

COTTON GINS TRANSFORM
THE LANDSCAPE

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COLORADO PRIDE

CHET BRAVES
THE GHOST ROAD

Texas Coop Power

FOR TRINITY VALLEY EC MEMBERS

JULY 2022

Texas' Best Bird

Kreuz Market
serves up superb
barbecued chicken

TRINITY
VALLEY EC
NEWS

SEE PAGE 18

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July 2022



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Prized Fibers

Cotton gins still turn sweat and tears into a treasured commodity.

Story and photos by Julia Robinson

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Because Kreuz Market has perfected the once-scorned barbecued bird.

*By Joe Nick Patoski
Photos by Wyatt McSpadden*

ON THE COVER

Chicken that pitmaster Roy Perez describes this way: "Simple. With love."
Photo by Wyatt McSpadden

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Jerry Harris inspects raw cotton at King Mesa Gin.
Photo by Julia Robinson

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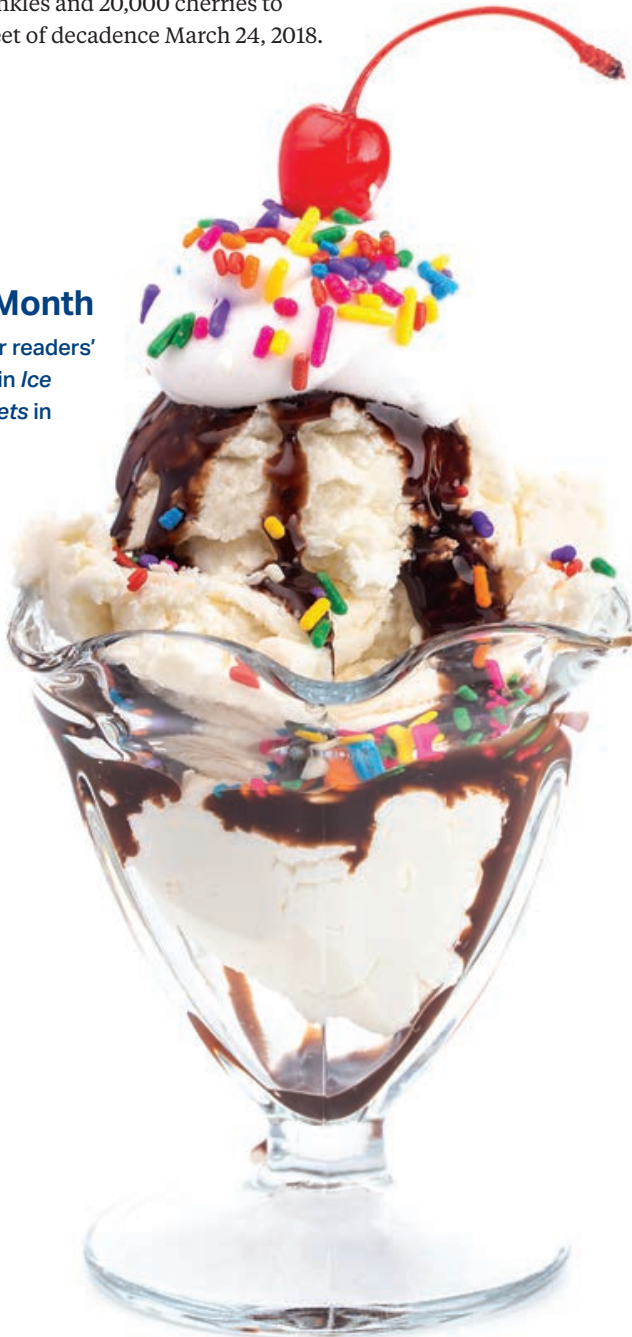
Sundae Best

THE WORLD'S LONGEST ice cream sundae—more than 15 football fields long—was concocted four years ago in College Station.

The creators at the Spirit of Texas Festival used 500 gallons of H-E-B Texans Tackle Crackle ice cream, 2,000 cans of whipped cream, 300 gallons of chocolate and strawberry syrup, 25 pounds of sprinkles and 20,000 cherries to assemble 4,549 feet of decadence March 24, 2018.

July National Ice Cream Month

Celebrate with our readers' recipes, featured in *Ice Creams and Sorbets* in July 2021.



WORKING FROM HOME?

Save electricity by unplugging your least-used devices—printers and scanners—when you don't need them.

Your electric cooperative is in the people business; it just happens to sell power. The less you use, the more you'll save.



Dig This

Texas Co-op Power readers ... well, they rock.

One reader, inspired by an October 2021 story, donated \$20,000 to a research program in South Texas.

Learning Rocks featured a Shumla Archaeological Research and Education Center program, above, involving high school students in Comstock. The donation will help Shumla purchase a camera with accessories, scaffolding to help students photograph rock art and tablets for data entry.



TCP Contests and More

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News Flash

LIGHTNING OVER TEXAS reached a long way, though not to the ground.

A storm April 29, 2020, produced a bolt that stretched a record 477 miles, from Southeast Texas to Mississippi. Scientists used satellite technology to confirm the record in February.

Also this year, Flatonia, a small town about halfway between Houston and San Antonio, was announced as the lightning capital of the U.S. Vaisala, a weather measurement and analysis company, determined that Flatonia received 1,043 lightning events per square mile in 2021—more than any other city in the country.



FINISH THIS SENTENCE

I FEEL
PATRIOTIC
WHEN ...

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

Here are some of the responses to our May prompt: **Three words that brighten my day are ...**

I love you.

SANDRA BOWEN
BIG COUNTRY EC
HAWLEY

Ice cold beer.

STEPHEN SEWELL
PEDERNALES EC
KEMPNER

I've got this. (A nice young man ahead of me in line at 7-Eleven this morning decided to pay for my juice and coffee.)

LINDA RIDEOUT
VIA FACEBOOK

To see more responses, read Currents online.



A Deep Dive

“What a fascinating story about a fascinating aspect of our state. I was amazed to learn such a unique place exists in the Lone Star State.”

DONALD HAHN
HAMILTON COUNTY EC
HICO

Hope Lives On

To find that the photo of the Wantland family was taken inside what was the old Hope Lutheran Church of Buckholts really took my breath away [*A Little Source of Joy*, May 2022].

Our family were members of Hope Lutheran, and our daughter's wedding was the last one before the old church was hauled off to the pasture of the man who purchased it to use as a barn. The building was later cut into several pieces and moved to Round Top to be restored and used as a children's library.

Lamerle Zajicek
Lucas

I love Ms. Dolly, not only for her music [*A Little Source of Joy*, May 2022]. She has done so much for the community she grew up in.

SHERRI CONSTABLE
VIA FACEBOOK



ERICH SCHLEGEL

It Takes the Cake

The Texas Praline Sheet Cake featured in March was one of the most amazing cakes I've ever made. It was a big hit on our Easter table.

I've made several of the recipes featured in the magazine over the years and really liked them all, but this cake takes the cake.

Cindi Boyd
Medina EC
Freer

A Great Mix

I love your magazine. I am always surprised at how much you get into so few pages. And it's a great mix of heartfelt stories, usable information, wonderful recipes and beautiful pictures. You represent our state well.

Anita Askew
Pedernales EC
Wimberley

Along Those Lines

As a child in the 1940s and '50s, we would travel between Vernon and Amarillo. There were always hundreds of scissor-tailed flycatchers on the electric lines [*Scissortail Signals*, April 2022]. My favorite bird. I love them.

Penny Haulman
Via Facebook

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.

Texas Co-op Power

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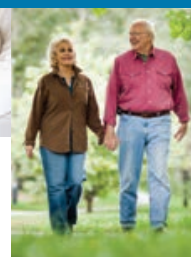
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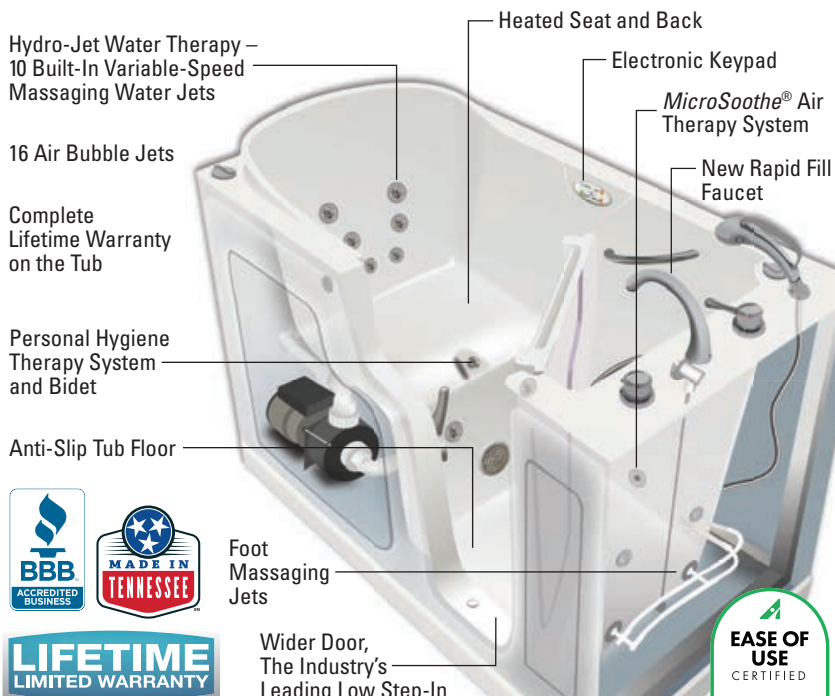
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Texas' cotton gins have turned more sweat and tears into lint than

STORY AND PHOTOS BY JULIA ROBINSON

At times the fabric of Texas' economy has been 100% cotton. The availability of cotton products, though, belies a complicated transformation.

