

A SOUTH TEXAS  
RANCH EVOLVES

RECIPES  
FOR GIFTING

PECAN COUNTRY'S  
NUTCRACKER COLLECTION

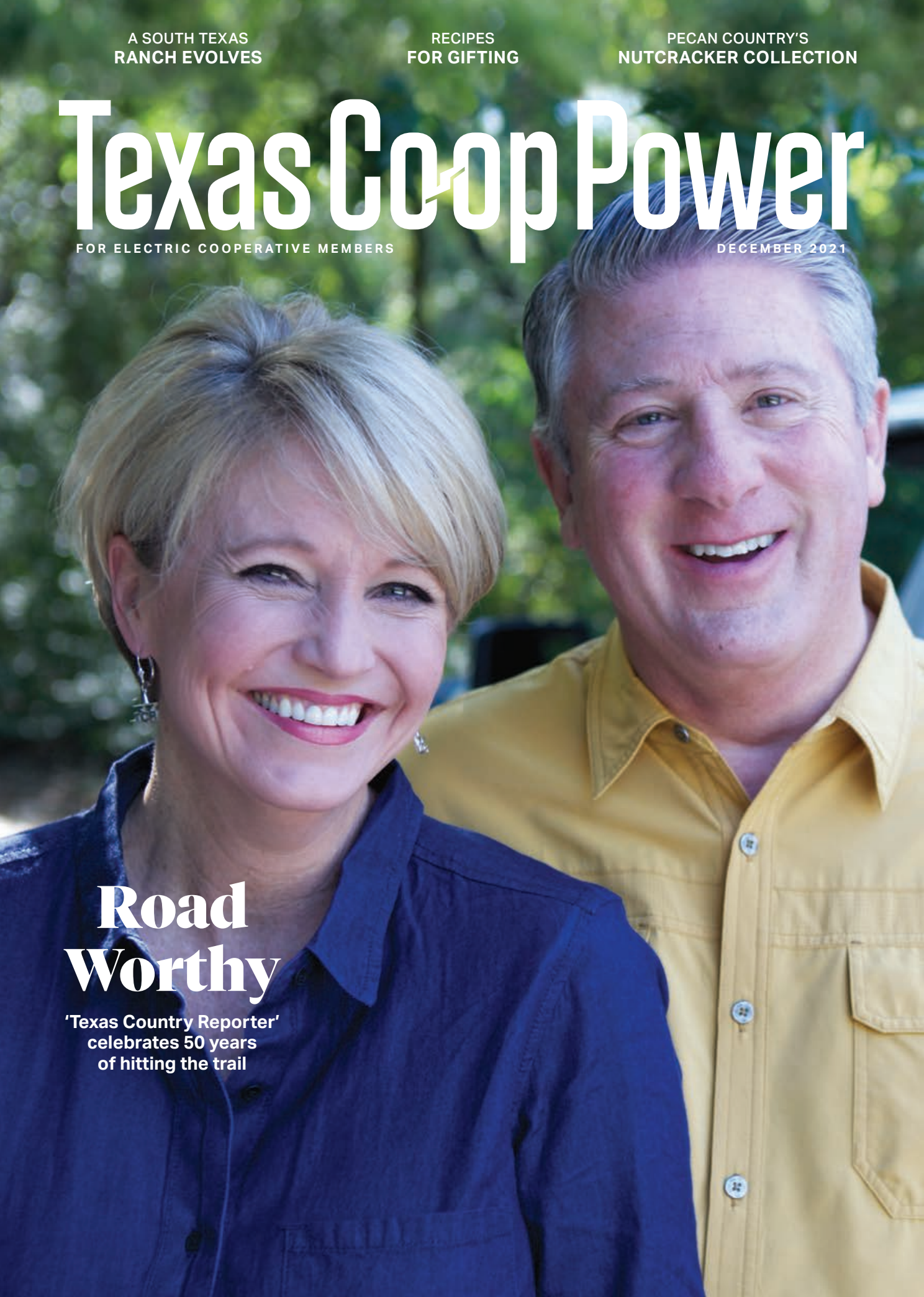
# Texas Coop Power

FOR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE MEMBERS

DECEMBER 2021

## Road Worthy

'Texas Country Reporter'  
celebrates 50 years  
of hitting the trail





# LIVE LIFE PAIN FREE



PATENTED VERSOSHOCK® SOLE  
SHOCK ABSORPTION SYSTEM



**Corrective Fit Orthotic**  
\$50 Value Free  
podiatrist-grade support  
with every shoe purchase  
Excludes sandals.

## Clinically Shown to Relieve Knee Pain

In a 2017 double-blind study by Olive View UCLA Medical Center.

↓ **85%** LESS  
KNEE PAIN

Enjoy the benefits of exercise  
with GDEFY

- ✓ Ultimate Comfort
- ✓ Renewed Energy
- ✓ Maximum Protection
- ✓ Improved Posture

## gdefy MIGHTY WALK \$135

This product is not intended to treat, cure or prevent any disease.

**Men Sizes 7.5-15 M/W/XW**

- Gray TB9024MGS
- Blue/Black TB9024MLU
- Black TB9024MBL

**Women Sizes 6-11 M/W/XW**

- Gray TB9024FGS
- Salmon/Gray TB9024FGP
- Purple/Black TB9024FLP

**X-WIDE  
WIDTH  
AVAILABLE**

## \$20 OFF YOUR ORDER

**Promo Code MQ8MNR1**

[www.gdefy.com](http://www.gdefy.com)

Expires March 31, 2022

Free Exchanges • Free Returns  
100% Satisfaction Guaranteed

Call 1(800) 429-0039

Gravity Defyer Medical Technology Corp.  
10643 Glenoaks Blvd. Pacoima, CA 91331



VersoShock® U.S Patent #US8,555,526 B2. May be eligible for Medicare reimbursement. \$20 off applies to orders of \$100 or more for a limited time. Cannot be combined with other offers. 9% CA sales tax applies to orders in California. Shoes must be returned within 30 days in like-new condition for full refund or exchange. Credit card authorization required. See website for complete details.

# December 2021



08

## An Evolving Ranch Reality

Fennessey Ranch turns to conservation and education to diversify its mission.

*By Clayton Maxwell  
Photos by Erich Schlegel*

## 12 The Domino Effect

How Bob Phillips has spent 50 years bringing regular folks into Texas homes.

*By Joe Nick Patoski*

04

### Currents

The latest buzz

06

### TCP Talk

Readers respond

18

### Co-op News

Information plus energy and safety tips from your cooperative

29

### Footnotes in Texas History

The Grand Giver  
*By W.F. Strong*

30

### TCP Kitchen

Recipes for Gifting  
*By Megan Myers*

34

### Hit the Road

A Jaw-Dropping Collection  
*By Chet Garner*

37

### Focus on Texas

Photo Contest: Bridges

38

### Observations

Carpe Diem, Mom  
*By Babs Rodriguez*

#### ON THE COVER

Kelli and Bob Phillips of the *Texas Country Reporter*.

*Photo by Dan Stricklin | Phillips Productions*

#### ABOVE

A barred owl on the Fennessey Ranch.

*Photo by Erich Schlegel*

# A Wonderful Flick

**THE HOLIDAY CHESTNUT** *It's a Wonderful Life* debuted 75 years ago, and it was kind of a flop.

Reviews were frosty after the film's premiere, December 20, 1946, at New York's Globe Theatre, and it bombed at the box office.

But in the 1970s, it landed on cable TV and has been pretty much unavoidable during the holiday season ever since.



“Look, Daddy. Teacher says every time a bell rings, an angel gets his wings.”

—ZUZU BAILEY

## TRUE TREKKER

As a little girl, Vanessa Wyche watched Nichelle Nichols portray Lt. Nyota Uhura in *Star Trek*. “I got inspiration by seeing someone on a TV screen that looked like me, that made me think that I could do that,” Wyche said in a July interview with *Texas Standard*.

Wyche, below, director of the Johnson Space Center in Houston since June, is the first Black woman to lead a NASA center. The multi-decade veteran of the space agency prioritizes safety and inclusivity in her leadership.

“Part of [leading a team] may be understanding that diversity of thought and personnel is very important for us to bring everything to bear,” she said.



## TCP Contests and More

ON [TEXASCOOPPOWER.COM](https://www.texascooppower.com)

### \$500 RECIPE CONTEST

Pickles and Jams

### FOCUS ON TEXAS PHOTOS

All Wet

### RECOMMENDED READING

*Underwater Theater*, from December 2011, took readers along with divers off the Texas coast to see a cast of extraordinary coral reef creatures.



## Be Enlightened

If every American replaced one incandescent lightbulb with an LED, we would save about \$600 million in annual energy costs and stop 9 billion pounds of greenhouse gas emissions per year, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. That's enough to power 3 million homes and roughly the amount of gas produced by 800,000 cars in a year.

# A Red-Letter Day +

**CLARA BARTON**, founder of the American Red Cross, was born 200 years ago this month.

The Red Cross, started in 1881, was largely devoted to disaster relief for its first 20 years. Barton participated in her last relief mission in September 1900, when, at the age of 78, she distributed financial assistance and supplies to survivors of the deadly hurricane and tidal wave that struck Galveston.

Barton was born December 25, 1821, in Massachusetts.

## FINISH THIS SENTENCE THE HARDEST JOB IN THE WORLD HAS TO BE ...

TCP Tell us how you would finish that sentence. Email your short responses to [letters@TexasCoopPower.com](mailto:letters@TexasCoopPower.com) or comment on our Facebook post. Include your co-op and town. Here are some of the responses to our October prompt: **I wish I was there when ...**

Stevie Ray Vaughan played at Antone's.

KIM GROSSMAN  
PEDERNALES EC  
JONESTOWN

Neil Armstrong famously landed on the moon.

LEANN HOLT  
GRAYSON-COLLIN EC  
ALLEN

The winning lottery ticket was being passed across the counter.

JULIA BRYANT  
SOUTH PLAINS EC  
SPUR

To see more responses, read *Currents* online.



KYLIE O'NEAL | WOOD COUNTY EC

### Making It Happen

The evening of the big freeze, I drove from my home in Crawford to Marble Falls to visit my disabled brother [Co-ops Shine, October 2021]. My wife was left alone to face the rigors of the freeze, and because of the work of Heart of Texas EC, she had power almost the entire time. I am deeply appreciative of all the work the co-op employees put in to make that happen.

Stan and Jane Jarosz  
Heart of Texas EC  
Crawford



Our San Patricio EC is excellent [Co-ops Shine, October 2021]. Always great service in the field and at the office. They keep customers informed and repair in a timely manner. We never lost power during the freeze.

SUE SPARKMAN  
VIA FACEBOOK



CHANELLE NIBBELINK

### Earliest Inconvenience

“So much respect for all our co-op guys. They go wherever they’re needed, whenever they’re needed, and stay as long as they’re needed.”

PEGGY LAGING  
VIA FACEBOOK

### A Stable Career

We sure need more horse vets [Second to None, September 2021].

Kate Jacobs  
Via Facebook

### Finding Contentment

I am content with my old house, too [Not About To Fixate, October 2021]. I’ve been through the remodels, and all get old and out of style sooner than later. It’s wonderful to be content with what one has. I’m glad to know that there is someone else out there who feels like I do.

M.C. Watts  
Sam Houston EC  
Chester

### Walking Through History

As a kid my brothers and I scoured this same Hill Country looking for arrowheads and other stuff, even chasing a few goats along the way [Raising the Stakes, September 2021].

John Taliaferro has a way of telling a story that makes you feel like you’re walking along with him and getting a history lesson at the same time. He talks Texan.

Dale Yardley  
Cherokee County EC  
Jacksonville

**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.

Texas Co-op Power

#### TEXAS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Chair** Gary Raybon, El Campo • **Vice Chair** Kelly Lankford, San Angelo  
**Secretary-Treasurer** Neil Hesse, Muenster • **Board Members** Greg Henley, Tahoka  
Julie Parsley, Johnson City • Doug Turk, Livingston • Brandon Young, McGregor

**PRESIDENT/CEO** Mike Williams, Austin

#### COMMUNICATIONS & MEMBER SERVICES COMMITTEE

Matt Bentke, Bastrop • Marty Haught, Burleson • Ron Hughes, Sinton  
Gary Miller, Bryan • Zac Perkins, Hooker, Oklahoma • John Ed Shipnough, Bonham  
Rob Walker, Gilmer • Buff Whitten, Eldorado

#### MAGAZINE STAFF

**Vice President, Communications & Member Services** Martin Bevins  
**Editor** Chris Burrows • **Editor-at-Large** Charles J. Lohrmann • **Associate Editor** Tom Widlowski  
**Production Manager** Karen Nejtek • **Creative Manager** Andy Doughty  
**Advertising Manager** Elaine Sproull  
**Print Production Specialist** Grace Fultz • **Communications Specialist** Travis Hill  
**Food Editor** Megan Myers • **Communications Specialist** Jessica Ridge  
**Digital Content Producer** Chris Salazar • **Senior Designer** Jane Sharpe  
**Proofreader** Shannon Oelrich • **Digital Media Intern** Sabrina Macias

**TEXAS CO-OP POWER** Volume 78, Number 6 (USPS 540-560). *Texas Co-op Power* is published monthly by Texas Electric Cooperatives (TEC). Periodical postage paid at Austin, TX, and at additional offices. TEC is the statewide association representing 75 electric cooperatives. *Texas Co-op Power's* website is TexasCoopPower.com. Call (512) 454-0311 or email editor@TexasCoopPower.com.

