

ARE THERE ALLIGATORS
IN MINEOLA?

THERE'S NO KNIFE
LIKE BOWIE'S

A PIONEERING
ARCHITECT INSPIRES

Texas Coop Power

FOR TRINITY VALLEY EC MEMBERS

FEBRUARY 2024

Perfect Fit

The pieces fall into place for Texas puzzle-makers

TRINITY
VALLEY EC
NEWS

SEE PAGE 16



“Physical gold is something that you have control over—it’s in your hands.”

—DIANE, U.S. MONEY RESERVE CLIENT

Free Gold Information Kit

UNLOCK THE SECRET TO WEALTH PROTECTION



Did you know that the average U.S. family’s wealth plunged nearly 40% during the Great Recession of 2007-2009? Meanwhile gold gained more than 75%.

Don’t be caught unprepared when an unexpected economic crisis hits. Learn how to protect and grow your savings by diversifying your assets with physical gold before it’s too late.

As the only gold company led by a former U.S. Mint Director, U.S. Money Reserve makes diversifying with gold fast, easy, and secure.

Get everything you need to know about gold!

- ✓ Answers to the most commonly asked questions about gold ownership
- ✓ Information on how gold can protect and grow your savings
- ✓ Special introductory offers you won’t find anywhere else
- ✓ Two additional exclusive reports: “25 Reasons to Own Gold Now” and “Protection in the Risk Zone”

**CALL NOW TO
GET YOUR FREE
GOLD INFO KIT**



1-855-426-7168

VAULT CODE: TX42



©2024 U.S. Money Reserve. The markets for coins are unregulated. Prices can rise or fall and carry some risks. The company is not affiliated with the U.S. Government and the U.S. Mint. Past performance of the coin or the market cannot predict future performance. Prices may be more or less based on current market conditions. All calls recorded for quality assurance. Coins enlarged to show detail. Offer void where prohibited.

February 2024



06

Later, Gators?

Finding everything else during a search for the elusive gators of the Mineola Nature Preserve.

Story by Christine Switzer
Illustrations by David Moore

10 Puzzling Times

The Texas puzzle-makers helping folks while away the hours and fill their kitchen tables with beauty.

Story by Sheryl Smith-Rodgers
Photos by Dave Shafer

04

Currents
The latest buzz

05

TCP Talk
Readers respond

16

Co-op News
Information plus energy and safety tips from your cooperative

25

Footnotes in Texas History
A Cut Above
By W.F. Strong

26

TCP Kitchen
Chocolate
By Vianney Rodriguez

30

Hit the Road
Texas' Heartbeat
By Chet Garner

33

Focus on Texas
Photo Contest: Vibrant Color

34

Observations
Progress by Design
By Arianna Cannon

ON THE COVER
Art and puzzles fit together perfectly for Ericka Chambers and William Jones.
Photo by Dave Shafer
ABOVE
The wild wonders of the Mineola Nature Preserve.
Illustration by David Moore



Nasty Norther

THE COLDEST TEMPERATURE ever recorded in Texas happened in mid-February—but it wasn't during our recent icy winters.

On February 12, 1899, it dipped to minus 23 degrees in the Panhandle town of Tulia. This was during a norther that killed 40,000 cattle across the state overnight. In February 1933 thermometers also fell to minus 23 in Seminole in West Texas.

Will You ... ?

Many wedding experts refer to the time from Thanksgiving to Valentine's Day as "engagement season," with as many as 40% of proposals happening during these months.



TCP Contests and More

ENTER CONTESTS AT
TEXASCOOPPOWER.COM



\$500 RECIPE CONTEST

Frozen Treats

FOCUS ON TEXAS PHOTOS

Food and Cooking

RECOMMENDED READING

National Women Physicians Day is February 3. Read *Dr. Sofie Herzog* in our archive and you'll meet a doc who cared for the people of Brazoria a century ago.

FINISH THIS SENTENCE

Campfires remind me of ...

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 December prompt: **Can't I have just one more ... ?**

Fishing trip with my dad.

RODNEY WHEELER
BLUEBONNET EC
LYTTON SPRINGS

Chance, officer.

SHELIA WORTHLEY
TRI-COUNTY EC
FORT WORTH

Hour of sleep.

MARY MION-WEBB
VIA FACEBOOK

Moment of peace and quiet.

DAVIE LEE GILES
COSERV
MCKINNEY

Martini.

SANDRA HOLT
VIA FACEBOOK

Visit our website to see more responses.

DECEMBER 2023 How Texas Became a Desert

“Absent is my favorite John Wayne movie with a Texas storyline—*Red River*, loosely based on the creation of the legendary Chisholm Trail.”

BILL “COWBOY” LAMZA
SAN BERNARD EC
HEMPSTEAD



More Desert Classics

This reminds me of a Davy Crockett movie starring Fess Parker [*How Texas Became a Desert*, December 2023]. When Crockett came from Tennessee to Texas, he would have passed through the Piney Woods of East Texas, right?

Well, in the movie, they get to the border, and Crockett says, “Well, there she is—Texas!” And they look out upon a mountainous desert land.

My wife and I almost fell on the floor laughing.

David Winkler
Pedernales EC
Dripping Springs

Another Somber Memory

I taught with Kathy Cox in 1963 [*A School Day Like No Other*, November 2023].

While we were glued to the TV, Father Baker came in and told us that they were taking all the kids into the church to pray for the president. The younger kids really didn’t comprehend what was

happening, but my sixth graders were pretty aware, and most of them were in tears.

Father came into the church a few minutes later to tell us that the president had died. After more prayers, the kids were all sent home early.

Diane Shalala Fritel
Wolford, North Dakota

Frankly, Almost a Texan

As someone who has followed Texas music for roughly 72 years, I never thought of Frank Zappa as having much to do with Texas [*Art and Parts*, December 2023]. I always pictured him as the ultimate California dude.

Joe Brannen
Sam Houston EC
Livingston

EDITOR’S NOTE It’s true Zappa wasn’t really a Texan, but in some circles he was considered an honorary Austinite because of his repeated appearances at the Armadillo World Headquarters in the 1970s.

TCP WRITE TO US

letters@TexasCoopPower.com

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

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

Texas Co-op Power

TEXAS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chair Neil Hesse, Muenster

Vice Chair Avan Irani, Robstown

Secretary-Treasurer Bryan Wood, San Augustine

Board Members Dale Ancell, Lubbock
Mark McClain, Roby • Julie Parsley, Johnson City • Brandon Young, McGregor

PRESIDENT/CEO Mike Williams, Austin

COMMUNICATIONS & MEMBER SERVICES COMMITTEE

Mike Ables, Bellville • Matt Bentke, Bastrop
Marty Haught, Burleson • Gary Miller, Bryan
Zac Perkins, Hooker, Oklahoma
John Ed Shinpaugh, Bonham
Rob Walker, Gilmer • Buff Whitten, Eldorado

MAGAZINE STAFF

Vice President, Communications & Member Services Martin Bevins

Editor Chris Burrows

Associate Editor Tom Widlowski

Production Manager Karen Nejtek

Creative Manager Andy Doughty

Advertising Manager Elaine Sproull

Assistant Production Manager Alex Dal Santo

Communications Specialist Samantha Bryant

Digital Media Specialist Caytlyn Calhoun

Print Production Specialist Grace Fultz

Food Editor Vianney Rodriguez

Senior Designer Jane Sharpe

Communications Specialist Claire Stevens

Proofreader Louie Bond

TEXAS CO-OP POWER Volume 80, Number 8 (USPS 540-560). *Texas Co-op Power* is published monthly by Texas Electric Cooperatives. Periodical postage paid at Austin, TX, and at additional offices. TEC is the statewide association representing 76 electric cooperatives. *Texas Co-op Power's* website is TexasCoopPower.com. Call (512) 454-0311 or email editor@TexasCoopPower.com.

SUBSCRIPTIONS Subscription price is \$4.96 per year for individual members of subscribing cooperatives and is paid from equity accruing to the member. If you are not a member of a subscribing cooperative, you can purchase an annual subscription at the nonmember rate of \$7.50.

Co-op members: Please notify your co-op of address changes or other subscription requests.

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

ADVERTISING Contact Elaine Sproull at (512) 486-6251 or espru@texas-ec.org for information about purchasing display ad space in *Texas Co-op Power* and/or in our 26 sister publications in other states. Advertisements in *Texas Co-op Power* are paid solicitations. The publisher neither endorses nor guarantees in any manner any product or company included in this publication.

COPYRIGHT All content © 2024 Texas Electric Cooperatives Inc. All rights reserved. Reproduction of this issue or any portion of it is expressly prohibited without written permission. Willie Wirehand © 2024 National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.



Texas Electric Cooperatives
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



American MainStreet Publications







BY CHRISTINE SWITZER
ILLUSTRATIONS BY DAVID MOORE

Later, Gators?

Finding everything else during a search for the elusive gators of the Mineola Nature Preserve

'WHERE are the alligators?" I can hear the frustration in my 8-year-old son's voice as we scan the serene water of Beaver Pond in the southwest portion of Aquatic Loop. This is our second visit to the Mineola Nature Preserve, and we've just learned that some of the ponds are home to alligators.

Fifteen minutes earlier, we had passed a slightly winded hiker on Beaver Pond Trail, an old logging path that harks back to the land's integral role in the East Texas timber belt a century ago.

The hiker smiled, greeted us and said his name was James. He chatted enthusiastically about the nearly 20-year-old preserve that spreads over close to 3,000 acres along the north banks of the Sabine River in Wood County, north of Tyler. James said he has been hiking at the preserve every week for a few years and loves this nature space.

"Most people don't know about this place," James said. He told us he thinks the preserve is one of the best nature areas in East Texas, with bird-watching and stargazing, catch-and-release ponds, plus many trails for horseback riding. Several hiking trails crisscross through the wetland areas around the ponds, and he said we might see wild animals at the preserve too, like beaver, deer and bobcats.

Then he asked, "Have you seen the alligators in the beaver pond?"



SOON we're leaning over the splintered railing of the wooden footbridge that spans Beaver Pond. I hear dragonflies and damselflies darting over the water and the occasional plip-plop of a fish leaping to catch one.

But no alligators in sight.

Once on the verge of extinction, the American alligator can now be found throughout the eastern third of Texas, according to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. The reptile has made a dramatic comeback over the past 50 years and is now a protected game animal in Texas.

"There are a couple of large ones who hang out at the beaver pond," James told us. "They like to sleep a lot at the bottom of the pond, but I've seen them several times."