"Blood, sweat and tears," says Kirk Tidwell, a cotton farmer in Lamesa, about halfway between Lubbock and Midland. "There's a lot of tears sometimes."

"There's just so much risk; we don't know from the day we plant it if it's ever going to make it to harvest or not," says Tidwell, who also serves on the board of directors at Lyntegar Electric Cooperative. "We may lose it to a hail-storm or a sandstorm or an early freeze. We're always just hopeful."

That cotton-hope blend—formed by a lot of hard work and a little luck—has not frayed much over two centuries. Times are still tough for cotton farmers, but cotton gins are still going. Texas had 4,300 gins in 1900; 185 operate today,

according to the Texas Cotton Ginners' Association.

"I would guess half of those are on the way out," says Jerry Harris, general manager of King Mesa Gin in Lamesa.

"As the number of gins go down, the number of bales ginned stays the same or goes up," Harris says as 18-wheelers pull onto scales with round bales bound in colorful plastic. "There used to be a gin every 6 miles because that's as far as people wanted to carry their crop, but now people will come hundreds of miles with a crop."

Spanish missionaries were the first to raise cotton in Texas. By 1821, Anglo colonists turned to the crop in earnest, reaping profits and building an industry by relying on the labor of enslaved people. Cotton drove the state's economy until the 20th century. Today it thrives in several areas of the state, and the South Plains region around Lubbock, where Tidwell farms, devotes more land to growing cotton than any other part of the world—as much as 3 million acres some years. Irrigation and easy weed control make

F I B E R S =



any other state for 150 years—and they're still innovating

growing cotton there more productive than in other parts of the state.

Starting at Odessa and going north up the Panhandle, the soil turns reddish brown as fields of cotton spread beneath the pump jacks and wind turbines that dominate the horizon. It's a geography of vast spaces—"so flat that your dog can run away, and you'll still see him a week later," a Texas congressman once said—and the white bolls in tidy rows are set off dramatically against unblemished blue skies.

Since 1850, Texas has led the nation in cotton production, tallying 8 million bales in 2021, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Every one of those bales is processed at a cotton gin, where bolls move through machines that separate the embedded seeds, which are about the size of a grain of rice, from the prized fiber, which is called lint. Cotton production at this scale is possible only because of the gins that dot the state.



TOP The South Plains region around Lubbock devotes more land to growing cotton than any other part of the world. **ABOVE** A handful of cotton seed left over after the ginning process.



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE Kirk Tidwell raises cotton on 6,500 acres in Lamesa. An 1833 hand-operated cotton gin. Jerry Harris runs King Mesa Gin in Lamesa. Curtis Stewart, manager at Spade Co-op Gin northwest of Lubbock, catches cotton seeds as they fall through a gin's spinning blades.

The largest gin in the world, Adobe Walls Gin in Spearman, about 35 miles from the Oklahoma border, produces 300,000 bales per year. Operations were much smaller during fall and winter harvests generations ago, when cotton gins became gathering places where farmers socialized and shared news while waiting their turn to have their crops baled. Those days could be stressful.

"There was a lot riding on the processing and selling of your cotton," says Andrew Torget, a University of North Texas professor and author of *Seeds of Empire: Cotton, Slavery, and the Transformation of the Texas Borderlands, 1800–1850*. "This is an industry where you basically have one payday. The emotional tenor of that was tremendous. How much profit you had, what you could buy your kids or couldn't for the coming year—all these things got concentrated in this one location and this one experience for farmers.

"Today we like to look back with a sort of bucolic romanticism about things that are unfamiliar to us, but I think we forget the terrors and the fears and the helplessness that sometimes accompany those experiences."

Still, gins greatly eased much of the anxiety of cotton farming, which in the early days of our state was only possible because of labor by enslaved people. It takes 10 hours for one person to remove enough seeds by hand to get 1 pound of lint. "Cotton has this problem that the seeds are stuck inside this prison of fibers," Torget says. "How you get those out is a real bottleneck because doing it by hand means you can't do it at scale."

Early gins used hand-cranked stone or iron rollers to separate the seeds from the fiber and could process 5 pounds of lint per day. In 1794, Eli Whitney designed a machine, a cylinder with spikes that pulled lint clean from the seed as it was cranked, that increased production to 50 pounds per day.

Two years later, Henry Ogden Holmes patented a design that increased the output to thousands of pounds per day with a set of spinning saw teeth on a circular steel blade that pulled lint from seeds in a continuous motion. This design



Since 1850, Texas has led the nation in cotton production, tallying 8 million bales in 2021.

year. In 1915 it pressed nearly 1,000 bales.

“We would have been serving 60 farmers in a really good day,” says Tynan Shadle, the museum’s programs coordinator and a member of Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative. Teams and wagons full of cotton would wait their turn—first come, first served—in the yard. Some farmers camped out the night before; some would unload in the morning and return in the afternoon with another load.

The gin featured pneumatic tubes that inhaled the raw cotton and blew it through the entire ginning process, an innovation that came from Robert Munger of nearby Ruttersville. The system is still used today in gins around the world.

Nothing from cotton was wasted in those days. Seed was separated from the lint and delivered back into the farmer’s wagon to plant for the next year. Sometimes the gin bought it to use as livestock feed or to press into oil.

The Burton gin continued operations until 1974, when it closed its doors after producing only seven bales that year. Lint cleaning, feed milling and other services had kept the facility going longer than most, but its time had come.

“We’ve seen boll weevil infestations lead to crop failures, two world wars taking men off the farms, and then the GI Bill, which gave those returning men better opportunities,” Shadle says. “We saw a mass exodus from farms.

“Cotton was just not able to make enough money, and so it was more profitable to switch back to cattle. Not too long after that, they began finding natural gas in the area, too.”

A community group formed a nonprofit and began restoring the Burton Farmers Gin in 1990. It’s the oldest operating cotton gin in the U.S. and is a Historic Mechanical Engineering Landmark listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Out in Lamesa, King Mesa Gin, which operates around the clock at times to keep up with the 7 tons of raw cotton delivered several times a day by truck, is the only gin in the U.S. to offer DNA tracing to its producers, ensuring the same cotton that’s sent overseas for manufacturing is the same cotton in the finished product on store shelves.

In 2019, Texas growers were responsible for three-quarters of all American organic cotton, which is grown using more sustainable practices. “Where you’re sitting right now is in a hundred-mile circle of the most organic cotton grown in the U.S.,” says Harris, a member of Lyntegar EC.

For Tidwell, becoming part owner of King Mesa just made sense for ensuring his livelihood.

“We went in together as a community to keep the gin in the community, under our control and to do it the way we’ve always done it,” he explains from his knee-high cotton field. “I only get paid once a year, and this is my payday right here.” ■

is still used in modern cotton ginning. Gin designs and innovations proliferated across the South, and daisy chains of gins began to be operated by animal and water power.

Visitors to the Texas Cotton Gin Museum in Burton, halfway between Austin and Houston, can see some of this history up close, including an open stand that reveals 80 saw blades that spin vertically through metal ribs. A group of local German farmers sold \$50 shares, raising \$10,000 to build the Burton Farmers Gin in 1913. The gin fired up for the first time August 3, 1914, and produced 82 bales that



Roy Perez, general manager and head pitmaster at Kreuz Market in Lockhart.

WHY'D THE CHICKEN CROSS THE PIT?

Because Kreuz Market has perfected the once-scorned barbecued bird

THE **poor barbecued chicken.**

The holy trinity of Texas barbecue consists of beef brisket, pork ribs and sausage. Other meats pulled from pits around these parts include prime rib, pork chops and giant beef.

Barbecued yardbird? Not so much. Even the generic turkey breast gets more 'cue love.

Traditionally, slow-smoked chicken has been regarded as too tricky to cook consistently, the end product either undercooked with too much red visible or overcooked to a dryness rivaling jerky.

Chicken, it would seem, is meant to be fried, roasted on a rotisserie or grilled in the Mexican style of the El Pollo Loco and Pollo Regio franchises.

For the past 10 years, however, the best barbecued chicken in Texas has been turned out quietly, as something of an afterthought—an almost under-the-counter thing—in one of the most obvious places on Earth: Kreuz Market in Lockhart, one of the temples of Texas barbecue.

Moist and tender, every morsel packs savory-sweet smoked flavor, enveloped by deep-bronzed skin that's crispy, not greasy.

