

UNEARTHING ARTIFACTS
IN WEST TEXAS

JUNETEENTH'S LONG PATH
ACROSS AMERICA

STAUNCH COMPETITOR
FINALLY WEARS OUT

Texas Coop Power

FOR MEDINA EC MEMBERS

JUNE 2023

Comfort Food

New food editor
Vianney Rodriguez
opens her kitchen
to TCP readers



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June 2023



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Scratching the Surface

West Texas ranchers team up with researchers to unearth pieces of history.

*By Eileen Mattei
Photos by Dave Shafer*

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A Pulitzer Prize-winning historian describes the holiday's long path out of her home state.

*Excerpt by Annette Gordon-Reed
Illustration by John Jay Cabuay*

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ON THE COVER

New food editor Vianney Rodriguez in her studio kitchen, Cocina Gris.

Photo by Jason David Page

ABOVE

Joey and Laurie Roland show teeth from an extinct three-toed horse at their ranch.

Photo by Dave Shafer

Making Magic With Vianney

MEET VIANNEY RODRIGUEZ, the Corpus Christi foodie who will be inviting readers into her kitchen every month as *TCP*'s new food editor. You first met Vianney in December 2020, when she wrote in delicious detail about *pan dulce*.

She fell in love with cooking as a child in Aransas Pass. "Growing up watching my *abuelita* and mami cook together in perfect sync ... They were creating magic. I wanted to be a part of this world and have been cooking ever since."

Vianney—"simply say the letters V-N-A"—started her blog, Sweet Life, in 2009, joining the online conversations that she saw as "mini love letters to food." Her passion kept growing. "I have authored two cookbooks—*Latin Twist*, a cocktail book featuring cocktails from Latin countries, and *The Tex-Mex Slow Cooker*."

Today she works out of her studio kitchen, Cocina Gris—gray kitchen—where she can't wait to dive into more reader recipes from Co-op Country.



“Don’t be told something is impossible. There’s always a way.”

—ROBERT RODRIGUEZ

FINISH THIS SENTENCE THANKS, DAD, FOR ...

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 April prompt: **I drove all night to ...**

Find myself *still* in the great state of Texas!

ROXANNE NEWMAN
VIA FACEBOOK

Be by my mother’s bedside in her final hours.

ELLEN ROZNECK COULTER
VIA FACEBOOK

Be at the gate when he got a weekend leave.

MARTHA BEIMER
VIA FACEBOOK

Get back to Texas, and I kissed the ground when I did.

RICHELLE NASH
GRAYSON-COLLIN EC
SHERMAN

Get to Concan after heavy spring rains so I could float the Frio.

LISA HOLLOWAY FITZSIMMONS
VIA FACEBOOK

Visit our website to see more responses.

QWERTY, USA

When typing while using proper form on a QWERTY keyboard, only two U.S. states' names can be typed using just one hand (overlooking the need for the shift key for capitalization). Texas is one of them. Ohio is the other.



TCP Contests and More

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Holiday Desserts

FOCUS ON TEXAS PHOTOS

Helping Out

RECOMMENDED READING

National Egg Day, June 3, reminds us of all the great reader recipes on our website that use eggs—especially those found in *Eggs: Plain and Fancy* from March 2016.



Welcome Signs

With the arrival of 470,708 people in 2022, Texas became just the second state to surpass 30 million residents—now with 30,029,572. The other one? Well, that would be California, with 39,029,342.

Super Cool or Old School?

THE FIRST LP came out 75 years ago this month, when Columbia released the New York Philharmonic's rendition of Mendelssohn Violin Concerto in E minor as a long-playing record June 21, 1948.

Since then, we've hoarded records, then eight-track and cassette tapes, and compact discs. Those made way for digital files and streaming as our favorite music ended up both in a closet and in the cloud.

But take heart, record geeks: Vinyl albums outsold CDs in 2022 for the second year in a row.



DANA SMITH

Grounded in Mystery

“An East Texas minister built an airship that supposedly flew in 1902. It was destroyed before it could fly publicly at the 1904 World’s Fair in St. Louis.”

VAL L. ERWIN
COSERV
LANTANA

442nd’s Heroism

My father took part in the rescue as a member of an antitank company [*Rescue of the Lost Battalion*, February 2023].

