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THE BLACK WRITER WHO
CHANGED NEWSPAPERS

Texas Coop Power

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MAY 2022

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**TRINITY
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NEWS**

SEE PAGE 18



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May 2022



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How the Kerrville Folk Festival has launched careers and brought people together for 50 years.

By Bobby Bridger

Illustration by Stephanie Cowan Dalton

'A Little Source of Joy'

Nonprofits work with Dolly Parton's Imagination Library to spark an early love of reading.

By Jessica Ridge and Chris Burrows

ON THE COVER

Dolly Parton has been supplying children with free books since 1995.
Courtesy the Dollywood Foundation

ABOVE

The Wantland family enjoys Imagination Library books in Round Top.
Photo by Erich Schlegel

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By Kathleen McElroy

Eye on Language

MERRIAM-WEBSTER added “doorbell camera” to its dictionary in 2021 as more consumers incorporate home security measures.

A two-word term added to the dictionary 100 years ago was “eye shadow.” Even though ancient Egyptians are known to have worn eye makeup, cosmetics use emerged as a trend in the U.S. in the years after World War I. Thus, eye shadow made it into the lexicon in 1922.



TCP Contests and More

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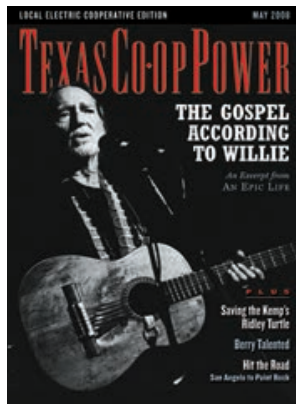
Nuts About Nuts

FOCUS ON TEXAS PHOTOS

Light and Shadow

RECOMMENDED READING

Featuring Dolly on our cover is a treat, as was Willie in May 2008 for *The Gospel According to Willie*.



Merchandising Mom

Shoppers spent an average of \$220 on Mother's Day gifts in 2021. Her special day is May 8 this year. Sorry, dads: Father's Day gifts averaged \$174.

Danger of Downed Lines

Never touch or even approach a downed power line. Here's why:

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The ground near a downed line can be energized.

Never forget these guidelines and share them with friends and family, especially during May—National Electrical Safety Month.

FINISH THIS SENTENCE

THREE WORDS THAT BRIGHTEN MY DAY ARE ...

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

Below are some of the responses to our March prompt: **The woman I admire most in history is ...**

Harriet Tubman.

DONNA FALDYN
VIA FACEBOOK

Rosa Parks.

SANDRA LONGORIA
VIA FACEBOOK

Sacagawea, who helped make the Lewis and Clark expedition a great success.

ALFRED WILSON
COSERV
NORTHLAKE

Barbara Jordan, the first African American woman elected to the Texas Senate.

DEBORAH MILLER
CHEROKEE COUNTY EC
CUSHING

Mother Teresa.

JOHN TINOCO
VICTORIA EC
VICTORIA

To see more responses, read Currents online.



IN THE RED

Mars can't yet sustain humans, but it can sustain ketchup. Heinz teamed up with researchers to grow tomatoes in a Mars-like environment—with soil, climate and water conditions similar to the red planet—to fill bottles of its experimental Heinz Tomato Ketchup Marz Edition. It's not available for purchase, but Mars' first Texans will probably pack their own Whataburger spicy ketchup anyway.



Head of the Class

IN CELEBRATION of National Teacher Appreciation Day—May 3—*Texas Co-op Power* staffers fondly remember our influential teachers.

Chris Burrows: Jazz legend Maynard Ferguson played at my high school after an invite from my band teacher, instilling in me a love of America's music.

Travis Hill: My middle school Old Testament teacher introduced a world of avant-garde art, film and music that altered my worldview.

Jessica Ridge: My fifth grade teacher cheered me on from the auditorium as I competed in the city spelling bee, the year she taught me and the next.

Jane Sharpe: My third grade art teacher inspired me to design "magazines" on notebook pages bound with yarn.

Tom Widlowski: A high school teacher sparked my love for language and writing, which I turned into a career.

Is Your AC OK?

Now is a perfect time to schedule the annual tuneup for your home's cooling system. Your electric cooperative wants to help you save money, and a tuneup will help your AC run efficiently.



COURTESY ARLINGTON CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

A Whole New Ballgame

“Schreiner University has a varsity esports program, prompted by students who wanted to compete at intramural and intercollegiate levels.”

BILL REID
PEDERNALES EC
HORSESHOE BAY

Moved to Tears

The Shoes [March 2022] moved me to tears. I'm a wife and mother of career soldiers whom I lost after their combat tours. My husband took his own life due to addiction to opioid meds in 2009. He was a Vietnam veteran who had two tours there.

My son was a retired veteran who was in Panama and Desert Storm. He died in a motorcycle accident in 2016.

I am remarried to an Air Force retiree.

Suzanne Cornett
Pedernales EC
Lakeway

Truly a blessing
[*Hope in a Box*,
March 2022].

LAWRENCE AND
CINDY HRACHOVY
VIA FACEBOOK



COURTESY CHRIS LEBLANC

Always Worth It

To Pam LeBlanc's exhortation to *Just Add Adventure* [March 2022], I offer a hearty “amen.” In my 50s, I began competing in triathlons. I learned white-water kayaking. I married for a second time—an adventure to rival rappelling down a 38-story building.

In my 70s now, I often sense a vague resistance to the unfamiliar, to the potentially uncomfortable. I've learned to ignore the feeling and forge ahead. The payoffs, even if I fall on my face, literally or figuratively, are always worth it.

Patty Moynahan
Pedernales EC
Austin

Country Cooking

We are miles away from cities and only have Dollar Store and maybe one or two grocery stores that do not sell the exotic ingredients sometimes featured in your recipes.

Please remember that we grow some of our food and meat, so please publish “country people” recipes.

Nancy Lynch
Deep East Texas EC
Jasper-Newton EC
San Augustine

TCP WRITE TO US
letters@TexasCoopPower.com

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Austin, TX 78701

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

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FOLK'S GOLDEN HOUR

Musician Bobby Bridger has seen the
Kerrville Folk Festival launch careers
and bring people together for 50 years

BY BOBBY BRIDGER • ILLUSTRATION BY STEPHANIE COWAN DALTON

The festival is the longest continuously running folk festival in America. It has played a significant role in launching the careers of scores of international musical stars and, in doing so, continues to shape the trajectory of American folk music.

BUFFALO BILL made a fortune and built his Wild West show into an international empire by following one simple rule: Perform where people are already gathering.

So in 1972, when the people behind the inaugural Texas State Arts and Crafts Fair reached out to music impresario Rod Kennedy about providing entertainment for their Memorial Day weekend event in Kerrville, Kennedy saw an opportunity. Between the folks gathering in the Hill Country and the large contingent of artists, musicians and students in nearby Austin, the Kerrville Folk Festival was meant to be.

Now, as the festival approaches its 50th anniversary, time has proved that Kennedy picked the perfect location for an annual celebration of songwriters. It's the longest continuously running folk festival in America. It has played a significant role in launching the careers of scores of international musical stars and, in doing so, continues to shape the trajectory of American folk music. This year's milestone fest runs May 26–June 12.