I wonder to myself if they look like floating logs in the middle of the pond. Or if they lurk in the shady areas around the bridge, with only nostrils visible above the water.

"I'll be right back!" I call to my husband and move toward the opposite side of the pond, past the warning signs admonishing in bright red letters: "Beware of Alligators." I take a few pictures of a lone white egret standing amid a clump of soft rush.

"Don't stand too close to the bank," my husband calls. "Alligators move fast. Faster than you think."

'MAMA, a snapping turtle!" My son points to a partially submerged log, its distinctive beak stretched into the sunshine.

Several months have passed since our previous visit, but we haven't forgotten our conversation with James, so we search once again for the resident alligators in Beaver Pond.

Late spring humidity presses in on us. We hear the buzz of cicadas, grasshoppers and bees among the coral honeysuckle, purple coneflower and blue larkspur. We give wide

berth to the soggy, loamy sands banking the pond, where spring rains have left the ground saturated.

Once on the bridge traversing the pond, we look out over turquoise water shimmering like a dark mirror in the afternoon sun. Giant cutgrass clusters around the bridge. In the center of the pond, we see the remains of abandoned railroad trestles from when trains transported East Texas lumber to far points in the state.

"I don't see any alligators," my son says. Unfortunately, neither do I.

"You should probably go around 3 or 4 in the afternoon," my friend Laura advises. She has heard my story about looking for the preserve's reptile residents, and she has responded in typical Texas Master Naturalist fashion. She has looked things up on the iNaturalist website.

"According to iNat," she continues, "most of the alligator sightings in the preserve have been mid-afternoon. Maybe you'll have more luck then."

Alligators are native to this part of the state, but I haven't seen one in the wild yet in the 10 years I've lived in North Texas. We plan another visit to the preserve, hoping we will finally glimpse the elusive crocodilian.

'OH, NO!' my son exclaims. "Not the alligators again!" With the steady increase of summer heat indices in East Texas, his enthusiasm for alligator hunting has definitely cooled.

We crunch over the gravel of the city-owned and -managed park's Rawhide Trail, under the welcome shade of thorny locust, willow oak and sugar hackberry trees, our faces shiny from the late June heat.

As we approach Beaver Pond, I hear the low, resonant bugle of a bullfrog and the cry of a hawk overhead. Summer blooms of climbing prairie roses and meadow pinks cluster alongside the path. Ahead of us, half a dozen monarchs the size of my palm scatter in a swirl of tangerine.

Leaning over the railing of the now-familiar bridge, we scan the tranquil, algae-laden water for any signs of an enormous reptile. A tiny green anole darts away from us on the splintered wood. We watch a great blue heron lift off in flight above our heads.

"No," I say. "Not the alligators." ■

SACRED STONE OF THE SOUTHWEST IS ON THE BRINK OF EXTINCTION



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

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

We found a limited supply of turquoise from Arizona and purchased it for our **Sedona Turquoise Collection**. Inspired by the work of those ancient craftsmen and designed to showcase the exceptional blue stone, each stabilized vibrant cabochon features a unique, one-of-a-kind matrix surrounded in Bali metalwork. You could drop over \$1,200 on a turquoise pendant, or you

could secure 26 carats of genuine Arizona turquoise for **just \$99**.

Your satisfaction is 100% guaranteed. If you aren't completely happy with your purchase, send it back within 30 days for a complete refund of the item price.

The supply of Arizona turquoise is limited, don't miss your chance to own the Southwest's brilliant blue treasure. Call today!

Jewelry Specifications:

• Arizona turquoise • Silver-finished settings

Sedona Turquoise Collection

A. Pendant (26 cts)	\$299*	\$99	+s&p	Save \$200
B. 18" Bali Naga woven sterling silver chain		\$149	+s&p	
C. 1 1/2" Earrings (10 ctw)	\$299*	\$99	+s&p	Save \$200
Complete Set**	\$747*	\$249	+s&p	Save \$498

**Complete set includes pendant, chain and earrings.

Call now and mention the offer code to receive your collection.

1-800-333-2045

Offer Code STC865-09

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

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

Stauer®

14101 Southcross Drive W., Ste 155, Dept. STC865-09,
Burnsville, Minnesota 55337 www.stauer.com



Rating of A+

B.

*26 carats
of genuine
Arizona turquoise
ONLY \$99*

A.

Necklace
enlarged
to show
luxurious
color

Stauer... Afford the Extraordinary.®



PUZZLING TIMES

BY SHERYL SMITH-RODGERS • PHOTOS BY DAVE SHAFER

These Texas puzzle-makers help folks while away the hours and fill their kitchen tables with beauty

GROWING UP, JB Manning remembers putting puzzles together with his grandmother at her home in Minnesota.

"She always had a puzzle spread out on the table," he says. "She enjoyed working on them, and they became an activity that we all did with her."

Jigsaw puzzles have been drawing people together for centuries. Most historians credit British mapmaker John Spilsbury for creating the first puzzles in the 1760s. He pasted hand-colored European maps onto thin mahogany



boards and cut them into pieces along political borders. His “dissected” maps were marketed as educational tools to teach children about geography.

In the 19th century, dissected puzzles evolved into jigsaw puzzles, named for the bladed tool used to cut the pieces. Only the wealthy could afford to buy the handcrafted wooden creations. But as manufacturing improved, makers began to utilize plywood and then sturdy cardboard, which reduced costs and enabled mass production. Interlocking pieces were introduced to keep puzzles together.

Fast-forward to the COVID-19 pandemic, when game-makers reported in April 2020 that puzzle sales nationwide skyrocketed more than 300%. Stuck at home, people took to their kitchen tables to pass the time and relieve stress.

In Texas, two small companies have cut out their own niches with special touches that make their puzzles stand out from the ordinary.

Outside San Marcos, in Wimberley, Manning—who owns the Wimberley Puzzle Co.—often worked long hours during

the pandemic to make and ship 100 puzzles a day. Orders have since returned to a daily average of 15 to 20 puzzles. The more relaxed pace suits Manning, who quit a stressful corporate job in Houston in 2011.

He then began traveling through national parks with his digital Nikon camera. While crisscrossing states in 2014, he bought a postcard, wrote on it, cut it up and mailed it in an envelope.

“Puzzle postcards were my original idea,” says Manning, a Pedernales Electric Cooperative member. “But I decided they’d be hard to sell. I got the idea about puzzles while I was sitting on an outcrop that overlooked a waterfall at Glacier

CLOCKWISE FROM OPPOSITE A signature of JB Manning’s puzzles is including pieces with whimsical shapes—and he signs a piece in every order. A buck-shaped piece stands out in a field of bluebonnets. A computerized laser cutter navigates the myriad shapes of Manning’s creation. It also cuts the pieces for his plywood boxes.

JIGSAW PUZZLES

have been drawing people together for centuries. Most historians credit British mapmaker John Spilsbury for creating the first puzzles in the 1760s.

National Park. I decided I'd use my own photos of places that people know, have been to or want to go."

He moved to Wimberley in 2017 and set up his workshop. The Wimberley Puzzle Co. released its first puzzles, made of sturdy cardboard and packaged in cardboard boxes, early the next year. They featured such iconic Texas scenes as wildflowers along the Willow City Loop near Fredericksburg, Gorman Falls at Colorado Bend State Park, and Fischer Dance Hall between San Antonio and Austin.

That fall, Manning bought a travel trailer and set up a mobile workshop. He continued on the road, taking photos while making and shipping his products.

When the pandemic closed parks, Manning returned to Wimberley. He couldn't find cardboard when supply chains slowed to a crawl in 2021. So he transitioned to Baltic birch plywood to make his puzzles and matching boxes with sliding lids.

Today his computerized equipment includes a large-format printer and a laser cutter. The wooden puzzles, which range from 130 pieces up to 1,000, are usually made to order. His nine-page online catalog has grown to include striking scenes (and animals) from other states, national parks, Route 66 and even Africa, where he traveled in 2014.

From the start, Manning's puzzles have included whimsical pieces that help tell the puzzle image's story. For instance, his best-selling Bluebonnet Sunset, photographed near Navasota, between Houston and College Station, features pieces shaped like a butterfly, dove, bee, live oak and flowers. As a special touch, he always signs a piece, such as one shaped like Texas.

Manning tucks a folded envelope inside each box with information about his company and how customers can order a lost piece. He also includes a small wooden easel for displaying the box lid or glued puzzle as desktop art.

FINE ART of a different kind inspired siblings Ericka Chambers of Little Elm and William Jones of Sachse—towns in the Metroplex—to tap into their roots and launch their own puzzle company.

"We grew up doing puzzles together as a family," says Chambers, a CoServ member. "But we had a hard time finding diversity in puzzle images. Then, when I was pregnant, I wanted to decorate my nursery around a puzzle. But there were very few to choose from."

A painting of a Black woman by artist Kwanzaa Edwards of San Antonio sparked an idea. The vibrant colors and fanciful imagery intrigued Chambers, and she suggested making a puzzle of one of Edwards' paintings. "William thought that was a great business idea," Chambers says.

Thus was born Puzzles of Color, which exclusively licenses and features artwork created by the siblings' favorite Black artists as well as Native American, Latino

and Asian American artists. In fall 2020, they partnered with a company to print the artwork and another to mount the pieces on cardboard.

At night, Chambers, then a product manager for Capital One, and Jones, a freelance graphic designer, would cut the boards on a roller die cutter in Chambers' garage. Then they boxed up the puzzles. Their parents and spouses helped, too. They still do.

A big break came in January 2021, when a local news report on the company aired nationwide. Orders shot up so much that all production had to be outsourced.

Since then, Puzzles of Color has steadily grown, both in sales and merchandise. Puzzles are available online and at special events. "They're in some boutique stores and museums, too," Chambers says. "Last February, Target carried our puzzles during Black History Month. We're working to be there year-round."

So far they've licensed with nearly 30 artists from across the country and also Kenya to create puzzles that range from kid-friendly 20- and 60-piece jigsaws up to 1,000 pieces.



ABOVE William Jones breaks up a puzzle after a die cutter did its work. OPPOSITE Nearly 30 artists illustrate the puzzles that siblings Ericka Chambers, left, and Jones have in stock.



Among their first puzzles was Edwards’ dreamy depiction of a Black woman called *To Be Loved*. Paul Kellam of Jacksonville, Florida, depicts a Black family gathered near a Christmas tree and Kwanzaa table in his *Comfort & Joy*. Steph Littlebird of Las Vegas created *Wapato Woman*, a portrait of a powerful Native American woman.

