

AGGIES' 12TH MAN  
TURNS 100

SATISFYING  
SOUPS AND STEWS

WINDOW SHOPPING  
AT PRADA MARFA

# Texas Coop Power

FOR TRI-COUNTY EC MEMBERS

JANUARY 2022

## In the Care of Canines

How rescue dogs  
are learning  
to help people

TRI-COUNTY  
EC NEWS

SEE PAGE 18



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# January 2022



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## 08 Furred Responders

A Texas organization trains rescue dogs to help people overcome challenges.

*Story and photos by Laura Jenkins*

## Aggie Standouts

Texas A&M's 12th Man tradition, a spirit that 'engulfs you,' turns 100.

*By Rhonda Reinhart*

### ON THE COVER

Peter Slush, a firefighter and paramedic with Bexar County District 7 Fire & Rescue, shares affection with Rudy.  
*Photo by Laura Jenkins*

### ABOVE

Members of the 12th Man on the sidelines in the 1980s.  
*Cushing Memorial Library | Courtesy TAMU Press*

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*By Martha Deeringer*

# High Alert

**DON'T SAY THEY** didn't warn you.

It's long been known that rattlesnakes rattle their tails to alert aggressors or distract prey. But researchers recently reported in *Current Biology* that when a perceived enemy ignores the initial warning, the snakes switch from a low- to a high-frequency rattle to give the impression they are much closer than they actually are. When the initial slow, steady rattling rate of 12 hertz is ignored, rattlers will dial it up to as high as 100 hertz.



**TCP** Listen to a rattler's rattle with this story online.

## FINISH THIS SENTENCE THIS YEAR, I'M FINALLY GOING TO ...

**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. Below are some of the responses to our November prompt: **A Texan Would Never ...**

Squat with their spurs on.

JULIE BAKER  
BLUEBONNET EC  
CALDWELL

Pick a bluebonnet.

TRACEY POWELL  
TRI-COUNTY EC  
ALED0

Miss a chance to brag about Texas (and rightly so).

DONNA FALDYN  
VIA FACEBOOK

Turn down barbecue.

THELMA BEASLE  
LIGHTHOUSE EC  
MEMPHIS

Ask someone else to finish their sentence.

JAY GEIS  
HEART OF TEXAS EC  
MOFFAT

To see more responses, read Currents online.

## A COLD, HARD FACT

A fridge made 30 years ago uses almost four times as much electricity as a modern one.

# 66

distribution co-ops operate in Texas, from as far north as North Plains EC in Perryton and as far south as Magic Valley EC in Mercedes, and as far west as Rio Grande EC in Dell City and as far east as Jasper-Newton EC in Kirbyville. Co-ops power most of the state's landmass.



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Feathered Friends

### RECOMMENDED READING

*Where Birders Perch* from April 2018 took readers to the World Birding Center, which spans nine sites in the Rio Grande Valley with ideal photographing opportunities.



## What's New, Chet?

TCP's website! The redesigned TexasCoopPower.com is easier to use and more mobile-friendly. Check out the latest in travel, history, recipes and personalities. Point your smartphone at the code below—and throughout the magazine—to get there pronto.



# A Farsighted Mission

**MOST ASTRONAUTS** who spend at least a month in space return to Earth with impaired vision. And as NASA gears up for an eventual mission to Mars, which would require astronauts to spend at least 1½ years in space, the agency is turning to the Texas A&M University College of Medicine to study the effect of long-term spaceflight on the eyes and on the arteries, veins and lymphatic vessels that serve them and maintain vision.





DAVID MOORE

## Dad's Service Station

"I too changed lots of tires and melted lots of hot patches on tires at Red's service station on the side of the hill."

EDDIE BOLCH  
BRYAN TEXAS UTILITIES  
BRYAN

## The Tormenting Cries

I am thankful that Mary Ann Goodnight had a kind heart for animals [*Last of Their Kind*, November 2021]. It must have been tormenting to hear the cries of the bison calves whose mothers were slaughtered for their hides.

The U.S. government came up with the idea of killing off the bison to subjugate the Indians, and what a slaughter of immense proportions the idea produced.

The bison are as much a part of Texas' and this country's heritage as any other living thing. They have earned their right to survive.

Roberta McLaughlin  
Heart of Texas EC  
Lorena

My mom made meringue where it had little sugar tears [*The Alchemy of Egg Whites*, November 2021]. I could never get it right. She baked it on top of banana pudding. Fond memories.

LETA MASSEY  
VIA FACEBOOK



EARL NOTTINGHAM | TPWD

## Our Old House

I wanted to let you know how much I enjoyed Sheryl Smith-Rodgers' article on the Bendele family house [*Not About To Fixate*, October 2021]. My kids all got a kick out of remembering the details you wrote about. It made us all smile.

Kathy Bendele  
Pedernales EC  
Hye

Agree—we don't need to make everything new and shiny.

Roberta Dunn Dobie  
Via Facebook

## Meaningful Learning

I enjoyed the article about the Comstock high school kids doing research on Indigenous rock art with the Shumla Archaeological Research and Education Center [*Learning Rocks*, October 2021]. It sounds like a great way to engage kids in meaningful learning.

Felicity Hannay  
Central Texas EC  
Golden, Colorado

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Austin, TX 78701

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

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# The Invention of the Year

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Throughout the ages, there have been many important advances in mobility. Canes, walkers, rollators, and scooters were created to help people with mobility issues get around and retain their independence. Lately, however, there haven't been any new improvements to these existing products or developments in this field. Until now. Recently, an innovative design engineer who's developed one of the world's most popular products created a completely new breakthrough . . . a personal electric vehicle. It's called the **Zinger**, and there is nothing out there quite like it.

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***—Kent C., California***

The first thing you'll notice about the **Zinger** is its unique look. It doesn't look like a scooter. Its sleek, lightweight yet durable frame is made with aircraft grade aluminum. It weighs only 47.2 lbs but can handle a passenger that's up to 275 lbs! It features one-touch



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POWER OF OUR PEOPLE

# Furred Responders

A Texas organization trains rescue dogs to help people overcome challenges



FROM TOP Trainees at Service Dogs Inc. near Dripping Springs. First responders with Bexar County District 7 Fire & Rescue with Rudy. OPPOSITE PAGE, FROM TOP Sheri Soltes, president and founder of Service Dogs, with Poppy, a trainee. Austin Meredith, a senior computer science student at the University of Houston-Clear Lake, and his service dog, Peaches, live on campus.



STORY AND PHOTOS BY LAURA JENKINS

**T**he room was grim and silent, save for the rustling of papers. Lady, Rudy and Chanel—two yellow Labs and a golden retriever mix—slipped in as police officers studied security camera footage, surveying the aftermath of the shooting that left 23 people dead at an El Paso Walmart in 2019. The dogs knew what to do.

“Lady started making herself known to those who were going through security footage,” says Frankie Trifilio, Lady’s handler and one of three emergency medical services managers who flew to El Paso with the dogs from Methodist Healthcare in San Antonio to support first responders. “When Lady rolled on her back, a tall, muscular guy who looked like a member of a SWAT team asked me, ‘What is she doing?’

“I said, ‘She’s making herself available. She likes belly rubs.’”

The officer went back to what he was doing. But within a matter of minutes, he succumbed.

“He knelt down and started rubbing her belly, saying, ‘Oh come here. Who’s a good girl? Who’s a good girl?’” says Trifilio. “That was the catalyst for others to interact with the dogs, and suddenly everything came alive. Everyone started talking. There was laughter. When we left, people were communicating and collaborating. I can only speculate that it helped with the investigation. But I know firsthand that it helped those officers personally and emotionally.”

Providing trained dogs for people in need is nothing new to Sheri Soltes, founder and president of Service Dogs Inc., the organization that trained and placed Lady, Rudy and Chanel. An attorney by trade, Soltes was headlong into a successful career more than 30 years ago when she realized that the stress of the job was taking a toll on her health. She was living in Houston when she started thinking about a career change. At the time she had no idea what was next.

“One day I was at the eye doctor and picked up a maga-



zine that had an article about dogs helping people with disabilities,” says Soltes. “At the end it said that some of the groups used dogs from animal shelters, and that appealed to me because I’ve always been drawn to animals, especially those in need.”

Soltes saved the article and contacted organizations mentioned to find information that would help her build a nonprofit. She conducted a survey in Houston to see how many hearing-impaired people might be interested in a hearing dog; 75% answered affirmatively. Then she found a local dog trainer who agreed to visit shelters with her and help her find dogs best suited for service.

What began in 1988 as a home-based, one-dog-at-a-time endeavor has grown into a 6-acre campus near Dripping Springs, complete with a training facility, kennel and devoted team of trainers and caregivers. Even though SDI, a member of Pedernales Electric Cooperative, has placed more than 750 assistance dogs over the years, the operation is no assembly line. Soltes says they’ve developed an “artisan” approach to training because they select, train and match dogs to meet each client’s specific needs.

RIGHT Methodist Healthcare EMS relations managers and their dogs. BELOW Becky Kier, a former trainer at SDI, leaves the Humane Society of the New Braunfels Area with Lily, who is now in hearing dog training.

It might seem like any dog could be trained to mitigate any disability, but Becky Kier, former director of training at SDI, explains that when it comes to assistance dogs, one size definitely does not fit all.

“What they all have in common,” says Kier, “is that they’re all super sociable, obedient and have really good temperaments as far as loving and accepting all humans and animals. They’re not rattled by anything. But beyond that it comes down to the disposition of each individual dog. A hearing dog, for example, must take cues from the environment. We teach them what to do at first, but at some point, they have to take ownership of that.”

Kier says guide dogs for the visually impaired are hardest to find because they must be obedient and proactive without a lot of redirection. Even though SDI does not train animals to serve people with visual impairments, it does get a lot of “career-change” dogs from Guide Dogs for the Blind, the largest guide dog school in North America. Career-change dogs can have an excellent temperament, but they can also have qualities and traits that disqualify them from guide dog service.

