurcating the enormous 5,200-acre campus that it once bordered only on the west side.

The age of railroad dominance in Texas development is gone now, but the Lone Star State still boasts an important claim: Texas holds more miles of railroad than any state in the union—10,539—which still move the state's commerce. ■



# Texas' Best

Turn this lineup of Lone Star icons into staples in your kitchen

BY MEGAN MYERS, FOOD EDITOR

So many things come to mind when one thinks of Texas food that it's hard to distill it into a few distinct dishes. Beyond that, each region puts its own spin on things, resulting in a wonderfully vibrant food culture from top to tip. Texas caviar is a dish that many folks have made their own since it first appeared in the 1940s. I add crisp bacon and avocado, though you can skip the bacon if you want to keep it vegetarian.

## Texas Caviar With Bacon and Avocado

### CAVIAR

- 1 can (15 ounces) black-eyed peas, rinsed and drained**
- 1 can (15 ounces) black beans, rinsed and drained**
- 1 cup corn kernels, thawed if frozen**
- 1 red bell pepper, seeded and diced**
- ½ cup diced red onion**
- 1 cup halved grape tomatoes**
- 2 slices crisp-cooked bacon, chopped**
- ¼ cup chopped fresh cilantro**
- 1 avocado, diced**

### DRESSING

- ½ cup olive oil**
- ¼ cup red wine vinegar**
- 1 tablespoon lime juice**
- 1 teaspoon sugar**
- 1 teaspoon salt**
- ½ teaspoon cumin**
- ½ teaspoon pepper**

**1. CAVIAR** In a large bowl, stir together black-eyed peas, beans, corn, bell pepper, onion, tomatoes, bacon and cilantro.

**2. DRESSING** In a small bowl, whisk together dressing ingredients. Pour half the dressing over salad and mix well. Add more dressing to taste.

**3.** Gently stir in diced avocado just before serving.

**SERVES 8**

**TCP** Follow along with Megan Myers and her adventures in the kitchen at [stetted.com](http://stetted.com), where she features a recipe for Chili Beef Pie.





## Pinto Beans and Jalapeño Sausage

SHARON CRISMAN-PARKER  
CENTRAL TEXAS EC  
SAN BERNARD EC

This hearty dish is perfect for showcasing locally made sausage. Crisman-Parker has been making this dish for more than 35 years and recommends the jalapeño sausage from Krolczyk Meat Market in Hempstead.

- 1 pound dry pinto beans**
- 2 slices bacon or salt pork**
- 1 teaspoon olive oil**
- ½ cup chopped onion**
- ½ cup chopped fresh cilantro**
- 1½ teaspoons minced garlic**
- ½ teaspoon cumin**
- 1 teaspoon garlic pepper**
- Pinch ground cayenne pepper**
- 4 tablespoons chili powder**
- 2 teaspoons salt**
- 1 tablespoon pepper**
- 1 package smoked jalapeño sausage, sliced**

1. Soak beans 45 minutes–1 hour. Drain and rinse beans, then pour into a stockpot or Dutch oven. Add enough water to cover beans.
2. Add bacon and olive oil, and cook on low 15 minutes.
3. Add onion, cilantro, garlic, cumin, garlic pepper and cayenne. Cover and continue to cook on low 15 minutes, adding water if needed to keep beans submerged. Stir in chili powder, salt and pepper and continue to cook on low until beans begin to soften, adding water as needed. When beans are starting to

\$500 WINNER

## Texas Praline Sheet Cake

SHIRLEY SMITH  
PEDERNALES EC



The aroma of the cooked icing for this sheet cake is irresistible, so don't be surprised if you sneak a taste while spreading it onto the cake. Skipping the usual chocolate addition helps Texas pecans shine in this crowd-pleasing dessert.

