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March 2021



08

Flower Power

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

By Sheryl Smith-Rodgers

ON THE COVER

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

ABOVE

A firewheel.

Photos by Rob Greebon

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By Eli Winter

Month of Tweets

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

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



Scout's Honor

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

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

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



Hank the Cool Dog

Texas' coolest dog meets Texas' coolest character.

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

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

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

—JOSÉ ANTONIO NAVARRO

FINISH THIS SENTENCE

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

TCP Tell us how you would finish that sentence. Email your short responses to letters@TexasCoopPower.com or comment on our Facebook post. Include your co-op and town. Here are some of the responses to our January prompt: **Life was better ...**

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

JANICE F. CONWAY
TRINITY VALLEY EC
KEMP

Before COVID-19.

GARY GALLOWAY
TRI-COUNTY EC
WEATHERFORD

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

CARMEN LOCKSTEDT
VICTORIA EC
VICTORIA

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

PATRICIA RAPACKI
MIDSOUTH EC
MONTGOMERY

After I recovered from ovarian cancer.

SHERRI JEFFERY
GRAYSON-COLLIN EC
MCKINNEY

To see more responses, read Currents online.



Drink to That?

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

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

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

Cheers.



TCP Contests and More

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Night Life

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RUSSELL A. GRAVES

Captured!

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

JULIA FRANKENFIELD
MIDSOUTH EC
MONTGOMERY

No Fan of the Span

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

It should have a warning sign.

William Hamlin
Tri-County EC
Keller



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

KAY MOTLEY
VIA FACEBOOK

A World Opens

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

Dan Wood Jr.
Trinity Valley EC
Terrell

Dialect in Danger

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

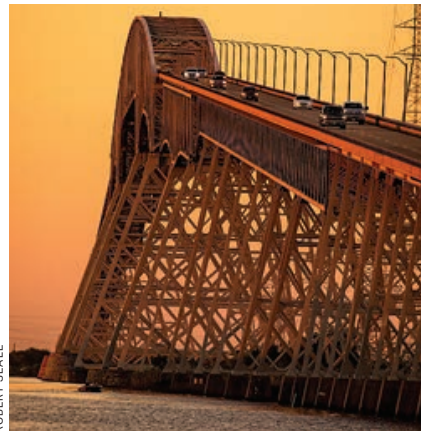
In 2001, I founded the Texas German Dialect Project at the University of Texas to record this unique dialect.

Hans Boas
Pedernales EC
Austin

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

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

Linda Secrist
San Bernard EC
Magnolia



ROBERT SEALE

TCP WRITE TO US
letters@TexasCoopPower.com

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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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SEASONAL SWAY OF COLORS
DRIVES TEXANS WILD

Flower POWER

BY SHERYL SMITH-RODGERS

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

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

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

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

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

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



ROB GREEBON | IMAGESFROMTEXAS.COM



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

WELL, I DO DECLARE!
OFFICIAL STATE DESIGNATIONS

Officially WILD

STATE FLOWER

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

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

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



WILDFLOWER CAPITAL OF TEXAS

DeWitt County

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

TEXAS WILDFLOWER DAY

Fourth Saturday in April

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

BLUEBONNET CO-CAPITALS OF TEXAS

Burnet and Llano counties

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



EDDIE WHITE

STATE FLOWER SONG

Bluebonnets

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

OFFICIAL BLUEBONNET FESTIVAL OF TEXAS

Chappell Hill Bluebonnet Festival

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

**WILDFLOWER SEEDING
BRIGHTENS ROAD TRIPS**

Take It ON THE ROAD

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

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

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

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

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

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



ROB GREEBON | IMAGESFROMTEXAS.COM



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

Picture THIS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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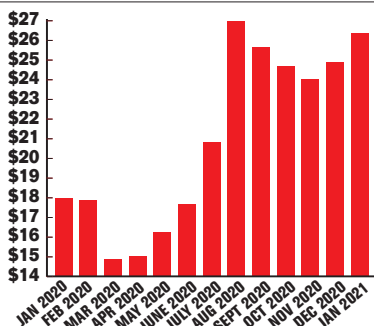
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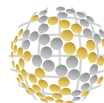
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Silver Trend Chart: Price per ounce based on monthly averages.