Full disclosure: "Best barbecue" is a loaded phrase, I know. But that's how my friend Wyatt McSpadden described the whole chicken wrapped in butcher paper he brought me when I was bedridden following a hospital stay last year. I didn't open the sack until about three hours after he left. When I did, bells rang and the lights started flashing.

Chicken!

I was part of the original *Texas Monthly* barbecue team for the magazine's top-50 barbecue joints ranking in 1997 and 2003. Barbecued chicken was never part of the discussion on either top-50 quest.

McSpadden photographed some of the top-50 locations, and today he's known as one of the foremost photographers

of Texas barbecue, capturing pitmasters including Austin's Aaron Franklin and Lexington's Tootsie Tomanetz and sampling their esteemed meats.

I met him at Kreuz Market to gauge his assessment, and now I'm willing to stick my neck out and declare it's the best.

Roy Perez chuckles when he hears that.

He says he started tinkering with yardbirds 10 years ago, after noting a number of customers—typically first-timers—asking about chicken. "It wasn't on the menu for years," he says. "We got tired of people asking, 'You got chicken?' and 'You ain't got chicken?' In my head, I went, 'You want chicken? We got Golden Chick, Chicken Express, all these chicken places.'"

But those are fried, not slow-smoked.

"There's something about barbecued chicken that's different," he says. "It just came to me: 'Can I do chicken?' I thought: Let's throw it on there and mess with it, see how it turns out."

As general manager and head pitmaster at Kreuz and with 35 years' experience, the mutton-chopped Perez is renowned for turning out top-shelf brisket as well as exceptional pork ribs, dino beef ribs and sausage.

But a hands-on approach to minding the pit and trial and error led him to consistently turn out slow-smoked birds that are moist and flavorful throughout. His favorite part? "I've always liked the thigh," he says. "We're old-school. As you can see, I'm sitting here keeping my eyes on this fire instead of sitting in an office somewhere."

Perez says he learned the pitmaster trade from Rick Schmidt, one of the owners at Kreuz Market when he started, back in 1987. Chicken takes as much skill as any of the cuts that Kreuz is known for.

"You've got to stay on it, take care of it," Perez says. "Keep an eye on it, twist on the leg to see if it's still tender and still needs more cooking. It's all visual. We don't use thermometers."

Still, most barbecue pit bosses don't share his respect for the craft.

"These guys laugh when we're cooking the chicken," Perez



CHOICE CHICKEN

We asked electric cooperative employees where they get their barbecued bird. Here are a few of their favorite spots.

Mimsy's Craft Barbecue, Crockett
Lockhart Smokehouse, Dallas
Iceman's BBQ, Edgewood
Stiky Ribz, Forney
Bar-B-Que To-Go, Ganado
Heavy's Bar-B-Que, Hondo
Back Porch BBQ & Grill, La Grange
Cooper's Old Time Pit Bar-B-Que, Llano
The Smoking Oak, Mercedes
Mack's Split Rail BBQ, Mineola
Judge Hunt's BBQ, Quitman
Hickory Roots BBQ, Terrell

Slow-smoked chicken
at Kreuz Market.

Roy Perez's method emphasizes simplicity: about two hours of cooking time at about 300 degrees.

says. "I'll say, 'Those are ready.' 'No, they're not!' I'll say 'OK, get a thermometer so we can check the internal temperature.' Sure enough, they'll poke it and say, 'How did you do that?'"

"With my years of experience, I don't need nothing to tell me this is done or this is not done. You got to make sure how it all comes out because people travel from all over. Even the locals—you don't want to let them down."

His method emphasizes simplicity: about two hours of cooking time at about 300 degrees.

"Put it in the back, let it cook slowly. When you know it's ready, take it off, put it in a container with the lid to keep the moisture in," Perez says. "It's such a little piece of meat; you have to keep an eye on it. You can't walk away like you can with a brisket."

The wood that provides the heat in Perez's pit is post oak. The seasoning, he says, "is no secret: just salt and pepper, a little cayenne, chili powder—same way we do our brisket." But timing is everything. "You can't sell it too early. If it's got blood in there, people might get sick. You can't sell it too late."

Kreuz was famous for not providing barbecue sauce as a condiment; the establishment has never used sauce in the cooking process, no matter the meat.

"It's cheating," Perez says. "It's a quick way out. Here we've

always been, 'Don't put nothing on it. Eat it, try it before you start covering it up with sauce.' Simple. With love. Everything else will take care of itself."

This is barbecue I can eat almost every day.

Hipster barbecue fetishists in search of the exotic tend to bypass the bird. Perez says it's because most young folks don't have the time or patience to slow-smoke chicken.

"They don't want to cook something that you have to babysit," he says. "They want to throw on a big brisket, a big clod, big rack of ribs, ring of sausage, pork chops. Then you get a little chicken—'Man, I don't want to sit here all day—it's hot!' "

Only one of Kreuz Market's eight pits accommodates chicken. The other pits, where briskets are cooking at 700 degrees, are too hot. Chicken sales have steadily increased, Perez says, despite a determined lack of emphasis on the product.

"We don't cook much of it," he says. "We're not known for chicken. The old people who have been coming for years don't order chicken. They don't want something new or different. They're set in their ways."

For the rest of us though, there's a whole other reason for making a barbecue pilgrimage to Lockhart: Roy Perez's barbecued chicken. ■

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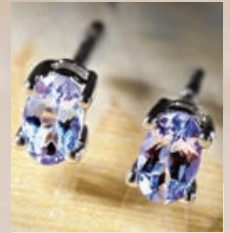


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with your purchase of the Sunburst Tanzanite Ring

African Gem Cutter Makes \$2,689,000 Mistake... Will You?

This story breaks my heart every time. Allegedly, just two years after the discovery of tanzanite in 1967, a Maasai tribesman knocked on the door of a gem cutter's office in Nairobi. The Maasai had brought along an enormous chunk of tanzanite and he was looking to sell. His asking price? Fifty dollars. But the gem cutter was suspicious and assumed that a stone so large could only be glass. The cutter told the tribesman, no thanks, and sent him on his way. Huge mistake. It turns out that the gem was genuine and would have easily dwarfed the world's largest cut tanzanite at the time. Based on common pricing, that "chunk" could have been worth close to \$3,000,000! The tanzanite gem cutter missed his chance to hit the jeweler's jackpot ... and make history. Would you have made the same mistake then? Will you make it today?

In the decades since its discovery, tanzanite has become one of the world's most coveted gemstones. Found in only one remote place on Earth (in Tanzania's Merelani Hills, in the shadow of Mount Kilimanjaro), the precious purple stone is 1,000 times rarer than diamonds. Luxury retailers have been quick to sound the alarm, warning that supplies of tanzanite will not last forever. And in this case, they're right. Once the last purple gem is pulled from the Earth, that's it. No more tanzanite. Most believe that we only have a twenty year supply left, which is why it's so amazing for us to offer this incredible price break. Some retailers along Fifth Avenue are more than happy to charge you outrageous prices for this rarity.

Not Stauer. Staying true to our contrarian nature, we've decided to lower the price of one of the world's rarest and most popular gemstones.

This stunning two-total carat Sunburst Tanzanite Ring features marquise-cut gems set dramatically in gorgeous sterling silver. Each facet sparkles with the distinct violet-blue hue of the precious stones. But we don't stop there. While supplies last, we'll include these tanzanite studs **FREE** with your purchase of the ring — a \$99 value!

Limited Availability. We only have ~~1200~~, 954 left for this ad only. Of course, your satisfaction is 100% guaranteed. If you are not completely aglow with the Sunburst Tanzanite Ring, send it back within 30 days for a complete refund of the item price. But, please don't wait, our supply is dropping rapidly.

Jewelry Specifications:

- 2 ctw genuine tanzanite set in .925 sterling silver setting; whole sizes 5–10

Sunburst Tanzanite Ring (2 ctw) ~~\$349~~ \$79* + S&P **Save \$270**
Plus FREE Tanzanite Studs (½ ctw) with your purchase of the Sunburst Tanzanite Ring — **a \$99 value!**

**Special price only for customers using the offer code.*

1-800-333-2045

Your Offer Code: TZR664-12

Stauer, 14101 Southcross Drive W., Ste 155, Dept. TZR664-12, Burnsville, MN 55337 www.stauer.com

Stauer® | AFFORD THE EXTRAORDINARY®

The Invention of the Year

The world's lightest and most portable mobility device

Once in a lifetime, a product comes along that truly moves people. Introducing the future of battery-powered personal transportation . . . *The Zinger.*

Throughout the ages, there have been many important advances in mobility. Canes, walkers, rollators, and scooters were created to help people with mobility issues get around and retain their independence. Lately, however, there haven't been any new improvements to these existing products or developments in this field. Until now. Recently, an innovative design engineer who's developed one of the world's most popular products created a completely new breakthrough . . . a personal electric vehicle. It's called the *Zinger*, and there is nothing out there quite like it.

"What my wife especially loves is it gives her back feelings of safety and independence which has given a real boost to her confidence and happiness! Thank You!"

