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# November 2020



08

## Bat Lodging

A conservationist creates a unique oasis for roving insect hunters in Central Texas.

*By Pam LeBlanc  
Photos by Eric W. Pohl*

ON THE COVER AND ABOVE  
Dusk sends bats rushing out of a cave at Selah, Bamberger Ranch Preserve to feast on insects.  
*Photos by Eric W. Pohl*

## 14 Out of This World

The International Space Station, controlled entirely in Houston and home to groundbreaking research, turns 20.

*By Melissa Gaskill*

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*By Dan Oko*



# Tuning Up a BMW

BY LAW, ELECTRIC CARS must emit artificial sounds to alert pedestrians, bicyclists and people with visual impairment. When BMW debuts its i4 sedan for 2021, its sonic signature will be the creation of film composer Hans Zimmer, who won an Oscar in 1995 for his score of *The Lion King* and has been nominated for 10 others.



## Not Giving an Inch

The U.S. remains one of three countries that does not use the metric system.

The others are Myanmar, in Southeast Asia, and Liberia, on the West African coast.

## FINISH THIS SENTENCE

I'M MOST THANKFUL FOR ...

**TOP** Tell us how you would finish that sentence. Email your short responses to [letters@TexasCoopPower.com](mailto:letters@TexasCoopPower.com) or comment on our Facebook post. Include your co-op and city. Here are some of the responses to our September prompt: **I can't believe I bought ...**

A 2020 planner.  
JANICE SCHWAB  
VIA FACEBOOK

My daughter's story about the dent in the car.  
JANET MOSLEY  
VIA FACEBOOK

Toilet paper for Christmas presents.  
DONALIE BELTRAN  
CECA  
MAY

A Super Bowl XII Cowboys-Broncos ticket for \$32.  
CRAIG MASSOUH  
PEDERNALES EC  
SATTLER

To see more responses, read Currents online.

“When I started counting my blessings, my whole life turned around.”

—WILLIE NELSON

# Texas has 247 freshwater fish species.

SOUND FISHY? OR ALLURING?



## PRIZED SCRIBES

November 1 is National Authors Day. *Texas Co-op Power* writers and editors tell of the authors who have been captivating them lately:

**Chris Burrows:** **Carlos Ruiz Zafón** crafted enchanting tales about enchanting tales.

**Travis Hill:** **Claudia Rankine** writes cross-genre poetry that lyrically weaves public engagement and private emotion around today's most relevant themes.

**Charles Lohrmann:** **John le Carré's** international intrigue has been replaced by **Attica Locke's** fast-moving crime fiction.

**Jessica Ridge:** **Toni Tipton-Martin** cracks open the culinary canon.

**Tom Widlowski:** **Elmer Kelton** takes me by horseback to pioneer Texas.



Howard Daniel Jr. and wife Clara with an award presented by Burke.

### TCP WEB EXTRA

Read about other co-op members who are making a difference in their communities in TCP's Power of Our People program.

## Real Passion, Real People

**HOWARD DANIEL JR.** of Livingston says everyone is important and that belief would be universal if people knew each other as individuals.

Daniel, a retired Army colonel and longtime member of Sam Houston Electric Cooperative, serves on the board for Burke, an organization that assists more than 10,000 people with mental health needs and developmental disabilities in 12 East Texas counties.

Daniel learned about Burke after his daughter, Marie, was born with a developmental disability. He joined the board in 1999 and has been its chair since 2011.

Under Daniel's leadership Burke has doubled its mental health services capacity, expanded developmental disability services, engaged law enforcement in mental health emergency management, and expanded Burke's reach to provide specialty services for children and veterans.

"I want the best for the people we serve," says Daniel, pastor of Chesswood Baptist Church, "because the people we serve, like my daughter and others, are real people, with real feelings—and they are special."

Daniel believes everybody should help people born with intellectual and developmental challenges. "We need to make them feel good," he says. "The best way to make them feel good is to put the best facilities out there that we can."

Learn more about Burke and Daniel at [myburke.org](http://myburke.org).

To nominate a person who is making a difference in your community, email details to [people@texascooppower.com](mailto:people@texascooppower.com).



### TCP Contests and More

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ANDREA COBB

**Meadow Oasis**

“Thank you, Sheryl Smith-Rodgers, for your Observations, which calmed my pandemic soul. It felt like I was there at the meadow with you.”

CATHERINE NELSON  
PEDERNALES EC  
SAN MARCOS

**Freaks of Nature**

I and many other native plant “freaks” have enjoyed our own little refuges of native habitat, experiencing the flora and fauna that used to be so common here—a true reflection of Texas—before the manicured lawn with its plants from Asia, Africa and Europe came to be the standard [Meadow Oasis, September 2020].

Regina Levoy  
MidSouth EC  
Shiro



Thank you for highlighting the story of [Jessie Daniel Ames](#), a compassionate, strong, confident woman who fought for our right to vote in addition to protesting against lynchings of people of color [Empowering Every Vote, August 2020].

MARTA LOPEZ  
VIA FACEBOOK



WARNER BROTHERS | GETTY IMAGES

**Giant Fan**

The first time I saw *Giant*, I was very young [Reel Moments, September 2020]. It made such an impression on me. I am 63 and have seen it more times than I can count. Thank you for the wonderfully written story.

Daniella Spann  
Medina EC  
Medina

**Movie Critics**

It is amazing that so many good movies have been made in Texas. One that was left out, *Secondhand Lions*, was filmed around Austin in 2002 and was, hands down, one of the best movies ever made.

Norris and Pat Croom  
Hamilton County EC  
Copperas Cove

How can you do a story on films in Texas and not mention *Hud*?

Dan Golden  
Houston County EC  
Lovelady

**TCP WRITE TO US**

letters@TexasCoopPower.com

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

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

Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Pinterest Texas Co-op Power

How could you not include *The Last Picture Show*, filmed in Archer City, written by Larry McMurtry and nominated for eight Academy Awards?

Mark Spurlock  
Taylor EC  
Abilene

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# holiday



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# *BAT LODGING*





**A CONSERVATIONIST** creates a unique oasis for roving insect hunters in Central Texas

BY PAM LEBLANC • PHOTOS BY ERIC W. POHL

## **AS DUSK FALLS ON A WARM SUMMER EVENING,** I've joined J. David Bamberger and a few close friends at a table about 50 yards from a gaping hole on a hillside at his ranch near Johnson City.

As we nibble chips and salsa, a single bat emerges from the opening. In a flash a hawk swoops down, snatching the fluttering scout in midflight. A few minutes later, with sunlight quickly fading, a few more bats appear. Soon a narrow stream of flapping shapes forms, like a horizontal plume of campfire smoke.

Bamberger, a former door-to-door vacuum cleaner salesman who co-founded the Church's Chicken chain, used his fortune to buy this once-overgrazed property in 1969, paying just \$124 an acre. He named it Selah, Bamberger Ranch Preserve and began nurturing it, removing nonnative species and planting indigenous grasses. The dry, eroded Central Texas landscape sputtered back to life. Today the 5,500-acre oasis features flowing creeks, fields of waving grass and towering trees and serves as a laboratory for land conservation.

It's also got a bat cave, or "chiroptorium," as Bamberger, 92 and still hiking or exploring his property nearly every day, calls it. (The word hasn't made it into dictionaries, but it's a standard at Selah, which itself is a biblical word whose definition is debated but to Bamberger means "to stop, pause, look around and reflect.")

While volunteering as a trustee with Bat Conservation International's Bracken Cave in the 1990s, Bamberger met BCI founder and bat expert Merlin Tuttle, who taught him the environmental benefits the furry, sometimes pecan-sized mammals provide. Bats gobble up tons of insects across the country each night, Bamberger learned, saving farmers more than \$3.7 billion a year in crop damage and pesticide use. Bamberger, a member of Pedernales Electric Cooperative, got the wild idea to lure a bat population to his own ranch by building a bat cave. Constructing a bat habitat, he figured, meshed with his mission to restore rangeland and protect wildlife.

Mexican free-tailed bats emerge from the chiroptorium—the bat cave constructed at Selah, Bamberger Ranch Preserve.



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE J. David Bamberger shows an indigenous grass that thrives at the preserve. Bamberger walks with author Pam LeBlanc. Sunset at the preserve.

**TOP WEB EXTRA**

Enter online to win Pam LeBlanc's recent book, *My Stories, All True: J. David Bamberger on Life as an Entrepreneur and Conservationist*.

"People laughed at the idea," Bamberger tells me. We met and became friends more than a decade ago, when I first wrote about his work. "When people laugh at you, sometimes you back away," he says. "Most successful people continue on."

After consulting with bat experts, architect Jim Smith designed a 30-by-100-foot, three-domed habitat with a special observation room where scientists and visitors could watch the bats through a plate glass window. They picked an easily accessible spot near water with a clear flight path. Then they went to work building the structure of concrete and gunite, backfilled it with dirt and covered it with native vegetation.

Newspaper reporters flocked to the ranch in 1998 to report the story. Now all he needed was a resident population.

Bamberger hauled in a load of bat guano to make the cave more appealing, but the bats turned up their noses. He brought in a small occupied bat box to lure a population, but the bats didn't stick around. Still, Bamberger persisted.