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MESSAGE
FROM
PRESIDENT/
CEO

**DARRYL
SCHRIVER**

An Exciting Time to be a Co-op Member

SPRING IS UPON US, temperatures are getting warmer and we are spending more time outdoors. The spring weather brings vibrant colors and recreation activities. Your co-op is also experiencing exciting times.

Tri-County Electric Cooperative recently wrapped up our 2020 year. We added 5,565 meters during the year, which equates to 4.73% growth. Additionally, we added 222 miles of line to our system to serve our membership. This growth is astounding, especially during a world-wide pandemic.

In November, we partnered with the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, our national trade association, to conduct a membership satisfaction survey. Members were selected at random to complete a phone interview or receive an electronic survey to gather data. NRECA worked with Touchstone Energy Cooperatives to calculate our 2020 American Customer Satisfaction Index to measure satisfaction. Our 2020 ACSI score was an 84, an increase of three points from 2019. We appreciate our members who took the time to complete the survey. 800586117

Soon, our co-op's board of directors will grow by two directors. You may recall the board adopted a new set of bylaws that went into effect on November 1, 2020. Those bylaws included a redistricting of the director district boundaries and expansion of the board. Now, the membership is equally represented with four urban districts, four suburban districts and a rural district. The Keller area gained two directors, districts 1 and 2. These seats are vacant, but the Committee on Nominations and Qualifications is hard at work to recommend top candidates to the board of directors for appointment.

We received an overwhelming response from the members of districts 1 and 2 who showed interest in serving the co-op as a director. The committee took the time to interview each candidate who applied and recommended top candidates to the board for consideration. The board expects the two new directors to join the board later this spring.

Your co-op is also accepting applications from members of districts 3, 6 and 8 who are interested in serving on the board of directors. The new bylaws also brought a more open and transparent nomination process designed to give any interested member a path to the election ballot. More information on the nomination process is located on the next page. 800631249

Last, but not least, we have a new outage map coming. As an electric provider, we know that you expect safe and reliable electricity. However, some outages are beyond our control. We have heard your concerns and comments on our current map and have plans to bring you a new map that allows for enhanced communication. Our team of employees is hard at work to set up the new map and expects to roll it out in the coming months. Be on the lookout for additional information on this enhanced feature.

As you can see, there is a lot happening at your cooperative and it is a great time to be a member. ■



Final Call: 2021 Director Nominations

Deadline approaching for candidates seeking nomination through the committee

TRI-COUNTY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE'S director nomination process is open for director districts 3, 6 and 8.

DISTRICT 3, suburban district

DISTRICT 6, suburban district

DISTRICT 8, urban district

Members in these districts interested in serving on the Tri-County Electric Cooperative Board of Directors may seek nomination through the Committee on Nominations and Qualifications or by member petition.

Application Deadlines

- ▶ Application packets for members seeking **nomination through the committee** are due by 5 pm on Thursday, March 11, 2021.
- ▶ Application packets for members seeking **nomination by petition** are due by 5 pm on Thursday, April 15, 2021.

Planning your Petition

Members may obtain the petition on our website at tcctexas.com/director-elections under **Election Documents**. 8005242301

The first page includes information to help members complete the petition. The second page includes blocks for member information, and candidates may print as many pages as needed in order to obtain a sufficient number of member signatures. We recommend gathering more than the minimum in the event a member's signature cannot be verified or is not valid. 800860780

Once the petition is complete and meets nomination requirements, director candidates must submit it to the co-op along with the other required documents.

Director candidates may obtain a list of members within their district by contacting the cooperative via email at memberrequests@tcctexas.com.

Bylaws related to the board of directors are located in Article 4, including director qualifications, director nominations, director elections and director terms. A copy of the bylaws is available at tcctexas.com/bylaws. Members may also request a copy of the bylaws by calling our offices at 817-444-3201.

Please contact us with any questions related to the director nomination process. ■

Visit tcctexas.com/director-elections for nomination documents and additional information.

Director Nominations

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

Committee on Nominations and Qualifications

- ▶ Eligible members seeking nomination as a director shall file their applications by the deadline established in the most recent director election schedule, pursuant to the application form provided by the cooperative.
- ▶ Each director applicant shall execute, and attach to the application, the necessary and relevant consent forms provided by the cooperative for reasonable credit and criminal background checks.