—Kent C., California

The first thing you'll notice about the *Zinger* is its unique look. It doesn't look like a scooter. Its sleek, lightweight yet durable frame is made with aircraft grade aluminum so it weighs only 47.2 lbs. It features one-touch folding and unfolding – when folded it can be wheeled around like a suitcase and fits easily into a backseat or trunk. Then, there are the steering levers. They enable the *Zinger* to move



Available in Green, Black and Blue (shown)

forward, backward, turn on a dime and even pull right up to



The Zinger folds to a mere 10 inches.

a table or desk. With its compact yet powerful motor it can go up to 6 miles an hour and its rechargeable battery can go up to 8 miles on a single charge. With its low center of gravity and inflatable tires it can handle rugged terrain and is virtually tip-proof. Think about it, you can take your *Zinger* almost anywhere, so you don't have to let mobility issues rule your life.



Now available in a Joystick model
(Zoomer Chair)



Joystick can be mounted on the right or left side for rider's comfort

Why take our word for it? Call now, and find out how you can get a *Zinger* of your very own.

journey
zinger

Call now and receive a utility basket absolutely FREE with your order.

1-888-348-0271

Please mention code 117324 when ordering.

mobility | sleep | comfort | safety

enjoying life never gets old™

journey
HEALTH & LIFESTYLE

The Zinger and Zoomer Chairs are personal electric vehicles and are not medical devices nor wheelchairs. They are not intended for medical purposes to provide mobility to persons restricted to a sitting position. They are not covered by Medicare nor Medicaid. © 2022 Journey Health and Lifestyle





MESSAGE
FROM
GENERAL
MANAGER/
CEO

JEFF LANE

Unplug To Cool Off and Beat the Peak

WE'RE IN THE THICK of it. Summer's heat is near its peak, school's out, vacations are underway, and the Fourth of July is here again. As you plan celebrations, travel or simply go about enjoying the rest of the season, take a cue from the holiday and declare independence from needlessly high electric bills.

Here are a few simple, low-tech ways to rein in midsummer energy costs.

Run the clothes washer and dishwasher only when each appliance is full, and beat the peak by not using either between 3 and 7 p.m.

Use a clothesline or dryer rack to air-dry laundry. Your clothes will stay in better shape longer, and you'll cut out one energy drain entirely.

Set your thermostat to 78 when you're home and turn on ceiling fans in occupied rooms to add to the cooling effect. Run the blades counterclockwise to create a cooling downdraft and turn off the fan when you leave the room.

Use countertop appliances to make dinner without turning on the oven. Better yet, make a salad with a combination of fresh and pantry ingredients. Start with greens and add cucumber, avocado, canned black beans or chickpeas, sunflower seeds, dried fruit, or whatever you have on hand for a satisfying meal that doesn't require cooking.

Take a break from devices and screens and get outside after dinner—after the heat relents just a little—and use that much less electricity while you digitally detox. Take a walk, water plants, say hello to a neighbor, or just enjoy the sunset and nature with a cool drink.

While you're outside, consider some areas around your home that might benefit from energy-wise landscaping. Providing shade for an outdoor air conditioning unit can increase its efficiency, and planting deciduous trees on the east, south and west sides of your home will create shade in the summer while still allowing sunshine in the winter. You might also see some opportunities to plant trees to shade windows now; as they mature, they'll shade your home's walls and roof.

Once you're back inside, unwind with a cool treat from the freezer and a tech-free activity like a board game or book. The long light and lazy days of this time of year are fleeting, so make the most of them. Trinity Valley Electric Cooperative wishes you and your family a restorative summer. ■



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Independence Day
Monday, July 4

**Give Something
Away Day**
Friday, July 15

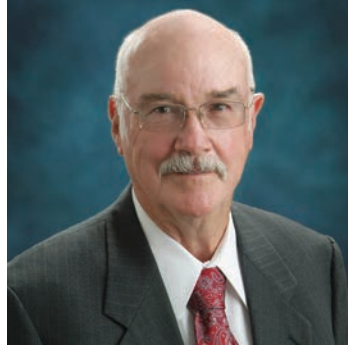
**International Day
of Friendship**
Saturday, July 30

ROMOLO TAVANI | ISTOCK.COM

In Memoriam



Jerry Priest
1938-2022



David Lang
1939-2022

JERRY PRIEST

Trinity Valley Electric Cooperative lost its longest-serving board member with the passing of Jerry Priest on June 3.

Elected to the board of Kaufman County Electric Cooperative in 1981, Priest helped navigate a merger with New Era Electric Cooperative in 1997, which formed TVEC.

Priest may be best known as the proprietor of Jerry's Pizza in Canton, which he opened in 1976. Known as a diligent and hard worker, he was managing the day-to-day operations of the restaurant until just weeks before his death of an unexpected illness.

The pizza restaurant, along with a Canton-area cattle ranch, was a new phase for Priest, after a 25-year career working for Transcon Lines.

Priest and his high school sweetheart, Jo Ann, were just one month short of their 64th wedding anniversary when he died. He is also survived by his three children, seven grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

DAVID LANG

The TVEC co-op family is also mourning the loss of David Lang, who served as a TVEC board member from 2010–2021 representing District 7.

He was raised in the LaRue area before serving in the United States Air Force, then working in and owning oil field equipment businesses.

He retired back to Anderson County, where he continued to work the land of Landis Creek Farm along with his wife Ruth

Lang was also an active volunteer who was particularly devoted to fellow military veterans, spending many hours driving them to doctor appointments.

With their experience in business and active community involvement, the impact of these two board members will benefit TVEC members for years to come.

“Mr. Lang and Mr. Priest were both passionate about serving the co-op’s membership and their respective communities,” said General Manager/CEO Jeff Lane. “They were kind and humble souls and their knowledge, wisdom and candor—in and outside of the board room—will be missed.”

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

Vacant at Press Time, 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





TVEC ENERGY
MANAGEMENT
SUPERVISOR

CHRIS WALKER, BAP

The Energy Advisor:

Is Your Home Full of Energy Hogs?

ENERGY COSTS BETWEEN two homes of similar age and size can vary greatly, depending on the residents' habits and possessions. If you compare your home's electricity bill with your neighbor and find that yours is higher, you may have hidden energy hogs causing you to use more energy.

Perhaps one of the common energy hogs below is increasing your energy use.

An old fridge or freezer in the garage.

That second fridge or freezer may be costing more than you think. If the model was produced prior to 1990, it's likely using twice as much energy (or more) than a newer, Energy Star-certified model. If it's located in the garage, it may run constantly in the summer, which adds to electric bills.

Thermostat settings. Using fans and wearing lighter clothing in the summer rather than lowering the thermostat can make a big difference in energy consumption. A smart thermostat can increase savings by automatically adjusting your home's temperature based on your household's schedule, raising the temperature when you're not home and lowering it shortly before you return.

Cooling or heating an uninsulated area. Uninsulated workshops and garages can be expensive to keep cool. Pet owners have been known to heat and cool uninsulated areas to keep pets comfortable, not realizing that this might be costing more than heating or cooling their actual home.

Water heaters. If your electric water heater's thermostat is set higher than 120 degrees and the tank isn't wrapped in an insulating blanket, you're spending more money than you need to for hot water.

Pumps. If you live on acreage or a farm or ranch, you probably have several pumps, including for irrigation, a well, septic and sump. If you're like most of us, you use those pumps until they break. Consider replacing the oldest and most-used pumps over time with new, more efficient ones that are sized correctly for their task.

Hot tubs. The average hot tub costs \$250 per year to operate. But that amount may be higher if your hot tub is an older, less

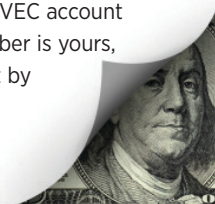


efficient model or if you live in a colder climate. A smaller hot tub with better insulation, a cover and a pump that runs on a lower voltage will use much less energy than other models.

Swimming pool. If you have a swimming pool, consider installing a smaller, more efficient pump and reducing how often it runs. You can also look at installing a larger filter and maximizing the flow of water through the pipes by making them larger and reducing how sharply the corners turn. These measures could cut your electric use for the pool pump by as much as 75%. ■

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





New Utility Scams Capitalize on COVID

A SPATE OF SCAMS is targeting utility customers, as fraudsters alter their strategies and seek to capitalize on vulnerabilities created by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Members of an electric cooperative in Wisconsin recently reported two unique tactics, according to a report from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

One involved a call from a bogus representative of an investor-owned utility claiming to have taken over the member's account and demanding immediate payment or disconnection. The member wasn't fooled and contacted the co-op to warn others.

Another scam that we have had reported locally involves a swindler claiming to be with the co-op calling members claiming that a utility bill was overpaid, and the members would need to provide financial information to get a refund. The members didn't fall for the scam, hung up the phone and notified the co-op.

Members need to stay vigilant because scammers have adapted their tactics over the past two years to exploit consumer vulnerabilities and changes in habits created by the pandemic.