Puzzles of Color boxes tell the company’s story and those of the featured artists.

“We also interview all our artists in a podcast so we can share their methods and how they got into art,” Chambers

says. “Each puzzle has a musical playlist on Spotify with songs connected to the artist’s inspiration and what music they’re into. So as people are doing a puzzle, they can get into the artist’s mindset.

“We’ve had people tell us they don’t do puzzles,” she adds. “But they’re so enamored with the art that the experience of putting our puzzles together gives them a feeling of being an artist. And that’s cool!” ■

150 Years of
Iconic U.S. Silver
Dollars

Peace

Silver Eagle
Type 1

FIVE OF THE MOST
SOUGHT-AFTER U.S. SILVER
DOLLARS, IN ONE SET!

Morgan

Eisenhower

Silver Eagle
Type 2

Dates
will vary

YOUR ULTIMATE SILVER DOLLAR SET

150 Years of Iconic U.S. Silver Dollars from the Morgan to the Silver Eagle in One Master Collection!

The heritage of American Silver Dollars is rich and diverse, marked by stunningly beautiful designs, leading to an enduring desirability in the hearts of collectors around the world. In this iconic U.S. Silver Dollar set, spanning nearly 150 years, you're getting FIVE American Silver Dollars issued over the last 15 decades that each reflect the history, culture and economic aspects of the United States.

We've Done the Work for You with this Extraordinary 5-Pc. U.S. Silver Dollar Set

Each of these U.S. Silver Dollars is sought-after by collectors individually, but this set includes every design of U.S. Silver Dollar in American history, issued from 1878 to 2024!

Morgan Silver Dollar: First struck 146 years ago in 1878, the Morgan has a historic legacy as the coin that helped build the American West. Minted until 1904, then again in 1921, this 90% silver coin with its iconic Lady Liberty design is the most collected vintage Silver Dollar in the world. Extremely Fine (XF) condition coin included in set.

Peace Silver Dollar: With a beautiful design memorializing peace following the end of World War I, the 90% silver Peace Dollar was intended as a one-year only release struck in 1921—but it proved so popular with the American people, it was struck until 1928, then again in 1934-35. Extremely Fine (XF) condition coin included in set.

Eisenhower Dollar: The last circulating U.S. dollar coin, the Eisenhower Dollar, aka the "Ike Dollar," was prized by Americans, with its design featuring war hero President Dwight D. Eisenhower, backed by an image symbolizing the Apollo II moon landing. First struck with silver 1971-1976, the Eisenhower Dollar in this set was struck in 40% silver for collectors, and you will receive a coin in Brilliant Uncirculated (BU) condition.

Silver Eagle Type 1: The first-ever U.S. Silver Dollar minted in 99.9% silver, these coins were first minted in 1986 following President Ronald Reagan's signing of the Liberty Coin Act into law on July 9, 1985, which authorized the U.S. Mint to strike America's new silver bullion coin. This gorgeous Silver Dollar features the original, revered Type 1 "Heraldic Eagle" reverse design by John Mercanti, 12th Chief Engraver of the U.S. Mint. Brilliant Uncirculated (BU) condition coin included in set.

Silver Eagle Type 2: In honor of the popular 99.9% silver coin's 35th anniversary in 2021, the Silver Eagle received a new, esteemed Type 2 "Eagle Landing" reverse design. This is the current issued coin by the U.S. Mint. Brilliant Uncirculated (BU) condition coin included in set.

SAVE with this Ultimate U.S. Silver Dollar Set!

You'll save both time and money on this 150 Year U.S. Silver Dollar Set, with FREE SHIPPING and a BONUS presentation case, plus a new and informative 150 Years U.S. Silver Dollars booklet! Call right now to get yours before they're gone!

**Ultimate U.S. Silver Dollars Set — Regular Price \$249 - \$199
Save \$50.00 (over 20%) + FREE SHIPPING**

For fastest service call today toll-free

1-800-517-6468

Offer Code YSL133-01

Please mention this code when you call.

SPECIAL CALL-IN ONLY OFFER

FREE SHIPPING: Standard domestic shipping. Not valid on previous purchases.

GovMint • 1300 Corporate Center Curve, Dept. YSL133-01, Eagan, MN 55121

Asset Marketing Services, LLC d/b/a GovMint is a retail distributor of coin and currency issues and is not affiliated with the U.S. government. The collectible coin market is unregulated, highly speculative and involves risk. Prices, facts, figures and populations deemed accurate as of the date of publication but may change significantly over time. All purchases are expressly conditioned upon your acceptance of AMS's Terms and Conditions (www.amsi-corp.com/terms-conditions); to decline, return your purchase pursuant to our Return Policy (www.amsi-corp.com/product-return-policy). Keeping your purchase means you agree to the Terms and Conditions. © 2024 GovMint. All rights reserved.



Call the window & door company with the **most 5-star customer reviews!***



Renewal by Andersen of Central Texas and North Texas

4.8 ★★★★★
2,912 Google Reviews

93% of customers gave us 5 stars!



“

I cannot stress enough how refreshing it is to see the **professionalism** and **customer service** we experienced. All other industries should take note of how to **properly perform a service** to a customer as this team has.

—Mitchell B. ★★★★★

”

Only until February 29!

Buy two windows or doors, get the third one

60% OFF¹

with

NO NO NO for **1 year!**² if paid in full
Money Down Payments Interest

Interest is billed during promo period but will be waived if the amount financed is paid in full before promo period expires.



Call or scan before **February 29** to book your **FREE Window and Door Diagnosis**.

Austin **512-298-1858**

West Texas **432-257-3640**



San Antonio **210-961-9990**

Dallas/Fort Worth **469-606-5229**



TopWindowSolution.com

¹Subject to availability, on a total purchase of 3 or more. Buy 2 windows or doors and get the third window or door, of equal or lesser value, 60% off - applied to lowest priced window and/or door products in purchase. Cannot be combined with other offers. To qualify for discount offer, initial contact for an appointment must be made and documented on or before 2/29/24 with the purchase then occurring on or before 3/10/24. *Review aggregator survey of 5-star reviews among leading full-service window replacement companies. December 2020 Reputation.com. Products are marketed, sold and installed (but not manufactured) by Renewal by Andersen retailers, which are independently owned and operated under Central Texas Windows & Doors LLC, d/b/a Renewal by Andersen of Austin and San Antonio. North Texas Windows & Doors LLC, d/b/a Renewal by Andersen of Dallas/Fort Worth and West Texas. See complete information and entity identification at www.rbaguidelines.com. ©2024 Andersen Corporation. ©2024 Lead Surge LLC. All rights reserved.

²Plan 4521. Subject to credit approval. Rates range from 14.26% - 21.19% APR (interest rates range from 15.99% - 24.99%). Loan amount and rate will vary based on your income and creditworthiness. 12 month promotional period ("Promo Period") during which interest is billed but will be waived if the amount financed is paid in full before Promo Period expires. Monthly payments are not required during the Promo Period. Any unpaid balance and amounts owed after Promo Period will be paid over 84 monthly payments. For example, assuming the full credit limit is used on loan approval date and no payments are made during Promo Period, for every \$1,000 financed at a fixed interest rate of 24.99%, 12 monthly payments of \$0 followed by 84 monthly payments of \$28.29. This example is an estimate only. Actual payment amounts based on amount and timing of purchases. Call 866-936-0602 for financing costs and terms. Financing for the GreenSky® consumer loan program is provided by Equal Opportunity Lenders. GreenSky® is a registered trademark of GreenSky, LLC, a subsidiary of Goldman Sachs Bank USA. NMLS #1416362. Loans originated by Goldman Sachs are issued by Goldman Sachs Bank USA, Salt Lake City Branch. NMLS #208156. www.nmlsconsumeraccess.org.



MESSAGE
FROM
GENERAL
MANAGER/
CEO

JEFF LANE

Electricity Brings Everyday Value

EVEN THOUGH I WORK in the energy industry, I'm like most people—I don't think much about the electricity I use. I expect the lights to turn on when I flip the switch and the coffee maker to work each morning.

Because electricity is so abundant, we don't think much about it. No matter how much power we use, we still expect an endless supply of it with uninterrupted service 24/7. The only time we really think about electricity is when the lights go out or perhaps when the monthly bill arrives.

Given how electricity powers our lives every day, it's a great value—especially when compared to other common services and expenses. For example, think back to the cost of a gallon of gas 20 years ago. Think about the cost of groceries or a cup of your favorite specialty coffee from a few years back. In comparison, the cost of electricity has remained largely flat, unlike most other consumer goods.

Like many of you, I have a cellphone to stay connected, and I subscribe to streaming channels so I have more viewing options. Many of us consider these necessities for modern day life. We can see what we're getting for our money, and we pay the price for those services. In contrast, when we use electricity, we don't necessarily "see" all that we're getting for our money.

But with everything that electricity does for us, it's a tremendous value for our quality of life as well as our budgets. For comparison, consider

that in recent years, the costs of rent, medical care, groceries and education have all increased 5%–10%. But our base electricity rate has remained unchanged since 2008, and has only fluctuated in direct relation to the co-op's cost of wholesale energy. The bottom line: Electricity brings everyday value.

In fact, Trinity Valley Electric Cooperative continually improves our distribution network to minimize the frequency and length of outages. And knowing that electricity is a vital resource that we all use around the clock, I'm very proud of our track record. We're also continually working to improve our operations to ensure a smarter grid and exploring more renewable energy options where possible.

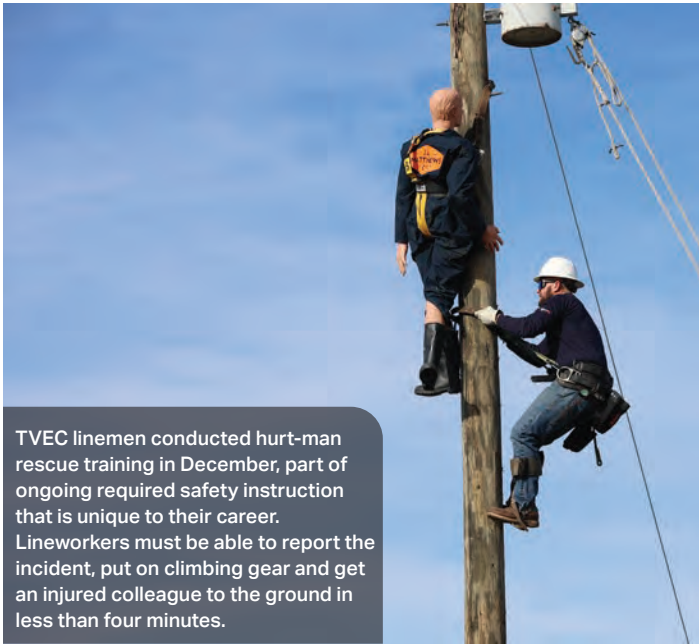
TVEC provides the reliable service you expect and deserve as valued members of the co-op. And as your trusted energy adviser, we want to help you save energy and money.