Back in 1972, America had entered a new era of music festivals. The Monterey International Pop Festival in California and Woodstock in New York were defining events of the counterculture era of the late 1960s.

Even then, Austin clubs attracted a range of talented singers and songwriters who found success on the fringes of the recording industry but felt it constricted their musical vision. This community of musicians and the University of Texas students who filled out their shows created a culture conducive to Kennedy's next move.

Kennedy and Peter Yarrow of folk trio Peter, Paul and Mary got to work, and in May 1972, Steven Fromholz, Carolyn Hester, Bill and Bonnie Hearne, John Lomax Jr., Mance Lipscomb, Michael Martin Murphey, and eight other acts performed on the main stage at the first Kerrville Folk Festival. Former President Lyndon B. Johnson and Lady Bird were in the audience with Longhorns football coach Darrell Royal that year, when the fest was still held at the Kerrville Municipal Auditorium downtown.

Kennedy ran the festival with input from the performers. He was a former big band singer and race car driver, a Marine, and a lover of classical and folk music. He was a singular character of the era who could convince folk artists to work for a vision instead of money and come together for what he called "music from the heart."

That love for music and songwriting held the Kerrville Folk Festival together during its very rough first two decades.

The main stage lineup in 1973 included Allen Wayne Damron, Willie Nelson, Robert Shaw, B.W. Stevenson, Kenneth Threadgill, Townes Van Zandt, Jerry Jeff Walker

and me. I also played the inaugural festival—and the next 26 fests. In 1972 I wasn't on the main stage but played as part of the New Folk Concert,

held outdoors at Schreiner College in those early years.

The idea behind the New Folk Concerts was to create a platform to showcase lesser-known talent, and the concerts later became a competition for folk performers and contributed greatly to the success of artists including Robert Earl Keen, Lyle Lovett, Nanci Griffith and John Gorka.

Since 1974, the festival has been held outdoors at the Quiet Valley Ranch, about 16 miles outside Kerrville.

Songwriters Steve Young and Van Zandt and I were the judges for the New Folk Concert in 1977. After we made our choices for the top three songs and I had announced the winner, I took Kennedy aside and told him that the judges agreed the New Folk Concert was no longer a simple showcase for new singers and songwriters. It had become a launch pad for careers in folk music. I suggested we needed a new venue to showcase unrecognized talent and put forth Chapel Hill, which had a lovely oak that could also be a great location for a "ballad tree," where unknown artists could perform a couple of songs for a concert hosted by a main stage artist. Kennedy liked the idea, and it became a staple of the annual festival. In the mid-1980s, someone recorded Michelle Shocked performing at the tree, and the recording launched her into stardom.

In 1979, I was rehearsing with musicians David Amram and John Inmon backstage at the festival preparing to go onstage. I was teaching them a new song of mine called *Heal in the Wisdom*. Kennedy heard us rehearsing and told me he wanted the song to be the festival's official anthem. We celebrated the anthem's 40th anniversary in 2019.

Drawing on the hardscrabble drive that keeps folk musicians afloat, Kennedy willed the Kerrville Folk Festival through floods and other hardships until his death in 2014. Folk singers and songwriters have since kept alive his vision and determination, keeping it going through the COVID-19 pandemic, which forced the festival to resort to livestreaming for the past two years.

We couldn't let a virus get in the way of decades of coming together to celebrate singers and songwriters. And we still found a way to meet people where they were already gathering—online—and celebrate our sacred music from the heart. ■



Jihyun and John Wantland with daughter Lilianna and son Noah visit the Round Top Family Library, which partners with the Dolly Parton Imagination Library program.



BY JESSICA RIDGE AND CHRIS BURROWS

Co-ops and other nonprofits work with ***Dolly Parton's Imagination Library*** to spark an early love of reading

John Wantland opens a slim volume at a sturdy wooden table at the Round Top Family Library, his family gathered around him. “There’s a log on the bottom of the lake, there’s a log on the bottom of the lake, there’s a log? There’s a log! There’s a log log log, there’s a log on the bottom of the lake,” he reads aloud, displaying the pages’ nature-inflected palette of green, gold and brown.

“And that would be the first refrain. It’s a sing-songy call-and-response story, and it builds on itself,” says Wantland, a ranch manager who lives near Round Top in east Central Texas. *There’s a Hole in the Log on the Bottom of the Lake*, written and illustrated by Loren Long, introduces elements with each successive refrain, including a frog, fly and gnat. “So by the end of it, you’re just out of breath and laughing,” Wantland says.

The tale is a favorite of Lilianna’s, John and Jihyun Wantland’s 4-year-old daughter, who received it as one of more than 1.9 million participants in Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library. Every child enrolled in the program receives a free, personalized, age-appropriate book in the mail each month.

Parton started the program in 1995 to supply books to children in her Tennessee hometown, and over 27 years it has grown exponentially with the help of 3,745 community partners in five countries.

When Lilianna was born, the family bought and was given many books, John says. But as their home library grew familiar, Lilianna’s interest in spending time together reading began to wane.

All that’s changed thanks to the Imagination Library.

“It’s certainly a special treat for her to get a book once a month,” Jihyun says. “We have 100 books for her, but she was tired of some.”

The fresh reads spark excitement for Lilianna and her younger brother, Noah. “Whenever these books come in, she’s like mailbox to the chair, and let’s read it now,” says John, a member of Fayette Electric Cooperative.

The Wantlands and some 17,000 other Texas children take part in that same magical trip to the mailbox each month thanks to the more than 1.7 million Imagination Library books that have been delivered in the state over the years. The whole goal is to get kids reading early so they’re

‘A Little Source of Joy’

ABOVE Dolly’s program has grown to reach more than 1.9 million children.

TCP Join Dolly Parton as she reads *There’s a Hole in the Log on the Bottom of the Lake*.





"My daddy could not read or write, so I grew up with seeing how limiting it can be. I often say he was the smartest man I have ever known, but I always wonder what else he could have done if he knew how to read." —DOLLY PARTON

more prepared for school and better equipped for a lifetime of success.

"Over the years, we learned a lot about what works, but the one thing I knew for sure is that to have even a remote chance for success, you have to know how to read and write," Parton says. "And the best way to learn is to love books and love reading."

An author herself, Parton founded the program as a tribute to her father.

"My daddy could not read or write, so I grew up with seeing how limiting it can be," she says. "I often say he was the smartest man I have ever known, but I always wonder what else he could have done if he knew how to read."

Community investment is at the core of the Imagination Library, which partners with nonprofits—Lions Clubs, library foundations, electric cooperatives and other organizations—to fund and administer the program at the local level. Parton's Dollywood Foundation handles the rest, tapping a committee of early childhood experts to select books focused on values including kindness, respect, acceptance and inclusion.

Children can receive the free reads from birth until age 5,

when they head off to school. The selections change as readers age to expand on their abilities; two titles per year are English-Spanish bilingual, and every book includes reading tips that extend the engagement and interaction between child and caregiver.

