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MAY 2023

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May 2023



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08 Surf Your Turf

Texas doesn't have the best or the biggest waves, but that's never stopped surfers.

*By Jennifer Simonson
Photos by Kenny Braun*

In a Whole New Light

A Rio Grande Valley museum showcases a transcendental collection of century-old art.

*By Eileen Mattei
Photos by John Faulk*

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By Shane Torno

ON THE COVER

Surfers arrive at the beach on South Padre Island.

Photo by Kenny Braun

ABOVE

Te Deum, the Gelman Stained Glass Museum's largest work, invites contemplation.

Photo by John Faulk



EISENHOWER STATE PARK

A Most Scenic Century

ADVENTURER PAM LEBLANC, a frequent *TCP* contributor, appreciates the splendor of Texas' state parks about as much as anybody: "I don't own a ranch or a big chunk of Texas wilderness, but because of our state park system, I feel like part of this big, beautiful state belongs to me."

Thanks to state leaders 100 years ago, Pam and all Texans can escape to 89 state parks, historic sites and natural areas. The State Parks Board was created in May 1923 to begin setting aside land for parks, and in 1963 it merged with another agency to form the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. Happy trails, y'all.

May 20

National Be a Millionaire Day

Texas has some 650,000 million-aire households, second only to California.

Made in a Shade

Viva Magenta—a nuanced crimson that balances warm and cool—is the color of the year. The hue, announced last winter by Pantone Color Institute experts, was inspired by the red dye derived from cochineals. "This color merges the warmth of the natural world with the endless, rich possibilities of the digital space," says Pantone's Elley Chang. Learn more about the tiny insects called cochineals in our 2019 story *The Bugs That Make You See Red*.



TCP Contests and More

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FINISH THIS SENTENCE

MOM ALWAYS SAID ...

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 March prompt: **If I could fly, I would ...**

Finally take down all my Christmas lights.

WILLIAM MARTIN
SAN BERNARD EC
WALLER

Never be stuck in traffic again.

NANCY DABNEY
HILCO EC
HILLSBORO

Really hope I wasn't afraid of heights anymore.

JUDI RAISH
TRI-COUNTY EC
GRANBURY

Hope I could land.

KENNETH BRINSON
WISE EC
PARADISE

Not sit on power lines.

TERRY WOLBRUECK
HEART OF TEXAS EC
MOFFAT

Visit our website to see more responses.

Play It Safe

May is National Electrical Safety Month. It's also when many of us hit the water. Never swim near a boat, marina or launching ramp. Residual current could put anyone in the water at risk of electric shock drowning.

“I've learned that success comes in a very prickly package.”

—SANDRA BULLOCK



Ironing Out the Rough Edges

SOME 1,000 MEN and even more horses and mules trained in San Antonio 125 years ago in preparation for their participation in the Spanish-American War.

By the end of May 1898, Theodore Roosevelt, above center, and his Rough Riders were on their way to Florida before sailing to Cuba, where the future president led the charge up San Juan Hill.

While in San Antonio, the Rough Riders trained at what is now Riverside Golf Course, near the water hazard on the 16th hole.



COURTESY CHET GARNER

'Lonesome' in a Library
 “The Wittliff Collections took us by total surprise. What a gem! This museum within a beautiful campus library offers surprisingly rich, diverse exhibits.”

SARA DUNN
 PEDERNALES EC
 WIMBERLEY

Allies in Aging

A Pet Project [March 2023] resonated perfectly. I have an 18-year-old black beauty named Rhiannan. She was my wife’s loyal companion until my wife passed away over five years ago and has since become very needy and close to me. She is skin and bones but eats well and fortunately does not appear to be in any distress or pain.

I am 82 myself, so we are dealing with aging together. I hope to outlive her so she won’t have to suffer.

Charles L. Glisan
 Pedernales EC
 Cedar Park

We need to honor and appreciate these men who risk their lives every day [First Responders, February 2023].

BETH CHAPMAN
 VIA FACEBOOK

Readers on a Roundup

Kudos to Eric Schlegel for his excellent photography and capturing the voices of the Huebner Bros. Cattle Co. cowhands in this fascinating story [Until the Cows Swim Home, March 2023].

As readers we felt we were moving across the Matagorda and Colorado waters, past the snakes, onto the island and back to the ranch.

Martha Everman Jones
 Victoria EC
 Victoria

Dove Doings

We had a *Lonesome Dove* party 30 years ago. Everyone had to dress as their favorite character of the miniseries/book. My husband dressed as Augustus McCrae, and I dressed as the stone-throwing Janey. My mother dressed as Peach and carried a live chicken under her arm.

Susan Mansell
 Coleman County EC
 Ballinger

CORRECTION

Though the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives had said in 2016 that the deadly 2013 fertilizer explosion in West was triggered by an intentionally set fire, other experts have since raised doubts about that finding [Rise Up West, April 2023].



ERICH SCHLEGEL

TCP WRITE TO US
 letters@TexasCoopPower.com

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 Austin, TX 78701

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

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TEXAS CO-OP POWER Volume 79, Number 11 (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 77 electric cooperatives. *Texas Co-op Power's* website is TexasCoopPower.com. Call (512) 454-0311 or email editor@TexasCoopPower.com.
SUBSCRIPTIONS Subscription price is \$4.44 per year for individual members of subscribing cooperatives and is paid from equity accruing to the member. If you are not a member of a subscribing cooperative, you can purchase an annual subscription at the nonmember rate of \$7.50.
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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.



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SURF



YOUR



TURF

Texas doesn't have the best or the biggest waves, but that's never stopped surfers

DURING THE HOT SUMMER months, thunderstorms develop in Central Africa each afternoon like clockwork. If the monsoon is at least partially active, a disturbance can intensify over North Africa as it marches west before being thrust out over the Atlantic Ocean near Cape Verde. Sometimes storms peter out right there, but if the ocean is warm and the conditions are right, a storm can continue its trek across the Atlantic, picking up power along the way until it reaches the Gulf of Mexico.

That's when a small but mighty group of Texas surf enthusiasts break out their boards.

Hurricanes bring world-class waves to the sluggish waters of the Texas Gulf Coast—waves that area surfers sometimes wait years for. When a storm begins tracking on the radar and swell reports look promising, pent-up surfers call out sick, miss family obligations and put plans on hold to head to the nearest beach.

“Most people are driving away from the ocean during hurricanes, but Texas surfers are driving towards it,” says William “Boog” Cram, owner of Ohana Surf & Skate in Galveston.

The existence of a passionate surfing community in Texas might come as a surprise to many—even those who grew up here. But surfing culture in Texas dates back to the 1960s, when the surf craze perpetrated by the Beach Boys, the documentary *The Endless Summer* and Gidget movies swept the nation. Much more recently, a renewed interest in the sport began when the pandemic pushed more people to embrace outdoor activities. Landlocked Texans wanting to escape city lockdowns headed to the beach, rented surfboards and tried their hand at a sport many people don't realize exists here.

“Usually when you tell people that you surf in Texas, the immediate response is: ‘There is surf in Texas?’” says Frank Floyd, longtime surfer and owner of Wind & Wave Watersports in Corpus Christi. That question is often followed up with a curiosity of what it's like to surf in Texas.

Are Texas waves large? No.

Do they have power behind them? Also no.

But can one surf in crystal clear water so beautiful that they forget about the waves? Absolutely not.

Surfing in Texas is not for the faint of heart. The state's 367 miles of coastline have a reputation for producing small, choppy, inconsistent surf in water with a less-than-ideal hue, and the Texans who surf here accept that. There's no false bravado that even the waves are bigger in Texas. What there is among surfers is an unwavering appreciation for the waves in their backyard.

“Texans are extremely enthusiastic about surfing in Texas. We have an amazing culture here,” Brad Lomax says. “To be a surfer in Texas you need to be an optimist with low standards.” A good sense of humor helps, too. Lomax has sold T-shirts that read, “Texas Waves: Slow, mushy and hard to catch” and “Texas Surfing: It is better than it looks.”

Lomax has been surfing the waters of the Coastal Bend since the mid-1960s. Originally from San Antonio, he spent his teenage summers selling T-shirts on the beach in Port Aransas just to live near the ocean. The surfer teen grew into a businessman who never left. After the success of his first Corpus Christi restaurant in 1983, Lomax opened the Executive Surf Club in 1990.

“My friends and I all had jobs, but we also surfed as much as we could, so we called ourselves the Executive Surf Club,” he says. “I wanted to open a place with a vibe where everyone could come together—guys from the refinery, old ladies, surfers, everyone—and unwind after a long day of work.”

There's no missing the surf vibe when walking into the brick building originally built in the 1800s. Surfboards line the walls, hang over the bar and are used as tables.

