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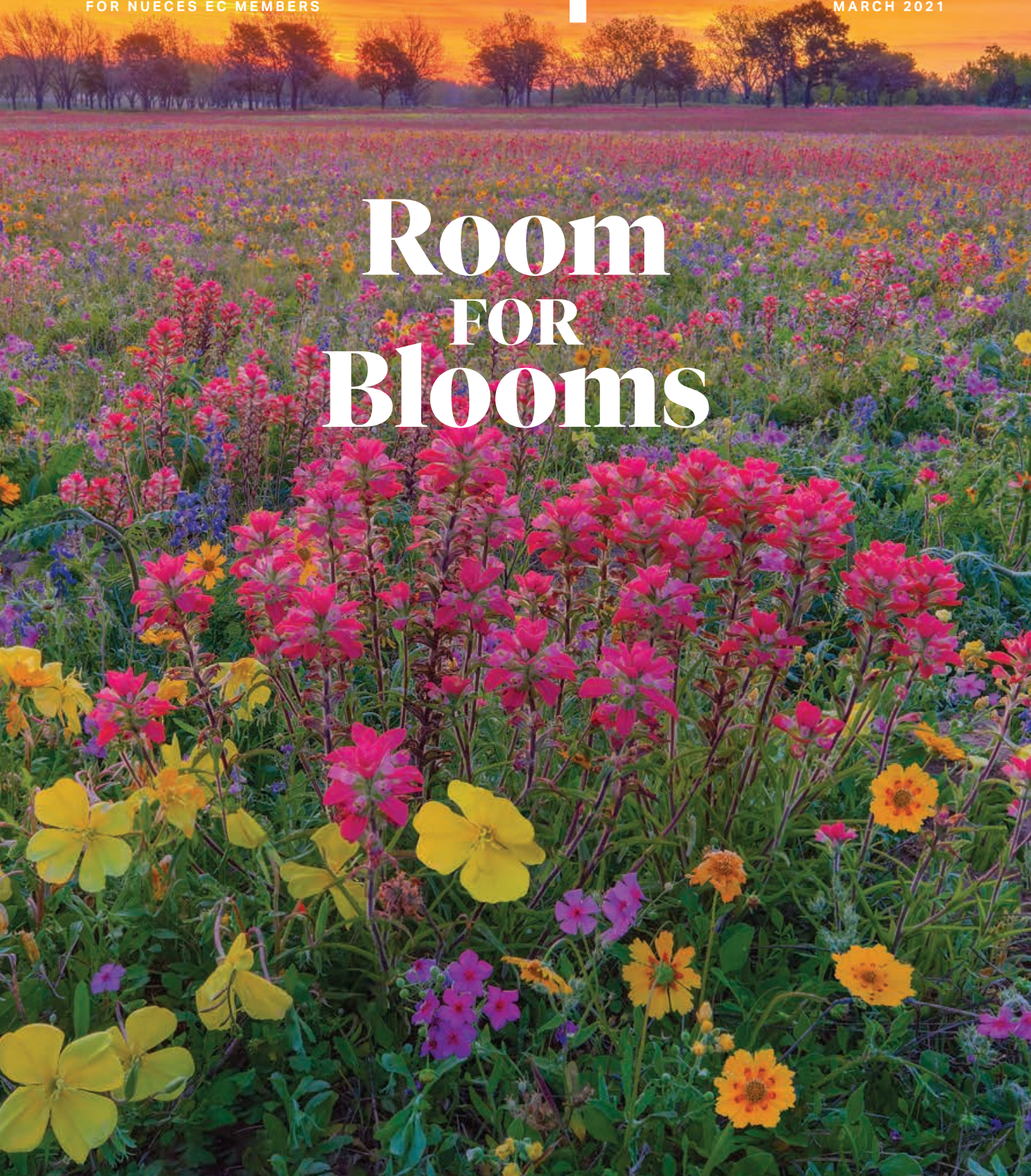
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March 2021



08

Flower Power

Wildflowers proliferate in an explosion of color along the highways and byways of Texas each spring, inspiring artists to capture the state's wild beauty and luring travelers off the beaten path.

By Sheryl Smith-Rodgers

ON THE COVER

A red patch of Indian paintbrush highlights a field of wildflowers near New Berlin.

ABOVE

A firewheel.

Photos by Rob Greebon

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By Eli Winter

Month of Tweets

OF THE 654 SPECIES of birds documented in Texas, over half are migratory. Millions of these will fly the Texas skies starting this month on their way to northern breeding grounds after wintering in Mexico and Central and South America.

Some species, such as the prothonotary warbler, below, and red-eyed vireo, will go no farther north than Texas, where they'll make their home until the fall, when they migrate south again.



Scout's Honor

Since the Boy Scouts of America created the Eagle Scout rank in 1911, about 2.6 million Americans have earned one of Scouting's highest honors. Until last year, all Eagle Scouts were boys.

When Abby Winkelman, whose family is a member of Sam Houston Electric Cooperative, became an Eagle Scout in October, when she was 14, she made history, becoming one of the first girls to reach the rank.

"I don't think I've ever set a goal this ambitious for myself, so I'm just really proud of myself that I met my goal," said Winkelman, of Troop 5131 in Austin, "and I planned and I got help from all my friends and all my community."



Hank the Cool Dog

Texas' coolest dog meets Texas' coolest character.

A new podcast series stars Matthew McConaughey as Hank the Cowdog, based on the long-running series of children's books written by Texan John R. Erickson, illustrated by Gerald L. Holmes and set in the Panhandle.

The podcast, which debuted in the fall, is available on all major podcast platforms.

“I will never forsake Texas and her cause. I am her son.”

—JOSÉ ANTONIO NAVARRO

FINISH THIS SENTENCE

THE SONG THAT GOT ME THROUGH A YEAR OF PANDEMIC IS ...

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 January prompt:

Life was better ...

When my skate key was hanging around my neck, my knees were scabbed and the wind was blowing my hair from my face.

JANICE F. CONWAY
TRINITY VALLEY EC
KEMP

Before COVID-19.

GARY GALLOWAY
TRI-COUNTY EC
WEATHERFORD

When we could reach out and touch someone, literally. I miss hugs and handshakes.

CARMEN LOCKSTEDT
VICTORIA EC
VICTORIA

When the only screen we had was in our door, and we could see through it.

PATRICIA RAPACKI
MIDSOUTH EC
MONTGOMERY

After I recovered from ovarian cancer.

SHERRI JEFFERY
GRAYSON-COLLIN EC
MCKINNEY

To see more responses, read Currents online.



Drink to That?

USING HOUSTON as a model, researchers at Rice University have developed a plan to recycle wastewater economically and make it drinkable, which could reduce the need for surface water—from rivers, reservoirs and wells—by 28%.

“All the technologies needed to treat wastewater to drinking water quality are available,” Rice researcher Qilin Li said. “The issue is that today they’re still pretty expensive.”

This proposed system makes up for that by bringing down the cost of a city’s water supply. Recycled water doesn’t have to travel as far and is therefore cheaper.

Cheers.



TCP Contests and More

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RUSSELL A. GRAVES

Captured!

“Katmai National Park and Preserve holds a contest every year to name the fattest bear at Brooks Falls.”

JULIA FRANKENFIELD
MIDSOUTH EC
MONTGOMERY

No Fan of the Span

My wife drove across it with our teenage son in 1985 and could not drive back [*The Scariest Bridge in Texas*, January 2021]. It was so traumatizing for her that she has not been able to drive over any multilevel highway overpass, interstate or other even moderately high bridge since.

It should have a warning sign.

William Hamlin
Tri-County EC
Keller



Crossed it pulling a six-horse trailer with a truck full of squealing little girls [*The Scariest Bridge in Texas*, January 2021]. Not something I care to repeat.