**SUBSCRIPTIONS** Subscription price is \$4.20 per year for individual members of subscribing cooperatives and is paid from equity accruing to the member. If you are not a member of a subscribing cooperative, you can purchase an annual subscription at the nonmember rate of \$7.50. Individual copies and back issues are available for \$3 each.

**POSTMASTER** Send address changes to *Texas Co-op Power* (USPS 540-560), 1122 Colorado St., 24th Floor, Austin, TX 78701. Please enclose label from this copy of *Texas Co-op Power* showing old address and key numbers.

**ADVERTISING** Advertisers interested in buying display ad space in *Texas Co-op Power* and/or in our 30 sister publications in other states, contact Elaine Sproull at (512) 486-6251. Advertisements in *Texas Co-op Power* are paid solicitations. The publisher neither endorses nor guarantees in any manner any product or company included in this publication. Product satisfaction and delivery responsibility lie solely with the advertiser. © Copyright 2021 Texas Electric Cooperatives Inc. Reproduction of this issue or any portion of it is expressly prohibited without written permission. Willie Wirehand © Copyright 2021 National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.



# 3,000-Year-Old Beauty Secret Revealed

Turquoise — the original fashion icon — comes full circle for an amazing price.

She's been around for thousands of years, but she's never gone out of fashion. We're talking turquoise, one of the world's most ancient gems. Egyptian queens adorned themselves with turquoise jewelry more than 3,000 years ago. And the blue beauty is even more coveted now than she was a millennia ago.

Do you know someone who's even more beautiful now than when you first met? Then the Timeless Turquoise Pendant is for them — a stylish circle formed from seven total carats of natural turquoise and exquisite sterling silver metalwork. And the price? Let's just say we made sure timeless was attainable for less than you'd think.

Time is running out for timeless turquoise. Just because turquoise is timeless, doesn't mean supplies of it will last forever. Turquoise is only found a few places on Earth. Typically unearthed in arid climates like the American Southwest and Egypt's Sinai Peninsula, turquoise requires a delicate balance of minerals and water to achieve its gorgeous range of blues. But even when conditions are optimal for turquoise to form, finding stones of gem-worthy quality is a challenge. There are very few turquoise mines left, and then, less than 5% of turquoise mined worldwide is of jewelry condition, making it rarer to come by than even diamonds.

There are turquoise and sterling silver pendants out there for over \$1,200. And while genuine turquoise can garner a pretty penny, there's no reason to be paying a designer price when we can bring you designer pieces for a remarkable price.

**100% Satisfaction Guaranteed.** Try the Timeless Turquoise Pendant for 30 days. If it fails to delight, just send it back for a refund of the item price.

**Limited Availability.** These are handcrafted artisan pieces, and we only have so many. Call today.

## Jewelry Specifications:

- Natural turquoise in .925 sterling silver settings

## Timeless Turquoise Collection

A. Pendant (7 ctw) ~~\$299†~~ ..... \$79 Save \$220

B. 18" 3-Strand Sterling Silver Cable Chain \$79

Pendant & Chain ~~\$378†~~ ..... \$99 Save \$279

C. Earrings (14 ctw) ~~\$399†~~ ..... \$129 Save \$270

**Pendant, Chain & Earrings \$777      only \$199 Best Value!**

† Special price only for customers using the offer code versus the price on Stauer.com without your offer code.

Call now and mention the offer code to receive your collection.

# 1-800-333-2045

**Offer Code TTC176-01**

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

# Stauer®

14101 Southcross Drive W., Ste 155, Dept. TTC176-01,  
Burnsville, Minnesota 55337 [www.stauer.com](http://www.stauer.com)

7 carats of  
genuine turquoise  
**ONLY \$79**

B.



A.

Pendant  
enlarged  
to show  
luxurious  
color

*"...turquoise is becoming rarer and more valuable because less of it is being discovered... the very best turquoise is more valuable than diamonds."*

— The Jewellery Editor, 2021



C.

Stauer... Afford the Extraordinary.®

BY CLAYTON MAXWELL • PHOTOS BY ERICH SCHLEGEL

# AN EVOLVING RANCH REALITY



## FENNESSEY RANCH TURNS TO CONSERVATION AND EDUCATION TO DIVERSIFY ITS MISSION

**W**ALKING A WOODLAND TRAIL on the Fennessey Ranch, Sally Crofutt, former manager of this 3,250-acre spread on the Texas coast, stops at a tangle of woody branches. “Here’s a grapevine,” she says, holding a twisted branch in her hands. “We pick our grapes July Fourth ’cause that’s about when they ripen. I make jelly. I got in the Refugio County Fair with it, and I won.”

Crofutt managed this South Texas ranch of wetlands and coastal prairies for 26 years and has proved her ability to make this rough land bear fruit. She has transformed the Fennessey into a poster child among coastal ranches in the art of revenue stream diversification—a step many ranches must pursue now that increasingly complex production cost management means cattle operations alone will not do the trick.

“Over the past 30-plus years, input costs associated with cattle production have risen at a faster rate than cattle prices,” says Clay Mathis, director of the King Ranch Institute for Ranch Management at Texas A&M University-Kingsville. “It’s more than just rising commodity prices and is particularly driven by the rise in fixed costs of land ownership. Today many ranches that are profitable have

achieved success by diversifying revenue streams to spread the fixed costs over more income-producing enterprises.”

Crofutt carved out trails with award-winning wildlife photographer Dean Johnstone to build a photography shelter by the Mission River, 7 miles of which run through the ranch. It’s a prime spot that entices photographers to pay for the opportunity to catch a shot of a painted bunting or a hawk soaring over the treetops.

She also leases an observation blind to birders. Located on the Central Flyway, the Fennessey is a birders’ jackpot, with more than 420 species of resident and migratory birds recorded on the ranch. And she brought on beekeepers to coax 160 pounds of honey each year from the endless acres of scrubby huisache trees that greet you as soon as you drive through the ranch gates.

Jim Blackburn, an environmental attorney and professor at Rice University’s Baker Institute for Public Policy, says the Fennessey is an excellent case of a ranch generating alternative sources of income. “The Fennessey’s wildlife tours and catering to birdwatchers and photographers makes them a premier example of how to find cash sources well before others,” he says. “My hat is off to them as trail-blazers.”



ABOVE Sally Crofutt, retired manager of the Fennessey Ranch, oversaw the wetlands and coastal prairies there for 26 years. BELOW A Texas rat snake.



OPPOSITE A bald eagle returns to its nest with a squirrel on the Fennessey Ranch. ABOVE A pair of barred owls.





TOP The McGill Lake wetlands and Mission River on the Fennessey Ranch.  
ABOVE A painted bunting sings during spring migration.

The Fennessey is at the forefront of what may be the most meaningful way that ranches are diversifying: conservation and education. In his book *A Texan Plan for the Texas Coast*, Blackburn contends that one of the best things coastal ranches like the Fennessey can do to sustain the land, and therefore the Gulf, is simply remain intact. Although there are many critics of Texas' vast private land ownership—about 95% of the state's land is privately owned—some environmentalists believe large private landowners often are the best custodians of their land, as long as they can avoid parceling it off.

"One of the biggest threats to the long-term future of the Texas coast (and perhaps Texas generally) is the potential breakup of large landholding," Blackburn writes. "The continued presence of these large tracts devoted to cattle ranching and wildlife is a centerpiece of the charm and ecological abundance and variety of the Texas coast. They provide fabulous wildlife habitat, holding ducks and geese on the ponds and short grass and deer in the woodland."

Mark Steinbach, executive director of Texas Land Conservancy, says unmitigated development changes the landscape in big ways, disturbing ecosystems and negatively impacting the water supply, air quality and light pollution levels.

In 2006 the Fennessey Ranch's owner, Brien O'Connor Dunn, a descendent of one of the oldest ranching families

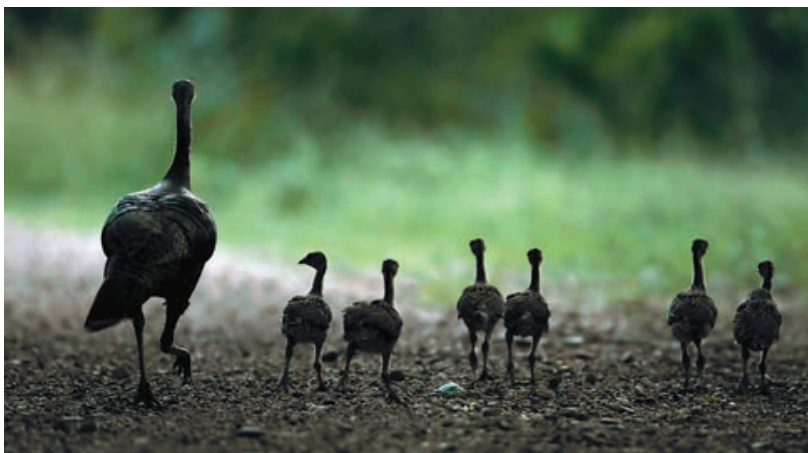
in South Texas, signed an agreement for a conservation easement with the University of Texas Marine Science Institute. Headquartered in Port Aransas, the institute holds the easement in perpetuity and has made the ranch part of the Mission-Aransas National

Estuarine Research Reserve. As Dunn hoped, the ranch's lakes, meadows, prairie, freshwater wetlands and the Mission River are now an expansive classroom for university research and schoolchildren.

Education on the Fennessey hits full throttle during its March Madness program, when more than 100 fifth graders overtake a field edging the ranch's bulrush-filled marshes to tag monarch butterflies migrating to Mexico. Kids jump through hula hoops to mimic the nimble calculations monarchs must perform to avoid smashing into buildings, a reminder of why undeveloped flyways are key to the survival of winged creatures.



LEFT A greater roadrunner.  
BELOW Wild turkeys.



**R**ANCHERS AS conservationists is not a new concept: As far back as 1934, U.S. Rep. Richard Kleberg, “the Cowboy Congressman” from the King Ranch, championed the Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp Act, requiring that a stamp be purchased by hunters of migratory waterfowl to raise funds for wetland conservation. The Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute, an offshoot of the King Ranch, has for more than three decades studied the loss of native species in Texas and is now working with the Texas Department of Transportation to reseed 240,000 acres of Texas roadsides to restore native plants and habitat.

Apart from conservation programs, the ranchers and workers who live on the land and can read its rhythms—those who see what a heavy rain can do or where spoonbills land—are often its best stewards. Crofutt understands the Fennessey with an intimacy earned from decades of interaction. She can throw out an impressive sandhill crane call and then point to the bobbing tail of an eastern phoebe, a sight recognizable only to the practiced eye. She knows what the ranch’s many critters, from its lazy cattle to the one roaming mountain lion, are up to: “Bucks are in rut right now.”

Reflecting on her years on the Fennessey, Crofutt says that finding new ways to make money and keep those acres from being fragmented is her proudest accomplishment. Standing amid the tangle of foliage and trees that frame the Mission River, which feeds into Copano Bay and then out

into the Gulf of Mexico, her words show her pride and hard-won knowledge of the land.

Although Crofutt officially retired as manager of the ranch in 2020, she is still intimately involved with the Fennessey, coordinating efforts with the Marine Science Institute. She trains master naturalists and is resuscitating the ranch’s journals, a key way to keep track of changes on the land.

“I always kept a journal of rainfall, bird and wildlife sightings, what is happening day to day on the ranch,” Crofutt says. “After [Hurricane] Harvey, all of that wound up in the bay. So now it’s all there in Sally Crofutt’s brain, which isn’t all that steady. We are journaling again about what’s happening day to day so that we have a baseline. There are always changes, especially after the big freeze.”

It’s good to know that the Fennessey is in good hands, that its river won’t be surrounded by concrete and condos, and that it will continue to be a source of education and awe.

“I’ve been out here where I’ve seen a thousand hawks just lift off,” says Crofutt. “You see, the hawks have to have large trees to roost in. You want tall trees along the river so your migrating hawks will come in. We have a hawk watch every September that’s just amazing. We put guests on a hawk hayride. I can make a hayride out of anything.” ■

**TCP WEB EXTRA** See a slideshow featuring more wildlife found on the Fennessey Ranch.



**Back in 1972,** Bob Phillips took on an extra assignment as a news reporter for KDFW-TV in Dallas. He became the host of a new program called *4 Country Reporter*, going out into the Texas countryside to find interesting characters who told him their stories.

In 2002, Phillips even interviewed me and photographer Laurence Parent for our book, *Big Bend National Park*. Naturally, he conducted the interview halfway up the park's Lost Mine Trail.

Nearly 50 years and more than 3 million miles after he first hit the road, Phillips is still traveling around the state as host of *Texas Country Reporter*, talking to folks and sharing their stories. He's a juggernaut now, with a production company and a show that airs on 23 affiliates across Texas as well as the nationwide RFD-TV cable channel; a YouTube channel; *A Texas Tribute*, a touring presentation backed by a live symphony; and the TCR Festival in Waxahachie every October. For the past seven years, partner Kelli Phillips has been riding shotgun. Yes, they are married.