The Imagination Library has found that participants are nearly twice as likely to read every day, more than 85% read at least three times a week and participants outperform their peers on assessments when they get to school. Reading aloud with an adult adds to those benefits, helping children build empathy, expand their vocabulary and recognize emotions.

Jihyun, who is from South Korea and not a native English speaker, has found that she and Lilianna learn from each other when they read together. "She will correct my pronunciation," Jihyun says, smiling.

Despite all the good that books can provide, some 60% of U.S. children living in poverty don't have a single children's



LEFT Dolly reads *Coat of Many Colors*, her book based on the song she wrote and the Imagination Library's 100 millionth donation, during a 2018 ceremony at the Library of Congress. BELOW Enrolled children receive a new book in the mail every month.



book in their homes. The Imagination Library is working to change that, especially among rural children who often have less access to public libraries.

"We know that receiving monthly books has a positive and significant impact on family literacy habits, kindergarten readiness and grade-level reading by third grade," said Nora Briggs, executive director of the Dollywood Foundation. "DPIL puts country kids on more equal footing with their big-city peers."

Parton reads aloud stories on the Imagination Library's YouTube channel. Those videos spurred Emily Shisler to enroll her daughters, Eleanor, 4, and Victoria, 2, in the program. "I watched them with my daughters when they would get up from their naps during the worst of the pandemic," says the educational consultant from Houston and Fayette EC member. "And it was a little source of joy."

The Shisler and Wantland families participate in the Imagination Library through its partnership with the Round Top Family Library, which has registered dozens of children in a five-ZIP code swath of Fayette and Washington counties since April 2020.

Julie Wantland, a member of the RTFL board and grandmother to Lilianna and Noah, implemented and coordinates the program at the community library. Despite the

disruption caused by the pandemic, including a months-long closure of the Round Top library, its collaboration with the Imagination Library meant it could continue to bring books to children, she says. "It really was one of the few things not terribly affected."

Not all DPIL programs are supported by a physical library; all that's required is investment from a local nonprofit. "It's actually pretty easy to fundraise for because it's such a wonderful program," says Julie, also a member of Fayette EC. Neighboring organizations have pitched in to help cover the program's costs, a portion of which each Imagination Library affiliate bears. The Round Top Lions Club contributed a year's worth of funding last summer.

Several electric cooperatives across the U.S. have also found ways to fund local programs and bring free books to their youngest members. That's what Maegan Caffey did for the folks in Comanche Electric Cooperative Association's service area, which reaches parts of seven counties southwest of Fort Worth.

Caffey's 4-year-old son, Oliver, is obsessed with books, she says, but she was disappointed to find that they didn't have a local Imagination Library affiliate to feed his appetite. So the resident of the town of Comanche, between Waco and Abi-



lene, made it her mission to start her own. When Caffey realized the goals of the DPIL align with that of the co-op, where she works as a communications and public relations specialist, she knew she had to act.

"This was a good way to show that we are not just the normal electric provider," she says.

Caffey says it was an easy sell for the co-op's general manager and the board that oversees its community giving program. They immediately recognized the value for the co-op's some 10,000 members and the greater community.

"They loved it," she says. "A lot of the board members either have kids or grandkids, and so the idea of being able to bring that to families who may not have that opportunity was just a no-brainer for us. We wanted everyone to get that opportunity."

The co-op funds its books with donations from members and partnered with the public library in nearby Eastland to bring the program to fruition in January. Eastland librarian Kathy Druesedow, a CECA member, is thrilled.

"The sad truth is that many children are unable to go to a library until they have access to their school library," she says. "Dolly Parton and CECA are putting books straight into the hands of children who would otherwise not have the opportunity to touch or read a book until they attend school."

ABOVE Dozens of Texas counties have affiliates that partner with the Imagination Library.

Some 60% of U.S. children living in poverty don't have a single children's book in their homes. The Imagination Library is working to change that.

Beyond preparing students for school, some parents have found that the books provide shared experiences that children can hopefully build on when they start kindergarten.

"I think there's something really cool about the girls reading the same books that kids from all over the place are reading," Shisler says. "It's kind of this connected web: Here are all these kids from these different rural and other communities that are all having read *The Little Engine That Could*. And I think that's a really special thing to be a part of."

But for every individual young reader, there's a much greater benefit found between pages. "I think they can learn so much from books," Shisler says. "A world that's a little different from theirs—different people, different cultures, different places. Books open a world of possibility." ■

FIND OUT MORE

Go to imaginationlibrary.com to see if there's an Imagination Library affiliate in your area.

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Actual size
is 38.1 mm

**90% Silver Dollars
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BONUS
American Collectors Pack
\$25 Value—FREE with every order



Get Drunk on the Sun?

Sunny citrine brightens even the cloudiest day.



The most valuable citrine is Madeira citrine, characterized by its blazing orange-yellow hues.



In the day-to-day rat race, it's easy to take for granted some of the finer things in life, like walking barefoot on a well-kept lawn, drinking a cold beer on a hot summer day, or the warmth given by the sun while getting a tan at the beach. That's why we propose a toast to the sun with our Sunny Madeira Citrine Collection. Citrine, after all, is known for its warm, attractive color that makes it a favored stone among jewelers. With its excellent transparency and luster, citrine is a gem of a gem.

**ONLY 2% OF THE
WORLD'S CITRINE IS THIS COLOR!**

At the top end of the citrine scale are glowing specimens like the Madeira citrine you see here. This darker, red-gold variety of citrine is named for the fortified wine made in the Madeira Islands just off the coast of Portugal. *Only 2% of the world's citrine is this color.* Here, Madeira citrine captures the radiance of the sun in a spectacular dance of rich honey color. Offset with white topaz studs and surrounded by yellow gold-finished .925 sterling silver, this ring, pendant and earring set captures one of our favorite stones in all its glory.

So, we're giving you permission to get sun-drunk. Get the luxurious Sunny Madeira Citrine Collection and bask in its red-orange glow. As Madeira is the rarest of all citrine,

similarly designed jewelry sets can cost three times as much, but because of our gem connections across the globe and our dedication to cutting out the middleman, we can offer this collection for a fraction of the price! This is our lowest price on Madeira citrine ever! Already, the Sunny Madeira Citrine Collection is shaping up to be one of this year's best sellers. Of our artisans' initial run of 3,487, 60% of these jewelry sets have already sold.

Your satisfaction is guaranteed. If for any reason you don't absolutely adore the Sunny Madeira Citrine Collection, return it within 30 days for a full refund of your item price. But we promise that once you get a look at this citrine up close, you'll agree with the thousands of jewelers who love this stone!

Jewelry Specifications:

- Madeira citrine in yellow gold-finished .925 sterling silver
- Ring: whole sizes 5-10
- Pendant: ¾" drop
- Earrings: ⅔" drop with post backs

Sunny Madeira Citrine Collection

Ring (2 ⅔ ctw) ~~\$399~~ \$99* + S&P **Save \$300**

Complete Set** ~~\$1,266~~ \$299* + S&P **Best Value!**

*Special price only for customers using the offer code.