KAY MOTLEY
VIA FACEBOOK

A World Opens

The Carnegie library of my hometown of Terrell did indeed fill a real need [*Literary Fortunes*, January 2021]. As a boy I was able to jump on my bike and spend time looking through the stacks and especially enjoying the reference room. The whole world opened for me.

Dan Wood Jr.
Trinity Valley EC
Terrell

Dialect in Danger

The Texas German dialect and culture are slowly dying out as they are not passed on to younger generations [*Burgs in a New Land*, December 2020]. Within the next 20 years, the Texas German dialect will become extinct after being spoken for close to 200 years.

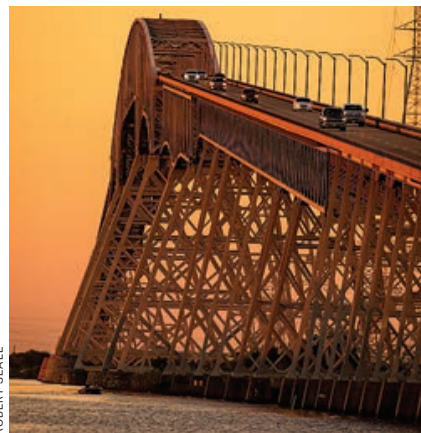
In 2001, I founded the Texas German Dialect Project at the University of Texas to record this unique dialect.

Hans Boas
Pedernales EC
Austin

Thank you for the article about the fear of crossing bridges and high overpasses. I am that person. I will go out of my way to avoid the flyovers in Houston and any other high or narrow bridge.

I no doubt annoy drivers behind me when I have no choice but to use one of these structures, and I crawl across it, white-knuckled, at 40 mph.

Linda Secrist
San Bernard EC
Magnolia



ROBERT SEALE

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.

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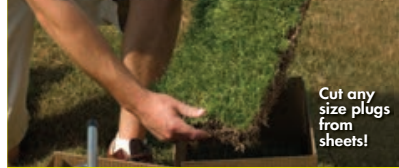


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SEASONAL SWAY OF COLORS
DRIVES TEXANS WILD

Flower POWER

BY SHERYL SMITH-RODGERS

NATURE'S PALETTE CAPTIVATES Texans every spring. Sapphire blue, lemony yellow, crimson red, golden orange, lavender purple and ivory white. We love our wildflowers so much that we'll drive great distances to see them. Frame their colors in countless photos. Designate official state titles in their honor. Celebrate their return with festivals, parades and dances. Spread their seeds across our yards, campuses and roadsides. Pen words, compose music and paint landscapes that hail their natural glory.

We also revere the Texans who've promoted our 5,000-plus species of wildflowers and native plants. Foremost was Lady Bird Johnson, who started her national highway cleanup campaign during Lyndon B. Johnson's presidency and co-founded the National Wildflower Research Center in 1982. Now called the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, the 284-acre complex in Austin supports the Botanic Garden and Arboretum of Texas as well as cultivated gardens and wild natural areas.

Another wildflower hero is Carroll Abbott of Kerrville, a native plant expert who lobbied in 1981 to establish the fourth Saturday in April as Texas Wildflower Day. That same year he was instrumental in founding the Native Plant Society of Texas, which now boasts 34 chapters with 2,800 members.

Other wildflower advocates made a difference, too. San Antonio civic leader Sallie Ward Beretta launched a state-wide campaign in the 1920s to stop the bluebonnet from being overpicked. As president of the City Federation of Women's Clubs and the San Antonio Council of Girl Scouts, she recruited volunteers to gather seedpods in fields around the city. Then they shared the seeds with other cities across the state and nation.

Large or small, every effort to protect our wildflowers makes a difference. You can do your part: Please don't pick, trample or uproot bluebonnets or any other wildflowers. No law prohibits Texans from picking bluebonnets unless they're on private property or state park land, but any flower picked or damaged can't reseed for the next spring's bloom.

So welcome back, wildflowers. We look forward to yet another glorious show!



ROB GREENON | IMAGESFROMTEXAS.COM



A field of bluebonnets in the southern Chisos Mountains welcomes the sun as it rises on Big Bend National Park.

WELL, I DO DECLARE!
OFFICIAL STATE DESIGNATIONS

Officially WILD

STATE FLOWER

Most U.S. states claim one official state flower. Not Texas. We have at least 16. In 1901 the bluebonnet (*Lupinus subcarnosus*) went up against the prickly pear and cotton boll for the right to be named state flower. Rep. John “Cactus Jack” Nance Garner of Uvalde lobbied for the cactus bloom. Other legislators argued that cotton had made Texas rich. In the end, the National Society of the Colonial Dames of America carried the day, and the bluebonnet won.

But floral dissent wasn’t over. Many didn’t like the bluebonnet choice. Of the state’s six bluebonnet species, *Lupinus subcarnosus* was the “least attractive,” opined botanist Howard S. Irwin in *Roadside Flowers of Texas*. So in 1971 state lawmakers amended legislation to include the more popular Texas bluebonnet (*Lupinus texensis*) in addition to *Lupinus subcarnosus* and all other varieties of bluebonnet as the official state flower.

Since then, horticulturalists have developed different colors of bluebonnets, such as white and maroon. To date, they’ve introduced at least 10 bluebonnet varieties. Thus, Texas has at least 16 official state flowers ... for now.



WILDFLOWER CAPITAL OF TEXAS

DeWitt County

Wildflower trails crisscross DeWitt County, northwest of Victoria, where more than 1,000 wildflower species have been documented. A 1999 resolution adopted by the Texas House recognized the county as the Wildflower Capital of Texas.

TEXAS WILDFLOWER DAY

Fourth Saturday in April

In April 1981 the Legislature declared the fourth Saturday of April as Texas Wildflower Day. The resolution asks the governor “to issue an appropriate proclamation annually” to encourage the proper observance of the special day.

BLUEBONNET CO-CAPITALS OF TEXAS

Burnet and Llano counties

Every spring visitors admire wildflowers along the Highland Lakes Bluebonnet Trail, which winds through Burnet and Llano counties in Central Texas. In 1981 the Legislature designated the pair as Bluebonnet Co-capitals of Texas.



EDDIE WHITE

STATE FLOWER SONG

Bluebonnets

Our state flower song, *Bluebonnets*, has roots in Washington County. Julia D. Booth of Chappell Hill wrote lyrics for the song, which was composed by piano teacher Lora C. Crockett. On February 8, 1933, Alice Clay Rountt of Chappell Hill, accompanied by Crockett on the piano, sang the tune for the Texas House. It was then adopted as the state flower song by the Legislature.

OFFICIAL BLUEBONNET FESTIVAL OF TEXAS

Chappell Hill Bluebonnet Festival

The Chappell Hill Historical Society hosted its first bluebonnet festival in 1964, calling it the Bluebonnet Antique Show. In 1983 the name changed to Chappell Hill Bluebonnet Festival. In 1997 the Legislature named the event, in the town east of Brenham, as the Official Bluebonnet Festival of Texas.

**WILDFLOWER SEEDING
BRIGHTENS ROAD TRIPS**

Take It ON THE ROAD

SINCE THE 1930s the Texas Department of Transportation has planted native flowers and grasses along state highways. In 1934 the agency directed staff not to mow until wildflowers had set seed, a policy that still guides mowing schedules.