I caught up with Bob and Kelli at their Dallas home during a break in the show's 50th season.

# The Domino Effect

**Joe Nick Patoski:** Real important question: How old were you when you started to drive?

**Bob Phillips:** I spent a lot of weekends and a lot of summers up on my Aunt Lena's farm in Grayson County. There was an old pickup out there that I could drive on the farm probably starting when I was about 9 years old. I couldn't go out on the road until I got my driver's license when I was 15.

**JNP:** What was the trigger to get into television?

**BP:** A guy named Eddie Barker who was both news director and the main anchor on the CBS affiliate in Dallas came to talk to my class—to my journalism class, when I was a first-semester freshman in college. This guy came and started telling stories. He was the first person to announce that John Kennedy had been killed in Dallas. He was five minutes ahead of Walter Cronkite. This was the guy that corralled Marina Oswald and did the first interview with her. He was a legend. I was mesmerized. As he was walking out of my class, I stopped him and asked him for his business card. He gave it to me and said, "What are you going to do with this?"

I said, "I'm going to ask you for a job." He gave me the greatest encouragement because he said, "You do just that." I gave him 30 minutes to get back to the office, and then I called him. He had me come in for an interview the next morning, and he hired me.

## How Bob Phillips has spent nearly 50 years bringing regular folks into Texas homes

**JNP:** When did you get into the idea of driving around looking for characters who tell good stories?

**BP:** I rode around with my dad a lot when I was a really little kid, and he always had a fishing pole and a set of dominoes. He said, "I never know when I'm going to see a place where I want to drop a line, and I never know when I'm going to meet three other guys who want to sit down and play some 42."

After I had started working, I'm watching the *CBS Evening News With Walter Cronkite*, and there's a guy on there who's making a living doing what my dad did. It was Charles Kuralt, and I thought, "Oh, my gosh, my dad just did this for fun. That guy gets paid to do it." It looked like all Charles Kuralt did was drive around and talk to people who were playing dominoes and fishing and stuff.

I knew I had to put my own spin on it, so I went back to Eddie Barker and said, "OK, look. You know that Charles Kuralt guy that travels all over America? We can do the very same thing except we'll just travel all over Texas." He let me give it a try as a one-time-only deal. I did a few features on the news, and they kind of liked them. I clearly did not know what I was doing, but I cobbled them together. The audience response was good enough that they kept saying, "All right, do another one." Here we are at 50 years, still doing another one.

Kelli and Bob Phillips at Big Top Candy Shop in Austin.



The Texas Country Reporter Festival in Waxahachie celebrated 25 years of bringing arts and music fans together in 2021.

**JNP:** OK, honestly, the TV reporter going out on the road looking for stories like this was not a new concept. Others had programs like this. You had traction. Why do you think you resonated and the others didn't?

**BP:** I was talking to people who were just like my dad. In the very beginning, somebody was coaching me along and said, "When you're on camera, picture somebody that you love talking to." Well, that was my dad. To this day, when I look into the barrel of the lens, I'm looking at my dad's face. Every time, I thought about doing something else because you don't make any money in television news. I worked forever for two bucks an hour, but you're having a good time. Every now and then I thought, "Well, as I get older, I got to go find a real job." Then I would think, "But I love this so much." It also helps when people walk up to you almost every day of your life and say, "You must have the greatest job in the world." You start believing it when enough people say it to you.

**Kelli Phillips:** I also think it has something to do with the fact that when we go on stories, we don't have a preconceived idea of what this story is going to be. We honestly go in there with no questions in advance. We just sit down and talk with these people, and we develop a relationship. You see that transpire on the air.

**BP:** Yeah, she's right. I've never gone in with a list of questions for people. Frankly, I don't even think much about it ahead of time. We just sit down and have one of those, "Hey, how's it going?" chats and try to take people on a little journey to get them to tell us their life story and to forget there's cameras.

**KP:** And most of the time, they do.

**BP:** Yeah, for some reason, that's something we were pretty successful at. If you've got one of those huge crews like some shows do now, they've got a crew of 40 or 50 people on the set shooting these things. I always think, "How do they get anything done?" We go out with two or three or maybe four people, max, and the camera kind of disappears.

**JNP:** Bob, on that hike up Lost Mine Trail, I remember I'd gotten in hot water with Mike Levy, the publisher at *Texas Monthly*, and that eventually led to my departure from the magazine. But you actually had the most comforting words at the time when you said getting fired from Channel 4 was the best thing that ever happened to you.

**BP:** Well, yeah, it was because that's what propelled us. That made me. I'd done that show for 14 years. They didn't actually fire me; they just canceled my show. But it was like being fired because I wasn't going to stay there if they weren't going to let me do my show. That made me pull my britches up and say, "OK, you've got to do something about this," and that's when we syndicated the show all over the state and when I started producing it myself instead of through a television station. The show had been popular in Dallas-Fort Worth, but then it ...

**KP:** Exploded.

**BP:** Exploded all over the state. That was a good thing. ■

# MUELLER METAL ROOFING

## LASTING PROTECTION FOR YOUR HOME



Mueller metal roofs provide long-lasting beauty, weather resistance and energy efficiency. You can select from a wide range of designer colors to complement your home, backed by limited paint warranties up to 40 years. It all adds up to lasting peace of mind. Get a metal roof you can depend on from a company you can trust – a Mueller metal roof.



Learn more at: [www.muellerinc.com](http://www.muellerinc.com)  
877-2-MUELLER (877-268-3553)

# TEARS FROM A VOLCANO

*Uniquely American stone ignites romance*

On May 18, 1980, the once-slumbering Mount St. Helens erupted in the Pacific Northwest. It was the most impressive display of nature's power in North America's recorded history. But even more impressive is what emerged from the chaos... a spectacular new creation born of ancient minerals named Helenite. Its lush, vivid color and amazing story instantly captured the attention of jewelry connoisseurs worldwide. You can now have four carats of the world's newest stone for an absolutely unbelievable price.

Known as America's emerald, Helenite makes it possible to give her a stone that's brighter and has more fire than any emerald without paying the exorbitant price. In fact, this many carats of an emerald that looks this perfect and glows this green would cost you upwards of \$80,000. Your more beautiful and much more affordable option features a perfect teardrop of Helenite set in gold-covered sterling silver suspended from a chain accented with even more verdant Helenite.

**EXCLUSIVE  
FREE**

**Helenite Earrings**  
-a \$129 value-  
with purchase of  
Helenite Necklace



**Limited Reserves.** As one of the largest gemstone dealers in the world, we buy more carats of Helenite than anyone, which lets us give you a great price. However, this much gorgeous green for this price won't last long. Don't miss out. Helenite is only found in one section of Washington State, so call today!

**Romance guaranteed or your money back.** Experience the scintillating beauty of the *Helenite Teardrop Necklace* for 30 days and if she isn't completely in love with it send it back for a full refund of the item price. You can even keep the stud earrings as our thank you for giving us a try.

Helenite Teardrop Necklace (4 1/4 ctw) ~~\$299~~\* ..... Only \$129 +S&P

Helenite Stud Earrings (1 ctw) ..... \$129 +S&P

**Helenite Set** (5 1/4 ctw) ~~\$428~~\* ..... **Call-in price only \$129** +S&P  
(Set includes necklace and stud earrings)

Call now and mention the offer code to receive FREE earrings.

**1-800-333-2045**

**Offer Code HEN414-01**

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

**Stauer®** 14101 Southcross Drive W., Ste 155, Dept. HEN414-01,  
Burnsville, Minnesota 55337 [www.stauer.com](http://www.stauer.com)



\* Special price only for customers using the offer code versus the price on Stauer.com without your offer code.

• 4 1/4 ctw of American Helenite and the Ultimate Diamond Alternative®, DiamondAura® • Gold-finished .925 sterling silver settings • 16" chain with 2" extender and lobster clasp

Limited to the first  
1600 orders  
from this  
ad only

*4 carats of  
shimmering  
Helenite*

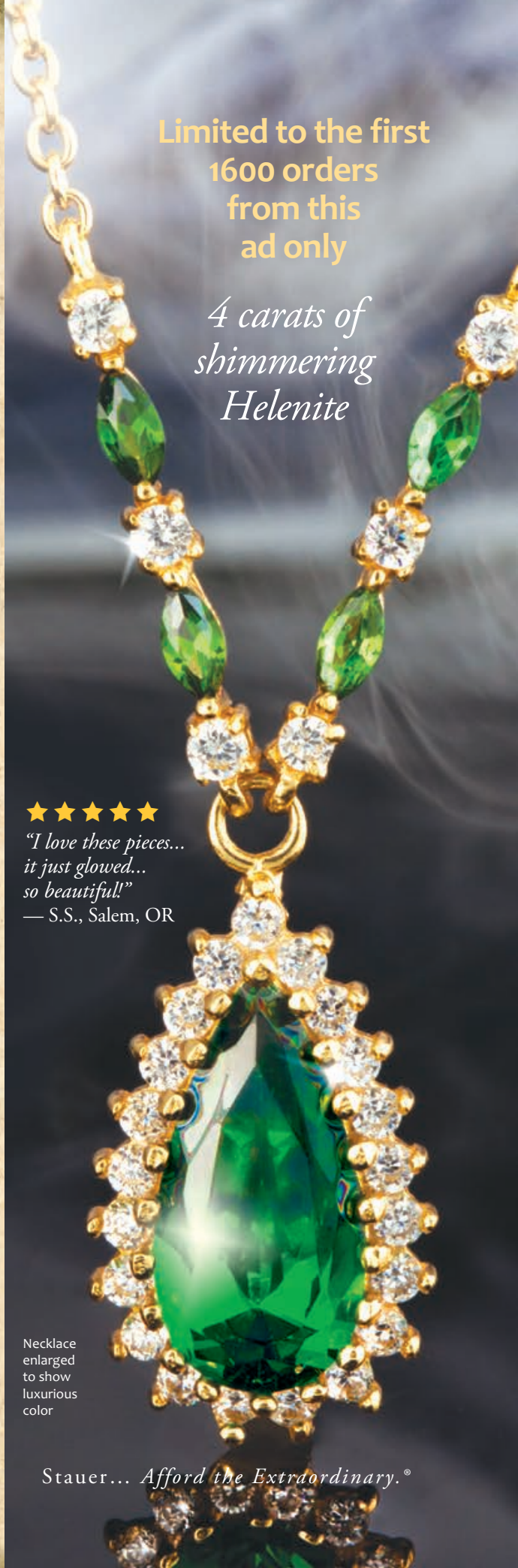
★★★★★

*"I love these pieces...  
it just glowed...  
so beautiful!"*

— S.S., Salem, OR

Necklace  
enlarged  
to show  
luxurious  
color

Stauer... *Afford the Extraordinary.®*



# ADVANCED DIGITAL HEARING AID TECHNOLOGY

## Now Rechargeable!

**BUY 1 GET 1 FREE**  
Reg: \$599.98  
**Only \$299<sup>99</sup>**  
Each When You Buy a Pair – **LIMITED TIME ONLY!**



*"I was amazed! Sounds I hadn't heard in years came back to me!"*

— Don W., Sherman, TX

### How can a rechargeable hearing aid that costs only \$299<sup>99</sup>

be every bit as good as one that sells for \$2,400 or more?

**The answer:** Although tremendous strides have been made in Hearing Aid Technology, those cost reductions have not been passed on to you. Until now...

**The MDHearingAid® VOLT+** uses the same kind of technology incorporated into hearing aids that cost thousands more at a small fraction of the price.

Over 600,000 satisfied MDHearingAid customers agree: High-quality, FDA-registered rechargeable hearing aids don't have to cost a fortune. MDHearingAid is a medical-grade, digital, rechargeable hearing aid offering sophistication and high performance; and works right out of the box with no time-consuming "adjustment" appointments. Now that you know... why pay more?

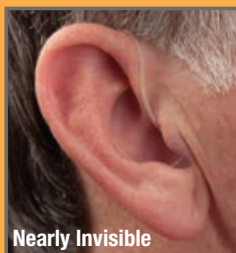
### 45-DAY RISK-FREE TRIAL!

If you are not completely satisfied with your MDHearingAids, return them within 45 days for a **FULL REFUND!**

For the Lowest Price Call

**1-800-674-1595**

[www.MDVolt.com](http://www.MDVolt.com)



Nearly Invisible

**A+BBB**  
rating for  
10+ years

**CHARGE** AT NIGHT **AND GO** ALL DAY

**Never Change a Battery Again!**



Charging Case

30-Hour Battery Life



Water Resistant to 3 Feet

**Order Now & Get  
3 FREE Accessories  
– \$150 Value –**



\*Extra charging case does not include additional hearing aids.

**MDHearingAid®**

DOCTOR DESIGNED | AUDIOLOGIST TESTED | FDA REGISTERED

Use Code **MB71** and get  
**FREE Shipping and Accessories**



**DARRYL  
SCHRIVER**

PRESIDENT/  
CHIEF  
EXECUTIVE  
OFFICER

# The Winter Forecast

**THE END OF ANOTHER YEAR** is quickly approaching. December kicks off the first official month of winter and brings about holiday festivities. In the back of your mind, however, you may be thinking: Are we really ready for another winter in Texas?