Fifteen years after opening the Executive Surf Club, Lomax along with a good friend, surfing legend Pat McGee, opened the Texas Surf Museum next door. Before it closed in September, the institution told the story of the evolution of Texas surfing with photos, vintage memorabilia, newspaper clippings, short videos and more than 30 legendary surfboards.

Galveston also draws surfers despite its similarly less-than-stellar waves. The continental shelf along the barrier island is long and shallow, creating small swells. The wimpy waves are welcoming for newcomers to the sport. Every summer, children in surf camps can be seen on the beach practicing pop-ups and in the water riding waves with a face full of concentration, arms up, hands pointed

OPPOSITE FROM TOP Rachel Gore takes on a wave at Isla Blanca Park on South Padre Island. A classic woody, the most iconic of surfmobiles.

Where To **HANG 10** in Texas

1 Surfside Beach Just south of Galveston, in Brazoria County, you'll find a variety of waves, including big swells, for a range of skill levels.

2 Matagorda Peninsula Specifically, where the Colorado River empties into the Gulf. The strong waves there, thanks to the area's deep ocean floor, are best for experienced surfers.

3 Port Mansfield Jetty The cut that separates North and South Padre islands is incredibly isolated but has arguably the best waves in the state—for seasoned surfers.

4 South Padre Island Jetties The gentle beach-break waves here, where the continental shelf drops off dramatically, are great for longboarding—from beginners to pros.

5 Boca Chica Beach Just a little farther south, Boca Chica is known for occasionally producing barreling waves when the swells are strong. With sometimes serious undertow, this beach is for the best of the best.



toward the shore—just like they're taught. The shallow water, relatively flat sandy bottom and lack of rocks make area beaches a great place to learn.

"If you can surf here, you can surf anywhere," Cram says from his surf shop in Galveston. "When you can master the wave here, you can take those skills to any waves around the world."

Cram started surfing in Galveston in the early 1970s after inheriting a hand-me-down surfboard from a friend's older brother. He and a friend would ride bikes 1 mile to the 47th Street break, between them holding the 9-foot board weighing close to 40 pounds. He has been surfing and skateboarding the island ever since. In 2005, Cram opened his brightly colored, Hawaii-style surf and skate shop across from one of Galveston's most popular surf spots—



the Pleasure Pier. His team teaches surfers to catch a wave even in the worst conditions.

While the beaches near Galveston are perfect for newbie surfers, as one travels south along the coast, the waves become bigger and more powerful. This is because the shallow continental shelf of the Gulf gradually deepens near the southern point of South Padre Island.

Beaches with the best waves, like Port Mansfield Jetty, are often in secluded areas requiring four-wheel-drive vehicles. Because of that, most surfers stick to their local beaches for an afternoon surf session. Weather patterns can change quickly and never last long. When the perfect conditions don't arrive, surfers make do.

"Texas gets some great quality surfers because we have to make something out of nothing," Floyd says.

When traveling, Texas surfers tend to have the most fun of anyone in the water, Floyd says. They appreciate waves that other surfers might take for granted, knowing that they're probably better than the waves at home. Unless, of course, a hurricane is on its way.

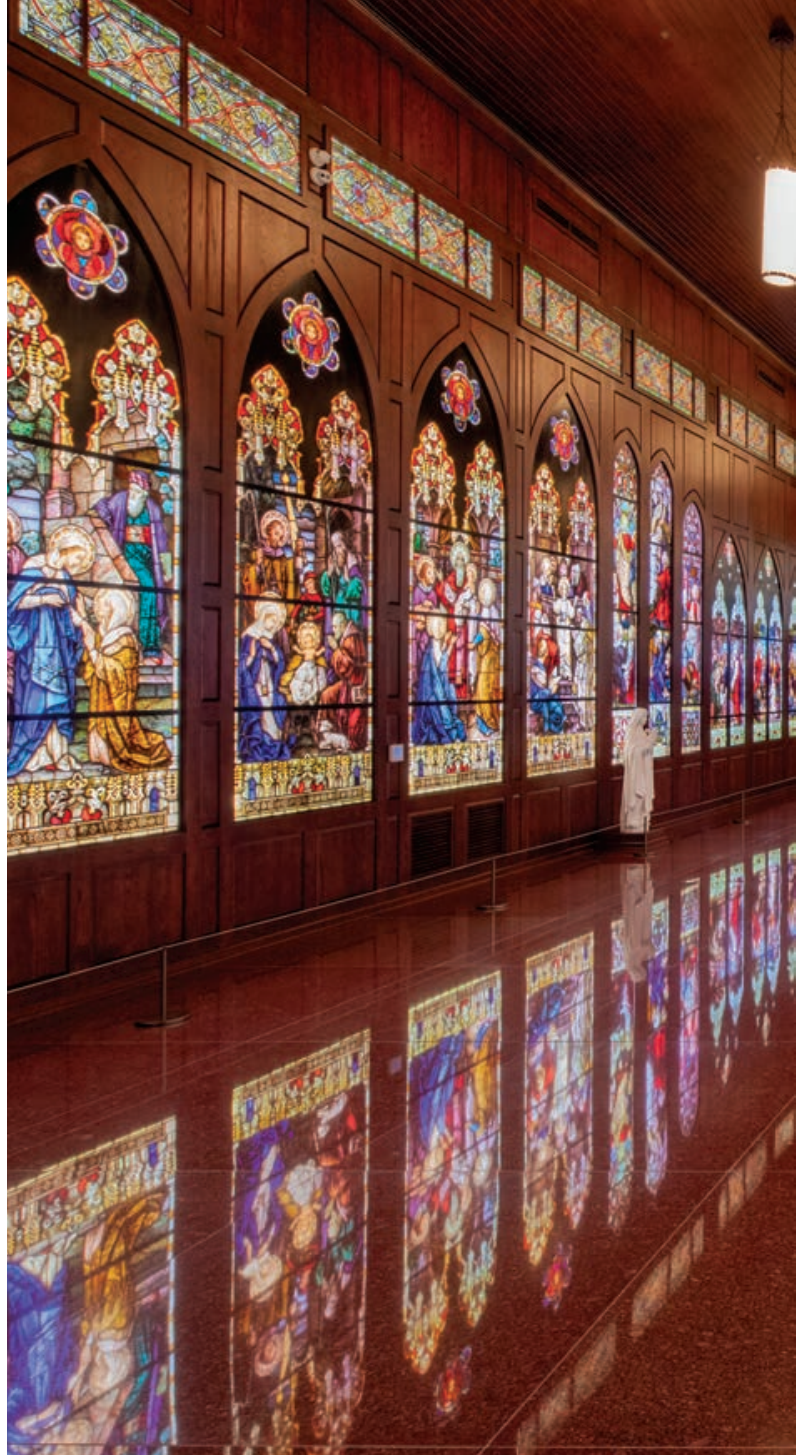
"We have to work at getting good in Texas," he says. "Then we can go anywhere." ■

CLOCKWISE FROM OPPOSITE PAGE Catching a wave off Port Aransas. Aarin Hartwell, with baby Brixton, is founder of SPI Sessions, a surf and water sports shop on South Padre Island. Brad Lomax has been surfing the waters of the Coastal Bend since the mid-1960s. A board, a bike and, down the road, a beach. Henry Fry's surfboards were some of the first made in Texas, in the 1960s.

