

WOMEN'S PUSH FOR
CARNEGIE LIBRARIES

SCARIEST BRIDGE
IN TEXAS

READER RECIPES
A HIT IN NEVADA

Texas Coop Power

FOR NUECES EC MEMBERS

JANUARY 2021

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where the wild things are





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January 2021



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Captured!

Take memorable wildlife photos with preparation, research and sleuthing.

Story and photos by Russell A. Graves

14 Literary Fortunes

Women of the early 20th century wrangled Carnegie grants and libraries for their towns.

By Melissa Gaskill

ON THE COVER

A brown bear at Katmai National Park and Preserve in Alaska.

ABOVE

A cottontail near Childress, on the southern edge of the Panhandle.

Photos by Russell A. Graves

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By Suzanne Featherston

Flying Colors

ONE OF THE BLACK MARKS against wind turbines is the number of birds killed by the rotating blades. Black marks, it turns out, could help resolve the problem.

Scientists in Norway found that painting one of the three blades on a wind turbine black reduces avian deaths by 72%.

The paper produced by the Norwegian Institute for Nature Research explains that painting one blade black is believed to create motion smear patterns that birds perceive as moving objects, enabling birds to take evasive action.

Of the more than 60,000 wind turbines in the U.S., Texas has some 15,000—the most of any state.



Tons of Tomatoes

If you love tomatoes, you have about a week left to enter our recipe contest that celebrates the fruit.

Tomatoes are a big deal in Jacksonville. A big deal. The East Texas city has hundreds of huge concrete tomatoes, some weighing 665 pounds, scattered around town as a declaration of its love for the juicy fruit that many people consider a vegetable.



UPLOADS OF CASH

Parents of K–12 students planned to spend a record \$789.49 per family for back-to-school supplies last fall. Purchases of laptops and computer accessories in anticipation of more online schooling because of the COVID-19 pandemic helped break the record set in 2019 by almost \$100.

There are 78 snake species in Texas.



We spotlighted rattlesnakes, one of the most common, in *A Snake To Love*, April 2020.



TCP Contests and More

ON.TEXASCOOPPOWER.COM

\$500 RECIPE CONTEST

Tomatoes

FOCUS ON TEXAS PHOTOS

Historic Texas

WEB EXTRA

Learn more about the 30 cities in Texas selected for Carnegie libraries—some of which still exist.

Power of Our People A Cupboard Never Bare

CHRISTINA KUPER grew up in Indiana, where she watched a neighbor she called Grandma Hiner, though they weren't related, regularly sharing food from her pantry with others.

"I think that's where giving was implanted into my heart," says Kuper, a member of Taylor Electric Cooperative. "Throughout my life I have always tried to give to others."

Thus began a lifetime of charity that included Meals on Wheels, Habitat for Humanity, Girl Scouts food drives and baking for military troops away during the holidays. When a debilitating respiratory disease left Kuper homebound in Hawley, about 10 miles north of Abilene, she refocused her benevolence.

Kuper installed the Hawley Sharing Box, left, at the end of her driveway in 2017. Based on the Little Free Pantry program, itself inspired by the Little Free Library project, Kuper's sharing box makes food, toys, school supplies and toiletries available for anybody—and Kuper stresses *anybody*—driving past 225 12th St., near the edge of town.

Daily updates on Facebook tell what's available and what's needed, and Kuper says the box is stocked almost completely by community donations.

"Kindness is addicting and contagious," she says, "and it should be spread everywhere."

INFO ▶ facebook.com/hawleysharingbox



TCP POWER OF OUR PEOPLE To nominate a co-op member who is making a difference in your community, email details to people@texascooppower.com.

FINISH THIS SENTENCE LIFE WAS BETTER ...

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 November prompt: **I'm most thankful for ...**

The little bitty space where my pets let me sleep in my own bed.

SUE CALDWELL
BANDERA EC
PIPE CREEK

My health, friends and warm home tonight.

MATTIE WOODFIN BORDERS
VIA FACEBOOK

My beloved brother, Rob, who, 31 years ago in December, donated his bone marrow to me and saved my life.

ANNE SWEET
PEDERNALES EC
GEORGETOWN

To see more responses, read Currents online.



ERIC W. POHL

Bat Lodging

“What a great endeavor to improve the planet. Thank you, Mr. Bamberger.”

NANCY GREENHAW
CENTRAL TEXAS EC
FREDERICKSBURG

Farrier Finesse

I went to farrier school in 1981, not to become a professional farrier but because I owned nearly 50 head of horses [Why Horses Wear Shoes, October 2020]. Pleased to see more women taking up that profession as brute strength is not as important as understanding the horse you’re shoeing.

Ken Wade
Central Texas EC
Fredericksburg



I have made these with vanilla wafers for as long as I can remember [Cookie Swap, Bourbon Balls, November 2020].

SHARON STOLL
VIA FACEBOOK



MEGAN MYERS

No Small Potatoes

J. David Bamberger is a hero in the Texas conservation world and has shown us all how being a good steward of the land can enable nature to thrive [Bat Lodging, November 2020]. Pam LeBlanc’s coverage of his “chiroptorium” showed Bamberger’s persistence and determination as well as his warm, down-home nature.

Yes, J. David, I agree: Your potatoes are, indeed, “terribly important!”

Elizabeth Bowerman
Comal County Conservation
Alliance
Pedernales EC
New Braunfels

I saw that cave soon after it was built. Love that beautiful ranch and the man who made this real.

Beverly Barnt
Via Facebook

Matagorda Connection

My great-grandfather was the assistant keeper there in the 1890s, leaving and then returning as keeper in the early 1900s until his death in 1913 [Matagorda Island Lighthouse, October 2020]. His sister, my great-great aunt, perished with her children at Indianola in the 1875 hurricane.

Bill Reeves
Pedernales EC
Georgetown

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 77, Number 7 (USPS 540-560). *Texas Co-op Power* is published monthly by Texas Electric Cooperatives (TEC). Periodical postage paid at Austin, TX, and at additional offices. TEC is the statewide association representing 75 electric cooperatives. *Texas Co-op Power*'s website is TexasCoopPower.com. Call (512) 454-0311 or email editor@TexasCoopPower.com.
SUBSCRIPTIONS Subscription price is \$4.20 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. Individual copies and back issues are available for \$3 each.
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 PUBLISHERS CLEARING HOUSE



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WO MINUTES AFTER I start blowing a predator call, I see movement to the northeast of the cedar tree in which I am hiding. Out of nowhere a sleek coyote takes a step into a clearing where I'd hoped one might and glares in my direction. Everything I planned to make this moment happen materializes 20 yards away: A predator stands in the burnished orange bluestem in perfect afternoon light and remains motionless long enough for me to focus and squeeze the shutter. I capture two frames of 35 mm slide film, and then the animal disappears. Then I notice my heart is pounding.

In that instant I made my first truly memorable wildlife image. It was exhilarating. Even though the scene is three decades old, I can recall it clearly. It was a defining moment in my eventual career as a photographer.

But here's the truth: Initially I didn't know the image was that good. Those were the days before digital photography, when I still had to expose the entire roll of film, ship it to a distant photo lab and wait for the images to return. A couple of weeks passed before I was finally able to look through the cardboard-mounted slips of film and find the coyote. First I thought someone else's pictures had been mixed in with mine. I quickly realized that the slides were indeed my own. In the Northeast Texas wild, everything I'd learned about how to make an engaging wildlife photo clicked.

Since that day, my photographs have appeared on more than 500 magazine covers, and I now guide photo tours all over the world. Recently I took a group to photograph bears in Katmai National Park and Preserve in Alaska.

A lot has changed since that moment calling up a coyote in Fannin County. A few years after the coyote stepped in front of my lens, digital photography revolutionized how images are made and democratized the medium to the point that even the best equipment made is truly affordable.

Some things have not changed with time and technology. Wildlife is still wild, and the steps required to capture great wildlife images are the same.

LEFT A brown bear atop Brooks Falls in in Katmai National Park and Preserve in Alaska anticipates a meal of a spawning salmon. ABOVE Camouflage helps photographers get closer to wildlife.



ABOVE A bobcat approaches near Dodd City in North Texas. BELOW A motion-sensor camera can capture shy animals, such as this badger in Montana.

TCP WEB EXTRA

Enter online to win a digital copy of *The Big Book of Wildlife and Nature Photography* by Russell A. Graves.

Here are proven techniques that can help ensure your wildlife images are engaging and dynamic.