“One of our recent graduates, Sensi, was released from GDB for not liking to work in the rain,” says Kier. “She didn’t want to guide through puddles. But she’s an ideal hearing dog.” Kier notes other examples of career-change dogs, such as Artist, who needed more supervision in the home than a blind person could provide, and Tootsie, who didn’t like the guide harness. “Dogs have idiosyncrasies just like people do,” she says.

Before the partnership with GDB provided career-change animals, all of SDI’s dogs came from rescue organizations. Many still do. For more than three decades, Soltes and her team have been searching animal shelters, offering a life of love and service to abandoned and unwanted dogs. Kier found Sherlock, a terrier mix, on a routine visit to the Humane Society of Central Texas. After his training, he was partnered with Megan Harris of Austin, who’s had a hearing impairment since she was 15 months old.

“Before he entered my life, I didn’t feel comfortable being left at home by myself,” says Harris, who has been partnered with Sherlock for more than eight years. “Anybody could enter the house at any moment, and I wouldn’t hear them. I worried about hearing smoke alarms, the doorbell and timers. Once Sherlock became my hearing dog, I felt more relaxed and at ease at home and in public.”

In the beginning Soltes was focused solely on the need for hearing dogs. But before long others began asking if she could train dogs to meet other specific needs, and SDI expanded its programs.



LEFT Patty Maginnis, a district court judge in Montgomery County, with Sumi, who provides victim support in the courtroom. BELOW Sherlock has been assisting Megan Harris of Austin for eight years.



"A couple of years into it, a young man who had become paralyzed from the shoulders down asked if we could train a service dog for him," says Soltes. "Another woman with paraplegia did too. We weren't sure, so we did two as a test run, and it was successful."

Soltes thrives on the challenge of innovating new programs to meet the needs of those who seek help.

"A few years ago, we were at a Texas Medical Association conference in Houston and a battalion chief said to me, 'Our suicide rate is approaching that of veterans. Can you help us?,' " Soltes says. "I took that information, did some research, and we created a program that provides dogs to support first responders."

Lady, Rudy and Chanel are a result of that initiative.

Soltes says it takes approximately \$50,000 to adopt, train and provide lifelong follow-ups for one dog. Despite that cost, SDI provides each one at no cost beyond nominal application fees and personal travel expenses. They rely on donors, sponsors, grants and fundraisers to operate. But Glenda Ann Kea says you can't put a price tag on the profound difference SDI is making in the lives of Texans with disabilities. When her systemic lupus became debilitating, she got so depressed she

stayed in bed for nearly two years.

"At that time the doctors were prescribing me tons of narcotics because I was in so much pain," says Kea, who lives in Allen, north of Dallas. "I couldn't get up on my own and I didn't want to. I didn't see the point. If I dropped something, my day was over because there was nobody there to help me pick it up. Seriously, I wanted to die."

"But when I got DaVinci, I had to brush him and feed him, so I'm moving and breathing and going outside, even if it's only my back-yard. When I'm in my bedroom, he can hear if something drops on the tile. He'll get up, come in here and look at me like, 'Do you need me to get that?' Now I genuinely want to get up every day. In a very real sense, DaVinci saved my life." ■

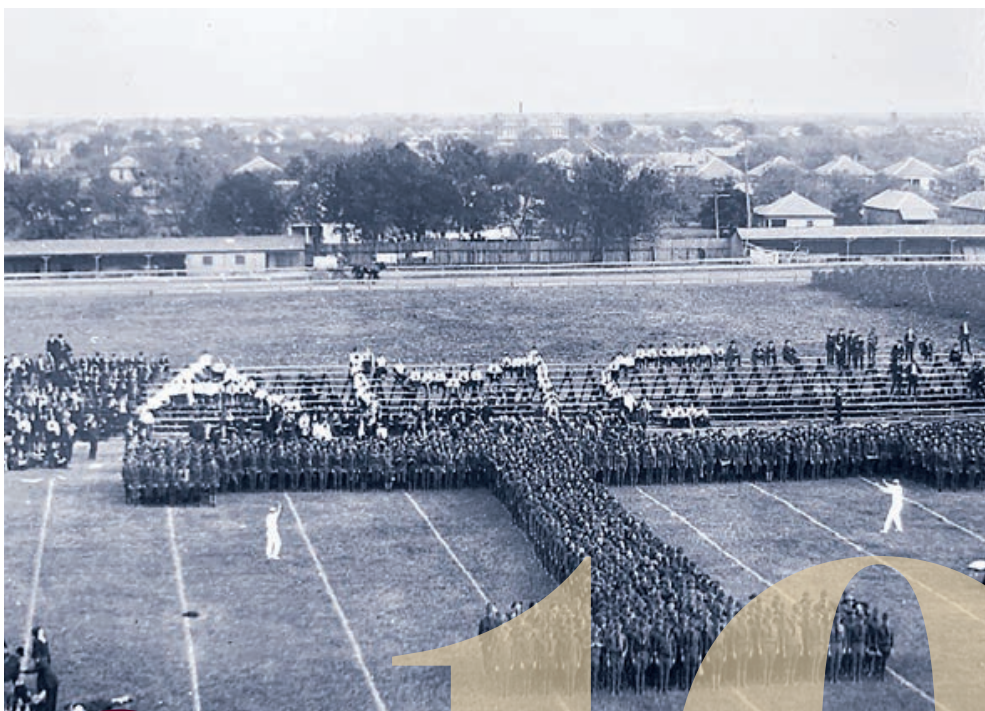


#### HOW TO HELP

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#### TCP POWER OF OUR PEOPLE

To nominate a co-op member who makes a difference in your community, email details to [people@texascooppower.com](mailto:people@texascooppower.com).



# AGGIE

# STANDOUTS

BY RHONDA REINHART

There are long shots—and then there are long shots. On January 2, 1922, at the inaugural Dixie Classic bowl game in Dallas, few fans thought the Texas A&M University football team had even a sliver of a chance at victory. The Aggies' opponents, after all, were the top-ranked Praying Colonels from Centre College in Danville, Kentucky. Centre included three All-Americans and had just knocked previously unbeaten Harvard out of the No. 1 national ranking.

The outlook was grim for the Aggies. "We were absolutely the unmitigated underdog," says author and historian John Adams, a member of A&M's class of 1973. "The papers all had A&M losing 40 to nothing, 30 to nothing, 20 to nothing."

Then came the bumps, bruises and fractures. A&M's captain and quarterback, Heine Weir, broke his leg on the third play of the game, and that started a domino effect of injuries, including at least one concussion. "At that time—and I think it's still a rule—if you can't have 11 players out there, you have to forfeit the game," says Adams, a Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative member. "So it's getting close to halftime, and they have 11 players, but they've got five of them that are injured."

What happens next is the stuff of legend and the beginning of one of Texas A&M's most revered traditions. With things looking bleak, Aggies coach Dana X. Bible remembered a kid named E. King Gill, class of 1924.

Though Gill was a member of the football team, he wasn't

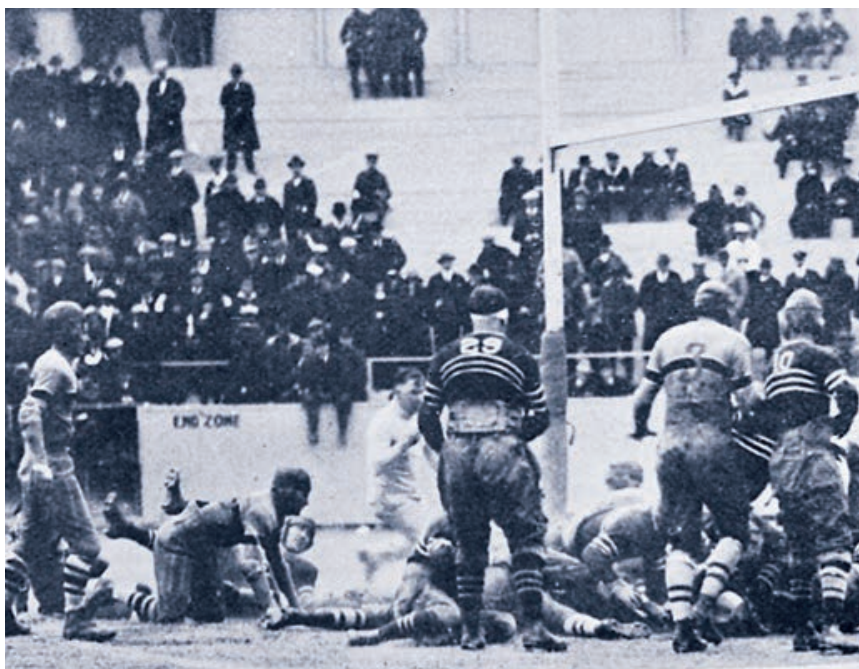
part of the squad traveling to the bowl game. He did, however, hitchhike from College Station to Dallas to see his buddies play at Fair Park, and he was up in the press box helping Waco sports writer Jinx Turner identify players on the field. But as the number of injured players quickly swelled, Bible had other ideas for the unsuspecting sophomore.

"All of a sudden, the coach turns and looks at the press box and waves at Gill," Adams says. "So he comes out of the press box during halftime, goes under the stands—there's no dressing room—and changes clothes with Heine Weir, the guy who broke his leg, and puts on his uniform. Gill comes out and stands on the sideline ready to go play. And then, little did they know, there is the beginning of the 12th Man."

In Adams' newest book—*Standing Ready: The Golden Era of Texas Aggie Football and the Beginning of the 12th Man Tradition*, published in December by Texas A&M University Press—he recounts the tale of the history-making bowl game, which was replaced by the Cotton Bowl Classic. Along with historical photos and little-known details from the game, *Standing Ready* features interviews with most of the major figures involved in the 1922 outing, including the bowl game's founder, Joe Utag, class of 1908 and captain of the 1907 A&M football team, as well as Gill himself. "I spent five years working on this book, but I've been interviewing these guys for over 40 years," Adams says. He interviewed Utag and Gill in the mid-1970s, before Gill died in 1976 and Utag in 1977.