▶ Each director applicant shall attach to the application the signatures of at least twenty five (25) members whose primary residence is located within the director district for which the applicant seeks.

▶ Each director applicant shall also attach an application fee payment of fifty dollars (\$50.00) or other fee as determined by the Board to cover the application process.

Nomination by Petition

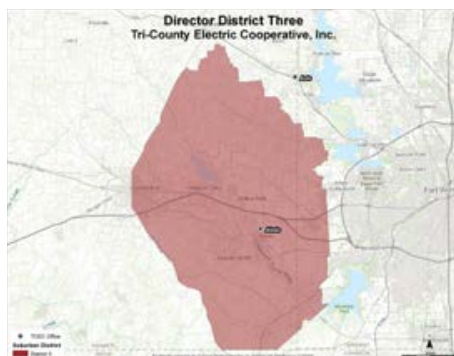
▶ Eligible members seeking nomination by petition may nominate themselves for a position on the ballot, by returning a petition containing the signatures of fifty (50) members who reside in the district.

▶ The petition must be filed with the cooperative by the deadline established in the election schedule and must be on the form as provided by the cooperative.

▶ The petition must be accompanied by a candidate application and background check consent forms.

▶ Each petitioning director candidate applicant shall also attach an application fee of one hundred dollars (\$100.00) or a fee determined by the board to recover a portion of the election costs.

▶ Petitioning candidates who are determined eligible shall have their names included on the ballot for election for the applicable director district. The label of *Petitioning Candidate* shall accompany the petitioning candidate's name on the ballot.





COMMITTEE MEMBERS, LEFT TO RIGHT
Danny Tuggle, District 6 | **Randy Marshall**, District 4
Steve Bartley, District 3 | **Lesley Boone**, District 8
Ramey Keeth, District 5 | **Ranell Scott**, District 7

*Not pictured: **Robert Gotcher**, District 9, Committee Chair*

Meet the 2021 Committee

The Committee on Nominations and Qualifications

THE COMMITTEE ON NOMINATIONS AND QUALIFICATIONS is responsible for reviewing and accepting applications from director candidates for each district scheduled for election each year. The committee, composed of no more than nine members, is nominated by the board to serve a three-year term and includes one member from each district. The membership elects and confirms appointments of committee members whose terms expire that year at the Annual Meeting. 800857400

In order to serve on the committee, members must be in good standing with the cooperative, not serving as a cooperative board member, not employed by the co-op, not a director candidate, or closely related to a co-op director or a director candidate.

Nomination through a committee is one of the most transparent methods a cooperative can use for director nominations. Tri-County Electric Co-op’s committee is composed of a great group of members who are looking out for the overall well-being of the cooperative.

Members of the committee met virtually with the co-op’s President/CEO Darryl Schriver and senior staff in January for an on-boarding session. During the virtual meeting, Schriver presented the group with their responsibilities, as well as provided an update on the cooperative.

The committee met in early February to interview director candidates who applied for the district 1 and 2 vacancies. Committee members reviewed each applicant’s application packet and asked a series of questions. The schedule was rigorous and included two days of interviews. After much deliberation, the 7-member committee recommended top candidates for each district to the board of directors for consideration. 8001312701

This month, the committee will meet to review applications from candidates in districts 3, 6 and 8 seeking nomination through the committee. ■

Meeting Notice

Friday, March 12 | 5:00 pm

The Committee on Nominations and Qualifications will meet at 5:00 pm on Friday, March 12, 2021, at the co-op’s Aledo office to accept and review applications from candidates seeking nomination through the committee for districts 3, 6 and 8. The committee will report back to the membership with a slate of nominees by director district published in the May *Texas Co-op Power*.



Stepping Up

Keller's Community Storehouse rises to meet needs

BY BOB BUCKEL, COMMUNICATIONS AND MEDIA REPRESENTATIVE

"WE'VE ALWAYS SAID THAT WHEN people understand the need that's in their community – truly understand it – they want to help. We had the opportunity last year... to really tell our story. People wanted to hear it."