◀ FOCUS ON THE EYES

You've heard the saying that the eyes are the windows to the soul. That trite phrase holds true for wildlife, too. When planning a photograph, pay close attention to the eyes. Many cameras now include an eye-tracking feature that can automatically detect an animal's eyes and ensure that the focus locks on accurately.

The reason the eyes are of utmost importance is simple: When you look at another person or an animal, you first notice the eyes. That's where you make a connection with the subject. If the animal's tail is out of focus, that's OK. Blow the focus on the eyes, and the image suffers.

▼ GET CLOSE

There's a popular misconception that wildlife photographers use giant lenses and stand hundreds of yards from their subjects to obtain quality photographs. Nope!

To get really impressive photographs of any animal, you must get close. For larger animals like deer, it is best to be within 50 yards. With smaller creatures like quail, try to get within a few feet.

It is possible to use extreme telephoto lenses to get optically closer, but the more air you shoot through, the less sharp your images will be. Since air is filled with particu-





A bighorn sheep in Montana grazes just a few feet away.

lates, subjects become optically softer as distance increases, so the objects or animals look hazy. It is a good practice in wildlife photography to get as close as you can.

You can achieve the goal of proximity in a number of ways. State and national parks are ideal locations because the animals are accustomed to seeing people and are not as likely to run when they see a photographer. When working in wilder locations, consider including a blind in your setup. Think like a hunter and use the same tools hunters use to get close to wildlife.

▲ LEARN ABOUT YOUR SUBJECT

One essential goal of wildlife photography is to control as many variables as possible. You can't control whether an animal will show up and walk into your line of sight, but you can learn your camera's features, the craft of photography and the basics of composition.

In addition, learn all you can about the species you wish to photograph. By becoming a student of creative photography and a student of wildlife, you'll be more likely to see a particular species.

If you want to photograph mule deer, understand what habitat they prefer and the most likely time to find them. By understanding everything possible about your subject, you will tip the odds in favor of finding your target species.



ABOVE A curious chipmunk in Colorado comes within inches of the camera. RIGHT A crane wades among feeding ducks in New Mexico.

▲ THINK ABOUT COMPOSITION

Great photographs rely on strong composition. Composition is the arrangement of the elements in a photograph that are visually balanced and pleasing. Typically with wildlife, that means composing them vertically or horizontally and relying on the compositional rule called the rule of thirds. The rule of thirds is a basic guide for where the main interest points in an image should lie inside the frame—a third of the way into the frame vertically and horizontally. This rule discourages centering the subject in the frame.

► LIGHTING IS KEY

Another essential consideration for a good wildlife photograph is how it is lit. Natural light looks best during the earliest and latest hours of the day. When the sun is low on the horizon, shadows fall away from the subject and the colors cast by sunlight take on a warm glow. The sun's light is always harshest during the middle of the day. So it is important to be in the field during the beginning and end of the day. Use the middle of the day to review the pictures you shot in the morning or scout for afternoon opportunities. Not only is the light better in early morning and late afternoon, but that's also when wildlife is most active.

What if the weather is overcast? Overcast days are great because the soft, nondirectional light extends your shooting day. I actually prefer to photograph on overcast days.



DON'T OVERTHINK IT

Don't complicate the process. Photography requires the mastery of a few fundamentals and then doing the same thing over and over so that results become predictable. Today's digital cameras are capable of performing many functions, but the truth is, a thorough understanding of aperture, shutter speed and sensor sensitivity will make more memorable photos.

Wildlife photography is comparable to golf. Golfers play the game knowing they'll never be perfect. Top photographers take the same approach. They pursue the perfect shot, and that addictive pursuit keeps them heading afield. ■

Bad to the Bone

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The very best hunting knives possess a perfect balance of form and function. They're carefully constructed from fine materials, but also have that little something extra to connect the owner with nature. If you're on the hunt for a knife that combines impeccable craftsmanship with a sense of wonder, the **\$79 Huntsman Blade** is the trophy you're looking for.

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LITERARY = FORTUNES

Women of the early 20th century wrangled Carnegie grants and libraries for their towns

BY MELISSA GASKILL

VISITORS TO BRYAN IN 1902 walked unpaved streets and bought drinks at one of a dozen saloons. Many carried guns, and it was possible to witness a public hanging on the courthouse lawn. Local women sought to correct the situation and founded the Mutual Improvement Club.

“The ladies of the club were upset with the saloon-town atmosphere and wanted to bring in some culture and learning,” says Rachael C. Altman, manager of Bryan’s Carnegie History Center, housed in the town’s historic library.

Club member Lillie Wilson’s brother-in-law, Thomas W. Stewart, had been introduced to Andrew Carnegie. The Pennsylvania steel magnate was donating money to build libraries, and club leaders urged Wilson to contact Carnegie through her connection. “They were very persistent,” Altman says. Carnegie gave them a grant, and the Bryan Carnegie Library opened in December 1903.

A total of 2,509 Carnegie libraries were built between

1883 and 1929, including about 1,700 in the United States—32 of them in Texas. Many were funded through the efforts of women. Twenty of the original 32 buildings have been lost to demolition or fire, and eight of those surviving 12 remain in use, though not as libraries. Just four original Carnegie Libraries remain open in Texas—in Stamford, Ballinger, Franklin and Jefferson.

Carnegie sold his steel company to J.P. Morgan in 1901 for almost \$500 million, making him the world’s richest man. But “the man who dies rich dies in disgrace,” he said as he gave away \$350 million. Estimates suggest \$60 million went specifically toward libraries because Carnegie believed a free library was the best gift he could give a community. The keystones of the library program required that the facilities be public and free, and Carnegie required recipient cities to invest at least 10% of the grant annually to fund the libraries.

The northeast Texas town of Pittsburg had fewer than 1,500 inhabitants when it received the first Carnegie grant in the state in 1898, using it to build a small library and reading room. It burned down in 1939.



CLOCKWISE FROM OPPOSITE The 1905 Greek Revival-style Carnegie library in Cleburne is today home to the Layland Museum. Steel magnate Andrew Carnegie. A postcard of the Jefferson Carnegie Library.

TCP WEB EXTRA See a map of Texas' Carnegie libraries and a slideshow of vintage postcards.



In Northeast Texas, the Jefferson Library Association tried several fundraising strategies before applying successfully for a Carnegie grant. The Jefferson Carnegie Library was built in 1907 and was restored a century later.

The Classical Revival brick-and-limestone Carnegie Library in Stamford, north of Abilene, where Big Country EC has an office, features massive Ionic columns and corner pilasters. It hosted high school dances and, during World War II, games and socializing for airmen training nearby.

In Ballinger, south of Abilene, a Carnegie library built in 1911 is on the Texas Forts Trail as well as listed on the National Register of Historic Places and recognized as a State Antiquities Landmark and a Recorded Texas Historic Landmark. The building has continuously served as a library but needed extensive renovations by 1976. "It was in such bad shape the city had already bought another place to build a library then decided to save this one," says library director Carolyn Kraatz.

The Franklin Carnegie Library, north of Bryan, completed in 1914, served as a library through 1918 and then housed school classrooms and public activities until 1984. The building was restored and reopened as a library in May 2009. It originally came into being thanks to then-mayor R.M. Cole, who applied to Carnegie for funds in 1913.

Bryan's library building, designed by a professor at Texas Agricultural and Mechanical College (now Texas A&M University), today houses the Carnegie History Center. It served as a library until 1969 and then was used for city offices, says Altman. Matching handcarved pine stairways, tongue-and-groove pine flooring on the first floor and a decorative pressed metal ceiling all are original. Its restoration in 1999 took place with the help of the Women's Club, a modern incarnation of the Mutual Improvement Club.

Upstairs, the Bryan library hosted Red Cross gatherings during both world wars. The second floor now houses a genealogy research collection, which is free to the public along with access to online search services.

With so much of what people do being dependent on technology today, access to that technology is a crucial service provided by libraries, especially in small towns, says Karin Gerstenhaber of the Tocker Foundation, a nonprofit created in 1964 to support rural libraries in Texas.

"Carnegie felt that building libraries gave people opportunities to advance themselves," she adds. "The libraries provided free access to information, and those buildings were used for so many different purposes that brought people together. They filled a real need." ■

The Dallas, Fort Worth and San Antonio public library associations and the Woman's Club of Houston received grants around the turn of the century. The El Paso Public Library Association received one in 1904. And Clarksville, Waco, Belton, Tyler, Gainesville and Sherman received grants, all thanks to applications from local women's clubs.