The 442nd suffered 800 casualties rescuing 211 Texans. After the battle, Gen. John E. Dahlquist ordered everyone in formation to congratulate them. He scolded the regimental commander that he wanted *everyone* there. The commander stood at attention and replied, “That’s all that’s left.”

Sidney Miyakawa
CoServ
Lewisville

Bless your heart [A *Pet Project*, March 2023]. It’s the hardest thing fur parents have to do, but it’s our last, best gift to them. You’ll know when it’s time.

MARY HENDERSON
HARP
VIA FACEBOOK

Sacred Memory

As a boy growing up in north Louisiana, we would go exploring on a small creek near my house [*Caught Cuisine*, February 2023]. Along one stretch of the creek was a very low area that always contained numerous pitcher plants. The local name for the plants was preacher in a pulpit.

John Tubb
Medina EC
Houston

Wreaths Matter

Thanks to TCP’s December 2022 mention [*Wreaths for the Fallen*] of the November 2018 *Circle of Life* article about the impact of Wreaths Across America in Texas. That story helped grow 86 WAA Texas locations to 313 in 2022, with over 250,000 wreaths placed on veterans’ graves. Nationwide, over 2.7 million wreaths were placed at 3,702 locations.

Ellen Fuller
Bryan Texas Utilities
Bryan

My dad, Jack Andrews, was a proud member and captain in the 442nd in World War II. The 442nd ended up being the most highly decorated unit for its size and length of service in U.S. military history. The 442nd was also credited as being one of the first to find Dachau and release prisoners.

Bill Andrews
Big Country EC and Pedernales EC
Shackelford County and Buda



DAVE SHAFER

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

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SCRATCHING THE SURFACE

WEST TEXAS RANCHERS team up with researchers to unearth artifacts



LEFT Graffiti on the plastered walls of Fountain House at Fort Chadbourne dates to 1870.
TOP Artifacts, such as this nail, sometimes emerge after rains. ABOVE Rosettes that went on horses' bridles denoting cavalry Company F.



LEFT Garland and Lana Richards outside the restored east barracks at Fort Chadbourne. ABOVE Looking through the walls of the ruins of the west barracks, across the parade grounds and to Fountain House.

In its heyday, more than 150 years ago, Fort Chadbourne housed 450 soldiers. Today, it sits by its lonesome on a desolate rise in West Texas. Six restored limestone buildings and others, crumbling but stabilized, surround the parade grounds.

The inhabitants are long gone, but traces of them remain.

Garland Richards' family has lived on ranchland here, north of Bronte, in rural Coke County, for eight generations. The site includes a former stagecoach stop on the Butterfield Overland Mail Co. route and the remains of the frontier fort, used by the U.S. Army 1852–67.

Richards, a member of Taylor Electric Cooperative, knew history was being lost to time and the elements.

"When I was a kid, there was a waist-high adobe wall here," he says. "In my lifetime, it has melted to ground level."

The Richardses and another West Texas ranching family, knowing their properties hold remarkable history, are trying to stop the destructive march of time, welcoming excavations by archaeologists and paleontologists and

preserving important stories.

In 1999, soon after he inherited the property, Garland and his wife, Lana, set up the nonprofit Fort Chadbourne Foundation and gave the fort to the foundation to preserve and protect it. They marked a grid over an aerial photo and began keeping meticulous records.

"Everything we have found has been recorded on the grid," Richards says. "You do the best you can with the money you have and common sense."

Their first goal was to stabilize the weathered fort buildings, making them safe to work in and around. Lana took grant writing classes and got the needed funding.

"We joined the Concho Valley Archeological Society and let them come," Lana says. "It was one way of learning about what we had." CVAS members under the direction of Larry Riemenschneider, a Concho Valley Electric Cooperative member and volunteer steward with the Texas Historical Commission, began unearthing the fort's past.

The volunteers cost the Richardses a lot of bologna sandwiches, Lana says, but the workers are proud of their part in excavating a frontier fort. I know that's true, because 15 years ago, my husband and I participated in a Fort Chadbourne dig, working alongside a group of military retirees. The painstaking work of troweling and then sifting through the soil removed from meter-square sections was balanced with the joys of minor discoveries and the unsettling real-

ization that humans leave behind a lot of debris.

“We found almost half a million artifacts below the floor of the double officers’ quarters—the dogtrot house where rancher Tom Odom and his wife raised 13 children,” Garland says. In 1877, the Odoms purchased the land from well-known pioneer Mary Maverick and turned the fort into a ranch headquarters.