"If it doesn't work, it'll hold a hell of a lot of wine," he rationalized.

Every once in a while, a few bats would show up. "I'd be about to rapture," Bamberger says. But the stream of bats he dreamed about didn't move in until four years later, after biologists realized that the few bats that discovered the cave were smashing into the observation window. After they boarded up the window, the bats moved in.

"Unbelievable," Bamberger says, telling the story of driving up to the site and discovering the new residents. "Tears are running down my face. I can't believe what I'm seeing. The bats are pouring out."





## “PEOPLE LAUGHED AT THE IDEA,”

Bamberger tells me. We met and became friends more than a decade ago, when I first wrote about his work. “When people laugh at you, sometimes you back away,” he says. “Most successful people continue on.”

He felt vindicated, especially since the *San Antonio Express-News* was printing a story that very week, dubbing the cave “Bamberger’s Folly” and noting that he’d spent more to build a house for bats than most people spend building a home for their family.

When he phoned biologist Tom Kunz, though, the bat expert warned that the emergence was likely a fluke and that a migrating group had probably just stopped over temporarily.

But the bats came back. And since they arrived in big numbers in 2002, they have never left. Today the ranch is

home to year-round populations of Mexican free-tailed bats and cave myotis, another type of bat. Thermal imaging scans show that as many as 400,000 individuals pack shoulder to shoulder along the chiropterium walls during the summer and fly out nightly to forage for insects. In the winter the population dwindles to 3,000–15,000.

“Our bats are very strange,” says Jared Holmes, staff biologist at Selah, equating the population to the bat version of a wild college fraternity house. While a large maternal population inhabits the space during summer months, it



changes when temperatures drop. “We don’t know if the winter colony is just a bunch of lazy males [from northern populations] that don’t want to fly all the way south or something else,” Holmes says.

The maternal population generally shows up in April or May and remains until the heat eases in September or October. Bamberger built the chiroptorium to hold a million individuals, but biologists today believe the cave’s current population represents full capacity. “If you go in there, it’s wall-to-wall bats, and as [evolutionary biologist] Gary McCracken put it, they are a possum’s crawl off the floor,” Holmes says.

Bamberger likes to say you could run around naked all day and never get bitten by a mosquito at his ranch. And while that’s not quite true, the bats do keep down the insect population at Selah.

“It’s David’s bat cave of dreams,” Holmes says. “We’re lucky David tried it.”

But testing also has shown the cave carries a high load of the fungus that causes white nose syndrome, the disease that has killed millions of bats across the country, mostly in the Northeast. When conditions are right, the fungus blooms, creating an itchy, white, mushroomlike growth on the bats’ faces that wakes them from hibernation. That’s less of a problem in warmer places like Central Texas, where they can still find water and insects year-round, but devastating in colder climates. So far the Selah bats have not shown signs of the disease, but as a precaution, Holmes hopes to pressure-wash the chiroptorium this winter, at

Bamberger overlooks a pond from one of his favorite spots on the preserve.

night while the population is out foraging.

“If we lose bats, we lose ecosystem services—all that free pest control and food for other animals,” Holmes says.

“Bats are in trouble, and we have a very unique opportunity to study how these man-made bat caves can function with fungus and virus and how we can disinfect their habitats. It’s an opportunity to see how we can help bats, and it’s great to have a proven design that we may be able to scale down for smaller colonies.”

Besides, bats don’t deserve their negative reputation, Holmes and Bamberger say. The mammals have long been maligned, equated with evil in old films and described as blood-sucking vermin.

“But everything in the natural world, even things we despise, plays a role in the conservation of planet Earth,” Bamberger says. “From the very beginning of my time here, I knew I wanted to make the ranch something special with Mother Nature. I realized the potential of bats—they would be another thing I could brag about, teach from and demonstrate.

“This is small potatoes, but I think my small potatoes are terribly important.” ■

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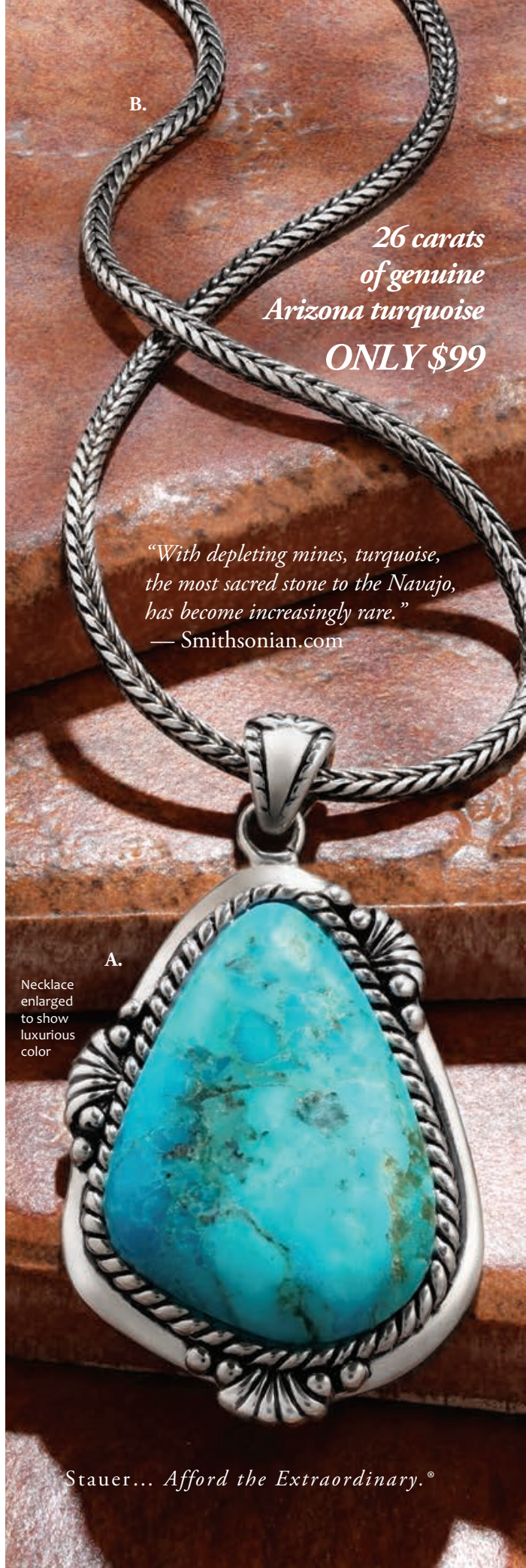
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BY MELISSA GASKILL

# OUT OF THIS WORLD

The International Space Station, controlled entirely in Houston and responsible for groundbreaking research, turns 20

**IF YOU OR SOMEONE** you know recently underwent laser eye surgery, the surgeon likely used technology developed on the International Space Station to track eye movements of astronauts. Surgeons needed a way to follow eye position that doesn't interfere with the procedure, and the space technology proved ideal. The equipment is now used in corrective eye surgeries worldwide.

The space station, the only microgravity laboratory in our known universe, enables research that cannot be conducted anywhere else. As of November 2, scientists have used the orbiting lab continuously for 20 years, conducting more than 2,700 experiments.

All of this science—and in fact every aspect of the space station—is managed at Johnson Space Center, established in 1961 in southeast Houston. Flight control teams of engineers, medical officers and technicians remain on duty there 24/7/365 for the space station.

"I'm not sure people understand what goes on in Mission Control," says John-David Bartoe, who flew on the space shuttle for the U.S. Naval Research Laboratory in 1985 before spending 20 years, starting in 1993, as the space station's research manager. "No astronaut on the station is sitting at a console with a stick flying the space station. That all happens in Mission Control. They are



CLOCKWISE FROM OPPOSITE Astronaut Nick Hague shows materials that were part of an experiment for middle and high school students. James H. Newman works outside the space station. Christina H. Koch conducts a capillary structures experiment.

**TCP WEB EXTRA**

Learn more about the space station—and watch it pass over your town.



Scientists study colloids, which are mixtures of various particles in a liquid, to create more effective and longer-lasting products. Shampoo, laundry detergent and salad dressing are examples of colloids. On Earth, colloids are hard to study because gravity causes heavy particles to sink and lighter ones to float, but in microgravity, that problem goes away, leading to advances we see on store shelves.

Anheuser-Busch has tested germination and malting of barley on the space station to learn how the grain can be altered to improve its use in brewing, distilling and food production. Goodyear Tire has conducted studies to help produce more fuel-efficient tires, and Adidas uses the space station to research improvements in the process of making insoles.

Agriculture and land management benefit from space station research, too. Farmers can monitor water use with thermal infrared measurements taken of Earth's surface from the space station, and another instrument indicates how much carbon is stored in forest canopies.

Equipment on the space station also supports disaster monitoring and responses on Earth. Crew members on the space station can adjust sensors in real time in response to natural disasters such as volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, flooding and tsunamis—something satellites cannot do—and relay valuable information to scientists on Earth. Night images taken from the space station help responders check the restoration of electric power after a disaster. Images also help monitor the spread of wildfires and the path of storms so earthbound experts can guide evacuations and rescue operations or the deployment of firefighters.

