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SAVOR THE  
WHOLE ENCHILADA

# Texas Coop Power

FOR TRINITY VALLEY EC MEMBERS

MAY 2025

## Chasing Chaos

Mother Nature's havoc  
is a siren song  
for storm chasers

TRINITY  
VALLEY EC  
NEWS

SEE PAGE 16



State of Texas

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2. ENERGY STAR rated units qualify for 30% through 2032,  
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# May 2025



12

## 06 Twisted Approach

Storm chasers go to great and dangerous lengths for thrills and scientific research.

*By Sheryl Smith-Rodgers*

## Bavaria, By Way of Texas

Yodeling takes this German back home, even after decades of running a restaurant and entertaining in tiny Walburg.

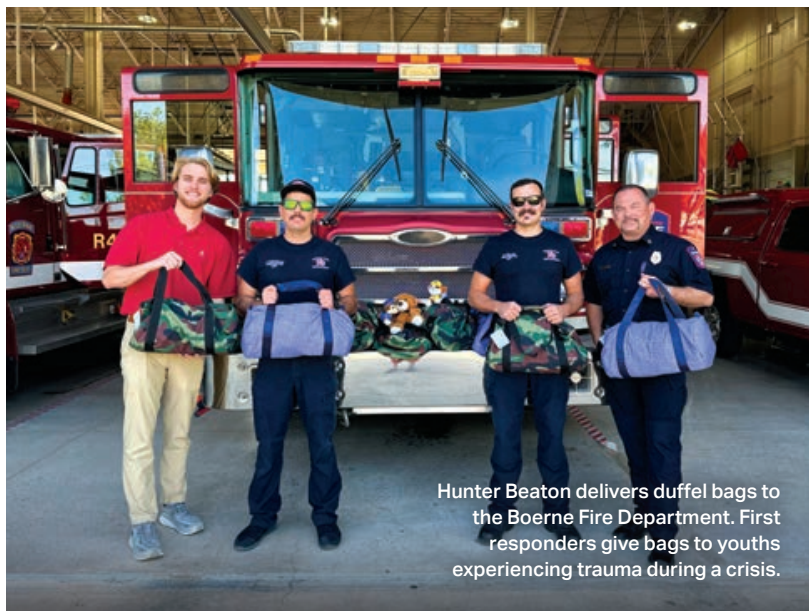
*Story and photo by Erich Schlegel*

ON THE COVER  
Supercells like this one near Claude trigger an adrenaline rush for storm chasers.  
*Photo by Jenny Brown*

ABOVE  
Ronny Tippelt and the Walburg Boys entertain in the Bavarian style.  
*Photo by Erich Schlegel*

04	<b>Currents</b> The latest buzz
05	<b>TCP Talk</b> Readers respond
16	<b>Co-op News</b> Information plus energy and safety tips from your cooperative
25	<b>Footnotes in Texas History</b> Beyond the Call <i>By Chuck Lyons</i>
26	<b>TCP Kitchen</b> The Whole Enchilada <i>By Vianney Rodriguez</i>
30	<b>Hit the Road</b> A Walk on the Wild Side <i>By Chet Garner</i>
33	<b>Focus on Texas</b> Photo Contest: Patterns
34	<b>Observations</b> Stepping Up <i>By Martha Deeringer</i>

# A Case Study in Compassion



Hunter Beaton delivers duffel bags to the Boerne Fire Department. First responders give bags to youths experiencing trauma during a crisis.

**NATIONAL FOSTER CARE DAY** is the first Tuesday in May—May 6 this year.

For Hunter Beaton, every day is foster care day. Beaton, disturbed that foster children showed up at adoptive homes carrying all their possessions in trash bags, used his 2016 Eagle Scout project to offer some measure of dignity for them.

He raised \$10,000 and filled 100 duffel bags to give to Texas foster kids.

When requests for duffels kept pouring in, Beaton knew he found his lifelong mission. He started the nonprofit Day 1 Bags, which has since delivered 224,000 bags in 47 states and drove 2023 legislation in Texas requiring the state to maintain a supply of proper luggage for foster youths.

Beaton said in 2018, when we first wrote about the Bandera Electric Cooperative member, after his parents adopted three foster children, “They had all their possessions in a black trash bag. How awful is that? I decided to find a way to say, ‘No, no kid deserves this.’”

To help Beaton in his mission, go to [day1bags.org](http://day1bags.org).



## Cinco Celebrations

Cinco de Mayo has become a day to commemorate Mexican culture and heritage in the U.S., where it is more celebrated than in Mexico. May 5, 1862, is when the Mexican army defeated invading French forces at the Battle of Puebla. Outside of that city, the day doesn't get much attention in Mexico.

The big celebrations south of the border come on *Diez y Seis*, when Mexicans mark their independence from Spain, on September 16, 1810.



## TCP Contests and More

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### RECOMMENDED READING

From our archives: In May 2005 we took readers to Fossil Rim Wildlife Center, where endangered and threatened species have found safe haven since 1984. Download the issue at [TexasCoopPower.com](http://TexasCoopPower.com).

## FINISH THIS SENTENCE

**I blush whenever ...**

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

Here are some of the responses to our March prompt: **Making my bed every morning is ...**

What keeps me from climbing back into it.

MARSHA MOORE  
UNITED COOPERATIVE SERVICES  
GRANBURY

Means I've made it through another night, saw another sunrise. Hope I get to make my bed tomorrow.

KENNY COGBURN  
CECA  
COMANCHE COUNTY

Totally useless since, at 76, I need a nap every day.

CAROLYN SUE HAMMONS  
SOUTH PLAINS EC  
LUBBOCK

A ritual that started as a requirement and is now a source of happiness.

MARK W. OWEN  
BLUEBONNET EC  
ELGIN

Visit our website to see more responses.



## MARCH 2025 Home of the Brave

“Brig. Gen. George ‘Bud’ Day made me to want to be a pilot growing up, but I did not have the eyesight for it.”

ARTHUR RICHARD TROELL III  
VIA FACEBOOK



ROBERT SEALE

## Unforgettable Honor

As an Army lieutenant, I was charged with researching and commissioning a series of paintings showing the actions of the Medal of Honor recipients from South Carolina [*Home of the Brave*, March 2025]. It was my privilege to talk directly with some of the honorees or with their families. It was an honor I won't forget.

Ed Rowland  
CECA  
Eastland

## Return of the Bluebonnets

*Nanny's Blessing* [March 2025] struck me, as the same miracle happened to me. Our ranch was destroyed by the Eastland Complex Fire three years ago. By a divine hand, bluebonnets returned where the house once stood the following year when there were none for at least 15 years.

Bill Dakin  
CECA  
Eastland County



SARAH FERONE

## Sancho's Long Reach

I enjoyed the J. Frank Dobie tale of the tamale-loving longhorn [*Sancho's Long Road*, March 2025]. It took me back to my childhood when Walt Disney took the story and made it an episode of his long-running Sunday night TV show. It was about Texas, so I had to watch it.

Michael Bolton  
CoServ  
Little Elm

## Dancing Memories

I would like to see an article about polka and waltz music/dancing/bands being handed down through the generations [*It's Hip To Be a Square*, February 2025].

These bands play at church picnics, festivals, old dance halls—you name it—almost the whole year in south Central Texas. I learned to dance to Joe Patek in Shiner.

Del Jean (Leck) Bauer  
GVEC  
La Vernia

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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.

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## Storm chasers go to great and dangerous lengths for thrills and scientific research



BY SHERYL SMITH-RODGERS

Nearly everyone has their passion. Some people love to garden, hike or travel. Others play video games, dance or volunteer.

Chelsea Burnett chases storms. Her unusual passion surfaced at age 2 in the late 1980s, when, upon hearing thunder, she'd rush to a window and search the skies.

"As I got older, I watched the Weather Channel and local weather updates," recalls Burnett, who lives in Little Elm, north of Dallas. "I had weather calendars, and I'd cut out newspaper articles about weather in the region. I also had a weather radio alarm clock that played local forecasts."

Today, Burnett, a member of CoServ, makes a living from weather-related work. So does her husband, Adam Lucio. Their mutual passion led them to become storm chasers—a term for professional and amateur weather watchers who pursue tornadoes, hurricanes and other severe weather.

Why? Some want to see their first tornado. Many crave the adrenaline rush. Others photograph storms for spectacular images, scientific research or news coverage. And these days, social media, mobile devices and even tour groups are making it easier than ever to find and share stunning storms despite extreme risks.



# Twisted





# *Approach*

OPPOSITE A storm cell produces lightning beyond a church in Gainesville.

ABOVE A Tornadoic Expeditions tour in April 2021 came across a rare weather phenomenon in Lockett: a tornado alongside a rainbow.