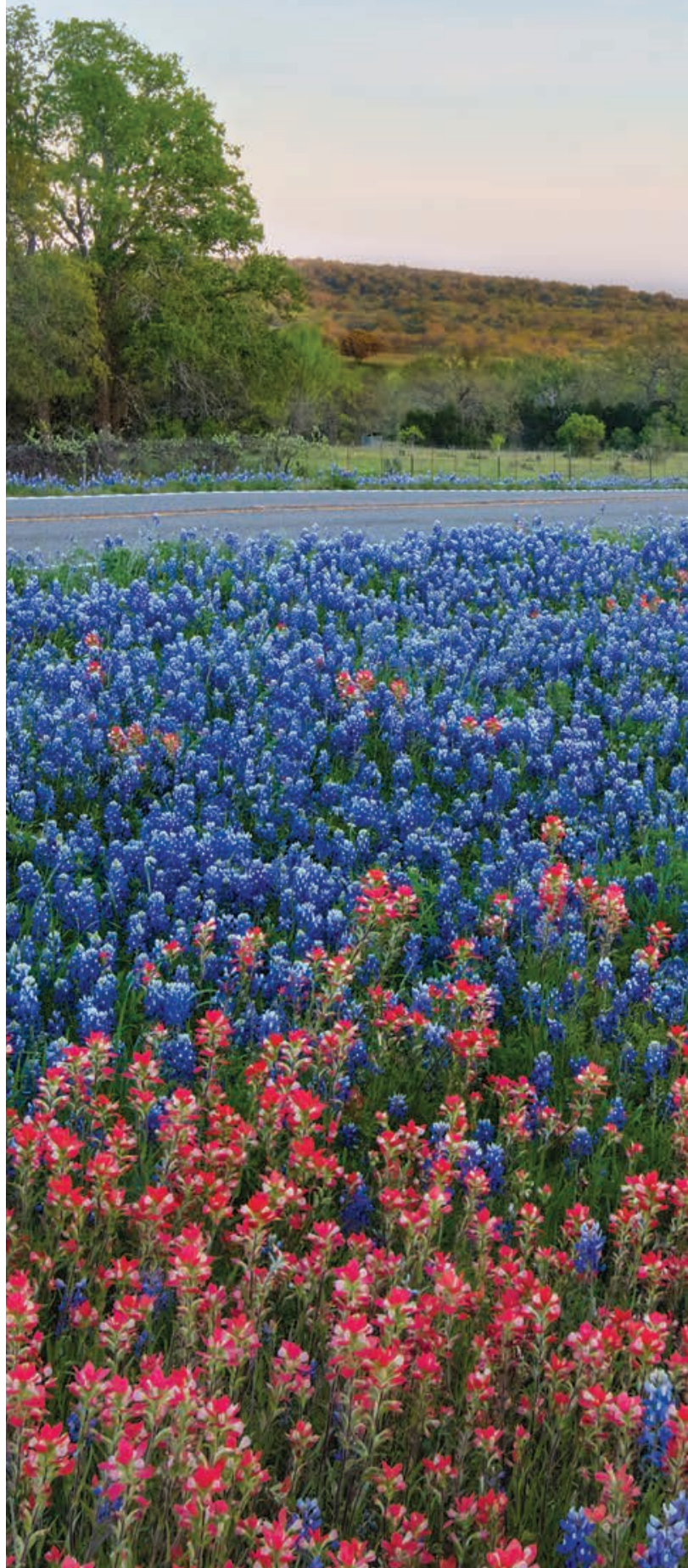
TxDOT's wildflower program has expanded in both scope and vision, and the department now maintains 800,000 acres of roadside along with 80 safety rest stops and 12 travel information centers. Every year TxDOT must reseed approximately 4,800 construction projects.

Enter native plants, which require less care, provide wildlife habitat and increase biodiversity. "Every fall we sow approximately 30,000 pounds of native flower and grass seed mixes," says Travis Jez, a TxDOT vegetation specialist. "Because monarch butterflies have become a species of major concern, we're also planting pollinator gardens and milkweeds, such as zizotes. What's cool is that all pollinators benefit."

No single seed source can supply the 15 tons that TxDOT sows annually. So Jez works with six Texas companies that specialize in producing seeds for native species. TxDOT also collaborates with Texas Native Seeds of the Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute, a nonprofit program that develops commercial seed supplies of native plants for use in restoring habitats on private and public lands. The program supports six regional projects that select and grow plants endemic to their areas.

While you're searching for wildflowers, look out for bright green carpets along Texas roadsides. Those indicate that the areas have been hydroseeded with a slurry of seeds, mulch and water. "The process is used for spreading seeds and to control erosion," Jez explains. "The mulch also holds in water and helps the seedlings get started."

As for the green color, "It allows applicants to see where they've sprayed the slurry," Jez says.



ROB GREEBON | IMAGESFROMTEXAS.COM



Bluebonnets and Indian paintbrush accompany travelers along a stretch of Texas 16 in Gillespie County.

MARY MOTZ WILLS'
WILDFLOWER WATERCOLORS

Picture THIS

IN APRIL 1961 nature enthusiasts hurraed the publication of *Roadside Flowers of Texas*. The classic guide written by botanist Howard S. Irwin showcases 257 wildflower paintings by Mary Motz Wills, a prolific artist and amateur botanist whose work was exhibited nationally. Her attention to the smallest details led to floral watercolors that were, as one columnist noted, “botanically accurate as well as artistically superb.”

Wills attended formal art schools and began painting flowers in 1913 while recovering from an illness in Panama, where her husband, a U.S. Army colonel, was stationed. After his death in 1925, Wills moved to Georgia and then to Abilene, where she aspired to record as many Texas flowers and plants as she could.

At her home studio, Wills painted plants that she collected or were sent to her by friends. She sometimes woke at 4 a.m. or worked through the night to capture blooms in their most natural form. “Some flowers only bloom at night, so I stay up until I get them painted,” she told a newspaper reporter in 1958.

A stickler for accuracy, Wills often noted on her paintings the common and botanical name of plants and where they grew in the wild.

In all, Wills produced more than 2,000 Texas botanical paintings. Many of the plants that she painted “were endangered species in her day, and some have disappeared entirely since then,” writes Cecilia Steinfeldt in *Art for History’s Sake: The Texas Collection of the Witte Museum*.

Wills died at 86 in 1961. Today, many of her delicate watercolors are housed for safe-keeping in Austin’s Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, San Antonio’s Witte Museum and Abilene’s Grace Museum. ■

TCP WEB EXTRA Pick up more wildflower facts and win a book that can make you an expert.



MILKWEED, TEXAS BLUEBONNETS, MARY MOTZ WILLS BY ELSIE MOTZ LOWDON COURTESY COLLECTION OF THE GRACE MUSEUM



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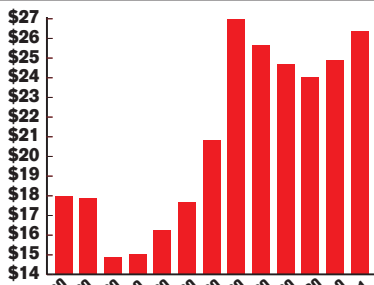
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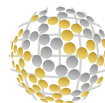
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Silver Trend Chart: Price per ounce based on monthly averages.

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A MESSAGE FROM YOUR CEO, Varzavand "Avan" Irani

What's in It for 'We'?

One of the most attractive traits of cooperatives is that we answer the popular question, "What's in it for me?" with **"What's in it for we?"**

Co-ops are formed when the market fails to offer a good or service, with decent quality, at an affordable price. Nueces Electric Cooperative was formed in 1938, when investor-owned utilities claimed there was not enough profit to be made in our community and refused to offer electricity.

The founding members of NEC went door to door to collect a few dollars from each resident who was willing to become a member to raise a portion of the original investment the co-op needed to get started. Those go-getters realized the only way to get electricity for "me" was to get it for "we"—the whole community.

With the cumulative down payment, NEC was able to invest in an electrical distribution system that would serve the community. We were—and are—able to offer electricity to members at sometimes far-apart meters without worrying about profit because we are member-owned and organized as a nonprofit. Any extra money that comes in beyond the safe and efficient operation of and investment in our co-op goes back to the members we serve.