Cleburne, south of Fort Worth and now home to a United Cooperative Services office, also built a Carnegie Library thanks to persistent women, in 1905. "A determined committee of ladies from the local women's club decided that the young town needed to become civilized and, we are told, traveled to New York to visit Carnegie's office without an appointment," says Stephanie Montero, manager of the Layland Museum now housed in the building. "He offered them \$10,000, but the committee felt that wasn't enough." Carnegie doubled his offer.

The Greek Revival-style building served as Cleburne's library until 1978, when it became part of the museum. The front entrance and main room feature Ionic columns with ornamental necking, and plaster details decorate interior and exterior walls.

CARNEGIE: NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY/SMITHSONIAN; JEFFERSON POSTCARD: COURTESY JUDY AULIK

Discovered! Unopened Bag of 138-Year-Old Morgan Silver Dollars

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The Morgan Silver Dollar is the most popular and iconic vintage U.S. coin. They were the Silver Dollars of the Wild West, going on countless untold adventures in dusty saddlebags across the nation. Finding a secret hoard of Morgans doesn't happen often—and when it does, it's a *big deal*.

How big? Here's numismatist, author and consultant to the Smithsonian® Jeff Garrett:

“It's very rare to find large quantities of Morgan Silver Dollars, especially in bags that have been sealed... to find several thousand Morgan Silver Dollars that are from the U.S. Treasury Hoards, still unopened, is really an incredible opportunity.”

-Jeff Garrett

But where did this unique hoard come from? Read on...

Morgans from the New Orleans Mint

In 1859, Nevada's Comstock Lode was discovered, and soon its rich silver ore made its way across the nation, including to the fabled New Orleans Mint, the only U.S. Mint branch to have served under the U.S. government, the State of Louisiana and the Confederacy. In 1882, some of that silver was struck into Morgan Silver Dollars, each featuring the iconic “O” mint mark of the New Orleans Mint. Employees then placed the freshly struck coins into canvas bags...

The U.S. Treasury Hoard

Fast-forward nearly 80 years. In the 1960s, the U.S. government opened its vaults and revealed a massive store of Morgan Silver Dollars—including *full, unopened bags* of “fresh” 1882-O Morgan Silver Dollars. A number of bags were secured by a child of the Great Depression—a southern gentleman whose upbringing showed him the value of hard assets like silver. He stashed the unopened bags of “fresh” Morgans away, and there they stayed...

The Great Southern Treasury Hoard

That is, until *another* 50 years later, when the man's family finally decided to sell the coins—still in their unopened bags—which we secured, bag and all! We submitted the coins to respected



Actual size is 38.1 mm

- ✓ Historic Morgan Silver Dollars
- ✓ Minted in New Orleans
- ✓ Struck and bagged in 1882
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- ✓ Hefty 38.1 mm diameter
- ✓ Certified Brilliant Uncirculated by NGC
- ✓ Certified “Great Southern Treasury Hoard” pedigree
- ✓ Limit five coins per household

third-party grading service Numismatic Guaranty Corporation (NGC), and they agreed to honor the southern gentleman by giving the coins the pedigree of the “Great Southern Treasury Hoard.”

These gorgeous 1882-O Morgans are as bright and new as the day they were struck and bagged 138 years ago. Coins are graded on a 70-point scale, with those graded at least Mint State-60 (MS60) often referred to as “Brilliant Uncirculated” or BU. Of all 1882-O Morgans struck, *LESS THAN 1% have earned a Mint State grade*. This makes these unopened bags of 1882-O Morgans extremely rare, certified as being in BU condition—nearly unheard of for coins 138 years old.

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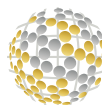
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Goodbye 2020 Window & Door Event



• With all that 2020 threw at us, we're happy to see it go **and give you a HUGE discount!**

• **We'll give you a price that's good for a year.** While visiting your home we'll talk about all your options and give you an honest and exact price quote. We'll never try to talk you into windows you don't need.

• Our Fibrex® composite material is so strong **we're able to build thinner frames with a greater glass area** that allows more natural light into your home.

• For your safety and peace of mind, we've adjusted our operations to serve you in the **safest** way possible.



Now offering virtual appointments, too!



Call for your FREE Window and Door Diagnosis

Goodbye 2020 Event ends January 31st!

Buy 1 window or door, get 1 window or door

40% OFF¹

★★★★★ **and** ★★★★★

NO Money Down

NO Payments

NO Interest

for 1 year!¹

★★★★★

Austin: **512-298-1858**

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Fort Worth: **469-606-5229**

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TopWindowSolution.com

¹Offer not available in all areas. Discount applied by retailer representative at time of contract execution and **applies to purchase of 4 or more windows and/or patio doors.** Buy two windows and/or doors, get the second two windows and/or doors, of equal or lesser value, 40% off. Discount applied to lowest priced window and/or door products in purchase. Cannot be combined with other offers. Initial contact for a free Window and Door Diagnosis must be made and documented on or before 1/31/21, with the appointment then occurring no more than 10 days after the initial contact. No payments and deferred interest for 12 months available to well qualified buyers on approved credit only. Not all customers may qualify. No Finance Charges will be assessed if promo balance is paid in full in 12 months. Renewal by Andersen retailers are independently owned and operated retailers, and are neither brokers nor lenders. Any finance terms advertised are estimates only, and all financing is provided by third-party lenders unaffiliated with Renewal by Andersen retailers, under terms and conditions arranged directly between the customer and such lender. Central Texas Windows & Doors LLC, d/b/a Renewal by Andersen of Austin and San Antonio. North Texas Windows & Doors LLC, d/b/a Renewal by Andersen of Dallas/Fort Worth and West Texas. "Renewal by Andersen" and all other marks where denoted are marks of Andersen Corporation. ©2021 Andersen Corporation. All rights reserved. ©2021 Lead Surge LLC. All rights reserved. **All sales, marketing and installation of windows is conducted by Renewal by Andersen of Austin and San Antonio, and by Renewal by Andersen of Dallas/Fort Worth and West Texas. All are independently owned and operated affiliates operating in TX.**



New Year, Same Principles

A message from your CEO,
Varzavand "Avan" Irani

January is a good time for Nueces Electric Cooperative (NEC) to reflect on the past year and make plans for the new one while keeping our Seven Cooperative Principles in mind.

2020 had its challenges. Electric cooperatives across Texas were affected by natural disasters, the COVID-19 pandemic and economic uncertainty. To get through, we leaned on our values of helping one another and caring for the community, just as we have since our founding many years ago.

The past year also had its successes. Among them, NEC celebrated 81 years of serving you, our consumer-members, with reliable electricity while hopefully improving your quality of life. The annual meeting may have looked a little bit different last year, but we still recognized our longevity and celebrated the members who made it possible with the same enthusiasm.

For 2021, we resolve to maintain the same—or even better—quality of service to our members as we have over the history of NEC. We will continue to provide reliable electricity, maintain jobs in our community and offer energy-saving information in Texas Co-op Power while giving neighborly member service every step of the way.

And as we enter the new year, it's a good time for NEC to review the Seven Cooperative Principles. These principles are timeless, and we resolve to continue to uphold the values in ways that are relevant for 2021.

Voluntary and Open Membership:

Cooperatives are voluntary organizations, open to all persons able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial, political or religious discrimination.

Democratic Member Control:

Cooperatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting policies and making decisions. The elected board of directors is accountable to the membership.

Members' Economic Participation:

Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their cooperative. At least part of that capital is usually the common property of the cooperative. Members allocate surpluses for any or all of the following purposes: developing the cooperative; distributing capital credits according to co-ops' individual formulas; and supporting other activities approved by the members.

Autonomy and Independence: Co-ops are autonomous, self-help organi-

zations controlled by their members. If they enter into agreements with other organizations, including governments, or raise capital from external sources, they do so on terms that ensure democratic control by their members and maintain their cooperative autonomy.

Education, Training, and Information: Cooperatives provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their cooperatives. They inform the general public particularly young people and opinion leaders, about the nature and benefit of cooperation.

Cooperation Among Cooperatives: Cooperatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the cooperative movement by working together through local, national, regional and international structures.

Concern for Community: While focusing on member needs, cooperatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies and activities accepted by their members.

With resolute values like these at the center of all that we do, we are ready to take on the new year.

GOVERNMENT-IN-ACTION

Nueces Electric Cooperative
NEWS

YOUTH TOUR

COVID-19 UPDATE!

Due to the ongoing and unpredictable nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2021 Government-in-Action Youth Tour has been cancelled. As unfortunate as this is, we still want to see the essays written by those that wanted to go. In lieu of the trip, NEC has decided to award two winners a \$4,000 scholarship!