The increased use of technology paired with concerns about the economy have created a breeding ground for scams, according to Utilities United Against Scams.

Numbers from the Federal Trade Commission show that consumer fraud in general spiked during the past two years.

In 2021, about a quarter of all reported fraud losses stemmed from scams originating on social media. Those scams resulted in \$770 million in total losses, which is an 18-fold increase from 2017, according to the agency's latest Consumer Protection Data Spotlight report.

Somos, the entity that manages toll-free numbers in the U.S., tracks when those numbers are used fraudulently. They often work with UUAS to combat scams, and their collaboration has shut down more than 12,000 phone numbers since 2017.

If you receive a suspicious message—whether a phone call, text, social media message or email—regarding your electric cooperative account, please contact Trinity Valley Electric Cooperative immediately. ■



DID YOU KNOW?

With inexpensive smart plugs, you can conveniently manage lighting, home office equipment, video game consoles and more with a smart-phone app.

RIDOFRAZ | ISTOCK.COM



POWER TIP

In summer, run large appliances that emit heat (like clothes dryers and dishwashers) during the evening when it's cooler. This will minimize indoor heat when temperatures are highest.

DUSANPETKOVIC | ISTOCK.COM



ULZA I ISTOCK.COM

Beware of Co-op Equipment

AS YOU SPEND TIME OUTSIDE this summer, Trinity Valley Electric Cooperative reminds you to use caution near electrical equipment. Often we are surrounded by electric infrastructure without even realizing it, so look up and around to make sure you know the location of poles, power lines, transformers and other co-op property in your surroundings.

Never climb trees near power lines. If you touch a tree that is touching a power line, your body could become the path of electricity from the line to the ground. If you encounter an animal trapped in a tree near power lines or inside a substation, do not attempt to rescue it. Call your co-op for assistance instead.

Don't fly drones near electrical equipment. Remote control toys should never be flown near power lines, substations or other electrical equipment. If contact is accidentally made with a power line or a transformer inside a substation, many members of your community could be left without electricity. To avoid accidents, keep the remote control toy in sight at all times and avoid flying in windy conditions that might make you lose control.

Keep kites away from power lines. Kites can cause power outages if they come into contact with power lines, so it's best to fly them only in wide-open areas. If the wind pushes your kite near a power line, let go of it and don't try to retrieve it without help from your co-op. Never attach anything metal to a kite or fly it when it's wet.

Leave balloons inside and away from power lines. Keep them tethered at all times and attached to weights. Never use metallic ribbon on balloons. Be especially careful with Mylar balloons, whose metallic coatings conduct electricity and can cause short circuits or power surges if they come into contact with power lines. Properly dispose of balloons by puncturing them to release the helium that could cause them to float away.

Here at TVEC, your safety is important to us. Share this message of electrical safety so that you and others can enjoy plenty of summer days filled with fun. ■

Internet-Connected Devices Can Help You Save Energy

INTERNET-CONNECTED DEVICES—often called the Internet of Things—are simply gadgets and appliances outfitted with hardware that allows them to transmit data over the web. That data can be accessed by a user to monitor a device's performance and even control it with a smartphone or computer. Such control allows homeowners to manage appliance use to save energy, identify problems or defer use to off-peak times.

Here are some of the many home items that can be turned into smart devices:

- ▶ Baby monitor
- ▶ Wi-Fi booster
- ▶ Dog tracker and monitor
- ▶ Bed
- ▶ Voice assistant
- ▶ Lighting
- ▶ Smoke alarm
- ▶ Sprinklers
- ▶ Air quality monitor
- ▶ Security monitor
- ▶ Coffee maker
- ▶ Refrigerator
- ▶ Dishwasher
- ▶ Wi-Fi router
- ▶ TV
- ▶ Washer/dryer
- ▶ Oven/stove
- ▶ Slow cooker
- ▶ Thermostat
- ▶ Speakers
- ▶ Remote control
- ▶ Garage door opener
- ▶ Lock
- ▶ Car charger
- ▶ Doorbell
- ▶ Vent
- ▶ Remote control
- ▶ Exterior lighting
- ▶ Electric vehicle
- ▶ Yard lighting
- ▶ Leak detector



DOMIN DOMIN I ISTOCK.COM



SASACVETKOVIC33 | ISTOCK.COM

First-aid and emergency response courses are key components of the training for our lineworkers.

Your Co-op's Employees Are Part of the Community

KEEPING THE ELECTRICITY on is a lineworker's main responsibility, but Trinity Valley Electric Cooperative's crews live and work right here in our community. They're volunteer firefighters, youth league coaches and community organization members.

And sometimes their training is put to work in lifesaving ways.

Take John Hert, for example. The Central Texas lineworker was finishing lunch and refilling his drink at a diner in Kingsland back in February when he heard a commotion in the restroom area.

"I heard somebody say, 'Hey, she's choking!'" Hert said.

He sprang into action, putting his training to work and performing the Heimlich maneuver, which he had never had to administer in his 19 years as an EMT.

A lifelong co-op member who was at the restaurant with her husband and mother had run to the restroom to dislodge a piece of food and was struggling to breathe. Her husband was yelling for help.

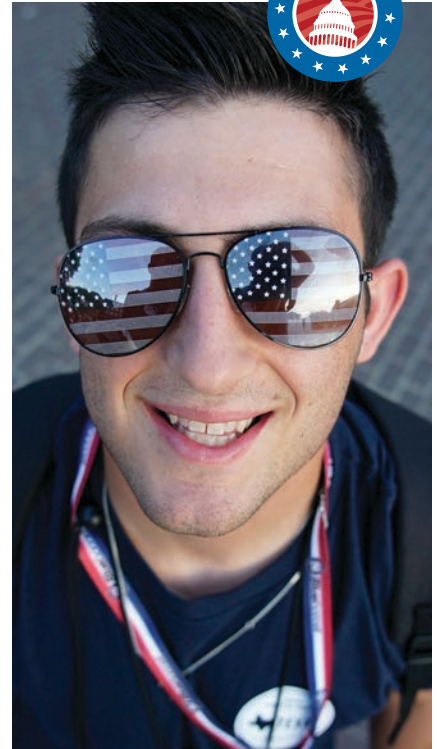
"I told him that I could help," said Hert, who left a firefighting career to work as a lineworker. After several attempts, Hert was able to dislodge the food from her airway. "We got her to a chair and sat her down, and her color immediately started coming back," he said. "It gives you a good feeling that her family was so appreciative and that your actions kept her alive."

Of course, it's not every day that lineworkers get the chance to save a life, but we do depend on them day in and day out to light our lives. Our lineworkers go through vigorous training not only on how to build, repair and maintain our electric system but on how to do it safely. That training includes courses in first aid and emergency response, so they're always ready to help their fellow lineworkers in an emergency—or their neighbor, fellow co-op member or a stranger.

TVEC employees work in all conditions, around the clock, to keep our lives powered, and they're a valuable part of our community. ■

THE TRIP OF A LIFETIME

GOVERNMENT-IN-ACTION YOUTH TOUR



Are you a Texas high school student? Would you like to travel to Washington, D.C., and visit historic landmarks—all without spending a dime of your own money?

Perhaps you'd like to meet elected officials, or maybe you're looking for an inspirational experience in the company of other Texas teens. If that sounds like you, then the Government-in-Action Youth Tour is your tour. 2023 details coming soon!

tvec.net/youth-tour

Start your adventure at
TexasYouthTour.com.

TEXAS DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Hurricane Preparedness Guidelines

Hurricane season is June 1–November 30

Preparedness Checklist

- ▶ **Make an evacuation plan.** Find activated evacuation routes at drivetexas.org or by dialing 1-800-452-9292. Call 211 to find out if you live in an evacuation zone.
- ▶ **Sign up for emergency alerts.** Make sure your mobile device is enabled to receive wireless emergency alerts.
- ▶ **Prepare an emergency supply kit.** Learn how to build an emergency kit at ready.gov/build-a-kit.
- ▶ **Review your home insurance policy.**
- ▶ **Register with the State of Texas Emergency Assistance Registry** at stear.tdem.texas.gov or by dialing 211 if you live in an evacuation zone and:
 - Have a disability or medical needs and do not have a car or other vehicle to use in an evacuation.
 - Have a disability or medical needs and do not have friends or family to help in an evacuation.

Information collected for STEAR is confidential.