As Tri-County Electric Cooperative's President/CEO, many members have asked this question of me. Even though it has been 10 months since Winter Storm Uri, it is still fresh on our minds. While I cannot predict the weather, I can assure you that Tri-County Electric Co-op's distribution system is ready. In fact, our electric distribution system held up very well during Winter Storm Uri. However, due to statewide fuel supply issues, renewable generation not producing, and most importantly, generators not being properly winterized and encountering sustained outages, our members were out of power due to mandatory load shed directives. 10569004

During Winter Storm Uri, the Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT) called for mandatory load shed to help preserve the grid. We do our best to provide a reliable flow of electricity to our members. Rotating outages went against everything we stand for, but we complied with the mandate to protect the integrity of the grid. After the event, we learned that the grid was less than five minutes away from a total blackout. If this were to occur, it would take weeks maybe months—to restore the grid to full functionality.

This failure of the electric grid got the attention of the leadership and members of the Texas Legislature. Since then, the legislature has conducted hearings, passed bills that were signed into law and the Public Utility Commission of Texas (PUCT) is taking a serious look at market design and generator responsibility. We hope the work of our legislators and PUCT commissioners will yield the intended results. Only time will tell.

As for Tri-County Electric Co-op, we will continue to perform appropriate maintenance and invest in the necessary capital additions and improvement projects to harden our system and improve reliability. If another winter event were to hit our service area, our distribution infrastructure investments will stand strong, but keep in mind that our system can only perform properly if the state leadership, and the ERCOT generation and transmission providers, do their jobs.

Now that we have discussed system reliability, let's talk costs. Our wholesale power supplier, Brazos Electric Power Cooperative (Brazos), filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection on March 1, 2021. We have kept you updated on this process that is far from over. However, it appears that Brazos may push for a plan to exit bankruptcy predicated on more debt and costs which would pass millions of dollars of costs directly on to you, the members, as end users. We will continue to fight for your interests while keeping you updated on the progress of the bankruptcy case. 800707558

Recently, natural gas prices have soared to levels unseen in over seven years. This has increased the cost of the wholesale power purchased by Tri-County Electric Co-op for this month and others. We are working with Brazos staff to understand the impact and learn of their solutions to have this additional cost of generating power under control. However, due to increases in the price of natural gas, members should start preparing now for an increase in their bills throughout 2022. We will share details with you once we receive the necessary information from Brazos to develop accurate projections.

The Tri-County Electric Co-op Board of Directors and staff will do everything we can to continue our mission of providing you with safe, reliable and affordable power. The board worked hard throughout the year to deal with many challenges, and I thank them for their dedication to the membership. I would like to formally welcome Michael Sivertsen to the board. He was elected to District 8 during the 2021 election. His background, education and experience will be a great asset to the board. The board of directors will continue to work hard and make decisions in your best interest. We are in this together.

We count our blessings this upcoming holiday season. From the Tri-County Electric Co-op family to yours, Happy Holidays! ■



**MAX  
WADDELL**  
CHAIRMAN  
DISTRICT 9



**JOHN  
KILLOUGH**  
VICE CHAIRMAN  
DISTRICT 6



**MARGARET  
KOPREK**  
SECRETARY/  
TREASURER  
DISTRICT 2

# A Seat at the Board Table

**YOUR TRI-COUNTY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE** Board of Directors works hard to serve you, the members-owners of the cooperative. As a member-owned and member-governed electric provider, it is important to keep you in the know. Over the past few years, our management team and communications team has worked hard to transparently communicate co-op news. The board would like to continue that trend by publishing key topics and considerations quarterly, and monthly when needed, we consider and discuss at our meetings. 8002857802

In addition to normal business, like hearing from staff who report on their departments, we discuss the following topics that affect you:

- ▶ **Brazos Bankruptcy:** Over the past few months, we have been deep in conversation regarding Brazos’s bankruptcy. We instructed President/CEO Darryl Schriver to leave no stone unturned when investigating Brazos’s practices during Winter Storm Uri and as the bankruptcy case unfolds.
- ▶ **Power Costs:** Your board has looked at the cost of natural gas and how it affects the cost of power. Wholesale power costs compose more than 70% of your electric bill, so we closely monitor generation and industry trends. Your rates are directly impacted by power cost and we are constantly looking for ways to keep your rates and costs low.
- ▶ **Rising Fuel Costs:** The price of natural gas continues to trend upward. Currently, prices are at the highest we have seen in over seven years. Natural gas is a key player in our state’s electric generation portfolio, so we track prices closely.
- ▶ **ERCOT Grid:** Attention turned to the state’s electric grid and its regulators after Winter Storm Uri. We have always kept an eye on the grid, but we continue to closely monitor legislative efforts and PUCT actions to identify how new laws will impact us as an electric provider, and you the member as an end consumer.
- ▶ **Member Benefits:** We are looking at ways to better our member engagement, programs and benefits. Next month, members will have a new way to monitor electric use and save money on your electric bill through energy efficiency. Look for the next issue of the *Texas Co-op Power* for more information.
- ▶ **Annual Meeting:** The board is reviewing feedback and surveys from this year’s Annual Meeting and election. Your opinions help us prepare for future meetings and elections. We thank the members who took the time to participate in the democratic process.

We hope you take the time to read your monthly *Texas Co-op Power* magazine to stay up to date on your cooperative. I also hope you enjoy this new addition and find that it brings added transparency to your cooperative. The board, management team and employees strive to keep you informed.

I thank you for the opportunity to serve on the board. On this page you will see the other eight members who sit at the table and make decisions on your behalf. Together, we comprise Tri-County Electric Co-op’s regulatory and governing body. I would like to formally welcome Michael Sivertsen to the board. He came on the board this past October after Annual Meeting. We thank you for entrusting the co-op in our hands and we promise to uphold the membership’s best interest while keeping you at the forefront of every decision. Just like every employee at the co-op, we work for you. ■



**KEVIN  
INGLE**  
DISTRICT 1



**JORDEN  
WOOD**  
DISTRICT 3



**JERRY  
WALDEN**  
DISTRICT 4



**STEVE  
HARRIS**  
DISTRICT 5



**LARRY  
MILLER**  
DISTRICT 7



**MICHAEL  
SIVERTSEN**  
DISTRICT 8



# A Successful Annual Meeting

## Hundreds of members joined the co-op for the second annual virtual membership meeting

BY ANNIE MCGINNIS, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS

**TRI-COUNTY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE** held the 82<sup>nd</sup> Annual Meeting of the Members on Tuesday, October 5. This was the second year to hold the meeting virtually to protect the health and safety of members and employees during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

This year's Annual Meeting commenced with the 2021 election. Members received their official election ballot, Annual Meeting notice, Annual Report and financial reports in the September *Texas Co-op Power* magazine. Survey and Ballot Systems, our third-party election partner, conducted the election and members could cast their vote online or by mail-in ballot. Voting closed at 5 p.m. on September 29. Survey and Ballot Systems tabulated the ballots and every member who cast a ballot by the deadline received a \$25 bill credit.

More than 670 members joined us online and by phone to listen to the Annual Meeting. Members were welcomed to the meeting, heard the invocation and National Anthem. Janet Rehberg, Chief Strategy Officer and Vice President of Engineering, introduced the board of directors before inviting President/Chief Executive Officer Darryl Schriver to help announce the first round of door prizes, a member favorite.

Rehberg called on board chairman and District 3 director, Jorden Wood to call the meeting to order. Wood welcomed members to the meeting and introduced Darryl Schriver as the meeting chairman. Schriver reported on the election and determined the meeting quorum. According to our co-op's bylaws, a minimum of 3 percent of the membership must be in attendance to conduct quorum. 800877144

"Since 97,723 members received a notice, the quorum requirement for the 82<sup>nd</sup> Annual Meeting of the Members is a minimum of 2,931 members," Schriver reported.

Survey and Ballot Systems provided the official voting

report for the meeting. The report stated 4,363 ballots were cast online and 3,503 ballots were submitted by mail for a total of 7,866 ballots cast in the election, or 8 percent of the membership. This was the second year of offer both online and mail-in balloting. More than 55% of members chose to cast their ballot online using Survey and Ballot Systems secure voting website.

Schriver proceeded with the business portion of the meeting by asking the membership to approve the minutes of the 81<sup>st</sup> Annual Meeting of the Members, and to confirm the Committee on Nominations and Qualifications. Both passed with sufficient numbers. Schriver asked for board secretary/treasurer and District 6 director, John Killough, to deliver his treasurer's report. 800902418

Killough reported the co-op's financial stance remains strong. The fiscal year ending March 31, 2021, showed cooperative assets totaled \$701,341,297, revenue exceeded \$261,497,208, and margins were \$7,580,273. Killough said the co-op model is one of the strongest operating models because any margins are allocated back to the members.

"In July 2021, the board of directors voted to retire \$5 million to the members in capital credits," he said. "Members who received electric service in 2002 received a bill credit or a check last month. This is just a reminder that you are not only a member, but an owner of this cooperative."

Schriver then presented the 2021 director election results for director districts 3, 6 and 8. The Committee on Nominations and Qualifications set the ballot as follows: District 3 - Jorden Wood, incumbent; District 6 - John Killough, incumbent; and District 8 - Jarrett Armstrong, incumbent and Michael Sivertsen, nomination candidate.

Survey and Ballot Systems provided the voting results for



the election. Incumbents Jorden Wood and John Killough ran unopposed in their districts and received 100 percent of the votes. Jarrett Armstrong and Michael Sivertsen were on the ballot for District 8. Survey and Ballot Systems certified that Armstrong received 3,570 votes and Sivertsen received 4,003 votes. Sivertsen received 52.9 percent of the votes and was elected to district 8. Schriver congratulated the winners on their three-year terms and concluded the business portion of the meeting.

Schriver and Rehberg announced another round of door prize winners before the co-op update. Schriver called this past year the year of tidal waves. The “waves” were events and challenges like changes to the co-op’s governance structure, exponential growth, added member benefits, the lasting impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as Winter Storm Uri and its aftermath. 800741413

Schriver discussed the first wave, Winter Storm Uri, and the challenges the co-op faced during the long, cold days. Tri-County Electric Co-op’s employees worked around the clock

from February 12 through February 21 to take care of you.

“It was so cold and miserable,” he said. “Keeping fuel in our trucks from freezing, keeping linemen from freezing, and keeping the freezing from wearing us out was all a challenge.”

David Hollingsworth, System Operations Manager, said the co-op started tracking the storm the week before it hit. Several outlets were predicting winter weather. Winter preparations continued through member notification and the operations department stocking up on materials and performing maintenance on vehicles. Linemen were divided into three shifts to ensure crews were rested and ready to work. System operators, communications and staff continuously monitored the ERCOT grid. Hollingsworth said the co-op received the first load shed order at 1:27 a.m. on Monday, February 15, and the load shed requirements continued to increase throughout the

## Board Spotlight



**MICHAEL  
SIVERTSEN**

DISTRICT 8

Michael Sivertsen joined the Tri-County Electric Cooperative Board of Directors in October. He comes to the table with experience and knowledge in the electric utility industry, as well as physics and engineering. Mr. Sivertsen earned a bachelor’s degree in physics from the University of Minnesota, Institute of Technology, and a master’s degree in knowledge management.

Mr. Sivertsen recently retired from Lockheed Martin Aeronautics in Fort Worth. Prior to his tenure at Lockheed, Sivertsen spent 15 years in the electric utility industry, which included scientist

position in radiation physics and information systems. Throughout his career, he has received numerous awards and recognitions, including the Aero Star Award, Lockheed Martin Aeronautics highest award.

Outside of work, Mr. Sivertsen is involved in the community by delivering presentations to schools and conducting science teacher workshops. He enjoys going on bike rides with his granddaughters and elk hunting. Mr. Sivertsen and his wife have three grown children and eight grandchildren. ■

day.

"This quickly put us over 100 megawatts of load shed obligation, and by 6:50 p.m. that same night our obligation was at its peak of 192 megawatts," he said.

Providing information to members during the rotating outages was a priority. Danielle Voss, Communications Specialist, said updates were posted to the co-op's Facebook and website as available. Voss reported the team posted to Facebook 14 times, including six live video updates the week of February 15. Additionally, the team engaged with more than 450 members through Facebook Messenger and our website received more than 248,000 views.

Throughout the storm, the Member Services team was available to answer phones and emails. Nichole Eshbaugh, Chief Technology Officer and Vice President of Business and Technology, said the phone system was updated with an emphasis on providing information on the rotating outages and tracking down members experiencing continuous outages.

The winter storm was truly a team effort. One of the biggest challenges was feeding employees who were working since local restaurants and grocery stores were closed. Melissa Watts, Chief Financial Officer and Vice President of Finance, said she and a few other staff members would travel to the closest grocery store to purchase food for breakfast and lunch.

"We would have food available for the MSRs who were taking your phone calls and the linemen who were working out in the field," she said. 7000003204

Hollingsworth reported that system operators were able to restore consistent power to all members at 12:06 a.m. on Thursday, February 18. Tri-County Electric Co-op's distribution system held up very well during the winter storm.