**SERVES 24**



**CAKE**

- 1 cup (2 sticks) butter**
- 1 cup water**
- 2½ cups flour**
- 1 cup loosely packed brown sugar**
- 1 cup sugar**
- 1 teaspoon baking soda**
- ½ cup buttermilk**
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract**
- 2 eggs, lightly beaten**

**ICING**

- 1 cup (2 sticks) butter**
- 2 cups loosely packed brown sugar**
- ½ cup half-and-half**
- 4 cups unsifted powdered sugar**
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract**
- 2 cups pecans, toasted and chopped**

1. **CAKE** Preheat oven to 350 degrees and grease a deep 18-by-13-inch baking sheet or jelly roll pan.
2. In a small saucepan, combine butter and water and bring to a boil, then remove from heat.
3. In a large bowl, mix together flour, sugars and baking soda. Stir in buttermilk, vanilla and eggs; mixture will be thick and sticky. Carefully mix in the butter-water mixture and stir until smooth.
4. Pour batter onto prepared baking sheet and spread evenly to edges. Bake 20 minutes, until golden brown.
5. **ICING** In a large saucepan over medium-high heat, melt the butter and brown sugar, stirring to melt evenly. Boil 2 minutes. Stir in the half-and-half and bring back to a boil, then remove from heat. Whisk in powdered sugar until melted and icing is thick and creamy. Fold in vanilla and pecans. While cake and icing are still warm, pour icing on cake and spread to edges. Let cool before serving.

## TCP \$500 Recipe Contest

**BEST BURGERS** DUE MARCH 10

What's going on your grill this spring? Submit your recipes at [TexasCoopPower.com/contests](https://TexasCoopPower.com/contests) by March 10 for a chance to win \$500.



CONTINUED >



## RECIPES CONTINUED

soften, after about 30 minutes, add the sausage.

4. Continue cooking, covered, on low until beans are tender. Serve with cornbread.

**SERVES 6-8**

## South Texas-Style Migas

CELESTE SMITH  
PEDERNALES EC

Smith's South Texas roots informed her recipe for migas, which she has been making for her family for years. Enjoy the dish on its own or tuck it into flour tortillas and serve with refried beans.

### Vegetable oil

1 green bell pepper, diced

1 small onion, diced

1 serrano or jalapeño pepper, seeded and diced

1 clove garlic, minced

3 large plum tomatoes, peeled



¼ cup chicken broth

1 teaspoon cumin

1 teaspoon salt, divided use

¼ teaspoon pepper

6 5-inch corn tortillas

4 eggs, lightly beaten

½ cup shredded cheddar cheese

1. In a saucepan over medium heat, warm 1 teaspoon oil, then add bell pepper, onion, and serrano or jalapeño. Sauté 5 minutes, until onion is transparent, then add garlic and cook 1 minute more.

2. Pulse peeled tomatoes in a food processor until chunky but not watery, then add to the saucepan along with broth, cumin, ½ teaspoon salt and pepper. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer partially covered for 15 minutes, stirring occasionally. Remove the sauce from heat and set aside.

3. Cut tortillas into 1-inch strips, then cut in half crosswise. Cover the bottom of a large skillet with about 1 inch of oil and heat over medium. Cook tortilla strips until crisp, 7-10 minutes, then place on paper towels to drain excess oil.

4. Drain all but 1 tablespoon of oil and add eggs to warm skillet. Cook without stirring until eggs begin to set on the bottom, then draw a spatula across the bottom to form large curds. Sprinkle with remaining salt and return tortilla strips to the pan. Stir well and cook until eggs are set but still moist. Remove from heat, top with the sauce and cheese and serve.

**SERVES 2**

# PUT FINANCIAL FREEDOM IN YOUR HANDS.

Did you know that if you would have taken \$150,000 of your money and bought physical gold in 2000, you would now have over \$1 million at today's gold prices? That's an incredible increase of over 600%, outperforming the Nasdaq, Dow, and S&P 500. Learn how to protect and grow your money by diversifying with physical gold.

**FREE KIT  
& 2 BONUS  
REPORTS!**



Call now to claim your **FREE 2022 Gold Information Kit** only from the experts at **U.S. Money Reserve!**

**CALL NOW:** Vault Code: TX38

► **1-855-426-7168**

### FREE BONUS REPORT!

Call right now to receive two exclusive BONUS reports: **25 Reasons to Own Gold** and the **2022 Global Gold Forecast!**



**U.S. MONEY  
— RESERVE —**  
AMERICA'S GOLD AUTHORITY

©2022 U.S. Money Reserve. \*Based on the change in gold's price from \$263.80/oz. (10/27/00) to \$1,902.75/oz. (06/02/21). The markets for coins are unregulated. Prices can rise or fall and carry some risks. The company is not affiliated with the U.S. Government and the U.S. Mint. Past performance of the coin or the market cannot predict future performance. Prices may be more or less based on current market conditions. All calls recorded for quality assurance. Coins enlarged to show detail. Offer void where prohibited.