COURTESY ERIK BURNS



COURTESY CARRIE CUNNINGHAM

ABOVE A Tornadic Expeditions tour pursued this supercell for 125 miles across West Texas, from Spur to Tuscola.

LEFT Tim Marshall and Carrie Cunningham met in 2010 chasing storms for the Vortex2 research project.

*“The first people I see coming into a disaster area are the power crews. It’s amazing how many of them get ready and are there once law enforcement clears the roads.”*

Modern-day chasers follow in the wake of David Hoadley, considered to be the father of storm chasing. In 1956, he photographed the aftermath of a severe thunderstorm in his hometown of Bismarck, North Dakota. His fascination led him to drive after and document storms using his own forecast maps. From 1977 to 1986, he published *Storm Track* magazine for the growing chaser community.

At 86, Hoadley, who lives in Falls Church, Virginia, still chases.

“It’s a challenge,” he says. “I enjoy intersecting storms and getting pictures. I just do what I like to do.”

Some words of warning: Chasing is dangerous, sometimes deadly. And even despite the best of safety precautions, accidents happen. In June 2013, three veteran chasers were killed by a tornado near Oklahoma City. Other chasers have died in car crashes while on the road.

In 1996, daring risk-takers came to life when *Twister* tore into theaters nationwide. The disaster film—which inspired a generation of weather scientists—stars Helen Hunt and the late Bill Paxton as storm chasers trying to release data-gathering sensors into a tornado in hopes of improving early warning systems.

The same goal returns in *Twisters*, the action-packed 2024 sequel that features scientists and chasers going up against tornadoes in the social media era using more sophisticated technology.

Tim Marshall of Flower Mound, in the Metroplex, Hoadley’s protégé, started storm chasing in 1978. In those days, he’d stop at pay phones to call the National Weather Service for radar updates. Then he and his partner would take off for a location where a storm might intensify. Or not.

“In the ’70s and ’80s, the odds of catching a tornado were 1 in 20 times when you went out,” says Marshall, who has seen hundreds of twisters. “Now it’s 1 in 8 or 10. It’s still more miss than anything, but the odds are better because of our technology.”

Marshall and Hoadley were among the six inaugural inductees to the National Storm Chaser Hall of Fame in February. Professionally, Marshall, a CoServ member, has worked since 1983 as a meteorologist and forensics engineer. As part of his job, he assesses damaged buildings after catastrophic weather events.

“Before a storm, power crews prestige their trucks,” he says. “So the first people I see coming into a disaster area are the power crews. It’s amazing how many of them get ready and are there once law enforcement clears the roads.”

Most chasers carry first-aid supplies in case they’re the

first on the scene of a disaster.

Carrie Cunningham of Boerne, near San Antonio, met Marshall in 2010 when she volunteered with Vortex2, which was the largest tornado research project of its kind. As a driver, she was among a team of more than 100 scientists and crew members, with 40 support vehicles and 10 mobile radars, who raced after supercell thunderstorms for six weeks across seven Midwestern states.

On June 10, 2010, she witnessed her first tornado with Marshall near Denver. Every season since, she and her husband, Doug, have chased with Marshall. When forecasts and weather models predict risky conditions, the couple pack up and head north.

“We call them ‘chase-cations,’” says Carrie Cunningham, a member of Bandera Electric Cooperative. “It’s not always about seeing a tornado. I just love to drive, visit the small towns, eat in cafés and meet new people. For me, it’s spiritual being with the storms and nature.”

Then there’s the tradition among the community of eating a steak after a sighting.

## Myths Busted

**MYTH:** Areas near mountains, cities and rivers are safe from tornadoes. **FACT:** Twisters can go up mountains, through cities and across rivers, like the 1925 tri-state tornado, which crossed the Mississippi and Wabash rivers and killed nearly 700.

**MYTH:** Open windows in your house during a tornado to equalize pressure. **FACT:** Do not do this! Your house will not explode, and opening windows will only let in powerful winds. Seek shelter in an interior room.

**MYTH:** If you’re on the highway with a tornado approaching, find an underpass. **FACT:** As the opening scene of *Twisters* showed, this is a dangerous myth. High-speed flying debris is channeled through underpasses, where winds move at incredible speeds. If a tornado is imminent, seek a ditch, and duck and cover.

Source: National Weather Service





COURTESY ERIK BURNS

“Some of our family think we’re crazy,” she says. “A lot of friends are fascinated, and some say they’d love to go with us.”

For more casual storm adventure seekers, chasing tours can be booked through many companies in Texas and beyond. That is, if they’re not booked up, thanks to renewed interest inspired by *Twisters*.

For example, Tornadic Expeditions completely sold out for 2025 tours by the end of 2024, and 2026 will fill soon. Erik Burns, a Grayson-Collin Electric Cooperative member who lives in Whitesboro, near the Oklahoma border, launched the niche business in 2015.

“On a seven-day tour, we cover about 2,500 miles,” says Burns, who met his Australian wife, Emma, on one of his 2019 excursions. “Our tours are laid-back and personable. We only put four guests in a van, so everyone’s got a window seat.”

The U.S. experiences more tornadoes than any other country—about 1,150 per year, which is about five times what Europe will see in a year. And 2024 was the second-worst tornado season on record in the U.S., with more than 1,735 confirmed twisters, including 169 in Texas—more than any other state. On average in the U.S., 73 people die in tornadoes per year.

Burns and his chaser guides conduct five- to 10-day trips from April into July across Tornado Alley, a twister-prone area that roughly spans north from Texas up to Nebraska and South Dakota. Tours may also venture into neighboring states, depending on weather. Guests travel in vans equipped with Wi-Fi, cameras and laptops loaded with radar and satellite-tracking software.

Since 2018, Ray Myers of Plano has been on three Tornadic Expedition tours. He’s also accompanied Burns on numerous

## *Early Eyes on the Sky*

**Some of America’s Founding Fathers were avid weather watchers. Thomas Jefferson bought a thermometer while in Philadelphia for the adoption of the Declaration of Independence. He noted that the high temperature there July 4, 1776, was 76. He also owned one of the only barometers in the colonies. George Washington also made regular weather notes. The last weather entry in his diary was made the day before he died.**

Source: National Weather Service

solo trips. On April 23, 2021, the two witnessed five tornadoes near Lockett, west of Wichita Falls, including twin tornadoes and one that spiraled next to a rainbow. What was his reaction to seeing his first?

“I said, ‘Oh, look at that! Oh, look at that—look at that—look at that!’ ” recalls Myers. “There are just no words. You are witnessing one of the most powerful things in nature. Some people go speechless. Some cry.”

Storm chasing has even joined the collegiate world. Since 2020, the department of atmospheric sciences at Texas A&M University has offered a spring course called convective storms field studies. Students are trained on how to storm chase, forecast tornadoes and conduct field research.

*“There are just no words. You are witnessing one of the most powerful things in nature. Some people go speechless. Some cry.”*



COURTESY CHRIS NOWOTARSKI



COURTESY ERIK BURNS

CLOCKWISE FROM OPPOSITE A Tornadoic Expeditions tour watched this twister in Hawley stay on the ground for 24 minutes. Texas A&M University students studying atmospheric sciences launch balloons for National Weather Service research. A Tornadoic Expeditions tour poses with a tornado in 2022 in Crowell.

“Then for two weeks in May, we go out storm chasing,” says Chris Nowotarski, an associate professor. “The students take turns forecasting and navigating where they think there will be storms in the Great Plains. They also launch weather balloons and send the data to the National Weather Service.”

After graduation, “our meteorology majors go on to become forecasters for the National Weather Service, private forecasting companies or aviation companies that need weather forecasts,” Nowotarski says. “Some go into grad school to do research related to severe weather or other weather. Some go into television.”

Schooled or not, storm chasers provide information that advances scientific understanding of weather.

“Many amateur storm chasers are more focused on collecting photography and videos of tornadoes, which may be less useful in improving our understanding and prediction,” Nowotarski says. “But these chasers report tornadoes to the National Weather Service. These reports are critical to developing an accurate record and climatology of tornadoes that can be used for future studies.”

Although she has no meteorology degree, Chelsea Burnett has years of hands-on training and experience. She’s a tour guide for Tornadoic Expeditions and a public speaker with Storm Science, which conducts educational weather programs. She’s also a member of Girls Who Chase, an online group that encourages and connects women who want to storm chase, and is a chaser and speaker with Texas Storm Chasers.

In her chasing career, Burnett has gone after 70 twisters (and three hurricanes). But—like all storm chasers—she’ll never forget her first. On the night of December 26, 2015, she was standing outside a gas station near Red Oak, south of Dallas, when power flashes and lightning illuminated the sky—and a tornado.