Cooperative ownership is in the hands of the people who use the co-op's services (not investors), so not only do co-ops start out answering the question

"What's in it for we?" but they continue to answer that question for as long as they exist.

These days we often hear about companies that abandon communities and move overseas in search of cheaper labor. This negatively impacts communities through job loss, decline in housing values and school closures. But because local residents own cooperatives, co-ops aren't likely to ever leave town. In fact, it would be impossible for NEC to leave. The co-op is a critical part of what makes our community a community.

The way co-ops continue to answer the question **"What's in it for we?"** is critical to our survival. It is imperative that we keep you—our members—as the primary focus. Keeping rates as low as possible is one major part of that focus, but ensuring that we provide real value as your trusted energy adviser is also extremely important. You can count on our experts if you have questions about your electric bill.

And we will continue to look for ways to improve the quality of your life through services beyond the distribution of electricity, such as by advocating for rural broadband and supporting legislation that benefits the people in our communities.

By maintaining that focus with your help and support, we will continue to be able to serve the "me" and the "we" in our community long into the future.

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





Kara Johnson

Youth Tour
\$4,000
Scholarship Winners

Congratulations!



Abigail Larkin

NEC Announces 2021 Youth Tour Scholarship Winners

Nueces Electric Cooperative (NEC) would like to congratulate Abigail Larkin and Kara Johnson who were selected as recipients for the 2021 Government-in-Action Youth Leadership Tour Scholarship! While the impacts of COVID-19 caused the 2021 Youth Tour trip to Washington D.C. to be cancelled, NEC is proud to award each of this year’s recipients a \$4,000 to help each student pursue their educational goals.

Amid concerns surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) announced its decision to cancel the Government-in-Action Youth Leadership Tour, which was scheduled to take place June 18-24, 2021.

Texas Electric Cooperatives (TEC), who represents the interest of more than 75 electric cooperatives throughout the state, coordinates the trip for Texas and made the official announcement to cancel Texas’s participation in the event in December. Despite the cancellation of the Washington trip, NEC offered high school juniors the contest opportunity for a chance to each win a \$4,000 scholarship award.

“We certainly understand the reason for the cancellation of this year’s Youth Tour,” explains NEC’s Youth Tour Coordinator Alexa Patek, “We respect and appreciate the decision by TEC to place the health and safety of the youth first. However, we are proud to support these students and help them achieve their educational goals through this incentive.”

In order to win the Youth Tour Scholarship, students were asked to fill out an application and write an essay, aimed at demonstrating their knowledge and research of electric safety and efficiency.

Six finalists were then selected for a virtual interview. From the group of finalists, the winners were selected based on the score from their essay and interview where they were scored based on simple knowledge of the Cooperative, interview readiness, and communication skills.

NEC proudly awarded two \$4,000 Youth Tour Scholarships to Abigail Larkin, a junior at W.B. Ray High School and Kara Johnson, a junior at Calallen High School.

The application process for the 2022 Government-in-Action Youth Tour begins October 2021. For more information about NEC’s Youth Programs, please visit NEC’s website at nueceselectric.org.

NEC Sponsors NCJLS

Since 2015, Nueces Electric Cooperative has been a proud sponsor of the Nueces County Junior Livestock Show (NCJLS). Although this year was not the norm, NCJLS did everything they could to make the 86th annual show happen. With audiences limited to viewing the show due to the pandemic, participants were still given the opportunity to develop their trade and earn scholarship money. Our yearly donations to this local livestock shows is an important part of our commitment to supporting education in Nueces County. This show teaches kids the value of friendly competition, while nurturing their interest in agriculture. Congratulations to the 2021 NCJLS participants and winners!



Doug Wilson Retires After 15 Years

Goodbyes are never easy but retirements make them better. Congratulations to Doug Wilson, former Meter Technician II, who retired from NEC after 15 years. Doug has seen a lot of change, but has always kept NEC and its members at the forefront of his work. Doug, thank you for your many years of service and enjoy this next chapter of your life!



IMAGE COURTESY OF LINDSAY HANEWICH PHOTOGRAPHY



IMAGE COURTESY OF LINDSAY HANEWICH PHOTOGRAPHY

2021 Employee Service Awards



Rosie Avalos, 45-years



Warren Hoelscher, 45-years



Chris Knetig, 35-years



Manuel Mayorga, 30-years



Albert Gomez, 25-years



Roland Trevino, 20-years



Paula Shadle, 15-years



Joe Huerta III, 10-years



Chris Carrion, 10-years & Dec. Employee of the Month



Benito Torres, 10-years



Susan Bridges, 5-years & Feb. Employee of the Month



Roland Ramirez, 5-years



Matt Smith, DOL Journeyman Lineman



Tate Priest, 5 years & DOL Journeyman Lineman



Kenneth Krueger, March Employee of the Month



Raymund Pina, April Employee of the Month



Mary Pavelka, Employee Of The Year



Jimmy Hernandez, May Employee of the Month



Christopher Johnston, Oct. Employee of the Month

We thank these employees for their commitment to our cooperative!

Spring Cleaning Tips for Energy Efficiency

Spring cleaning time has arrived! It might be hard to get motivated to clean, but cleaning for the sake of saving energy and money might get you moving. By adding a few extra chores to your cleaning list, you not only will enjoy an orderly household, you'll also save energy and money leading into air conditioning season. Keep these tips in mind.

- Dust your lamps and lightbulbs.
- Replace burned-out incandescent bulbs with energy-efficient LEDs.
- Clean the air filter. If it's over a month old, replace it. Replacing air filters allows your heating, ventilating and air conditioning system to run more efficiently.

- Clean the air return vents. And make sure drapes and furniture aren't blocking the flow of air.
- Dust your blinds. House too cool for comfort? Leave blinds open to let the sun's rays heat your home. Home too warm? Keep them closed to block the sunlight, keeping your home insulated.
- Vacuum your refrigerator's coils. The dust buildup can cause the fridge to run less efficiently.
- Thoroughly dust your electronics, and if they're not in use, unplug them.
- Scrub your tub, and then install a low-flow showerhead.

DID YOU KNOW?

March 20 is the first day of spring and the vernal equinox. On this day, daytime and nighttime are roughly equal for all parts of the world. Equinox means "equal night."

POWER TIP

Instead of powering up your TV and surround sound system to watch a movie, try reading a book with just the right amount of task lighting.



Tackle Yardwork Safely

With warmer temperatures comes an increase in outdoor activity, especially for homeowners getting their yards and gardens back into shape. Think safety first, especially around electricity, when performing spring chores.

- If you use an electric mower this spring, ensure that the blade is sharp and in good condition, the discharge chute is free of dirt and debris, and the insulation on the power cord is in good shape.
- Appliances and electric power tools should not be used outdoors unless they are equipped with a heavy-duty cord and three-pronged plug. If the grounding prong is missing or damaged, have it repaired before you attempt to use it.

- Ensure that all outdoor electrical outlets are weatherproofed with plug covers and equipped with a ground-fault circuit interrupter.
- Before digging, whether it's to plant a tree, make a new garden bed or start a construction project, call 811 to find out whether a buried electric cable or other infrastructure might be on your property. The call is not only required by Texas law—it might even save your life.
- If an electrical fire starts at an outdoor wall outlet, pull out the plug by the cord or turn off power at the breaker and call 911. If the fire is small, you can attempt to put it out with a carbon dioxide-based or general-purpose fire extinguisher. Never put water on an electrical fire.