Researchers in Texas take advantage of the space station for their own work. Larry Kramer, an academic radiologist at the University of Texas Health Science Center in Houston, is working on a study with the Cardiovascular and Vision Laboratory at Johnson Space Center that looks into how space travel affects vision and the brain.

"Vision problems are a major problem for NASA to solve, something they have to worry about as flight duration becomes longer and they contemplate travel to Mars," Kramer says. "I had experience and was in the right place at the right time."

The team at Johnson Space Center continually plans experiments, and NASA is flooded with proposals from people wanting to conduct research on the space station, Bartoe says. "A long time ago, the executive director of a national science organization said that research in microgravity is of micro-importance. I think we have clearly proven him wrong." ■

actually controlling the mission.

"People in the space station program office make decisions every day on how to make this thing work," Bartoe says. "No one had ever done this before, and the brains behind making this thing happen are right there at JSC."

Bartoe says that when he arrived at Johnson Space Center, his goal was to interest the scientific community in using the space station, which was difficult because it did not yet exist. "We took the philosophy of 'build it and they will come,'" he says, "and turned out it worked."

Every single astronaut who has flown to the space station—more than 240 people so far—trained at the Houston facility.

Research on the space station has contributed to a variety of medical advances in addition to the eye-tracking technology. People soon may be able to receive treatments for some types of cancers via a simple injection rather than intravenous infusion, and studies in space contribute to development of medicines targeting specific cancers, muscular dystrophy, Alzheimer's and other diseases. Advances that help with osteoporosis, stiffening of the arteries and other symptoms of aging spring from research to help protect astronauts from bone loss and cardiovascular problems they can experience in space.

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It's not often you happen upon a blade smith who has gem cutting skills. In fact, you stand a better chance finding a needle in a haystack. But finding needles in haystacks is what we do best, so when we saw this master craftsman's handiwork, we made certain to procure some of these Southwestern masterpieces to complete our collection.

The stainless steel blade, bolster and pommel are exquisitely etched and would have looked great with a less ambitious handle. But the results of overachieving are stunning here. The turquoise-blue colored handle is ablaze with assorted stones like jasper, marble, sunstone, and coral that have been hand cut and inlaid in a Southwestern motif that conjures images of intricately beaded belts and moccasins.

Whether you collect blades, interesting stones, or are a lover of the great American Southwest, the *Sedona Knife* is more than cut out to do the job.

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

**Your satisfaction is 100% guaranteed.** Feel the knife in

*"...Native American knives have since taken on a more artistic meaning in the modern era...these decorative style knives have become a must-have for any Southwestern home."* — PRWeb, 2017

**EXCLUSIVE  
FREE**

Stauer® 8x21  
Compact  
Binoculars

-a \$99 value-  
with purchase of  
the Sedona Knife



**What customers are saying about Stauer knives...**



*"Very hefty, well-built knife and sheath. Extremely good-looking and utilitarian."*

— R., Lacey, Washington

your hands, wear it on your hip, inspect the impeccable craftsmanship of the *Sedona Knife*. If you don't feel like we cut you a fair deal, send it back within 30 days for a complete refund of the item price.

**Limited Reserves.** You could pay nearly \$1,900 for a steel, fixed blade knife with a gemstone handle, but why would you when you can enjoy the superb craftsmanship of the *Sedona Knife* for only \$99. Don't let this beauty slip through your fingers. Call today!

**Sedona Knife \$479\***

Offer Code Price Only **\$99** + S&P **Save \$80**

**1-800-333-2045**

**Your Insider Offer Code: SEK137-01**

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

**Stauer®**

14101 Southcross Drive W., Ste 155, Dept. SEK137-01  
Burnsville, Minnesota 55337 [www.stauer.com](http://www.stauer.com)

\*Discount is only for customers who use the offer code versus the listed original Stauer.com price.



Rating of A+

California residents please call 1-800-333-2045 regarding Proposition 65 regulations before purchasing this product.

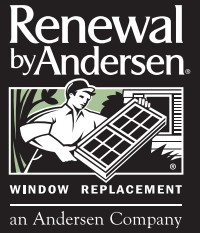
- 5" etched stainless steel blade; 9 1/2" overall length
- Turquoise-colored handle with accent stones including coral, marble, sandstone, tiger's eye, jasper and sunstone
- Leather pouch included

Stauer... *Afford the Extraordinary.*®



Countdown to  
**BLACK FRIDAY**

Window and Door Sale!



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When it comes to protection from the elements, your **windows** are **as essential** as your roof and walls. Safeguard your home against drafts and replace your windows and doors **before winter**.

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November 1<sup>st</sup>–November 27<sup>th</sup> only!

**\$349** OFF  
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**469-458-1925**

**TopWindowSolution.com**

<sup>1</sup>Offer not available in all areas. Discount applied by retailer representative at time of contract execution and applies to purchase of 3 or more windows and/or doors. 3% cash discount for payment in full by cash or check applied at time of sale. Cannot be combined with other offers. Initial contact for a free Window and Door Diagnosis must be made and documented between 11/1/20 and 11/27/20, with the appointment then occurring no more than 10 days after the initial contact. No payments and deferred interest for 24 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 24 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. ©2020 Andersen Corporation. All rights reserved. ©2020 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.



## 2021 Youth Leadership Tour and Scholarship Applications are now available

*A message from your CEO,  
Varzavand "Avan" Irani*

Each Fall, NEC opens our youth programs to qualifying high school juniors and seniors who are dependents of NEC members. I'm excited to announce that NEC is now accepting applications for our 2021 NEC scholarship program and 2021 Government-in-Action Youth Leadership Tour.

### **Government-in-Action Youth Leadership Tour**

January 15, 2021 is the deadline for applications for NEC's free trip to Washington, D.C. The cooperative is sponsoring two area students on the annual Government-in-Action Youth Tour. Each summer, participating electric cooperatives from around the nation send hun-

dreds of high school students to the nation's capital to attend the Government-in-Action Youth Tour. The seven-day tour includes visits to the Washington Monument, the White House, the U.S. House and Senate chambers, the Supreme Court, Washington National Cathedral, Arlington National Cemetery, the Smithsonian Institution, and a host of other national sights. This year's tour dates are June 13 to June 22, 2021. If the 2021 Youth Leadership Tour should be cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, winners will instead receive a \$4,000 scholarship!

### **NEC Scholarship Program**

Each year, NEC awards scholarships to graduating high school seniors who are dependents of NEC members and meet the eligibility requirements set forth on the application form. Funding for this scholarship

program comes from unclaimed NEC capital credits. This year's scholarship awards include:

- \*One Grand Prize Ramiro De La Paz \$4,000 scholarship, awarded to students planning on attending a qualifying 4-year university.
- \*One John L. Sims \$4,000 scholarship awarded to students planning on attending a qualifying 4-year university.
- \*Ten \$1,000 scholarships awarded to students planning on attending a qualifying 4-year university.
- \*Two (2) - \$2,000 scholarships distributed over the length of the 2-year or vocational college in Texas.
- \*Two (2) - \$5,000 scholarships distributed upon completion of a qualifying Lineman's College.

Deadline to submit scholarship applications is Friday, February 12, 2021.

Energizing South Texas for the past 80 years. That's the Cooperative difference.



2021

# Youth Leadership Tour

Win the trip of a lifetime!



**Application Deadline:  
January 15, 2021**

2021

# NEC Scholarship Program



**Application Deadline:  
February 12, 2021**

[www.nuaceselectric.org](http://www.nuaceselectric.org)



NEC is partnering with the  
Coastal Bend Food Bank for a

## **HOLIDAY FOOD DRIVE!**

Please stop by any of our open lobbies between  
**Nov. 24 - Dec. 18, 2020**, and donate canned  
goods and non-perishables.

### **Please Donate Canned:**

**\*VEGETABLES \*FRUIT \*PROTEIN \*SOUPS  
\*GRAINS \*OTHER: PASTA & JUICE**

**\*Lobby rules subject to COVID-19  
restrictions in place at the time of  
drop off.**



# NEC Director Earns NRECA Director Gold Program Credential

Nueces Electric Cooperative  
NEWS

Nueces Electric Cooperative (NEC) District #5 Director Louis “Bill” Hartman recently earned NRECA’s Director Gold credential certification, the highest level of achievement in NRECA’s Board Director Certificate Programs.

“The commitment of time spent to earn these credentials speaks volumes about Mr. Hartman’s dedication to serving NEC,” said Varzavand “Avan” Irani, NEC CEO. “As an entrusted elected official, as well as being a co-op member himself, he understands the value of this kind of education and how it contributes to acting in the best interest of his fellow members. We couldn’t be prouder of his achievement and continuing service to our cooperative.”

NRECA’s Board Director Certificate Programs are specifically designed to help electric coop-

erative directors, at every stage of their service, understand their roles and responsibilities, stay up-to-date on the key issues and trends in the industry and prepare them to meet the challenges facing electric cooperatives now and in the future. For a director to earn the Director Gold credential, they must have already earned the Credentialed Cooperative Director Certificate (CCD) and Board Leadership Certificate (BLC) and earn three additional credits from the BLC series of courses. Unlike the CCD and BLC certificates, Director Gold includes a continuing education requirement which calls for directors to earn three credits of approved course work and or conferences every two years to maintain their Director Gold status.