We recognize that the cold winter months can create bill challenges for many of our members, and we're here to help. If you have questions about your account or are looking for ways to save energy at home, please give us a call. TVEC is your electric co-op, and our sole purpose is to serve you and the needs of our community.

That's an everyday value. ■



GRADYREESE | ISTOCK.COM



TVEC linemen conducted hurt-man rescue training in December, part of ongoing required safety instruction that is unique to their career. Lineworkers must be able to report the incident, put on climbing gear and get an injured colleague to the ground in less than four minutes.

TVEC February Updates: Municipal Map Changes, President’s Day Closing

FEBRUARY IS THE MONTH OF VALENTINES, and we love our Trinity Valley Electric Cooperative members. Unfortunately it is often some of the coldest days of the year. Bundle up and check out the energy savings tips here in this magazine and on tvec.net and social media channels to help save energy while staying comfortable.

• **Municipal Map Updates**—As 2024 begins TVEC’s mapping team will be adjusting municipal boundaries across the TVEC service area. While most members will not be affected by this update, it is important for members to know how these updates happen and how that affects your bill.

As boundaries change, you may be added to or removed from an area that is charged a franchise fee, emergency service district fee or sales tax if it applies to your account.

For the purposes of determining a member’s service location, we use the precise coordinates of your meter. As boundaries change, municipalities must provide updated maps, and they must inform us when new maps are available.

If you feel that you have been included in a municipal franchise fee in error, contact TVEC member services and we can research the matter. You can find a full explanation of items on your bill at tvec.net/your-bill.

• **TVEC Offices Will Be Closed Feb. 19**—TVEC employees will take advantage of the Presidents Day holiday for an all-employee training event. TVEC offices will be closed, but line crews will be available to take care of any outages or emergencies.

• **SmartHub Update**—More than half of TVEC members have signed up for SmartHub. Thank you! SmartHub offers the most informative and easiest way to manage your TVEC account. Check usage, pay your bill and more from your phone or computer. Visit tvec.net/smarthub for more information. ■

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
Jeff Priest, District 2
Paul Weatherford, District 3
Edward Reeve, District 5
Jack Endres, District 7

General Manager/CEO

Jeff Lane

24/7

Outage
Hotline
Numbers

For information and to report outages, please call us.

TOLL-FREE
1-800-967-9324

AUTOMATED
ASSISTANCE
1-800-720-3584

ABOUT TRINITY VALLEY EC

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

OFFICE LOCATIONS

Kaufman District Headquarters

1800 E. Highway 243, Kaufman

Athens District Office

909 W. Larkin St., Athens

Cedar Creek District Office

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

Wills Point District Office

582 N. Fourth St., Wills Point

Lobby Hours

8:15 a.m.–4:45 p.m.

VISIT US ONLINE

tvec.net





EXTREME MEDIA | ISTOCK.COM



TVEC ENERGY
MANAGEMENT ADVISER

CHRIS WALKER, BAP

Making Dollars and Sense of Energy Efficiency

THE TERM “ENERGY EFFICIENCY” can cause confusion. Some see it as a way to a cleaner environment. Others see added expense and inconvenience.

Sorting out those views gets even more complicated as technology gives us a dizzying array of choices for using electricity, from smart thermostats to varieties of lightbulbs.

The basic idea of energy efficiency is simple—use less energy to do the same amount of work, which can save you money on electric bills.

Here’s where it starts getting confusing. Sometimes you have to pay more for something that’s considered energy-efficient. It costs more upfront but actually saves money in the long run. That may sound illogical at first—like the old phrase, “You have to spend money to make money.” But it makes sense—most moneymaking projects require an initial upfront investment, whether it’s a factory or a lemonade stand.

Pay Now To Save Later

From computers to major appliances, manufacturers are increasing the energy efficiency of their products. According to the Department of Energy, Energy Star-rated appliances can save you 10%–50% of the energy required for standard

models that don’t earn the Energy Star label. Considering most major appliances last 10 years, those savings can stack up over time.

There’s even more savings in store by replacing older appliances that weren’t built with today’s efficiency standards in mind. Improvements in refrigerators are cutting their energy use in half about every 15 years. So if your fridge is more than 20 years old, replacing it with a new high-efficiency model could save \$300 in operating costs over the next five years.

Smart power strips also show how spending now on efficiency can make money in the future. Keeping your phone charger and other electronic devices plugged in can consume electricity even after they’re fully charged or not in use. A smart power strip cuts off the electricity once charging is complete. A smart strip costs about \$40, and depending on your electric rates and how much charging you do, it could save as much as \$40 a year on your electric bills, recovering your initial investment almost right away.

Lightbulbs offer the most dramatic story of efficiency technology improvements. By spending \$5–\$10 on an LED bulb (compared to about \$1 for an old incandescent), you get a product that uses 75% less electricity and can last 20 years—compared to about a year for an incandescent bulb. The DOE estimates the average home could save more than \$200 a year by replacing incandescent bulbs with LEDs.

Maybe the best news of all is that as efficient products improve and gain popularity, they’re not always more expensive. Many less expensive appliance models have similar annual operating costs compared with the pricier versions.

Two key tips for turning energy efficiency into dollars are to know what you want from your energy use and to do your homework. Products come with a wide range of features that cost extra and may actually be less efficient—do you want a refrigerator that offers the best efficiency, or do you want to pay more for a less-efficient model that has an ice dispenser in the door?

To compare efficiency among appliances, look for the yellow EnergyGuide label, which shows information such as estimated annual operating costs. Explore the [energy.gov](https://www.energy.gov) website for online calculators and additional resources that can help you turn efficiency data into real savings on your energy bills. ■



Put a Freeze on Winter Fires

HOME FIRES ARE most common in the winter, when folks are using heat sources to stay warm. As you stay cozy and warm this winter, be smart about fire safety.

If you're using a portable heater:

- ▶ Use a heater that has an automatic shutoff so if it tips over, it turns off.
- ▶ Keep anything that can burn, such as bedding, clothing and curtains, at least 3 feet from the heater.
- ▶ Plug portable heaters directly into wall outlets. Never use an extension cord or power strip.
- ▶ Turn heaters off when you go to bed or leave the room.

If you're using a fireplace:

- ▶ Keep a glass or metal screen in front of the fireplace to prevent embers or sparks from jumping out and starting a fire.
- ▶ Do not burn paper in your fireplace.
- ▶ Before you go to sleep or leave your home, put the fire out completely.
- ▶ Put ashes in a metal container with a lid. Store the container outside at least 10 feet from your home.

If you're using a wood stove:

- ▶ Have your chimney inspected and cleaned each year by a professional.
- ▶ Keep anything that can burn at least 3 feet from the stove.
- ▶ Don't burn paper in your wood stove.
- ▶ Before you go to sleep or leave your home, put the fire out completely.

When heating your home, be aware of carbon monoxide. It's called the invisible killer because it's a colorless, odorless and poisonous gas. More than 400 people in the U.S. die every year from accidental CO poisoning from generators or fuel-burning appliances such as furnaces, stoves, water heaters and fireplaces.

Put CO alarms inside your home to provide an early warning of increasing CO levels. These alarms should be placed in a central location outside each sleeping area and on every level of your home.

As always, make sure you have a smoke alarm on every level of your home, inside bedrooms and outside sleeping areas. ■

Keep Balloons Away From Power Lines

IF YOU'RE IN LOVE this Valentine's Day, declare it in ways other than releasing balloons into the sky.

Runaway balloons—especially metallic ones—too often come into contact with overhead power lines. When they do, they can cause a temporary power outage. Hundreds of thousands of homes and businesses lose their power every year when helium-filled foil balloons drift into power lines.

The balloon's metallic coating can conduct electricity. So when the balloon touches a wire, it can start a fire or create an electrical surge. Either way, power in the neighborhood goes out, home electronics are at risk and the electric cooperative's property can be damaged.

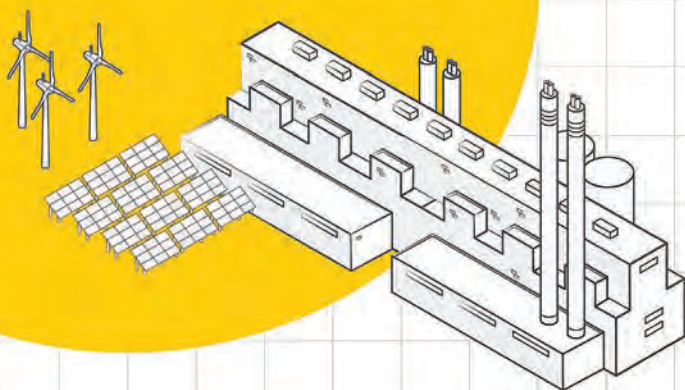
If you must take balloons outdoors, secure them with weights so they won't get loose. Don't take them near overhead power lines or deliberately set them free to float through the sky.

If a balloon does get stuck in a power line, do not try to retrieve it yourself. Instead, call your electric cooperative, report it and let the pros remove it. ■



DID YOU KNOW?

Across the U.S., more than 11,000 power plants send electricity to the grid.



A Beginner's Guide to the Electric Grid

ELECTRICITY PLAYS an essential role in everyday life.

It powers our homes, offices, hospitals and schools. We depend on it to keep us warm in the winter (and cool in the summer), charge our phones and binge our favorite TV shows. If the power goes out, even briefly, our lives can be disrupted.

The system that delivers your electricity is often described as the most complex machine in the world, and it's known as the electric grid.

What makes it so complex? We all use different amounts of electricity throughout the day, so the supply and demand for power is constantly changing. For example, we typically use more electricity in the mornings when we're starting our day and in the evenings when we're cooking dinner and using appliances. Severe weather and other factors also impact how much electricity we need.

The challenge for electric providers is to plan for, produce and purchase enough electricity so it's available exactly when we need it. Too much or too little electricity in one place can cause problems. So to make sure the whole system stays balanced, the electric grid must adjust in real time to changes and unforeseen events.

At its core, the electric grid is a network of power lines, transformers, substations and other infrastructure that span the entire country. But it's not just a singular system. It's divided into three major interconnected grids: the Eastern Interconnection, the Western Interconnection and the Electric

Reliability Council of Texas. These grids operate independently but are linked to allow electricity to be transferred between regions when backup support is required.