**Complete set includes ring, earrings, pendant and chain.

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MESSAGE
FROM
GENERAL
MANAGER/
CEO

JEFF LANE

Reflect and Honor During Military Appreciation Month

WHILE ENJOYING MEMORIAL DAY festivities this month, I hope you will join me in pausing to reflect on the sacrifices of our country's veterans and their families. I am especially humbled by those who gave the ultimate sacrifice so that we can enjoy freedom.

May is Military Appreciation Month, and in the words of John F. Kennedy, "As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words but to live by them."

At Trinity Valley Electric Cooperative, we are grateful to have veterans within our ranks, and we are proud to serve veterans and their families within our community. In addition to providing safe, reliable and affordable energy, we care about the veteran community and show our appreciation through our actions and ongoing commitment to them and their families.

We are not alone in our efforts to honor and serve veterans. TVEC is part of a network of more than 900 electric cooperatives across the country that support and honor our nation's veterans of all generations. As part of our national association of electric cooperatives, spanning 48 states and serving 13% of U.S. consumers, there are countless programs that our family of electric co-ops has initiated.

The Department of Defense is one of the largest energy consumers worldwide and the single largest energy consumer in the U.S. Electric cooperatives across the country work closely with military installations, providing electricity and partnering on various projects.

Not only do we pause on Memorial Day to remember the sacrifice and service of those who gave all, but the month also holds several other military anniversaries and events, including Military Spouse Appreciation Day and Armed Forces Day.

TVEC is proud to be part of the electric cooperative network that honors and supports veterans of all ages, ranks and branches of the military. Please join us in taking a moment to show your appreciation to a veteran—not just this month but every month. ■

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Cinco de Mayo
Thursday, May 5

Mother's Day
Sunday, May 8

Memorial Day
Monday, May 30

Our offices will be closed in observance of the holiday. Crews will be on call for any outages or emergencies.

BUTENKOW | ISTOCK.COM



Severe storms tracked across the TVEC service in the early morning hours of April 5 leaving some normal hazards like this broken tree in the lines (left), and a unique challenge in this angry hive of bees in the trunk of a tree that fell and broke a pole.

TVEC May Highlights: Safety Celebration, Brown Envelopes

- Trinity Valley Electric Cooperative hit a safety milestone in March, passing 1,000 days without a lost-time accident. With more than 160 employees, and many in the dangerous job of high-voltage electricity, this is an achievement worth celebrating.

“The risks and challenges are out there, but it shows that you are making a difference and for that I am grateful,” said Chad Marshall, TVEC manager of safety and loss control, during a special safety celebration. “The stats just for 2021 include more than 337,000 hours worked and 2.1 million miles on the road...with those kind of numbers, 1,000 days is huge and you keep raising the bar every day.”

- Blame it on the supply chain: TVEC’s mailing service provider has run into issues finding white envelopes. Over the next few months your bills may come in brown envelopes. Or better yet, help save money and the environment and switch to electronic billing in the member portal.

- The TVEC system audit is getting close to completion. Contractors from Davey Resource Group are still working in Kaufman and Dallas County areas served by TVEC. They will be visiting all TVEC service locations and equipment to update our maps and system information, including meters, poles and transformers on members’ properties. All personnel should have identification, authorization paperwork and TVEC-marked vehicles.



- TVEC text and email alerts can help you manage your electricity usage and prevent any surprises on your bill. You can choose to see your usage every day or just when high usage occurs. Due date reminders and other alerts are also available. Check out the member portal at tvec.net or on the myTVEC mobile app. ■

Trinity Valley Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

CONTACT US

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

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For information and to report outages, please call us.

TOLL-FREE
1-800-967-9324

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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





TVEC Targets Transaction Costs To Save Members Money

With constant attention to costs and budgets, Trinity Valley Electric Cooperative has been aggressive in dealing with rising costs over the last 12 years. Those efforts have resulted in a steady base electricity rate of \$.10484/kWh that has not changed since 2008, even as almost 32% inflation has occurred in the same period, raising the cost of doing business.

One way co-op members can help is to consider the costs of transactions for payment. The cost of credit card and mailed-in payments in particular have grown considerably over the last several years.

“As a nonprofit cooperative business, it is really in all of our best interests to keep costs as low as possible,” said Jeff Lane, TVEC general manager/CEO. “We have identified the costs of payments, and of mailing service in general, as a way that co-op members can really help us by simply choosing the most cost-effective payment method

that makes sense for their situation.”

For perspective, credit card merchant fees paid by the co-op have risen 28% just since 2020. That has resulted in about \$750,000 in charges paid in 2021.

“As the co-op has grown, the percentage of members using credit cards for payment has also grown. Combine that with higher fees charged by the card companies, credit card payments have become a major expense,” Lane said.

The most cost effective methods of payment are automated bank drafts, e-check payments online or through the myTVEC mobile app, and mailed check payments.

Mail service costs have also risen dramatically, meaning a switch to electronic billing with online bill payment is both easier on the environment and cost-effective for co-op members. ■

Average Transaction Costs

Payment Method	Average Cost per Payment	Paperless Options
Auto Bank Draft	\$.15	Yes, Setup online or by contacting Member Services
Electronic Check	\$.50	Yes, pay online or through the myTVEC Mobile App
Mailed Check	\$.67	No
Phone/In-Person Payments	\$1.48	Yes, E-Bill
Credit Card Payments	\$1.63	Yes, pay online or through the myTVEC mobile app

Severe Weather: Are You Ready?

Lightning strikes kill more Americans than tornadoes or hurricanes. Don't take chances with this deadly force of nature.

Go inside a building and stay away from windows and doors.

Avoid electric appliances and metal plumbing and stay off the phone.

Do not seek shelter under a tree—they are easy targets.

Move to low ground and avoid open fields.

Whether at the beach or in a swimming pool, get out of the water immediately.

Do not touch metal objects, such as golf clubs or bicycles.

Inside a car is relatively safe, but do not touch interior metal.

If your hair stands on end, you may be a target. Crouch low on the balls of your feet and keep your knees and hands off the ground.

Trinity Valley Electric Cooperative encourages you to always practice safety.

Get Ready for the Energy Star Tax Holiday

MARK YOUR CALENDAR for the Energy Star Sales Tax Holiday, May 28–30.

Texas shoppers wanting a break on energy-efficient items can buy qualifying Energy Star products in stores, online or by phone, mail, custom order or any other means (including in-store purchases) tax-free, when either: The item is both delivered and paid for during the exemption period or you order and pay for the item and the seller accepts the order during the exemption period for immediate shipment, even if delivery is made after the exemption period ends. 60161787002

If you pay sales tax on qualifying items during the sales tax holiday, you can ask the seller for a refund of the tax paid or a refund form to send directly to the Texas comptroller's office. ■

Qualifying Products

Air conditioners
Refrigerators
Ceiling fans
Incandescent and fluorescent lightbulbs
Clothes washers
Dishwashers
Dehumidifiers

Nonqualifying Products

Water heaters
Clothes dryers
Freezers
Stoves
Attic fans
Heat pumps
Wine refrigerators
Kegeators
Beverage chillers



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Local Feature: **Accurate Home Services**

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Accurate Home Services specializes in home comfort and electrical work including HVAC, duct cleaning, backup generators and mini-split units.