## Electrical Safety Tips for Hurricane Season

The Atlantic hurricane season runs from June to November, but the peak begins in August. An average of six hurricanes churn through the Atlantic each year, and three of those are usually categorized as severe.

A Category 1 hurricane can have winds up to 95 mph, damaging roofs, felling branches or trees, and harming electrical infrastructure. A Category 5 hurricane brings winds greater than 156 mph that cause catastrophic damage, such as extreme home damage, uprooted trees, downed utility poles and long-term power outages.

Remember these electrical safety tips from Electrical Safety Foundation International to prepare for, weather and recover from a storm.

### Before

Charge all phones and communications devices. If there is an extended power outage, you’ll want to have a full charge on your cellphones, laptops and tablets.

Unplug all electronics and move them as high as possible to keep them out of floodwaters’ reach and protect them from water damage.

### During

Stay inside and away from windows and glass during hurricanes. Strong winds and flying debris could break windows.

Never operate a portable generator indoors. Doing so can lead to the buildup of carbon monoxide, an odorless gas that is deadly.

Never plug a generator directly into your home’s wiring unless you have a transfer switch, which isolates home circuits from the power lines to protect your home, generator and lineworkers.

### After

Don’t use electrical devices, equipment or outlets that have been submerged in water.

Moisture can lead to corrosion, parts failure and fire risk.

Have a qualified electrician inspect any water-damaged electrical equipment and electronics. Replace any electronic components, including circuit panels, outlets and fuse boxes, if they get wet.



# **Nueces Electric Charities, Inc.** **awards more than \$130,000 to 26** **local non-profit organizations**

Following our Cooperative Principle #7, Concern for Community, NEC strives to be a great community partner by implementing programs that impact lives for our members and communities we serve. One of the ways NEC impacts lives in the Coastal Bend is through the Operation Round-Up program. Each year, various local non-profits are awarded grant funds through Nueces Electric Charities, Inc. This year, NEC awarded more than \$130,000 to 26 local non-profit organizations thanks to the Operation Round-Up program.

Through Operation Round-up, Nueces Electric Cooperative members volunteer to “round up” their electric bills to the next dollar. All of the additional change goes to a non-profit fund developed by NEC called Nueces Electric Charities, Inc. The money adds up each year and Nueces Electric Charities (on behalf of all participating NEC members) gives a check to various worthy community projects. The monthly donation by a member, per account, never exceeds 99 cents per month, can be as low as a penny, and averages just \$6 per year.

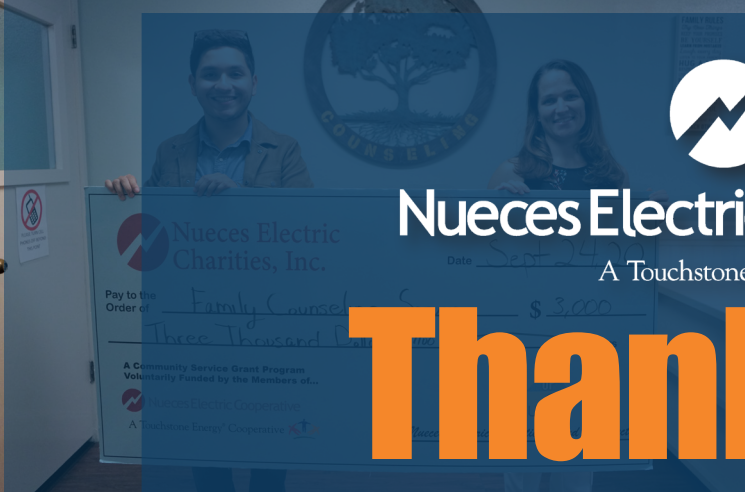
Since 1997, Operation Round-up raised over \$1.6 million! The donated funds are targeted towards community improvement in areas such as education, health, hunger, abuse, and homelessness.

In February 2020, NEC awarded \$86,250 to 14 worthy non-profit organizations. Recent Fall grant awards totaling \$50,000 have gone to 13 additional organizations for a total of \$136,250 awarded to 26 non-profit organizations in 2020.

## **2020 Grant Recipients**

- \* Children’s Advocacy Center of the Coastal Bend
- \* Corpus Christi Education Found.
- \* Mission of Mercy
- \* United Way of the Coastal Bend
- \* Robstown ISD Education Found.
- \* YMCA
- \* Women’s Shelter of South Texas dba The Purple Door
- \* Citizens for Educational Excellence
- \* Educating Children’s Future Community Center
- \* Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) of the Coastal Bend
- \* Agape Ranch
- \* Corpus Christi Metro Ministries
- \* Driscoll Children’s Hospital
- \* Brownsville Society for Crippled
- \* Children Inc, dba Moody Clinic
- \* Corpus Christi Hope House, Inc.
- \* Family Counseling Service
- \* Corpus Christi Pregnancy Center, Inc. dba Pregnancy Center of the Coastal Bend
- \* Foster Angels of South Texas Found.
- \* Presbyterian Pan American School
- \* Corpus Christi Museum of Science and History
- \* West Side Helping Hand
- \* Casa of Kleberg County dba Brush Country CASA
- \* Youth Code Jam
- \* South Texas Botanical Gardens
- \* YMCA of the Coastal Bend
- \* HALO-Flight



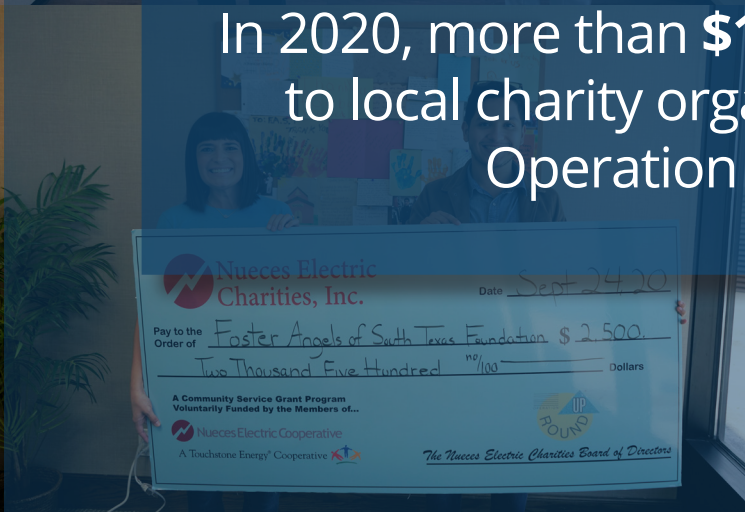


# Nueces Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

# Thank You

In 2020, more than **\$130,000** was awarded to local charity organizations through Operation Round-Up



# Introducing POWER USAGE ALERTS

## *Eliminate Surprises!*

Nueces Electric Cooperative now has Power Usage Alerts that you can set to notify you when your energy usage exceeds maximum or does not meet minimum thresholds you set for your meter. These alerts will be sent by email to the account you specify when you set them up.

Visit [nueceselectric.org/content/power-usage-alerts](http://nueceselectric.org/content/power-usage-alerts)



Image courtesy of unsplash.com

### TEXAS DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT Hurricane Preparedness Guidelines

Preparing for Hurricane Season: June 1–November 30

**EVACUATION PLANNING:** When a hurricane threatens, listen for instructions from local officials. If they call for an evacuation in your area, get going without delay.

- \* Discuss evacuation plans with your family before hurricane season, June 1–November 30. Make a checklist of what you need to do before you leave town and review it.
- \* Monitor NOAA Weather Radio, local TV and radio broadcasts during storm season.
- \* Prepare an emergency supply kit that includes a radio, flashlight, extra batteries, extra eyeglasses, bottled water, nonperishable food, dry clothes, bedding, insurance information, important documents, medications, copies of prescriptions and special products for babies, seniors, medically fragile family members and pets.
- \* Learn evacuation routes before storm season. When there's a hurricane in the Gulf, keep your gas tank as full as possible. Expect traffic delays in an evacuation.
- \* Register with the State of Texas Emergency Assistance Registry online at [stear.dps.texas.gov](http://stear.dps.texas.gov) or dial 211 to register if you have a disability or medical needs, or if you simply do not have transportation. Gulf Coast residents in evacuation zones who have a disability or medical needs who do not have friends or family to help or do not have transportation should register with STEAR in advance.

### DIVISIÓN DE ADMINISTRACIÓN DE EMERGENCIAS DE TEXAS Guía para Huracanes

Preparando para la temporada de huracanes desde el 1 de junio hasta el 30 de noviembre

**EVACUACIÓN EN CASO DE HURACÁN:** Cuando exista una amenaza de huracán, escuche las instrucciones de funcionarios locales. Cuando llamen para una evacuación en su área, evacue del área lo más pronto posible.