Stay Cool on Your Deck

Building a deck off the house might expand living space, but that outdoor area is not useful if it's too hot to enjoy. Consider these solutions to stay cool on your patio this summer:

- Install a retractable awning or canopy on your house to shade your deck when the weather requires it.
- Try a free-standing gazebo or umbrella, paying special attention to anchoring it so that it will stay put in windy conditions. Adding mosquito netting could increase the livability of the space during summertime, when bugs are out.
- Install a ceiling fan to permanent pergolas to provide a cooling breeze. Be sure to wire it safely or plug it into a ground-fault circuit interrupter-protected outlet.
- Lay out some light-colored area rugs to reflect the sun's harsh rays and create a soft pad for bare feet.
- Surround the deck with cooling landscaping options, including shade trees and grass.



Corpus Christi Rotary Club 16th Annual Fish Fry Scholarship Fundraiser

Friday, March 26, 2021

COLUMBIAN CIVIC CENTER (FORMER KC HALL)

2137 N. Business Hwy 77, Robstown, TX 78380

Drive-Through Meal: 5:00 – 7:00 pm

1st Prize: \$1000

2nd Prize: \$500

3rd Prize: \$250

Last Chance Pot \$100

Every 20th ticket drawn wins \$50

Providing College Scholarships

For graduating seniors at both Calallen & Robstown High Schools

Gold Ticket Price \$50.00, includes: (2) fish plates & placed in Prize drawing.

Blue Ticket \$10.00 for (1) fish plate

Contact NW Rotary Club at 361-548-8485



IMAGE COURTESY OF UNSPLASH.COM

Power Outage FAQs

Everyone wonders about power outages, and Nueces Electric Cooperative has the answers to your most frequently asked questions.

Does NEC automatically know when my power goes out?

Advanced meters can send outage information to the cooperative. However, we ask that you call the co-op when you have a power outage; do not assume it has already been reported.

What can I do to help get my power back on quickly?

First check your fuses or circuit breakers, making sure they have not blown or tripped. Next call NEC and have your account number ready. Let us know if you saw or heard anything, such as sparks, loud noises, and trees or limbs on the power lines. This will help our field crews find the problem quickly to get your power restored.

How do you decide whose power to restore first?

The outage restoration process begins at the substation where power feeds into our system. Once that's in good shape, crews work on lines serving the greatest number of members until electricity is restored to all main lines. Then crews begin repairing lines to individual members.

Why would a crew pass by my house without restoring power?

Our No. 1 goal is restoring power to as many members as quickly and safely as possible. If you see a service crew pass by without stopping, it could be because crews are working to restore main lines, responding to an emergency, or going past your location to access lines and substations serving your area.

Why does my neighbor have power, but I don't?

Outages depend upon the cause and location of the problem. If your neighbor has electricity, but you don't, it's likely that you're on separate lines. Also remember to make sure your power is not out because of a tripped breaker at your home.

What about members with special medical needs?

We maintain a critical care list to identify members who have special medical emergency needs requiring electricity. In case of extended outages, members who require electricity should be prepared with an emergency backup plan, such as moving to an alternative location or installing a battery backup. Please notify us if you have a critical need for electricity.

Why can't you tell me how long it will take to restore my electricity?

During the power restoration process, crews encounter many factors that affect the time it takes to find problems and make the necessary repairs.

Is a generator safe to use when I lose power?

A generator can be a wonderful tool during an outage, but it can also be extremely dangerous if used improperly. Without a transfer switch, a generator is a fire hazard if it's online when electricity is restored. Improper connection of a generator to your home's electrical circuits also endangers service crews working to restore power. If used without ventilation, generators can cause deadly carbon monoxide poisoning. Never use a generator indoors.

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.



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

Call us at:
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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
Temporarily closed

Orange Grove Service Center:
5302 W. FM 624
Temporarily closed

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

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Hill Country Empire

Charles Schreiner's legacy includes the YO Ranch and a university that bears his name

BY MARTHA DEERING • ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID DANZ

THE ROUGH TERRAIN of the Hill Country that drew ambitious ranchers in the 19th century now lures vacationers seeking spring-fed rivers and limestone bluffs. That scenic beauty belies the challenges faced by early stockmen who were new to Texas.

One of the ambitious early settlers was Charles Armand Schreiner, who established a store in 1869 and methodically built a sprawling operation that covered half a million acres with the fabled YO Ranch. His name also would define banking and mercantile businesses as well as the Kerrville-based university he helped found in 1923.

Today, the legendary YO lives on with the help of creative marketing, and throughout the Hill Country, stories of the Schreiner family and its influence abound.

Schreiner was born at Reichenstein Castle in Alsace-Lorraine, a picturesque region then part of Germany and now France. In 1852, Schreiner's father, Gustave Schreiner, emigrated with his wife and five children halfway around the world, to Indianola. Once on Texas soil, they walked across the prairie to San Antonio in the sweltering September heat.

In a tragic twist, Gustave died from a rattlesnake bite 18 days after the family arrived in San Antonio. Sixteen-year-old Charles enlisted in the Texas Rangers. "It was the only way I could earn a man's wages," he explained decades later. After 2½ years as a Ranger, Schreiner took up ranching south of Kerrville. After his mother's death in 1857, he built a cabin along Turtle Creek and opened a store, supplementing his income by providing wool and beef for the government.

Schreiner married in 1861 and shortly thereafter enlisted in the 3rd Texas Infantry to fight in the Civil War. He returned to Texas four years later, after the surrender at Appomattox, with five gold dollars in his pocket. To save his funds, he walked home from San Antonio rather than ride a stagecoach.

He found his ranch and herd in miserable shape and, after working to bring the operation back to profitability, decided a store would be more lucrative. Schreiner moved his family to Kerrville and opened another store with a partner on Christmas Eve 1869. Total sales the first day were \$2.50 in cash and a bit more on credit. After 10 years in business, Schreiner bought his partner's interest, and the

Schreiner Mercantile Company grew into one of the largest general stores in the Southwest.

Most ranching operations in Texas had, like Schreiner's, suffered during the war. Millions of longhorn cattle roamed freely and by local standards were nearly worthless. Not so at the Kansas railhead markets. Schreiner joined other Texas cattlemen in discovering they could earn cash by gathering cattle and driving them north. The Western Trail plowed right through Kerrville, and Schreiner's store raked in payments in Spanish gold doubloons worth \$16 each. Schreiner used an ax to cut coins into pieces so he could make change.

Soon cowboys began to hand their cash over to Schreiner for safekeeping. Each night he hid his customers' money along with his own in a box under the floor and moved a barrel of salt over the stash. Occasionally, thieves stole merchandise from the store, but none discovered the cache under the floor. The operation grew with the region, and Schreiner chartered a bank and appointed his son as cashier, a job L.A. Schreiner held until he was nearly 100 years old and the private bank had become a chartered national bank.

Elected captain of a home guard unit in Kerrville, Schreiner also served as a county and district clerk. He increased his holdings by acquiring land (paying from a penny to 50 cents an acre) and stocking it with cattle. Later he diversified into sheep and goats, and in 1880 he purchased the YO Ranch, most of which remained in his family for more than a century.

Kerrville Mayor Bill Blackburn acknowledges the accomplishments of Schreiner and his family. "There was little farmland in Kerr County," he says, "and that left ranching, which was not easy because the soil was not deep and [was] rocky."

Schreiner built great wealth from his enterprising, Blackburn says, but especially from wool and mohair production. Other Texas ranches enjoyed long-lasting success, but Schreiner's stands out for overcoming the merciless Hill Country landscape. ■



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Wounded— Then Rejected

The first casualty of the Texas Revolution, a free Black man, had to fight for his residency in the new republic

BY MICHAEL HURD

SAMUEL MCCULLOCH JR. was biracial but considered a free Black man when, as a soldier with the Texian army, he was wounded during the Battle of Goliad on October 9, 1835, and considered the first casualty of the Texas Revolution. A musket ball shattered his right shoulder, and despite his injury and service, the postwar Texas government ordered him and all other free Blacks to leave.