Make your home more comfortable than ever

“To you, it’s the **perfect lift chair**.  
To me, it’s the **best sleep chair** I’ve ever had.”

— J. Fitzgerald, VA

**NOW**  
also available in  
**Genuine Italian Leather**  
(as pictured here)



**Three Chairs  
in One  
Sleep/Recline/Lift**

**You can’t always lie down in bed and sleep. Heartburn, cardiac problems, hip or back aches – and dozens of other ailments and worries.** Those are the nights you’d give anything for a comfortable chair to sleep in: one that reclines to exactly the right degree, raises your feet and legs just where you want them, supports your head and shoulders properly, and operates at the touch of a button.

Our **Perfect Sleep Chair®** does all that and more. More than a chair or recliner, it’s designed to provide total comfort. **Choose your preferred heat and massage settings, for hours of soothing relaxation.** Reading or watching TV? Our chair’s recline technology allows you to pause the chair in an infinite number of settings. And best of all, it features a powerful lift mechanism that tilts the entire chair forward, making it easy to stand. You’ll love the other benefits, too. It helps with correct spinal alignment and promotes back pressure relief, to prevent back and muscle pain. The overstuffed,

oversized biscuit style back and unique seat design will cradle you in comfort. Generously filled, wide armrests provide enhanced arm support when sitting or reclining. **It even has a battery backup in case of a power outage.**

**White glove delivery** included in shipping charge. Professionals will deliver the chair to the exact spot in your home where you want it, unpack it, inspect it, test it, position it, and even carry the packaging away! You get your choice of Genuine Italian Leather, plush and durable Brisa™, stain and liquid repellent DuraLux™ with the classic leather look or plush MicroLux™ microfiber, all handcrafted in a variety of colors to fit any decor.

**Call now!**

**The Perfect Sleep Chair®**  
**1-888-785-0746**

Please mention code 116498 when ordering.

**Now  
available in  
plush and  
durable  
Brisa™**



**REMOTE CONTROLLED**  
EASILY SHIFTS FROM FLAT TO  
A STAND-ASSIST POSITION

Now available in a variety  
of colors, fabrics and sizes.  
Footrests vary by model

**Genuine Italian Leather**  
classic beauty & style

Chestnut



**New** **Brisa™**  
plush & durable

Saddle



Coffee  
Bean



**Long Lasting DuraLux™**  
stain & liquid repellent

Burgundy



Tan



Chocolate



Blue



**MicroLux™ Microfiber**  
breathable & amazingly soft

Burgundy



Cashmere



Chocolate



Indigo



Because each Perfect Sleep Chair is a made-to-order bedding product it cannot be returned,  
but if it arrives damaged or defective, at our option we will repair it or replace it. © 2022 Journey Health and Lifestyle





COURTESY CHET GARNER

## Chomping at the Trip

Beaumont's Gator Country gives travelers a taste of the wild side

BY CHET GARNER

**GROWING UP IN** Southeast Texas, I always had a fascination with alligators. Every time my family drove past a marsh (which was a lot), I would eagerly scan, hoping to see a pair of eyes peeking above the water. Occasionally I would spot one and nearly burst with giddy excitement.

With that early influence in mind, you can imagine my thrill when I discovered Gator Country Adventure Park—home to more than 450 alligators, crocodiles and other reptiles just outside Beaumont.

My adventure started with a walk across a bridge spanning a pond packed with more alligators than I could count and continued with exhibits featuring snakes and turtles and at least six outdoor habitats. The pond for large gators had residents that measured more than 12 feet long, including one named Kong.

But no gator in the park can hold a candle to Big Al and Big Tex—two creatures so intimidating they each get a personal pond. Big Al measures more than 13 feet long and weighs a half ton. He was the largest gator in captivity in America until the arrival of Big Tex, measuring an inch shy of 14 feet.