OPPOSITE The block Aggie T formed at halftime by the Corps of Cadets at Kyle Field in 1920. LEFT E. King Gill, the original 12th Man. BELOW The Aggies make a goal-line stand in the 1922 Dixie Classic.



## TEXAS A&M'S 12TH MAN TRADITION, A SPIRIT THAT 'ENGULFS YOU,' TURNS 100

One hundred years later, in honor of Gill and his willingness to stand up for his team, the A&M student section stands for the entirety of every football and basketball game. And what a student section it is. At every home game at Kyle Field, an average of 38,000 students decked out in maroon and white stand ready, cheering for their team and waving white flags emblazoned with "12th Man." A&M set an NCAA record for largest student section attendance in 2014 when 40,032 students watched the Aggies play Ole Miss.

Annie McGinnis, class of 2017 and director of communications at Tri-County Electric Cooperative, has attended A&M football games since she was a child. "I was born on Thanksgiving Day, so rumor has it I watched the first Aggie game with my dad the day I was born," she says. Her father, David McGinnis, class of 1990 and general manager and CEO at Grayson-Collin Electric Cooperative, confirms the tale. "She came at lunchtime, like 11-ish in the morning," David McGinnis says. "We played TCU that year, and she and I watched that game while Mom slept, sitting in the hospital."

Annie McGinnis describes the A&M student section as having a "spirit that pretty much engulfs you" and says that any potential discomfort from standing for four hours is no issue for Aggie fans. "There's so much adrenaline and camaraderie amongst the students who are standing with the 12th Man that you don't even think about your feet hurting because you're standing on wobbly bleachers," she says.

Cameron Smallwood, class of 1996 and CEO and general

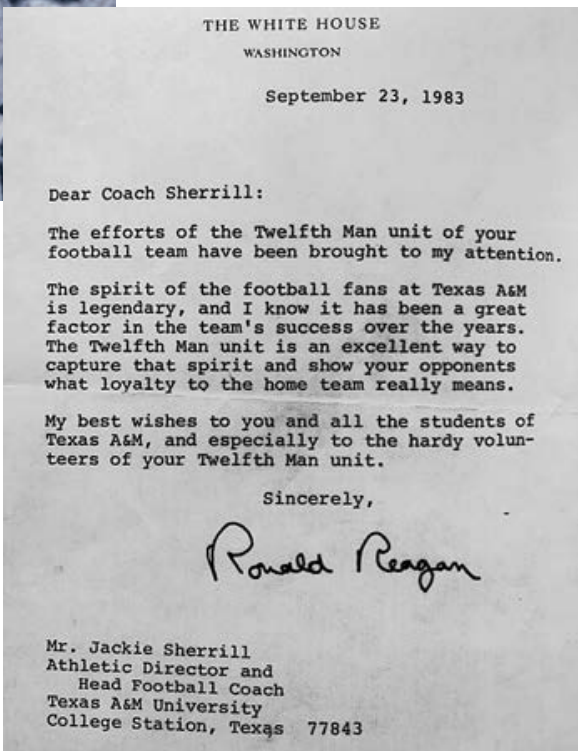


Aggies captain Heine Weir, left, whose injury paved the way for the 12th Man, with coach Dana X. Bible.



LEFT The first A&M football team, organized in the fall of 1894. BELOW A letter from President Ronald Reagan to coach Jackie Sherrill recognizes the 12th Man.

**TCP WEB EXTRA** Enter online to win a copy of *Standing Ready: The Golden Era of Texas Aggie Football and the Beginning of the 12th Man Tradition*.



manager at United Cooperative Services, attended games as a student and has held season tickets for football and basketball games for many years since. “It’s like being part of a big family there cheering on the team,” he says. He likens the student spirit at A&M—and that eagerness to pitch in when needed—to working with an electric cooperative. “It’s a job with purpose,” he says, “so it fits our training pretty well.”

Like the McGinnises and Smallwood—and so many students before and after them—Gill never had to go on the field that winter day in 1922. The team didn’t need him to play after all. In fact, the banged-up country boys from College Station went on to win 22-14, accomplishing one of the biggest upsets college football has ever seen. The game made newspapers nationwide and, by Adams’ estimation, put Texas football—and Texas sports in general—on the map.

“It put a spotlight on sports in the state of Texas. That’s what the Dixie Classic did,” Adams says. “There had been some great SMU teams during that time. There had been some good TCU teams. University of Texas had a good team in 1919. But none of them got any attention—no All-Americans, no recognition, no ranking.”

While attention and accolades are, of course, welcomed with open arms, those aren’t what propel Aggie students to show up on game day, 12th Man towels in hand, and stand for their team. Gill, a longtime Corpus Christi physician, possibly said it best. In a 1964 campus speech, without even

a whiff of self-aggrandizement, he talked about that day at Fair Park and his role as the original 12th Man: “I’ve never thought that the 12th Man really belonged to a personality. It belongs to the A&M student body,” he said. “And every one of you can be a 12th Man. You stand up—stand up for what’s right and be ready to serve.” ■

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

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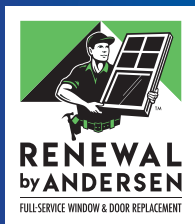
Rating of A+



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

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

Stauer... *Afford the Extraordinary.*®



# Goodbye 2021 Window & Patio Door *Event*



**Goodbye 2021 Event  
ends January 31<sup>st</sup>!**

**Buy 1 window or door,  
get 1 window or door**

**40% OFF<sup>1</sup>**

★★★★★ **and** ★★★★★

**NO** Money  
Down

**NO** Payments

**NO** Interest

**for 1 year!<sup>2</sup>**

★★★★★

Austin **512-298-1858**

Dallas/  
Fort Worth **469-606-5229**

San Antonio **210-961-9990**

• With all that 2021 threw at us, we're happy to see it go **and give you a HUGE discount!**

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

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

• **We eliminate the middleman** and manage your entire project—from selling and building the windows to the installation and warranty.



**RENEWAL  
by ANDERSEN**  
FULL-SERVICE WINDOW & DOOR REPLACEMENT

**Call for your FREE  
Window and Door  
Diagnosis**

**TopWindowSolution.com**

<sup>1</sup>Subject to availability, on a total purchase of 4 or more, buy 2 windows or doors, get the second 2 windows or doors, of equal or lesser value, 40% off — applied to lowest priced window and/or door products in purchase. Initial contact for a free Window and Door Diagnosis must be made and documented on or before 1/31/22, with the appointment then occurring no more than 10 days after the initial contact. <sup>2</sup>No payments and deferred interest for 12 months available from third-party lenders to well qualified buyers on approved credit only. No Finance Charges will be assessed if promo balance is paid in full in 12 months. Products are marketed, sold and installed (but not manufactured) by Renewal by Andersen retailers, which are independently owned and operated under Central Texas Windows & Doors LLC, d/b/a Renewal by Andersen of Austin and San Antonio. North Texas Windows & Doors LLC, d/b/a Renewal by Andersen of Dallas/Fort Worth and West Texas. See complete information and entity identification at [www.rbaguidelines.com](http://www.rbaguidelines.com). ©2022 Andersen Corporation. ©2022 Lead Surge LLC. All rights reserved.



**DARRYL  
SCHRIVER**

PRESIDENT/  
CHIEF  
EXECUTIVE  
OFFICER

## We Keep Fighting for You

**THROUGHOUT 2021**, I provided updates on Tri-County Electric Cooperative's generation and transmission cooperative, Brazos Electric Power Cooperative ("Brazos"), and the status of its bankruptcy case filed on March 1, 2021. In review, during the early days of the bankruptcy, Brazos was keenly focused on the legislative process and had high hopes that some form of legislative relief would "bail out" Brazos. As the legislative session wrapped up without a state-supported bailout, Brazos pivoted to court action to reduce the approximate \$2 billion ERCOT claim, as well as certain other creditor claims, related to Winter Storm Uri that have been filed against it. 800636811

We also reported to you that the Brazos management is focused on securitization as the vehicle for Brazos to emerge from bankruptcy. Securitization simply pushes the obligations of the Brazos bankruptcy estate down to you, the ultimate consumers of the power furnished by Brazos, by adding the costs of the securitization directly to your monthly power bills. Under a securitization exit scenario, millions of dollars of debt could be issued resulting in increases to your bills for the next 15 to 30 years. It also allows Brazos to emerge from bankruptcy without making any material changes in its business model, even though there may be other business models that better serve the member-cooperatives, including the sale of assets. 4260200002

Tri-County Electric Co-op has consistently voiced its opposition to this exit scenario, which we believe is bad for you, our member-owners. Tri-County Electric Co-op is working to protect your rights and demanding that Brazos change its business model to better serve you. In fact, Brazos recently filed a Motion with the Bankruptcy Court to extend its exclusivity period which provides Brazos the "exclusive" right to present a Chapter 11 Plan of Reorganization to the Court to exit bankruptcy. Tri-County Electric Co-op filed a formal Objection to Brazos's Motion to extend the exclusivity period.

Our Objection pointed out to the Bankruptcy Court that the cost of securitization will be placed solely on your backs as the consumers of the electricity and that Tri-County Electric Co-op believes other options, such as the sale of some of Brazos's assets, would not only help to pay Brazos's creditors but would also help to reshape Brazos so that cooperative members are not exposed to a similar disaster in the future. This would also put Tri-County Electric Co-op and other member cooperatives in a much better position to manage future power supply transactions by putting the decision-making of our largest cost item in the hands of individual member-cooperative boards and not Brazos's board. We expect to remain intensely active in the Brazos bankruptcy case to ensure that the Bankruptcy Judge understands our position as the second largest member-cooperative of Brazos.