Use your Co-op Connections app to save \$150 on any service or repair or \$1,800 off of qualified HVAC equipment purchases. www.accurateairtx.com



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Celebrate Electrical Safety Month

IT'S MAY, AND Trinity Valley Electric Cooperative is celebrating National Electrical Safety Month. While safety for our members is a top priority year-round, Electrical Safety Month is a time to acknowledge the importance of safety vigilance.

This year we're focusing on electrical safety in the home. Electricity causes more than 140,000 fires each year, resulting in more than 500 deaths, 4,000 injuries and \$1.6 billion in property damage, according to Electrical Safety Foundation International.

There are many measures you can take to ensure the safety of your loved ones. Use these helpful tips to safeguard your home.

In the Kitchen

- ▶ Vacuum your refrigerator coils every three months to eliminate dirt buildup that can reduce efficiency and create fire hazards.
- ▶ Ensure all countertop appliances are away from the sink.
- ▶ All appliance cords should be away from hot surfaces. Pay particular attention to cords around toasters, ovens and ranges. Cords can be damaged by excess heat.
- ▶ The area above the cooking range should be free of combustibles, such as potholders and plastic utensils. Storing these items on or near the range may result in fires or burns.

Light the Way to Safety

- ▶ The wattage of the lightbulbs you use in your home should match the wattage indicated on the light fixture. Overheated fixtures can lead to a fire.

- ▶ Check lamp cords to make sure they are in good condition—not damaged or cracked. Do not attempt to repair damaged cords yourself. Take any item with a damaged power cord to an authorized repair center.
- ▶ Extension cords should not be used to provide power on a long-term or permanent basis. Have additional electrical outlets installed by a professional to provide power where needed.

Be Prepared

- ▶ Nearly two-thirds of fire deaths result from fires in homes without working smoke alarms. Smoke alarms should be located on every level of your home, inside each bedroom and outside each sleeping area.
- ▶ Test smoke alarms every month. Batteries should be replaced at least once a year—or sooner if indicated in the manufacturers' instructions. All smoke alarms should be replaced at least every 10 years.
- ▶ Talk to your family about an emergency plan in the event of a fire in your home. If you have small children, include them in planning an emergency escape route; they are more likely to remember the plan if they're involved in creating it. ■



The Energy Advisor: You Live In a Refrigerator

TVEC ENERGY
MANAGEMENT
SUPERVISOR

CHRIS WALKER, BAP

AS WE HEAD TOWARD THE HEAT OF SUMMER, air conditioning will be the driving force of energy usage. If you are looking for a great example of energy efficient design for space cooling, you can find one in your kitchen.

Refrigerators and air conditioners use the same process for removing heat from the air, so it makes sense that there are some parallels when it comes to keeping your home cool.

Appliance manufacturers go to great lengths to make sure that everything seals well, walls and doors are well insulated and temperature control is managed in an efficient way.

Of course you don't want to live in a small, windowless box, so there are some compromises that must be made for house design.

You wouldn't put a heater in the refrigerator, but you have a lot of different heat sources inside the house. Computers and electronics, clothes dryers and ovens all generate heat. Turning off those electronics and minimizing heat-producing activities, particularly during the heat of the day, will go a long way toward helping the A/C do its job.

Leaving the refrigerator door open is always a big no-no, but did you know some studies have shown that an average house has the equivalent of an open window in air leakage? Doors and windows are the biggest culprits and easiest to fix. But you may also have air leaking through unsealed attic openings, electrical plugs and switch boxes and exterior wall penetrations.

System maintenance also makes a big impact on the efficiency and longevity of both refrigerators and your home air conditioning. Clean coils, ducts and air filters are essential for your AC, with the added bonus of reducing home air contaminants and dust. That might mean a professional cleaning is in order, but well worth the cost.

Finally, you wouldn't want to keep your refrigerator sitting out in the summer sun. Using curtains wisely can keep the heat rays mostly outside which can help tremendously. If you have large glass surfaces, an investment in solar screens may be in order.

So enjoy your walk-in refrigerator this summer, but you don't have to turn off the lights when the door is closed. ■

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 May 31 to receive a \$100 credit on your electric bill. Don't miss out—you could be a winner.



TVEC TRINITY VALLEY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE Energy Quiz



For incandescent (old style) light bulbs, how much energy goes toward producing light?

- A. About 5%
- B. About 25%
- C. More Than 40%

Win **\$100!**

Send your answer and contact information to contest@tvec.coop or contact TVEC Member Services by May 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.

April Energy Quiz: Nuclear Energy in Texas

TEXAS OPERATES ALL TYPES of power generation, but only two nuclear plants help energize the ERCOT grid with a total of about 5,000 megawatts of capacity.

The 2,400MW Comanche Peak Nuclear Power Plant is located about 60 miles southwest of Dallas.

Further south, the 2,560MW South Texas Project facility operates near Bay City.

Congratulations to John Blake of Kaufman who correctly answered our March quiz about the relative power use of coffee makers and laptop computers. ■



TVEC

Charitable Foundation

Your Generosity in Action



Myrtle Springs Alumni Association members Bill and Ida Rusk accept a TVEC Charitable Foundation grant of \$2,000 from Joy Long, TVEC public relations representative.

Operation Round Up Spotlight: Myrtle Springs Alumni Association

NESTLED IN THE SMALL COMMUNITY of Myrtle Springs sits an old building that once was the gathering place for kids and community members. The old Myrtle Springs school, almost a century old, was the beloved center of community.

As in many small towns, school district consolidation meant students were bussed out of town, with the Myrtle Springs school closing in the 1970s.

Fortunately, the historic wood-frame school building has survived, and the Myrtle Springs Alumni Association has a vision to make it a place for the community to come together once again. The building needs many updates, including foundation repairs and a roof.

For more information or to get involved, find Myrtle Springs School Alumni on Facebook. ■

March 2022 Grants

Athens Good Samaritans/Labor of Love - \$4,000

Humane Society of Cedar Creek Lake - \$3,000

Lila Lane Outreach Center - \$3,000

Myrtle Springs Alumni Association - \$2,000

Serenity Corner - \$3,500

Terrell ISD Excellence Foundation - \$2,400

The King's Rein Equine Outreach - \$2,400

Van Zandt Co. Veterans Memorial - \$2,000

14TH ANNUAL

Helping Hand Project

Mueller strongly believes in giving back to organizations that always give to others. For the 14th year in a row, we are extending a helping hand to a Texas non-profit in need of a new facility. One deserving organization will receive a FREE Mueller steel building through our Helping Hand Project.

We will be accepting applications April 9 - May 16, 2022, at www.muellerinc.com/about-us/helping-hand

www.muellerinc.com

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Beachcombing at home.

Texas Co-op Power presents an illustrated *Seashells of Texas* poster by artist Aletha St. Romain, 20x16 inches, suitable for framing.

Order online at TexasCoopPower.com for only \$20 (price includes tax, shipping and handling).

Bonus offer: Get 2 posters shipped to the same address for just \$30.

**\$20
or 2 for
\$30**

Please allow 4-6 weeks for delivery.