Like most of the gators here, Big Al and Big Tex were rescued after being deemed nuisances and a danger to the public. For owner Gary Saurage, the park is a place where alligators can be cared for and serve as tools to educate the public instead of being killed.

Even though I found a new level of love and respect for these prehistoric creatures, I couldn't leave without also tasting alligator meat (sourced from a farm, not the park). So I ordered a basket of fried gator bites from the snack bar and marveled at how powerful—and delicious—alligators truly are. ■

ABOVE Chet keeps Jana Saurage of Gator Country between him and Bruce.

**TCP** Watch Chet get giddy for gators in our video. And catch all his Texplorations on *The Daytripper* on PBS.



## Know Before You Go

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

## MARCH

01

**Canyon [1–19] Southwest Abstractions of Emil Bisttram**, (806) 651-2244, [panhandleplains.org](http://panhandleplains.org)

**Austin [1–20] Daniel Johnston: I Live My Broken Dreams**, (512) 453-5312, [thecontemporaryaustin.org](http://thecontemporaryaustin.org)

**Alpine [1–April 2] Texas as Art**, (432) 837-8145, [museumofthebigbend.com](http://museumofthebigbend.com)

**Burnet [1–April 30] Birds, Bees & Butterflies**, (512) 334-2070, [canyonoftheeagles.com](http://canyonoftheeagles.com)

08

**Bandera [8–12] Fiber and Arts Week and Festival**, (949) 400-4225, [banderafiberandarts.com](http://banderafiberandarts.com)

10

**Brenham Texas A&M Singing Cadets**, (979) 337-7240, [thebarnhillcenter.com](http://thebarnhillcenter.com)

11

**Grand Prairie No Cap Comedy Tour**, (972) 854-5050, [texastrustcutheatre.com](http://texastrustcutheatre.com)

12

**Burton Texas Ranger Day**, (979) 803-0393, [burtonheritagesociety.org](http://burtonheritagesociety.org)

17

**Canton [17–19] Van Zandt County Bluegrass Festival**, (214) 802-5999, [facebook.com/vzbluegrass](http://facebook.com/vzbluegrass)

18

**Round Top [18–19] Herb Society Pioneer Unit Annual Plant Sale**, (832) 867-9617, [herbsocietypioneer.org/events](http://herbsocietypioneer.org/events)

**Tolar [18-19] Ceramic Expo & Handcrafted Items,** (254) 716-5227, westceramicshow.com

**Fredericksburg [18-20] Trade Days,** (210) 846-4094, fbgtradedays.com

19

**Fredericksburg Mud Dauber Festival & Chili Cook-Off,** (830) 997-3224, luckenbachtexas.com

**Lufkin Viva Momix,** (936) 633-5454, angelinaarts.org

**McKinney [19-20] Collin County Master Gardeners Garden Show,** (214) 502-8276, ccmgatx.org/thegardenshow

**Woodville [19-20, 25-26, April 2] Tyler County Dogwood Festival,** (409) 283-2234, tylercountydogwoodfestival.org

24

**Corsicana The Ahn Trio,** (903) 874-7792, corsicanapalace.com

**Lufkin The Malpass Brothers,** (936) 633-5454, angelinaarts.org

**Wimberley Moonlight Swing,** (281) 773-8874, wimberleyvalleybigband.org

**Beaumont [24-April 3] South Texas State Fair & Rodeo,** (409) 832-9991, beaumontcvb.com

25

**Brenham Michael Martin Murphey,** (979) 337-7240, thebarnhillcenter.com

**Georgetown [25-26] Tropical Garden Quilt Show,** (512) 658-6973, handcraftsunlimited.com

MORE EVENTS >

## TCP Submit Your Event

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



**WALK-IN TUBS**  
FROM \$8,995 INSTALLED



**ONYX SHOWERS**  
FROM \$8,995 INSTALLED



## Fredericksburg Getaway Contest

Enter to win a two-night stay in charming and historic Fredericksburg, where you'll enjoy unique food, architecture and culture.