“I couldn’t believe I was seeing one,” she recalls. “It was the most incredible moment of my life! You’re eye to eye with one of Mother Nature’s most raw processes. To see a tornado come together truly is a spiritual moment.” ■





# Bavaria, By Way of Texas

**Yodeling takes this German back home, even after decades of running a restaurant and entertaining in tiny Walburg**

**T**ake Exit 268 off Interstate 35, head east on FM 972, make a pair of 90-degree jogs past mobile homes and rolling farmland, and suddenly you're in Germany. Well, the German settlement of Walburg, formerly known as Concordia.

The Williamson County community, about 40 miles north of Austin, was founded in 1881 by Henry Doering, a German immigrant. The following year, Doering opened the Hy. Doering Co. mercantile store. Doering eventually changed the name of the community from Concordia to Walburg, his German birthplace.

Today, instead of groceries, dry goods and hardware, the shelves of the former general store are now filled with more than 200 beer steins.

Iconic flags of Bavaria hang from the high ceiling, with matching blue and white tablecloths in the dining room. Of course, there's a cooler full of imported German beer. And opposite the buffet table and kitchen is a stage where Ronny Tippelt and his band, the Walburg Boys, play Friday and Saturday nights. Tippelt is also co-owner of the venue, which is now called Walburg German Restaurant & Biergarten.

Tippelt, founder of the band, was born in Munich. He learned to yodel at the age of 7 from his "vocal hero," Franzl Lang, a world-renowned *Jodlerkönig*, or Yodel King. Lang was an expert in Bavarian alpine yodeling.

Humans have yodeled for tens of thousands of years, mostly for calling livestock, but across Switzerland and Bavaria (a state in southern Germany), the calls began to be incorporated into songs, accompanied by accordion, in the 19th century.

Some Native American cultures yodeled, Liz Tracy writes in *No Depression* magazine. Then cowboys picked up on the custom. "The yodel is used as a call to herds across lonely landscapes; the pastoral, solitary life of cowboys made them a prime conduit for the yodel," Tracy writes.

Ronny Tippelt, a music-maker in Walburg, has been yodeling since he was 7.

By age 12, Tippelt was learning accordion. At 16, he won a Bavarian yodeling competition in Munich. By then, he had started a musical group called the Lerchenauer Baum with some friends and had been playing Oktoberfest in Munich—the largest and oldest such German festival in the world.

In 1982, Tippelt was 23 when his band was at Oktoberfest. "After the show, I went over to a table of cute American ladies, and I ended up marrying one of them," Tippelt says. "She was a Braniff Airlines flight attendant from Austin, Texas."

They moved to Texas that year, and though the marriage didn't last, Tippelt stayed. He opened his restaurant a few years later. "I just thought Texas was the Wild West," Tippelt says. "I figured out pretty quickly that it wasn't like the movies."

He started a duo called the Bavarian Boys. They're now a five-piece band featuring, in addition to accordion and yodeling, a keyboard, guitar, saxophone, bass, fiddle and drums.

When he performs, Tippelt wears traditional lederhosen with beautifully embroidered scrolls stitched in and a T-shirt with the Bayern—the German name for Bavaria—state coat of arms. He plays a chromatic accordion with keys like a piano.

He typically sings in German, flowing smoothly from German lyrics into yodeling and back. "When I play and yodel," Tippelt says, "I feel pride in representing my homeland. People get to hear a true German music style."

Another Texas musician who plays in the Bavarian style is Alan Walling, leader of Metroplex band AlpenMusikanten, a friend of Tippelt's and a self-taught yodeler.

"I met Ronny at a Fredericksburg German festival in 1990," Walling says. "He's a fantastic yodeler in the Bavarian style. The best yodeler in Texas and perhaps in the United States."

In 2019, Walling and Tippelt organized their own festival, Walburg Fest, which became an annual event over Labor Day weekend.

About 35 years ago, the boys were playing one of the stages at Austin's former Aqua Fest. Tippelt came up to the headliner and introduced himself. "Hello, I'm Ronny Tippelt from Germany. Who are you?" he said.

"Well, I'm George Strait from Texas," answered the famous country singer.

Ronny Tippelt from Texas now covers a handful of Strait's songs, with *Amarillo By Morning* being a favorite.

And that isn't his only foray into the country realm. He's especially proud to sing Merle Haggard's sentimental hit *Silver Wings*. Tippelt ends it with his signature yodeling. ■



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The ATTO SPORT is equipped with a TSA-approved battery. Its compact size and optional split mode make it the only mobility scooter that can fit in the aircraft's overhead compartment.

## Reliable for Every Adventure

With a driving range of up to **12.5 miles** (extendable to **25 miles** with the XL battery), a **6.2 MPH top speed**, a **weight capacity of 300 lbs**, flat-free, shock-absorbing tires, and **4-inch ground clearance**, it is ideal for air travel and outdoor exploration and built for longevity.

## Front and Rear Lights

ATTO SPORT's powerful front and rear LED lights enable riding in dark conditions.

## It's Never Too Soon

Time waits for no one, so why should you? There's no better time to reclaim your mobility and make the most of every moment.

**Don't wait! Call now and buy your ATTO SPORT and receive a free front/rear basket and phone holder, a \$184 value.**



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MESSAGE  
FROM  
GENERAL  
MANAGER/  
CEO  
**JEFF LANE**

## How We Restore Power Safely and Efficiently

**WE DO OUR BEST** to prevent power outages, but we can't avoid every one.

In general, outages are rare and only last a few hours. But when major storms impact our area, extended outages are sometimes unavoidable.

When the power goes out, Trinity Valley Electric Cooperative crews are prepared with a plan for safe, efficient power restoration.

When it's safe for our crews to begin the restoration process, they start by repairing power lines and equipment that will restore power to the greatest number of people in the shortest time possible.

The process typically begins with repairs to the larger main distribution lines that serve many homes and businesses. After those repairs are made, crews work on tap lines, which deliver power to transformers, either mounted on utility poles (for aboveground service) or placed on pads (for underground service). Finally, individual service lines that run between transformers and homes are repaired. 5282001

We can't control the weather, but we can prepare for it. TVEC keeps a supply of extra utility poles, transformers and other equipment on hand so we can quickly get to work in the event of an outage.

When widespread outages occur, crews will be out in the field working to repair damage at multiple locations simultaneously. We also coordinate with nearby co-ops to bring in additional crews when necessary.

A proactive approach to maintenance helps minimize the chance of prolonged outages. This is why you see crews periodically trimming trees and clearing vegetation near TVEC rights-of-way. We love trees, but it only takes one overgrown limb to knock out power for an entire neighborhood. Trimming improves power reliability for our entire community.

In addition to managing vegetation, we regularly inspect utility poles, power lines and other critical equipment to maintain a more reliable system.

If you experience a power outage, don't assume a neighbor already reported it. It's best to report the outage yourself, and we make it easy. The quickest way is by calling our outage reporting number, (800) 967-9324, through SmartHub or outage texting. You can find more outage reporting information and outage maps at [tvec.net](http://tvec.net).

If you have a medical condition that requires electrical equipment, please let us know, and always have a backup plan in place. This plan could include a portable generator, extra medical supplies or moving to an alternate location until power is restored. If you plan to use a generator for backup power, read all safety information and instructions before use.

Mother Nature can be unpredictable, but as a member of TVEC, you can feel confident knowing we're standing by, ready to restore power as quickly and safely as possible. ■



TVEC | DON JOHNSON



TVEC | DON JOHNSON

# Puzzling it Out: Unique Contest Draws Teams to Wills Point

WITH A NAME LIKE THE DFW DESTROYERS, it would be easy to imagine a wrestling duo or football team. But if their performance in the Wills Point Pilot Club's Puzzle Palooza event is any indicator, this team of four DFW-area ladies is much more interested in putting things together rather than destruction.

Puzzle contests, also known as speed puzzling, have been going on since the early 1900s, but remain a niche hobby. That means when a competition is held, it can draw participants from a wide area.

The second annual event in Wills Point drew amateur teams from local families and businesses, while the advanced category had teams from as far away as the town of West, TX.

"We practice regularly as a group, with different techniques of flipping and sorting and you just get up to speed," said Destroyers team member Genesis Thomas. "Over time you start to understand how to approach different types of puzzles."

While the unique event may never have the draw of a golf tournament or other common fundraisers, it is a good fit for the Pilot Club, which focuses on brain health and injury prevention.

"This was the idea of Jane Miller a few years ago, and thankfully she has been here as a player in the contest before," said Pilot Club board member Melinda Thomason. "We were able to promote it to various different puzzle groups on Facebook and online to get the word out and we've managed to get great response."