From the publishers of **TexasCoopPower**

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

— J. Fitzgerald, VA



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,

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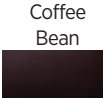
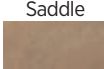
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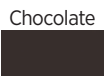
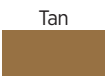
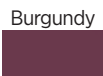
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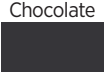
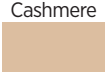
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A Deep Dive

Explorers map the recent history of the state's deepest ancient cave

BY W.F. STRONG • ILLUSTRATION BY BRAVE UNION

THERE'S A 10-FOOT-WIDE river in West Texas that almost no one can reach. That's because the Sirion River is on private land near Sanderson—and at the bottom of the deepest cave in the state. The Sorcerer's Cave descends about 570 feet, or as a Texan might put it, "damn near two football fields deep."

The first part of the cave goes down quickly. Explorers have to negotiate a series of steep, dramatic drops totaling 500 feet—50 stories—to reach the Sirion, so named because one of its discoverers, Randy M. Waters, was a huge fan of author J.R.R. Tolkien. The underground river reminded Waters of the fictional river of the same name. Texas' Sirion flows a long way through the cave system, descending 70 feet or more and

passing over two short waterfalls before disappearing beneath a rock wall.

George Veni, executive director of the National Cave and Karst Research Institute in New Mexico, is said to know more about the cave than anyone and is credited as the discoverer of its record-setting depth. He said the water of the Sirion is very clean. "You could drink from it if you wanted to," he said, "though to be perfectly safe, you probably shouldn't." The water at that depth might have fallen as rain on the surface decades or even hundreds of years ago, he said, and likely flows another 40 miles into the Rio Grande. If fully explored, the Sorcerer's Cave could be the longest cave in Texas, Veni believes.

He fondly remembers the day in 1979

when he was rappelling down the cave's deepest shaft and hollered with delight to his friends above when he realized he had set the depth record for caves in Texas, a record that remains intact today. Since then, he has been one of the primary mappers of the tunnel system.

Once a cave has a theme, Veni said, the naming of its features continues to be inspired by that theme. That's why the Sorcerer's Cave includes a Poltergeist Pit, Demon Drop and Mormoops Chamber, named for the ghost-faced bats that live there. The theme even extends to another cave in the area—the Wizard's Well.

Bill Steele, another internationally known caver who has explored and helped to map the Sorcerer's Cave, said it's a fun cave to explore because of its numerous and substantial vertical drops. For the "properly equipped vertical caver, it's not dangerous, but for the inexperienced, it certainly would be," he said.

Steele has spent 45 years exploring and mapping the deepest cave in this hemisphere, Sistema Huautla in Oaxaca, Mexico. At nearly a mile deep, Huautla is nine times as deep as the Texas cave. But Steele said Sorcerer's Cave is still important beyond its record depth. Ancient drawings and mortar holes used for grinding at the entrance show it was used as a shelter, with one item dated to the year 700. Human bones found in the Sirion River, almost certainly washed down from above, are the deepest human remains known in North America.

That important history helps form the basis for the caver's motto: Take nothing but pictures, leave nothing but footprints, kill nothing but time. ■

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



Pickles and Jams

Canning captures the delightful flavors of today for use later

BY MEGAN MYERS, FOOD EDITOR

Making strawberry jam is a yearly tradition in my house that began after we started taking the kids to Sweet Berry Farm in Marble Falls. We've explored all kinds of jams, jellies, pickles and preserves, but we still make this Strawberry-Vanilla Jam every year. We love the warm floral flavor the vanilla brings to the berries. If you're new to making preserves, be sure to follow the directions on the pectin box for safe canning practices, or store your jars in the refrigerator.

Strawberry-Vanilla Jam

7 cups sugar
8 cups whole strawberries
¼ cup lemon juice
1 box (1.75 ounces) powdered fruit pectin
1 7-inch vanilla bean

1. Prepare a water bath canner and heat to boiling, adding jars to sterilize.
2. Measure sugar into a large bowl and set aside.
3. Wash and hull strawberries. In a large bowl, crush berries one layer at a time using a potato masher, leaving some chunks. Pour berries and juices into a large pot and stir in lemon juice.
4. Heat over medium-high heat, then stir in pectin. Continue heating until it reaches a rapid boil, then add sugar all at once, stirring to dissolve.
5. Split the vanilla bean, scrape out the insides and add to the jam. Bring jam back to a rapid boil that cannot be stirred down, and boil 1 minute.
6. Test for doneness by spooning some jam onto a chilled plate and letting it cool. Touch to see if a skin is forming and feels gellike; if so, jam is ready. Remove from heat.
7. Ladle jam into jars, leaving about ¼-inch headspace. Wipe edges clean and place lids on top, securing with screw bands. Return jars into hot-water bath and boil 10 minutes, then remove to counter and let rest until completely cooled. Store any unsealed jars in the refrigerator.

MAKES 8 HALF-PINT JARS

TCP Follow along with Megan Myers and her adventures in the kitchen at stetted.com, where she features a recipe for Pickled Red Onions.



Zingy Candied Jalapeños

MYRA HUNSICKER
MEDINA EC

You won't have any trouble finding ways to enjoy these sweet and spicy candied jalapeños. Hunsucker recommends using them on eggs and nachos or over cream cheese as a dip. She uses the leftover syrup for marinating meats.

- 1½ pounds fresh jalapeños**
- 1 cup cider vinegar**
- 3 cups sugar**
- 1½ teaspoons garlic powder**
- ½ teaspoon ground cayenne pepper**
- ¼ teaspoon ground turmeric**
- ¼ teaspoon celery seeds**

1. Wash jalapeños, remove stems, and slice into rings or chop in a food processor.
2. In a large pot over medium-high heat, combine vinegar, sugar, garlic powder, cayenne, turmeric and celery seeds and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer 4 minutes. Add sliced jalapeños and simmer another 4 minutes.
3. Scoop into heated jars, packing semi-firmly and leaving ¼-inch headspace. Ladle syrup into jars. Use a chopstick or wooden dowel to remove air bubbles, pressing down on jalapeños, then place lids.
4. Let jars cool to room temperature, then store in the refrigerator.

MAKES 2 PINT JARS

MORE RECIPES >



\$500 WINNER

Gigi's Bourbon Blueberry and Pear Jam

TAMERA BUSSEY
TRINITY VALLEY EC



Reminiscent of blueberry pie, this jam is wonderful for lovers of the fruit. The bourbon adds depth of flavor, but you can leave it out if you prefer.

MAKES 12 HALF-PINT JARS

- 10 cups blueberries**
- ¼ cup diced pear**
- ½ cup powdered fruit pectin**
- ⅓ cup lemon juice**
- ¼ cup bourbon**
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract**
- ½ teaspoon almond extract**
- 6½ cups sugar**

1. Prepare a water bath canner and heat to boiling, adding jars to sterilize.
2. In a large pot, stir together blueberries, pear and pectin, crushing fruit as you mix. Stir in lemon juice, bourbon, and vanilla and almond extracts.
3. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat, stirring frequently. Add sugar all at once and bring jam back to a full rolling boil, stirring constantly. Hard boil for 1 minute, then remove from heat.
4. Ladle jam into warm jars, leaving ¼-inch headspace, and apply lids. Process in canner for 10 minutes, then remove and let rest until completely cooled.