You may also recall in my December column I asked that you prepare for increased power costs throughout 2022 related to updated cost projections we received from Brazos for the calendar year. These increases are largely related to the increases in the price of natural gas seen across the state and nation. Natural gas is the predominant fuel used by generators in Texas. Therefore, any significant increase in the natural gas market has a noticeable impact on electric bills. These increases to your bill will be reflected in the Power Cost Recover Factor (PCRF) portion of your bill, which we pass on to you directly from Brazos.

Your board of directors and staff will continue to actively engage in all matters related to Brazos and we will keep the best interests of our member-owners at the forefront. As we embark on a new year, our commitment to you remains the same. We will keep fighting for you. We are in this together.

I hope each of you have a happy New Year! ■



AARON BURDEN | UNSPLASH

# Applications Open for 2022 Director Nominations

**TRI-COUNTY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE** operates under the cooperative business model, meaning we are governed and regulated by an elected board of directors who represent our members’ best interest when making important decisions. Being a member of the co-op’s board is an incredibly important position in the community. A director’s decisions will impact issues such as the budget, service rates, Capital Credits allocations and retirements, right-of-way maintenance and work plans.

This position holds great responsibility and requires men and women who understand the needs of our communities and are willing and able to serve. Any co-op member who meets the qualifications listed under article four of the cooperative’s bylaws is eligible to run for the board. On page 22, we published the director qualifications from our bylaws. You can visit [tcectexas.com/bylaws](https://tcectexas.com/bylaws) to view the digital copy of the bylaws, or you can call our offices at 817-444-3201 for a hard copy. 800793793

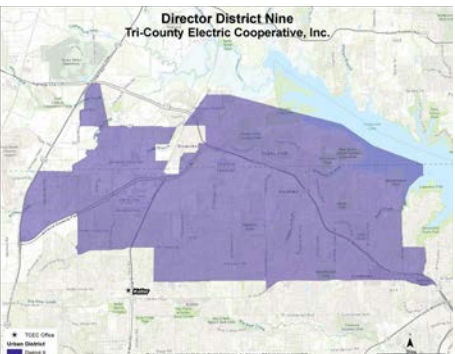
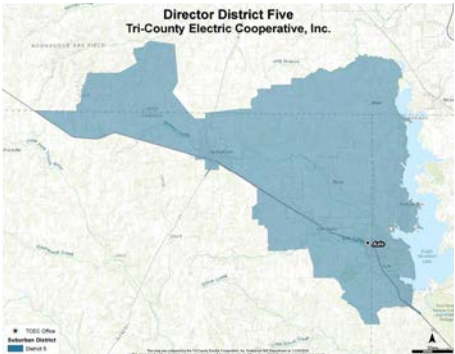
## Director Elections

Our board is a democratically elected body – elected by the members and for the members. Each year, one-third of the directors will be up for election. Tri-County Electric Co-op holds elections in September prior to Annual Meeting. This year, Director District 5, Director District 7, and Director District 9 are up for election.

- DISTRICT 5**, suburban district
- DISTRICT 7**, rural district
- DISTRICT 9**, urban district

Members in these districts who are eligible and interested in running for the board of directors must submit a complete nomination application packet by March, 10, 2022. The Committee on Nominations and Qualifications will accept and review application packets for each director district scheduled for election and recommend a slate of candidates to the board to set the election ballot.

Additional director nomination and election details, including the application packets for each nomination path and petition, can be found at [tcectexas.com/director-elections](https://tcectexas.com/director-elections). ■



## Director Nominations

Eligible members interested in seeking election to the board of directors may be nominated in two ways:

### Nominations and Qualifications Committee

- Eligible members seeking nomination as a director through the committee must submit a complete application packet by March 10, 2022.
- Each director applicant must include a petition with at least twenty five (25) member signatures whose primary residence is located within the director district for which the applicant seeks.
- Each director applicant must also attach an application fee payment of fifty dollars (\$50.00) or other fee as determined by the board to cover the application process. 800624841

### Nomination by Petition

- Members seeking nomination by petition may nominate themselves for a position on the ballot, by submitting a complete application packet by March 10, 2022.
- Each director applicant must include a petition with at least fifty (50) member signatures whose primary residence is located within the director district for which the applicant seeks.
- Each director applicant must also attach an application fee payment of one hundred dollars (\$100.00) or other fee as determined by the board to cover the application process.

**Director nomination application packets can be found on our website.**

[tcectexas.com/director-elections](https://tcectexas.com/director-elections).

# Reasons to Apply for t

## 10 reasons to help you get off the fence and apply

BY ANNIE MCGINNIS, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS

**KICK OFF SUMMER 2022** with a 10-day, all-expenses-paid trip to Washington, D.C. Tri-County Electric Cooperative is looking for high school sophomores and juniors to apply for this once-in-a-lifetime trip.

On the 2022 Youth Tour, you'll meet life-long friends, crane your neck at tall buildings, stand humbled by national memorials, and get inspired by leaders. You'll love it so much that you will be sad to return home.

**Need more convincing? Here are 10 reasons to apply for the 2022 Youth Tour.**

- 1. It's free:** Tri-County Electric Co-op, along with various sponsors, will cover the cost for you to attend the the Youth Tour, including airfare, hotels, meals and attractions. All you need is money for souvenirs!
- 2. It includes a scholarship:** The six winning participants will also receive a \$2,000 scholarship for college or trade school after high school. 800606601
- 3. You can put it on your résumé:** When you apply for college or a job, Youth Tour can help you stand out. The trip offers experiences that can shape your college applications, essays and career path.
- 4. You learn a lot:** You return home with newfound knowledge of our nation's history from being surrounded by venues that focus on history, science, art, space, American culture and more.
- 5. You get to travel:** Your days are spent touring popular attractions in D.C., including memorials, monuments and museums.
- 6. You meet new people:** You'll make new friends from among more than 150 teens from across Texas, and more than 1,900 teens from around the nation.
- 7. You gain leadership experience:** You are able to grow as a young adult and return home with leadership experience. Also, one student will be selected to represent Texas in a week-long, in-depth, leadership workshop.
- 8. You get a classic American adventure:** Washington, D.C., is rich in history and heritage. Attending the Youth Tour will allow you to connect with history.
- 9. You can make your voice heard:** You will spend a day on Capitol Hill and get the opportunity to meet with an elected official.
- 10. You connect with opportunity:** You get plugged into the electric co-op community and are in a great position to learn about scholarships, internships and jobs offered through this network. 800920250

Are you ready to pack your bags? Applications are due by 5 pm on Friday, January 21, 2022.

The Youth Tour truly is the trip-of-a-lifetime. If you are a sophomore or junior in high school, I highly encourage you to apply. The Youth Tour will allow you to experience our nation's history, learn more about government, meet congressional leaders, get outside of your comfort zone, meet new friends, and expand on your leadership skills.

Additional information can be found at [tcctexas.com/youth-tour](http://tcctexas.com/youth-tour). For more questions related to the Youth Tour program, email Annie McGinnis at [amcginnis@tcctexas.com](mailto:amcginnis@tcctexas.com) or call 817-752-8116. ■



**Applications close for the trip-of-a-lifetime  
AND a \$2,000 scholarship at 5 p.m. on  
Friday, January 21!**

# the Trip-of-a-Lifetime

## Youth Tour put Springtown grad on path to public service career

BY BOB BUCKEL, COMMUNICATIONS & MEDIA REPRESENTATIVE



Above: Jimmy Stathatos (standing) on the 1989 Government-In-Action Youth Tour

Below: Stathatos currently serves as the city manager for the City of Bedford.

**"GOVERNMENT-IN-ACTION"** would make a good title for Jimmy Stathatos's biography.

Stathatos, city manager of the City of Bedford, was already a rising star when he represented Tri-County Electric Cooperative on the 1989 Government-In-Action Youth Tour. An Academic All-Stater, he didn't drink or stay out late, and worried more about his test scores than who he was going to take to prom.

"I was basically Alex P. Keaton," he laughed, referring to the Michael J. Fox character on 80s sitcom *Family Ties*. "I wanted to be an attorney and run for Congress. I was a little geeky kid, but I just loved that stuff."

The experience of going to Washington with small-town kids from all over Texas shifted his goal from service in Washington to service in local government. 4245400001

"I think it was Tip O'Neill who said, 'All politics is local,'" he said. "I wanted to have a bigger impact. The tour was absolutely the catalyst, and after that it just kind of snowballed."

Stathatos, who was born in California, moved to Texas when he was 10 and graduated from Springtown High School with honors in 1990. He earned a bachelor's degree from Texas A&M in 1994 and a Master's in Public Administration from the University of North Texas two years later.

While in college, he interned for the cities of College Station and Euless. He spent two years in administration with the City of Ennis before landing the city manager's job at Roanoke in 1998. In his 15 years there, the city focused on economic development and became the "dining destination" for north Tarrant

**"I cannot tell you enough how much this trip impacted my life."**

—JIMMY STATHATOS

County. Leaving there in 2013, he served seven years as town manager for Flower Mound. In September 2020, he became city manager in Bedford.

He credits the Youth Tour with putting him on his career path.

When he applied, the essay topic – "What does rural electrification mean to me?" – helped him realize the value of rural electrification and the importance of service, of the things we take for granted. The tour itself gave him experiences that helped shape his life.

"I was just kind of a sponge," he said. "I was able to absorb so much of being an American."

He spent the following summer as a page for Texas Congressman Charles Stenholm, himself a former co-op general manager. That job put Stathatos in Washington during a historic time, as the Soviet Union disintegrated. But he recommends the Youth Tour in any era.

"If anyone is remotely interested – whether or not they're going to pursue a career in public service – you need to jump in. This truly is an opportunity to see government in action. It's also an opportunity to be exposed to peers from around the state who have that similar passion. I cannot tell you enough how much this trip impacted my life.