This year's contest featured a custom puzzle that commemorated the Wills Point 1965 state championship-winning football team. The image included a large black and white team photo that posed a challenge for even the advanced puzzlers.

"This was a very challenging puzzle, but it was really fun to put together," said Destroyers member Meghan Jenkins. "Some of the larger contests use unreleased puzzles but this one, with all of the faces, that really got us."

If you think you are up for a puzzle challenge you can find contests at [speedpuzzling.com](http://speedpuzzling.com), and find out more about the Pilot Club of Wills Point on their Facebook page. ■

## 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](http://tvec.net)

### Board of Directors

Howard Tillison, Chairman, District 6  
Carolyn Minor, Vice Chairwoman, District 1  
Derrick Hoelscher, District 4  
Jeff Priest, District 2  
Paul Weatherford, District 3  
Edward Reeve, Secretary, 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](http://tvec.net)





# Hoelscher Selected To Fill Board District 4 Vacancy

**DERRICK HOELSCHER** is a familiar name around Cedar Creek Lake, as an active member of the CCL Chamber of Commerce, Kiwanis Club and in the



Derrick Hoelscher

business community.

Hoelscher will now be tasked with service on the Trinity Valley Electric Cooperative Board of Directors, filling the district four seat

formerly held by Jo Ann Hanstrom.

In their regular meeting in March, pursuant to the TVEC bylaws, the board voted unanimously for Hoelscher to fill the remainder of Hanstrom's term. The district four seat will be up for election in 2026.

"I just want to bring some value to the co-op as a board member and do the best I can for the co-op members," Hoelscher said. "I enjoy being involved in the community, and it really becomes like a big family. That makes it something I really enjoy doing."

Hoelscher is a graduate of Texas A&M with a background in business including running a dairy and his current career in insurance. Throughout his life and career he has been a member of several electric co-ops, and noted he still has a lot to learn for his role on the board.

"With all of the growth we are seeing, there we have to be looking ahead to be prepared and making sure we are ready to meet the demand," he said. "That is true of the business sector, the schools and everyone trying to do the best with what they have."

Hoelscher lives in southern Kaufman County with his wife Tana. They have two daughters. ■



## Thunderstorm Safety Tips From the American Red Cross

**THEY SAY APRIL SHOWERS** bring May flowers, but May in Texas often has its own share of showers, so it's a good idea to be prepared for thunderstorms. **Here are some safety tips from the American Red Cross.**

Listen to local news or National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Weather Radio for emergency updates. Watch for signs of a storm, like darkening skies, lightning flashes or increasing wind.

If a severe thunderstorm warning is issued, take shelter in a substantial building or a vehicle with the windows closed. Get out of mobile homes that can blow over in high winds.

Postpone outdoor activities if thunderstorms are likely to occur, even if it's not raining. Lightning can strike well outside the area where rain is occurring.

If you can hear thunder, you're close enough to be struck by lightning. If thunder roars, go indoors. The National Weather Service recommends staying inside for at least 30 minutes after the last thunder clap.

Avoid electrical equipment and corded phones. Use battery-powered TVs and radios instead.

Close outside doors securely and shutter windows. Keep away from them once closed.

Do not take a bath, shower or use plumbing.

If you're driving, try to safely exit the roadway and park. Stay in the vehicle and turn on the emergency flashers until the heavy rain ends. Avoid touching metal or other surfaces that conduct electricity in and outside the vehicle.

If you're outside and cannot reach a safe building, avoid high ground, water, tall and isolated trees, and metal objects such as fences or bleachers. Picnic shelters, dugouts and sheds are not safe. ■



## POLES AREN'T FOR POSTING

**Foreign objects on utility poles are dangerous for co-op employees. Help us keep our lineworkers safe: Don't use utility poles as bulletin boards.**

Electric cooperative workers find all kinds of no-nos on utility poles, such as yard sale signs, basketball hoops, deer stands, satellite dishes, lights and birdhouses.

These obstructions are dangerous for employees. Unwelcome clutter on utility poles can compromise lineworkers' safety equipment, leaving them vulnerable to electrocution.

Anyone posting items on utility poles also is at risk of exposure to thousands of volts of electricity pulsing overhead. Always stay at least 10 feet away from utility lines.

Think before you post that sign!

**Trinity Valley EC encourages you to always practice safety.**

PHOTO: DAVE SHAFER

## Tackle Outdoor Chores Safely

**TRIMMING TREES AND** tall bushes can take a deadly turn if electricity is involved. Never trim a tree that has grown into a power line. Metal and wood can transmit electricity to your body if you come into contact with a live wire.

Contact Trinity Valley Electric Cooperative to determine how the tree can be safely trimmed.

**Here are more tips to help keep your lawn chores safe.**

- ▶ Before digging or landscaping, call 811 to check for underground utility lines. It's free—and the law.
- ▶ Never trim trees, cut the lawn or work in the garden during bad weather. Wet and windy conditions can cause slips and falls. Go inside immediately if you see lightning.
- ▶ Electric tools and trimmers should be plugged into outlets protected by ground-fault circuit interrupters. Never use tools in the rain or when the ground is wet.
- ▶ Don't work alone, in case of an accident. Hire a professional if you doubt your ability to safely complete the job. ■



ANDRII BORODA | ISTOCK.COM





JACKIE | ISTOCK.COM



TVEC ENERGY  
MANAGEMENT  
SUPERVISOR  
**CHRIS WALKER**

## Need a New Appliance?

May is a great time to buy

**THIS YEAR TEXAS' ANNUAL** Energy Star Sales Tax Holiday is May 24–26. During this three-day week-end, ending on Memorial Day, sales taxes are not charged on a variety of energy efficient appliances and products. There is no limit on the number of

qualifying items you can buy, and you do not need to give the seller an exemption certificate to buy items tax free.

### These Energy Star-labeled items qualify for the sales tax exemption:

Air conditioners (priced at \$6,000 or less)	Clothes washers
Refrigerators (priced at \$2,000 or less)	Dishwashers
Incandescent and fluorescent light bulbs	Dehumidifiers

### These items do not qualify and are taxable even if they are

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

### Energy Star labeled:

During the holiday you can buy qualifying Energy Star products in store, online or by phone, mail, custom order or any other means. The sale of the item must take place during the specific period. The purchase date is determined by when payment is actually completed (i.e., a credit card charge is processed).

Delivery, shipping and handling charges are taxable. Charges for installing free-standing items are considered part of the item's sales price. If the item you buy is not taxable, then these charges are not taxable. However, for items with a sales price cap, installation fees may be taxable if the total goes above the cap.

For more information, visit [comptroller.texas.gov](http://comptroller.texas.gov) or call 1-800-252-5555. ■

## Consider IT HOT

A PODCAST FOR MEMBERS



### WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

The term "hot" in electrical distribution indicates that a line is about to be energized.



**Power up your knowledge on the podcast that sparks conversations about energy savings, safety tips, co-op news, and the future of electricity!**

**New episodes every month!**



## WARNING

Listening to this podcast may result in:

- Learning how to save energy
- Knowing the latest co-op news
- Staying safe around electricity
- Hearing about Operation Round Up
- Winning a prize... just for listening



CARLOS GAWRONSKI | ISTOCK.COM

## Understanding Appliance Energy Use

**AS APPLIANCES AGE** or break down and need to be replaced, it's a good idea to take a close look at potential energy savings that could come with their replacements.

Because energy use varies month to month, it can be difficult to see how much difference an appliance purchase makes. It's best to consider the savings over the lifetime of the equipment. Think about the up-front cost and the lifetime energy cost.

In a Consumer Reports test, the most efficient refrigerator used \$68 less in electricity than the least efficient model over the course of a year. Multiply that difference over a decade or two, and the lifetime energy savings could be significantly greater than the up-front cost. All it takes to get the best appliance for your needs is some initial research.

Appliance energy use is less, on average, than home heating and cooling bills but is still a significant portion of your energy expense. Your appliance electricity use depends on factors like the model, how often you use it, the settings you use for its particular function and even the time of day it's used most.

Over the past few decades, new appliances became more energy-efficient, driven partly by minimum government standards. These standards, created by the U.S. Department of Energy, save consumers over \$60 billion each year.

Appliances are required to include an Energy Guide label that shows estimated energy use and operating cost per year. These labels help you compare different models and calculate the initial cost against the long-term savings.

Some appliances will also have an Energy Star label. This indicates the appliance is substantially more efficient than the minimum standard. Your greatest energy savings opportunities can come from replacing an old appliance with an Energy Star-rated appliance. Removing a refrigerator that's 20 years old and replacing it with a new Energy Star model can lower the monthly refrigeration costs by 75%.

In some cases, the configuration of the appliance can also make a substantial difference. For example, a side-by-side refrigerator/freezer uses about 70% more energy than other configurations, with the most efficient models having the freezer stacked on top of the fridge. The most efficient clothes washers are front-loading models.