APPLY TODAY

Visit nueceselectric.org or call 361-387-2581
for more information

IMAGE COURTESY OF UNSPLASH.COM

FOR HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS

NEC SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

**Application deadline:
February 12, 2021**

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nueceselectric.org**

*Two \$4,000 scholarships
and
Ten \$1,000 scholarships
and
Two \$2,000 scholarships
and
Two \$5,000 scholarships*

Alice couple loses home in fire, Nueces Electric Cooperative **OFFERS SUPPORT**

ROBSTOWN (Dec. 2, 2020) – After an Alice couple lost their home in a fire three weeks ago, Nueces Electric Cooperative (NEC) employees responded quickly by gathering funds, donations, and offering support to the cooperative members.

Janet Simms and Jose Rivadeneyra’s home caught fire on Tuesday November 17, around 3:45 a.m. Simms, alone when the fire began quickly alerted the local authorities.

“I woke up to something burning.” Explains Simms, “I noticed smoke coming from the kitchen and realized my home caught fire. I couldn’t believe how quickly the fire spread. Before I knew it, my home was engulfed in flames.

Simms escaped with no injuries and first responders arrive shortly after to extinguish the blaze. An investigation into what caused the fire revealed that the fire was caused by an extension cord plugged into a power strip for a heating lamp.

“They lost everything,” says NEC’s Work Order/Material Accountant Mary Pavelka “As soon as we received reports of what happened, I knew we had to help. I reached out to all NEC employees and asked for anything that will help our members get back on their feet. Shirts, jeans, boots, and even an electric skillet were just some of the items NEC employees donated.”

Simms said the couple is currently staying with their daughter and plan on building a new home as soon as possible.

“I would like to say thank you to everyone at NEC who donated to me and my husband. The support and love shown to us by you and the community have helped us immensely during this difficult time. I also want to encourage everyone to have a smoke detector in every room of their home, including your outdoor porch.”

“Our thoughts and prayers are with Mr. Rivadeneyra and Mrs. Simms as they work to rebuild their home and all that they lost in this tragic fire,” says NEC CEO Varzavand “Avan” Irani. “Electrical safety at home is crucial, and I would like to take this time to encourage all of our members and the public to practice electrical safety and stay vigilant.”

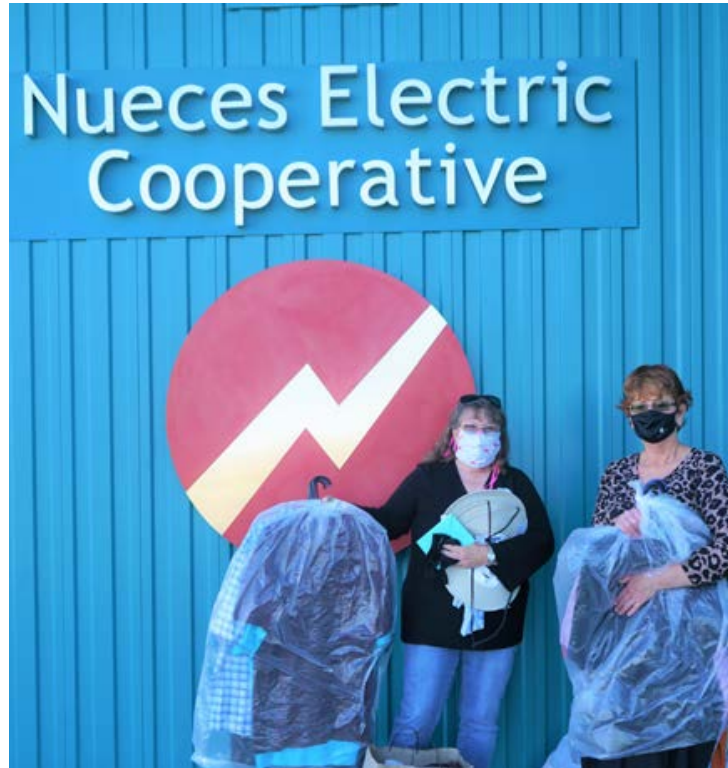


PHOTO COURTESY OF JANET SIMMS



PHOTO COURTESY OF JANET SIMMS

Understanding Your Bill

Nueces Electric Cooperative
NEWS

You pay your electric bill every month, but what does it mean?

1 Customer Service Charge

Customer Service charge is a flat, fixed rate designed to cover NEC's costs for poles, wires, transformers and equipment. It also supports flat, facility, customer service and administrative functions, such as line maintenance, tree clearing, safety equipment, and general administrative responsibilities.

2 Service Delivery Charge

The Service Delivery Charge varies with the amount of energy NEC delivers over the power lines. If you use less electricity, these charges go down, but if you use more, this portion of your bill goes up.

3 Power Provider

NEC Members have the right to choose their retail electric providers, resulting in separate billing charges for the delivery and power of members. Most providers have chosen to bill separately for their power supply services.

4 Current Charges Due

Current amount to be paid based on electric energy (kWh) consumed.

5 Total Amount Due (After Due Date)

An amount that has passed the date of payment deadline. Failure to pay the Past Due Amount may result in disconnection of service.

6 kWh Usage History

This chart on your bill includes your current energy usage history along with your average daily uses for the current and previous month.

Nueces Electric Cooperative
Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative
14353 Cooperative Avenue - Robstown, TX 78380
Phone # (361) 387-2581 or 1-800-632-9288
All numbers answered 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for power outages
Office Hours: 8:00 am to 5:00 pm Monday - Friday

672 1 AV 0.386 5 672
Joe Blow C-3 P-6
1234 Texas Lane
South, TX 78000

KWH USAGE HISTORY
Bar chart showing usage for current and previous 1-12 months. Y-axis ranges from 0 to 1500 kWh. X-axis shows months from 2020 to 2019.

Current Month: Avg Daily Use: 32 KWH
Previous Month: Avg Daily Use: 31 KWH

Average Temperature Information
This Month: 63°F
Last Month: 64°F
Same Month Last Year: 60°F

Rate: SMDG2
Usage: 1234512345
ESI ID: 1234512345
Service Addr: 1234 Candy Cane Lane, US Map Location: 26 036 044A
Meter: Service Period: 1/20/2019 to 01/22/2020 Mult: 1 Previous Rdg: 45997 Present Rdg: 47042 Total KWH: 1045

Account #: 12341234
Your power provider is: XYZ Energy Company
You may contact your power supplier directly at: 1-855-632-73

Distribution (Wires) Charges		
Customer Charge	1	32.50
Wires Only Roundup		0.89
Service Delivery Charge@0.0073 per KWH	2	72.39
Tax		7.09
PUC Assessment Fee		0.13
Sub Total		113.00
Power Provider		
Customer Charge	3	7.50
Electric Use@0.0596 per KWH		62.31
PUC Assessment Charge		0.12
Tax		4.72
Sub Total		74.65

Current Charges Due on 02/24/2020 \$187.65
You may make a payment by phone by calling 1-855-385-9909

Due date is for CURRENT CHARGES Only
Total Amount Owed \$187.65

Return this portion with your payment.
Make checks payable to NEC
Write your account number on your check.

STATEMENT IS PAYABLE UPON RECEIPT

Meter #	Cycle	Billing Date	Account #
	4	01/30/2020	
	Current Charges due 02/24/2020	Total DUE	5 Total due after 02/24/2020
	187.65	187.65	195.56

Scan for Kiosk Payment

NUECES ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE
PO BOX 659821
SAN ANTONIO TX 78265-9121

0000000000 0027506900 00000018765 00000019556 9

What is Kilowatt-Hour (kWh)?

The kilowatt-hour is the basic measurement used to calculate your bill. Any electronic device has a certain amount of electricity it needs to function, also known as its wattage. For example, the average ceiling fan is 50 watts. If you use that ceiling fan for 20 hours in one month, your ceiling fan will have consumed one kilowatt-hour.