Barbara Board, CEO of Keller's Community Storehouse, has been telling that story for more than two decades. She's never seen a greater need than she saw in 2020 – and she's never seen a greater response from her staff, the community and the families they serve. 8004452501

Community Storehouse is a nonprofit agency with a simple mission: Keep children healthy, active and thriving in the Keller, Southlake and Northwest school districts. Their donation center and headquarters is at 12001 Katy Road, just down the street from Tri-County Electric Cooperative's Keller office, and the original Upscale Retail store, a major source of funding, is at 309 North Main – a stone's throw from the Tri-County Electric Co-op office. Both facilities get their electricity

from the co-op.

But their true power comes from their community.

Volunteers range from retired people with time on their hands, to busy professionals, to high school students looking for service projects. They take in donated food and household items, assemble grocery bags and take-home snack-packs for children, sort clothing, restock the food pantry and deliver goods – mostly via drive-through – to families in need. They also help with special events, from planning and execution to cleaning up afterward.

Community Storehouse always needs donations – of money and food – and willing volunteers in every area. But the biggest need right now is for tutors.

When last year's COVID outbreak eliminated larger in-school programs and left many children learning from home, Community Storehouse responded by launching an after-school

tutoring program. Gearing up to meet that need has changed the landscape permanently.

"Once we started really honing down on what we do and what the community needs, the Achievement Center was born," said Megan Stiller, the agency's development director. "Now we host around 20 kids a day, Monday through Thursday, and then on Saturday, they get one-on-one tutoring, mentorship, all that good stuff."

The need was clear. Many children fell behind because they couldn't attend classes, and their families can't afford private tutoring. Community Storehouse has certified teachers and curriculum specialists among their staff and volunteers, who work with school counselors to identify students with the greatest needs and get them consistent, positive, encouraging help.

That need will still be here when the pandemic of 2020 is a fading memory.



TOP: Mastering the use of a glue stick is just one of the challenges pre-schoolers face in "Little Learners" sessions.

LEFT: Upscale Retail opened a new location Jan. 29 at 6650 Beach Street in Fort Worth. Like the original on North Main in Keller, the new store helps support the Community Storehouse's outreach programs.



TOP LEFT: In addition to an “army of volunteers,” Community Storehouse CEO Barbara Board (seated) relies on a gifted and dedicated staff that includes (standing, from left) development director Megan Stiller and educational director Shanna Holden.

TOP RIGHT: Ryan Ruiz helps load items from the Community Storehouse’s Donation Center on Katy Road, taking them to the new Upscale Retail location.

BOTTOM LEFT : Volunteer Cami McElhinny helps a father and daughter with a coloring project in the Community Storehouse’s Achievement Center recently. “Little Learners” works with children 18 months to pre-K to build pre-school readiness.

“I think those families who came in for the first time and got that assistance, they found that we’re a good resource, whether it be the tutoring or the nutritional center,” Stiller said. “It wasn’t just in the heat of the moment that Community Storehouse saw these big numbers. These people are staying with us.”

Educational director Shanna Holden said this spring, the focus is on helping kids who are learning online catch up and keep up. “We’re kind of filling in gaps as we go,” she noted. “We have an accredited teacher on staff, in the tutoring room, for all the sessions. We’re able to also hand out a lot of resources to our folks.”

“The tutors are all volunteers,” Stiller added. “A huge piece of what we need are volunteers for this program, because it’s 20 volunteers a day, times five. We have two different shifts, 4:30 to 5:30 and 5:30 to 6:30.”

As of this writing, the program was serving 117 kids – 70 to 90 in any given week. And while other programs like Kids-to-College, Kids-to-Careers, Camp Read S’more and the summer Quest program will adjust to conditions and continue, tutoring will undoubtedly remain a major focus, going forward. 800608147

Stiller said it’s all part of “getting creative” in response to the pandemic – not shutting down, but pivoting in response to the need.

Lauren Baccus, community affairs coordinator for Tri-County Electric Co-op in Keller, is a member of the Community Storehouse advisory board. The agency also has a junior board and benefits from strong volunteer involvement from teenagers, advisory board members and members of its board of directors.

“I can’t say enough good things about our army of volunteers, teens and adults alike, who are coming through that door, masking up, face shield on, and getting it done,” Holden said. “There’s just so much community buy-in, so much positivity toward our mission.”