"It was life-changing," he said. "It really was." ■

# Director Qualifications

## ARTICLE 4, SECTION 4.3 - A DIRECTOR OR DIRECTOR CANDIDATE MUST COMPLY WITH THIS BYLAW

**General Director Qualifications.** To become a Director, a Person must comply with the following general qualifications:

1. be an individual; be a member of Tri-County Electric Cooperative, Inc. receiving service at his/her primary residential abode, and reside within the district to which such director is elected to represent for a period of (3) years;
2. have the capacity to enter legally binding contracts.
3. not have been previously removed or disqualified as a Director.
4. while a Director, and before becoming a Director, not be convicted of, or plead guilty to, a felony or two (2) misdemeanors; or found guilty of any offense involving moral turpitude.
5. before becoming a Director, graduate from high school or earn an equivalent degree or certification.
6. not be in any way employed by or financially interested in any competition enterprise, business or partnership selling electrical energy or any service provided by the Cooperative or its affiliates.
7. no person shall be eligible to become or remain a director of the Cooperative who is a close relative of an incumbent director or of an employee of the Cooperative provided, however, this provision shall not prohibit the eligibility of a close relative of an incumbent director from seeking such position if the conflict is eliminated by the election;
8. comply with any other reasonable qualifications determined by the Board.
9. not be an employee, or spouse of an employee of the Cooperative, or former employee, or spouse of a former employee, who was employed by the Cooperative at any time within 10 years preceding the date set for election of directors; and
10. no person shall take or hold any elected position of national, state, county or city public office nor shall any person be a School Board Member and/or County Commissioner.
11. no person shall have held an elected position as referenced in subsection 10 above within the preceding 3 years immediately prior to the Director Election.
12. while a director, and during the three (3) years immediately before becoming a director, not hold a public or quasi-public position which, in the determination of the Committee on Nominations and Qualifications, would unduly interfere with the director's independence or create an unfairly electoral advantage in the director election. Any determination of ineligibility under this subsection shall be made only by secret ballot with a super majority three-fourths vote of the full Committee. Examples of such potential public or quasi-public positions would include, but not limited to, the following: appointed public offices, political offices, or an officer or substantial participant in major civic, charitable, religious, or corporate organizations. Being an incumbent director of the cooperative is not, in and itself, a disqualification under this section.

**Membership Director Qualifications.** To become and remain a Director, an individual must comply with the following membership qualifications:

1. while a Director and during the three (3) years immediately before becoming a Director.
  - a. be an unsuspended Member.
  - b. permanently reside or use electric energy provided by the Cooperative, at the individuals principal residence as defined under federal tax law within the service area, or the Director District from which the Director is nominated or elected.
  - c. comply with application, petition and election standards set forth for election to the Board of Directors.
  - d. comply with membership list procedures if a membership list is utilized for election.
  - e. except as otherwise provided by the Board for good cause, shall receive a credentialed Cooperative Director designation, Directors certificate, or similar designation or certification from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association within thirty-six (36) months of becoming a Director.
  - f. except as otherwise provided by the Board for good cause, attend at least two-thirds (2/3) of all Board Meetings during each twelve (12) month period; and
  - g. maintain the confidentiality of Cooperative business discussed by the Board. Confidential Cooperative business includes: all undisclosed matters covered or discussed in executive session of the Board; as well as all confidential information and business plans and trade secrets; private directors, employee or member information; potential or pending acquisition of real or personal property of the Cooperative; operational plans and business promotions; power supply and generation interests; and all power distribution plans; until the Board has collectively agreed to the terms and timing for public disclosure of such information. 800737545

**Independent Director Qualifications.** To become and remain a Director, an individual must comply with the following independence qualifications:

1. annually complete and sign an independence certification and disclosure form approved by the Board.
2. while a Director, not be employed by another Director, or be employed by, or receive more than ten percent (10%) of Annual gross income from, an entity for which another Director controls, owns more than ten percent (10%), or is a Director or Officer; and
3. while a Director and during the five (5) years immediately before becoming a Director, not be employed by, control, own more than ten percent (10%) of, serve as a Director or Officer of, or receive more than ten percent (10%) of Annual gross income from an entity that:
  - a. advances the entity's pecuniary interest by competing with the Cooperative or a Cooperative subsidiary or

# I Work for You

Cooperative affiliate, providing a good or service similar to a good or service provided by the Cooperative or a Cooperative subsidiary or a Cooperative affiliate providing electric energy or a good or service related to providing electric energy.

4. while a Director, not engage in any behavior, actions or activities that (i) subject either the Director or the Cooperative to ridicule or embarrassment; (ii) adversely affect the Directors or the Cooperatives reputation; (iii) interfere with or diminish the Directors standing as a Cooperative ambassador and representative; or (iv) are contrary to the best interests of the Cooperative and its employees.

**Director Disqualification.** After being elected, designated, or appointed to the TCEC Board of Directors and if a director does not comply with all general director qualifications, membership director qualifications, and independent director qualifications, then for good cause as determined by the Board, the Board shall disqualify the director and the individual is no longer a director if:

1. the Board notifies the director in writing of the basis for, and provided the director an opportunity to comment regarding the Board's proposed disqualification; and
2. within twenty (20) days after the Board notifies the director of the proposed disqualification, the director neither complies with nor meets the director qualification. ■

## ANNIE M<sup>c</sup>GINNIS Director of Communications

For the past year, we have included employee spotlights in the *Texas Co-op Power* magazine. The idea behind the column stemmed from the 2020 Annual Meeting theme: *I work for you*. We wanted you, the members, to get to know the folks who work for you. To continue to communicate transparently to you, our member-owners, I figured it was time to introduce you to the communications team responsible for the *Texas Co-op Power* magazine.



Howdy! I am Annie McGinnis, your Director of Communications, and I work for you. I started at Tri-County Electric Cooperative in January 2018, after graduating from Texas A&M University. I have bachelor's degrees in Recreation, Parks & Tourism Sciences and Agriculture Communications and Journalism.

Growing up, I wanted to be a party planner. My interest in communications grew in high school after I joined FFA and participated in Leadership Development Events. Planning and executing events have always been something I enjoyed, so when I learned A&M's College of Ag had an event planner certification, I knew it was meant to be. I added Ag Comm as a second degree to expand my educational background and extend my time in Aggieland closer to the four-year mark.

My passions include my faith, family, football – Aggie football – and electric co-ops. I was born and raised in an Aggie home, and I am a third-generation electric cooperative employee. I guess you could say it is in my blood. It was no surprise that I attended A&M, and to many, it was no surprise I ended up working for an electric co-op.

When I came to the co-op four years ago, communications was very limited. I have thoroughly enjoyed working with employees across the co-op to develop a strategic direction and meet the needs of our members. Our goal has, and always will be, to communicate transparently.

I wear many hats in communications, with the primary responsibility communicating to you, our members, and internally to our employees. The communications team works with our statewide association, Texas Electric Cooperatives, to curate content, print and mail this monthly magazine to every member. Each copy costs less than the price of a stamp. Additionally, I oversee our website, Facebook page, and our Youth Tour and Scholarship programs. One of my favorite responsibilities is assisting with Annual Meeting, the election, and director nominations.

Communications works with departments across the co-op to communicate benefits, updates and information. We work with system operations and operations to keep members informed on outages. We work with the member services team to promote member benefits, like our app TCEC Connect.

Currently, we are a communications team of three and we do our best to work around the clock to make sure you, the members, have the information you need. I am blessed to work with a great team. We have come a long way in the past few years, and we continue to make progress and improvements to take care of you, our member-owners. I am proud to work for you. ■



**Happy New Year!**  
January 1

**Youth Tour Applications Due**  
January 21

## Your Co-op's Community Calendar

### January

1

**New Year's Day**

3

**New Year's Day, observed**  
Tri-County Electric Co-op offices will be closed

9

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

17

**Martin Luther King Day**

21

**Youth Tour Application Deadline**  
tcectexas.com/youth-tour

### February

11

**Black Tie Boxing for a Cause**  
parkercountyhealthfoundation.org

25

**Black and White Party**  
mesquaredcancerfoundation.org

**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.

## 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)

# Healthy Banana Bread

BY JOAN WOOD  
SOUTHLAKE

- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 cup whole wheat flour
- 1 ½ tsp baking powder
- ½ tsp baking soda
- 4 bananas, very ripe
- 2 large eggs
- 5 tbsp butter, melted and cooled
- ¼ cup buttermilk, (can substitute reg milk)
- 1 tsp fresh lemon juice
- ½ cup sugar
- ½ tsp vanilla extract
- ¼ tsp salt
- 1 cup pecans or walnuts, coarsely chopped



JEFF SIEPMAN | UNSPLASH

1. In a large mixing bowl, whisk together the flours, baking powder and baking soda. In another bowl, roughly mash the bananas.
2. Using an electric mixer or food processor, combine eggs, butter, buttermilk, lemon juice, mashed bananas, sugar, vanilla and salt. Mix or process until smooth.
3. Slowly add the dry ingredients and mix until well blended. Fold in the chopped nuts.
4. Spray and flour a 10-inch loaf pan. Pour in batter.
5. Bake at 350°F for 1 hour to 1 hour and 15 minutes, or until toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean.

Enjoy!



Tri-County Electric Cooperative has partnered with AirMedCare Network (AMCN) to offer you the opportunity to join our membership program at a special rate of just \$65 per year!

Expenses for emergency air medical transport can put stress on your finances. With an AMCN membership—America’s largest air medical membership network—you will have no out-of-pocket expenses if flown by an AMCN provider.

Secure financial peace of mind  
for your family today!

**ENROLL TODAY!**  
Wes McAden  
U.S. Business Development  
843.708.6192  
wes.mcaden@gmr.net  
Track Code: 14396



## 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



# SACRED STONE OF THE SOUTHWEST IS ON THE BRINK OF EXTINCTION



Centuries ago, Persians, Tibetans and Mayans considered turquoise a gemstone of the heavens, believing the striking blue stones were sacred pieces of sky. Today, the rarest and most valuable turquoise is found in the American Southwest—but the future of the blue beauty is unclear.