**TCP Enter Today**  
[TexasCoopPower.com/contests](https://www.texascooppower.com/contests)





# Texas' Lowest Life Insurance Rates

## No Health Questions No Medical Exam

Monthly Rates Guaranteed for Life  
Whole life Insurance

Age	\$10,000	\$15,000	\$25,000
45	\$36	\$54	\$89
50	\$40	\$60	\$99
55	\$45	\$68	\$112
60	\$57	\$85	\$141
65	\$68	\$102	\$170
70	\$87	\$129	\$215
75	\$113	\$169	\$282
80	\$157	\$235	\$391

## 10-Year Term Life

Monthly Premium

Age	\$100,000	\$250,000
25-35	\$7	\$10
40	\$8	\$12
45	\$11	\$17
50	\$14	\$24
55	\$20	\$37
60	\$30	\$65
65	\$44	\$102
70	\$87	\$178

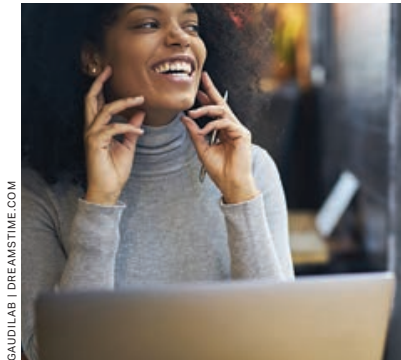
**Call today to request  
a FREE Price Comparison  
Report for you and your  
family members.**



**1-800-323-3220**

**LifeQuotes, Inc.**  
Over 400,000 Customers Insured

Texas Agency Lic. 13686, Agent 738393



GAUDILAB | DREAMTIME.COM

## Pick of the Month

### Texas Storytelling Festival

Denton, March 10-13

(940) 380-9320

tejasstorytelling.com

The Tejas Storytelling Association's signature event goes virtual this year. More than 50 storytellers will share ghost stories and Texas tales, and a liars contest and concerts are also on tap.

## MARCH EVENTS CONTINUED

25

**Marshall [25-26] East Texas Square and Round Dance Association Festival**, (903) 922-3692, etsrda.com

**Burton [25-April 2] La Bahia Antique Show**, (979) 289-2684, labahiaantiques.com

26

**Burnet Hill Country Lawn and Garden Show**, (512) 756-3059, burnetcountyhighland lakesmastergardener.org

**Fredericksburg Hill Country Indian Artifact Show**, (830) 329-2636, hillcountryindianartifacts.com

**Huntsville Herb Festival at the Wynne Home**, (936) 891-5024, texasthymeunit.org

**Lufkin Citizens at Last**, (936) 633-5454, angelinaarts.org

**College Station [26-27] Living History Weekend**, (979) 690-0501, americangimuseum.org

27

**Galveston The Queen's Cartoonists**, 1-800-821-1894, thegrand.com

**Grand Prairie Ana Gabriel**, (972) 854-5050, texastrustcutheatre.com

**Lufkin David Phelps**, (936) 633-5454, angelinaarts.org

31

**Beaumont Music in the Gardens**, (409) 832-2134, mcfaddin-ward.org

**Port Aransas Texas Plastic Pollution Symposium**, (361) 749-3046, portaransas.org

## APRIL

01

**Galveston A Bronx Tale: Chazz Palminteri**, 1-800-821-1894, thegrand.com

**McAllen Art Crawl**, (832) 202-4881, exploremcallen.com

02

**Corsicana Texas Country Boys**, (903) 874-7792, corsicanapalace.com

**Port Arthur [2-3] Cajun Heritage Fest**, (409) 835-2787, cajunheritagefest.com

03

**Abilene Dog Man: The Musical**, (325) 677-1161, cpasabilene.org

05

**Canyon [5-7] Week of the Young Child: Choose Your Class Adventures**, (806) 651-2244, panhandleplains.org

07

**Fort Worth [7-10] Main Street Fort Worth Arts Festival**, (817) 336-2787, mainstreetartsfest.org

# The Texas Experience

Farming, wildlife, scenic views and music—there's a lot to love about Texas. Grab a chair, pour a glass of iced tea and take a look at how sweet life here is.

CURATED BY GRACE FULTZ



**1 CANDACE PAULY**  
HAMILTON COUNTY EC

As Pauly and her husband bring native Texas species back to their ranch, they were subjected to a ragweed awakening.