Hurricane Preparedness Online Resources

Texas Division of Emergency Management: tdem.texas.gov
Texas Department of State Health Services: texasready.gov
American Red Cross: redcross.org
U.S. Department of Homeland Security: ready.gov
Office of Texas Gov. Greg Abbott: gov.texas.gov

DIVISIÓN DE ADMINISTRACIÓN DE EMERGENCIAS DE TEXAS

Preparación para huracanes

La temporada de huracanes es del 1 de junio al 30 de noviembre

Lista de verificación de preparación:

- ▶ **Haga un plan de evacuación.** Encuentre rutas de evacuación activadas en drivetexas.org o marcando 1-800-452-9292. Llame 211 para averiguar si usted vive en una zona de evacuación.
- ▶ **Regístrese para recibir alertas de emergencia.** Asegúrese de que su dispositivo móvil esté habilitado para recibir alertas de emergencia inalámbricas.
- ▶ **Prepare un kit de emergencia.** Aprenda como construir un kit de emergencia en ready.gov/build-a-kit.
- ▶ **Revise su póliza de seguro de hogar.**
- ▶ **Regístrese con el Registro de Asistencia de Emergencia del Estado de Texas** en stear.tdem.texas.gov o marcando el 211 si vive en una zona de evacuación y:
 - Tiene una discapacidad o necesidades médicas y no tiene un auto u otro vehículo para usar en una evacuación.
 - Tiene una discapacidad o necesidades médicas y no tiene amigos o familiares para ayudar en una evacuación.

La información recolectada para STEAR es confidencial.

Recursos en línea para la preparación para huracanes

División de Administración de Emergencias de Texas: tdem.texas.gov
Departamento de Servicios de Salud del Estado: texasready.gov
Cruz Roja Americana: redcross.org
Departamento de Seguridad Nacional de los Estados Unidos: ready.gov
Oficina del Gobernador de Texas Greg Abbott: gov.texas.gov

DEEPBLUE4YOU | ISTOCK.COM

TVEC

TRINITY VALLEY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Energy Quiz



What is the average monthly electricity consumption by Texas households? (2020 eia.gov data)

- A. 1,550 kWh**
- B. 925 kWh**
- C. 1,132 kWh**
- D. 1,900 kWh**

Win **\$100!**

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

June Energy Quiz: Insulation Terminology

GETTING THE MOST out of your energy dollars means understanding your home's systems. In the case of insulation, that means knowing R-value.

Insulation is rated using the R-value system. In new construction, the standard is R-13 for exterior walls and R-38 above ceilings.

Homes using spray foam insulation or a combination of spray foam and traditional batt insulation often exceed these standards.

Congratulations to Tiffany Bennett of Kaufman, who correctly answered our May quiz about lightbulb energy use.

TVEC

Charitable Foundation

Your Generosity in Action



TVEC | ERICA RAVELLA

Sue Ellen Shaw and Henderson County Library Director Michelle Zenor accept a TVEC Charitable Foundation grant of \$2,500 from Kari Wilmeth, TVEC public relations representative.

May 2022 Grants

Two grants totaling \$5,500 were awarded during the May meeting of the TVEC Charitable Foundation board.

With these two grants, the co-op has awarded more than \$102,000 of your generous donations so far in 2022 and more than \$3 million since the program's inception in 2013. 60178258005

Find more information and grant application details at tvec.net/charitable-foundation.

Friends of the Henderson County Library
\$2,500

Kaufman High School NOW Backpack Program
\$3,000



You're Invited!

The 2022 TVEC Annual Membership Meeting is set to be a family picnic to remember. Mark your calendar and plan to come out to connect with fellow members, hear from co-op leaders and meet your co-op staff.

October 6
Canton Civic Center
6 p.m. - Picnic Dinner
7 p.m. - Annual Meeting

For the Man Who Gives Everything and Expects Nothing



If you're anything like my dad, you give your family everything. Your name, your time, your values — the people in your life know they can depend on you for practically anything. In exchange for imparting all of this energy and experience, you expect nothing in return.

The point? You deserve to treat yourself once in a while. You do so much for the people you care about. Now it's time to focus on you for just a few minutes. That's where the Men's Due Volta Watch comes in. This astonishing innovation provides a digital readout that's powered by a precise quartz engine, combining both analog and digital timekeeping.

Outfitted with a stopwatch, alarm, a.m./p.m. settings, and day, date and month complications, this timepiece stands out from the crowd. With its large face and handsome, masculine design, this watch is perfect for the back nine and the happy hour afterwards. Water-resistant up to 3 ATM, this timepiece won't wimp out if you have a run-in with a water hazard.

Other hybrid watches can sell for thousands of dollars, but because we've built more than 1 million watches, we know how to create real value. That's why we can offer this timepiece for just \$79! If you're not completely satisfied with this watch, return it for a full refund.

Act quickly! This one-of-a-kind watch has been one of our fastest sellers this year. Of our original run of 2,872, we only have 389 left for this ad! In the last couple of years there's been a watch shortage, but Stauer has got you covered. If you're the kind of man who gives everything and expects nothing in return, it's time to treat yourself.

Watch Specifications:

- Complications: stopwatch, alarm, a.m./p.m. settings, and day, date and month
- Precision movement chronograph
- Stainless steel caseback and crown
- Water-resistant to 3 ATM

Men's Due Volta Watch ~~\$399~~ **\$79*** + S&P **Save \$320**

**Special price only for customers using the offer code.*

1-800-333-2045

Your Insider Offer Code: DVW141-01

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301 Salem Road • Brenham

DDM Bastrop Office
512-321-0336
1083 Hwy 71 W. • Bastrop

Photos for illustration only. Prices subject to change. Please check for your local buildings codes. Prices include color walls, color trim and galvalume roof.

*Building prices are before freight and taxes.



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"This knife is beautiful!" — J., La Crescent, MN



It was a perfect late autumn day in the northern Rockies. Not a cloud in the sky, and just enough cool in the air to stir up nostalgic memories of my trip into the backwoods. This year, though, was different. I was going it solo. My two buddies, pleading work responsibilities, backed out at the last minute. So, armed with my trusty knife, I set out for adventure.

Well, what I found was a whole lot of trouble. As in 8 feet and 800-pounds of trouble in the form of a grizzly bear. Seems this grumpy fella was out looking for some adventure too. Mr. Grizzly saw me, stood up to his entire 8 feet of ferocity and let out a roar that made my blood turn to ice and my hair stand up. Unsnapping my leather sheath, I felt for my hefty, trusty knife and felt emboldened. I then showed the massive grizzly over 6 inches of 420 surgical grade stainless steel, raised my hands and yelled, "Whoa bear! Whoa bear!" I must have made my point, as he gave me an almost admiring grunt before turning tail and heading back into the woods.

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I was pretty shaken, but otherwise fine. Once the adrenaline high subsided, I decided I had some work to do back home too. That was more than enough adventure for one day.

Our Grizzly Hunting Knife pays tribute to the call of the wild. Featuring stick-tang construction, you can feel confident in the strength and durability of this knife. And the hand carved, natural bone handle ensures you won't lose your grip even in the most dire of circumstances. I also made certain to give it a great price. After all, you should be able to get your point across without

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But we don't stop there. While supplies last, we'll include a pair of \$99 8x21 power compact binoculars **FREE** when you purchase the Grizzly Hunting Knife.

Make sure to act quickly. The Grizzly Hunting Knife has been such a hit that we're having trouble keeping it in stock. Our first release of more than 1,200 SOLD OUT in TWO DAYS! After months of waiting on our artisans, we've finally gotten some knives back in stock. Only 1,337 are available at this price, and half of them have already sold!

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Colorado's Texas Bridge

The Royal Gorge Bridge, highest in America, was built and owned by Texans

BY W.F. STRONG

BRIDGES ARE MEASURED in three ways: longest, tallest and highest. In Texas, the Fred Hartman Bridge across the Houston Ship Channel boasts the longest span at 1,250 feet and is the tallest at 440 feet. But it's not the highest. That honor goes to the aptly named Pecos High Bridge, where the deck is an astounding 273 feet above the Pecos River—nearly a football field straight up.

The highest bridge in America is the Royal Gorge Bridge—just shy of 1,000 feet high. It's in Colorado. But without Texas, it might not exist at all.

The Royal Gorge Bridge was the dream of Lon P. Piper of San Antonio. They say he stood on the edge of the gorge in 1928

and imagined laying a bridge across it. He had already built a bridge across the Rio Grande into Mexico.

The Royal Gorge would be different though. It would be a bridge to nowhere, one that would exist purely to give tourists heart-stopping views they couldn't get anywhere else in the world.

Within two years it was done—at a cost of \$350,000, or more than \$6.2 million today. When it was finished, Piper owned the highest bridge in the world, and it would remain so for 72 years.

Piper hired bridge engineer George Cole of Houston to design the Royal Gorge Bridge and to serve as the general contractor. With 80 workers, they com-

pleted the project in seven months without a fatality or any serious injuries.

As I learned about the bridge's history, I couldn't help but notice its national character. It was a bridge built by Texans in Colorado spanning the Arkansas River with Oregon timber for the deck. Cole went on to design and build a railroad that would take brave riders to the bottom of the gorge at a 45-degree angle. Now there are gondolas far above the gorge for those who want to go higher still and zip lines for those who can't get enough tachycardia in their lives.

In 1947, Piper sold the bridge to another Texan, Clint Murchison Sr., who bought it sight unseen as an investment and strangely never traveled there to walk across his magnificent possession. Instead, Murchison set up the Royal Gorge Bridge Co. and managed the Colorado property from Dallas. When he died, the bridge was passed on to his sons, Clint Murchison Jr. (you remember him—he founded and owned the Dallas Cowboys for 25 years) and John Murchison. When John died, his wife, Lucille, inherited the bridge, and they say she just loved it, traveling often to see it.