Within the three regions, seven balancing authorities known as independent system operators or regional transmission organizations monitor the grid, signaling to power plants when more electricity is needed to maintain a balanced electrical flow. ISOs and RTOs are like traffic controllers for electricity.

The journey of electricity begins at power plants—factories that produce electricity using various energy sources, like natural gas, solar, wind and nuclear energy. Across the U.S., more than 11,000 power plants deliver electricity to the grid.

Trinity Valley Electric Cooperative receives power from the Texas electricity grid operated by ERCOT. You can find information about the state's current energy grid conditions and future outlook at ercot.com.

To get the electricity from power plants to you, we need a transportation system.

High-voltage transmission lines act as the highways for electricity, transporting power over long distances. These lines are supported by massive towers and travel through vast

landscapes, connecting power plants to electric substations.

Substations are the point that TVEC lines begin, and where transmission line voltage is brought down to 14,400 or 7,200 volts. At that level, electricity can be carried in the distribution lines that serve your home and local businesses.

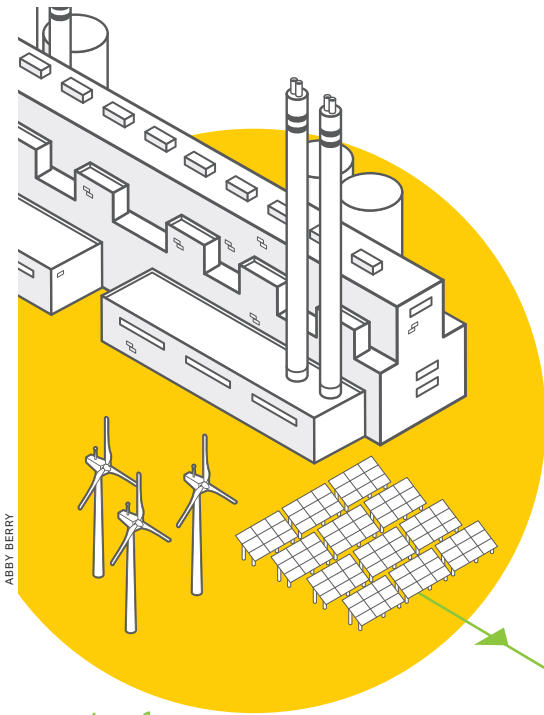
Once the electricity is reduced to the proper voltage, it travels through distribution power lines, like the ones you typically see on the side of the road. Distribution lines carry electricity from substations to homes, schools and businesses. Distribution transformers, which look like metal buckets on the tops of power poles or large green boxes on the ground, further reduce the voltage to levels suitable for household appliances and electronic devices.

After traveling through transformers, electricity reaches you—to power everyday life.

We're proud to be your local, trusted energy provider. From the time it's created to the time it's used, electricity travels great distances to be available at the flip of a switch. That's what makes the electric grid our nation's most complex machine—and one of our nation's greatest achievements. ■

CRITICAL CONNECTIONS: HOW ELECTRICITY GETS TO YOU

The electric grid is considered one of the most complex machines in the world, delivering the electricity we need for everyday life.



ABBY BERRY

step 1 GENERATION

Power plants generate electricity using a variety of energy sources, like solar, natural gas, nuclear and wind energy.

step 2 STEP-UP TRANSFORMER

A step-up transformer increases the voltage to push the electricity over long distances.

step 3 TRANSMISSION LINES

High-voltage electricity travels over long distances through these lines.

step 5 DISTRIBUTION SUBSTATION

These substations lower the voltage again so the electricity is ready to travel on distribution lines.

step 6 DISTRIBUTION LINES

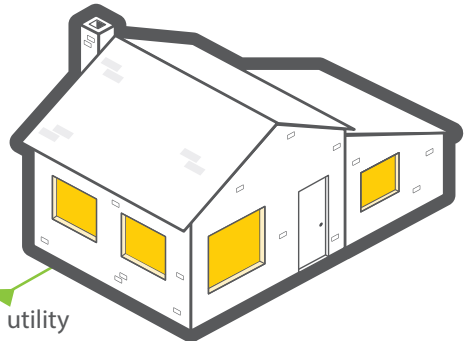
Lower-voltage electricity travels through distribution lines, like the ones you typically see on the side of the road.

step 4 TRANSMISSION SUBSTATION

Voltage is lowered at a transmission substation so electricity can travel across the local distribution system.

step 7 FINAL STOP

A transformer located on the ground or a utility pole reduces the voltage a final time, then electricity is sent inside your home, school or business.





Lineman Lunch

Scott's Crossing, Murchison

Don't let the outside fool you—it's much more than a fuel stop

TRINITY VALLEY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE LINE CREWS have been known to get by with some irregular eating habits, particularly during storm response or long hours of on-call duty. And while gas station food may sound like a poor substitute for a meal, Scott's Crossing General Store in Murchison is very much the exception to the rule.

The parking lot full of vehicles that aren't at the gas pumps are the first clue that there is more than meets the eye at the intersection of State Highway 31 and FM 1803.

Inside you will find a full restaurant that serves up breakfast, lunch and dinner favorites with all the hometown charm you could want. 55584001

While TVEC crews make Scott's Crossing a regular stop, Floyd Choyce, field inspector, has found a favorite in the fried bologna sandwich.

"I'm always looking for places that have food that kind of takes me back in time, and Scott's has that," he said. "There are other good lunch specials as well, and everything I've had has been good, but sometimes you want something you can't get everywhere else."

Find Scott's Crossing on Facebook or stop by the store to see what's cooking. ■



Win \$100 Just for Reading

Somewhere, hidden on pages 16-23, is a TVEC account number. Read closely. If the account number is yours, contact the member services department by February 29 to receive a \$100 credit on your electric bill. Don't miss out—you could be our winner.



TVEC
TRINITY VALLEY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Energy Quiz



What are most modern power lines made of?

- A • Copper**
- B • Fiber Optic**
- C • Steel and Aluminum**
- D • Zinc Alloy**

Win **\$100!**

Send your answer and contact information to **contest@tvec.coop** or contact TVEC Member Services by February 29. One \$100 bill credit winner will be chosen from all correct replies. Look for the correct answer in a future **Texas Co-op Power**.

January Energy Quiz: Transformers

TRANSFORMERS ARE MORE THAN toys and action movie characters. In fact electrical transformers have a much larger role in the electrical distribution system than many may realize.

At every step of the electrical delivery process, transformers adjust the voltage on the power lines. At very high voltages, transmission lines can carry power for dozens to hundreds of miles, while on a local level, transformers bring that voltage down to a level it can be safely carried into your home or business.

Congratulations to December Energy Quiz winner, Gillian Coleman of Wills Point.

Look for the winner of this month's contest in the April issue of **Texas Co-op Power**. ■



Your Generosity in Action

Operation Round Up Spotlight: FBC Kaufman Wellness

COMING OUT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, many organizations serving senior adults and other vulnerable communities saw a large drop in participation. There was a “new normal” of solitary living that had the potential to put some seniors at risk.

“Coming out of COVID it was a real struggle for some,” said Melinda Haynie, director of development for wellness programs at First Baptist Church of Kaufman. “FBC Wellness is the overarching program that identifies how we can positively impact the six frailties that affect people over 60, and this lifelong learning project is part of that.”

Bringing people together for meals, exercise and meaningful social interaction has become a key part of the program to address physical, cognitive, social, nutritional, psychological and religious needs in senior adults.

The TVEC Charitable Foundation grant will help cover costs to start a computer lab that will enable seniors to participate in upcoming educational opportunities..



Laura Melton, TVEC public relations supervisor, presented an Operation Round Up grant to FBC Kaufman's wellness program, represented by Pastor of Community Outreach Paula Dunn and Melinda Haynie, director of development for FBC Wellness.

“This computer lab is part of a partnership with Dallas Baptist University for our life and learning academy,” Haynie said. “We are planning five sessions per year with multiple areas of interest. The first session will have three courses including genealogy, gardening and ceramics/pottery.”

Fees for the new classes are set at \$50 per participant.

“We think the topics will draw interest, with the goal of getting people together and reconnected,” Haynie said. “The mission statement is that we want to help adults flourish, build purpose and foster resilience in the legacy-building season of life, and that takes a very intentional and focused effort.”

Find out more about FBC Wellness at fbckaufman.com/lifeandlearning. ■

December 2023 Operation Round Up Grants Awarded

Grants

Building Athens Together - \$3,000
Kaufman ISD Education
Foundation - \$3,000
Kaufman County Children's
Advocacy Center - \$5,000
FBC Wellness (Kaufman)- \$2,000

Wills Point ISD Education
Foundation - \$5,000

Food and Bill Assistance

Ten area agencies providing bill
payment assistance - \$30,000
Sixteen area food banks - \$32,000

This Fungus Is a Star

Our state mushroom that hisses and 'smokes' can only be found here—and 6,000 miles away

BY LAURA TOLLEY • ILLUSTRATION BY STEPHANIE DALTON COWAN

THE BEAUTIFUL BLUEBONNET is Texas' beloved state flower, the delicate monarch butterfly its official insect, and delicious pecan pie is the designated dessert. So how did an inedible fungus that hisses and spews "smoke" claim the prized mushroom designation in the Lone Star State? Shouldn't it instead be something tasty that can be fried and dipped in ranch dressing?

The Texas star mushroom, whose Latin name is *Chorioactis geaster* and is also known as the devil's cigar, became the state mushroom because it possesses some other distinctive traits.

First, it's an extremely rare mushroom, found sparingly in about 16 counties in Central and North Texas and thousands of miles away in a small section of Japan. There seems to be no scientific explanation as to why this mushroom exists only in two far-apart locations. (It was also spotted a few years ago just over the border in Oklahoma, but let's ignore that for now.)

Second, when its blackish cigar-like body opens, its stalks form a shape similar to the iconic Texas star.

"It is so distinct that when you see it, you can't confuse it with something else," says Harold W. Keller, a mycologist and resident research associate at the Botanical Research Institute of Texas in Fort Worth.

The mushroom, which looks nothing like a garden-variety toadstool, was first identified in Austin in 1893. It was never a widely known fungus in Texas, but the mushroom's fortunes started to shift in early 2021 when Randal Banik discovered the unique species on his family's property in Round Top in Fayette County.

Banik, a member of the Central Texas Mycological Society, had seen the star in the Austin area where he lives.