Wesley Scheets, Chief Operations Officer and Vice President of Operations, said approximately 2,400 outages were weather-related. Establishing three shifts of crews worked well to ensure linemen were in the field while others rested.

Ralph Revilla, Safety Director, said employees worked 8,631.5 hours without injury.

"This was a huge accomplishment," he said. "Especially since our linemen and crews faced treacherous driving conditions and exposure to consistent sub-zero temperatures."

Schriver continued and said that months later, we are still feeling the aftereffects of the winter storm. As you may be aware, Brazos Electric Power Cooperative, our wholesale power provider, filed for chapter 11 bankruptcy on March 1, 2021. Schriver has kept members up to date through his monthly columns in the *Texas Co-op Power* magazines. He said he has kept the members in mind throughout the entire process and been transparent in communications.

Through investigations, Schriver said Brazos's generation units designed to protect the 16 member-cooperatives from the volatility of the ERCOT market did not perform during the storm. Brazos racked up more than \$2.1 billion in power bills, which is more than three times the cost of power for the entire 2020 year.

Schriver said that Brazos entered bankruptcy quickly and did not provide much notice to member-cooperatives, which created a problem the co-op has little control over. The Tri-County Electric Co-op Board of Directors has asked for resignations from Brazos management so the generation and transmission co-op can progress and serve the member-cooperatives.

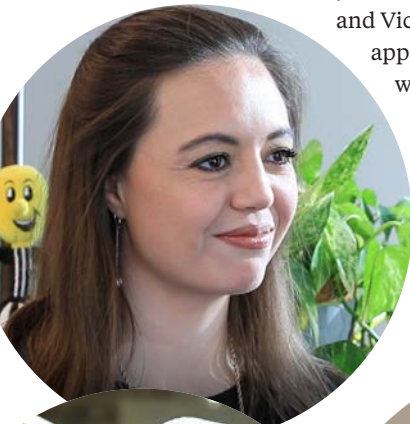
Next, Schriver reported the second wave, changes to the cooperative's governance structure. Major changes to the bylaws included a new director nomination process and new director boundaries. Interested and eligible members seeking nomination now have two paths to the ballot: through the Committee on Nominations and Qualifications or through member petition. The director boundaries were redrawn to reflect our diverse membership, including our urban, suburban and rural areas.

Your co-op continues to persevere through the coronavirus pandemic. Schriver said the lobbies were closed for the health and safety of our members and employees, and will continue to be closed until we understand more about the virus. Throughout the past year and a half, we have managed to keep the workforce healthy and working to take care of you, the members.

Melony Block, Director of Human Resources, reported that COVID-19 cases and exposure has been limited due to protocols in place.

"For the past 19 months, our COVID protocols have allowed our employees working day in and day out serving our members," she said.

Throughout the pandemic, the Member Services team has been available to answer the phone when you



call. The team set up payment arrangements to assist members who have been impacted by the virus.

Growth, the fourth wave, has been a blessing and a challenge over the past year. Schriver said the north Texas region is one of the fastest growing regions in the nation, increasing by one person every four minutes, 15 people per hour, or 362 people a day

Eshbaugh said since last Annual Meeting, we have welcomed nearly 5,000 new members, our member services team answers an average of 800 calls a day, and our field services team conducted more than 9,600 field visits for new service. Maintenance goes hand-in-hand with growth. Kelsey Gustainis, Engineering Manager, reported that engineering, field services and operations departments fulfill the work plan that increases capacity and reliability across the system. Watts said that while we are investing in infrastructure, we continue to keep an eye on the bottom line. Tri-County Electric Cooperative grew by 4.73 percent in 2020 and is on track to grow around five percent in 2021. The average electric co-op grows less than one percent.

Tiffany Whisenant, Senior Lead Member Services Representative, said we track member satisfaction using the American Customer Satisfaction Index. Members scored us an 81 in 2019, an 84 in 2020 and an 85 this year. We continue to improve our service and hope to increase your satisfaction.

In June, the member services team launched a new online service application that provides a better experience and is user friendly. The online member portal and TCEC Connect allow members to track electric use, make payments, report outages and more. Cole Shirley, Manager of Metering and Field Communications, said the AMI meter system provides the daily reads to the member portal and app.

Transparent communication was a primary focus for the communication team. Throughout the many tidal waves, it was our goal to keep members informed. 800873946

Schriver wrapped up the co-op update by thanking the members for joining by phone and online. Rehberg joined him at the podium for the last round of door prizes. More than 175 prizes were given out at the meeting. Survey and Ballot Systems drew winners at random from the pool of members who voted in the election by the deadline. Tri-County Electric Co-op thanks our vendors who donated prizes to the meeting.

The meeting ended with a question and answer session. Schriver answered more than 50 questions from members listening by phone and watching online. Topics included the winter storm, ERCOT, Brazos bankruptcy, rates, and solar.

If you missed this year's meeting, a recording is available at [tcectexas.com/annual-meeting](https://tcectexas.com/annual-meeting). ■

## *I Work for You*



### **JANE HALL**

#### **Work Order Technician Field Services**

Jane Hall is no stranger to the electric utility business. Jane, a 38-year industry veteran, joined the Tri-County Electric Cooperative family in 2007 as a member services representative. In 2019, she transitioned to the field services department to help members establish new service.

As a work order technician, Jane administers member jobs from the first contact through the power turning on. She schedules field site visits with staking technicians, processes easements, and works with the member on completing every step of the process.

Jane says she loves working at the co-op because her days are never the same and there is always something to learn. Additionally, she loves working with the members.

"Co-ops are member-owned and forming a relationship with the local members is special," Jane said.

As a local electric provider, our employees live and work in the communities we serve. Jane says she loves seeing members out in the community, like at the local farmers market, and keeping up with their lives.

"I love being able to hear what people are doing," she said. "You learn so much with daily conversations."

What does Jane love more than helping the members? Working for a company where she can help others. She is an avid supporter of Tri-County CARES, the co-op's benevolent committee that helps in time of need. Jane never misses a chance to participate in the fundraising events, especially when she can dress up!

Jane and her high-school sweetheart, Lee, will celebrate 45 years of marriage at the end of this month. They are proud parents of two adult daughters. ■





**Community Holiday Events**  
December 4

**Trumpeting in 2022**  
January 9

## Your Co-op's Community Calendar

December

1-31

**Radiance! A Holiday Light Spectacular**  
radiancechristmas.com

4

**Azle Christmas on Main**  
azlechamber.com

**Christmas in the Park**  
haslet.org

**Christmas on the Square**  
weatherford-chamber.com

**Christmas Tyme in Aledo**  
aledo-texas.com

23-24

**Offices Closed for the Holiday**  
tcectexas.com

24-25

**Christmas Holiday**

31

**New Year's Eve**

**NOTE:** Events are subject to postponement or cancellation due to COVID-19 guidance. Please check the event resource for updates.

**Interested in promoting your event in the next issue of Texas Co-op Power?**  
Email [pr@tcectexas.com](mailto:pr@tcectexas.com) with the event name, date and where readers can find more information.

January

1

**New Year's Day**

9

**KAYJO Trumpeting in 2022**  
Keller Area Youth Jazz Orchestra

21

**Youth Tour Application Deadline**  
[tcectexas.com/youth-tour](http://tcectexas.com/youth-tour)

## Tri-County Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

### CONTACT US

200 Bailey Ranch Road

Aledo, TX 76008

**Phone** 817-444-3201

**Email** [customer\\_service@tcectexas.com](mailto:customer_service@tcectexas.com)

**Web** [tcectexas.com](http://tcectexas.com)

### President/CEO

Darryl Schriver

### Board of Directors

**Max Waddell**, District 9 - Chairman

**John Killough**, District 6 - Vice Chairman

**Margaret Koprek**, District 2 - Secretary/Treasurer

**Kevin Ingle**, District 1

**Jorden Wood**, District 3

**Jerry A. Walden**, District 4

**Steve V. Harris**, District 5

**Larry Miller**, District 7

**Michael Sivertsen**, District 8

**24/7**

## Outage Reporting

For information and  
to report outages, please  
contact us.

Online: [oms.tcectexas.com](http://oms.tcectexas.com)

App: TCEC Connect

Phone: 817-444-3201

### ABOUT TRI-COUNTY ELECTRIC CO-OP

Tri-County Electric Co-op owns and maintains more than 9,510 miles of line to provide electric service to more than 98,300 members in Archer, Baylor, Denton, Foard, Haskell, Hood, Jack, King, Knox, Palo Pinto, Parker, Stonewall, Tarrant, Throckmorton, Wilbarger, and Wise counties.

### OFFICE LOCATIONS

#### Aledo

200 Bailey Ranch Road, Aledo 76008

#### Azle

600 NW Parkway, Azle 76020

#### Granbury

1623 Weatherford Highway, Granbury 76048

#### Keller

4900 Keller-Hicks Road, Fort Worth 76244

#### Seymour

419 N. Main, Seymour 76380

### IT PAYS TO STAY INFORMED

Find your account number in pages 18-25 of *Texas Co-op Power*, and you will receive a \$20 credit on your electric bill. Simply contact one of the offices listed above and make them aware of your discovery!

### VISIT US ONLINE

[tcectexas.com](http://tcectexas.com)

[Facebook.com/TCECTexas](https://www.facebook.com/TCECTexas)

# Swedish Tea Ring

BY COLEEN JONES  
COLLEYVILLE

**DOUGH**

- 2 cups milk
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1 stick margarine, softened
- ½ cup sugar
- 2 pkgs. Dry yeast (not rapid rise)
- 1 egg
- 5 lbs. flour

**FILLING**

- 2 sticks butter/margarine
- Cinnamon
- Cardamom, powdered
- 3 cups sugar
- 3 cups brown sugar
- Chopped pecans

1. Turn on oven to 200°F for 15 minutes, then turn off.
2. In a saucepan, heat milk, salt, 1 stick margarine and sugar until very warm (not scalding or hot to touch). Remove milk mixture from heat.
3. In a glass mixing bowl, empty yeast packages, milk mixture, egg and about 2 cups of flour. Mix together with large spoon. Keep adding a little flour until dough is soft but not sticky.
4. Cover with towel and put in warm oven to rise until double. This will only take about 30 minutes.
5. While dough is rising, melt 2 sticks of butter/margarine and have ready for filling.
6. When dough has doubled, remove, punch down and knead to get air bubbles out. Add a little more flour to make dough soft again.
7. On a floured surface, take half of the dough and make a ball. Roll dough out to a 12" x 17" rectangle. Dough will be thin, but not transparent.
8. Pour half of the melted butter on dough. Make sure all dough is covered. Use your hands to smooth butter all around. Sprinkle lots of cinnamon and cardamom over the buttered dough. Sprinkle half of the sugar and brown sugar. Add pecans.
9. Roll into a jellyroll and put on a greased cookie sheet. Have ends meet. With a serrated knife, make little slits all around the top, from end to end. Cover and let rise again until double.
10. Repeat procedures with the rest of the dough, or make balls about the size of a handball, and put into greased cake pan and let rise for regular rolls.
11. Bake at 350°F until golden brown on top. When cool enough to lift off the pan, remove and put on service tray.
12. Frost with powdered sugar frosting and sprinkle with red or green sugars. To make the powdered sugar frosting, combine 2 tablespoons melted butter, milk, vanilla and powdered sugar to make a thick, honey-like frosting.

Enjoy!



**Tri-County Electric Co-op  
Member Recipe Submission Form**

MEMBER \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL or PHONE NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

RECIPE NAME \_\_\_\_\_

**SUBMITTING YOUR RECIPE:**

- EMAIL:** Please include the above information with your recipe and send to [pr@tcectexas.com](mailto:pr@tcectexas.com)
- ONLINE:** [tcectexas.com/recipe-submission](https://tcectexas.com/recipe-submission)
- MAIL:** Please detach and submit this form with your recipe and mail to:
- Tri-County Electric Cooperative  
Attn: Recipe Submission  
200 Bailey Ranch Road  
Aledo, Texas 76008



**SPECIAL OFFER FOR NEW CUSTOMERS ONLY**  
**Dept. 6RP430** ☒ **YES** Please send me the following:


QTY	DESCRIPTION	PRICE	TOTAL
	56-Coin Quarter Set (limit 3)	\$29.95	
	Custom Display Folder	\$3.95	
1	Uncirculated Lincoln "Shield" Cent	<b>FREE!</b>	
	Shipping	<b>FREE!</b>	
	Sales Tax	<b>FREE!</b>	
	<b>TOTAL \$</b>		

**ORDERS MUST BE RECEIVED WITHIN 30 DAYS**

☐ Check payable to Littleton Coin Co.  
**Charge my:** ☐ VISA ☐ MasterCard  
☐ American Express ☐ Discover

Card #: \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date  /

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_ Apt# \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Mail To:  **Dept. 6RP430**  
 Littleton Coin Co.  
 1309 Mt. Eustis Rd  
 Littleton NH 03561-3737



**Final Issue**



Common Obverse  
Actual Size

©2021 LCC, Inc.

## Now! Complete National Park Quarter Set Only \$29.95!

**Don't miss out!** The final coin has been released and quantities are limited for these **Uncirculated Complete 56-Coin sets!** The first coin in this set was issued in 2010.