Consider how much you use the appliance. The more you use it, the greater your savings will be from choosing a more efficient model. If you use the appliance less or have a small household, you may get by with

a smaller refrigerator or freezer, saving you money.

**How you operate appliances can also make a difference. Here are some easy ways to save.**

### Refrigerator and Freezer

- ▶ Set your fridge at 35–38 degrees and your freezer at zero degrees.
- ▶ Make sure there is adequate air flow between the wall and the back of the unit.
- ▶ Keep the refrigerator relatively full when possible.
- ▶ Replace the seals around the doors if they appear to be leaking air.
- ▶ Defrost the fridge and freezer regularly.

### Stove and Oven

- ▶ Use the correct-sized burner to fit the pan.
- ▶ Use smaller appliances like a microwave or slow cooker instead of the oven when possible.

### Dishwasher

- ▶ Use the most energy-efficient and shortest-running setting that gets your dishes clean.
- ▶ Air dry rather than use the heated dry function.
- ▶ Wait to run a load until the dishwasher is full. ■





## Los Socios Cafe and Taqueria

Crossroads gas station gets new life as eatery with unique Mexican fare

**CROSS ROADS FITS INTO THE MOLD OF** so many small Texas towns where the highway intersection that gives the place its name doesn't even have a stop light. That doesn't mean it isn't worth a stop for food, however.

Los Socios Taqueria and Cafe celebrated two years of serving the area in 2024, with the converted gas station serving up a unique Mexican food menu.

"It is a little different than typical Tex-Mex and just really good," said Billy Sherrell, TVEC operations superintendent. "The tacos are street-taco style—I like the al pastor tacos—there is a good big burrito and nachos and it all has a really good unique flavor."

And for Sherrell, being a regular has had a surprising result with his own entree appearing on the menu.

"I'd had something at another restaurant that I wanted them to try and they did," Sherrell said. "Some other friends wanted to try it as well and I guess the word got out. I didn't expect to see my name on the menu though."

You can try Billy's enchiladas at 14754 Farm-to-Market Road 59 in Cross Roads, and online on Facebook. ■



**TVEC**  
TRINITY VALLEY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

**Energy Quiz**



**Where was the first controlled, self-sustaining nuclear chain reaction achieved?**

- A.** White Sands, New Mexico
- B.** The University of Chicago
- C.** New York City

Win **\$100!**

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

## April Energy Quiz: Generator History

**ELECTRICAL THEORY WAS** a growing scientific field in the 19th century, with many brilliant minds working to figure out to harness the invisible energy.

It was English physicist and chemist Michael Faraday who is credited with inventing the electric generator, electric motors and transformers.

These devices remain the core of how we use electricity today, enabling the modern electric grid and all the devices and technologies that rely on it.

Congratulations to our March Energy Quiz winner, Mariet Antony, of Crandall.

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

## 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 May 30 to receive a \$100 credit on your electric bill. Don't miss out—you could be our winner.





## MARCH 2025 Operation Round Up Awards

Thank you for turning your coins into change!



### Grants

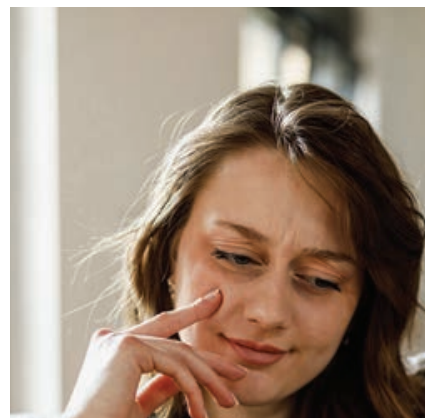
Friends of the Kaufman County Veterans	\$2,500
Friends of the Texas Freshwater Fish Hatcheries	\$4,000
Genesis Center	\$2,500
Henderson Co. United Way	\$1,000
Kaufman Co. Leadership Class	\$2,500
Sharing the Love Foundation	\$2,500
King's Rein	\$2,200

### Bill Assistance

Salvation Army of Kaufman	\$5,000
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### Food Pantry

Shining Light Ministry	\$5,000
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### DID YOU KNOW?

Scammers might contact you offering to restore power quickly if you make a payment. Your electric co-op will never request payment for outage restoration.

Visit [tvec.net/scam-awareness](https://tvec.net/scam-awareness) for more tips.

FOTOSTORM | ISTOCK.COM



### POWER TIP

Lower your energy use by washing clothes with cold water, as heating water accounts for most of the energy used in a laundry cycle.

SOLSTOCK | ISTOCK.COM



# A Cautioning Voice

Sean Carter's powerful message speaks volumes to young people across Texas

BY SHERYL SMITH-RODGERS • PHOTOS BY DAVE SHAFER

**SEAN CARTER CAN'T** talk, walk or stand on his own. Yet that hasn't stopped him from sharing his wise words of warning and hope. Since 2007, he and his mother, Jenny Carter, have testified against drinking and driving in front of more than 475,000 people across Texas.

His message—typed into an iPad and spoken by a masculine synthetic voice—is simple: “Think of me, and save yourself.”

Normal life for Sean abruptly ended 20 years ago—March 27, 2005. He was 22, a fun-loving and focused young man with a brilliant smile.

He grew up in rural Grayson County, north of the Metroplex. At S&S Consolidated High School, Sean earned top grades, played sports and showed pigs as an FFA member.

Sean went on to complete an associate degree. On the side, he modeled in Dallas and later New York City so he could pay his way through college. He planned to get his bachelor's degree and continue on to law school.

Then Sean's plans unexpectedly derailed.

He doesn't remember what happened that rainy night before Easter Sunday. But he has been told that he climbed into the passenger seat of a pickup driven by a drunk friend. The two had been barhopping in Wichita Falls, where Sean attended Midwestern State University.

Five minutes from Sean's apartment, the friend lost control of the steering wheel. The truck spun and slammed into a tree, pinning Sean in his seat. The collision shattered his body's entire right side.

The driver was unhurt and later pleaded guilty to felony intoxication assault. Sean, who lay in a coma for 39 days in a hospital, was left with a severe diffuse axonal injury, which occurs when the whole brain is shaken and torn from nerves within the skull. Sean also sustained numerous other serious injuries, including a ruptured bladder, collapsed right lung and internal lacerations.

That night, his mother's life changed forever too.

Jenny gave up her career as a regional billing coordinator for a national physician management company to care for her son. (Sean's parents were divorced when the accident happened, and his father died in 2012.)

Two years later, Sean, who isn't paralyzed, regained limited use of his arms and hands. To accomplish

that much, he endured 20 surgeries and many hours of physical therapy.

Today Sean walks short distances using a reverse posterior walker, a four-wheeled frame that he pulls behind him. He needs help from his mother with basic tasks but can take care of himself at their home in El Lago, southeast of Houston.

Using an iPad, Sean learned how to speak via the TouchChat app. In 2007, Mothers Against Drunk Driving invited Sean and Jenny to share their story with first-time DWI offenders.

They've been on the road ever since. In 2010, they founded When Sean Speaks, a nonprofit organization dedicated to preventing drunken driving and showing the real-life consequences.

In 2013, Sean and Jenny joined Watch UR BAC, an alcohol awareness program sponsored by the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. (BAC refers to blood alcohol concentration, a measure of a person's intoxication.) The program funds their appearances at schools and church and service groups.

“From the very beginning, Sean has touched hearts,” Jenny says. “After he speaks, people rush to him and cry. They say they've never thought about consequences like his.”

Over the years, Sean has received many emails too. “You guys came to my school when I was in junior high,” one student wrote. “Now I'm in college. Sean inspires me. I think of his story often. Thank you for the work that you do.”

His strong faith and will to impact others keep Sean moving forward. He works out every day at home and twice a week goes to the University of Houston-Clear Lake for supervised exercise. He's also a member of his church's leadership team.

Today, at age 42, Sean doesn't dwell on what-ifs or compare himself to others.

“Life happens to everyone,” he says via his keyboard. “You can't live in a bubble to stay safe. Bad things might happen even if you're not doing anything wrong. What defines you as a person is how you respond to those things.