You really have to know where to look for it. Texas star mushrooms are pretty picky about their habitat, almost always attaching to decaying cedar elm stumps. They fruit in cooler months, generally September–March, and they love wet ground.

On that chilly day on the family property, Banik went walking along a creek valley, hoping—but not really expecting—to find anything special.

"But lo and behold, I found one!" says Banik, a member of Fayette Electric Cooperative.

His discovery prompted a story in *The Fayette*

County Record as well as conversations with a fellow mushroom enthusiast about getting the state designation. They met with then-state Rep. Ben Leman, who agreed to sponsor legislation in the 2021 session to make it the state mushroom.

"We told him what a unique opportunity this was for the state," Banik says, noting that only Oregon and Minnesota had also designated official mushrooms. (Utah and California have since followed suit.) "He was really excited about it."

In a statement of support for the measure, Leman noted that when the mushroom opens, it "has a starlike shape that makes it seem custom designed for the Lone Star landscape. A poignant reminder of the natural diversity that surrounds us, the Texas star mushroom is as uncommon and striking as the state that serves as its home, and it is indeed deserving of special recognition."

The proposal overwhelmingly passed the Texas House and Senate and was signed by Gov. Greg Abbott in June 2021. Texas had its official shroom.

Unopened, the cigar-like mushroom is covered with fuzzy hairs. When it blooms, it's typically the color of tan leather and has four to six spears that form the star shape. It will shoot out spores to launch a new generation of Texas stars, causing puffs of whitish "smoke" and a sound like air being released from a tire.

"It forces spores out with so much force it makes this hissing sound," Keller says.

Texas stars are typically several inches tall and about two or three inches wide. The mushroom isn't poisonous, but it's not edible either.

"It's tough, woody. You wouldn't want to eat it," Keller says.

Banik says the designation as Texas' state mushroom has sparked new interest in it, though it remains difficult to find, and research about it continues. The Central Texas Mycological Society offers Texas star mushroom walks in the Austin area in the fall and winter.

"There's more to come, more to know," Banik says. ■



See the Forest Through the Trees

Mighty Conifer Knife at an Impossible Price!



What Stauer Clients Are
Saying About Our Knives



"Outstanding knife of high quality
and a great price. I now have a
number of your great cutlery in
my growing collection!"

— Robert F., Richardson, TX

We know you. You're not interested in everyday, run-of-the-mill, common cutlery. You want something with a story, a unique feature that you can brag about. We've got just the thing for you. Our *Mighty Conifer Knife* is a unique tool with a Damascus steel blade and a handle crafted from an enhanced and stabilized natural pinecone. While our competitors are charging hundreds for similar knives, we're offering the Mighty Conifer for JUST \$99! That's what we call our Stauer Impossible Price.

JOIN MORE THAN 389,000 SHARP
PEOPLE WHO COLLECT STAUER KNIVES

Each pinecone — and therefore, each knife — has its own unique characteristics. And the back of the handle features hand tooling, a further demonstration of each piece's individual nature.

The blade is nothing to scoff at either. Constructed of Damascus steel, a modern reworking of the legendary steel forged by ancient swordsmiths, this nearly 5-inch blade features 256 layers of steel that have been folded on top of each other to increase its durability. Our competitors are charging hundreds for boring, run-of-the-mill knives with no features worth bragging about. We're asking JUST \$99 for a knife unlike any you've seen before!

With its full-tang construction and high-quality genuine leather sheath, the Mighty Conifer Knife is the perfect blade for the

person who wants to stand out. **CALL NOW!** If you're one of the first 700 587 callers for this ad, we'll throw in a pair of *Stauer 8x21 Compact Binoculars* — a \$99 value — **ABSOLUTELY FREE!** Satisfaction guaranteed or your money back!

Knife Specifications:

- 9 1/2" overall length. Full-tang construction
- Damascus steel blade and natural pinecone handle
- Genuine leather sheath

Mighty Conifer Knife

~~\$299~~ \$99* + S&P **Save \$200**

**You must use Insider Offer Code: MCK160-01 to get this price.*

California residents please call regarding Proposition 65 regulations before purchasing this product.

1-800-333-2045

Your Insider Offer Code: MCK160-01



EXCLUSIVE **FREE**

Stauer 8x21
Compact Binoculars
a \$99 value
with your purchase
of the Mighty
Conifer Knife

Stauer, 14101 Southcross Drive W., Ste 155, Dept. MCK160-01, Burnsville, MN 55337 www.stauer.com

Stauer | AFFORD THE EXTRAORDINARY®



A Cut Above

No knife influenced the world like Jim Bowie's behemoth

BY W.F. STRONG • ILLUSTRATION BY MARK LEMON

A RELATIVELY NEW phenomenon in modern society is the rise of social media influencers, personalities skilled at persuading followers to pay attention or even buy things. But how many of today's influencers will still be known in 200 years?

How many can compare to the lasting magic of Jim Bowie?

Many assume Bowie became famous defending the Alamo in 1836. In truth, he was already quite famous 10 years before—as a knife fighter and designer, frontiersman, and all-round world-class badass. He was truly a “man’s man” by any standard.

His world-renowned Bowie knife was probably first made at the direction of his brother, Rezin Bowie. But later versions with Jim’s modifications became the enduring design.

Jim Bowie used the earlier knife in a bloody skirmish called the Sandbar Fight, when Jim was nearly killed by two assailants who shot him on a Mississippi River sandbar in 1827. One man stabbed Bowie with a cane sword, but the sword bent when it hit Bowie’s sternum, giving him a moment to spring upon his attacker with his huge knife, killing him. Bowie then badly wounded the second assailant.

You see, in those days, you wanted to

take a knife to a gun fight because guns were notoriously unreliable. Bowie miraculously survived, and the account of the Sandbar Fight went global, thanks to a journalist who witnessed it. Bowie and his blade were thus immortalized.

What made the knife stand out was its size. The original was almost a foot long, but the subsequent model was even longer—and razor sharp. About one-third of the top of the knife, the clip point, was honed to a fine edge—so it cut both ways.

Its lethality became legendary. The *Red River Herald* of Natchitoches, Louisiana, wrote that after the Sandbar Fight, “all the steel in the country, it seemed, was being converted into Bowie knives.” That’s influence!

When Bowie arrived at the Alamo nine years later, with his notoriety on the rise and his famous knife at his side, even Davy Crockett was impressed. He said the sight of a Bowie knife “makes you queasy ... especially before breakfast.”

Bowie’s last stand at the Alamo elevated his fame. It was widely claimed, at least what I heard as a kid, that he took out 10 Mexican soldiers with his knife in close-quarters combat. This is improbable given that Bowie was critically ill from typhoid fever, but a good legend will kill probability any day of the week.

I do like what Bowie’s mama said when she learned of his death: “I’ll wager no wounds were found in his back.”

Soon after, various versions of the Bowie knife began to be made by blacksmiths. Texas Rangers carried them. The Marines had their own version. In popular films, Rambo never left home without his and neither did Crocodile Dundee.

It’s as famous as the Swiss Army knife or Buck knife. Given the ubiquity of Bowie’s blade in the world today—nearly 188 years after his death—I’d say Bowie is a greater influencer than any social media star you can name. ■

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



Chocolate

Think outside the box with these delectable delights

BY VIANNEY RODRIGUEZ, FOOD EDITOR

This twist on a traditional tres leches cake begins with a boxed cake mix. And when one of the tres leches—three milks—poured over the warm cake is chocolate, you know you're in for sinfully sweet goodness.

Quick and Easy Chocolate Tres Leches Cake

CAKE

- 1 package white cake mix (14.25 ounces)**
- 3 eggs, room temperature**
- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup milk**
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (1 stick) butter, room temperature**
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract**
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon**
- 1 can sweetened condensed milk (14 ounces)**
- 1 can evaporated milk (12 ounces)**
- 1 cup chocolate milk**

TOPPING

- 1 cup heavy whipping cream**
- 3 tablespoons powdered sugar**
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract**
- 1 cup semisweet chocolate chips**

- 1. CAKE** Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Coat a 9-by-13-inch pan with cooking spray.
- 2.** In a bowl, beat together cake mix, eggs, milk, butter, vanilla and cinnamon until smooth.
- 3.** Pour into prepared baking pan. Bake 25–30 minutes or until a toothpick inserted comes out clean.
- 4.** Cool in pan 10 minutes.
- 5.** Use a fork to pierce holes in cake. Slowly pour the sweetened condensed milk, evaporated milk and chocolate milk over the cake.
- 6.** Allow cake to cool completely. Cover and chill overnight in the refrigerator.
- 7. TOPPING** In another bowl, beat whipping cream, powdered sugar and vanilla until light and fluffy.
- 8.** Spread over cake and top with chocolate chips.

SERVES 12

TCP Follow Vianney Rodriguez while she cooks in Cocina Gris at sweetlifebake.com, where she features a recipe for Mole Braised Brisket.





Marlene's Chocolate Doughnuts

TINA WEBB
BLUEBONNET EC

Making homemade chocolate doughnuts is easier than you think. Webb's recipe, passed down through generations, begins with a batter that comes together in a snap.

- 1½ teaspoons distilled white vinegar**
- 1 cup milk**
- 1 teaspoon baking soda**
- 3 cups flour**
- 1 cup sugar, plus 4 tablespoons for dusting**
- ½ teaspoon salt**
- 3 teaspoons baking powder**
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon, divided use**
- 2 eggs**
- 2 tablespoons (¼ stick) butter, melted**
- 1½ ounces unsweetened chocolate (1½ squares), melted**
- 1½ teaspoons vanilla extract**
- 1 cup vegetable oil**

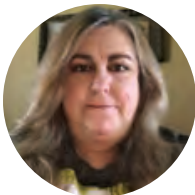
1. In a bowl, combine vinegar and milk and stir in baking soda to dissolve.
2. In another bowl, sift together flour, 1 cup sugar, salt, baking powder and 1 teaspoon cinnamon.
3. Stir in milk mixture, eggs, butter, chocolate and vanilla.
4. Roll out dough to ½-inch thickness on a floured surface, adding additional flour if dough seems too moist.
5. Cut dough into doughnuts using a doughnut cutter.

CONTINUED >

\$500 WINNER

Hershey Bar Chocolate Cake

KAREN HOLMES
JASPER-NEWTON EC



This customer favorite at the tearoom for which Holmes baked became her husband's requested birthday cake each year. Rich, gooey cake layers sandwiched between thick, fluffy icing is a chocolate lover's dream.