TCP \$500 Recipe Contest

NUTS ABOUT NUTS DUE MAY 10

We want to know the many ways readers use nuts in the kitchen. Submit your recipes on our website by May 10 for a chance to win \$500.





Carrot Cake Jam

CATHY TOWER
HAMILTON COUNTY EC

Carrot cake lovers will delight in this unique jam.

- 1 can (20 ounces) crushed pineapple in juice, undrained**
- 1½ cups shredded carrots**
- 1½ cups peeled and chopped ripe pears**
- 3 tablespoons lemon juice**

- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon**
- ¼ teaspoon ground cloves**
- ¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg**
- 1 box (1.75 ounces) powdered fruit pectin**
- 6½ cups sugar**

- 1.** Prepare a water bath canner and heat to boiling, adding jars to sterilize.
- 2.** In a large pot over medium-high heat, combine pineapple, carrots, pears, lemon juice, cinnamon, cloves and nutmeg and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low, cover and simmer until pears are tender, 15–20 minutes, stirring occasionally.
- 3.** Stir in the pectin and bring to a boil over high heat, continuing to stir. Stir in the sugar all at once and return to a full rolling boil that cannot be stirred down. Boil 1 minute, then remove from heat and skim off foam if desired.
- 4.** Ladle jam into heated jars, leaving ¼-inch headspace. Using a chopstick or wooden dowel, remove air bubbles and add additional jam if necessary. Place lids and process in canner for 10 minutes. Remove jars and let cool.

MAKES 8 HALF-PINT JARS

Essential Canning Tools

BY MEGAN MYERS

Canning doesn't have to be complicated, but you'll want to have these basics before you start.

Large pot: You don't need a special water bath canning pot; any pot large enough to hold jars covered with water will do.

Jar holder: These special tongs help you transfer hot jars into and out of the water bath.

Wooden dowel or chopstick: Use either of these implements instead of a knife to remove air bubbles to prevent scratching the inside of the jar.

Fresh canning lids: Wax seal lids cannot be reused, so be sure to have enough on hand. Rings can be reused until they start to rust.



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3,000-Year-Old Beauty Secret Revealed

Turquoise — the original fashion icon — comes full circle for an amazing price.

She's been around for thousands of years, but she's never gone out of fashion. We're talking turquoise, one of the world's most ancient gems. Egyptian queens adorned themselves with turquoise jewelry more than 3,000 years ago. And the blue beauty is even more coveted now than she was a millennia ago.

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Time is running out for timeless turquoise. Just because turquoise is timeless, doesn't mean supplies of it will last forever. Turquoise is only found a few places on Earth. Typically unearthed in arid climates like the American Southwest and Egypt's Sinai Peninsula, turquoise requires a delicate balance of minerals and water to achieve its gorgeous range of blues. But even when conditions are optimal for turquoise to form, finding stones of gem-worthy quality is a challenge. There are very few turquoise mines left, and then, less than 5% of turquoise mined worldwide is of jewelry condition, making it rarer to come by than even diamonds.

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— The Jewellery Editor, 2021



C.

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COURTESY CHET GARNER

Something Fishy

Lampasas sculpture garden gets feet—and minds—meandering

BY CHET GARNER

FOR CENTURIES FOLKS have flocked to Lampasas to take a dip in natural springs that supposedly possess life-giving properties. I'm not sure they can heal the sick, but they seem to have stimulated creativity and inspired artists to fill a small city park with larger-than-life sculptures.

When I cruised through Lampasas, I discovered all the trappings of a charming Texas town—a historic courthouse, inviting businesses and the sort of pie that makes your eyes roll back in your head. But then I discovered something that I've never seen in any small town: an old rusty truck laden with a giant metal catfish stretching from the windshield to beyond the tailgate. I needed an explanation.

Apparently I had stumbled upon the Hanna Springs Sculpture Garden that fills Campbell Park. The city built the park around Hanna Springs, which pushes crystal clear and pungent-smelling—like an old shoe—water out of the ground and into a large pool. The sulfur spring is stunning to see—and smell.

In 2005 the Lampasas Association for the Arts decided it was time to add a little more flash to the underutilized park. The group commissioned three artists to carve large limestone sculptures. There's a couch, a gateway and one that's ... open to interpretation. After this, the creativity started to flow faster than the springs. The sculpture garden now boasts more than 20 sculptures ranging from abstract spinning shapes to a painted tractor that kids can climb on. The fun comes in walking through the garden and letting your mind wander along with your feet.

It's the sort of unexpected delight you find when you hit the road, and it defies the stereotype that art is just for big-city galleries. In fact, some of the best art can be found in the great outdoors of small-town Texas. ■

ABOVE Chet finds himself hooked on the funky art at Hanna Springs Sculpture Garden.

TOP See what else caught Chet's eye in Lampasas on our website. Watch all his Texplorations on *The Daytripper* on PBS.



Know Before You Go

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

MAY
07

Abilene Abilene Philharmonic: 1812 Overture, (325) 677-6710, abilenephilharmonic.org

Bellville Farmers Market, (979) 865-3407, bellvillefarmersmarket.com

Galveston Michael Cavanaugh: The Music of Billy Joel and Elton John, 1-800-821-1894, thegrand.com

Kerrville Mother and Son Dance, (830) 257-7300, kerrvilletx.gov

Mesquite Cinco de Mayo Celebration, (972) 329-8331, visitmescquitetx.com

New Ulm Honey Bee Jubilee, (713) 568-5584, newulmtexas.com

South Padre Island Jailbreak Beach Escape, (956) 761-5900, runthejailbreak.com

Temple National Train Day, (254) 298-5172, discovertemple.com

The Colony Up, Up and Away! Festival of Flight, (972) 625-1106, thecolonytx.gov

Dallas [7, 14, 21] Dinner Detective Interactive Mystery Dinner, 1-866-496-0535, thedinnerdetective.com/dallas

08

New Ulm Sts. Peter & Paul Catholic Church-Frelsburg 175th Anniversary & Country Festival, (979) 732-3430, peterandpaulparish.com/country-festival

12

Lufkin Orquesta Akokán,
(936) 633-5454,
angelinaarts.org

**Abilene [12-15] Western
Heritage Classic,**
(325) 677-4376,
westernheritageclassic.com

13

**Coolidge [13-14] Mesquite
Tree Festival,** (254) 203-8531,
facebook.com/
mesquitetreefestival

**Stafford [13-15, 20-22]
The Hunchback of Notre
Dame,** (713) 302-5329,
inspirationstage.com

14

**Boerne Hill Country Mini
Milkers Texas Two-Step,**
(830) 964-4155,
hillcountryminimilkers.org

Celina Cajun Fest,
(972) 382-2682,
lifeincelinatx.com/cajunfest

**Grand Prairie Roberto
Carlos,** (972) 854-5050,
texastrustcutheatre.com

**Irving Las Colinas
Symphony Orchestra: Eldred
Marshall,** (972) 252-4800,
lascolinassymphony.org

**La Grange Bluff Schuetzen-
Fest,** (979) 968-5658,
friendsofkreischebrewery.org
/schuetzenfest

McKinney Night Hike,
(972) 562-5566,
heardmuseum.org

**New Braunfels Cooder
Graw,** (830) 606-1281,
gruenehall.com

15

Dallas Flora Fest,
(214) 428-7476,
txdg.org/flora-fest

MORE EVENTS >

TCP Submit Your Event

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



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Event Calendar

Fairs, festivals, food and family fun! Pick your region. Pick your month. Pick your event.