NEC Hosts Seventh Annual Arbor Day Celebration

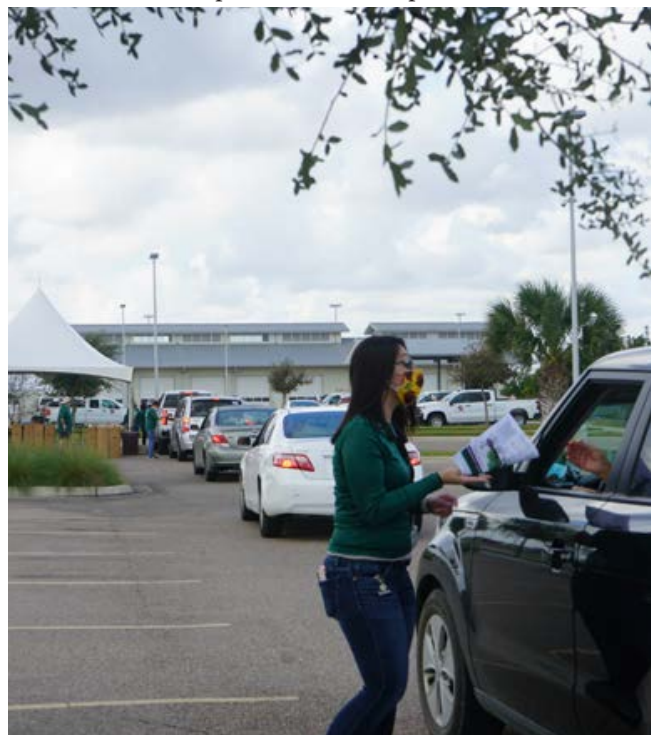
This past November, Nueces Electric Cooperative (NEC) partnered with Texas A&M Forest Service West Texas Nursery to celebrate Texas Arbor Day on Saturday, Nov. 7. In honor of Texas Arbor Day, NEC gave away 500 free two-year seedlings to members who brought their electric bill. The event took place from 9am – 12pm at the NE headquarters building located at 14353 Cooperative Ave. in Robstown, TX.

NEC's annual Arbor Day began in spring 2013 as a day to celebrate the excellent conditions required to plant trees and better support the environment. A properly planted tree can help save our members hundreds of dollars on their electric bill by providing shade in the summer and wind barriers in the winter.

On the day of the event, NEC members stopped by to pick up a free two-year seedling. Members picked from a Shumard Oak or Texas Mountain Laurel seedling tree to take home along with some planting instructions and efficiency tips. Trees were given out on a first come and first serve basis.

Once members chose their seedling, they also had the option to meet with local master gardeners from the non-profit volunteer program, Nueces Master Gardeners, Inc. 175 members met with the master gardeners who further assisted with seedling care, watering, and overall maintenance of trees to allow them to grow to their fullest potential to become cost-effective shade to our members' homes

NEC's Seventh Annual Arbor Day demonstrated NEC's commitment to giving back to the community that built us by showing concern for the environment and encouraging our members to help celebrate this important event.



Tame Midwinter **WEATHER AT HOME**

As winter does its worst this January, keep energy costs in check by making your home more efficient. It's easier than you think. Look for these common winter culprits throughout your house:

- * **Drafty doors and windows.** An easy fix with a big payback is weatherstripping. Caulk and apply weatherstripping around all window and door seams, especially those leading to the basement or attic. Weatherstrip your attic access door.
- * **Dirty air filters.** Dirty filters make your system work harder to heat air. Aim to change the filter at least every three months.
- * **Leaky ducts.** A contractor can test your ducts for leakage and repair any problems. Repair visible, accessible leaks with metal tape—not duct tape.
- * **Water heater.** If your water heater is old or not well insulated, wrap it in an insulating jacket.
- * **Wood fireplace.** Traditional fireplaces pull heated air out of the house when used improperly. When not in use, check that the damper is completely closed.



Resolve to Save Energy

Most of our New Year's resolutions are along the lines of spending less, saving more, eating less, exercising more, working less and spending more time with family.

This year consider adding a few things to the list to help keep your family safe.

- * Practice "out with the old, in with the new" with appliances. If an appliance snaps, crackles or pops but shouldn't, replace it with a safer, more energy-efficient model.
- * If you have light switch plates or outlets that get warm to the touch with use, or your lights dim when certain appliances come on, it's time to call an electrician. The electrical load of most homes has increased substantially in the past 20 years, but your home's wiring may not be up to the challenge. To keep your

loved ones safe, have it checked out and make the necessary improvements and repairs.

- * If you regularly find yourself headed to the breaker box with a flashlight in hand to restore power, it's probably time for repairs or an upgrade. Have a professional electrician do an inspection and make repairs.
- * Smoke detectors and fire extinguishers only help if they work properly. Regularly test and replace the batteries in smoke detectors. Replace or recharge fire extinguishers so they'll be ready in the event of a fire.



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Concern for Community a Guiding **FORCE FOR CO-OPS**

Electric cooperatives and other co-ops adhere to a long-standing set of principles that reflects their core values. The Seven Cooperative Principles provide guidance and are a testament to the sustainability of the cooperative business model.

But until about 25 years ago, the Seven Cooperative Principles were just six cooperative principles. A seventh principle, Concern for Community, was added in 1995, when representatives from more than 2,000 co-ops gathered in Manchester, England, for the World Cooperative Congress, organized by the International Co-operative Alliance.

The meeting is recognized as being as important as the founding of the first co-op in Rochdale, England, more than 175 years ago, said Martin Lowery, National Rural Electric Cooperative Association executive vice president emeritus and chair of the ICA's Identity Committee.

"It was the best effort since the Rochdale pioneers in 1844 to present our common DNA to ourselves and to the world," Lowery said. "For the first time, the ICA defined co-ops and instituted standards and values for a common cooperative identity."

The Seven Cooperative Principles are

- * Voluntary and Open Membership
- * Democratic Member Control
- * Members' Economic Participation
- * Autonomy and Independence
- * Education, Training and Information
- * Cooperation Among Cooperatives
- * Concern for Community

Lowery noted that adding Concern for Community has been particularly meaningful to U.S. electric co-ops.

"Principle seven has made an important, positive difference because it's a constant reminder that it's the community that matters," he said. "Electric cooperatives take that responsibility very seriously."

"Just as every human being has an identity, a self-identity, cooperative enterprises do as well," Lowery said. "Cooperatives are people-driven, or member-driven, and as a member, you actually own it and can make a difference in terms of the direction of the business and the services that are provided."

Payment Options:



Pay Online

www.nueceselectric.org

Access your account 24 hours a day from any computer to view usage, make payments or manage your account. Just click on "Pay Your Bill", on the left side of our Homepage and it will take you to the SmartHub account portal.



Pay With Your Smart Device

Download the SmartHub app to your iPhone or Android device. View usage, weather impacts, make payments and manage your account any time of the day.



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Sign up to have your bank account or credit card drafted for your monthly bill. You can sign-up via your SmartHub online account.



Equal Payment Plan

Through this payment program, a member's usage is averaged for the year and the member makes equal payments each month. See more information and sign up online under the Member Services ->Payment Options menu tab, or call the office.



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Pay in Person:

Pay your bill at any one of our Customer Service centers located in Calallen, Ben Bolt, Ricardo or Orange Grove.



Pay by Mail:

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Quick, easy, and accessible 24 hours a day, the Kiosk is located at the Calallen office. Payments post immediately to your account.



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Pay using any Fidelity Express Pay Stations or for an additional \$1.50 service charge. Search online to find a payment station near you.



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T-Th 9 - 12 / 1 - 4
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Use the NEC Outage Viewer to view outages 24-hours a day with any device. The Outage Viewer is located on the homepage our website.

NEC Power Providers

PLEASE NOTE: The (CRs) listed below have completed the process to qualify and are currently serving NEC area members. This provider list is subject to change. For the most up-to-date list of providers, please monitor our website nueceselectric.org or you can obtain a list from any NEC office.

AP GAS & ELECTRIC	COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL
APOLLO POWER & LIGHT	COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL
BLUESTAR ENERGY	COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL ONLY
CHAMPION ENERGY SERVICES	COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL
CONSTELLATION ENERGY	COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL ONLY
CORAL POWER SOLUTIONS	LARGE COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL
DYNEGY	COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL
ENERGY TRANSFER	LARGE COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL
ENERTRADE ELECTRIC	LARGE COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL
HINO ELECTRIC	COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL
MPOWER /MP2	COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL ONLY
NEC CO-OP ENERGY	RESIDENTIAL, COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL
TENASKA	LARGE COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL
ENCOA (TERM)	COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL ONLY
SMARTCOM ENERGY SERVICES	COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL ONLY
STARTEX POWER	LARGE COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL
SOURCE POWER & GAS	COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL
V247	RESIDENTIAL, COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL

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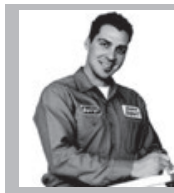
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A D V E R T I S E M E N T

Clogged, Backed—up Septic System... Can anything Restore It?