SERVES 12



CAKE

- 2 cups flour**
- ½ cup sugar**
- 1 teaspoon baking soda**
- ½ teaspoon salt**
- ¼ cup unsweetened cocoa powder**
- 3 eggs**
- ½ cup buttermilk**
- 1 cup water**
- 1 cup vegetable oil**
- 1½ teaspoons vanilla extract**

FROSTING

- 1 package cream cheese (8 ounces), room temperature**
- 2 cups sugar**
- 1 cup powdered sugar**
- 1 container whipped topping (12 ounces)**
- 4-ounce chocolate bar, chopped**
- ½ cup chopped pecans**

1. **CAKE** Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Coat two 9-inch round cake pans with nonstick spray.
2. In a bowl, whisk together flour, sugar, baking soda, salt and cocoa powder.
3. In another bowl, whisk together eggs, buttermilk, water, oil and vanilla.
4. Pour wet ingredients over dry ingredients. Mix well for about 2 minutes.
5. Divide batter evenly between cake pans. Bake 30 minutes.
6. Let cakes cool and remove from pans.
7. **FROSTING** In another bowl, cream together cream cheese, sugar and powdered sugar.
8. Fold in whipped topping.
9. Spread half the frosting over one cake. Top with second cake and spread remaining frosting over top.
10. Decorate with chopped chocolate and pecans.

TCP \$500 Recipe Contest

FROZEN TREATS DUE FEBRUARY 10

We all know it won't be too long before we're trying to beat the heat. Share your favorite recipes for cold desserts—ice creams, popsicles and beyond—for a chance to win \$500. Go online and submit your favorite by February 10.



RECIPES CONTINUED

6. Heat oil to medium-high in a medium skillet and fry doughnuts until golden-brown on both sides.
7. In a small bowl, combine 4 tablespoons sugar and remaining 1 teaspoon cinnamon and dust over hot doughnuts.

MAKES ABOUT 24-30 DOUGHNUTS

Chocolate Cobbler

LINDA J. MOORE
SOUTH PLAINS EC

Moore says she prefers dark chocolate cocoa powder in the batter of this family favorite, which comes out of the oven fudgy and brownielike.

BATTER

- 1/2 cup (1 stick) unsalted butter
- 1 1/2 cups sugar
- 4 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder



- 2 cups flour
 - 2 teaspoons baking powder
 - 1/4 teaspoon salt
 - 1 cup milk
 - 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- TOPPING
- 2 cups sugar
 - 1/2 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
 - 3 cups boiling water
 - Whipped topping (optional)
 - Unsweetened cocoa powder (optional)

1. BATTER Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Melt butter in oven in a 9-by-13-inch baking dish, removing from oven once butter has melted.
3. In a bowl, stir together sugar, cocoa powder, flour, baking powder, salt, milk and vanilla. Spoon mixture over melted butter, but do not stir.
4. TOPPING In another bowl, stir together sugar and cocoa powder and sprinkle over batter in pan.
5. Pour boiling water over all, but do not stir. Bake until top has set, 35-40 minutes.
6. Allow cobbler to cool 15 minutes. Serve with whipped topping and dust with cocoa powder, if desired.

SERVES 8

TCP Not enough chocolate? You'll find many more recipes in our online archive. Just search "chocolate."

FINALLY ... LIFE INSURANCE YOU CAN AFFORD
BUY \$100,000 LIFE INSURANCE

FREE INFORMATION • FREE INFORMATION • FREE INFORMATION • FREE INFORMATION



1175

PAY THE AMOUNT OF

One Hundred Thousand Dollars

\$ 100,000.00

MONTHLY RATES AS LOW AS:

ADULTS:\$3.49

CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN:\$2.17

EASY TO BUY

NO MEDICAL EXAM - SIMPLE APPLICATION

NO WAITING PERIOD

BUY DIRECT

Non-Negotiable



SCAN TO VISIT US ONLINE

For Immediate Service Call

1-855-766-4181

Or Visit ForGlobeLife.com

PERSONAL OFFER CODE:

ICCX1R7X

\$100,000 Adult Life Insurance
Monthly Rates As Low As \$3.49

- Rate schedule is based on your current age and is guaranteed for the life of the policy.
 - Coverage is also available for your spouse and other family members.
 - Benefits will NEVER be canceled or reduced for the life of the policy if premiums are paid on time.
- Policy Form #SRTCV/SRTCV R13 or R17, or #SRTCV90MA in MA
CA Residents, for your consumer rights, please visit forglobelife.com/privacy

\$30,000 Children's Life Insurance
Monthly Rates As Low As \$2.17

- Rates are based on your children's or grandchildren's present age and never increase for any reason.
 - Benefits will NEVER be reduced or canceled.
 - Give your children a financial head start right now. Your policy builds CASH VALUE for your family's needs.
- Policy Form #GWL2001 or GWLA001

Choose \$5,000, \$10,000, \$20,000, \$30,000 or up to \$100,000 Coverage
(Offer may vary, \$100,000 coverage not available in all states.)

WINTER SAVINGS



Bolt Together Steel Building Kits

Customer Service
Second to None

DDM Brenham Office
979-251-9503
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.



All Metal Structures



Made in Texas



Custom Barndominiums/Metal Houses

Affordable · Low Maintenance · Energy Efficient



40'x50'x12'



30'x40'x12'



Call today for our best pricing!

~~\$14,485~~ \$12,385-30x40x12

2-10x10 roll up doors, 1-3070 walk door

~~\$22,710~~ \$19,310-40x50x12

2-10x10 roll up doors, 1-3070 walk door

Freight and taxes not included in prices.

www.ddmbuildings.com

WD Metal Buildings

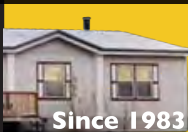


Turn Key Metal Buildings Info
WDMB.com

PERMA-ROOF®

from Southern Builders

Steel Mobile Home Roofing



Since 1983

High energy bill?
Roof rumble?
Leaks?

MOBILE HOME ROOF OVER SYSTEMS

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

BRUSH SHARK

SKID STEER MOUNTED SHEAR
• 1/2" to 6" diameter trees and brush.
• Perfect for cedar, shin oak, persimmon, mesquite.
(512) 263-6830 • www.brushshark.com

Low Cost Pole Barns
26' x 48' x 10'
3 Sides Enclosed

Call now for our best pricing!
Hay/Horse Barns, Shops, Decks, Concrete Work and Pad Sites
Call Ron: 512-367-0428

ARK-LA-TEX
SHOP BUILDERS
"WE GOTCHA COVERED"
SHOPS • BARN • CABINS • WWW.SHOPSBUILT.COM
830-730-0515
8670 IH 35 N NEW BRAUNFELS, TX

BUILDINGS OF ALL SIZES
Shops • Garages • Barns • Equipment Sheds • Barndominiums
WE MAKE DREAMS COME TRUE!
Price includes all labor and materials with 4" steel reinforced concrete slab with moisture barrier, one 10'x10' heavy duty roll up door, one 3 foot steel entry door, concrete apron, electric slab. *Dirt may be extra.

TCP Marketplace
Across Town | Across Texas

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



COURTESY CHET GARNER

Texas' Heartbeat

San Felipe de Austin was home for the first Texans 200 years ago

BY CHET GARNER

IT WAS EARLY MORNING, and I was flying down Interstate 10 with my radio on full blast, a fresh cup of coffee in my hand and the air conditioning cranked. Needless to say, it was a far cry from the way the first pioneers traveled through this same stretch of Texas in the 1820s to settle one of our most important towns.

I needed to connect with my past and so I set my GPS for the San Felipe de Austin State Historic Site in Sealy.

Nestled on the banks of the Brazos River, this charming site was once the headquarters for Stephen F. Austin's colony and is now a fascinating glimpse into the lives of early Texans. I stepped into the museum and was amazed at the interactive exhibits, artifacts and displays that told the story of how Austin led 297 families—the Old Three Hundred—here and established the unofficial capital of Texas. This act of courage earned Austin the title of the Father of Texas.

For more than a decade, San Felipe was a major hub, and everyone important to the Texas Revolution passed through here.

I walked the timeline of how the town grew exponentially but was then abandoned and burned to the ground in a moment of fear known as the Runaway Scrape in 1836. Until recently, visitors had to use their imagination to envision the bustling townsite. But today, visitors can step inside meticulously recreated buildings, including a cabin and Austin's empresario office. Fully costumed reenactors transported me back 200 years.

Visiting San Felipe gave me a new appreciation for the lifestyle and struggle of Texans. Whether you're a history enthusiast, a nature lover or simply need to be reminded of how thankful you are for modern conveniences, this is a must-see destination. ■

ABOVE Chet, right, with Bryan McAuley, manager at the San Felipe de Austin State Historic Site.

TCP Join Chet as he sees life as the Old Three Hundred did. And see all his Texplorations on *The Daytripper* on PBS.



Know Before You Go

Call ahead or check an event's website for scheduling details, and check our website for many more upcoming events.

FEBRUARY

07

Laredo [7–10] Birding Festival, (956) 718-1063, laredobirdingfestival.org

08

Brenham [8–11, 15–18, 22–25] The Crucible, (979) 830-8358, unitybrenham.org

09

Boerne [9–10] Chocolate Walk, (830) 248-1635, ci.boerne.tx.us

Fredericksburg [9–11, 16–18, 23–25] How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying, (830) 997-3588, fredericksburgtheater.org

10

Amarillo Triosarachops Devours, (806) 376-8782, amarillosymphony.org

Round Top Valentine's Concert and Bybee Library Fundraiser and Reception, (979) 249-3129, festivalhill.org

Surfside Beach Marathon and Half Marathon, surfsidebeachmarathon.com

Bay City [10, 16–18, 23–29, March 1–2] Matagorda County Fair, (979) 245-2454, matagordacountyfair.com

15

Alpine [15–17] Lone Star Cowboy Poetry Gathering, (432) 216-2167, lonestarcowboypoetry.com

16

Brenham [16–17] Texas Trails Quilt Show, friendshipquiltguild.weebly.com

Waller [16–17] Chili When It's Chilly Cook-Off, chiliwhenitschilly.org

17

Lake Jackson A Celebration of American Black Composers, (979) 265-7661, bcfas.org

San Felipe Nature Talks: Invasives and Exotics, (512) 461-4780, tpwd.texas.gov

19

Brenham [19-24] Fortnightly Club Annual Used Book Sale, (979) 830-5665, visitbrenhamtexas.com

23

Luling [23-24] American Legion Post 177 Chili and BBQ Cook-Off, (512) 554-5389, facebook.com/legion177

24

Victoria Tchaikovsky Spectacular, (361) 576-4500, victoriasymphony.com

26

Decatur [26-March 3] Wise County Youth Fair, wcyouthfair.org

29

Brownsville [29-March 2] Charro Days, (956) 542-4245, charrodaysfiesta.com

MARCH

01

San Angelo [1-2] Brews, Ewes & BBQ; (325) 655-2345; facebook.com/brewsewesbbq

02

Huntsville Texas Independence Day and Gen. Sam Houston's Birthday Celebration, (936) 291-9726, huntsvilletexas.com

TCP Submit Your Event

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

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

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

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

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



Hit the Road

TCP Plan now

TexasCoopPower.com/events



ONE-TIME, LIFETIME LAWN SOLUTION

PRESEASON SPECIAL
SAVE 50%
AND GET FREE SHIPPING

PLANT IN YOUR EXISTING LAWN.
Ideal for planting areas up to 500 sq. feet.
135 ready-to-plant 3x3 inch
SUPER PLUGS for just **\$125**
including shipping.