- \* Discuta los planes de evacuación con su familia antes de la temporada de huracanes, que empieza el 1 de junio y termina el 30 de noviembre. Haga una lista de lo que usted debe hacer antes de salir de la ciudad y revisela.
- \* Escuche la radio y televisión durante la temporada de huracanes.
- \* Prepare un equipo de emergencia que incluya un radio, linterna, repuesto de baterías, anteojos extras, agua embotellada, alimentos no perecederos, ropa extra, ropa de cama, información de seguros, documentos importantes, medicinas, copias de recetas medicas y productos especiales para bebés, las personas mayores, miembros de la familia médicamente frágiles y mascotas.
- \* Aprenda sus rutas de evacuación antes de la temporada de huracanes. Cuando haya un huracán en el Golfo, mantenga el tanque de gasolina lleno. Está consiente de que habrá demoras de tráfico.
- \* Puede registrarse con el State of Texas Emergency Assistance Registry en la página web, [stear.dps.texas.gov](http://stear.dps.texas.gov), o llamando al 211 para registrarse si usted tiene una discapacidad o necesidades médicas o si simplemente no tiene transporte. Los residentes que viven en la Costa del Golfo en zonas de evacuación con una discapacidad o necesidades médicas quienes no tienen amigos o familiares para ayudarles o no tienen transporte deben registrarse con STEAR por adelantado.

Image courtesy of unsplash.com



# Payment Options:



## Pay Online

[www.nueceselectric.org](http://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.



## Auto Draft:

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.



## Pay by Phone:

800-NEC-WATT (800-632-9288)



## 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:

P.O. Box 659821, San Antonio, TX 78265



## Pay at the Payment Kiosk

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



## Payment Services

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



Nueces Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



Find us on the web at:  
[www.nueceselectric.org](http://www.nueceselectric.org)

Call us at:  
361-387-2581 or 1-800-632-9288

## Your Elected Board of Directors:

Brian Menking, District 6, President  
Bill Hartman, District 5  
David Rosse, District 3, Secretary Treasurer  
Johnny Alvarado, District 7  
Gladys Lippincott, District 8 (Retail)  
Donald Herrmann, District 4  
Gregg Truesdale, District 2  
Rumaldo Z. Juarez, District 1

## Local Pages Editor:

Kirklan Hinojosa  
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5646 S. Hwy 281 Alice, TX  
M-F 8 - 12/ 12:30 - 4

Ricardo Service Center:  
123 CR 1026, Ricardo, TX  
M-W-F 8 - 12 / 12:30 - 4

Orange Grove Service Center:  
5302 W. FM 624  
T-Th 9 - 12 / 1 - 4  
(FM 624 & Hwy 281)

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](http://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

Pursuant to Ordering Paragraph 12 of the Financing Order (Application of Central Power and Light Company for Financing Order to Securitize Regulatory Assets and Other Qualified Costs, Public Utility Commission of Texas Docket No. 21528 (March 27, 2000)) and Section 6.1.1.2.1 of AEP Texas Central Company's Tariff for Electric Delivery Service, notice is hereby given that the Transition Property and the Transition Charge Rates contained in Sections 6.1.1.2.1 and 6.1.1.2.1.1 of the tariff are owned by the Special Purpose Entity and not by the REP nor by AEP Texas Central Company.

Each REP which bills Transition Charges must provide notice to customers of ownership of Transition Property and Transition Charge Rates by the Special Purpose Entity at least once each year, pursuant to the above-cited terms of the Financing Order and the tariff. Your company may have already completed this task, or may have it scheduled before the end of 2020.



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## Whole-House Electrical Safety Checklist

A **WHOLE-HOUSE ELECTRICAL** safety check can help prevent injuries, deaths and fires caused by faulty products and wiring. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission recommends that homeowners conduct an inspection every six months and provides a checklist to help with the task.

### First, check out lights.

- ▶ Are the lightbulbs the appropriate wattage for each fixture? If not, replace bulbs with the correct wattage. While you're at it, consider energy-efficient alternatives such as LEDs.

### Check portable electrical heating equipment.

- ▶ Does the heater have a mark—such as UL, ETL or CSA—of a nationally recognized testing laboratory? If not, replace the heater because it may not have adequate safety features.

- ▶ Is the heater placed at least 3 feet away from flammable materials? If not, move it that far or farther from combustibles and ensure that nothing could fall onto the heater. Some heaters produce enough heat to ignite even nearby combustible materials.

- ▶ Is the heater stable? If not, place the heater on a flat, level surface. Fires can start if a heater falls over. Some heaters turn off automatically if tipped, but it is best to make sure it doesn't tip over in the first place.

- ▶ Is the heater in good condition, without strange smells, sparks or smoke when in use? If not, repair or replace the

heater. Odd smells, sparks or smoke could indicate an electrical problem that could result in fire or electric shock.

### Check electrical outlets and switches.

- ▶ Are all outlets and switches working properly? If not, have an electrician check them and correct any unsafe wiring.

- ▶ Are all outlets and switches cool to the touch? If not, stop using them and make sure the outlet is not overloaded with appliances. Unusually warm outlets and switches could indicate an unsafe wiring condition.

- ▶ Do all electrical plugs fit into all outlets? If not, have the outlet replaced, as loosefitting plugs can cause overheating and fires.

- ▶ Do all electrical outlets have faceplates covering wiring? If not, install faceplates. Exposed wiring is a shock hazard.

- ▶ In homes with children, do all unused outlets have safety covers? If not, insert safety covers over outlets to prevent children from experiencing serious shock if any object is inserted.

### Inspect outlets with ground-fault circuit interrupters.

- ▶ Do you test all GFCI outlets regularly? If not, test them once a month. GFCIs can prevent electrocution and should be used in kitchens, bathrooms and other areas of the home where risk of shock is higher.

#### Follow this procedure to test GFCIs:

- ▶ Plug a light into the outlet and turn it on.
- ▶ Press the test button. Did the light go out? If not, replace the GFCI.
- ▶ Press the reset button. Did the light come back on? If not, replace the GFCI.

#### Check countertop appliances.

- ▶ Are all countertop appliances unplugged when not in use? If not, unplug them, as unattended appliances that remain plugged in may create a fire risk.

- ▶ Are all appliance cords positioned so that they will not contact a hot surface such as an oven or toaster in the kitchen? If not, relocate cords away from heat sources. Melted or burned cords with exposed wires could lead to electric shock or fire.

- ▶ Are all appliances located away from sinks? If not, move appliances away from sinks. If it is not possible to move appliances away from sinks, ensure they are plugged into an outlet protected by GFCI. Electricity and water mixing can cause electric shock and fire. ■



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## Efficient Holiday Cooking

**COOKING ACCOUNTS FOR** 4% of total home energy use, the U.S. Department of Energy estimates, and this figure doesn't include the energy costs associated with refrigeration, water heating and dishwashing.

As households gear up for the holiday season, keep these tips in mind to control energy costs.

### Smart Oven Use

Before the baking begins, clean the inside of your range, wiping accumulated grease and grime out of the oven and making sure the window is clean and clear so you can see what's cooking.

Don't open the oven door to check on the progress of cooking food. Every time the door is opened, the temperature inside is reduced by as much as 25 degrees, forcing it to use more energy to return to the proper cooking temperature. Use the oven light and the window to keep an eye on those cookies.

For recipes that need to bake longer than an hour, preheating isn't necessary.

If you use a ceramic or glass dish for baking, you can typically set your oven to 25 degrees lower than the recipe directs. Because ceramic and glass hold heat better than metal pans, your dish will cook just as well at a lower temperature.

### Stovetop Sense

For your stovetop to function effectively, it's important that the metal reflectors under your electric stove burners stay free of dirt and grime. Electric stovetops transmit heat to pans only by direct contact with burners. The less contact your pan has with the burner, the more energy the stovetop has to expend to heat the pan.

If your pans have warped over time and don't sit flat on the burner, it may be time to upgrade to a new set of cookware. To keep pans from warping, don't clean them while they are still hot. The temperature difference between the pan and wash water can deform the metal.

### Think Small Appliances

A slow cooker, microwave, toaster oven or warming plate can do the same job of cooking some dishes with less electricity. For example, the average toaster oven can use about half the energy of the average electric stove over the same cooking time. ■

## Change Air Filters All Winter Long

**YOU DUTIFULLY CHANGED** your air conditioning system's filter every month or two over the summer—right? And now that the weather is cooling off, you might think that job is finished until next summer.

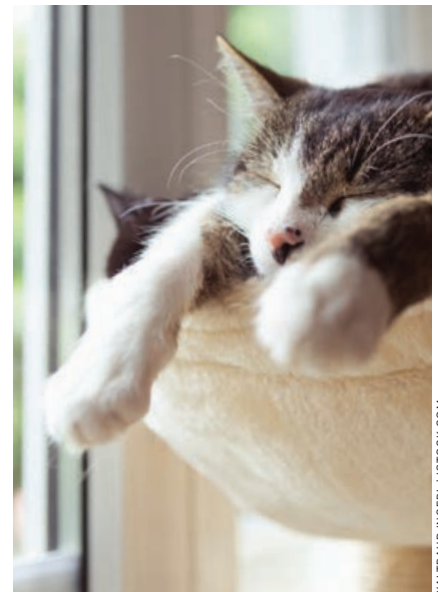
It's not.

Your central heating system also relies on a filter to catch dust, dirt, pet hair and other airborne particles that can clog the system, slow it down and even make it blow that stuff back into your rooms.