Holden said kids who have fallen behind can take up to three years to get back to grade level. She hopes the Community Storehouse programs can help teachers cut that in half.

“We’re here for the long haul for our community,” she said.

Board said people’s response to all these efforts has been phenomenal.

“It just really brought the community together in full force for the children,” she said. “There’s been a lot of challenges, and a lot of people have been hit really hard, but I think God has used this as kind of a shakeup, to get our priorities back in line – to show us what’s important.”

That’s the Community Storehouse story – and they’re sticking with it. ■

“We’re here for the long haul for our community.”

—SHANNA HOLDEN

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MARCH 5

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Spring Forward

DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME
BEGINS MARCH 14



I Work for You



MONICA BULLOCK

Benefits & Policy Administrator
Human Resources department, Aledo

When you ask Tri-County Electric Co-op employees how they feel about their job, many use the word “family.” That’s doubly true for Monica Bullock; her husband, John, is the co-op’s accounting supervisor. But it’s true that other way, too.

“My favorite part is the people,” she said. “I love the group I work with, and I enjoy talking to the employees, getting to know them on a personal level.”

Monica graduated high school in Plano and trained as an orthodontic assistant. After a short time, she went into the title/escrow business. A few years later, she was single again, with two children, living near her parents in Springtown when a friend put her in touch with the HR department at Tri-County Electric Co-op.

She applied, interviewed and started in Member Services in November 2016. Monica transitioned to the HR department in 2019. There have been many changes since then, but taking care of employees has remained her priority. COVID-19 has put even more on the HR plate, but they’re making it through.

Monica and John have four kids, so the idea of spare time is foreign. Jake plays soccer, Aubrey is into singing, Jackson is learning piano and Luke is in Boy Scouts. The dog, Baxter, is spoiled.

When she’s not at a kid’s activity, she enjoys singing, crafts and decorating their new house. ■

“My job is kind of like a box of chocolates. It’s different every day and that’s part of what I love about it.”



Little Black Dress Masquerade
March 25

Golf Shootout
April 5

Your Co-op's Community Calendar

March

5

**2021 Scholarship Applications
due by 5 pm**
tcectexas.com/scholarship

24

**"The Long Dirt Road" Awards
Luncheon**
kellerchamber.com

25

Alliance Development Forum
metroportchamber.org

**Little Black Dress Masquerade
and Fashion Show**
unitedwayofparkercounty.org

26

15th Annual Clay Shoot
azlechamber.com

27

WCS Lion's Gala
wcslions.org

April

5

Golf Shootout
southlakechamber.com

22

Fired Up
kellerchamber.com

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 with the event name, date and where readers can find more information.

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Mexican Lasagna

BY NANCY LINDE
SPRINGTOWN

- 1 pound ground meat (pork, beef or chicken)
- 1 large onion, minced
- 3 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1 large can of tomato sauce
- 1 small can of tomato paste
- 1 can of black beans, drained
- 1 teaspoon marjoram
- 1 teaspoon chili powder
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1 package cheddar cheese
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 package of tortillas (corn or flour)

1. Mix all ingredients, except for the tortillas, in a pan.
2. Line a 9 x 13-inch pan with a layer of tortillas. Spread a layer of the meat and cheese mixture on top. Place another layer of tortillas and finish with a layer of the meat and cheese mixture.
3. Cook on high in the microwave for 15 minutes.

Enjoy!

COOK'S TIP: Serve with salsa and guacamole.



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RECIPE NAME _____

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EMAIL: Please include the above information with your recipe and send to pr@tcectexas.com

ONLINE: tcectexas.com/recipe-submission

MAIL: Please detach and submit this form with your recipe and mail to:

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Wounded— Then Rejected

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

BY MICHAEL HURD

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Tacos

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

BY MEGAN MYERS, FOOD EDITOR

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

Roasted Red Salsa

6 plum tomatoes

1 medium white onion, halved

3–5 cloves garlic

1–2 hot peppers, such as jalapeños, serranos or habaneros

Fresh cilantro (optional)

Salt, to taste

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

1. Roast the tomatoes, onion, garlic and peppers on the stovetop or under a broiler. Turn vegetables as needed, blackening all over. Keep an eye on the garlic and peppers, as they will roast faster than the tomatoes.