IN A WHOLE NEW LIGHT

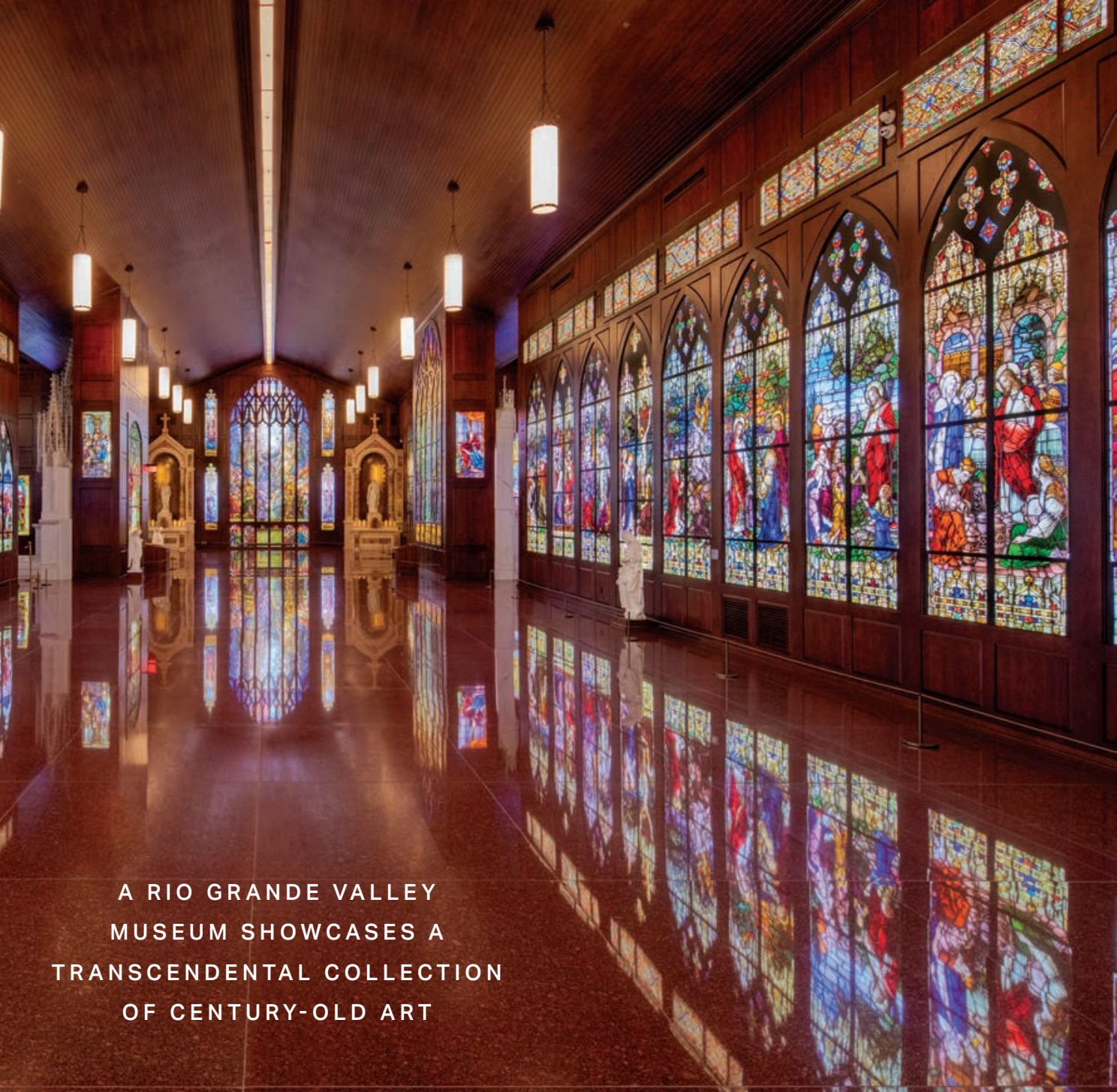


ABOVE The museum boasts eight Tiffany stained-glass windows depicting the Beatitudes, or blessings, including Blessed Are the Merciful. OPPOSITE A navelike passage illuminates works from now-closed churches.



I PULL OPEN THE DOOR of the Gelman Stained Glass Museum and step inside a kaleidoscope. More than 150 stained-glass windows and their reflections in the highly polished red granite floor immerse me in light, color and space. Then my eyes and brain begin to separate the profusion of shapes and colors into windows of religious scenes ranging from 10 to 25 feet tall, illuminated by what seems to be heavenly light.

Inside a gray stone building just off the highway in the heart of San Juan, in the Rio Grande Valley, the narrow, cross-shaped space is cool and dim. Most of the stained-glass windows in the museum, which opened in November 2021, originally graced now-closed East Coast churches, where they had been dedicated as memorials to departed loved ones. In their safe, new climate-controlled home, the complex LED arrays that backlight all the windows provide



A RIO GRANDE VALLEY
MUSEUM SHOWCASES A
TRANSCENDENTAL COLLECTION
OF CENTURY-OLD ART

a steady, otherworldly glow that compensates for variations in the thickness of the glass and paint amid the absence of natural light.

About 30 years ago, an auction catalog prompted Lawrence Gelman, an Edinburg anesthesiologist, to go to Atlanta, Georgia, to view a stained-glass window as it was being repaired. He later phoned in his winning auction bid and purchased the 4-by-7-foot landscape. “There’s something about the vividness of colors when light passes through stained glass,” Gelman says.

Captivated by the art, Gelman delved into the history and mastery involved, collecting more and more stained-glass windows until he had enough to fill a museum, which he chose to locate in San Juan, near the Basilica of Our Lady of San Juan del Valle. That shrine annually receives more than 1 million

visitors, an audience primed to appreciate Gelman’s collection.

“Dr. Gelman wanted to replicate a sacred, transcendental experience,” says Miriam Cepeda, the museum’s director.

He has succeeded, no question.

Created between 1880 and 1910 by 12 master glasswork artists and studios of the art nouveau era, the works comprise the largest American museum collection of stained-glass windows. And with 71 Louis Comfort Tiffany windows, the Gelman has the largest collection of Tiffany glass windows in the U.S. Other noted glass artists represented here include John La Farge, Mary Elizabeth Tillinghast and those at J&R Lamb Studios—the oldest continuously operating glass studio in the nation, dating to 1857.

Cepeda gives me a quick explanation of stained glass. Traditionally, stained glass was actually painted glass.



WITH 71 LOUIS COMFORT TIFFANY WINDOWS, THE GELMAN HAS THE LARGEST COLLECTION OF TIFFANY GLASS WINDOWS IN THE U.S.

The glass panels are supported and joined by flexible channels of lead called comes—and, in some cases, by copper foil. Tiffany Studios popularized the use of opalescent glass and layered glass to achieve shimmering, flowing colors for landscapes. Looking closely, I notice that even the faces and hands of Christ, the apostles and other religious figures have been painted onto the glass.

MANY OF THE WINDOWS represent biblical scenes, such as the Nativity, flight into Egypt, Good Shepherd, and Madonna and child, as interpreted by the artists. But La Farge's works here mostly portray medieval scenes.

The vivid jewel tones of Franz Mayer's stained-glass windows contrast with the luminous blues and greens of Tiffany Studios' masterpieces, such as the *Te Deum*. The museum is just one glorious work of art after another.

An eye-catching group of eight Tiffany windows portrays angels as stern warriors and loving guardians presenting the Beatitudes—sayings attributed to Jesus. These windows adorned a private mausoleum, out of the public eye for 108 years, until Gelman put them on display.

Similar memorial inscriptions evoke a bygone time, such as "To the Glory of God and in Loving Memory of Charles Chamberlain Gay 1835–1913." One narrow window honors the memory of three women who died in the wreck of a ship called the Paul Jones in January 1899 in the Gulf of Mexico.

The small but magnificent north chapel shimmers with windows rich in pastels. In the south chapel, a large pipe organ and an electronic organ, backed by superb sound systems, enhance the sensory feast. The museum hosts orchestral and chamber music concerts and has been the setting for weddings, workshops and secular celebrations.

The museum chose not to add interpretive displays to the windows, instead providing guests a compact map with QR codes that, with a click of your phone camera, link to in-depth descriptions of the windows, their artists and their techniques. The map also identifies the marble altars, statues and mosaics throughout the building.

La Casa del Vitral, an art studio in Edinburg, took on the restoration of the century-old windows and installed the glass art in the museum. They also made replicas of several windows held in other museums.

Admission to the Gelman Museum is by appointment only, made through its website, gelmanmuseum.org.

Once visitors are inside, benches invite sitting and contemplating. Subtle light washes over me while I listen to recorded voices raised in Gregorian chant. Peace and beauty. ■

The Good Shepherd, baptism of Jesus and flight into Egypt are among the biblical stories portrayed in stained glass framed by red oak paneling.



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How To Rock a Walking Stick

An essential part of a gentleman's wardrobe



In the 17th century, the walking stick overtook the sword as an essential part of a gentleman's wardrobe. Though it was primarily used as a decorative accessory, it could also function as a weapon if necessary. For men of the era, these walking sticks were a statement piece, and a way to communicate their wealth and refinement.

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Today, walking sticks still represent status and prosperity — a way to show off your deep pockets without being too flashy. In that vein, we present the Santa Fe Walking Stick. Made of eucalyptus wood painted a glossy black with an antiqued silver-finished sculpted handle, what gives this piece of finery a distinctive edge is an 18-carat turquoise inlay that's been enhanced to bring out its best blues. Don't be bashful about your affluence. See why the Santa Fe Walking Stick is the embodiment of sophisticated elegance for the modern gentleman.

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— Steven, Arlington, VA



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— Chas, Placida, FL

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MESSAGE
FROM
GENERAL
MANAGER/
CEO

JEFF LANE

Finding the Value of Electricity

NOWADAYS, SMARTPHONES and mobile devices are a part of our culture. It seems like everyone is connected on the go—whether they're calling, texting, emailing or scrolling Facebook. Such communication freedom is a luxury we pay for, generally without grumbling.

So why is it that when it comes to electricity—a necessity in our modern world—many of us complain when the power bill comes every month? We expect electricity to be there at the flip of a switch, and when it's not, it can be frustrating.