DEAR DARRYL: My home is about 10 years old, and so is my septic system. I have always taken pride in keeping my home and property in top shape. In fact, my neighbors and I are always kidding each other about who keeps their home and yard nicest. Lately, however, I have had a horrible smell in my yard, and also in one of my bathrooms, coming from the shower drain. My grass is muddy and all the drains in my home are very slow.



Dear
Darryl

My wife is on my back to make the bathroom stop smelling and as you can imagine, my neighbors are having a field day, kidding me about the mud pit and sewage stench in my yard. It's humiliating. I called a plumber buddy of mine, who recommended pumping (and maybe even replacing) my septic system. But at the potential cost of thousands of dollars, I hate to explore that option.

I tried the store bought, so called, Septic treatments out there, and they did Nothing to clear up my problem. Is there anything on the market I can pour or flush into my system that will restore it to normal, and keep it maintained?

Clogged and Smelly – El Paso, TX

DEAR CLOGGED AND SMELLY: As a reader of my column, I am sure you are aware that I have a great deal of experience in this particular field. You will be glad to know that there IS a septic solution that will solve your back-up and effectively restore your entire system from interior piping throughout the septic system and even unclog the drain field as well. **SeptiCleanse® Shock and Maintenance Programs** deliver your system the fast active bacteria and enzymes needed to liquefy solid waste and free the clogs causing your back-up.

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SeptiCleanse® Shock and Maintenance Programs are designed to work on any septic system regardless of design or age. From modern day systems to sand mounds, and systems installed generations ago, I have personally seen SeptiCleanse unclog and restore these systems in a matter of weeks. I highly recommend that you try it before spending any money on repairs. SeptiCleanse products are available online at www.septicleanse.com or you can order or learn more by calling toll free at 1-888-899-8345. If you use the promo code "TXS12", you can get a free shock treatment, added to your order, which normally costs \$169. So, make sure you use that code when you call or buy online.

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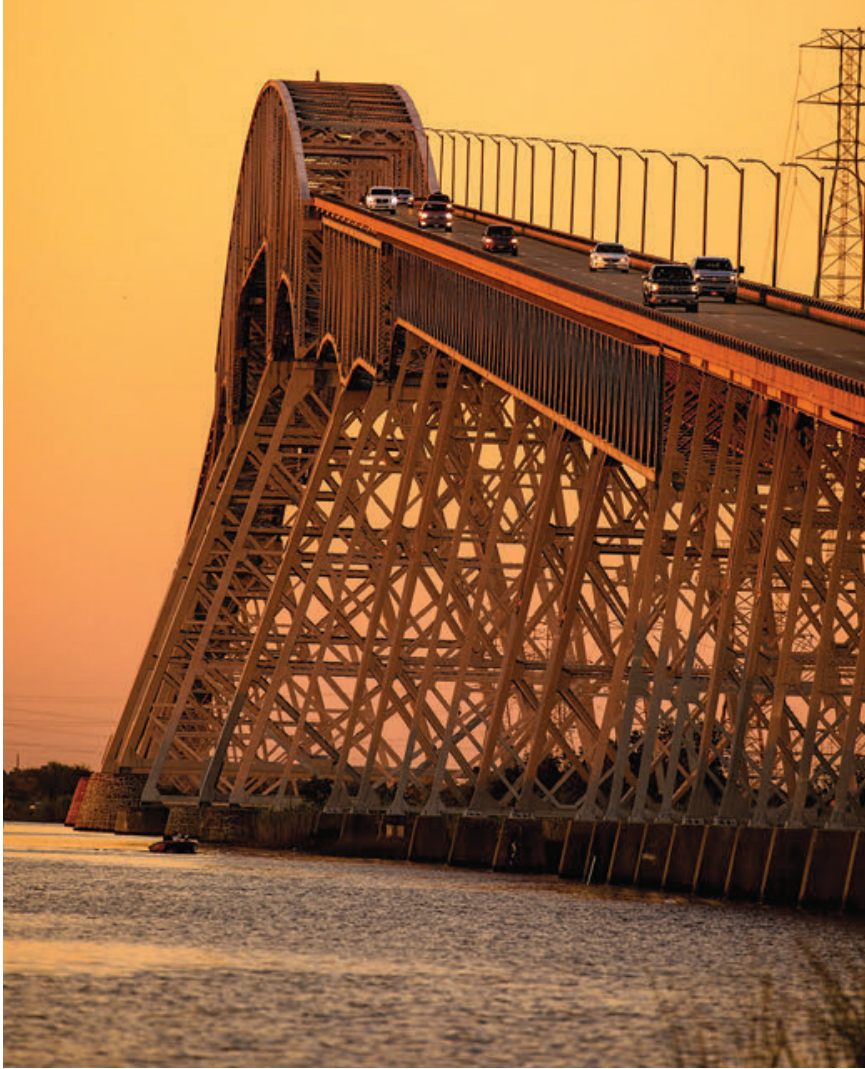
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TCP WEB EXTRA

Listen to W.F. Strong
read this story.



The Scariest Bridge in Texas

The steep Rainbow Bridge connecting Port Arthur and Orange is a nightmare for some

BY W.F. STRONG • PHOTO BY ROBERT SEALE

THERE'S MORE THAN ONE Texas bridge that can be especially troubling for those with gephyrophobia—fear of crossing bridges. The U.S. 90 bridge over the Pecos River can certainly give you the willies. The Corpus Christi Harbor Bridge can give you pause if you're hit with the outer bands of a tropical storm when you're on it. Some of those five-stack interchanges in Dallas and Houston can cause a palpitation or two.

But, in my opinion, the scariest bridge in Texas is the Rainbow Bridge between Port Arthur and Orange, on Texas Highway 73. It offers a triple threat. You can

see it coming from a long way off. It has a steep ascent and descent. And it rises frighteningly high over water. These are the things gephyrophobics most dread.

The Rainbow Bridge is scary enough today, with two lanes for one-way traffic southbound, but it used to be much worse. It is 20 stories tall, and drivers had to put up with two narrow lanes carrying cars and loaded 18-wheelers in two directions. When it was completed in 1938, it was the second-tallest bridge in the U.S., second only to the Golden Gate Bridge. (The Veterans Memorial Bridge, built just yards away and completed in 1990, car-

ries one-way traffic northbound.)

As you arrived near the top of the Rainbow Bridge, all you could see was sky in the daytime and the stars at night. You had to have faith that the pavement would be there when you drove over the hump, and that was enough to make some folks take a 30-mile detour. Local driver's education teachers often made students navigate over that bridge on their first day of class.

Originally it was called the Port Arthur-Orange Bridge. I long believed that the Rainbow Bridge name came from Norse mythology, wherein the rainbow bridge connects heaven and earth. But no. In 1957 the North Port Arthur Lions Club had a naming contest, and 6-year-old Christy McClintock submitted the winning entry—Rainbow Bridge. She said it looked like a mechanical rainbow. You will agree if you are there near sunset and see it illuminated in the shimmering hues of the evening. McClintock earned a \$50 U.S. savings bond as her prize.

Why was the bridge, with 177 feet of vertical clearance, built so tall? It crossed an important ship channel and builders wanted the tallest ship in the Navy at the time, the USS Patoka, to be able to pass easily beneath it, pulling a dirigible.

The Rainbow Bridge was more than an engineering marvel. It was also a magnet for teenagers in the night. The high school kids in the area used to climb up into the catwalks. One of those students was destined for worldwide fame. It is said that she used to sit up there high above the moonlit waters of the Neches River and sing in her passionately raw style. I'm sure you've heard of her. Janis Joplin? Her biographer, Myra Friedman, said Joplin would sing up there under the great Texas sky and "scorch the stars." But that's a whole other story.

The tallest ship in the Navy never did pass beneath the Rainbow Bridge. Seems a shame. Somewhat like a bride having planned a perfect wedding, but the groom never showed. ■

Vegetarian

Creative blends of vegetables and seasonings make for hearty meals

BY MEGAN MYERS, FOOD EDITOR

My family is always looking for more ways to add vegetables to our meals, especially with two growing kids at the table. One way that works for us is to create make-it-yourself bowls that allow each of us to choose our own vegetable and sauce. My husband and I like this carrot-ginger dressing, which can be enjoyed with roasted veggies, as in this recipe, or with a simple salad.