2. Add roasted vegetables, and cilantro if you like, to a blender or food processor and blend until smooth. A couple of pinches of salt will bring the salsa's brightness to the fore. Taste and adjust seasoning to your liking. You can serve this salsa warm, or chill until ready to serve.

MAKES ABOUT 3 CUPS

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





Fajita Tacos With Chimichurri Sauce

KITTIELE POTTS
BOWIE-CASS EC

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

FILLING

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

CHIMICHURRI SAUCE

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

CARAMELIZED ONIONS

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

TO SERVE

Tortillas

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

\$500 WINNER

Grilled Garden Harvest Tacos

CHERYL SCHULMAN
FAYETTE EC



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

MAKES 6 TACOS

FILLING

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

"BRING THE HEAT" SLAW

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



AVOCADO CRÈME

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

TO SERVE

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

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

TCP \$500 Recipe Contest

KIDS COOKING DUE MAR 10

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

CONTINUED >



Focus on Texas

Photo Contest

Submit your best photos for a chance to see your entry in the magazine!

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Deadline: March 10

Portraits

Deadline: April 10

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RECIPES CONTINUED

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

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

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

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

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

SERVES 8



Instant Pot Carnitas Tacos

MELALEE WINKLER
COSERV

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

6–7 pounds boneless pork butt shoulder

1 tablespoon salt

1 tablespoon dried Mexican oregano, crumbled

1 tablespoon smoked paprika

1 tablespoon cumin

1 teaspoon chipotle powder

½ teaspoon garlic powder

2 tablespoons olive oil

1 cup orange juice

¼ cup chicken stock

1 yellow onion, quartered

TO SERVE

Flour tortillas

Diced red onion

Sliced radishes

Chopped cilantro

Crumbled queso fresco

Lime wedges

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

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

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

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

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

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

SERVES 12

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— R., Lacey, Washington

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COURTESY CHET GARNER

Where Artistry Congregates

Czech and German painted churches in Central Texas are sparkling shrines

BY CHET GARNER

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

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

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

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

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

TCP WEB EXTRA See Chet's video from the painted churches in Fayette County and check out his Texplorations on *The Daytripper* on PBS.

Know Before You Go

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

MARCH

01

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

06

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

09

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

11

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

12

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

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

13

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

14

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

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

15

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

16

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

18

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

19

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

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

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

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

20

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

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

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

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

MORE EVENTS >

TCP Submit Your Event

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

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Event Calendar

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

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Pick of the Month

Classic Car Stampede

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

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

MARCH EVENTS CONTINUED

Palestine Dogwood

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

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

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

21

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

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

26

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

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

27

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

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

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

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

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

APRIL

01

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

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

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

02

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

03

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

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

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

Diners

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

GRACE FULTZ



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP

CHRIS MILLER
BLUEBONNET EC

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

REAGAN MAZY
SAM HOUSTON EC

Sunset at Ranch Hand Cafe in Cleveland.

SHELLY BORGFELD
FITZPATRICK
PEDERNALES EC

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

SANDRA DRAKE
BLUEBONNET EC

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



Upcoming Contests

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

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

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



Few and Far

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

BY ELI WINTER
PHOTO BY WYATT MCSPADDEN

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

TEXAS MINT

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

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

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



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BATTLE OF GONZALES

first in the series ● ● ● ●

The stunning 2020 Texas Silver Round depicts a scene from the Battle of Gonzales, with three Texian revolutionaries defending the famous Gonzales cannon, while brandishing the Come And Take It Flag.

The Texas Silver Round can be purchased in a monster box produced exclusively for the Texas Mint. Packaged in 20 protective tubes of 25 rounds each, the monster box holds 500 1-ounce Texas Silver Rounds. Built from durable cold-rolled steel and finished with a matte black powder coat, the monster box lid features an orange cutout of the state of Texas. Each sealed monster box is secured with a unique serial number and a holographic seal to ensure maximum product protection.

The Texas Silver Round is also available to purchase in a similarly designed and secured mini-monster box, which contains 10 protective tubes of 25 rounds each for a total of 250 silver rounds.



BATTLE OF THE ALAMO

second in the series ● ● ● ●

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



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