On a recent trip to Tucson, we spoke with fourth generation turquoise traders who explained that less than five percent of turquoise mined worldwide can be set into jewelry and only about twenty mines in the Southwest supply gem-quality turquoise. Once a thriving industry, many Southwest mines have run dry and are now closed.

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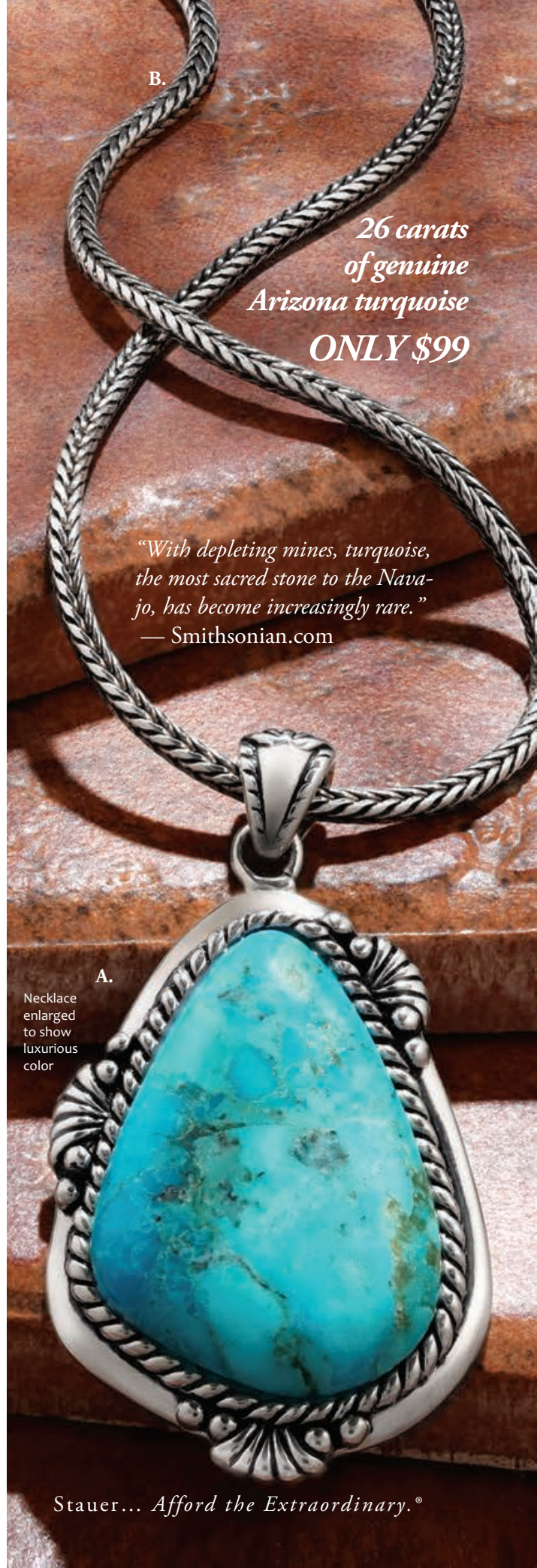
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**TCP WEB EXTRA**

Listen to W.F. Strong read this story.



# Joined by a Fence

How rural America turned barbed wire into telephone lines

BY W.F. STRONG

**HISTORIAN J. EVETTS HALEY** noted that the XIT Ranch was probably the largest fenced range in the world, and its barbed wire enclosed more than 3 million acres. The huge enclosure helped manage enormous cattle herds and deterred rustlers but also gave rise to the creative use of a new technology: the telephone.

Consider these reports from other parts of the West. In 1897, *The Electrical Review* reported that “on a ranch in California, telephone communication had been established between the various camps ... by means of barbed wire fences.” Also in 1897, the *New England Journal of Agriculture* observed that two Kansas farmers, a mile apart, had attached phone instruments to a barbed wire fence that connected their farms and established easy communication.

*The Butte Inter Mountain* included this notice in 1902: “Fort Benton’s latest development is a barbed wire telephone communication.” The article points out that people of that part of Montana were not happy with barbed wire, but they had decided to look at its practical side and created a telephone exchange that would connect all the ranches to Fort Benton.

On the XIT, given that the ranch covered more than 4,500 square miles, there was interest in creating a communication system that would be more efficient than sending out fast riders to distant camps. “In the early 1900s,” Haley wrote in his 1929 history of the XIT, “a great many telephones were placed upon the ranch. Where possible, the top line of the fences was used as a telephone line, though the ‘service’ was atrocious. It did allow for

quick communication concerning emergencies such as grassfires that required all cowboys immediately.” There was even talk among technology geeks of the era that cowboys could carry phones wherever they went and clip on to the fence to report problems.

The rudimentary use of barbed wire on the ranches led to more creative thinking about rural phone systems. Historian Don Anderson, who earned a doctorate in electrical engineering from Stanford University, told me that barbed wire phone systems led to the conclusion that “using whatever is already in place is smart planning.”

So when rural Texas wanted to extend phone service from town to town, engineers decided they could use the existing rural power lines, already installed by electric cooperatives through the Rural Electrification Administration, and run the phone signal through the electric lines at a different frequency. That saved a lot of money and brought phone service along with electricity to rural areas.

Still, many ranches liked their barbed wire systems and kept them, even though the voice quality wasn’t very good. As late as the early 1970s, a dairy farmer I knew had a barbed wire phone running a half-mile from his house to the barn. He said it was good for talking to his wife about what time to come in for supper. But most of all, he said, “It’s free. I don’t have to pay Ma Bell nothing for that phone, and I enjoy thinking that it’s a burr in their saddle.”

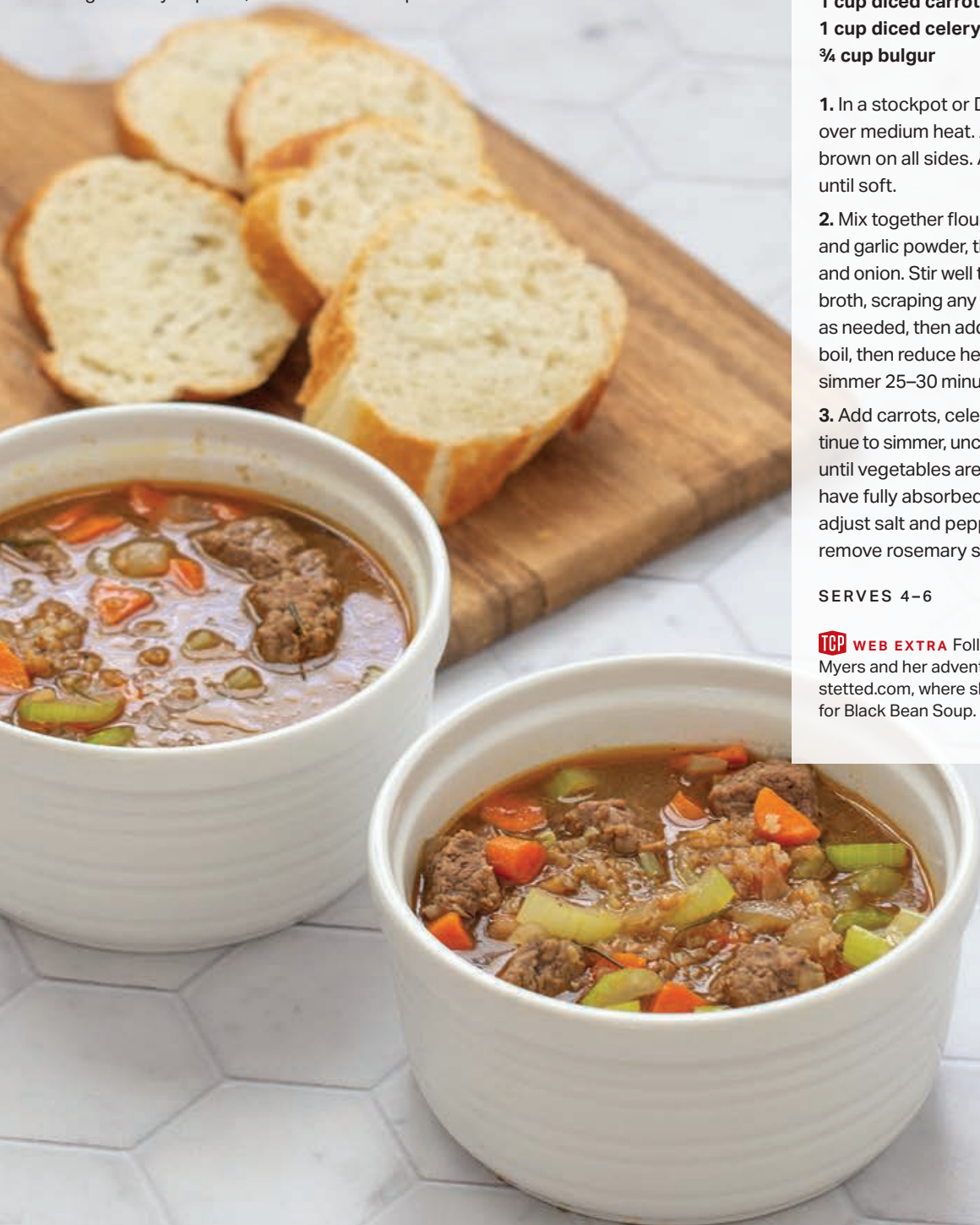
It is fascinating, Anderson said, to consider that what started as a fence system on the XIT evolved into what is XIT Communications, a co-op that provides phone service and high-speed internet to rural communities—some in the footprint of the original ranch. ■

# Soups and Stews

Stir up satisfying comfort food with a variety of ingredients

BY MEGAN MYERS, FOOD EDITOR

Soups have always been a go-to dish in my house. Virtually anything can be turned into a soup, so even when I haven't been to the grocery store in a while, I know I can still throw something together. This Beef Bulgur Soup is an economical option, thanks to the tenderized round steak. Bulgur is a parcooked wheat grain that can be found alongside rice, quinoa and other grains. If you prefer, substitute a small pasta such as orzo or ditalini.