**2 JULIANA WALTER**  
CENTRAL TEXAS EC

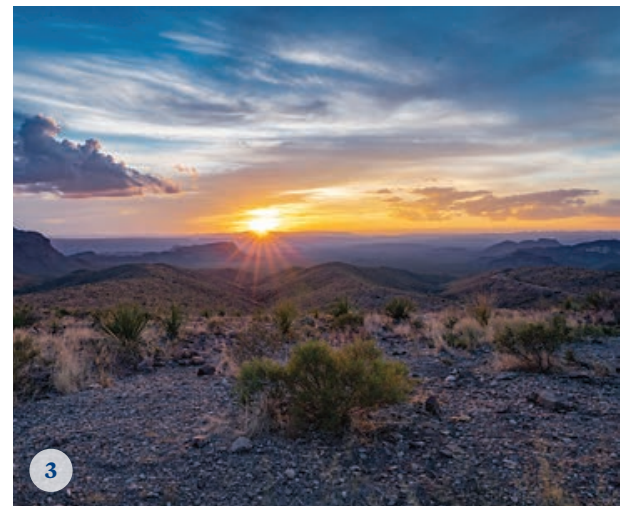
Greetings from a young, adorable longhorn in Salado.

**3 TRISH FERGUSON**  
HEART OF TEXAS EC

Sunset at Sotol Vista in Big Bend National Park, one of Texas' hidden treasures.

**4 SUE ROGERS**  
BRYAN TEXAS UTILITIES

"Fiddling Ann Leonard (sadly recently deceased) and banjo picker Sue Rogers playing some Texas tunes under the trees."



## Upcoming Contests

**DUE MAR 10** Morning Glory  
**DUE APR 10** Motorsports  
**DUE MAY 10** Light and Shadow



Enter online at [TexasCoopPower.com/contests](https://TexasCoopPower.com/contests).

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





The author at Blanco State Park.

**TCP** Tell us about your flying leaps into the unknown: [letters@texascooppower.com](mailto:letters@texascooppower.com).

## Just Add Adventure

Flying leaps into the unknown—above or underwater—are the spice of life

BY PAM LEBLANC  
PHOTO BY CHRIS LEBLANC

**FOR A NANOSECOND**, as I sailed over the side of an 18-foot rubber raft churning through a swirling rapid at the bottom of the Grand Canyon, I second-guessed a personal mantra I adopted a decade ago: Get your hair wet.

Maybe whitewater rafting through waves as big as school buses on a 15-day trip organized by friends wasn't such a good idea. Then I caught a rope on the side of the boat, managed to hoist myself ungracefully back onto the bobbing yellow vessel and saw that my pal Jimmy, who'd also been pitched out, was getting a kayak tow to shore. That's when my belief was reaffirmed.

Yes, it's way better to take a flying leap into the unknown than it is to sit on the sidelines and watch everybody else have fun—as long as you're wearing a life

jacket and helmet.

I'm not an adrenaline junkie. I don't take unnecessary risks. But for me, living means doing things that make me a tad nervous. It's why I scuba dive, backpack and try new things. Sometimes I succeed, sometimes I look like an idiot, but I always feel my heart beat and my mind expand.

The go-for-it mindset stems from my upbringing. When I was a kid, my dad took me on pint-size adventures. We explored the woodsy canyon at the end of our street, hopped cedar fences to gaze at dinosaur tracks, took a long drive to scout out a Volkswagen-size boulder balanced on the side of the highway. My dad found wonder in the simplest things, a trait I admire.

A few years ago, after returning from a 15-day backpacking trip on California's John Muir Trail with my husband, who has also clung with me by a metal hook to an ocean reef while hundreds of hammerhead sharks schooled overhead, I declared it my year of adventure. For 12 months I did things that scared me—from jumping off a 10-meter platform into a swimming pool to rappelling down a 38-story building while dressed as Wonder Woman and running a naked (except for a cowboy hat and shoes) 5K.

Injecting adventure into everyday life doesn't have to be extreme. It might be as simple as exploring a new neighborhood or swimming in the dark. It just takes a little creativity.

Search out a park you've never visited. Eat a food you've never tasted. Get on your bicycle and start pedaling. You might end up with a scraped shin or a bruised ego. I've suffered both, hundreds of times over.