GUARANTEED TO GROW or
We'll Replace Grass FREE!

LIMITED OFFER
ENDS FEBRUARY 29, 2024
SAVE TODAY

USE CODE 5223

www.BestZoysia.com
410-756-2311

Scan QR Code

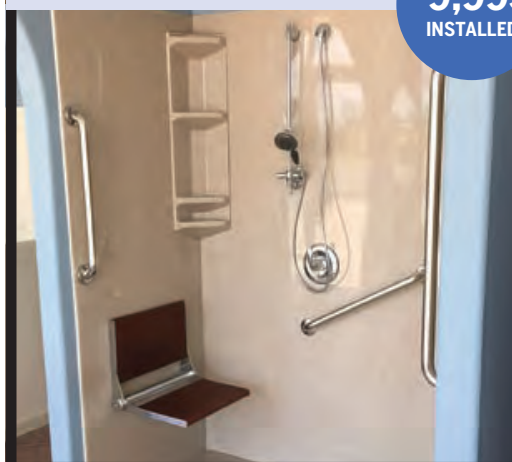


Zoysia Farm
NURSERIES

© 2024 Zoysia Farm Nurseries
3617 Old Taneytown Rd.
Taneytown, MD 21787



\$9,995
INSTALLED



NEW YEAR SPECIAL

**YOUR CHOICE OF A
WALK-IN SHOWER
OR WALK-IN TUB**

Lifetime Warranty
Custom Sizes Available
100% Financing Available
A+ BBB Rating
Good Contractors List



BEST BUY WALK-IN TUBS
FEATURING "SEALTITE" TECHNOLOGY

Trusted by Texans for 18 Years
Tubs and Showers
Made in America
Visit Our Texas Showroom

Call for More Info
682-205-3532 • 888-825-2362
bestbuywalkintubs.com

Heirloom Seed Kits

100% NON-GMO • VEGETABLES, FRUITS, & HERBS

Start A Home Garden Or Store Seed Vaults For Years To Come!

Provide for your family with **100% Non-GMO / Non-Hybrid** heirloom seeds that have been passed down from generation to generation.



(125) VARIETY SEED VAULT

(With Ammo Storage Box) Includes 22,000+ seeds & 125 varieties of vegetables, garden-fruits, & herbs, packed in an ammo box, for long-term storage. \$119

(50) VARIETY SEED KIT

50 varieties of vegetables, garden-fruits, & herbs, packed in a moisture proof, mylar bag.

Now Shipping Fresh Seeds
for the 2024 Growing Season!



HEARTSGOOD
— FARMS —

HeartsgoodFarms.com

(866) 861-7111

Family-owned & operated.
Cave Springs, Arkansas



TCP E-news

Fast and Direct

Get our best content delivered to your inbox each month! We bring you everything Texas: its culture, people, food, history and travel, plus our monthly contest winners and more.

TCP Sign up now

TexasCoopPower.com/join



TCP Gift Shop

Find Texas Treasures

Texas food, music, housewares, gifts and more—find it all on our website, along with great deals for TCP readers.

Just pick and click—it's easy to shop for friends and family without leaving home.

TCP Shop now

TexasCoopPower.com/shop

Vibrant Color

The sun rises, and the world becomes alive with color. As we marvel at hues both artificial and natural, some photographers are fortunate enough to capture the moment with vivid clarity. Come along as we wind down the back trails to see what catches the eye.

CURATED BY GRACE FULTZ

1 KRISTEN BROWN
PEDERNALES EC

A grackle finds something to eat on the trail at Brushy Creek Park in Cedar Park.

2 MARK HOLLY
BANDERA EC

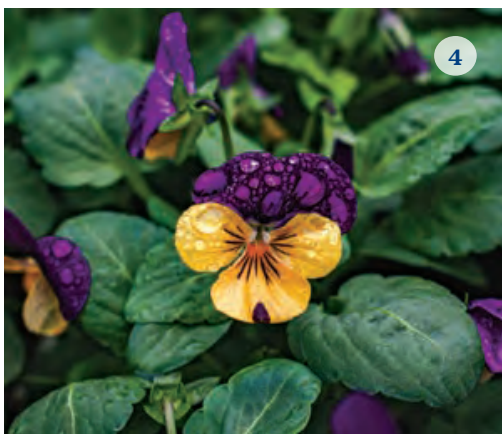
An iconic San Antonio holiday scene on the Riverwalk.

3 DANNY VIVIAN
NUECES EC

"A fiery sunrise on a summer morning on Mustang Beach, the most beautiful sunrise spot in Texas."

4 ALLISON MORROW
WOOD COUNTY EC

A horned violet.



Upcoming Contests

DUE FEB 10 Food and Cooking

DUE MAR 10 Shells and Scales

DUE APR 10 Textures



Enter online at TexasCoopPower.com/contests.

TCP See Focus on Texas on our website for many more Vibrant Color photos from readers.



Progress by Design

Beverly L. Greene framed a future for architects like her

BY ARIANNA CANNON
ILLUSTRATION BY
JOHN JAY CABUAY

I KNEW AT A YOUNG AGE that I wanted to change the world.

What I didn't know was how to go about doing it or even who I was to think that I could change the world. I did know that I was drawn to architecture. Maybe that would be my purpose, the mode by which I would change the world.

But less than 100 years ago, I couldn't have pursued that purpose.

Beverly L. Greene needed to come along first. In 1942, she became the first known female African American licensed architect in the U.S. In a field dominated by white men, she stayed true to herself and pursued a path into the unknown.

She earned a degree in architectural engineering, overcame preconceived notions—even being forced to move to New York due to a lack of opportunities

for a Black female architect in Chicago—and persisted.

"I wish that young [Black] women would think about this field," she said in an interview. "I wish some others would try it."

I answered that rallying call by enrolling as an architecture student at Texas Tech University in 2021, knowing full well that despite the many years that have passed since Greene's historic achievements, the playing field is still not level.

While history was made in 2020 as the number of licensed female Black architects reached 500, the national registrar reported that just 0.5% of licensed architects were Black women. Not even 1% of architects look like me.

But if Greene could achieve all that she did—including working on the UNESCO headquarters in Paris—during segregation and a world war, then the only limitations on the legacy I create are me.

It's possible that pursuing architecture will have no effect on a global scale, and it's possible that I'll face criticism and setbacks. It's even highly likely that I will fail in this field, which has a higher dropout rate than engineering and medicine.

If learning about Greene taught me anything, it's that success in life is often-times transient and short-lived, but your effect on others—your creations, all those beautiful gifts—those outlive you.

So if someone asked me today what I want my life or my career to look like, I won't tell them that I want to help people in an unconventional but impactful way. I won't tell them that I want to create bonds through and with the built environment. I won't even tell them that I want to design a world in which everyone has access to safe, sustainable and affordable shelter.

Instead I'll tell them this: I want to be remembered like Beverly L. Greene because I helped shape the future for those who came after me. ■

Country Charm and a Bit of Bling

Little Rhinestone Cowgirl

An Exclusive
Ashton-Drake Baby Doll

RealTouch® vinyl
that feels so lifelike

Custom-designed ensemble
with shimmering rhinestones

Poseable with
hand-rooted hair



Preciously poseable
for adorable positioning



18" long. Not intended
for children under 6.

The Ashton-Drake Difference

- **A Connection You'll Treasure**
Connect with babies, collectibles, and more
- **The Gold Standard of Artistry**
Creations from world renowned artists
- **Premium Materials**
The finest fabrics and signature materials
- **Special Features and Tech**
Unique interactive innovations
- **A Guarantee of Quality**
Safety tested with over 35 years of excellence
- **A Customer-First Philosophy**
Service by phone, Facebook, and email, with a 365-Day guarantee



So sweet, she'll wrangle your heart

There are two things this sassy little cowgirl can't get enough of – the country life and blingy rhinestones. That's why the Ashton-Drake artists couldn't resist dolling her up in a sparkly country gal outfit custom-designed to match her down-home personality. The result is an adorable little lady so full of country charm, she'll rope you in the moment you see her!

Created by Master Doll Artist Ping Lau, this baby doll features soft RealTouch® vinyl, hand painting, and hand-rooted hair. She's poseable and can be seated, and she'll surely capture your heart with her sweet-as-molasses smile! Her custom ensemble by Victoria Jordan features rhinestones and fringe, as well as denim chambray ruffle bloomers with bows. Lastly, for an extra bit of sparkle, she wears bandana barefoot sandals and a matching headband, each accented by a glistering rhinestone.

Saddle up and order today!

An original doll designed by Ping Lau can sell for thousands, but *Little Rhinestone Cowgirl* can be yours for four payments of just \$34.99. That's a total of only \$139.95 (plus \$14.99 shipping and service)! Reserve her today!



www.ashtondrake.com/3280

03-03280-001-BI

NEW

ASHTON DRAKE

9200 North Maryland Ave. Niles, Illinois 60714-1397

PLEASE RESPOND PROMPTLY

☐ **YES!** Please reserve *Little Rhinestone Cowgirl* for me as described in this announcement.

Name (please print clearly) _____ Telephone _____

Address _____ Apt. No. _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-mail Address _____

03-03280-001-D54801

Please allow 2 to 4 weeks after initial payment for delivery. Sales subject to product availability and order acceptance.



MUELLER METAL ROOFING

Protection and Style all with One Roof.

Beauty, strength, and durability are what you get with a Mueller metal roof. Select from our designer colors and various panel styles to complement your home. Protection and curb appeal from a company you can trust.



Learn more at: Muellerinc.com 877-2-MUELLER (877-268-3553)