“The archaeological picture of Fort Chadbourne is probably more complete than any other Texas military site,” Garland says, based on the number of artifacts recovered.

The 12,500-square-foot Fort Chadbourne Visitor Center opened in 2012 to give people a firsthand look at some of the military, ranching and Native American history of West Texas. Half of the center’s exhibits sit inside a spacious walk-in vault with displays of cavalry items uncovered during digs: buckles, spurs, buttons, helmet badges and metal powder flasks along with flattened bullets used as poker chips. A Native American exhibit contains 48 large knife and spear points found near the fort in a foot-square cache that dates back 6,000 years. There’s also a 450-piece antique gun collection and a replica stagecoach.

A walk around the fort and into the buildings puts the center’s displays into perspective. Even in daylight, the quiet creates a haunting atmosphere. Inside the restored Fountain House, bullet holes in its thick, plastered walls shared space with graffiti from 1870 on. After circling the unrestored hospital and the restored barracks, I spotted a rusty, 4-inch sliver of metal on the ground. Garland explained it was a square-headed nail common until 1880 or so. “You’re in the Butterfield stage corral area,” he says. “It’s littered with artifacts.”

Each excavation answers some questions but raises others. Ground-penetrating radar has revealed a building that isn’t mapped.

If you discover archaeological treasures on your land, contact your local archaeological society, Lana recommends. “We did this correctly, thanks to Larry’s help,” she says.

Millions of Years Away

WHILE exploring family property near Snyder, about 80 miles northwest of Bronte, Tina Roland came across large bones eroding out of a gully. Determined to find somebody who could identify the bones, Roland contacted Eileen Johnson, professor of museum science and a paleobiologist at Texas Tech University.

When Johnson went to Snyder in 2005 to see the discovery, she found herself looking at bones dating from 1.8 to 2.6 million years ago, a time known as the Early Pleistocene. The gully marked an ancient stream bed.

“We knew this was important and exciting. We’re still working 17 years later,” Johnson says. “There are a handful



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE Laurie and Joey Roland inside the 15-foot-deep paleontological dig site at Roland Springs Ranch. Graduate student assistant Madison Westfall tends to specimens from the ranch that are filed at the Museum of Texas Tech University. An ancient tortoiseshell recovered from the ranch.





of Early Pleistocene sites in the country of this age, but none has this diversity of species or is so well preserved.”

Numerous wading birds, camels, rabbits, giant tortoises and ancestors of coyotes, mountain lions and prairie dogs lived here once. Fossils have revealed the first appearance of some animals and the last appearance of others. Microbiological material excavated with the bones gives clues about the ancient plant community and climate.

The paleontological site is 15 feet deep and measures approximately 30 feet by 30 feet. For six weeks each summer, a small international crew trowels up dirt and washes the sediment through a fine mesh screen. Joey Roland, Tina’s son, and Joey’s wife, Laurie, host the field camp, providing small cabins next to their house and pool. “They are both very much involved,” Johnson says.

“I’m not a paleontologist, but they’ve taught us so much, mostly during talks around the pool after work,” says Joey,

a member of Big Country Electric Cooperative. “A random bone is exciting, but it doesn’t tell a story. It’s out of context. For us, this is fascinating. I love it, and I’ve fought tooth and nail to protect it.”

With doggedness, he managed to get an oil pipeline diverted around the site. Unlike archaeological sites, no federal or state laws protect paleontological sites.

Laurie loves the picture that the finds suggest: huge Galapagos-like tortoises roaming the West Texas grasslands about 2 million years ago with tiny, three-toed horses grazing nearby. She is thrilled to sometimes find prehistoric bones on the surface after a rain. “Humans have never seen or touched them,” she says. “How could you not know that’s special?”

The Rolands share their findings with their community, allowing the Scurry County Museum in Snyder to offer seasonal public tours at the site. The museum has a temporary exhibit of casts made of the finds. The Museum of Texas Tech’s Roland Springs Ranch materials are part of ongoing lab research and not currently viewable by the public.

“Joey and Laurie are the first and only landowners I know with the willingness to let people on their land,” Johnson says.

“It’s selfish not to let them come to the site,” Laurie says. “Texas is about hospitality.”