- **FREE** Shipping!
- **FREE** Gift: Uncirculated Lincoln "Shield" Cent

You'll also receive a handpicked trial selection of fascinating coins from our No-Obligation Coins-on-Approval Service, from which you may purchase any or none of the coins – return balance in 15 days – with option to cancel at any time.

**Mail Coupon Today!**  
**For Faster Service Visit**  
**LittletonCoin.com/Specials**

 **Littleton**  
 Coin Company®

Serving Collectors Since 1945



## WALK-IN TUBS FROM \$8,995 INSTALLED!



**ONYX SHOWERS**  
**FROM \$8,995 INSTALLED**



**TCP Gift Shop**

**TCP Shop now**  
 TexasCoopPower.com/shop



**BEST BUY WALK-IN TUBS**  
 FEATURING "SEALTITE" TECHNOLOGY

★ CELEBRATING 15 YEARS ★

**CALL US, DON'T WAIT ANOTHER DAY.**

Enhance your quality of life with a Best Buy Walk-in Tub. As the oldest manufacturer of walk-in tubs in America, we've been setting the industry standard for more than 15 years. Call us today to find the perfect custom solution for you.

Visit our showroom at 311 Kings Plaza in Granbury.



**888-825-2362** **www.bestbuywalkintubs.com**

**Bank C.D.'s Due?**  
**CALL US NOW**  
**1-800-359-4940** TEXAS TOLL-FREE  
[www.mattsonfinancialservices.com](http://www.mattsonfinancialservices.com)  
**BLAKE MATTSON, CFP™**  
 Signal Securities, Inc., 5400 Bosque, 4th Floor, Waco, TX 76710  
*Serving Customers All Over Texas*  
All C.D.'s are insured to \$250,000 per institution by the F.D.I.C. All C.D.'s are subject to availability. Securities offered thru Signal Securities, Inc., Member FINRA/SIPC 700 Throckmorton, Ft. Worth, TX 76102. (817) 877-4256.

**PERMA-ROOF**  
 from Southern Builders  
**Steel Mobile Home Roofing**  
  
 Since 1983  
 High energy bill? Roof rumble? Leaks?  
**MOBILE HOME ROOF OVER SYSTEMS**  
 Contact us at **800.633.8969** or **roofer.com**

**ARK-LA-TEX**  
 SHOP BUILDERS  
 "WE GOTCHA COVERED"  
 SHOPS • BARN • CABINS • [WWW.SHOPSBUILT.COM](http://WWW.SHOPSBUILT.COM)  
**830-730-0515**  
 8670 IH 35 N NEW BRAUNFELS, TX  
  
**BUILDINGS OF ALL SIZES**  
 Shops • Garages • Barns • Equipment Sheds • Barn/Minimiums  
**WE MAKE DREAMS COME TRUE!**  
Price includes all labor and materials with 4" steel reinforced concrete slab with moisture barrier, one 10'x10' heavy duty roll up door, one 3 foot steel entry door, concrete aprons, electric stub \*(Dirt may be extra)

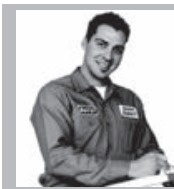
**BRUSH SHARK**  
  
**SKID STEER MOUNTED SHEAR**  
 • 1/2" to 6" diameter trees and brush.  
 • Perfect for cedar, shin oak, persimmon, mesquite.  
**(512) 263-6830 • [www.brushshark.com](http://www.brushshark.com)**

**Low Cost Pole Barns**  
  
 26' x 48' x 10'  
 3 Sides Enclosed  
**Call now for our best pricing!**  
 Hay/Horse Barns, Shops, Decks, Concrete Work and Pad Sites  
**Call Ron: 512-367-0428**

## ADVERTISEMENT

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

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



Dear  
Darryl

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

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

*Clogged and Smelly – Houston, TX*

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

This fast-acting bacteria multiplies within minutes of application and is specifically designed to withstand many of today's anti-bacterial cleaners, soaps and detergents. It comes in dissolvable plastic packs, that you just flush down your toilets. It's so cool. Plus, they actually Guarantee that it restores ANY system, no matter how bad the problem is.

**SeptiCleanse® Shock and Maintenance Programs** are designed to work on any septic system regardless of design or age. From modern day systems to sand mounds, and systems installed generations ago, I have personally seen SeptiCleanse unclog and restore these systems in a matter of weeks. I highly recommend that you try it before spending any money on repairs. SeptiCleanse products are available online at [www.septicleanse.com](http://www.septicleanse.com) or you can order or learn more by calling toll free at 1-888-899-8345. If you use the promo code "TXS14", you can get a free shock treatment, added to your order, which normally costs \$169. So, make sure you use that code when you call or buy online.

**TCP Marketplace**  
 Across Town | Across Texas

Advertise in Texas Co-op Power Marketplace  
 Elaine Sproull (512) 486-6251  
[advertising@TexasCoopPower.com](mailto:advertising@TexasCoopPower.com)



## BUSINESS THE TEXAS WAY

We operate an online precious metals business as well as a long term storage solution in our Texas Precious Metals Depository for individual investors and IRA customers. Texas Precious Metals maintains class 2 and class 3 equivalent vaults in our high-security underground Texas facility which is fully insured by Lloyd's of London.

Since 2011, Texas Precious Metals has processed \$1 billion dollars in client transactions and earned an A+ Rating from the Better Business Bureau.

In 2014, Texas Precious Metals was recognized as the No. 1 "fastest growing Aggie-owned or Aggie-led business in the world" by Texas A&M University, and in 2015, Inc. Magazine named it the No. 200 Fastest Growing Private Company in America.

You can visit us online at [texmetals.com](http://texmetals.com) to see how we are "Doing Business the Texas Way!"

**\$25 OFF**  
orders over \$500

USE COUPON CODE: **TXPOWER25**

Limit 1 per customer. Expires 12-31-2021



We accept Visa and MasterCard.

**[texmetals.com](http://texmetals.com)**



### Free Shipping & Insurance

Free shipping on all orders.  
Orders exceeding \$1,000 ship via  
UPS Next Day Air.



### Fast Processing

All orders ship within 3 business days  
of payment. Unlike other companies,  
if we don't have a product in stock, we  
don't sell it.



### No Order Minimum

Whether buying a small gift or  
making a large investment, we place  
no restrictions on order size.



### IRA & 401K Rollovers

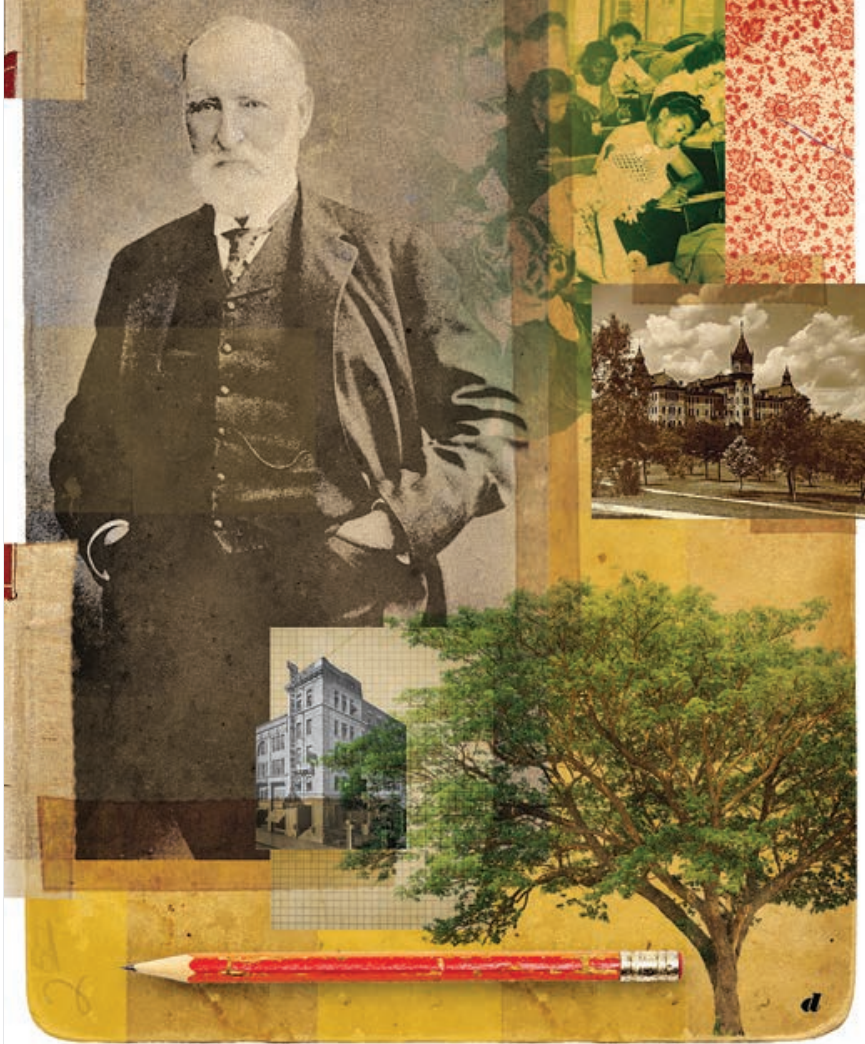
Investing in precious metals with a  
self-directed IRA is easier than you  
might think. We have the resources  
necessary to make the process  
hassle-free.



### Full Transparency

We proudly publish our buy and sell  
prices online. We have no  
salespeople, no commissions, no  
gimmicks, and we will never, ever  
solicit our clients.





**TCP WEB EXTRA**

Listen to W.F. Strong read this story.

# The Grand Giver

Brackenridge's goodwill and generosity continue to enhance life for San Antonio parkgoers and students across Texas

BY W.F. STRONG • ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID VOGIN

**GEORGE WASHINGTON BRACKENRIDGE** may have given more to Texas than anyone else. He donated 199 acres for his namesake park in San Antonio, which now includes a zoo, museums, a golf course, a Japanese tea garden and other features in an enchanting setting that today encompasses 343 acres.

But Brackenridge Park was not the philanthropist's most impactful gift. That was the oil money that supports the University of Texas and Texas A&M University systems. As the longest-serving University of Texas regent—25 years—Brackenridge insisted that West Texas lands set aside for the university by the Legislature be transferred from the state to university control.

Not long after Brackenridge died in

1920, Santa Rita No. 1 brought in the first oil money and the start of the Permanent University Fund, which provides for construction of university buildings. Brackenridge's influence made sure the money stayed with UT and A&M and was not siphoned off by the Legislature.

Brackenridge was so protective of UT that when Gov. James "Pa" Ferguson threatened to eliminate university funding because he disagreed with the institution's hiring practices, Brackenridge pledged to cover the university's operating costs for the biennium if Ferguson made good on his threat. It didn't come to that.

In addition to his visionary services as a regent, Brackenridge donated 503 acres along the Colorado River in Austin to UT

in 1910. That land today includes a municipal golf course, the Brackenridge Field Lab and student housing.

Brackenridge made the bulk of his fortune as president of San Antonio National Bank and San Antonio Loan and Trust.

He was troubled by the fact that his father had enslaved people, so the younger Brackenridge attempted to create his own reparations plan. He calculated how much money should have been paid to the enslaved people and gave hundreds of thousands of dollars for African American education.

Brackenridge also championed the admittance of women into UT. He insisted on hiring female faculty and demanded complete equality for women. When women couldn't attend the university's medical school in Galveston for a lack of housing, he donated funds to build a dormitory. He supported women's suffrage because he believed women would help build a better society through political influence.

He never married and had no children, and upon his death, at age 88, Brackenridge put the bulk of his wealth into the George W. Brackenridge Foundation—the first of its kind in Texas. The foundation now emphasizes support for charter schools. Brackenridge preferred to invest in people rather than buildings, and he especially loved investing in young people. During his life he loaned untold sums to students for college, and all they had to do was sign a contract that said, "I agree to repay when circumstances permit."

By his own standards, Brackenridge lived a successful life. He said that he wished the world would be a little better place for his having lived in it. ■

# Recipes for Gifting

Co-op Country kitchens offer perfect selections for one-stop shopping

BY MEGAN MYERS, FOOD EDITOR

I've been giving homemade food gifts at the holidays ever since I was a kid, when I'd box up packages of fudge and hot chocolate spoons for my entire family. From hot sauce to homemade bread, edible gifts are economical, personal and, of course, delicious. Granola is one of my go-to gifting recipes because it is endlessly customizable and keeps well in the pantry. Use your favorite dried fruits, nuts and spices to make your own signature blend.

## Lemon Blueberry Granola

**½ cup (1 stick) unsalted butter**

**½ cup honey**

**4 cups old-fashioned rolled oats**

**1 cup sliced almonds or chopped walnuts**

**½ teaspoon salt**

**½ cup dried blueberries**

**Zest of 1 lemon**

1. Preheat oven to 300 degrees and line two rimmed baking sheets with parchment.
2. In a small saucepan over medium-low heat, melt together butter and honey.
3. In a large bowl, combine oats, nuts and salt. Pour butter mixture over the top and stir well to coat.
4. Spread evenly onto baking sheets and bake 30 minutes, stirring halfway through.
5. Immediately after removing from oven, scatter on dried blueberries and lemon zest and pat down gently with a spatula. This will help the ingredients adhere and cluster as the granola cools.
6. Let cool completely, then break into pieces and store in airtight containers or glass jars for gifting.