## Beef Bulgur Soup

**1 tablespoon butter**  
**16 ounces tenderized round steak,**  
**cut into ½-inch chunks**  
**½ cup diced onion**  
**2 tablespoons flour**  
**1 teaspoon salt**  
**½ teaspoon pepper**  
**½ teaspoon paprika**  
**¼ teaspoon garlic powder**  
**4 cups beef broth**  
**2 sprigs fresh rosemary**  
**1 cup diced carrots**  
**1 cup diced celery**  
**¾ cup bulgur**

**1.** In a stockpot or Dutch oven, melt butter over medium heat. Add beef, stirring to brown on all sides. Add onion and cook until soft.

**2.** Mix together flour, salt, pepper, paprika and garlic powder, then sprinkle over beef and onion. Stir well to coat. Stir in beef broth, scraping any stuck bits in the pot as needed, then add rosemary. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat to low, cover and let simmer 25–30 minutes, until beef is tender.

**3.** Add carrots, celery and bulgur and continue to simmer, uncovered, 15–20 minutes, until vegetables are softened and grains have fully absorbed liquid. Taste and adjust salt and pepper as needed, and remove rosemary sprigs before serving.

**SERVES 4–6**

**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 Black Bean Soup.



## Chicken and Ginger Soup

JENNIFER BRANNEN  
BLUEBONNET EC

This Asian-inspired soup is heavy on ginger, livening up the senses whether you enjoy it for dinner or as breakfast leftovers, as Brannen recommends. Keep in mind that fish sauce is very salty, so add according to your taste.

- 12 ounces boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cubed**
- 3 ribs celery, chopped**
- 1½ ounces peeled ginger root, minced (about ⅓ cup)**
- ½ cup finely chopped cilantro**
- 7–8 cups low-sodium chicken broth, divided use**
- 3–4 tablespoons fish sauce**
- 2 cups cooked long-grain white rice**
- Green onions, thinly sliced**
- 1 serrano pepper, thinly sliced**
- Fried garlic chips**

**COOK'S TIP** Make fried garlic chips by frying ¼ cup of thinly sliced garlic cloves in ⅓ cup of canola oil until golden. Strain the garlic through a sieve but keep the garlic-infused oil for other uses.

1. In a large stockpot or Dutch oven set over medium-high heat, combine chicken, celery, ginger, cilantro, 6 cups broth and fish sauce and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low and simmer 30–45 minutes.
2. Stir in cooked rice and continue to simmer until the rice has absorbed the broth. Add the remaining broth if needed. Serve with green onions, serrano pepper and garlic chips on the side.

SERVES 4–6

MORE RECIPES >

\$500 WINNER

## Chicken and Dumplings Soup

AMANDA DECESARO  
TRINITY VALLEY EC



Perfect for chilly nights, chicken and dumplings are the ultimate comfort food. Mix the dumpling batter just before adding to the soup to retain the best texture.

SERVES 6



SOUP

- 1½–2 pounds boneless, skinless chicken thighs**
- 3 tablespoons butter**
- 1 yellow onion, diced**
- 1 teaspoon pepper**
- 1½ teaspoons salt**
- 1 teaspoon celery salt**
- 4 cups unsalted chicken stock**
- 1 cup water**
- 2 bay leaves**
- 3 cups baby carrots or chopped carrots**

DUMPLINGS

- 1½ cups flour**
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh parsley**
- 2 teaspoons baking powder**
- ½ teaspoon salt**
- ⅓ teaspoon ground nutmeg**
- ⅔ cup milk**
- 1 egg, slightly beaten**
- ⅓ cup (¼ stick) butter, melted and cooled**

**1. SOUP** In a large stockpot or Dutch oven set over medium-high heat, brown chicken with butter. Once browned, cut into small strips, then return to pot and add onion. Sprinkle in pepper, salt and celery salt. Sauté until onions are slightly cooked but not soft.

**2.** Add chicken stock, water and bay leaves. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to low and cover. Let simmer 10 minutes. Add carrots and simmer, covered, for an additional 15 minutes.

**3. DUMPLINGS** Mix together the dry ingredients. Add milk, egg and butter and stir until just blended.

**4.** When ready to add dumplings, remove bay leaves from soup, taste, and adjust salt and pepper as needed. Drop spoonfuls of dumpling batter into pot, spacing as much as possible. Cover and simmer 15 minutes, until dumplings are no longer doughy. Serve soup with a few dumplings in each bowl.

## TCP \$500 Recipe Contest

WEEKNIGHT DINNERS DUE JANUARY 10

We're looking for go-to recipes for busy weeknights. Submit yours at [TexasCoopPower.com/](https://TexasCoopPower.com/) contests by January 10 for a chance to win \$500.





## Potato Leek Soup With Dill

REXANNE MEAUX  
PEDERNALES EC

Potato soup always hits the spot, and dill adds bright flavor to Meaux's version. To wash the leeks completely, slice and add them to a bowl of cold water, swirling to dislodge any dirt between the layers.

**1 tablespoon butter**

**3 large leeks, thinly sliced and washed (white and light green parts only)**

**2 large russet potatoes, peeled and cubed**

**$\frac{3}{4}$  cup white wine, divided use**

**4 cups chicken broth**

**1 cup heavy cream**

**2 tablespoons chopped fresh dill, plus more to taste**

**$\frac{3}{4}$  teaspoon salt**

**$\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon pepper**

**Fresh dill sprigs, for garnish**

**1.** In a stockpot or Dutch oven, melt butter over medium heat. Add leeks and sauté 10 minutes or until tender. Add the potatoes,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup wine and broth. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to low and simmer, uncovered, 1 hour and 15 minutes or until the potatoes are very tender.

**2.** Transfer soup in batches to a blender and blend until smooth. Return the soup to the pot and add remaining  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup wine, heavy cream, dill, salt and pepper. Heat through and serve, garnishing bowls with fresh dill.

**SERVES 4–6**

## Soup Improv

BY MEGAN MYERS

**Looking for ways to riff on your soup recipe? Try one (or a few) of these ideas:**

**Add a cheese rind.** Parmesan rinds add umami, which enhances the other flavors in your soup.

**Finish with lemon** to brighten the flavor. This works especially well in chicken soups.

**Serve with a dollop** of sour cream or yogurt for tang.

**Chopped fresh herbs** are a great finish to any soup.

**Thicken soups** without cream by puréeing beans or vegetables from the soup and adding them back in.

**Brown the meat** for full flavor, and deglaze the pan with a small amount of white or red wine, depending on the recipe. The alcohol will cook off, leaving only the flavor behind.

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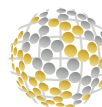
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COURTESY CHET GARNER

## Faux Chic, for Sure

Like a desert mirage, Prada Marfa perplexes

BY CHET GARNER

**I'M NOT A SHOPPER** and never have been. So I was having an internal struggle when I found myself driving more than seven hours from my Central Texas home to visit a high-end designer retail store in the desert.

Why was I dedicating so much time to this quest when I don't even know Versace from Vuitton? Those are different, right?

But once I arrived at the remote outpost known as Prada Marfa, the answer became clear.

I reached Marfa in record time but was disappointed to learn that my destination was still 36 miles west. I cruised U.S. 90 parallel to a set of train tracks for what seemed like hours, past the crumbling set of the movie *Giant* and through the tiny town of Valentine. I was about to turn around thinking I had missed my destination when I spied a boxy building up the road on my left. I pulled over and stepped into the Texas heat.

This was Prada Marfa, a stark white building that looks like an honest-to-goodness boutique storefront beside an empty highway. It's as if anyone could walk in, slap down some cash and leave with the fanciest footwear in West Texas. However, at this Prada store there is no staff. They don't accept credit cards. In fact, the front door doesn't even open. Because even though it looks authentic, Prada Marfa is a permanent work of art constructed in 2005 by the Swedish duo Elmgreen & Dragset as a comment on consumerism.

I peered through the window at displays of thousand-dollar purses and a wall of elegantly lit high-heeled shoes. I chuckled, wondering if anyone ever trekked out here expecting to buy designer items and left disappointed. I was happy to only window-shop, but even that cost me 14 hours on the road. ■

ABOVE Chet visits the art installation called Prada Marfa, along U.S. 90, about halfway between Marfa and Van Horn.

**TCP WEB EXTRA** Watch Chet's dispatch from Marfa at [TexasCoopPower.com/travel](http://TexasCoopPower.com/travel). And to see the front doors Chet does make it through, watch his Texplorations on *The Daytripper* on PBS.



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**Temple Family Day—Cabin Fever: Stargazing**, (254) 298-5690, [templeparks.com](http://templeparks.com)

**Boerne [8–9] Market Days**, (210) 844-8193, [boernemarketdays.com](http://boernemarketdays.com)

**Dallas [8, 15, 22] The Dinner Detective Murder Mystery Dinner Show**, 1-866-496-0535, [thedinnerdetective.com](http://thedinnerdetective.com)

## 15

**Fredericksburg Luckenbach Blues Festival**, (830) 997-3224, [luckenbachtexas.com](http://luckenbachtexas.com)

**Granbury 7 Bridges: The Ultimate Eagles Experience**, (817) 573-5548, [thenewgranburylive.com](http://thenewgranburylive.com)

**Lake Jackson Bird Banding**, (979) 480-0999, [gcbo.org](http://gcbo.org)

**McKinney Night Hike**, (972) 562-5566, [heardmuseum.org](http://heardmuseum.org)

**Mesquite** Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration,  
(972) 204-4925,  
visitmesquitetx.com

**Fredericksburg** [15-16]  
**Hill Country Gem & Mineral Show**, (325) 248-1067,  
fredericksburgrockhounds.org

16

**Fredericksburg** Agarita Chamber Players,  
(830) 997-6523,  
fredericksburgmusicclub.com

17

**Elgin** Martin Luther King Jr. Walk, (512) 281-5724,  
elgintx.com

**Houston** MLK Grande Parade, (713) 560-8328,  
mlkgrandeparade.org

20

**Corpus Christi** Third Thursdays, (361) 825-3500,  
artmuseumofsouthtexas.org

22

**Fredericksburg** Hill Country Indian Artifact Show,  
(830) 329-2636,  
hillcountryindianartifacts.com

**Irving** Fela in Concert: A Tribute to Whitney Houston, (972) 831-8818,  
irvingsymphony.org

**Orange** CeCe Winans,  
(409) 886-5535, lutchter.org

**Surfside Beach** Food and Art Festival, (979) 233-1531,  
surfsidetx.org

**Victoria** Victoria Symphony: José Feliciano,  
(361) 576-4500,  
victoriasymphony.com

MORE EVENTS >

## TCP Submit Your Event

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



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## Pick of the Month

### Chili Quest & Beer Fest

Galveston, January 14–15  
(409) 770-0999  
yagaschiliquest.com

Sample chili from the cook-off plus beer and spirits on the Strand. Burn off those carbs in the 5K fun run.