For the past 21 years, Texan Mike Bandera has served as the Royal Gorge Bridge's general manager of operations. But today, the bridge—after nearly 100 years—has Colorado ownership. After Lucille Murchison passed it on to her grandchildren, they sold it a few years ago to nearby Cañon City.

So I'd like to say this to Colorado, about the world-class bridge we envisioned, financed, built and managed for you all those years: You're welcome. ■

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



Stone Fruits

This season of abundance offers a variety of delectable options

BY MEGAN MYERS, FOOD EDITOR

When summer hits, I know I'm not the only one looking forward to that first bite of a juicy peach. My family loads up on stone fruits, making sure to have enough to cover our snack cravings and to enjoy in sweet and savory recipes. In this curry, fresh nectarines take the place of the dried fruits more commonly used. You can peel the nectarines if you like; I keep the skins intact to let them bubble away into the sauce.



Chicken Nectarine Curry

1 tablespoon olive oil
2 pounds boneless, skinless chicken thighs
2 teaspoons salt, divided use
½ teaspoon pepper, divided use
1 onion, halved and thinly sliced
4 cloves garlic, minced
1 tablespoon grated fresh ginger
2 teaspoons cumin
1 teaspoon paprika
1 teaspoon ground coriander
½ teaspoon ground turmeric
¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon
⅛ teaspoon ground cayenne pepper
1 cup chicken broth
4 nectarines, pitted and sliced
½ cup chopped fresh parsley, divided use
2 cups cooked couscous
¼ cup roughly chopped pistachios (optional)

1. In a large straight-sided skillet with a lid, add oil and heat over medium-high. Season the chicken on both sides with half of the salt and pepper, then add to the hot skillet. Cook until browned on both sides, about 12 minutes total. Remove from pan and set aside on a plate.

2. Reduce heat to medium and add onion. Sauté until slightly softened, about 3 minutes. Add garlic and ginger and cook another 30 seconds. Stir in remaining salt, pepper and spices, and cook until fragrant, about 1 minute.

3. Add a small amount of chicken broth to deglaze the pan, scraping the bottom, then pour in remaining broth. Return chicken to the pan with any accumulated juices. Scatter nectarine slices over the top.

4. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat to medium-low, cover and simmer for about 25 minutes. Remove lid and stir occasionally. Once chicken is tender, simmer uncovered for 5 minutes to thicken sauce. Stir in half the parsley and serve over couscous, with remaining parsley and pistachios for garnish.

SERVES 4

TCP Follow along with Megan Myers and her adventures in the kitchen at stetted.com, where she features a recipe for Peach Barbecue Sauce.



Apricot Scones

JANET EAKINS
NAVASOTA VALLEY EC

These tender scones, a perfect way to feature dried apricots, are wonderful straight out of the oven but also keep well, so you can enjoy them multiple days in a row.

2½ cups flour
½ cup plus 2 teaspoons sugar, divided use
2 teaspoons baking powder
½ teaspoon salt
½ cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, cold and cut into pieces
1 cup finely chopped dried apricots
1 cup plus 1½ tablespoons heavy cream, divided use, plus more as needed

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Line a baking sheet with parchment.
2. In a large bowl, combine flour, ½ cup sugar, baking powder and salt. Using a pastry blender or two knives, cut butter into flour mixture until crumbly and butter is evenly blended. Add apricots, stirring to mix well. Add 1 cup cream, stirring just until dry ingredients are moistened. If mixture looks too dry, stir in more cream, 1 tablespoon at a time, until dough is equally moistened and coming together.
3. On a lightly floured surface, scoop out dough and knead gently just to bring it together. Pat dough into an 8- to 9-inch circle and cut into 8 equal wedges. Place on baking sheet slightly separated, brush with remaining 1½ tablespoons cream and sprinkle with remaining sugar. Bake 20 minutes or until browned.

SERVES 8

MORE RECIPES >

\$500 WINNER

Peach Cream Cheese Danish

MARY MITCHELL
GRAYSON-COLLIN EC



Easy to make and bursting with peaches, this braided danish makes for an elegant presentation on the brunch or dessert table. Swap in your favorite fresh or canned fruits and serve as is or with ice cream on the side.

SERVES 6



FILLING

6 ounces cream cheese, at room temperature
¼ cup sugar
1 egg yolk, at room temperature
½ teaspoon vanilla extract
½ teaspoon lemon juice
Pinch of salt

PASTRY

Flour, for dusting
1 sheet puff pastry, thawed
1 can (15 ounces) sliced peaches, drained and sliced into bite-size pieces
1 egg
1 tablespoon water
1–2 tablespoons coarse sugar

GLAZE

⅓ cup powdered sugar
1½ teaspoons milk

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees.
2. **FILLING** In a bowl, beat together cream cheese and sugar until smooth. Add egg yolk, vanilla, lemon juice and salt and beat together until well blended.
3. **PASTRY** Lightly dust a sheet of parchment with flour and roll out puff pastry, flattening creases if needed. Set onto a rimmed baking sheet. Spread cream cheese mixture down the middle of the pastry lengthwise, leaving a 1-inch border at the top and bottom. Spoon diced peaches onto the cream cheese mixture.
4. Use kitchen shears or a paring knife to cut an equal number of 1-inch strips diagonally down both sides of the pastry, leaving ½ inch between the filling and the start of each cut. Braid the pastry strips by folding them into the middle, alternating from side to side.
5. In a small bowl, whisk together egg and water and brush over pastry. Sprinkle with coarse sugar. Bake 25–30 minutes or until pastry is golden brown. Let cool to room temperature.
6. **GLAZE** In a small bowl, whisk together powdered sugar and milk until smooth, then drizzle glaze over the pastry and let set or serve immediately.

TCP \$500 Recipe Contest

FINGER FOODS DUE JULY 10

Bite-size foods are perfect for holiday gatherings, tailgating or just hanging out. Submit your recipes on our website by July 10 for a chance to win \$500.





Easy Cherry Pie

POLLY BELT
COSERV

Instead of a bottom crust, this pie features a buttery crumble topping that bakes into the filling. Make sure to keep the syrup separate from the pie until ready to serve so the topping stays delightfully crisp.

1 can (14.5 ounces) sour or tart pitted cherries
1 cup plus 1 tablespoon flour, divided

use
1½ cups sugar, divided use
½ cup chopped pecans
1 teaspoon baking powder
¾ teaspoon ground cinnamon
¼ teaspoon salt
1 egg
¾ cup (1½ sticks) butter, melted

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees and set a rimmed baking sheet on the lower rack to catch any spilled juices.

2. Drain the juice from the cherries into a small saucepan and reserve. Pour the cherries into the bottom of an ungreased 9-inch pie dish.

3. In a medium bowl, combine 1 cup flour, 1 cup sugar, pecans, baking powder, cinnamon and salt. Using a fork, mix in egg until mixture is evenly moist and crumbly. Spread evenly over the cherries. Pour the melted butter over the crumble topping, coating it completely.

4. Bake 40 minutes, until browned. Let pie cool while you make the sauce.

5. To make the sauce, whisk together

remaining flour and sugar. Place reserved saucepan of juice over medium heat, whisking in sugar mixture. Cook until slightly thickened, then remove from heat (sauce will thicken more as it cools).

6. Serve slices of pie with spoonfuls of warm sauce over the top.

SERVES 6-8

TCP You'll find hundreds more recipes featuring these and other stone fruits on our website. Most of them are from the kitchens of *Texas Co-op Power* readers just like you.



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COURTESY CHET GARNER

Creeping Along

I was brave enough to visit the eerie Ghost Road. How about you?

BY CHET GARNER

I VIVIDLY REMEMBER the first time I set out to see the Saratoga lights. My mom loaded up the family van with as many people as it could carry so we could experience a bona fide unsolved mystery.

Generations of locals say the lights are a periodic presence of unexplainable orbs and lights dancing up and down an old Big Thicket dirt road under a dark canopy of piney woods. My mom killed the headlights, and we crept along, holding our breath. My only comfort was that I was inside a locked car.

Bragg Road (aka Ghost Road) is a rite of passage in East Texas, between Beaumont and Livingston. It's only about 8 miles long, originally a railroad spur used during the East Texas oil boom. Legend holds this run through swampy land was full of danger, and crews suffered numerous casualties from accidents, malaria and other perils. Some say those killed never left the work site.

The tracks and ties were removed in the 1930s, leaving a very straight road that anyone with a healthy dose of Lone Star courage can drive to see if the ghostly orbs appear. Some say they change colors. Others say they dart back and forth, even coming toward vehicles at light speed.

Naysayers believe they're simply distant headlights, and scientists explain them as swamp gas. But nobody can explain everything that happens out there in the dark.

It took Mom over an hour to drive the entire length of Bragg Road. Every couple minutes she would yell, "Did you see that?" or "Whoa, that was beautiful." As soon as I looked, the light (or whatever it was) would be gone.