**MAKES 5 CUPS**

**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 Smoked Salt Caramel Corn.





### Lacy Farm Apple Pie Jelly

JESSICA LACY  
HOUSTON COUNTY EC

Homemade jelly is always a good gift, and this spiced apple version can be used for breakfast or as a glaze on pork chops. Be sure to let jars cool completely before moving them, which will help ensure a proper seal and set.

- 4 cups apple juice
- 1 tablespoon maple syrup
- 1 tablespoon ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1 box (1.75 ounces) Sure-Jell powdered fruit pectin
- 5 cups sugar

**COOK'S TIP** If using low-sugar Sure-Jell, reduce sugar to 2.5 cups.

1. Fill a large canning pot with water and heat to boiling. Carefully lower jars into water and heat for 10 minutes to sterilize. Measure sugar into a bowl and set aside.
2. In a heavy saucepan or Dutch oven, combine apple juice, maple syrup, cinnamon, nutmeg and Sure-Jell and bring to a rolling boil that can't be stirred down.
3. Add sugar all at once, stir to dissolve and bring back to a rolling boil. Boil for 1 minute. Remove from heat.
4. Remove jars from canner and ladle jelly into jars, leaving ¼-inch headspace. Wipe rims with a wet cloth and apply lids and bands, then lower carefully into boiling water bath. (If you have a partially filled jar, let it cool on the counter.) Place cover on canning pot and process 10 minutes. Turn off heat, remove cover and carefully remove jars.

CONTINUED >



\$500 WINNER

### Mom's Knock-Out Cake

NAOMI RAWLE  
WISE EC



Rawle, 94, remembers getting electricity for the first time more than 70 years ago, with one outlet for the whole house. Her fruit and nut cake is terrifically moist and bakes in mini loaf pans, making it ideal for gifting.

MAKES 5 LOAVES

- 2 cups sugar
- 4 eggs
- 1 cup vegetable oil
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1 apple, cored and chopped
- 1 banana, mashed
- 1 cup golden raisins
- 3 cups flour, divided use
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 cup coarsely chopped walnuts
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

1. Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Coat 5 mini loaf pans (5¾-by-3¼-inch) with cooking spray and lightly flour. Set aside.
2. In a large bowl, whisk together sugar, eggs, oil and vanilla until blended. Stir in apple, banana and raisins. Let soak while preparing remaining ingredients.
3. In another bowl, sift together 2 cups flour, salt and baking soda. Stir into wet ingredients until no dry bits remain. In the same dry bowl, mix together remaining 1 cup flour, walnuts and cinnamon. Stir into batter until blended.
4. Divide batter among prepared loaf pans and place onto a baking sheet. Bake 35–40 minutes, until a toothpick inserted into the center of each pan comes out clean.

### TCP \$500 Recipe Contest

**PICKLES AND JAMS** DUE DECEMBER 10  
One of the great rewards of home gardening is home preserving. What is the pride of your pantry? Enter your best pickles and jams recipe at [TexasCoopPower.com/contests](https://www.texascooppower.com/contests) by December 10 for a chance to win \$500.



## URGENT: Diamond Ring Recall

Experts warn that millions of rings may be "romantically defective" when compared to the spectacular 4 total carat Avalon Ring.

Have you recently overpaid only to be underwhelmed?

You can do bolder.

You can do brighter. You can own the Stauer 4 total carat *Avalon Ring* for **under \$50**. Only

Stauer's exclusive diamond alternative gives you the luxury look of large-carat diamonds for a fraction of the price. After cutting and polishing, scientists create a faultless marvel that's optically clearer with even more color and fire than a "D" flawless diamond.

The ring features a classic round-cut center stone, prong-set in rare platinum over fine .925 sterling silver.

**Your satisfaction is guaranteed.** If for any reason you don't absolutely adore your Avalon Ring, return it within 30 days for a full refund of your item price.

### Jewelry Specifications:

- 3 ¾ carat Ultimate Diamond Alternative®, Diamond *Aura*® center stone; 32 brilliant-cut accent stones
- Platinum-finished .925 sterling silver setting; whole sizes 5–10

**Avalon Ring** (4 ctw) ~~\$295~~  
**\$49\* + S&P**

*\*Special price only for customers using the offer code.*

**1-800-333-2045**

**Your Offer Code: AVR545-09**

Stauer, 14101 Southcross Drive W.,  
Ste 155, Dept. AVR545-09, Burnsville,  
MN 55337 [www.stauer.com](http://www.stauer.com)

**Stauer®**

**AFFORD THE EXTRAORDINARY®**

### RECIPES CONTINUED

5. Let jars cool overnight. Once cooled, check to make sure lids have popped. Any jars that have not properly sealed should be stored in the refrigerator. Store sealed jars in a cool, dark area until ready to serve or gift. Refrigerate after opening.

MAKES ABOUT FIVE 8-OUNCE JARS



### Potato Soup Mix

SANDY WELLBROCK  
BLUEBONNET EC

Soup is an excellent gift in the wintertime, and this mix turns instant mashed potatoes into a creamy, warming meal. Add cheese powder for a cheesy soup.

- 2 cups instant mashed potatoes**
- 2 cups instant nonfat dry milk**
- 2 tablespoons chicken bouillon granules**
- 2 teaspoons dried chopped onion**
- 1 teaspoon dried parsley**
- 1 teaspoon seasoned salt**
- ¼ teaspoon dried thyme**
- ⅛ teaspoon ground white pepper**
- ⅛ teaspoon ground turmeric**
- ½ cup cheese powder (optional)**

1. In a large bowl, mix together all ingredients and package into jars. Or divide ingredients evenly and layer into jars for an attractive presentation.

2. For gifting, prepare a label or tag with preparation instructions: "To prepare 1 serving of soup, add ½ cup soup mix to 1 cup boiling water. Let stand 2 minutes for water to be absorbed, then stir well and add toppings as desired, such as bacon bits, sliced green onion and shredded cheese."

MAKES 8 SERVINGS



### Susie's Victorian Toffee

CANDICE HUNT  
COSERV

A crowd favorite, homemade toffee is easier to make than you might think. Use your favorite chocolates or nuts or other toppings, such as crushed pretzels.

- 1 cup (2 sticks) butter**
- 1 cup sugar**
- 1 tablespoon water**
- 4 ounces chocolate, broken into pieces**
- 1 cup pecan halves, chopped**

1. Line a rimmed baking sheet with aluminum foil and set aside.
2. In a nonstick skillet over medium heat, melt butter, sugar and water together. Stir constantly in figure eights with a rubber spatula until mixture is bubbly and golden, about 10 minutes.
3. Carefully pour mixture onto prepared baking sheet and let cool 3–5 minutes, then scatter chocolate across the top. Using a rubber spatula, gently spread chocolate across the top as it melts, reaching all the edges. Scatter nuts over the chocolate.
4. Let cool overnight. If your kitchen is warm, the process can be sped up in the refrigerator or freezer. Once toffee is solid, break into pieces and store in an airtight container for up to two weeks.

MAKES 1 POUND TOFFEE

**TCP WEB EXTRA** Find other recipes suitable for gift giving at [TexasCoopPower.com/food](http://TexasCoopPower.com/food), where you can search through nearly 1,000 recipes.



# holiday GIFT GUIDE

In the magazine and on [TexasCoopPower.com](https://www.texascooppower.com), we make it easy to shop for friends and family.



## 2022 Texas Bluebonnet Calendar

Celebrating 35 years of publication. Large 15" x 20" calendar with 12 watercolors by Texas State Artist George Boutwell. \$12.50 plus sales tax and \$3.50 shipping. Quantity price on website.

800-243-4316  
[gboutwell.com](https://www.gboutwell.com)



## Fresh "New Crop" Pecans

New crop pecans, chocolate-covered nuts, specialty gift baskets, fudge, pecan pies. Our very own specialty roasted and salted pecans and gifts galore!

325-356-3616  
[sorrellsfarms.com](https://www.sorrellsfarms.com)



## Homegrown Texas Pecans and Pecan Treats

Berdoll's has been family-owned for 43 years. We make delicious pecan pies, chocolate pecans, honey-glazed pecans and more! Visit our squirrel, Ms. Pearl, at our retail store or order online.

512-321-6157  
[berdoll.com](https://www.berdoll.com)



**100% GUARANTEED TO WORK!**



## Prevents Nearly Any Cut, Scratch, Bruise or Burn!

Durable, yet soft leather takes abuse your skin can't. Adjustable airflow makes them cooler than long sleeves. See website for 30+ benefits and 100s of uses.

651-492-4830  
[armchaps.com](https://www.armchaps.com)



## Like Walking on a Cloud

Re-energize your life with Mighty Walk by GDEFY. Clinically shown to relieve pain in the knees by up to 85%. Use code MQ8MNR1 and save \$20.

[gdefy.com](https://www.gdefy.com)



## Texas Red Grapefruit and Avocados

Always a gift in good taste! Orchard-fresh grapefruit and other Texas products are all hand-selected, carefully packed and shipped to be delivered just in time for the holidays.

1-800-580-1900  
[crockettfarms.com](https://www.crockettfarms.com)



COURTESY CHET GARNER

## A Jaw-Dropping Collection

A Seguin museum's nutcracker compendium honors the pecan

BY CHET GARNER

**I REMEMBER THE CHILDHOOD** pain caused by suffering through performances of *The Nutcracker* and always associated it with the scolding I got for trying to use my family's decorative nutcracker to actually crack a nut. The heirloom's broken jaw never recovered despite hot glue treatments.

After that experience, I never liked nutcrackers. But a trip to see one of the world's largest nutcracker collections, in a Seguin museum, helped me realize I had more to learn about one of the world's oldest tools.

Seguin's known pecan history includes Native Americans who lived in the Guadalupe River valley and 16th-century Spanish explorer Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, who survived by eating the river's native nuts. Seguin now lays claim to three of the world's largest pecans, including the 10-foot fiberglass pecan sitting outside the Pape Pecan House. But the real treasure of Pape Pecan sits inside its retail store: a museum of more than 8,000 nutcrackers of every shape and size.

I had seen different nutcrackers before, most depicting a bearded soldier wearing a fancy uniform. At Pape Pecan House, you'll find nutcrackers in an astounding array of shapes, sizes and designs, including dozens of Santas as well as President Lyndon B. Johnson and Darth Vader. Some of these nutcrackers were carved and painted by hand more than 100 years ago.

Each character is distinctive, but each can be identified by its hinged jaw.

Kenneth Pape began collecting nutcrackers in the 1950s as an extension of his successful pecan business. His first nutcracker was a 6-foot-tall cowboy that now stands guard by the gift shop's cash register. A bonus to visiting the museum is leaving with some of Pape Pecan's locally grown nuts.

I prefer to let them crack the shells for me. After all, they are the experts. ■

ABOVE Chet cozies up to a life-size nutcracker at Pape Pecan House.

**TCP WEB EXTRA** If Chet's take on Texas cracks you up, you'll want to see all his Texplorations on *The Daytripper* on PBS.

## Know Before You Go

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

## DECEMBER

07

**Nederland** *Lighted Christmas Parade*, (409) 722-0279, [nederlandtx.com](http://nederlandtx.com)

09

**Sugar Land** *The Elf on the Shelf: The Christmas Musical*, (281) 207-6278, [smartfinancialcentre.net](http://smartfinancialcentre.net)

**Victoria** [9-12] *Victoria Ballet Theatre: The Nutcracker*, (361) 575-2313, [victoriaballet.org](http://victoriaballet.org)

10

**Grand Prairie** *Michael Martin Murphey's Cowboy Christmas*, (972) 854-5050, [texastrustcutheatre.com](http://texastrustcutheatre.com)

**Lake Jackson** *Tracy Byrd*, (979) 230-3658, [brazosport.edu/clarion](http://brazosport.edu/clarion)

**Cuero** [10-11] *Christmas in Downtown*, (361) 485-8008, [cueromainstreet.com](http://cueromainstreet.com)

**Fredericksburg** [10-11] *A Christmas Journey*, (830) 997-2069, [bethanyfredericksburg.com](http://bethanyfredericksburg.com)

**Grapevine** [10-11] *It's a Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play*, (817) 410-3100, [grapevinetexasusa.com](http://grapevinetexasusa.com)

**Ingram** [10-12] *A Christmas Carol*, (830) 367-5121, [hcaf.com](http://hcaf.com)

**Montalba** [10-12] *A Walk Through Bethlehem*, (903) 764-8048, [visitpalestine.com](http://visitpalestine.com)

**Tomball** [10-12] *German Fest Christmas Market*, (281) 350-5484, [tomballgermanfest.org](http://tomballgermanfest.org)

11

**Chappell Hill** Chappell Hill Garden Club Christmas Homes Tour, (713) 562-6191, [chappellhillgardencub.com](http://chappellhillgardencub.com)

**Corsicana** *The Nutcracker*, (903) 874-7792, [corsicanapalace.com](http://corsicanapalace.com)

**Frankston** Frankston Garden Club Christmas Tour of Homes, (817) 913-1982, [frankstontexas.com/events](http://frankstontexas.com/events)

**Grapevine** Farmstead Christmas Celebration at Nash Farm, (817) 410-3185, [grapevinetexasusa.com/nash-farm](http://grapevinetexasusa.com/nash-farm)

**Howe** Christmas Parade, (903) 532-6080, [howechamber.com](http://howechamber.com)

**Huntsville** Houston Family Christmas, (936) 294-1832, [samhoustonmemorialmuseum.com](http://samhoustonmemorialmuseum.com)

**Mesquite** Christmas on the Corridor, (972) 204-4927, [visitmesquitetx.com](http://visitmesquitetx.com)

**Palestine** Dogwood Jamboree: *Just in Time for Christmas*, (903) 729-7080, [dogwoodjamboree.com](http://dogwoodjamboree.com)

**Port Arthur** Holiday Downtown Celebration, (409) 983-8105, [portarthurtx.gov](http://portarthurtx.gov)

**Surfside Beach** Nighttime Kites, (979) 233-1531, [surfsidetx.org](http://surfsidetx.org)

**Seguin** Mid-Texas Symphony: Home for the Holidays, (830) 463-5353, [mtsymphony.org](http://mtsymphony.org)

MORE EVENTS >

## TCP Submit Your Event

We pick events for the magazine directly from [TexasCoopPower.com](http://TexasCoopPower.com). Submit your event online for February by December 10, and it just might be featured in this calendar.