“I can't go back in time to change what happened,” adds Sean, flashing one of his brilliant smiles. “All I can do is look to the future.” ■







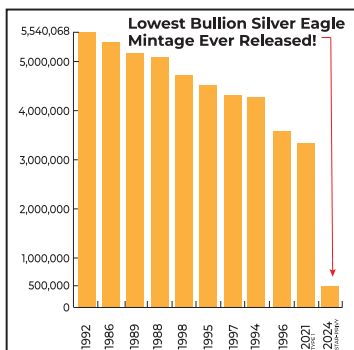
Actual Size  
40.60 millimeters)

2024 Silver Eagle BU  
5 Sided Star Privy Mark

## A World's First Creates The Lowest Mintage Silver Eagle...Ever!

The American Silver Eagle is arguably the most popular coin on the planet. First struck in 1986 for US citizens to own physical silver bullion, the Silver Eagle is made from one ounce of 99.9% fine silver. It's no wonder why these hefty silver dollars have become THE global standard for silver bullion coins, with over 640,000,000 coins minted to date.

And now, the US Mint has released a special Silver Eagle that might just become THE greatest of all time...the *Star Privy Silver Eagle*!



with 3,603,386 coins made. The Star Privy Silver Eagle has a mintage of only 500,000 coins. That's SEVEN TIMES LOWER. Just look at the graph for perspective.

### The First 50,000 Coins Released

Each coin comes certified in Gem Brilliant Uncirculated condition, coming from the first 50,000 coins issued, the "top 10%" if you will, certified by the leading independent 3rd party grading company NGC. Those are bragging rights every collector would dream of having!

### What's So Special?

There are two "key" reasons why the Star Privy Silver Eagle is poised to become the most sought-after coin in the Silver Eagle series;

**One**, collectors LOVE "Firsts" and the Star Privy is the First-Ever bullion Silver Eagle to have a Privy Mark, cementing its permanent place in Silver Eagle history.

**Two**, collectors also GO CRAZY for low mintage coins, the lower the better. And the Star Privy Silver Eagle not only has a low mintage. It's the lowest mintage bullion Silver Eagle EVER!

### First-Ever Privy-Marked Bullion Silver Eagle

Privy marks are small symbols added to coin, oftentimes to commemorate special occasions and/or historic events. In this case, the US Mint has added a "star" to the Silver Eagle to celebrate the release of a new mobile gaming app, 8th Era, a groundbreaking new mobile gaming app that marries gaming with coin collecting to inspire the next generation of collectors. It's an instant "must-have" for Silver Eagle collectors.

### Lowest Mintage Bullion Silver Eagle EVER

Not only is the Star Privy Silver Eagle the first ever privy-marked bullion Silver Eagle, it's also the lowest mintage bullion Silver Eagle ever! How low? It's not even close! Consider this...the 1996 Silver Eagle is the lowest mintage

### Buy More and Save

If you act now, you'll even have the chance to SAVE BIG when you buy more! But don't wait, our inventory won't last long! Every moment you hesitate, someone else could be claiming your piece of this historic release!

### 2024 1oz Star Privy American Silver Eagle - NGC Gem BU

1-2 coins - \$79 each plus s/h  
3-4 coins - \$77 each + **FREE SHIPPING**  
5-9 coins - \$75 each + **FREE SHIPPING**  
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rarcoca.com/star-privy-eagle



Staff Sgt. Lucian Adams of Port Arthur receives the Medal of Honor from Lt. Gen. Alexander Patch.

# Beyond the Call

Lucian Adams dedicated his life to his comrades in arms

BY CHUCK LYONS

IN 1994, A 6-mile stretch of Interstate 37, between I-410 and I-10, was named in honor of Lucian Adams. Maybe you've seen signs for the freeway, in southeast San Antonio, and wondered who he is.

Adams was one of 12 children born into a Mexican American family in Port Arthur, near Beaumont, along the coast. Twenty-two years later, like a Gulf wind, Adams tore through a French wood and earned a Medal of Honor.

"I never had any fear," Adams said years afterward. "And you do things so automatically because of the training that you had in the States that you don't take time to think how serious, you know, the predicaments you get into are sometimes. And before you know it, you're in it to your head and you just have to fight

your way out."

During World War II, in October 1944, Staff Sgt. Adams' Army company was fighting to reconnect with the 3rd Battalion, 30th Infantry, which had become isolated in the Vosges Mountains near Saint-Dié-des-Vosges, in northeastern France. German machine-gun fire had killed three of Adams' men and wounded six others before his unit could even move 10 yards.

While the remaining men took cover, Adams grabbed a Browning automatic rifle and charged forward, dodging from tree to tree and firing from his hip as machine-gun fire and grenades hit the trees over his head.

"I didn't want to go down with any ammunition still on me," Adams told

*The Dallas Morning News* in 1993, "so I just kept firing."

In 10 minutes of intense fighting, Adams single-handedly killed nine Germans and silenced three machine gun nests, reconnecting with the isolated battalion and restoring an important supply line for the Allies.

On April 23, 1945, Adams was awarded a Medal of Honor—the highest military distinction awarded by the U.S.—joining 472 other Americans to earn the remarkable distinction during World War II.

Along with four other members of the 3rd Infantry Division, Adams received his award at ceremonies held in Nuremberg's Reichsparteitagsgelände (Reich Party Congress Grounds), which had been the scene of massive Nazi rallies before the war. The Allies had captured the grounds three days earlier.

A large cement swastika, symbol of the Nazi party, that was still on the stadium roof at the time of the presentation was covered with an American flag during the medal ceremony and destroyed with explosives shortly afterward.

Seven of Adams' brothers also fought in the war, but he was the only one to return with a Medal of Honor. He also received a Purple Heart, earned earlier in the war, when he was wounded neutralizing an enemy machine gun nest in Italy.

After the war, Adams dedicated himself to helping other veterans. He worked for the next 40 years as a representative for the Veterans Administration in San Antonio. Afterward, he worked as a VA consultant for U.S. Rep. Frank Tejeda (himself a veteran who also has a highway named in his honor).

Adams retired in 1986 and died in March 2003. He was buried with full military honors at Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery in San Antonio. ■



# The Whole Enchilada

So many flavors rolled into one savory dish

BY VIANNEY RODRIGUEZ, FOOD EDITOR

My morning enchiladas are comfort food to the max. This is my go-to recipe when hosting brunch, as I can whip up the sauce the day before and assemble them before guests arrive. Serve with a mimosa or coffee for a delicious start to your day.

## Black Bean Breakfast Enchiladas

**¼ cup plus 2 teaspoons vegetable oil, divided use**  
**½ cup diced onion**  
**2 cloves garlic, chopped**  
**1 can black beans (15 ounces)**  
**1 cup water**  
**2 teaspoons salt, divided use**  
**2 teaspoons ground black pepper, divided use**  
**8 corn tortillas**  
**6 eggs**  
**2½ cups shredded Monterey Jack cheese, divided use**  
**Salsa, for serving**  
**Cilantro, minced, for serving**

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees.
2. In a skillet, heat 2 teaspoons oil over medium-high heat. Add onion and cook until light and translucent, about 5 minutes. Add garlic and cook 1 additional minute.
3. Transfer onions and garlic into a blender or food processor. Add black beans, water, 1 teaspoon salt and 1 teaspoon pepper. Blend until smooth. Return black bean sauce to skillet and keep warm.
4. Heat remaining ¼ cup oil in a second skillet over medium-high heat. Lightly fry each tortilla 5 seconds on each side and place on paper towels to drain. Reduce heat to medium and use the same skillet to prepare eggs.
5. Add eggs, remaining 1 teaspoon salt and remaining 1 teaspoon pepper. As eggs begin to set, use a spatula to gently pull the eggs across the skillet until thoroughly scrambled and cooked. Remove pan from heat.
6. To assemble the enchiladas, dip each tortilla in bean sauce, fill with egg, sprinkle with ¼ cup cheese, roll and place seam side down in a 9-by-13-inch baking dish. Repeat this process until all tortillas are rolled. Spoon the remaining sauce over rolled enchiladas and top with remaining ½ cup cheese. Bake 10 minutes. Serve warm with salsa and cilantro.

**SERVES 4**

**TCP** Follow Vianney Rodriguez as she cooks in Cocina Gris at [sweetlifebake.com](http://sweetlifebake.com), where she features a recipe for Chicken Enchilada Tostadas.