But I've also logged some of the most memorable experiences of my life, including that dip in churning water in the Grand Canyon. ■



# MUELLER METAL ROOFING

## LASTING PROTECTION FOR YOUR HOME



Mueller metal roofs provide long-lasting beauty, weather resistance and energy efficiency. You can select from a wide range of designer colors to complement your home, backed by limited paint warranties up to 40 years. It all adds up to lasting peace of mind. Get a metal roof you can depend on from a company you can trust – a Mueller metal roof.



Learn more at: [www.muellerinc.com](http://www.muellerinc.com)  
877-2-MUELLER (877-268-3553)



# dish

## Save a Bundle on TV and Internet!



# \$69<sup>99</sup>

month  
for TV

## 2-YEAR TV PRICE LOCK!

### It's All Included!

- ✓ Includes 190 Channels with Locals
- ✓ Includes Hopper Smart HD DVR
- ✓ Includes HD Programming
- ✓ Includes One TV, Add More for \$5/ea.
- ✓ Includes Voice Remote Requires internet connected Hopper.



## FREE Premium Channels

After 3 mos. you  
will be billed  
\$30/mo unless  
you call to cancel.

## NETFLIX

– Fully Integrated –  
Just Change The Channel  
And Watch!  
Netflix subscription required.

### Add Internet!

# Blazing-Fast Internet

# ~~\$59<sup>99</sup>~~ <sup>\$40</sup>

month  
for Internet

per month  
for Internet

- Speeds from 25Mbps-1 Gbps
- No Matter Where You Live
- Now with Unlimited Data!

### Save up to \$20/month!\*

\*\$ off discount offers vary by service address. TV service not required for Internet. Speeds and prices vary by provider. Call for details or visit [godish.com/internet](http://godish.com/internet)

[godish.com/pricelock](http://godish.com/pricelock)



iSe Habla  
Español!

## 1-866-290-7151

Mon-Fri: 7am-10pm • Sat: 7am-9pm • Sun: 10am-7pm Central Time

**dish**  
Authorized Retailer

Offer for new and qualifying former customers only. Important Terms and Conditions:

Qualification: Advertised price requires credit qualification and 24-month commitment. Upfront activation and/or receiver upgrade fees may apply based on credit qualification. Offer ends 4/13/22. 2-Year Commitment: Early termination fee of \$20/mo. remaining applies if you cancel early. Included in 2-year price guarantee for additional cost: Programming package upgrades (\$84.99 for AT120+, \$94.99 for AT200, \$104.99 for AT250), monthly fees for upgraded or additional receivers (\$5-\$7 per additional TV, receivers with additional functionality may be \$10-\$15). Regional Sports: RSN Surcharge up to \$3/mo. applies to AT120+ and higher packages and varies based on location. NOT included in 2-year price guarantee or advertised price (and subject to change): Taxes & surcharges, add-on programming (including premium channels), DISH Protect, and transactional fees. Premium Channels: 3 Mos. Free: After 3 mos., you will be billed \$30/mo. for Showtime, Starz, and DISH Movie Pack unless you call or go online to cancel. Remote: The DISH Voice Remote with the Google Assistant requires internet-connected Hopper, Joey, or Wally device. Customer must press Voice Remote button to activate feature. The Google Assistant Smart Home features require Google account and compatible devices. Google is a trademark of Google LLC. Other: Netflix streaming membership required. All packages, programming, features, and functionality and all prices and fees not included in price lock are subject to change without notice. After 6 mos., if selected, you will be billed \$9.99/mo. for DISH Protect Silver unless you call to cancel. After 2 years, then-current everyday prices for all services apply. For business customers, additional monthly fees may apply. Free standard professional installation only. Indiana C.P.D. Reg. No. – 19-08615. ©2021 GoDISH.com. All rights reserved. Internet speeds, prices, and providers vary by customer address. \$40 price refers to widely available plan from multiple providers. Restrictions apply. Nationwide availability of 25 Mbps plan is subject to change without notice. The application of "Unlimited Data with no Hard Data Limits" varies by provider, but commonly mean that your access to the internet will not be stopped by going over a data limit, but that speeds may be lowered. Call for details. Internet not provided by DISH and will be billed separately.