Roasted Vegetable Farro Bowls With Carrot-Ginger Dressing

1 cup farro
1 head cauliflower, chopped
1½ cups diced butternut squash
1 head broccoli, chopped
½ cup plus 2 tablespoons olive oil, divided use
⅔ cup chopped carrot
¼ cup diced onion
¼ cup rice vinegar
1 tablespoon grated fresh ginger
½ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon pepper

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Cook farro according to package directions. Drain excess liquid if needed.
2. While the farro is cooking, spread cauliflower and squash onto a rimmed baking sheet and put broccoli into a bowl. Drizzle 2 tablespoons olive oil over the vegetables. Put baking sheet into oven and roast 10 minutes, then add broccoli and give the vegetables a stir. Roast for another 10 minutes, until vegetables are softened and starting to caramelize.
3. While vegetables are cooking, make the dressing. In a food processor or blender, combine ½ cup olive oil, carrot, onion, rice vinegar, ginger, salt and pepper and process until completely smooth. Taste dressing and adjust seasoning if needed.
4. Divide farro and vegetables among 4 bowls with dressing on the side.

SERVES 4

TCP WEB EXTRA Follow along with Megan Myers and her adventures in the kitchen at stetted.com, where she features a recipe for Roasted Carrot and Fennel Soup.





Instant Pot Greek Spanakorizo With Herbed Cashews

KATHERINE SUAREZ
COSERV

This Greek dish is a great way to get started using an Instant Pot.

COOK'S TIP To make this dish without an Instant Pot: In Step 3 increase the water to 3 cups and add it and the rest of the ingredients into a large saucepan. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat to medium-low, cover and simmer for 18 minutes. Remove from heat and let stand 5 minutes, then fluff with a fork before serving.

- 2 cups jasmine rice**
- 2 tablespoons plus 1 teaspoon olive oil, divided use**
- ¼ cup cashews**
- 2 teaspoons Greek seasoning, divided use**
- 2 tablespoons fresh dill, divided use**
- ½ medium yellow onion, sliced**
- 4 cloves garlic, minced**
- 2 cups water**
- 1 bag (12 ounces) frozen spinach, thawed and drained**
- Juice of 1 large lemon**
- Salt and pepper, to taste**
- Feta cheese crumbles, for garnish**

1. Rinse the rice until water runs clear, drain and set aside. Set a small sauté pan over medium heat. Add 1 teaspoon of olive oil and the cashews to the pan and toast until golden brown, stirring occasionally. Remove the pan from heat and stir in 1 teaspoon Greek seasoning and a pinch of dill. After removing cashews from the pan, give them a rough chop and set aside.

2. Set an Instant Pot to sauté and add 2 tablespoons olive oil and the sliced onion to the cooker's inner pot. Stir to coat onion and cook until softened, stirring

\$500 WINNER

Roasted Vegetable Enchiladas

NANCY DENNIS
BARTLETT EC



Who doesn't love enchiladas? This simple recipe features roasted vegetables for the filling and the sauce. If you have extra filling, use it to make more enchiladas or serve it as a side.

SERVES 4



- 3 red bell peppers, quartered, seeds and stems removed**
- 2 zucchini, cut into 1-inch chunks**
- 2 yellow squashes, cut into 1-inch chunks**
- ½ yellow onion, cut into 1-inch chunks**
- 1 jalapeño pepper, halved, seeds and stem removed**
- 2 cloves garlic, skin on**
- Olive oil, for drizzling**
- 8 ounces light sour cream**
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin**
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro, divided use**
- Salt and pepper, to taste**
- 6–7 corn tortillas, warmed**
- 1 cup queso fresco, crumbled**

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Spread the vegetables and garlic onto a baking sheet and drizzle with olive oil. Roast vegetables 25–35 minutes, until slightly browned. Stir every 10 minutes, checking on garlic and bell peppers, and removing garlic once soft and bell peppers once skin is browned and beginning to peel.
2. Place the bell peppers in a bowl and cover for 10 minutes. Set aside the rest of the vegetables. Once peppers are cool enough to handle, remove the skins from the peppers and the garlic.
3. Place the bell peppers, jalapeño, garlic, sour cream, cumin and 1 tablespoon cilantro in a food processor or blender and purée until smooth. Add salt and pepper.
4. Spread a large spoonful of the sauce in an 8-by-8-inch baking dish. Roll into each corn tortilla about ¼ cup of the roasted vegetables and a sprinkling of cheese and place carefully in the dish. Spread the remaining sauce over the top.
5. Bake enchiladas 20–25 minutes. Top with remaining cheese and cilantro and serve.

TCP \$500 Recipe Contest

TOMATOES DUE JAN 10

What's more perfect for summer than tomatoes? No matter how you slice them, we want your best tomato recipe. Enter at TexasCoopPower.com/Contests by January 10.

CONTINUED >

RECIPES CONTINUED

occasionally. Add garlic and sauté for about 1 minute, being careful to not burn it.

3. Add the water, spinach, rice, rest of the dill and 1 teaspoon Greek seasoning into the Instant Pot. Stir, place the lid and set to high pressure for 1 minute, then let rest for 15 minutes to allow the pressure to release naturally. Release excess pressure if needed before removing lid. Stir in lemon juice and salt and pepper. Sprinkle the top of the spanakorizo with cashews and cheese before serving.

SERVES 8

Mujadara

SHANNON SKAALURE
TRI-COUNTY EC

Lentils are a great ingredient for meatless meals, and this staple Middle Eastern dish is an excellent option. Even though cooking the onions down takes time, the results are worth it. Serve topped with



yogurt or labneh—strained yogurt—if you like.

- 4 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 large onions, thinly sliced
- Salt, to taste
- 4 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- ¼ teaspoon ground allspice
- Pinch ground cayenne pepper
- Large pinch dried thyme, oregano and/or rosemary
- 5 cups vegetable broth
- 1 cup green, brown or red lentils
- ¾ cup rice
- 1–2 tablespoons lemon juice
- Pepper, to taste

Pinch red pepper flakes, for garnish
Chopped fresh herbs, for garnish

1. Heat olive oil in a large, deep skillet over medium heat, then add onions. Add a pinch of salt and sauté until the onions turn golden brown, 15–45 minutes, stirring often so they don't burn. Transfer half of the onions to a plate, leaving remaining half in the skillet.

2. Add garlic to skillet and sauté until fragrant, about 1 minute, then add cumin, allspice and cayenne and sauté a few seconds to toast the spices. Stir in herbs and broth, bring to a simmer, and add salt to taste.

3. Add in lentils, cover and simmer with lid cracked until lentils are almost done (25–30 minutes for green and brown lentils, 15–20 minutes for red). Stir rice into the pot and continue to cook until everything is tender, 15–20 minutes. Close lid completely if it looks too thick while cooking.

4. Add lemon juice and salt and pepper to taste. Top with reserved onions and garnishes.

SERVES 8

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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.

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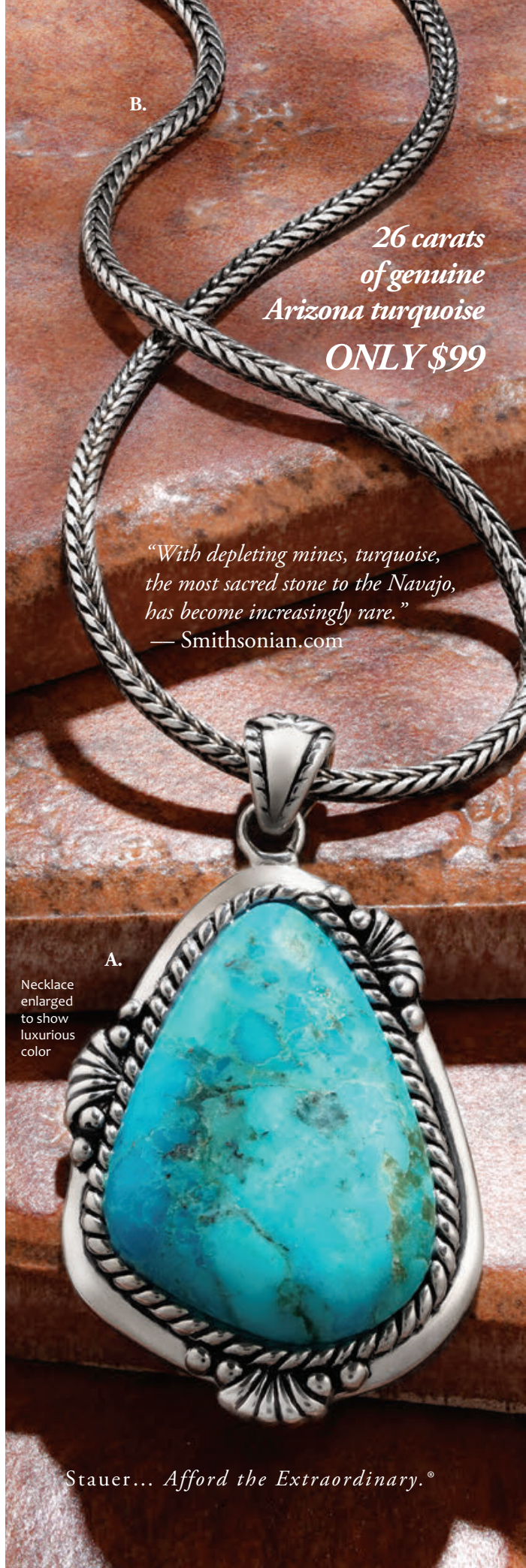
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COURTESY CHET GARNER

Upscale Lodging

The Tarpon Inn embodies the historical vibe of Port A

BY CHET GARNER

TEXANS HAVE ALWAYS been good at telling fish stories, but the Tarpon Inn in Port Aransas can out-exaggerate even the saltiest fisherman. This beachy hotel has been giving Mustang Island visitors a place to rest their heads and share their stories since 1886.