A clogged filter restricts airflow, and that can force the system's blower to work harder. This can shorten the life of the equipment, causing it to overheat, break down or unnecessarily increase your heating bill.

That's why it's important to change the filter regularly during cooling and heating seasons. In fact, most heating, ventilating and air conditioning system manufacturers recommend monthly changes all year long.

Especially if you have pets, if you live in a dusty climate, or if someone in your home smokes or suffers from allergies, regular filter changes are critical to keeping your HVAC system in good shape and your family comfortable. ■



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# Sweet on Crab Apples

Tart fruit from the uncommon native trees makes for enduring memories

BY SHERYL SMITH-RODGERS

**JEFFERY SWIERC** thinks of his late mother whenever he's tending her 1940s pressure cooker filled with cherry-sized Texas crab apples. Growing up, he'd watch her turn the mouth-puckering fruit into tasty jelly every fall. Years later he still follows the same recipe passed down to his mother, Lorraine Swierc, by his grandmother and great-grandmother.

"We used to help Mother pick crab apples from two big trees on our ranch, but they rotted and died more than 15 years ago," recalls Jeffery Swierc, who lives with his brother, Zachary, on property they inherited in northeastern Kendall County, which is served by Pedernales Electric Cooperative.

When their great-grandfather Emil Kuebel bought the original 1,280-acre ranch in 1883, Texas crab apples—also called Blanco crab apples—thrived in Kendall, Kerr, Blanco and Gillespie counties. Their abundance inspired such local names in southwestern Blanco County as Crabapple Road, Crabapple Creek and Crabapple School. In Gillespie County, German settlers established the community of Crabapple along a different Crabapple Creek and built their own Crabapple School, which still stands on Lower Crabapple Road north of Fredericksburg.

Native only to the Edwards Plateau, the thorny and thickly branched Texas crab apple forms dense thickets from underground roots and can reach a height of 15 feet. In April they bear fragrant pink or white flowers that produce hard, yellow-green fruit.

For 20 years David Winningham, a Bandera Electric Cooperative member, has germinated and sold Texas crab apples at his Natives of Texas nursery midway between Medina and Kerrville. "Crab apples make a great accent tree because of their thick foliage," he says. "In the spring they're covered with flowers and in the fall with fruit."

Wilson Blackburn, a Pedernales EC member who lives on the Kendall County family farm where he grew up, remembers when Texas crab apples were common. "Then screwworms were eradicated in the 1960s," he says, referring to the parasite that decimated cattle and reduced deer populations from the 1930s into the 1950s. "So as white-tailed deer increased, crab apples began to die out."

Deer still get blamed for the shrinking number of crab apples in the Hill Country. "Seedlings don't have a chance because deer come along and browse

them," says Robert Edmonson, a biologist with the Texas A&M Forest Service in Johnson City.

Both wild and cultivated crab apples stand little chance of surviving without protection. "I recommend placing cages at least 4 feet tall around trees to keep them from being browsed and deer rubbing the trunks," says Edmonson, a Pedernales EC member. "These cages can serve a dual purpose in that any seed that falls inside the area will be protected from browsing."

Years ago on the Swierc ranch, an uncle fenced off the family's last crab apple motte. The enclosure, constructed of steel wire mesh and T-bar stakes, guards more than 20 shrubby trees. A few put on fruit but not enough to make jelly. So Jeffery Swierc replenishes his crab apple supply from trees on a neighbor's ranch.

"When the apples are ripe, we put tarps under the branches and shake the trees," he explains. "That's the easiest way to collect the crab apples. You can't climb the trees because they're too thorny."

Swierc boils the apples for half an hour on the stove. Using a wooden pestle, he presses the juice from the soft fruit through a vintage metal ricer, a cone-shaped sieve designed for mashing potatoes. "A gallon of fruit, which makes four dozen half-pint jars, calls for 7 cups of juice and 9 cups of sugar. I also add a little red food coloring, like Mother always did."

Starting in the late '70s, Lorraine Swierc faithfully made and donated crab apple jelly to her church's fall bazaar in Blanco. The jars, labeled with her name and "Wild Crabapple Jelly," never failed to sell out. "I helped Mother make it for the last time in October 2005," Jeffery Swierc says. "She was 86 years old. The following January, she passed."

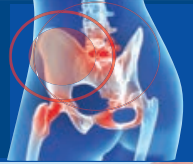
In her honor he continued the tradition of donating crab apple jelly to the church's annual fundraisers. Sadly, the bazaars were canceled for good in 2019. Though he misses the event, Swierc plans to continue jarring his jelly, labeled under his name, to give to family and friends.

"Whenever I drive by our Blanco crab apples, I always think how lucky I am to have a part of my family's legacy," he says. "We're going to continue to preserve and take care of the trees for the next generation." ■





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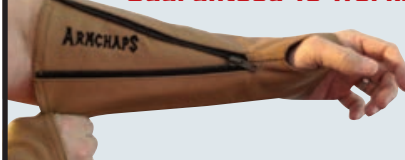
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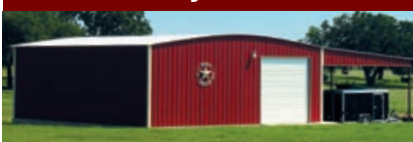


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# Toeing the Line

How a Washington connection helped Texas keep a 900-square-mile slice of New Mexico

BY W.F. STRONG • ILLUSTRATION BY TRACI DABERKO

**YOU CAN NEVER** underestimate the value of a good friendship forged early in life. If not for one such friendship, Texas would be more than 900 square miles smaller.

Before I get to the friendship, come with me up to the northwest corner of the Panhandle, where Texas meets Oklahoma and New Mexico. If you look closely at a map, you see that the border between Oklahoma and New Mexico doesn't meet up exactly with the border between Texas and New Mexico. The northern Texas border continues 2.3 miles west before heading straight south, essentially notching into New

Mexico. That jog is the result of a mistake some have called the worst survey error in U.S. history.

In truth, that land should have gone to New Mexico. The border between Texas and the New Mexico Territory was to be exactly along the 103rd meridian, same as the border between Oklahoma and New Mexico.

John H. Clark was hired to do the Texas survey in 1859. He started from the south and surveyed northward until he ran out of access to water. He figured: No problem, I'll just go up to the north end of Texas and work my way down and connect to this spot.

Clark started again northwest of present-day Dalhart, at a spot that was a couple of miles to the west of where he should have been. He headed south, marking his way, until Native Americans ran him off. He was just 70 miles from connecting the line to where he left off in the south, so he connected the dots on the map and turned in his work. Sadly, he never would have connected with his earlier starting point. He would have missed it by more than a mile to the west. His northern starting point was 2.3 miles west of where it should have been, and his southern corner was nearly 3.8 miles west of the correct point. The error amounted to an extra 603,348 acres, or 942 square miles, for Texas.

By the time New Mexico was set to achieve statehood, state leaders knew about the error and slipped a clause into the statehood legislation that said that the eastern boundary would be the true 103rd meridian. Thus, New Mexico would get its land back. Nobody seemed to be paying attention to the state's intentions except John Farwell, an original investor in the XIT Ranch in Texas. He realized that the XIT would lose hundreds of thousands of acres—and mineral rights—if the New Mexico plan went through.

Farwell had been good friends with President William Howard Taft during college at Yale University. He went to see his old buddy and explained the predicament. Taft summoned powerful men to his office and told them the Clark border would be the legal border when New Mexico became a state, or it would remain a territory.

And that is how a survey error, along with an old friendship, made Texas almost a thousand square miles bigger than it was supposed to be. Once again, it's about who you know. ■

# Cookie Swap

Get to know people and recipes with a sweet exchange

BY MEGAN MYERS, FOOD EDITOR

Cookie swaps are a wonderful way to get your sugary holiday fix while learning a bit about the other swappers. I feel like you can tell a lot about people from what kinds of cookies end up on the table, whether there are classic thumbprints or delicate macarons. Because bourbon balls don't require baking, they are a perfect treat to make while your other holiday cookies have their stint in the oven. While I use graham crackers here, vanilla wafers or gingersnaps are also options. Go with your favorite—or whatever you already have on hand.

## Bourbon Balls

**2 cups crushed graham crackers**  
**1¼ cups powdered sugar, divided use**  
**1 cup finely chopped pecans**  
**2 tablespoons cocoa powder**  
**1 teaspoon cinnamon**  
**¼ cup bourbon**  
**2 tablespoons pure maple syrup**

**COOK'S TIP** To make these nonalcoholic, use apple juice in place of the bourbon.

1. In a large bowl, mix together graham cracker crumbs, 1 cup powdered sugar, pecans, cocoa and cinnamon.
2. Whisk together bourbon and maple syrup, then add to dry ingredients. Stir together until everything is evenly moistened. If the mixture looks too dry, add more bourbon and syrup, a small amount at a time. The mixture should clump easily when squeezed.
3. Form mixture into small balls by hand. On a flat surface, roll balls in remaining ¼ cup of powdered sugar and then place them on a waxed paper-lined plate or tray. Chill to let the flavors meld before serving.