## JANUARY EVENTS CONTINUED

22

**Belton [22–23] Sami Show Marketplace,**  
(512) 441-7133,  
samishow.com

23

**Lufkin Popovich Comedy Pet Theater,**  
(936) 633-5454,  
angelinaarts.org

27

**Corsicana Asia,**  
(903) 874-7792,  
corsicanapalace.com

29

**Bay City Wild Game and Wine Camofest,**  
(979) 245-8081,  
facebook.com/  
baycitycamofest

**Grand Prairie Tom Segura,**  
(972) 854-5076,  
texastrustcutheatre.com

**Lufkin Brit Beat,**  
(936) 633-5454,  
angelinaarts.org/  
pines-series

**Port Aransas Home Tour,** (254) 289-4510,  
portaransasgardenclub.org

**Tyler Charles Yang, Violin Rock Star,** (903) 566-7424,  
cowancenter.org

FEBRUARY  
03

**Tyler Beautiful: The Carole King Musical,**  
(903) 566-7424,  
cowancenter.org

**San Angelo [3–20] Livestock Show,**  
(325) 653-7785,  
sanangelorodeo.com

05

**Abilene Abilene Philharmonic: The Wonderfully Wicked Music of Oz,**  
(325) 677-6710,  
abilenephilharmonic.org

**Bellville Market Day,**  
(979) 865-3407,  
discoverbellville.com

**El Paso Shen Yun,**  
1-877-663-7469,  
shenyun.com/el-paso

**Huntsville Sam Houston Square and Round Dance Association Presidents Ball,** (936) 494-8402,  
shsrda.weebly.com/  
events.html

**McKinney McKinney Philharmonic Orchestra: Music in Motion,**  
(469) 633-9104,  
mckinneyphilharmonic.org

**Sweetwater Lift Every Voice Art Show and Concert,** (325) 235-5488,  
sweetwaterauditorium.org

# Fired Up!

Whether getting the grill ready for a barbecue or watching the big game, Texans love to get fired up. So put another log on the fire and gather 'round because these offerings are smokin'.

BY GRACE FULTZ

1 TONYA CARLIN  
CECA

"Being a mother of a firefighter, this photo represents the brotherhood shared between these individuals."

2 PATTY DISHMAN  
PEDERNALES EC

"The hot air balloon festival in Horseshoe Bay always fires me up for great photo opportunities."

3 BROOKE WILLIAMS  
TRINITY VALLEY EC

Homecoming parade in Forney.

4 CADEN WILSON  
UNITED COOPERATIVE  
SERVICES

Cowtown rodeo.



1



2



4



3

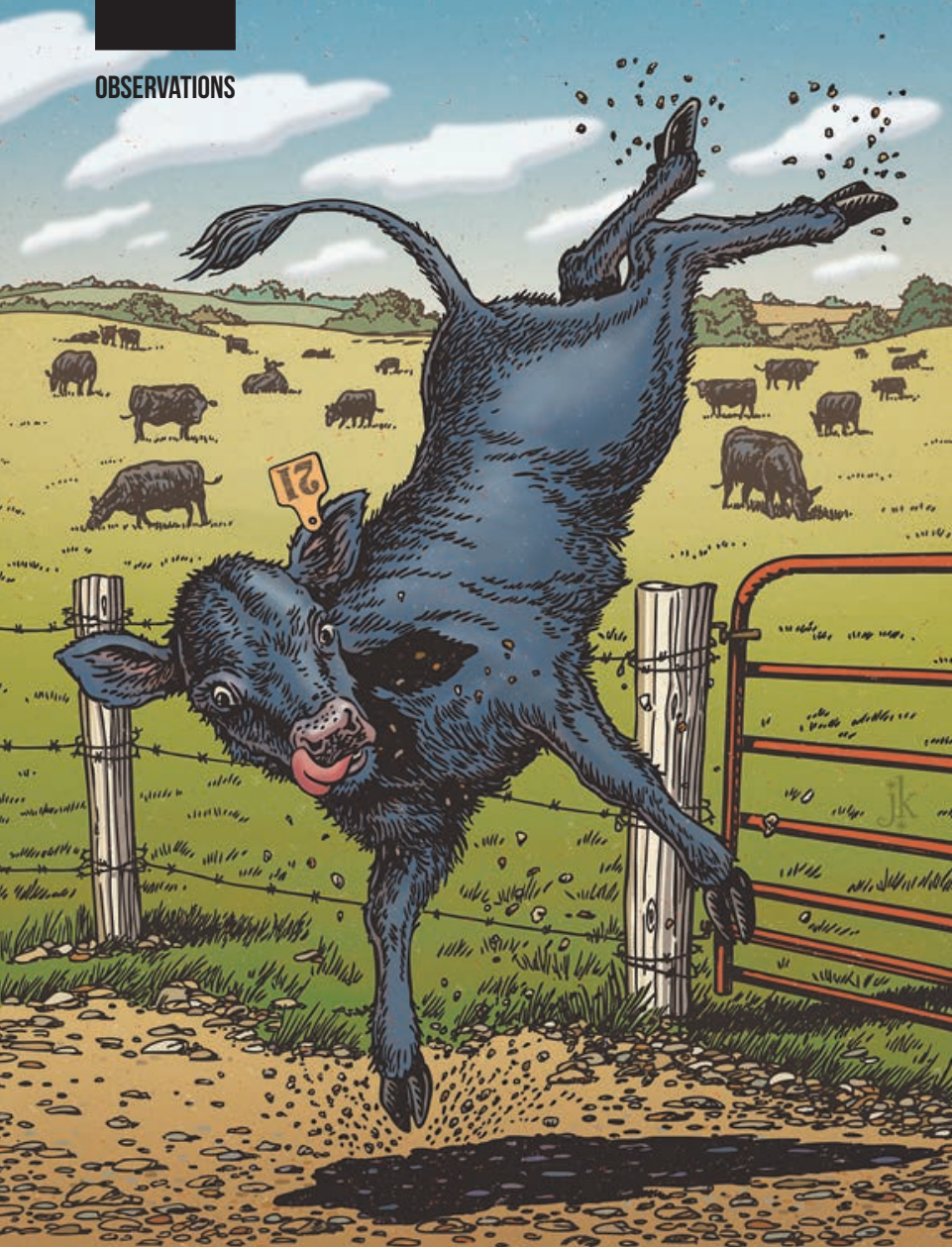
## Upcoming Contests

DUE JAN 10 Feathered Friends  
DUE FEB 10 Industrial  
DUE MAR 10 Morning Glory



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

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



## Buck's Pluck

What we learned from a spunky calf

BY MARTHA DEERING  
ILLUSTRATION BY JOHN KACHIK

**LIFE LESSONS** can crop up in the oddest places. Such was the case when an undersized black calf with an oversized personality was born on our farm a few years ago. A green hillside dotted with black cows and new calves is a tranquil scene. It's almost impossible to tell one calf from another without getting close enough to read the numbers on their ear tags.

Except for Buck Rogers.

Within hours of birth, Buck Rogers, a Black Angus bull calf, hopped in circles around his mother with that peculiar tippy-toed new-calf gait, flipping his stubby tail and kicking at the sky with his hind legs. While most newborn calves wobble for a day or two, Buck Rogers bucked and kicked across the pasture with total disregard for his mother's whereabouts. An inexperienced first-

calf heifer, Mama lumbered behind, bawling out warnings about the dire consequences of not minding your mother.

We almost never name cattle. If you grow attached to them, you might find yourself a vegetarian with a bank account drenched in red ink. Buck Rogers was the exception. It was easy to spot him: He was the small black blur galloping through the peaceful scene.

Most folks who own animals will testify that the critters have distinct personalities. Samuel D. Gosling, a University of Texas psychologist, agrees. "Animals have personalities, emotions and thoughts, just as humans do," says Gosling, who has published several articles on the subject.

Across the garden fence one afternoon, we heard a tremendous clatter, something like an explosion in an aluminum pan factory. Buck Rogers, awakening from a nap under a cotton wagon, had launched into one of his outrageous bucking episodes, his head and back hitting the wagon's underside with all the force his 70-pound frame could muster. He finally bucked his way out and dashed off, leaving me wiping tears of laughter from my face. Crystal clear was the notion that the little fella lived with joy!

Like his namesake, a fictional space opera character from the 1930s, the bovine Buck Rogers awoke each morning bent on new adventures. Chasing guineas set off a raucous squawking chorus that seemed to amuse him. Although he never reached outer space as his cartoon namesake did, he sometimes attempted flight by leaping into the air from the top of a large mound of manure scooped from cow and horse pens.

Eventually he grew up and moved on to pastures elsewhere, but he brightened our days and made us think about the importance of living with energy and enthusiasm. ■

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