I'm no different—I expect the lights to come on every time, too. And as the manager of Trinity Valley Electric Cooperative, I have a special responsibility to make sure your electric service is safe, reliable and affordable. But I also believe that compared to other commodities, electricity remains a great value.

For example, over the past year, the cost of a loaf of white bread rose 16%, frozen vegetables are up 19% and margarine jumped 45%, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Electricity prices, while up 8% over the same period, are much more stable. When you consider how reliable electricity is, the value goes up even more. TVEC provides access to electricity 24 hours a day, and we work hard to increase our service reliability and control costs through innovative technology. 60193381002

Those smartphones I mentioned earlier? Nearly one-third of all U.S. households have four or more electronic devices plugged in and charging, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration. In fact, over the past 30 years, the amount of residential electricity used by appliances and electronics has increased from 17% to 31%. Cable and streaming devices, Wi-Fi routers, and multiple TVs have become the norm for many homes.

Clearly, our appetite for electricity shows no signs of slowing down. So the next time you flip a switch, charge your phone or run your washing machine, remember the value that electricity holds. And know that TVEC is looking out for you by working together to keep electric bills affordable, controlling costs through innovation and careful planning, and putting you, our members, first. ■



DID YOU KNOW?

May is National Electrical Safety Month. Look around your home and take note of any lamps, toys, appliances, electronics, cords, plugs or outlets that need repair or replacement.

VIACHESLAV PERETIATKO | ISTOCK.COM



POWER TIP

When the weather is nice, put your grill to use! During summer months, cooking outdoors is a great way to save energy and eliminate unwanted heat from cooking indoors.

VIOLETASTOIMENOVA | ISTOCK.COM



Trinity Valley Electric Cooperative Safety & Loss Control Coordinator Travis Croft, left, receives a certificate celebrating safety achievements from Texas Electric Cooperatives' Mike Finnell.

TVEC May Updates: Safety Awards, Cost Savings Campaign and Upcoming Software Change

THE ANNUAL TEXAS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES Loss Control Conference and Exhibit had co-op professionals from around the state in attendance in April. And while the goal was to learn about updated safety practices and procedures, it was also nice to receive recognition for the co-op's safety achievements.

In particular Trinity Valley Electric Cooperative received certificates for having worked three full years without a lost-time accident, and more than 1.1 million man-hours worked without a lost time accident as of the end of 2022.

- We continue to encourage members to use the most convenient and cost-effective methods of payment available: automatic bank draft and electronic check.

Transaction costs for credit cards have increased, costing co-op members more than \$700,000 per year. As a nonprofit cooperative, any excess margin is returned to members through the capital credit system.

Contact TVEC member services or use the online TVEC Member Portal to set up the method of payment that works best for you.

- While you are in the member portal, check to see if we have the best phone number, mailing address and email contact information for you.

While we don't need to make contact often, it is important to have current information when the need arises. We also have been using email to send updates during severe weather emergencies and monthly co-op news updates. Don't miss out!

- Be on the lookout for information regarding big changes coming to the TVEC member portal and mobile app.

Over the next six months, we will transition to a completely new software and member interaction system. It will be a big upgrade, with new bill design and a slate of new features for member communication and account management. ■

Trinity Valley Electric Cooperative

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Toll-Free 1-800-766-9576
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OFFICE LOCATIONS

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1800 E. Highway 243, Kaufman

Athens District Office

909 W. Larkin St., Athens

Cedar Creek District Office

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582 N. Fourth St., Wills Point

Lobby Hours

8:15 a.m.–4:45 p.m.

VISIT US ONLINE

tvec.net



A Full House of Energy Savings

ATTIC

In many homes, attic insulation is one of the easiest, least expensive and most effective ways to reduce your energy use. Contact us to find out how much insulation is right for your home. In colder regions, a properly insulated attic also reduces the chance of ice dams.

DEN/OFFICE

Plug all electronic gadgets such as phone and laptop chargers, printers, gaming consoles and BluRay players into a power strip with an on/off switch. When not in use, turn the power strip off to eliminate all those energy vampires.



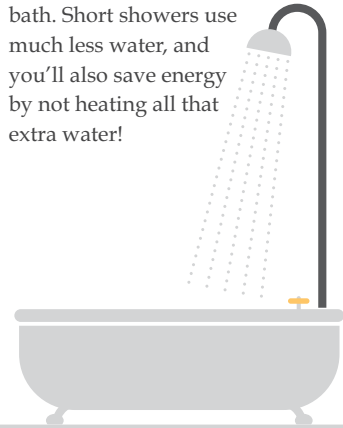
BEDROOM

Ceiling fans can help save energy all year long! In the summer, fans should rotate counterclockwise to push air down, creating a cooling flow. In the winter, fans should rotate clockwise to help draw cool air up toward the ceiling and push the warm air that naturally rises down to you and your family.



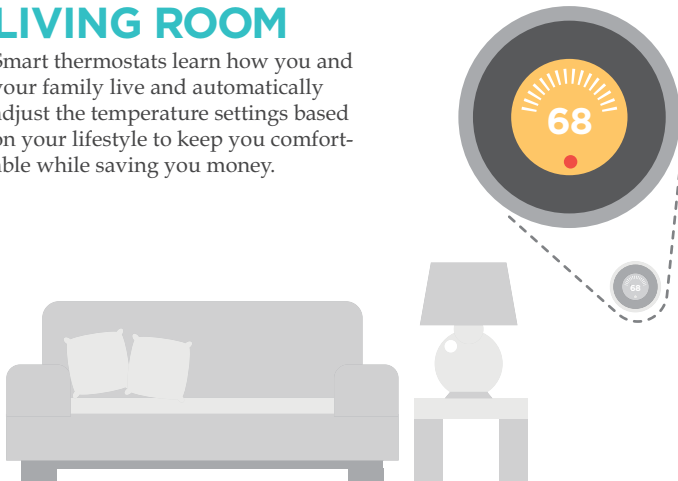
BATHROOM

Take a short shower instead of a bath. Short showers use much less water, and you'll also save energy by not heating all that extra water!



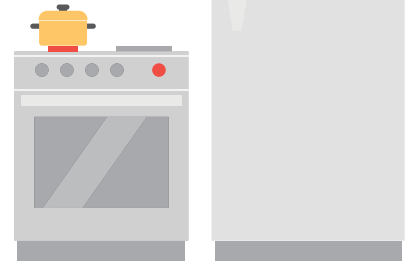
LIVING ROOM

Smart thermostats learn how you and your family live and automatically adjust the temperature settings based on your lifestyle to keep you comfortable while saving you money.



KITCHEN

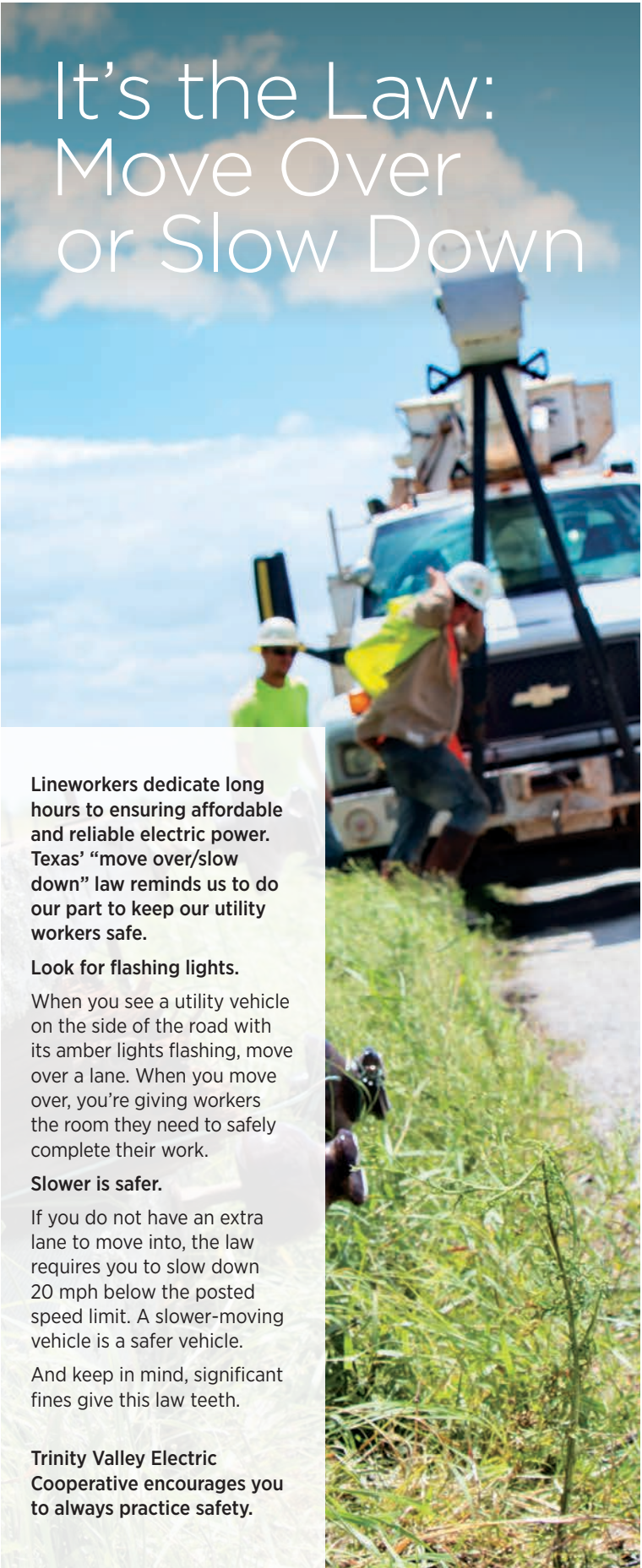
Make sure your burner isn't bigger than the pan, and use flat-bottomed pans to maximize surface contact with the burner. Don't preheat the oven until you're ready to use it. Minimize the number of times you open and close the refrigerator or oven door.