Then, in a series of conflicting legislative moves, things got confusing. Could he stay, or did he have to go?

McCulloch was born in 1810 in South Carolina. His father was white, and his mother was Black, but no other records

of her status exist. McCulloch Sr. moved his son and three daughters, all considered free, to Texas, where they settled near the Gulf Coast in what is now Jackson County in May 1835.

The Battle of Goliad was the second skirmish of the revolution, coming one week after the brief skirmish known as the Battle of Gonzales and just four days after McCulloch joined the Texian army as a private with the 50-man Matagorda Volunteer Company. When the force attacked a Mexican army camp, McCulloch was first to enter the fort and the lone soldier wounded. The injury left his shoulder permanently disabled.

After the war McCulloch's residence status quickly began to twist and turn. Initially, the republic's constitution, adopted in September 1836, prohibited citizenship for "Africans and the descendants of Africans and Indians" and required all free Blacks to apply to the Congress for permanent residence. McCulloch made the required application for himself and his sisters in 1837, recounting his military service and stating that he had been "deprived of the privileges of citizenship by reason of an unfortunate admixture of African blood."

On June 5, 1837, the republic passed a law that permitted free Blacks to keep their residency if they had been living in Texas before the Republic's Declaration of Independence on March 2, 1836.

With his petition still pending, McCulloch saw his residency status further imperiled on February 5, 1840. That's when an act was passed to prohibit the immigration of free Blacks and demand that all free Black residents vacate the republic within two years or be sold into slavery.

McCulloch filed a successful second petition, likely because of the Ashworth Act, passed December 12, 1840. This legislation provided that the Ashworth families, Black relatives in Jefferson County, could remain in Texas after influential whites intervened.

As a disabled veteran, McCulloch was eligible for a land grant and was awarded one league (4,428 acres) of land, two-thirds of which he chose to ranch and farm near Von Ormy.

Despite his land and his disability, McCulloch soldiered again, fighting in the battle of Plum Creek in 1840 against Comanches and serving as a spy during the Mexican invasion of San Antonio in 1842. He died in Von Ormy on November 2, 1893. ■

Tacos

Some of the most creative and complex flavors ever to meet a tortilla

BY MEGAN MYERS, FOOD EDITOR

This month, readers treat us to a variety of taco recipes, so naturally we crave salsa. We turn to Austin food advocate and community coordinator Héctor González, who has been sharing his recipes since moving from Mexico. "There are taquerías there that established their fame based on their salsas," González says. But, he says, you don't have to limit the versatile ingredient's use to a condiment—it is also the perfect base for cocktails. This salsa can easily be adapted to your tastes. Increase or decrease the jalapeño pepper or try a habanero if you want an extra kick.

Roasted Red Salsa

6 plum tomatoes
1 medium white onion, halved
3–5 cloves garlic
1–2 hot peppers, such as jalapeños, serranos or habaneros
Fresh cilantro (optional)
Salt, to taste

COOK'S TIP You can turn this salsa into a michelada. Press $\frac{1}{4}$ cup salsa through a fine mesh strainer into a pint glass. Add 1 tablespoon lime juice and 1 teaspoon salt, or more to taste, then slowly pour in 12 ounces of Mexican lager. Cheers!

1. Roast the tomatoes, onion, garlic and peppers on the stovetop or under a broiler. Turn vegetables as needed, blackening all over. Keep an eye on the garlic and peppers, as they will roast faster than the tomatoes.
2. Add roasted vegetables, and cilantro if you like, to a blender or food processor and blend until smooth. A couple of pinches of salt will bring the salsa's brightness to the fore. Taste and adjust seasoning to your liking. You can serve this salsa warm, or chill until ready to serve.

MAKES ABOUT 3 CUPS

TCP WEB EXTRA Follow along with Megan Myers and her adventures in the kitchen at stetted.com, where she features a recipe for Butternut Squash Tacos With Black Beans.





Fajita Tacos With Chimichurri Sauce

KITTIELE POTTS
BOWIE-CASS EC

For her fajita tacos, Potts uses a zippy chimichurri sauce that pairs beautifully with sweet caramelized onions.

FILLING

- 32-ounce sirloin steak**
- ¼ cup red wine vinegar**
- ¼ cup olive oil**
- ¼ cup Worcestershire sauce**
- 1 tablespoon salt**
- 1 tablespoon pepper**
- 1 teaspoon cumin**
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder**
- ½ teaspoon onion powder**
- ½ teaspoon paprika**

CHIMICHURRI SAUCE

- 1 cup parsley**
- 1 cup cilantro**
- ½ cup olive oil**
- ½ red onion**
- 20 green pitted olives**
- 4 cloves garlic**
- 3 tablespoons red wine vinegar**
- 1 tablespoon capers**
- 1 teaspoon oregano**
- ¼ teaspoon red pepper flakes**
- ¼ teaspoon cumin**

CARAMELIZED ONIONS

- 4 onions**
- ¼ cup (½ stick) butter, melted**
- ⅓ cup olive oil**
- 1 tablespoon sugar**
- ¼ teaspoon salt**
- ⅛ teaspoon pepper**

TO SERVE

Tortillas

COOK'S TIP The sauce is best made in advance to allow flavors to meld.

CONTINUED >

\$500 WINNER

Grilled Garden Harvest Tacos

CHERYL SCHULMAN
FAYETTE EC



These vegetarian tacos pack a surprising amount of flavor into each bite, thanks to the crisp slaw and cool avocado crème. If you can't find ancho chile powder, substitute regular chili powder and a pinch of ground cayenne.

MAKES 6 TACOS

FILLING

- 3 large carrots**
- 2 medium zucchini**
- 1 large sweet potato**
- 2 tablespoons olive oil**
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin**
- 1 teaspoon ground ancho chile powder, or to taste**
- ½ teaspoon salt**
- 2 ears corn, shucked**

"BRING THE HEAT" SLAW

- 3 cups shredded green cabbage**
- ⅓ cup chopped cilantro**
- 1 small jalapeño pepper, chopped**
- ⅓ cup diced jicama**
- ½ cup chopped red bell pepper**
- ½ cup apple cider vinegar**
- 1 teaspoon salt**
- ½ teaspoon pepper**
- ½ teaspoon sugar**



AVOCADO CRÈME

- 1 large avocado**
- ½ cup Mexican crema**
- 2 teaspoons lime juice**

TO SERVE

- 12 corn tortillas**
- Crumbled cotija cheese**
- Pico de gallo**
- Lime wedges**

- 1. FILLING** Prepare grill to cook over medium-high heat.
- 2.** Peel carrots and cut in half lengthwise. Slice zucchini into strips ¼ inch thick. Peel sweet potato and dice into ¼-inch cubes. Toss all in olive oil, cumin, ancho chile powder and salt. Set aside.
- 3. SLAW** Mix cabbage, cilantro, jalapeño, jicama, bell pepper, vinegar, salt, pepper and sugar. Set aside.
- 4. CRÈME** Combine avocado, crema and lime juice in a blender and blend on low until smooth. Set aside.
- 5.** Place a sheet of foil on half of grill grates. Place carrots flat side down on foil along with sweet potato cubes. Place zucchini strips and corn directly on grill. Turn vegetables to char on all sides. Remove vegetables once they're well charred and tender all the way through, about 6 minutes total for the zucchini and 10 minutes for the carrots, corn and sweet potato. Let cool slightly, then slice zucchini and carrots into quarters and cut corn kernels off the cob.
- 6.** To assemble tacos, grill or warm the tortillas. Layer two tortillas, then top with grilled vegetables followed by slaw and avocado crème. Garnish with pico de gallo, cotija or lime juice.