**MAKES 2 DOZEN COOKIES**

**TCP WEB EXTRA** Follow along with Megan Myers and her adventures in the kitchen at [stetted.com](http://stetted.com), where she features a recipe for Raspberry Jam Cookies.





## Chocolate Chip Ginger Wheels

NANCY FILER  
COSERV

These big cookies are a great option for mailing to friends and family thanks to molasses, which keeps the treats soft and tender. For the ones you keep for yourself, Filer recommends wrapping each baked cookie individually in plastic wrap to freeze and enjoy as desired.

- 1 cup (2 sticks) butter, softened**
- 3 teaspoons baking soda**
- 2 teaspoons ground ginger**
- 2 teaspoons cinnamon**
- 1 teaspoon dry mustard**
- 1 teaspoon instant coffee**
- 1 teaspoon ground cloves**
- ½ teaspoon salt**
- 1¼ cups sugar, divided use**
- 1 cup molasses**
- 1 egg**
- 4¾ cups flour**
- ¾ cup milk**
- 1 cup semisweet chocolate chips**
- 1 cup chopped nuts**

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees and line two cookie sheets with parchment.
2. In a large bowl, cream butter, baking soda, ginger, cinnamon, mustard, coffee, cloves and salt. Blend in 1 cup sugar, then molasses and egg.
3. Mix in the flour, alternating with the milk. Stir in chocolate chips and chopped nuts. The dough will be somewhat sticky.
4. Measure a scant ¼ cup of dough and place on parchment-lined baking sheet, spacing cookies 2 inches apart.

CONTINUED >

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## Mocha Wedge Cookies

MELISSA SEXSON  
PANOLA-HARRISON EC



This recipe was inspired by Sexson's grandmother, who baked butter cookies with a light raspberry glaze. "I love the combination of chocolate and coffee flavors, so I came up with these cookies, which my family and friends all love," Sexson says. If you can't find espresso powder, use ground espresso.

MAKES 16 COOKIES



COOKIES

- 1 cup (2 sticks) butter, softened**
- ¼ cup sugar**
- ½ cup packed dark brown sugar**
- ⅛ teaspoon salt**
- 2½ cups flour**
- ⅓ cup mini semisweet chocolate chips**

TOPPING

- ½ teaspoon espresso powder**
- ⅛ teaspoon cinnamon**
- 1½ tablespoons hot water**
- 3 tablespoons light corn syrup**
- Sparkling or sanding sugar**

1. Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Coat two 8-inch round cake pans with nonstick spray and set aside
2. **COOKIES** In a large mixing bowl, cream butter, sugar, brown sugar and salt. Incorporate flour in thirds, using a sturdy spoon to mix. The dough will be crumbly.
3. Once the flour is mixed in, use your hands to continue mixing dough together and forming clumps with your hands. Mix in chocolate chips by hand.
4. Remove dough to a clean surface and knead for a few minutes until dough is evenly moistened and holds together well. If needed, sprinkle on 1 teaspoon of water to moisten.
5. Divide dough into halves and press each into a prepared cake pan, making sure to create an even layer all the way to the edges. Use a fork to prick holes over the surface of the dough.
6. Bake 25–30 minutes, until golden brown on top, rotating pans halfway through. Remove pans and immediately invert onto a clean cutting board. As soon as rounds are turned out, cut each into 8 wedges.
7. **TOPPING** In a small bowl, combine espresso powder and cinnamon. Whisk in hot water, then corn syrup. Using a pastry brush, brush each cookie wedge lightly with syrup mixture. Sprinkle each with sparkling or sanding sugar, then cool completely.

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RECIPES CONTINUED

5. Pour remaining 1/4 cup sugar into a shallow bowl or onto a rimmed plate. Wet the bottom of a glass with water, then dip glass into sugar. Press the glass onto each cookie to flatten slightly, leaving sugar on the cookies. Bake 12–15 minutes.

MAKES 2 DOZEN LARGE COOKIES



## Lemon Bonbons

LONNA RANADA  
COSERV

These tender cookies, first made by Ranada's mother, have a burst of lemon flavor thanks to the easy frosting. Be sure to sift the powdered sugar before measuring to remove any large lumps, which can make the cookies and frosting thicker than desired.

COOKIES

1 1/4 cups flour  
3/4 cup cornstarch

1/2 cup powdered sugar  
1 cup (2 sticks) butter  
1 teaspoon almond extract

FROSTING

1 tablespoon butter, softened  
2 cups powdered sugar, divided use  
2 tablespoons lemon juice  
1–2 teaspoons heavy cream

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. COOKIES In a large bowl, mix together flour, cornstarch and powdered sugar. Cut in butter using a pastry blender or two butter knives, much like mixing a pie crust. Once mixture resembles coarse

sand, sprinkle in almond extract, then continue mixing until dough forms large clumps.

3. Scoop dough into small balls and place on cookie sheets. Bake 10–12 minutes, until edges just begin to brown. Let cookies cool on cookie sheets for 5 minutes before removing to a wire rack to cool completely.

4. FROSTING Mix softened butter with 1/4 cup powdered sugar, then blend in lemon juice. Add remaining sugar a little bit at a time, then blend in cream. For a thinner glaze, add more cream until frosting reaches desired consistency. Frost cooled cookies, then let frosting set before serving.

MAKES 2 DOZEN COOKIES

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COURTESY CHET GARNER

## Road Trip Relics

The U-Drop Inn still entices travelers to pull off Route 66 in Shamrock

BY CHET GARNER

**TEXANS LOVE** a good road trip.

With the advent of the automobile in the early 20th century, road-tripping became a pastime as important as baseball and barbecue. With the completion of Route 66, the Mother Road of America, road trippers needed rest stops to refuel gas tanks and stomachs. The U-Drop Inn Café in Shamrock stood ready to serve.

The first time I saw the U-Drop Inn, I was traveling the Texas stretch of Route 66 that slices across the Panhandle. Fifteen miles west of Oklahoma, I found the High Plains town of Shamrock, known for the tallest water tower in Texas. But another tower, a cream-colored column with glowing green neon atop an art deco gas station, caught my attention. It was the U-Drop Inn and Tower Station, one of the iconic stops along historic Route 66. The distinctive architecture even inspired a building in *Cars*, the Pixar animated feature about a forgotten highway town.

Built in 1936, the Tower Station was open 24 hours a day and connected with U-Drop Inn Café, which also kept long hours to serve weary travelers. The U-Drop became famous as the best stop between Oklahoma City and Amarillo. Even Elvis Presley dropped in on occasion. The diner no longer offers food but now serves visitors a glimpse into the past. I roamed through, wishing I could park at a booth and order a blue-plate special.

The rest of the building is now a visitors center catering to folks from all over the world who travel the Mother Road. The world map was cluttered with pushpins noting visitors from more than 100 countries. To them, Route 66 and classic stops like the U-Drop Inn signify freedom—the sort of freedom that can only be found on the open road. ■

ABOVE The Tower Station and U-Drop Inn as it looks today.

**TCP WEB EXTRA** See Chet's video from the U-Drop Inn Café in Shamrock and check out his Texplorations 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.

## NOVEMBER

07

**Corpus Christi Harbor Half Marathon**, (361) 884-6561, harborhalf.com

**Kerrville Kerr County Market Days and Hill Country Swap Meet**, (830) 459-6198, kerrmarketdays.org

**New Braunfels Fall Walk**, (830) 660-4935, my.ava.org/find-an-event.php

**Tyler [7-8] Texas Rose Fall Horse Trials**, (903) 882-8696, texasrosehorsepark.com

**Georgetown [7-15] Field of Honor**, (951) 834-3301, georgetowntxfieldofhonor.org

10

**Bryan Messina Hof U.S. Marine Corps Ball**, (979) 778-9463, messinahof.com/events

11

**Grapevine Paint Your Pet**, (817) 442-8463, messinahof.com/events

**Ozona Veterans Day Appreciation Banquet**, (325) 392-2827, ozona.com/eventscalendar

12

**New Braunfels [12-14] Shop, Crop & Craft**, (830) 221-4011, heirloompro.com

13

**Palestine [13-Dec. 27] The Polar Express**, (855) 632-7729, texasstaterailroad.net

14

**Denison Holiday at the Market**, (469) 712-9122, downtowndenisonfarmersmarket.com

20

**Kingsbury Pioneer Flight Museum Wings and Wheels Fly-In**, (830) 639-4162, pioneerflightmuseum.org

**Santa Fe Heritage Festival**, (409) 925-8558, santafetexaschamber.com

**Tyler [14-15] North Texas Hunter Jumper Club Year-End Show**, (903) 882-8696, texasrosehorsepark.com

**Corsicana Christmas Tree Lighting and Fireworks Display**, (903) 654-4850, visitcorsicana.com

**Alpine [20-21] Artwalk**, (432) 294-1071, artwalkalpine.com

**Giddings [20-21] Texas Word Wrangler Book Festival**, (979) 542-2716, texaswordwrangler.com

**Fredericksburg [20-22] Fredericksburg Trade Days**, (210) 846-4094, fbgtradedays.com

**Ingram [20-21, 27-28, Dec. 4-5, 11-12] Inspecting Carol**, (830) 367-5121, hcaf.com

21

**Jacksonville Cherokee Craft & Trade Fair**, (903) 268-1598, jacksonvilletexas.com

**Seguin Texas Hold 'em Poker Tournament**, (830) 379-0933, texagedu.org/texasholdem tournament

**Tyler [21-22] Dallas Hunter Jumper Scholarship Circuit Year-End Show**, (903) 882-8696, texasrosehorsepark.com

26

**Lake Jackson [26-27] Turkey Trot 5K**, (979) 285-2501, lakejacksonturkeytrot.com

MORE EVENTS >

### TCP *Submit Your Event*

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

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TRISH RAWLS

## Fredericksburg

### Getaway Contest

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**TCP Enter Today**

[TexasCoopPower.com/Contests](http://TexasCoopPower.com/Contests)