*Want to learn about additional ways to save energy?
Contact us for more energy efficiency tips!*

TVEC
TRINITY VALLEY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

It's the Law: Move Over or Slow Down



Lineworkers dedicate long hours to ensuring affordable and reliable electric power. Texas' "move over/slow down" law reminds us to do our part to keep our utility workers safe.

Look for flashing lights.

When you see a utility vehicle on the side of the road with its amber lights flashing, move over a lane. When you move over, you're giving workers the room they need to safely complete their work.

Slower is safer.

If you do not have an extra lane to move into, the law requires you to slow down 20 mph below the posted speed limit. A slower-moving vehicle is a safer vehicle.

And keep in mind, significant fines give this law teeth.

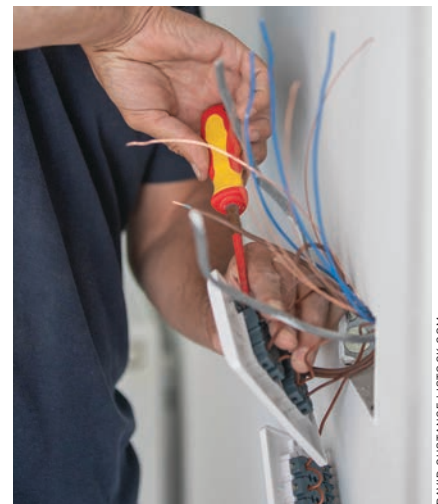
Trinity Valley Electric Cooperative encourages you to always practice safety.

Avoid Overloaded Circuits

A **CIRCUIT OVERLOAD** happens when too much electricity demand is placed on an electrical circuit. Besides causing annoyances like dimming lights or tripping breakers, overloads can be hazardous. Overloaded circuits can heat up wires and cause house fires.

Even though breakers may help avert disaster, a better solution is to avoid overloading your circuits in the first place. Here are some tips to avoid a circuit overload:

- ▶ Label circuit breakers to easily identify the different circuits in your home.
- ▶ Contact a qualified electrician to inspect your home if it's older than 40 years or has had a major appliance installed.
- ▶ Have a qualified electrician install new circuits for high energy use devices and anywhere you need additional outlets.
- ▶ Move plug-in appliances to a circuit that is less used.
- ▶ Remember not to turn on too many things at once. For example, turn off the TV and sound system while you vacuum (you can't hear them anyway).
- ▶ Purchase energy-efficient appliances and lighting to reduce your electrical load. ■



DAVID CUSTANCE | ISTOCK.COM

May is National Electrical Safety Month

plug into safety



Electricity brightens our daily lives—but it also requires caution to help keep your family safe.



Never use electrical equipment near water and other liquids.



Never use electrical cords that are frayed or damaged.



Do not overload electrical outlets.



Never use lightbulbs that exceed the recommended wattage for any lighting unit or fixture.



TRINITY VALLEY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE



TRINITY VALLEY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Energy Quiz



About how much of the total U.S. marketed natural gas did Texas produce in 2021? (www.eia.gov/state/?sid=TX#tabs-3)

- A • 25%
- B • 8%
- C • 12%
- D • 46%

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: Energy Measurement

WE WEREN'T TRYING to be tricky, there are just a lot of ways to measure energy.

A British thermal unit, or Btu, is equal to about 252 calories, .3 watt hour and 1,055 joules, making the answer D, all of the above.

Congratulations to the March Energy Quiz winner, Kim Fisher, of Murchison.

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



ONURDONGELI | ISTOCK.COM

A Buyer's Guide to Residential Generators

LET'S FACE IT: Rough weather happens. At Trinity Valley Electric Cooperative, our goal is to restore power as quickly and safely as possible. But when a major storm hits, like the ice storm in February, power may be out for an extended time. Anyone who has experienced an extended power outage has likely mulled over the idea of buying a generator, but before you do, make sure you have all the facts.

Let's look at the decisions you'll need to make when it comes to purchasing a residential generator. First, do you want to power your entire home or just portions of it? The biggest drawback to a permanently installed, whole-house generator is the cost. While the advantages are significant, it's a big expense.

The next decision is sizing the generator to your particular situation. Online tools abound, so if you like to research, just type "generator sizing guide" into your browser and you'll find plenty of resources. A nice portable generator provides at least 6,500 watts with a startup capacity of around 8,000 watts. When motor loads start, they draw more power than they use when running. This "in rush" of power gets them spinning. Afterward, their demand for electricity decreases.

The third consideration is how to integrate the generator with your home. Permanent models have dedicated switching devices that handle this chore, while portable models require you to remove them from storage, set them up, connect them and start them. Here is where the danger comes in to play.

Improperly connected generators can easily backfeed TVEC's grid. As electricity flows back into the lines, the transformers boost the voltage to lethal levels. Be sure to closely follow connection instructions and contact us if you

have any questions regarding connecting your generator safely.

Use of the generator can be as simple as plugging appliances directly into it. This is cumbersome and very limiting. A better option is to have a transfer switch installed by a qualified electrician. This device connects to the circuits you want to power. Connect your generator to the dedicated plug, follow the disconnect procedure and fire it up. Now you've got power for your home that's safe for all.

Next, a word about quality. With generators, you definitely get what you pay for. Go for engines with recognizable brand names. They may cost more, but the investment generally is worth it.

It's important to exercise your portable generator regularly. Don't worry, you don't need to walk your generator—it's not that type of exercise. Exercise in this case means connecting load to your portable generator and turning it on to be sure it will run. As a general rule, a generator should be exercised for about 30 minutes without a load at least once a month. Testing with a load should be done on a monthly or quarterly basis. ■

Win \$100 Just for Reading

Somewhere, hidden on pages 18-25, is a TVEC account number. Read closely. If the account number is yours, contact the member services department by May 31 to receive a \$100 credit on your electric bill. Don't miss out—you could be our winner.





Tame the Humidity in Your Home

TVEC ENERGY
MANAGEMENT ADVISER
CHRIS WALKER, BAP

CONDENSATION, “FOG” or frost on your home’s windows is a sure sign that they’re too inefficient to keep cold air out in the winter and in during the summer.

Moisture in the air condenses when it touches a cold surface, causing the glass to “sweat” like a cold glass of iced tea on a hot day. Condensation can form on the glass and even pool on the windowsill. Like any excess moisture, it can eventually lead to mold and mildew and can damage your windows over time. Here are some options for keeping humidity at bay.

Replace drafty, single-pane windows with double-pane versions that are more energy efficient. If that’s not an option right now, install storm windows to add an extra layer of glass.

Install ventilating fans in every bathroom, and turn them on before every shower. Let the fan run until the fog clears out of the bathroom but not any longer. Overuse of exhaust fans can send your home’s comfy, air-conditioned or heated air right out of the house.

Use the hood fan over your stove when you cook. Cooking sends moisture into the air—along with lingering odors. The fan will rid your home of those smells and humidity. Again, run the fan just long enough to clear the air. You also can put lids on pots and pans while cooking to tamp down steam.

Vent your clothes dryer to the outside. Check the duct for leaks, especially at the point where it’s attached to the dryer, and for obstructions that can prevent hot dryer air from escaping to the outdoors.

If you run humidifiers inside your home, don’t overdo it. It’s possible to add too much moisture to indoor air.

Fix any leaking pipes or drips. The last thing you want to do when you’re trying to reduce indoor humidity is add



Installing ventilation can help get excess humidity out of your home, making it more comfortable and also reducing the possibility of water damage due to condensation.

moisture. Leaking pipes and faucets do just that.