TCP \$500 Recipe Contest

KIDS COOKING DUE MAR 10

Have your kids turned into sous-chefs? Share their kitchen creations with our readers. Enter at TexasCoopPower.com/Contests by March 10.



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Deadline: March 10

Portraits

Deadline: April 10

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RECIPES CONTINUED

1. FILLING Place steak in a shallow baking dish. Combine vinegar, olive oil and Worcestershire sauce and pour over steak. Cover and refrigerate; let marinate at least 4 hours.

2. SAUCE Combine ingredients in a blender or food processor and pulse until ingredients are completely chopped but not liquefied. The sauce should be somewhat thick and chunky.

3. ONIONS Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Peel off the outer paper layer of the onions, leaving the ends on. Halve onions lengthwise from stem to root. Place the onions in a casserole dish cut-sides up. Combine melted butter, olive oil, sugar, salt and pepper. Drizzle onions generously with the mixture. Cover loosely with foil and bake 30 minutes. Flip onions over and bake an additional 25 minutes, or until onions are tender and caramelized.

4. When ready to cook steak, prepare grill for direct heat cooking. Combine salt, pepper, cumin, garlic powder, onion powder and paprika, and season steak on all sides. Grill to desired doneness, about 10 minutes per side for a medium sirloin. Let steak rest 5 minutes.

5. Slice steak thinly and layer on tortillas with caramelized onions and chimichurri sauce.

SERVES 8



Instant Pot Carnitas Tacos

MELALEE WINKLER
COSERV

These carnitas tacos are made in an Instant Pot for all of the flavor in half the time. Instead of frying, Winkler finishes the carnitas under the broiler to get the crispy edges carnitas are known for. If you have leftovers, save some of the cooking liquid for reheating.

6-7 pounds boneless pork butt shoulder

1 tablespoon salt

1 tablespoon dried Mexican oregano, crumbled

1 tablespoon smoked paprika

1 tablespoon cumin

1 teaspoon chipotle powder

½ teaspoon garlic powder

2 tablespoons olive oil

1 cup orange juice

¼ cup chicken stock

1 yellow onion, quartered

TO SERVE

Flour tortillas

Diced red onion

Sliced radishes

Chopped cilantro

Crumbled queso fresco

Lime wedges

COOK'S TIP If you don't have an Instant Pot, you can also cook this in a heavy, covered pot in the oven at 325 degrees for 3½ hours.

1. Cut the pork butt into six or seven chunks. Mix together the salt, oregano, paprika, cumin, and chipotle and garlic powders. Rub the pork with the spice mixture on all sides.

2. Set the Instant Pot to sauté setting high. Heat the oil in the pot and, working in batches, brown the pork on all sides. Remove the pork and deglaze the Instant Pot with the orange juice and chicken stock, scraping up the browned bits.

3. Place the quartered onion in the pot and turn off the Instant Pot. Place all of the pork on top of the onion. Put the lid on, making sure the valve is set to seal, and set the Instant Pot to pressure cook, high, 1 hour.

4. When the time is up, allow natural release for 15 minutes, then manual release. Remove pork, reserving some of the cooking liquid. Discard the onion.

5. Pull pork with two forks and spread on a baking sheet. Drizzle with a small amount of the cooking liquid and place under the broiler until the pork is slightly browned and crispy on the edges, 3-5 minutes. Serve with grilled flour tortillas, red onion, radish, cilantro, queso fresco and lime wedges.

SERVES 12

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COURTESY CHET GARNER

Where Artistry Congregates

Czech and German painted churches in Central Texas are sparkling shrines

BY CHET GARNER

A **TOUR OF TEXAS** back roads takes you past prosaic scenes such as pastures full of grazing cows, profiles of spinning windmills and rural churches quietly awaiting their Sunday congregations. For most of these outlying houses of worship, a simple exterior foreshadows a modest sanctuary. That expectation changes in Fayette and Lee counties, where, concealed within unassuming facades, you'll find Old World decorative glory inside the region's painted churches.

I started my own churchgoing road trip with an apricot kolach because that's what you do when visiting Texas Czech country. I was on a mission to visit the area's five painted churches that are hidden in plain sight within the Czech and German communities that dot the map. My first stop was Dubina.

I pulled into a dirt parking lot and shrugged at what appeared to be an ordinary white building known as Sts. Cyril and Methodius Church. As soon as I stepped inside, I was transported to a world of sacred traditions and intricate religious art. From floor to ceiling, the room dazzled in bright colors and inlaid metals adorning the altars and statues of saints. It was clear that the Czech immigrants who built this church in the late 1800s took great pride in their work and sought to recreate the traditions and artistry of their European homeland here in Texas.

I spent the entire day driving, relying on my GPS so I didn't miss a turn down an obscure road in Fayette or Lee counties. From St. Paul Lutheran in Serbin to St. John the Baptist Catholic Church in Ammannsville, each sanctuary had its own feel and history. In the ornately painted St. Mary Catholic Church in High Hill, known as the "Queen of the Painted Churches," the wooden columns looked just like marble. I felt transported to Europe without leaving Texas. ■

ABOVE Chet inside St. John the Baptist Catholic Church in Ammannsville.

TCP WEB EXTRA See Chet's video from the painted churches in Fayette County 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.

MARCH

01 **College Station [1-11] Territory: The Exhibition in a Box**, (979) 458-0539, arch.tamu.edu/inside/services/wright-gallery

06 **Bulverde [6, 13, 20, 27] Saturday Night Rodeo**, (830) 980-2226, tejasrodeo.com

09 **Houston Viano String Quartet**, (713) 348-5400, chambermusichouston.org

11 **Tyler [11-14] Texas Rose Spring Kickoff II Hunter/Jumper Horse Show**, (903) 882-8696, texasrosehorsepark.com

12 **Shiner [12-13] Pink Chandelier Market Barn Sale**, (361) 798-0573, facebook.com/pinkchandeliermarket

McKinney [12-14] Third Monday Trade Days, (972) 562-5466, tmtd.com

13 **Huntsville [13-14] Rusty Chippy Vintage Hippy & Garden Show**, (936) 661-2545, huntsvilleantiqueshow.com

14 **Dallas [14-June 20] Building on the Boulevard: Celebrating 20 Years of the Meadows's New Home**, (214) 768-2516, meadowsmuseumdallas.org

Dallas [14-June 20] Fossils to Film: The Best of SMU's Collections, (214) 768-2516, meadowsmuseumdallas.org

15

Fredericksburg [15-20]
Spring Break at the Pioneer Museum, (830) 990-8441, pioneermuseum.net

16

Austin [16-20] South by Southwest Online, (512) 467-7979, sxsw.com

18

Brenham [18-21, 25-28]
The Absolute Brightness of Leonard Pelkey, (979) 830-8358, unitybrenham.org

19

Abilene [19-20] Outlaws and Legends Music Fest, (325) 660-8458, outlawsandlegends.com

Wichita Falls [19-20]
Cowboy True, (940) 767-2787, artscouncilwf.org/cowboy-true

Tyler [19-21] United States Dog Agility Association Agility Trials, (903) 882-8696, texasrosehorsepark.com

Palestine [19-April 4]
Texas Dogwood Trails Celebration, (903) 723-3014, www.texasdogwoodtrails.com

20

Corpus Christi Lecture: Kitchen Herbs, (361) 852-2100, stxbot.org

Irving Las Colinas Symphony Orchestra: Jonathan Jones, (972) 252-4800, lascolinassymphony.org

Luckenbach Mud Dauber Fest, (830) 997-3224, luckenbachtexas.com

Mesquite Eggcitement With the Bunny, (972) 216-6273, cityofmesquite.com/pard

MORE EVENTS >

TCP Submit Your Event

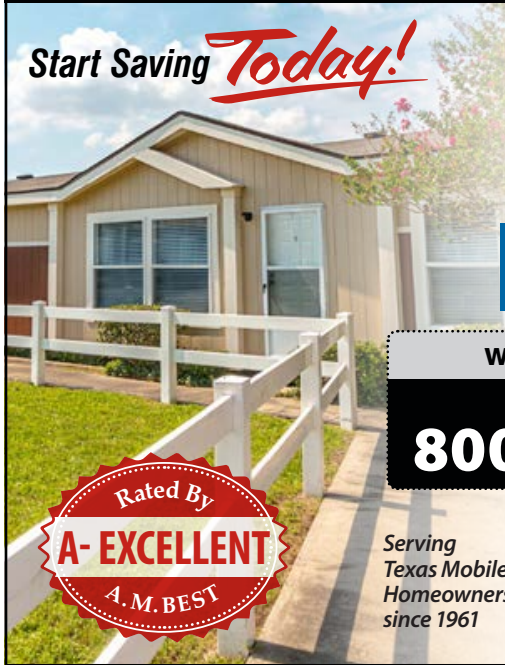
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Hit the Road

Event Calendar

Fairs, festivals, food and family fun! Pick your region. Pick your month. Pick your event.