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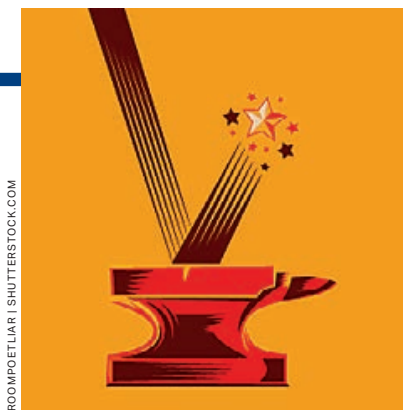
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b. Paid and/or Requested Circulation	1,694,365	1,721,961
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f. Total Distribution	1,705,163	1,732,613
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i. Percent Paid and/or Requested	99.37%	99.39%
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c. Total Print Distribution	1,705,163	1,732,613
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Signature and Title of Editor, Publisher, Business Manager, or Owner  
Date  
Karen Nejttek, Managing Editor October 1, 2020



**Pick of the Month**  
**American Legion Anvil Shoot**  
Hamilton, November 11  
(254) 386-3992  
facebook.com/cunningham222  
American Legion Cunningham Post 222 has held this event every November 11 since 1918, when World War I ended. It involves exploding gunpowder that has been placed between two stacked heavy anvils, which sends the anvil on top flying. Anvil shoots were once a common way for pioneers to commemorate holidays, elections and other special occasions.

NOVEMBER EVENTS CONTINUED

27 **Granbury Night of Lights Christmas Parade**, (817) 573-5548, visitgranbury.com  
**Abilene [27-28] Thanksgiving Throwdown**, (325) 673-4233, abilenevisitors.com/calendar

**Fredericksburg [27-29] Peddler Show**, (512) 358-1000, peddlershow.com  
**Fredericksburg [27-29] Trade Days Thanksgiving Show**, (210) 846-4094, fbtradedays.com

**Jefferson [27-28, Dec. 5, 12, 19, 26] Christmas Express**, 1-866-398-2038, jeffersonrailway.com

**Llano [27-Dec. 31] Starry Starry Nights Lighted Christmas Park**, (325) 247-5354, llanostarrystarrynights.com

28 **Comfort Christmas in Comfort**, (830) 995-3131, comfortchamber.com

DECEMBER

01 **Amarillo [1-3] Farm and Ranch Show**, 1-800-827-8007, ideagroup.com/amarillo

02 **Alpine Christmas in Alpine**, (432) 837-2326, vitalpinetx.com/christmas

03 **Cameron Christmas Drive-Thru Parade**, (254) 697-4979, cameron-tx.com

**Columbus Ladies Night Out**, (979) 732-8385, columbus-texas.org

**Jacksonville Christmas Parade**, (903) 586-2217, jacksonvilletexas.com

**La Grange Schmeckenfest**, (979) 968-3017, visitlagrangetx.com

**New Braunfels Wassailfest**, (830) 221-4000, since1845.com

04 **Fredericksburg First Friday Art Walk Fredericksburg**, (830) 997-6523, visitfredericksburgtx.com

**La Grange [4-6, 10-13, 17-23] Trail of Lights**, (979) 968-5658, friends-of-kreischebrewery.org

05 **Fredericksburg Holiday Home Tour**, (830) 990-8441, pioneer-museum.net

**Fredericksburg Kinderfest**, (830) 990-8441, pioneer-museum.net

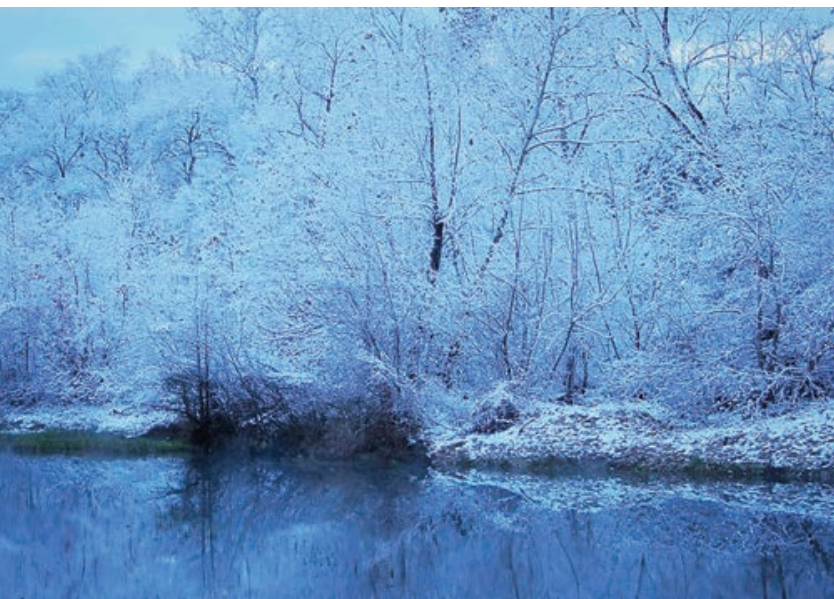
**Grand Saline Salt City Christmas**, (903) 962-5631, grandsalinemainstreet.com

**Kerrville Kerr County Market Days and Hill Country Swap Meet**, (830) 459-6198, kerrmarket.days.org

# Extremes

Extreme environments, animal behaviors and weather are to be expected, and Texans rise to meet any challenge.

GRACE FULTZ



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP

**TOMMIE CALFEE**  
PEDERNALES EC

A winter scene on Onion Creek.

**AMBER LADYMON**  
FARMERS EC

"Our neighbor was burning his field. This is one of my favorites that I got."

**JENNIFER CARMACK**  
HEART OF TEXAS EC

Carmack's son Cyress took this photo of a large thunderhead on the horizon.

**JESSICA RAMOS**  
SOUTH PLAINS EC

"A sunny, warm day takes an extreme turn filled with hail and rain."



## Upcoming Contests

DUE NOV 10 **Diners**

DUE DEC 10 **Storms**

DUE JAN 10 **Historic Texas**

Enter online and review submission rules at [TexasCoopPower.com/Contests](https://TexasCoopPower.com/Contests).

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



## Fresh Perspective

An ardent conservationist resurfaces as a 'meat angler'

BY DAN OKO  
ILLUSTRATION BY NIC JONES

**ALONG THE BRACKISH** shallow lakes off Matagorda Island in the Gulf of Mexico, I'm scanning for redfish fins. Restless mullet keep distracting me, their schools pulsing in the shallows, when all I want is a keeper red.

I'm armed with light spinning tackle, and my friends are spread across the flats. It is an undeniably beautiful day. I spotted herons, egrets, flamingo-pink spoonbills and surfacing dolphins as we crossed the salt. Adding a stout redfish for dinner would make the day even better.

I have not always been what's sometimes referred to as a "meat fisherman," but 20 years in Texas have taught me that redfish on the half shell, prepared over coals and sprinkled with Cajun spice mix and drizzled with oil and lemon, is a treat every angler should enjoy. Before I moved south,

I could be found stalking trout in the riffle lines of Rocky Mountain streams, fly rod in hand, either standing astern in a drift boat or moving like a slow-motion hunter along the bank.

As an ardent conservationist, I don't know what to say about my trajectory from catch and release to deadly hunter except that I believe in abiding the law of the land, and ultimately, fishing purely for sport lacks a certain zest. Rather than debating whether fish feel pain, let's just say my thinking has evolved.

I know plenty of saltwater anglers who prefer fishing with flies, and I have watched redfish hit crab patterns, clouser minnows and popping foam shrimp. But in the name of efficiency and simple camaraderie, I fish conventional tackle when I'm on the Gulf Coast. Whether I am pursuing assorted stream fish or ocean species, the joy I experience remains rooted in the same nitty-gritty details: the attention paid to subtle signs and structure where fish might lurk, the anticipation when a well-placed cast brings the bite, the pulse-pounding joy of the hookup and the epic relief of bringing a fish to hand.

Which returns us to this patch of Matagorda Bay, where I attempt to wade with the stealth of a prowling cat. Through polarized lenses, I glimpse the prize—a bronze bruiser suspended in a few inches of water. I've got a speckled soft-plastic bait, which lands a few feet from my target. I reel slowly, then rest a beat. The movement puts the red on high alert.

He chases down the lure, and I raise my rod to set the hook. A fight ensues that lasts minutes but feels like hours. With a 20-inch red in my net, I look around and spot my friends on the boat. The sun is setting. Dinner will be fresh fish after all. ■



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