# LONE STAR JAZZ PARTY

AT THE 1895

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 11

140 W CAMERON AVE @ BURLESON ST · ROCKDALE TX



9AM – 6PM

HOLIDAY MARKET  
FOOD & BEVERAGE VENDORS

12PM – 6PM

TOURS OF THE 1895 CITY HALL  
LIVE MUSIC

SHOWCASING THE SOUNDS OF

SPARKY THOMASON QUINTET

TOMMY HOWARD TRIO

DAVE WILD TRIO FEATURING TYRHA LINDSEY

EVENT INFO & TICKETS AT  
[HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/1895JAZZ](https://tinyurl.com/1895JAZZ)

A FUNDRAISER FOR VISION HISTORIC PRESERVATION FOUNDATION  
TAX ID 85-2855176

12



JERRY REICHERT makes wooden toys as charity donations for children.  
POWER OF OUR PEOPLE | DECEMBER 2019

# POWER OF OUR PEOPLE

TexasCoopPower

\$100  
WINNER

Nominate someone today!



Tell us about somebody who improves the quality of life in your community. Email your nomination to [people@texascooppower.com](mailto:people@texascooppower.com). Include the person's name, co-op affiliation and a short description of his or her work in the community. Featured nominees will receive a \$100 donation for their cause.

# Trail of Lights

**KREISCHE BREWERY & MONUMENT HILL**  
STATE HISTORIC SITES  
LA GRANGE, TX



**5:30-8:00PM**  
**TRADITIONAL NIGHTS**  
DEC. 4<sup>TH</sup>, 10<sup>TH</sup>-11<sup>TH</sup>, AND 17<sup>TH</sup>-18<sup>TH</sup>  
FAMILY FUN • HOLIDAY HISTORY

**ENCORE NIGHTS**  
DEC. 19<sup>TH</sup>-23<sup>RD</sup>  
LIGHTS ONLY

Information and Advance Tickets at  
[friendsofkreischebrewery.org/trailoflights](http://friendsofkreischebrewery.org/trailoflights)  
or call 979-968-5658







## Hit the Road

### Event Calendar

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

With hundreds of events across Texas listed every month, [TexasCoopPower.com](http://TexasCoopPower.com) has something for you.

**TCP Plan now**  
[TexasCoopPower.com/events](http://TexasCoopPower.com/events)



PHOTOFUNNIA14 | STOCK.ADOBE.COM

### Pick of the Month

#### Winter Wonderland

Muenster, December 11  
(940) 759-5299  
[heritageparkmuenstertx.com](http://heritageparkmuenstertx.com)

Heritage Park in this North Texas town features a synthetic ice skating rink, ornament making, cookie decorating, bounce houses, dance and music performances, and an obstacle course. Oh, and Santa will be there, too.

#### DECEMBER EVENTS CONTINUED

16

**Palestine Christmas Carol Sing Along**, (903) 723-3014, [visitpalestine.com](http://visitpalestine.com)

**Grapevine [16-17] Frank Sinatra & Dean Martin Christmas Tribute**, (817) 410-3100, [grapevinetexasusa.com](http://grapevinetexasusa.com)

**Anson [16-18] Texas Cowboys' Christmas Ball**, (325) 696-9040, [texasccb.com](http://texasccb.com)

17

**Wharton Snow on the Square**, (979) 532-1862, [whartonchamber.com](http://whartonchamber.com)

**Abilene [17-23] Abilene Zoo Christmas Celebration**, (325) 676-6085, [abilenezoo.org](http://abilenezoo.org)

18

**Big Spring Big Spring Symphony: Holiday Spectacular**, (432) 816-5196, [bigspringssymphony.org](http://bigspringssymphony.org)

**Brenham Celtic Angels Christmas**, (979) 337-7240, [thebarnhillcenter.com](http://thebarnhillcenter.com)

19

**Stonewall LBJ Tree Lighting**, (830) 644-2252, [tpwd.texas.gov/calendar](http://tpwd.texas.gov/calendar)

31

**Fredericksburg New Year's Eve Countdown to 2022**, (830) 997-6523, [visitfredericksburgtx.com](http://visitfredericksburgtx.com)

**Spring The Four Freshmen**, (281) 440-4850, [cypresscreekface.org](http://cypresscreekface.org)

## JANUARY

07

**Galveston Mavis Staples**, (409) 765-1894, [thegrand.com](http://thegrand.com)

# Bridges

On deck this month are bridges from readers spanning the Lone Star State. These tower over the others we received.

BY GRACE FULTZ

CLOCKWISE FROM RIGHT

**JIM BLAKE**  
**COLEMAN COUNTY EC**  
The Waldrip Bridge at night.

**RICHARD REEVES**  
**JASPER-NEWTON EC**  
Part of a Neches River bridge between Evadale and Silsbee. "I remember riding over it as a child."

**PAIGE KILLIAN**  
**UNITED COOPERATIVE SERVICES**  
The Margaret Hunt Hill Bridge over the Trinity River in Dallas.

**BUDDY PARK**  
**PEDERNALES EC**  
Bluebonnets along a rail line in Llano County.



## Upcoming Contests

- DUE DEC 10** All Wet
- DUE JAN 10** Feathered Friends
- DUE FEB 10** Industrial

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

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



## Carpe Diem, Mom

Impromptu, simple celebrations set an entertaining standard

BY BABS RODRIGUEZ  
ILLUSTRATION BY ANNA GODEASSI

**MY MOTHER, WHOM** I firmly believe invented staycations to save herself the extended stress and unique exhaustion of traveling with five children (and a rooster, a chipmunk and two dogs), had the ability to make the everyday feel magical. Part and parcel of that superpower was her skill for impromptu entertaining.

I think Mom's way with last-minute meals and celebratory mood changers was honed while constantly responding to the needs of her squad of kids and a husband whom the U.S. Air Force had on call. Any day that work and school and flight schedules allowed all seven of us to be at the table, she'd whip up a loaves-and-fishes miracle from whatever she had on hand. Candles were always lighted just because. And even backyard picnics were graced with flowers in Mason jars, decades before that sort of practical elegance was trendy.

Her can-do spirit focused on honoring our family's together time whenever possible with whatever was on hand.

Holiday events were executed with equal ease. Christmas Eve dinner might be waffles and eggnog. On New Year's Eve we'd dance in the backyard under the stars. A maraschino cherry in anything from ginger ale to iced tea heralded a toast.

Mom's recipe for pig pie, a foraged blackberry cobbler topped with shortbread in the shapes of piglets, welcomed summer into our house. And her compulsive seasonal collections of seashells, pine cones and dried flowers worked their way into the decor that celebrated holidays and birthday bashes.

There was a do-it-yourself eccentricity to my mother's carpe diem spirit, and I see pale imitations of it now in trends from factory chic to urban farmhouse.

I am thinking the world is filled with similarly celebratory traditions conceived by mothers. Moms, grandmothers and aunties who casually influence a family's style of entertaining only to witness their rituals and recipes take root in the next generation. Which isn't to say fathers, granddads and uncles never set a mood—or a table—but, in my circle, the male influences were more pragmatic than emotional.

When I write stories about people's homes, how they live in them, what they collect, I sometimes find that they own furniture made by a family patriarch. But the mismatched heirloom platters of food that parade across that table or buffet most often showcase the collections and tastes of a mom or a sister.

So, I'd just like to give my mother a shoutout for teaching me to celebrate any and every event. More importantly, she taught me that rather than merely holding onto things I find meaningful, I should pass them along and make the sharing the special occasion. ■



YOUR DREAM BATHROOM  
**IN 1 DAY**



7am TODAY



4pm TONIGHT



**50% off  
Installation\***

**PLUS**

**No Interest  
No Payments  
for 12 Months\*\***

Fall in love with your bathroom  
without breaking your budget



**Fits existing space**



**Certified Installers**



**Amazing style selection**



**Safety features available**

\*with purchase of any complete bath or shower system.  
Sales and installation performed by the licensed or  
registered (if applicable) BathWraps dealer in your area.  
\*\*Financing is provided by third-party lenders under  
terms arranged by customers and lender, subject to  
credit requirement. Not all buyers may qualify.  
Not all products available in all locations.

**CALL  
NOW!**

**888.571.3392**

Or visit us  
online at

**BathInOneDay.com**

# dish

## Save a Bundle on TV and Internet!



# \$69<sup>99</sup>

month  
for TV

### 2-YEAR TV PRICE LOCK!

## It's All Included!

- ✓ Includes 190 Channels with Locals
- ✓ Includes Hopper Smart HD DVR
- ✓ Includes HD Programming
- ✓ Includes One TV, Add More for \$5/ea.
- ✓ Includes Voice Remote Requires internet connected Hopper.



## FREE Premium Channels

After 3 mos. you  
will be billed  
\$30/mo unless  
you call to cancel.

## NETFLIX

– Fully Integrated –  
Just Change The Channel  
And Watch!  
Netflix subscription required.

### Add Internet!

## Blazing-Fast Internet

# ~~\$59<sup>99</sup>~~ \$40

month  
for Internet

per month  
for Internet

- Speeds from 25Mbps-1 Gbps
- No Matter Where You Live
- Now with Unlimited Data!

### Save up to \$20/month!\*

\*\$ off discount offers vary by service address. TV service not required for Internet. Speeds and prices vary by provider. Call for details or visit [godish.com/internet](http://godish.com/internet)

[godish.com/pricelock](http://godish.com/pricelock)



¡Se Habla  
Español!

## 1-866-290-7151

Mon-Fri: 7am-10pm • Sat: 7am-9pm • Sun: 10am-7pm Central Time

**dish**  
Authorized Retailer

Offer for new and qualifying former customers only. Important Terms and Conditions:

Qualification: Advertised price requires credit qualification and 24-month commitment. Upfront activation and/or receiver upgrade fees may apply based on credit qualification. Offer ends 4/13/22. 2-Year Commitment: Early termination fee of \$20/mo. remaining applies if you cancel early. Included in 2-year price guarantee for additional cost: Programming package upgrades (\$79.99 for AT120+, \$89.99 for AT200, \$99.99 for AT250), monthly fees for upgraded or additional receivers (\$5-\$7 per additional TV, receivers with additional functionality may be \$10-\$15). Regional Sports: RSN Surcharge up to \$3/mo. applies to AT120+ and higher packages and varies based on location. NOT included in 2-year price guarantee or advertised price (and subject to change): Taxes & surcharges, add-on programming (including premium channels), DISH Protect, and transactional fees. Premium Channels: 3 Mos. Free: After 3 mos., you will be billed \$30/mo. for Showtime, Starz, and DISH Movie Pack unless you call or go online to cancel. Remote: The DISH Voice Remote with the Google Assistant requires internet-connected Hopper, Joey, or Wally device. Customer must press Voice Remote button to activate feature. The Google Assistant Smart Home features require Google account and compatible devices. Google is a trademark of Google LLC. Other: Netflix streaming membership required. All packages, programming, features, and functionality and all prices and fees not included in price lock are subject to change without notice. After 6 mos., if selected, you will be billed \$9.99/mo. for DISH Protect Silver unless you call to cancel. After 2 years, then-current everyday prices for all services apply. For business customers, additional monthly fees may apply. Free standard professional installation only. Indiana C.P.D. Reg. No. – 19-08615. ©2021 GoDISH.com. All rights reserved. Internet speeds, prices, and providers vary by customer address. \$40 price refers to widely available plan from multiple providers. Restrictions apply. Nationwide availability of 25 Mbps plan is subject to change without notice. The application of "Unlimited Data with no Hard Data Limits" varies by provider, but commonly mean that your access to the internet will not be stopped by going over a data limit, but that speeds may be lowered. Call for details. Internet not provided by DISH and will be billed separately.