Use charcoal briquettes. Charcoal briquettes aren’t just for grilling anymore. They actually make a pretty good dehumidification tool. We’re not kidding—this actually works. All you have to do is take a few briquettes and place them in a receptacle—a basket or can will do. Charcoal is very absorbent and will draw moisture out of the air. You just have to replace it every two to three months—and make sure you don’t use self-lighting charcoal. ■



Your Generosity in Action

Operation Round Up Spotlight: Faith at Work



Ken and Donna Davis and Jose Garcia of Faith at Work Ministries accept a TVEC Charitable Foundation grant from Joy Long, TVEC public relations representative.

TVEC | ELAINE FROSCHE

EVERYTHING IS POSSIBLE WITH FAITH. In 2017, husband and wife duo Ken and Donna Davis were working full-time corporate jobs and serving at their church. Then Ken felt that he was being called upon and spoken to. “The Lord just impressed on Ken’s heart, ‘feed my people,’” Donna Davis said. “He came home from work and said, ‘I think we’re supposed to start a food pantry.’”

Working with the pastor at their church, Ken and Donna took over a broom closet to hold grocery items. On the first Sunday, they fed one family. “The next Sunday, we fed three families, and then we kept going,” Donna said.

Faith at Work Ministries became a separate nonprofit in 2018, named in honor of Ken and Donna’s daughter.

“We named it Faith at Work Ministries, first, for our faith in God, but second, in memory of my daughter Faith Marie, who passed away in 2012,” Donna said. “It is like an ongoing legacy of what God has done and the beauty from the ashes that he’s brought in our lives.”

As the food ministry continued to grow, other opportunities to serve people in need began to emerge.

“In 2019, the Lord stirred us and moved us, and a small group of us went out to the Mabank Pavilion, and we started holding a church service,” Donna said. “We would do church service, and then we would give away boxes of food and it

just kept getting bigger and bigger.”

Currently, Faith at Work Ministries gives away more than 800 boxes of food on Sundays with about 350 cars coming through the food line. Sixty-five to 70 volunteers help the ministry do the labor.

“When we finish the final car, usually around 4 p.m., then we have three to four other ministries that back their trailers in, and we load all their trucks and trailers, and they go and take care of their food lines,” Donna said. “By the end of the day, about 3,000 people get food on Sunday alone.” They have estimated that each week about 9000 people are benefiting from Faith at Work’s food assistance.

In addition to the food assistance, a thrift store and recently opened Lots of Faith RV park have been added.

“We kept running into people that didn’t have a place to live, so we could give them food, but there wasn’t a place for them to live,” Donna said.

Now, they have a 15-lot RV park, and right now, seven of those are ministry. “We have people that are trying to get restarted on life and get jobs and get settled so that they can get up and out and be independent again.”

Find out more about Faith at Work online at faithatworkministries.org or on their Facebook page. ■

March 2023 Operation Round Up Awards

Grants:

- Athens Samaritans dba Labor of Love- \$5,000
- Caseys Place- \$3,000
- Celebrate Forever Families- \$3,000
- Faith at Work Ministries- \$5,000
- First Baptist Church dba Mother’s Day Out- \$2,000

- Keep Athens Beautiful- \$3,000
- Lila Lane Outreach- \$3,000
- Serenity Church Terrell dba Serenity Corner- \$4,000

Bill Assistance:

- Salvation Army of Malakoff- \$3,000

Food Bank Assistance:

- The Terrell Share Center - \$1,500

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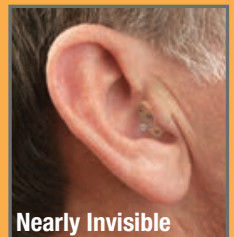
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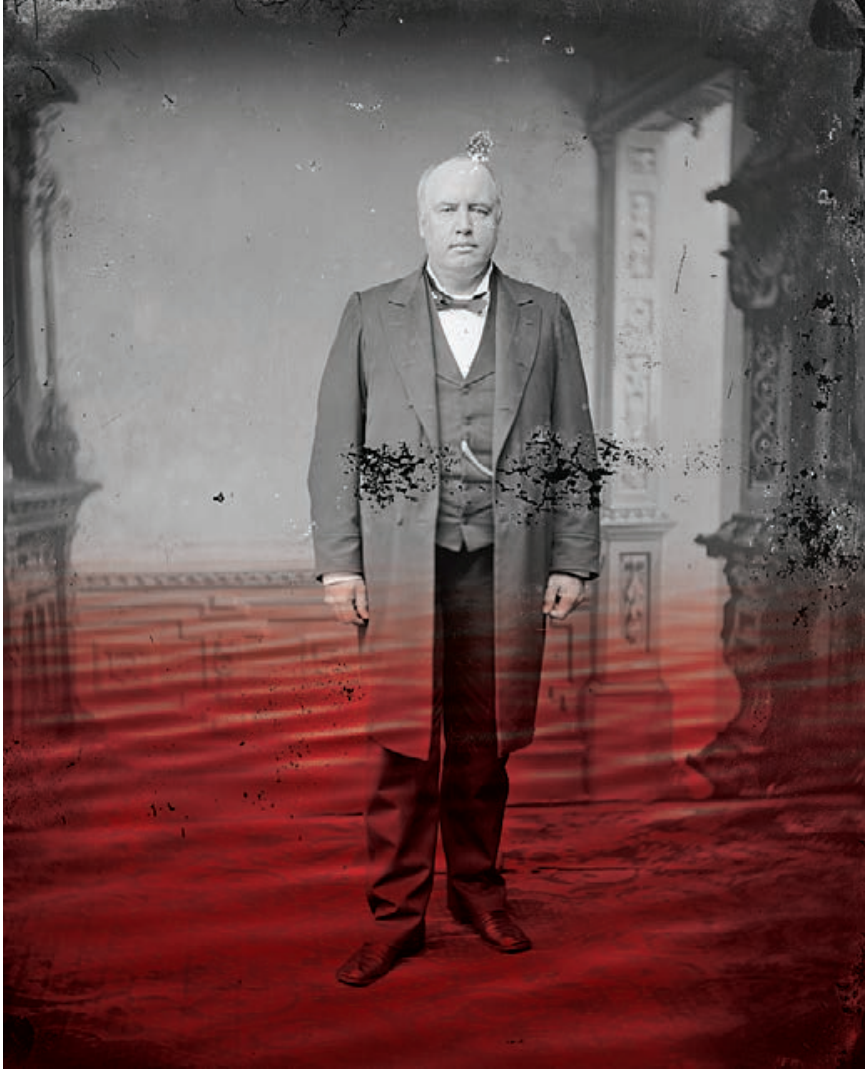


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Redwater Christening

East Texas residents washed away their sins—and their town's original name

BY W.F. STRONG

GO EAST OF DALLAS on Interstate 30 past Sulphur Springs until you reach U.S. Route 67. Take that east and before you reach Texarkana, you'll arrive in a little town of about 1,000 named Ingersoll. Well, it *was* called Ingersoll.

The name was unofficially changed to Redwater about 10 years after its 1875 founding—a change that was made official by the post office almost a decade after that.

Founders of the town admired Robert Green Ingersoll and decided to name their town after him. You may have never heard of Ingersoll, but that's only

because you didn't live in the late 1800s in America.

Back then, Ingersoll was one of the most famous people in the nation. He was friends with presidents and Mark Twain. He was a giant among politicians of the day, and any Republican who wanted to succeed at the national level needed and lusted after Ingersoll's endorsement—and his oratorical talents.

Had he wanted to, he would have made a formidable candidate for the presidency himself, except for the little problem of his nickname: the Great Agnostic.

Despite Ingersoll's reputation as a free-

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



thinker and anti-religious zealot, he was widely liked.

His central creed was this: “Happiness is the only good. The place to be happy is here. The time to be happy is now. The way to be happy is to make others so.”

Ingersoll, a devoted reader of Shakespeare and, ironically, the Bible, was known as the most brilliant wordsmith of his age. He mesmerized audiences with his genius for creating poetic oratory. His voice was captivating in tone, and his articulation was flawless.

Ingersoll was ahead of his time. The New York native who served as the 16th attorney general of Illinois after commanding a Union cavalry regiment in the Civil War was an outspoken abolitionist and supported voting rights for Black people and women.

But Ingersoll's fame died with him, in 1899. It seemed he would be confined to the century that had defined him.

Even in Texas. A revival meeting was held in the early 1890s in the East Texas town that was named for Ingersoll, and it was a mighty successful one.

That week 110 people were baptized, or “born again,” in the community. It suddenly became thoroughly devout and could not suffer the indignities of living under the name of a famous agnostic. So they agreed to rename the town Redwater, after a well that had recently been dug there was found to yield red water. Perhaps they also saw some religious significance in the name. In the Old Testament's telling, God parted the Red Sea to save Moses and the Israelites.