With hundreds of events across Texas listed every month, TexasCoopPower.com has something for you.

TCP Plan now
TexasCoopPower.com/events

19

Corsicana Jim Brickman, (903) 874-7792, corsicanapalace.com

20

Kyle Ash Pavilion Family Skate Night, (512) 262-3939, cityofkyle.com/recreation

Columbus [20-21] **Magnolia Days Festival**, (979) 732-8385, magnoliadays.org

Fredericksburg [20-22] **Trade Days**, (210) 846-4094, fbgtradedays.com

21

Amarillo Eli Young Band, (806) 372-6000, bigtexan.com

Brenham Ronstadt Revue With Special Guest John Beland, (979) 337-7240, thebarnhillcenter.com/events

Clifton Bosque Tour de Norway, (254) 675-3720, tourdenorway.com

Frisco National Soccer Hall of Fame Induction Weekend Concert: Zac Brown Band, (469) 365-0043, nationalsoccerhof.com

Hilltop Lakes Run Fore the Roses Golf Tournament, (713) 503-0470

Lake Jackson Bird Banding, (979) 480-0999, gcbo.org

Mesquite Mesquite Symphony Orchestra: *An Ode to Joy*, (972) 216-6444, visitmesquitetx.com

25

College Station [25-29] **Remembering the Fallen**, (979) 690-0501, americangimuseum.org

26

Kerrville [26-July 9] **Southwest Gourd & Fiber Fine Art Show**, (830) 895-2911, kackkerrville.com

27

Smithville [27-28] **Lost Pines BBQ Showdown**, (713) 540-1695, bastroprotary.com

28

Fredericksburg [27-29] **Crawfish Festival**, (830) 997-6523, fbgjaycees.com/crawfish-festival

Hunt Mike Donnell, (830) 238-4441, cridersrandd.com

Rockport Wine Festival, (361) 729-1271, texasmaritimemuseum.org/rockportwinefestival

29

Abilene Waitress, 1-800-869-1451, celebrityattractions.com

Brazoria River Wine Festival, (979) 964-3167, riverrendezview.com

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

JUNE

02

Fredericksburg [2-5] **Hill Country Film Festival**, 1-866-224-7714, hillcountryff.com

03

Stephenville [3-4] **Moo-La Fest**, (254) 552-1222, visitstephenville.com/moo-la-fest

04

Fredericksburg Car Fest, (830) 997-6523, fredericksburgcarfest.com

San Marcos Heritage Tour of Homes, (512) 392-4295, heritagesanmarcos.org

Austin [4-5] **Pond and Garden Tour**, publicity@austinpontsociety.org, austinpontsociety.org

Feathered Friends

We're not ones to get our feathers ruffled, but we've been surprised by how many entries flew in from all over Texas.

CURATED BY GRACE FULTZ

1 ROSS HINES
GRAYSON-COLLIN EC

"The February 2021 winter storm brought purple finches to my feeder."

2 MARK CHAPMAN
HEART OF TEXAS EC

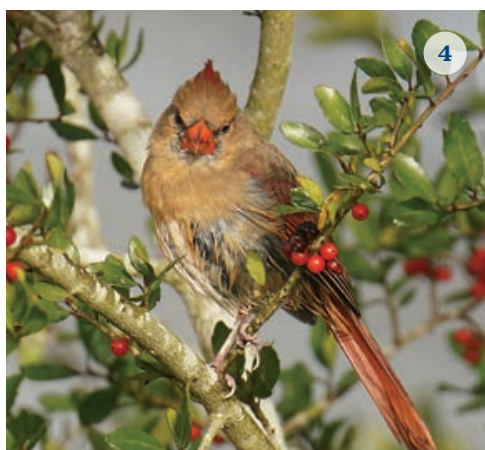
"I located a mated pair of barred owls in a heavily wooded creek and watched for several hours before capturing this image."

3 PAMELA SLAUGHTER
FANNIN COUNTY EC

Granddaughter Rachel loves her chickens but has taken a special liking to this hard-to-catch banty rooster.

4 CHRIS WEYLAND
TRINITY VALLEY EC

Female northern cardinal.



Upcoming Contests

DUE MAY 10 Light and Shadow

DUE JUN 10 Hometown Pride

DUE JUL 10 Aerials



Enter online at TexasCoopPower.com/contests.

TCP See Focus on Texas on our website for a whole flock of Feathered Friends photos from readers.



Community Crusader

Remembering journalism stalwart George McElroy on his birth's centennial

BY KATHLEEN MCELROY
ILLUSTRATION BY TAYLOR CALLERY

SOMETIMES, BEING the first of anything is beside the point.

George McElroy, my father, accumulated a lot of firsts as a pioneering African American journalist in Texas. As the Texas State Historical Association points out, he was the first Black journalist at a mainstream daily newspaper in Texas, *The Houston Post*; first to earn a master's degree from the University of Missouri's prestigious school of journalism; first to be a member of the Houston Press Club; first to teach journalism at the University of Houston; and first to be inducted into the Texas Newspaper Hall of Fame.

But as much as Dad enjoyed accolades from big-time journalism, his true journalistic love was his community newspaper, *The Houston Informer* and *Texas*

Freeman, the first African American newspaper published west of the Mississippi River. He started reporting there at age 16 and never really left until he died at 84 in 2006.

At the *Informer*, Dad was dogged as the eyes and ears of Houston's Black communities and cherished the opportunity to report back on the world beyond their neighborhoods. He kept every press badge he ever carried, pinning them on the paneled walls of our den.

The *Informer*, a storied part of the Black press, shared much with community and rural papers across the state. For Dad, it was home—located in a neighborhood where he lived most of his life. Mainstream newspapers might call its coverage hyperlocal: weddings and deaths, scholarship announcements, photos of smiling children and corsaged ladies. It's the kind of journalism that Texas community papers—ethnic and rural—have been practicing for more than a century.

Dad was probably most proud when the Texas Gulf Coast Press awarded him first place for editorial writing. Like any good small-town publisher and editor, he chose his words wisely and lovingly, knowing that the person reading them might be sitting in the next pew or barbershop chair.

In the centennial year of my father's birth, I'm part of two projects that honor the kind of journalism he practiced: the Headliners Foundation's George McElroy Scholarship (yes, the first Black person to be so honored by the prestigious nonprofit) and the University of Texas at Austin's Rural Journalism Pipeline Project, which seeks to sustain rural Texas newspapers by finding successors for aging publishers.

Whether it's Houston's bustling Third Ward or a one-stoplight town in the Panhandle, we're all richer living in a place where that one journalist knows your name. ■



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