## Butternut Squash and Black Bean Enchiladas

PENNY ATKINS  
UNITED COOPERATIVE SERVICES

- 4 tablespoons olive oil**
- ½ cup diced white onion**
- 2 cloves garlic, minced**
- 1 butternut squash (3–4 pounds), peeled, seeds removed and diced**
- 1 can black beans (15 ounces), drained and rinsed**
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin**
- 2 teaspoons seasoned salt**
- 1 teaspoon ground black pepper**
- 12 corn tortillas**
- 1 can red enchilada sauce (15 ounces), divided use**
- 2 cups shredded Mexican-style cheese**
- 1 can sliced black olives (2.25 ounces), drained**
- 2 green onions, sliced diagonally, for garnish**

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Coat a 9-by-13-inch baking dish with cooking spray.
2. In a large skillet, heat oil over medium-high heat. Cook onion and garlic until onions are translucent and fragrant.
3. Add butternut squash, cook 5 minutes, then reduce heat to simmer and cook an additional 10 minutes or until squash is tender and lightly browned. Stir in black beans, cumin, salt and pepper.
4. Place half the tortillas on a plate, cover with a damp paper towel, and microwave 30 seconds or until pliable. Repeat with remaining tortillas.
5. Spread ¼ cup enchilada sauce evenly on bottom of baking dish. Spoon ¼ cup squash and bean mixture onto center of each tortilla and roll up. Place seam side down in baking dish.
6. Pour remaining enchilada sauce evenly

\$500 WINNER

## Shrimp Enchiladas

JANICE MERCK  
PEDERNALES EC



Merck has been cooking up these enchiladas for over 30 years to rave reviews, and, baby, I get it! I absolutely loved these creamy shrimp enchiladas. The simplicity of the sauce in this coastal twist on classic enchiladas was so ... wow!



- 1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter, divided use**
- 1 cup finely chopped onion**
- 1 cup chopped green chiles, drained**
- ¾ cup finely chopped green bell pepper**
- 3 teaspoons salt, divided use**
- 2 teaspoons ground white pepper, divided use**
- 1 teaspoon cayenne pepper, divided use**
- 4 teaspoons ground oregano, divided use**
- ½ teaspoon minced garlic**

- 3 cups heavy cream**
- 1 cup sour cream**
- 8 cups shredded Monterey Jack cheese, divided use**
- 2 pounds medium shrimp, peeled and deveined**
- ¾ cup finely chopped green onions**
- ½ cup vegetable oil**
- 20 corn tortillas**

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. In a large skillet over medium-high heat, melt ½ cup butter. Add onion, chiles, bell pepper, 1 teaspoon salt, 1 teaspoon white pepper, ½ teaspoon cayenne and 2 teaspoons oregano. Cook 10 minutes, stirring often. Add garlic and cook an additional minute.
3. Stir in heavy cream, bring to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer uncovered 10 minutes, stirring constantly.
4. Whisk in sour cream until sauce is smooth, then add 3 cups cheese, 1 cup at a time, whisking after each addition until all cheese melts. Remove from heat and set aside.
5. In a 4-quart saucepan over medium-high heat, melt the remaining ½ cup butter. Add shrimp, green onions and remaining seasonings—2 teaspoons salt, 1 teaspoon white pepper, ½ teaspoon cayenne and 2 teaspoons oregano. Cook about 5 minutes, until shrimp is fully cooked.
6. Stir in cream sauce, reduce heat and simmer 5 minutes. Remove from heat.
7. In a small skillet, heat oil over medium-high heat. Lightly fry each tortilla 2–3 seconds on each side and place on paper towels to drain.
8. Spoon ⅓ cup of shrimp mixture into the center of each tortilla. Roll and place seam side down in a 9-by-13-inch baking dish. Spoon remaining sauce over rolled tortillas and sprinkle with remaining 5 cups cheese.
9. Bake 10 minutes or until cheese melts.

SERVES 10

## TCP \$500 Recipe Contest

**CANDIES AND FUDGE** DUE MAY 10

Homemade confections can be sure to make an impression and draw a crowd. Send us your best treats, and you could win \$500. Enter by May 10.

**UPCOMING: TURKEY TIME** DUE JUNE 10



CONTINUED ON PAGE 28 >



## RECIPES CONTINUED

over tortillas. Spread cheese evenly over enchiladas and top with black olives.

7. Bake 15–20 minutes, until heated through and cheese is melted. Remove from oven and sprinkle with green onions.

SERVES 6

### Buffalo Ranch Chicken Enchiladas

CARLA MOON  
DEEP EAST TEXAS EC

- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 small onion, diced
- 1 green bell pepper, diced
- 1 tablespoon Cajun seasoning
- 2 tablespoons ranch seasoning, divided use
- 1 cup chicken stock
- 1½ cups Buffalo sauce, divided use
- 1 package cream cheese (8 ounces), softened



- 2 cups shredded pepper jack cheese, divided use
- 1 whole cooked chicken, deboned and shredded
- 12 corn tortillas

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Coat a 9-by-13-inch baking dish with cooking spray.
2. In a skillet, heat oil over medium-high heat. Cook onion and bell pepper until soft and translucent, about 5 minutes. Add Cajun seasoning and 1 tablespoon ranch seasoning and stir.

3. Add stock and 1 cup Buffalo sauce. Reduce heat and simmer 5 minutes or until sauce is slightly thickened. Remove from heat and set aside.

4. In a large bowl, stir together cream cheese, remaining 1 tablespoon ranch seasoning, remaining ½ cup Buffalo sauce and 1 cup pepper jack. Stir well, then stir in shredded chicken.

5. Spread ¼ cup enchilada sauce in the bottom of the prepared baking dish. Place about ¼ cup of the chicken and cream cheese mixture in the center of each tortilla and roll. Place each rolled tortilla in the baking dish seam side down. Spoon remaining sauce over enchiladas. Top with remaining 1 cup pepper jack.

6. Cover dish with foil and bake 15 minutes. Uncover and bake about 15 more minutes or until cheese is bubbly and slightly browned on the edges.

SERVES 6

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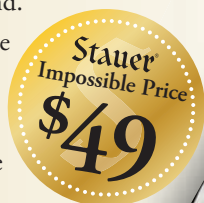
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COURTESY CHET GARNER

## A Walk on the Wild Side

This ranch boasts cows and pigs—but also giraffes and kangaroos

BY CHET GARNER

**HAVE YOU EVER** wanted to dine with a giraffe? Swim with an otter? Hold a baby kangaroo? Of course you have! Blue Hills Ranch, a 150-acre wildlife sanctuary outside Waco, can make all your wildest dreams come true.

I was giddy as I pulled up to the farmhouse that now serves as the office for this exotic ranch. I walked in and felt like I had stepped into the office of Dr. Dolittle. Two St. Bernard dogs lay on the floor like giant rugs while a potbellied pig and kangaroo poked around the kitchen.

Owner Matt Lieberman explained how his ranch started as a wedding venue with a couple giraffes in the pasture to make for interesting photos. But he soon realized animals were much easier than brides—and much more fun. He started adding other species, including axis deer and zebras, and had soon built one of the most interesting interactive animal adventures in Texas.

My first experience was a leisurely drive through the ranch feeding the dozens of species that populate the hills. Let me say, there isn't anything much scarier (or slimier) than the tongue of a hungry Highland cow.

Next I headed for the hot tub, where I spent an hour swimming with resident otters Otto and Sweet Pea. I've never met more curious creatures and could have spent the entire afternoon feeding them bits of shrimp as they treated me like a human jungle gym.

When it was time for the grand finale, we grabbed a picnic basket and headed out for dinner with Blue, the giraffe. There are few better ways to enjoy a Texas sunset than with a 16-foot-tall giraffe sniffing your plate for grapes and crackers.

I've done a lot of amazing things in Texas, but this has to be one of the wildest of them all. ■

ABOVE Chet finds himself on friendly terms with a giraffe at Blue Hills Ranch.

**TCP** Watch the video on our website and see all Chet's 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.

# MAY

## 8

**Abilene [8–11] Western Heritage Classic,** (325) 677-4376, [westernheritageclassic.com](http://westernheritageclassic.com)

## 9

**Grand Prairie [9–11] Asian Heritage Fest,** (972) 975-5100, [asiatimesquare.com](http://asiatimesquare.com)

## 10

**Brenham 7 Bridges: The Ultimate Eagles Experience,** (979) 337-7240, [thebarnhillcenter.com](http://thebarnhillcenter.com)

**Corsicana Mimosas at the Market,** (903) 654-4850, [visitcorsicana.com](http://visitcorsicana.com)

**El Campo Crawfish & Gumbo Cook-Off,** (979) 275-1600, [eclostlagoon.com](http://eclostlagoon.com)

**Palestine Wiggy Thump Festival,** 1-800-659-3484, [visitpalestine.com](http://visitpalestine.com)

**Winnsboro Max and Heather Stalling,** (903) 342-0686, [winnsborocenterforthearts.com](http://winnsborocenterforthearts.com)

## 13

**Fort Worth [13–18] MJ,** (817) 212-4280, [basshall.com](http://basshall.com)

## 15

**Luling Field Day,** (830) 875-2438, [lulingfoundation.org](http://lulingfoundation.org)

**Pasadena [15–18] Strawberry Festival,** (281) 991-9500, [strawberryfest.org](http://strawberryfest.org)

## 16

**Columbus [16–17] Magnolia Days Festival,** (979) 732-8385, [magnoliadays.org](http://magnoliadays.org)



## Pick of the Month

### Texas Route 66 Festival

Amarillo, June 5-14

1-800-692-1338, visitamarillo.com

Ten fun-filled days along Texas' stretch of the iconic highway include classic car shows, live music, a cattle drive and parade, bus tours, and a rodeo dance. The grand finale June 14 features Elvis impersonators, a pinup pageant, corn dog eating contests and kids' activities.