I traveled to the coast to enjoy that golden time when the weather turns colder and “island time” slows to a standstill. After walking the quiet streets of Port Aransas, I found myself standing in front of the long, two-story building with its porch and balcony that run from end to end. Folks sat in red rocking chairs, soaking in the relaxed pace of life in Port A.

I expected the smile I received when I stepped into the small lobby, but I did not expect the lobby’s decor. Covering the walls from the base of the windows to the ceiling are more than 7,000 tarpon scales, each signed and dated by a proud angler. In the early 1900s, these colossal fish were so plentiful that Port Aransas was nicknamed “Tarpon, Texas.” When a guest caught one, they noted the catch’s size and weight on a scale removed from the fish, then signed and pinned the silver-tipped trophy to the lobby wall.

I scanned the walls and found that most of the anglers were from Texas. Some scales recorded fish that were well over 6 feet long, while others bragged that the fish was caught using only “light tackle.” I found one scale safely behind glass and inscribed with the name Franklin D. Roosevelt, who traveled to Port Aransas in 1937 while serving his second term as president. During this trip he reeled in a 5-foot-1-inch, 77-pound tarpon and added its scale to the wall.

I walked out eager to see if there were any tarpons swimming in the nearby Gulf. ■

ABOVE Chet points out the tarpon scale signed by President Roosevelt in 1937.

TCP WEB EXTRA See Chet’s video from the Tarpon Inn and check out his Explorations on *The Daytripper* on PBS.

Know Before You Go

Some events may have been affected by COVID-19. Call or check an event’s website for scheduling details.

JANUARY

01

Austin [1–31] Fortlandia, (512) 232-0100, wildflower.org/event/fortlandia

09

Brenham Johnny Cash Tribute by Bennie Wheels, (979) 337-7240, thebarnhillcenter.com/events

12

Seguin Seguin Chamber Virtual Centennial Celebration, (830) 379-6382, seguinchamber.com

14

Amarillo [14–16, 21–24] Little Women, (806) 355-9991, amarillolittletheatre.org/current-season

15

San Angelo [15–16] Texas State Federation of Square & Round Dancers Nominating Meeting and Dance, (432) 685-3226, pbsrda.com

16

Brenham Uptown Swirl in Downtown Brenham, (979) 337-7580, downtownbrenham.com

17

Hallettsville State Championship Domino Tournament, (361) 798-2311, kchall.com

22

Amarillo [22–23] Beethoven’s Fifth & Project Trio, (806) 376-8782, amarillosymphony.org

28

New Braunfels Neal McCoy, (830) 627-0808, brauntex.org

30

Bandera Grace Lutheran Wild Game Dinner, (830) 796-3091, gracebandera.weebly.com/wild-game-dinner-2021

Brenham Bob Wills' Texas Playboys Starring Jason Roberts, (979) 337-7240, thebarnhillcenter.com/events

Nocona Mardi Gras Ball, (940) 825-3526, facebook.com/mardigrasnoconastyle

FEBRUARY

02

Austin Samin Nosrat, (512) 474-5664, thelongcenter.org

03

Bandera [3-6] Cowboy Mardi Gras, (830) 796-4849, 11thstreetcowboybar.com

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Pick of the Month

South Texas International Film Festival

Edinburg, January 22-31
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stxiff.com

The festival goes online this year. Visitors to stxiff.com can watch all film selections free and on-demand, access panels for insight from guests and directors, participate in workshops, and meet celebrities virtually. The festival will feature productions from the Rio Grande Valley and more than 20 countries.

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We pick events for the magazine directly from TexasCoopPower.com. Submit your event online for March by January 10, and it just might be featured in this calendar.

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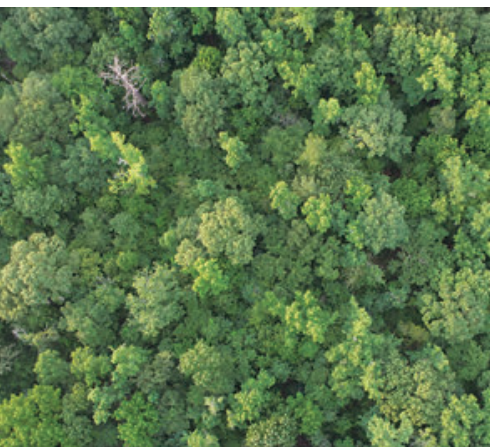
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CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT

ANNA RUSSELL
CHEROKEE COUNTY EC
 "This part of Colorado was once part of Texas."

SABINE BREDOW
PEDERNALES EC
 Bald cypress trees covered in Spanish moss in the world's largest cypress forest—around Caddo Lake in deep East Texas.

MIKE PRESTIGIACOMO
BARTLETT EC
 The forest *and* the trees.

TREY WATSON
DEEP EAST TEXAS EC
 "Drone photo of my forested property in the East Texas summer."

Upcoming Contests

- DUE JAN 10** Historic Texas
- DUE FEB 10** Manmade vs. Nature
- DUE MAR 10** Night Life

Enter online and review submission rules at TexasCoopPower.com/Contests.

TCP WEB EXTRA See Focus on Texas on our website for more photos from readers.



Cook Like a Texan

Memorable readers' recipes now delight diners in Nevada

BY SUZANNE FEATHERSTON
ILLUSTRATION BY MITCH BLUNT

I MIGHT NOT LIVE IN TEXAS anymore, but sometimes I still cook like a Texan.

Thank you, *Texas Co-op Power* readers, for teaching me about Southern cooking. Through the monthly reader recipe section, I learned about flavors and techniques that will stay with me forever.

When I joined *Texas Co-op Power* in 2011, I was thrilled to find out that the editorial staff participated in recipe testing for the recipe contest.

Every month the food editor would send out selected submitted recipes, and the editorial staff would race to pick out the most appealing ones to prepare for a panel of co-workers. We did not have a professional test kitchen, but we were a realistic representation of Texas home cooks.

Contestants showed their culinary acumen with instructions as simple as melting Velveeta into almost anything to the more meticulous, such as stuffing upright rigatoni noodles for Butternut Squash and Gorgonzola Rigatoni Pasta Pie With Fried Sage (July 2016).

Sometimes if I was late in choosing, I'd wind up preparing a more technical or time-consuming recipe, like the Red Velvet Cupcake in a Jar (November 2012) that took me three hours to make. At other times recipes picked me, like the Blueberry-Lime Jam (June 2012) because I owned a hot-water bath canner.

For the Chili Cook-Off contest of 2013, Jenny Sparks of Trinity Valley Electric Cooperative shared a recipe for Venison Chili that uses ground venison, chipotle peppers and hot chocolate mix. Being the only staff member with venison in my freezer at the time, I lucked out with that one. Not only did it win the contest, but it also became a favorite in my recipe repertoire. I make it mostly for company, often using beef instead of venison and adding beans (controversial, I know) to make it stretch. People love the sweet and smoky flavors, and I love telling them about *Texas Co-op Power*.

Several other Texas recipes and concepts made their way into my cooking routine, thanks to the magazine. Sweet and Savory Sprouts (March 2017) with pancetta or bacon and maple syrup, it turns out, is good hot or cold. Aunt Sharn's Saag (July 2011) is a yummy way to use an overabundance of greens such as spinach from the garden, and it freezes well.

The experience also exposed me to using nontraditional ingredients in pesto, such as beans as in the Cannellini Pesto Pasta Sauce (March 2012) and pecans instead of pine nuts as in Texas Pecan Pesto (March 2012).

These and many other *Texas Co-op Power* recipes are now folded into my binder, so I can continue to cook like a Texan. ■



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