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Pick of the Month

Classic Car Stampede

Bellville, March 13
 (979) 865-3187
austincountycruisers.com

Austin County Cruisers is a small group of die-hard car enthusiasts who share a passion for the mixture of mechanics and art that creates a vehicle. Cars, trucks and motorcycles from 1976 and earlier will be on display.

27

Abilene Triple Concerto: Beethoven at 250, (325) 677-6170, abilenephilharmonic.org

Burnet Hill Country Lawn & Garden Show, (512) 756-9396, burnetcountyhighlandlakesmastergardener.org

Burton Texas Ranger Day, (979) 803-0393, burtontexas.org

Sabinal [27-28] Wild Hog Festival and Craft Fair, (830) 486-8549, sabinalwildhogfestival.com

San Antonio [27-May 9] Night of Artists, (210) 299-4499, briscoemuseum.org/noa

MARCH EVENTS CONTINUED

Palestine Dogwood Festival, (903) 729-6066, palestinechamber.org/dogwoodfestival

Belton [20-21] A Sami Show, (512) 441-7133, samishow.com

New Braunfels [20-21] Old Gruene Market Days, (830) 629-5077, gruenemarketdays.com

21

Kerrville Celtic Angels Ireland, (830) 896-9393, caillouxtheater.com

Belton [21, 28, April 11, 18, 25] Healthy Kids Running Series, (254) 340-4577, healthykidsrunningseries.org

26

West [26-27] West, Central Texas Ceramic Expo & Handcrafted Items, (254) 716-5227, westceramicshow.com

Burton [26-April 3] La Bahia Antique Show and Sale, (979) 289-2684, labahiaantiques.com

APRIL

01

Levelland [1-3] American Business Club Pro Rodeo, (806) 777-1510, abcrodeo.com

Karnack [1-24] Earth Day Flotilla, (903) 736-3063, tinyurl.com/flotilla2021

Ennis [1-30] Bluebonnet Trails, (972) 878-4748, bluebonnettrail.org

02

Jefferson [2-4] City-Wide Rummage Sale, (903) 665-2672, jefferson-texas.com

03

Llano Fiddle Fest, (325) 247-5354, facebook.com/llanofiddlefest

New Braunfels Jamestown Revival, (830) 964-3800, whitewaterrocks.com

Palestine Easter Egg Express on the Texas State Railroad, (855) 632-7729, texasstaterailroad.net

Diners

Diners sprinkled across the state offer cooking that tastes like home no matter where you travel. Here's what our members served up, and we're coming back for seconds!

GRACE FULTZ



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP

CHRIS MILLER
BLUEBONNET EC

A diner Miller stumbled upon during a road trip on Route 66.

REAGAN MAZY
SAM HOUSTON EC

Sunset at Ranch Hand Cafe in Cleveland.

SHELLY BORGFELD
FITZPATRICK
PEDERNALES EC

"We spent our anniversary in the charming town of Blanco and had a delightful experience at the Chess Club."

SANDRA DRAKE
BLUEBONNET EC

Drake's grandson at Mama's Daughters' Diner.



Upcoming Contests

- DUE MAR 10 **Night Life**
- DUE APR 10 **Portraits**
- DUE MAY 10 **Rust & Decay**

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.



Few and Far

Young musicians find out just how much luck and money Far West Texas requires

BY ELI WINTER
PHOTO BY WYATT MCSPADDEN

CAMERON KNOWLER AND I rang in Christmas next to a trailer in the Christmas Mountains. It was 2018, and we had just done a show at Terlingua's Starlight Theatre. For breakfast we'd eaten cowboy omelets with Catfish, a legendary river guide who punctuated slow bites with a groan—"Oh, merciful days!"

Later that night, toward the end of an 11-hour drive to Austin, we sat in an empty Kerrville IHOP for 45 minutes without being served and wolfed down fast food in a parking lot late at night.

That's how touring goes sometimes: No matter the crowd size, guarantee or delusions of grandeur, whether you play bars, basements or arenas, you spend a lot of time driving. Especially in far West Texas.

We were just 21 and 22 but already seasoned touring musicians. My music re-

volves around instrumentals for six-string, 12-string and Weissenborn acoustic guitars. Cameron's guitar and banjo playing draws influence from old-time and bluegrass musicians of the rural South.

This tour marked the first time we had performed together regularly, reinterpreting traditional folk songs and devising our own, and our Christmas Eve concert marked a halfway point, for which we'd traveled from Houston to the desert and back—a route we had looked forward to.

Growing up in Houston, I thought of Far West Texas as a region of stark beauty and mystery. I listened to *StarDate* on the radio and gave a presentation on Fort Davis in fourth grade. It seemed impossibly far.

We were surprised to have made it. On the way out of Lubbock, we stopped by Buddy Holly's grave. Holly toured similarly, and his plane use began from a desire to avoid freezing on a tour bus between shows in the rural Midwest. Our concerts, perhaps like his, were small—a nonprofit record store in Dallas, a backyard barn in Austin and a hotel bar in Marfa—but they didn't need to be big. Cameron thought of it like Hollywood, less charmed by the \$10 cacao nibs we attempted to snack on during long drives or the person who asked him before a gig if we were together, then asked, "Are you any good?"

Each day we made enough money for the next, aware of the luck that permeated our travels: playing to a packed house in a repopulated ghost town the night before Christmas, the night after playing for an attentive handful on the outskirts of Austin.

At the homecoming show in Houston, we cracked jokes about our travels, and I thought back to Catfish, as I often do. These days had been merciful indeed. ■

TEXAS MINT

We are excited to announce the release of the 2021 Texas Silver Round – Revolution Series. This is the second release of a four-year series commemorating the battles of the Texas Revolution. Each Texas Silver Round is one troy ounce .9999 fine silver.

The obverse of the high-quality mint strike features Texas' iconic lone star in the foreground. The smooth engraving of the star is framed by a textured topographical outline of the state of Texas. "TEXAS" arches proudly over the top of the round's obverse in large capital letters, with "Precious Metals" presented inversely along the opposite side. The round's mintage year is engraved in the bottom left of the round, just southwest of what would be the Rio Grande bordering Texas and Mexico.

The reverse of the 2021 release displays a scene from the famous Battle of the Alamo. It depicts two Texian soldiers including the American icon, Davy Crockett, attempting to fend off Mexican soldiers attempting to breach the walls of the Alamo.



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second in the series ● ● ● ●

The events of this famous battle took place on the days of February 23rd - March 6th, 1836. At the end of a 13-day siege, President General Antonio López de Santa Anna and his Mexican troops reclaimed the Alamo Mission, killing the Texian and immigrant occupiers.



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