17

**El Campo** Coletto Creek BBQ Association Cook-Off, (979) 275-1600, eclostlagoon.com

**La Grange** Bluff Schuetzen-Fest, (979) 968-5658, friendsofkbmh.org

**Round Top** Vanity Fur Fashion Show, (979) 966-0021, janssenanimalshelter.org

21

**Winnsboro** [21-July 19] Gary Bachers Memorial Art Exhibit & CJ Bachers, (903) 342-0686, winnsborocenterforthearts.com

22

**Grapeland** [22-24] Salmon Lake Park Gospel Bluegrass Festival, (936) 687-2594, slpbluegrass.com

MORE EVENTS >

## TCP Submit Your Event

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



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**TICKETS:**  
[www.fbcraftbeerfestival.com](http://www.fbcraftbeerfestival.com)

# MAY EVENTS CONTINUED

23

**Fredericksburg [23-25]**  
**Crawfish Festival,**  
[fbgcrawfishfestival.com](http://fbgcrawfishfestival.com)

**Victoria [23-25] Memorial**  
**Weekend Bash,**  
(361) 485-3116,  
[discovervictoriatexas.com](http://discovervictoriatexas.com)

**Granbury [23-26]**  
**Memorial Day Weekend**  
**Festival,** (682) 936-4550,  
[granburysquare.com](http://granburysquare.com)

24

**Freeport [24-Aug. 13]**  
**Shark Exhibit,** (979) 233-  
0066, [facebook.com/](http://facebook.com/freeportmuseum)  
[freeportmuseum](http://freeportmuseum)

30

**El Paso Downtown**  
**Treasures,** (915) 533-0048,  
[tomlea.com](http://tomlea.com)

31

**Godley Christian Music**  
**Fest,** (817) 389-2287,  
[godleymethodist.org](http://godleymethodist.org)

JUNE  
7

**Corsicana The '77**  
**Experience: Hits of 1977**  
**Tribute,** (903) 874-7792,  
[corsicanapalace.com](http://corsicanapalace.com)

**Fredericksburg Lucken-**  
**bach School Open House,**  
(830) 685-3321,  
[historicschools.org](http://historicschools.org)

**Waxahachie [7-8]**  
**Gingerbread Trail Tour of**  
**Homes,** (469) 309-4040,  
[waxahachiecvb.com](http://waxahachiecvb.com)

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# Patterns

We marvel with these readers at the smooth repetition of human-made structures and the chaotic arrangements found in nature. While they may seem random at first, if we just step back, we see the big picture.

CURATED BY GRACE FULTZ



**1 SHARON BLUNT**  
COSERV

"Turkey tail mushrooms on a fallen log in Caddo Lake State Park."

**2 MARK HOLLY**  
BANDERA EC

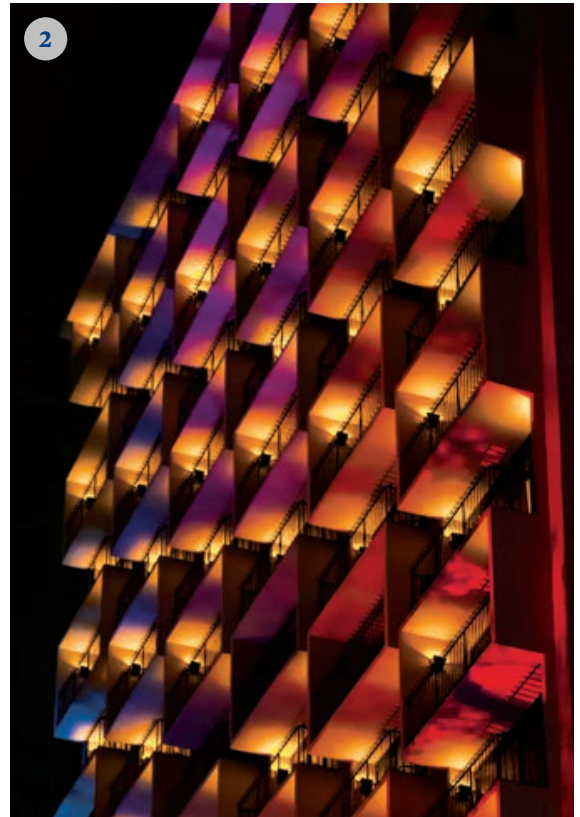
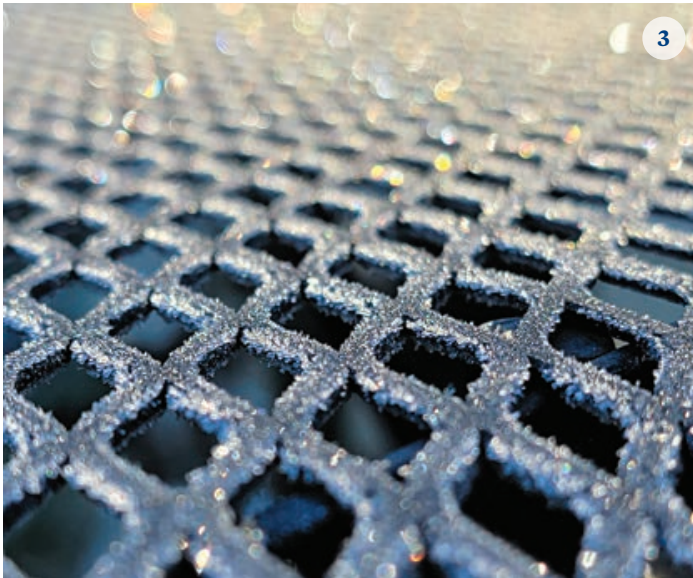
Hotel balconies along the San Antonio River Walk.

**3 KATHY DUMAS**  
PEDERNALES EC

"I captured the morning sun sparkling off the frost on the grates of a patio table."

**4 KEITH CUDDEBACK**  
PEDERNALES EC

Fallen leaves at Lost Maples State Natural Area.



## Upcoming Contests

**DUE MAY 10** Off-Road Adventures

**DUE JUN 10** Heroes

**DUE JUL 10** Abstract



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

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





## Stepping Up

Our family tree branched out with Bobbin, at first a stranger

BY MARTHA DEERING  
ILLUSTRATION BY  
ANNA GODEASSI

**WE CALLED OUR** grandmother Bobbin. I'm not sure why. She was my mother's stepmother, acquired with some reluctance on Mother's part when her father remarried a few years after her own mother died of rheumatic heart disease.

By the time Bobbin came into her life, my mother was a tiny tyrant, used to having her father and a string of housekeepers kowtow to her every need.

To be fair, it must be hard to lose your mother at the tender age of 6, especially since Mother was not allowed to attend the funeral. No one explained to her what had happened.

Mother, a petite, lively tomboy with shining dark hair, and Bobbin could hardly have been more different. Bobbin was tall and willowy with long blond hair. As the wedding approached, she pored

over a box of family photos, trying to capture a past she had not shared.

There were problems, of course. They faced the task of consciously building the bridge of communication and love that typically develops naturally between parents and their children. My grandfather, superintendent of schools in a small Wisconsin town, could do little more than stand by and watch with love and understanding.

Bobbin's well-meaning friends offered unsolicited advice. Mother's playmates stood ready with sympathy. "Is she mean to you?" they asked. But most of the problems seemed to stem from worrying too much.

Admiration and love gradually grew. When Mother learned in her early teens that Bobbin was expecting, she rushed out to be the first to buy a present for the new arrival.

Years later, Mother shared this bit of advice with Bobbin, who was writing an article about stepmothers: "Tell them to be demonstrative about showing affection even if the child doesn't appear to want it. I used to pretend I didn't want to be hugged and kissed, but deep down I wanted it badly."

By the time Mother married and had a family of her own, none of us perceived a difference between our beloved Bobbin and other grandmothers. When she rode the train to Texas to visit us, she was entangled in so many loving arms, she couldn't move out of the way to allow other passengers to disembark.

She regularly trounced my brothers and me at Scrabble—no surprise since later in life she worked in Washington, D.C., as an editor at the national cathedral. As much as she loved us, she never let us win.

We lost her in her 80s when a young addict grabbed her purse as she walked home from church, slamming her onto the sidewalk. She only had \$20. If he had asked her, she would have gladly given it to him.

Bobbin's DNA did not match ours; she was a grandmother of the heart. ■