That's how Ingersoll became Redwater and one more reason that the man himself became, as *The Washington Post* called him in 2012, “the most famous American you never heard of.” ■

Berries

Make a grand entrance with your favorite diminutive delights

BY MEGAN MYERS, FOOD EDITOR

Berries have long been my favorite kind of fruit. Not only are they wonderful eaten out of hand, these versatile little gems shine in recipes of all kinds. For these cornmeal pancakes, blueberries are combined with jalapeño for a tart, sweet, slightly spicy topping.



Cornmeal Pancakes With Blueberry Jalapeño Sauce

PANCAKES

- 1 cup self-rising flour**
- 1 cup cornmeal**
- 2 tablespoons sugar**
- ½ teaspoon baking powder**
- 1 cup buttermilk**
- 2 eggs**
- 4 tablespoons (½ stick) butter, melted, plus more for the pan**

SAUCE

- 1½ cups blueberries**
- 2 tablespoons sugar**
- 1 jalapeño, seeded and diced**
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice**

1. PANCAKES In a large bowl, stir together flour, cornmeal, sugar and baking powder. Whisk in buttermilk and eggs until smooth. Let batter rest while you make the sauce.

2. SAUCE In a small saucepan, combine blueberries, sugar, jalapeño and lemon juice and stir well. Set over medium heat and cook 5 minutes, stirring occasionally and mashing blueberries with the back of a spoon. Turn heat to low and let simmer while you cook the pancakes.

3. Warm a nonstick skillet over medium heat. Add a small amount of butter to the pan and swirl to coat.

4. Stir the 4 tablespoons melted butter into the batter. Scoop ¼ cup of batter and pour into the prepared pan, repeating as allowed for pan size.

5. Cook pancakes until edges are dry and bubbles appear (1–2 minutes), then flip and cook an additional 2 minutes. Remove to a plate and repeat until all the batter is used. Serve immediately with warm sauce.

MAKES 1 DOZEN PANCAKES

TCP Follow along with Megan Myers and her adventures in the kitchen at stetted.com, where she features a recipe for Raspberry White Chocolate Cookies.



Strawberry Burfee

SHUBHADA KORE
PEDERNALES EC

This burfee, an Indian dessert similar to fudge—also spelled burfi, barfi, barfee or borfi—is a wonderfully easy treat. Top it with coconut, sprinkles or chopped nuts for festive flair.

- 1 cup strawberries**
- 1 cup almond flour**
- 1 cup brown sugar**
- ½ cup desiccated coconut**
- 1 tablespoon butter**

COOK'S TIP Desiccated coconut can be made by pulsing shredded coconut in a food processor until finely chopped.

1. Wash, trim and purée strawberries until smooth. Set aside.
2. In a nonstick pan over low to medium heat, roast almond flour for 5 minutes or until it is lightly browned and aromatic. Pour into a bowl and set aside.
3. Return the pan to the heat and add strawberry purée and brown sugar. Cover and cook 2–3 minutes on low to medium heat.
4. Once the berry and sugar mixture is bubbling, remove lid and stir in almond flour and coconut. Mix well, then stir in butter. Cook on low, stirring constantly, until mixture comes together into a dough, about 5–6 minutes. It will be somewhat sticky, with excess moisture cooked off.
5. Let the mixture cool slightly and then spread onto greased parchment or into a buttered square pan, using a spatula to shape into ½-inch thickness. Let cool completely and slice into squares or diamonds to serve.

SERVES 8–10

[MORE RECIPES >](#)

\$500 WINNER

Berry Burst Pavlova

JUANITA GUERRA
MAGIC VALLEY EC



Pavlovas are always impressive on the table, especially when layered with a creamy filling and fresh fruit. Make sure not to open the oven during baking and cooling so the pavlova dries fully.

SERVES 12



PAVLOVA

- ¼ cup fresh or frozen berries of choice**
- ¾ cup egg whites at room temperature (about 6 eggs)**
- 1 cup superfine sugar**
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch**
- 1½ teaspoons cream of tartar**
- ½ teaspoon lemon or almond extract (optional)**

FILLING

- ¼ cup fresh or frozen berries of choice**
- 8 ounces cream cheese, softened**
- 1 can sweetened condensed milk (14 ounces)**
- ¼ cup lemon juice**
- ½ teaspoon lemon or orange extract**
- 1 pound mixed fresh berries**

1. **PAVLOVA** Preheat oven to 240 degrees. Draw an 8-inch circle on a sheet of parchment and set aside.
2. Microwave berries for 1 minute, smash with a fork and drain off any excess liquid. Set aside.
3. In a large bowl, whisk egg whites using an electric mixer on low until soft peaks form, 5–6 minutes. Continue to whisk, adding sugar 1 tablespoon at a time, waiting 15 seconds between each addition. Once all the sugar is added, increase mixer speed to high and whisk meringue to stiff peaks and until mixture is smooth. Sift in cornstarch and cream of tartar, add extract (if using), and whisk to incorporate.
4. Drop the heated berries into five areas on top of the mixture and fold in lightly with a spatula to create swirls.
5. Place a small amount of meringue onto each corner of a baking sheet and set the parchment, pencil side down, on top of it, sticking the corners down. Scoop the meringue onto the parchment, using the spatula to spread and fill the circle shape evenly. Bake 1½ hours, then turn oven off and let the meringue cool with the door closed for at least 2 hours.
6. **FILLING** Microwave berries 1 minute, smash with a fork and drain off any excess liquid. Set aside.
7. In a medium bowl, beat the cream cheese until fluffy. In another bowl, mix together the condensed milk, lemon juice and extract until smooth. Add to the cream cheese and whip until smooth and fluffy. Drop the heated berries into five areas on top and fold in lightly to make swirls.
8. To assemble, carefully transfer the cooled pavlova to a serving plate. Spread the filling into the middle and top with fresh berries.

\$500 Recipe Contest

BEANS DUE MAY 10

Submit your most delicious bean dishes, and we'll award \$500 for the winning recipe.



Raspberry Bread Pudding

JANELLE NIX
NUECES EC

Excellent for breakfast or dessert, this bread pudding is bursting with tart raspberries. It's topped with a creamy vanilla sauce, which Nix's mother has been making for decades.

BREAD PUDDING

- 1 loaf French bread
- 3 eggs
- 2½ cups half-and-half
- 1 cup sugar, divided use,
plus 2 tablespoons
- ½ cup brown sugar
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 2½ cups fresh raspberries
- ¼ cup water
- Zest of 1 small orange
- Butter for the pan

VANILLA SAUCE

- ½ cup sugar
- 2 tablespoons cornstarch
- Dash of salt



- 1½ cups half-and-half
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 tablespoons (¼ stick) butter

- 1. BREAD PUDDING** Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Slice bread into ½-inch cubes to yield 5 cups of cubes and spread onto a baking sheet. Bake 7–10 minutes, until dry. Set aside.
- 2.** In a large bowl, whisk together eggs, half-and-half, ½ cup sugar, brown sugar, vanilla and salt. Fold in the toasted bread, coating evenly. Let soak for 30 minutes.

3. Place the raspberries in a bowl. In a small saucepan over medium heat, combine water, orange zest and ½ cup sugar, stirring to dissolve sugar. Cool syrup slightly, then pour over raspberries and stir to coat.

4. Lightly coat a 9-inch square baking pan with butter. Pour ¾ of the bread mixture into the pan, then spoon raspberries and syrup over the top. Add remaining bread mixture, then sprinkle on 2 tablespoons sugar. Bake 50–60 minutes, until center is set.

5. VANILLA SAUCE While the bread pudding is baking, make the sauce. In a small saucepan, whisk together sugar, cornstarch and salt. Whisk in half-and-half, then set over medium heat. Cook, stirring constantly, until mixture thickens and coats the back of a spoon, about 10–15 minutes. Remove from heat and whisk in vanilla and butter until blended and smooth. Serve on top of the bread pudding.

SERVES 8



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COURTESY CHET GARNER

Underwater Wonderland

At Mammoth Lake Texas, it's what's inside that counts

BY CHET GARNER

I WAS WALKING like an awkward, eager duck with all my gear shaking like heavy tail feathers behind me. Mammoth Lake Texas attracts divers from all over the country, and I understood why as soon as I submerged myself into its strange underwater menagerie.

You can use your fingers to count the number of inland scuba diving destinations in Texas. Some offer a natural glimpse of spring-fed pools (like San Solomon Springs at Balmorhea State Park), and others offer swims through sunken objects. Mammoth Lake in Clute mixes the natural and artificial to create an underwater amusement park.