By the end, I didn't see a thing. But I did settle the fact that I was brave enough to travel the infamous Ghost Road. ■

ABOVE Chet discovers that what you don't see can be as frightening as what you do see on the Ghost Road.

TCP A dark lane with a chance of ghosts. What could go wrong? See Chet's video on our website to find out. Watch all his Texplorations on *The Daytripper* on PBS.



Know Before You Go

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

JULY

08

Canton [8-9] Balloon Fest,
balloonfestcanton.com,
(903) 567-1849

**Lewisville [8-10] Texas
Art and Literary Festival,**
texasartandlitfest.com

09

**Galveston Bill Engvall
Farewell Tour,** thegrand.com,
(409) 765-1894

**Grapevine 1920s Ice
Cream Social at Nash
Farm,** 1-800-457-6338,
nashfarm.org

**Lampasas Toughest 10K
in Texas,** runsignup.com,
toughest10klampasas@
gmail.com

La Porte Cycling Saturday,
(281) 479-2431, thc.texas.gov

**Mason Roundup Festival
and Parade,** (325) 347-5758,
masontxcoc.com

**McDade Watermelon
Festival,** (512) 736-4302,
mcdadetexas.com

**Meridian Chisholm Trail
Roundup,** (254) 435-2381,
facebook.com/meridiantx

Palacios Poker in Palacios,
(361) 972-2615,
palacioschamber.com

**Palestine East Texas
Southern Soul Zydeco
and Blues Festival,**
(832) 892-1407, eventbrite.com

**Weatherford Parker
County Peach Festival,**
(817) 596-3801,
parkercountypeachfestival.org

**Kerrville [9-10] Summer
Market,** 1-888-225-3427,
kerrvilletexasclub.com

Palestine [9, 16, 23, 30, Aug. 6] Farm & Flower Market, (903) 723-3014, visitpalestine.com

14

San Angelo [14–Sept. 11] Banjara Textiles From a Private Collection, (325) 653-3333, samfa.org

15

Ennis [15–16] Creative Quilters Guild of Ellis County Quilt Show, (972) 878-4748, elliscountyquilters.com

Bastrop [15–17] Corvette Invasion, (512) 303-0558, corvetteinvasion.com

Laredo [15–17] International Sister Cities Festival, (956) 795-2200, visitalaredo.com

16

Paris Tour de Paris, (903) 784-2501, tourdeparis.org

Round Rock Colombian Fest ATX, (512) 903-8929, colombianfestatx.com

Fredericksburg [16–17] Night in Old Fredericksburg, (830) 997-2359, gillespiefair.com

Waco [16–17] Duel on the Brazos, (830) 385-3106, sdbaracing.com/schedule

19

Lubbock [19–23, 25–30] **Hamilton**, (806) 792-8339, visitolubbock.org

21

Waco [21–24] Deep in the Heart Film Festival, deepintheheartff.com

MORE EVENTS >

TCP Submit Your Event

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



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Pick of the Month

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JULY EVENTS CONTINUED

22

Kyle Dive-in Movie: Lilo & Stitch, (512) 262-3939,
cityofkyle.com

Lubbock Dwight Yoakam, (806) 792-8339,
visitlubbock.org

Waxahachie [22-23] Metroplex Archaeological Society Indian Artifact Show, (469) 309-4040,
waxahachie.com

Palestine [22-24, 29-31] The Little Mermaid, (903) 724-4385,
visitpalestine.com

Victoria [22-24, 28-31] The Wizard of Oz, (361) 570-8587,
theatrevictoria.org

Lockhart [22-24, 29-31, Aug. 5-6] Annie Get Your Gun, (512) 376-5653,
mygbt.org

23

Bandera National Day of the American Cowboy, (830) 796-3045,
banderacowboycapital.com

San Angelo National Cowboy Day, (325) 657-4444,
fortconcho.com

28

Buffalo Gap [23-24] Tour de Gap, (325) 829-0617,
tourdegap.com

Gonzales [23-24] Float Fest, floatfest.net

Salado [23, 30, Aug. 6], Salado Legends, (254) 308-2200,
tablerock.org

Clute [28-30] Great Texas Mosquito Festival, (979) 265-8392,
mosquitofestival.com

29

Fredericksburg [29-31] Hill Country Auto Swap Meet, (254) 751-7958,
visitfredericksburgtx.com

Junction [29-31] Sizzler Disc Golf Tournament, (361) 549-5507,
junctiontexas.com/disc-golf

San Angelo [29-Aug. 5] Wild West Fest, facebook.com/wildwestfestsanangelo

Stafford [29-31, Aug. 5-7, 12-14] The SpongeBob Musical, (713) 302-5329,
inspirationstage.com

30

Bowie July Jam, (940) 872-6246,
cityofbowietx.com

Lubbock An Evening With Journey, (806) 742-7362,
visitlubbock.org

AUGUST

02

Bandera Cowboy Capital Opry, (830) 796-4969,
banderatex.com

06

Camp Wood Nueces Canyon Old Settlers Reunion, (830) 597-6241,
nuecescanyonchamber.org

Frankston Neches River Wilderness Race, (903) 245-9490,
necheswildernessrace.com

Morning Glory

A new day is dawning in Co-op Country, and members have captured the magnificence, from dewy haze to warm sunshine. So fetch yourself a cup of coffee, and let's greet the sunup.

CURATED BY GRACE FULTZ



1 DANNY VIVIAN
NUECES EC
"The sun rises over the breakers near Port Aransas."

2 BRIAN FOX
PEDERNALES EC
Sunrise over Caprock Canyons State Park.

3 CASSIE DE LEON
TRI-COUNTY EC
"Breakfast. Need I say more?"

4 MICHAEL HRISCHUK
TRINITY VALLEY EC
"Our backyard on a cool fall morning."



Upcoming Contests

DUE JUL 10 Aerials
DUE AUG 10 Winter Wildlife
DUE SEP 10 Nature's Colors



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TCP See Focus on Texas on our website for more Morning Glory photos from readers.





Can't Top This

Finding more than just a sense of accomplishment on Guadalupe Peak

BY ANDY RHODES
PHOTO BY E. DAN KLEPPER

"HOW FAR AWAY is the peak?"

"Once you get to the really hard part, you're nearly there."

"Wait ... *this* isn't the really hard part?"

I was approaching the summit of Guadalupe Peak—or at least I thought I was—and glad to catch my breath while giving my rubbery legs a break. After encountering the descending hiker, I was momentarily discouraged but not daunted. My three-hour trek in far West Texas had so far been challenging but not overwhelming, and I wanted to carry my momentum all 8,751 feet up to the tallest natural point in the state.

The last eighth of a mile was indeed tricky—a couple sheer rock faces (I didn't look down) and large boulders to ascend—but it never felt dangerous. Finally, I took one giant step and came face to face

with a metal pyramid atop the peak.

But I also encountered something I hadn't expected: Surrounding the sculpture was a spontaneous community. About a dozen of us smiling hikers shared the rewarding accomplishment of having just summited Guadalupe Peak. Cheers of "You did it!" and "Welcome to the top of Texas!" erupted. We beamed with adrenaline and pride, knowing how much planning, commitment, resolve and stamina it took to conquer such a formidable foe.

I was also rewarded by the most spectacular 360-degree views I've ever seen in Texas. It was a perfect fall day—65 and sunny—so visibility was pristine. The sky was pure blue, a cheerful overstretched canvas. I took in multicolored ridges of mountains stretching for miles and miles beyond Guadalupe Mountains National Park.

I had started the day with a hearty breakfast and hit the trail in the cool shade. The first hour was tough, with tight switchbacks and steep ascents. I reminded myself I wasn't in a race and listened to my body's cues; when I felt weary, I'd stop for water or take a few bites of a protein bar. My trusty trekking poles helped me navigate the rocky trail and pivot up tough spots.

The second hour was easier—a large section of trees provided welcome shade, and I noticed more flora, including jade-colored desert scrub and small waxy succulents. The trail was well maintained and easy to navigate, which helped guide me through the final stretch.

By the end, my legs were fatigued, but that seemed a small price. I was excited about completing the quest. When the shiny obelisk entered my view, the smile on my face reflected the joy I felt in joining my new community.

At that moment, it felt like the top of the world. It just so happened that it actually was. ■



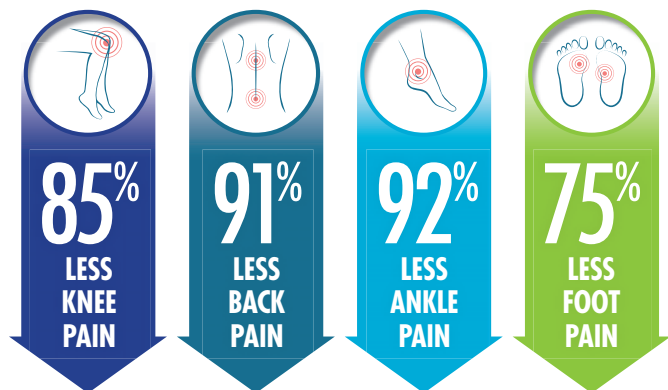
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