Below the depths of this 65-acre lake lie more than 150 objects ranging from small sculptures to the entire fuselage of a C-130 cargo plane. With a reservation and a current dive license, visitors can rent gear and embark on the most unusual underwater scavenger hunt in the state—in the largest and deepest dedicated scuba lake in Texas. Most attractions are in 35–40 feet of water, but a deeper hole reaches down to 75 feet.

I was joined by a knowledgeable divemaster, Alex Amaro, who took us on an epic expedition through a World War II submarine and a fighter jet. There's even a life-size sculpture of a Columbian mammoth marking the spot where fossils were found when this was just a sand pit. My favorite stops were the decommissioned rides from Six Flags AstroWorld, which owner Jason Burlison bought and submerged.

All around us were bass, perch and turtles that seemed to be enjoying the sunken treasures as much as I was. Unfortunately we didn't get a glimpse of the 7-foot paddlefish that call the lake home—just another reason to come back. ■

ABOVE Instructor Alex Amaro, giving the diving OK sign, with Chet and Todd White, producer of *The Daytripper*.

TCP Follow along as Chet goes sightseeing underwater. See the video on our website and check out all his Texplorations on *The Daytripper* on PBS.



Know Before You Go

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

MAY

07

Ennis Cinco de Mayo, (972) 878-4748, visitennistexas.com

09

Amarillo [9–10] Fiddler on the Roof, (806) 378-3096, amarillociviccenter.com

11

South Padre Island [11–13] Shallow Sport Owners Tournament, (956) 233-9489, shallowsporttournament.com

Abilene [11–14] Western Heritage Classic, (325) 677-4376, westernheritageclassic.com

12

Johnson City Movies at the Memorial, (830) 868-7111, johnsoncitytx.org

Saint Jo Sporting Clay Event, (817) 296-3104, saintjosportingclay.com

Boerne [12–13] Hand-made Market, boernehandmademarket.com

Coolidge [12–13] Mesquite Tree Festival, (254) 203-6198, facebook.com/mesquitetreefestival

Lindale [12–13] Piney Woods Wine Festival, (903) 881-5103, visitlindale.com

McKinney [12–13] Y'all Had To Be Here Live, (214) 769-0645, thecomedyarena.com

Ingram [12–June 23] Of the Earth: Metal and Wood, (830) 367-5121, hcaf.com

13

Brenham T. Graham Brown, (979) 337-7240, thebarnhillcenter.com

Brownwood Lake Brownwood Bash, (325) 784-5223, tpwd.texas.gov

Fort Davis Mile-High Mountains Fest, (432) 426-3337, tpwd.texas.gov

Fredericksburg Cherry Mountain School Open House, (830) 685-3321, historicschools.org

Mesquite Historic Mesquite Inc. Preservation Month Open House and Porch Party, (972) 216-6468, cityofmesquite.com

Texarkana Dragon Boat Festival, (903) 798-3211, texarkanadragonboat.com

The Woodlands Buzzfest, (281) 364-3010, woodlandscenter.org

Victoria Mother's Day Brunch, (361) 573-3734, goldencrescentcasa.org

18

Corsicana Yesterday & Today: The Beatles Experience, (903) 874-7792, corsicanapalace.com

Giddings [18-20] Lee County Fair, leecountyfairtx.com

19

Grapevine [19-21] Main Street Fest, (817) 410-3185, grapevintexasusa.com

Plano [19-21] Texas Mineral and Fossil Show, (972) 941-5840, planoeventcenter.org

MORE EVENTS >

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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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www.kerrvillefolkfestival.org



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Pick of the Month

Cinco de Mayo Celebration

Cleburne, May 7
 (817) 645-2455
 cleburnechamber.com

This festive celebration will feature vendors and Mexican dishes, plus ballet folklorico, dancing horses, live music, a custom car show, kids' zone and *luchadores* from Advanced Pro Wrestling.

MAY EVENTS CONTINUED

19

Richardson [19-21] Wildflower Arts and Music Festival,
 wildflowerfestival.com

20

College Station Troubadour Festival,
 troubadourfestival.com

Hico Texas Steak Cook-off, (254) 485-4984,
 texassteakcookoff.com

La Grange Pat Byrne, (979) 968-9944,
 thebugleboy.org

Jefferson [20-21] Train Show, (903) 665-3733,
 visitjeffersonstexas.com

21

Fredericksburg The Moanin' Frogs,
 fredericksburgmusicclub.com

25

Grapeland [25-27] Memorial Day Gospel Bluegrass Festival, (936) 687-2594,
 salmonlakeresort.com

Kerrville [25-June 11] Folk Festival, (830) 257-3600,
 kerrvillefolkfestival.org

26

McKinney [26-27] Erica Rhodes, (214) 769-0645,
 thecomedyarena.com

Bandera [26-28] Memorial Day Weekend Stampede,
 banderaprorodeo.org

Fredericksburg [26-28] Crawfish Festival,
 fbgcrawfishfestival.com

Kerrville [26-28] Texas Masters of Fine Art and Craft Invitational Exhibition, (469) 223-4162,
 texasmasters.com

27

Brenham Gunhild Carling, (979) 337-7240,
 thebarnhillcenter.com

New Braunfels [27-28] Randall King, (830) 606-1281,
 gruenehall.com

28

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

31

Navasota [31-June 10] Grimes County Fair,
 grimescountyfair.com

JUNE

01

Fredericksburg [1-4] Hill Country Film Festival, (866) 224-7714,
 hillcountryff.com

02

Hillsboro [2-3] Bond's Alley Art Festival, (254) 582-5499,
 hillsboromainstreet.org

03

Fredericksburg Car Fest, (830) 456-2735,
 fredericksburgcarfest.com

04

The Colony Take on the Heat Triathlon, (214) 370-9010,
 visitthecolonytx.com

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1 LARRY ALFORD
PEDERNALES EC

A great blue heron takes flight at Cypress Falls in Wimberley.

2 CRYSTAL MARTIN
FARMERS EC

Blue Angels soar over Pensacola Beach, Florida.

3 FAIN ZIMMERMAN
VICTORIA EC

A female ruby-throated hummingbird and thistle plant.

4 RACHEL SPENCER
CENTRAL TEXAS EC

"The turkeys here on the ranch are very busy in the fall. On this day they were flying across one of our creeks to find more food."



Upcoming Contests

- DUE MAY 10** Night Sky
- DUE JUN 10** Helping Out
- DUE JUL 10** Golden Hour



Enter online at TexasCoopPower.com/contests.

TCP See Focus on Texas on our website for more Taking Flight photos from readers.



TCP Try your hand at working through the maze to reach the dewberries. See the solution online.

sharp thorns, so I wear thick leather gloves. However, you cannot pick delicate berries with rigid gloved hands, so I cut off the glove tips of my thumb and index finger on my right hand.

Since I'll be kneeling or lying in the pasture, I also wear thick long-sleeved shirts and heavy long pants, which are quite uncomfortable in the May heat and humidity.

I've discovered that these berry vines love the same environment as poison ivy, and often the two plants intermingle. Since I'm focused on berries, I sometimes miss the signature three leaves of poison ivy until I am neck deep. Thus, I keep a trash bag in my supplies so I can change out of and isolate exposed clothes.

Another hazard lurking in the berry patch is the diamondback rattlesnake. The warm spring days are a holiday for them, and a step in any direction is a leap of faith. So before plopping down in the bushes, I probe with a walking stick and listen for the warning rattle.

I have been chased from a berry patch by wild hogs more than once. That's why I keep a pistol on me, though I've never had to use it.

If it's been a wet spring, you can expect good berries but also lots of mosquitoes. Ticks and chiggers are also common pests, so I apply a high-grade bug repellent. I am fair skinned, too, so I wear a large hat and sunscreen to guard against the sun.

I often wonder why no one in my family enjoys the berry picking as much as I do. Oh, they eat them, but they have quit coming with me on the harvest adventure. Once I even offered to get my 15-year-old son out of school early to tag along with me, but he said he had homework. Odd for a Friday. ■

Crawling With Trouble

Harvesting wild dewberries takes patience, will—and an armory

BY SHANE TORNO
ILLUSTRATION BY
CHANELLE NIBBELINK

DEWBERRIES GROW WILD in the scrub brush country of South Texas, and as a child I would pick them with my grandparents. Most of what we picked we ate immediately, but often we would collect enough for my grandmother to bake a cobbler that she served warm, topped with vanilla ice cream—South Texas springtime perfection.

Over the years, I have found very few locations where wild dewberries grow, and they tend to be hard to access. When I do find berries to pick, I am careful to outfit myself properly.

Usually I pick them as they trail along the ground or climb among taller pasture weeds. I have to get on my hands and knees, sometimes even lying on the ground to pick them. Mind you, dewberry vines are covered in thousands of short,

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