Texas has millions of years of buried history—giant mammoths, dinosaurs, oyster reefs, frontier trails. Does that make you wonder what could be in your backyard? ■



‘On Juneteenth’

A Pulitzer Prize-winning historian describes the holiday’s long path out of Texas

TO MY SURPRISE some years back, I began to hear people outside of my home state, Texas, talk about, and *actually celebrate* the holiday “Juneteenth.” June 19, 1865, shortened to “Juneteenth,” was the day that enslaved African Americans in Texas were told that slavery had ended, two years after the Emancipation Proclamation had been signed, and just over two months after Confederate General Robert E. Lee had surrendered to Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox. Despite the formal surrender, the Confederate army had continued to fight on in Texas until mid-May. It was only after they finally surrendered that Major General Gordon Granger, while at his headquarters in Galveston, prepared General Order Number 3, announcing the end of legalized slavery in the state.

The truth is, I confess here, that I was initially annoyed, at least mildly so, when I first heard that others outside of Texas claimed the holiday. But why? After all, it was a positive turn in history, evidence that our country was leaving behind, or attempting to, a barbarous institution that had blighted the lives of millions. Such a thing should be celebrated far and wide.

My twinge of possessiveness grew out of the habit of seeing my home state, and the people who reside there, as special. The things that happened there couldn’t have happened in other places. Non-Texans could never really understand what the events that took place in Texas actually meant. I am certain that I’m not alone in this attitude.

From my earliest days, it was drummed into me and, I believe, other young people growing up in Texas at that time, that we inhabited a unique place that we were always supposed to claim, and of which we were always supposed to be proud. I’ve noticed over the years, that it is hard to meet a person from Texas who does not, at some point in the conversation, let you know, either with a drawl or without, that he or she is from the state.

My proprietary attitude about Juneteenth quickly disappeared. Rather than keeping the holiday to ourselves, Texans have been in the forefront of trying to make Juneteenth a national holiday. As I think of it, it’s really a very Texas move to say that something that happened in our

state was of enough consequence to the entire nation that it should be celebrated nationwide.

It has been offered, as part of the justification, that the end of slavery in Texas was the end of the institution period. That’s not quite true. Granger’s order did not end slavery in the country. That did not happen officially until December 1865, when the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution was ratified by the necessary number of states. But it is significant that Texas was the site of the tail end of the Confederate war effort. As the war had been fought to preserve slavery, celebrating Juneteenth throughout the land is a fitting way to mark the end of that effort.

It also is fitting to think of Texas in relation to the nation for another reason. The state has been described as a bellwether for what the United States will become; the term “Texification” has come into use to describe a process that is, supposedly, of recent origin.

The history of Juneteenth, which includes the many years before the events in Galveston and afterward, shows that Texas, more than any state in the Union, has always embodied nearly every major aspect of the story of the United States of America. That fact has been obscured by broad caricatures of the state and its people, caricatures that Texans themselves helped to create and helped make the state seem exotic, almost foreign to the rest of the Union.

My Texas roots go deep—on my mother’s side back to the 1820s, on my father’s side at least to the 1860s. Significantly, my wide-ranging approach to Juneteenth reveals that behind all the broad stereotypes about Texas is a story of Indians, settler colonialists, Hispanic culture in North America, slavery, race, and immigration. It is the American story, told from this most American place. ■

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JUNETEENTH

COMMEMORATED ANNUALLY ON JUNE 19TH, 1865, AS THE OLDEST CELEBRATION OF THE END OF SLAVERY IN THE U.S. THE PROCLAMATION OF THE PRESIDENT ABRAHAM LINCOLN ON SEP. 22, 1862, THAT "ON JANUARY, A.D. 1865, IN REBELLION AGAINST THE UNION AND FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF SLAVERY, THE U.S. SHALL BE FREE AND INDEPENDENT, HOWEVER, IT WOULD BE UNLAWFUL TO PASS ANY AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION TO END THE INSTITUTION OF AFRICAN

SLAVES IN TEXAS IN APRIL 1865 MOST SLAVES IN TEXAS WERE SET FREE. THIS BEGAN TO CHANGE IN GALVESTON MAJ. GEN. G. W. MOORE, DISTRICT OF TEXAS, ORDERED THE POSTOFFICE BUILDING (STRAND BUILDING) ON JUNE 19, 1865. TEXAS ARE INFORMED THAT, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE EXECUTIVE ORDER, ALL SLAVES ARE FREE. THIS INVOLVES ALL RIGHTS AND RIGHTS OF FREE AND SLAVES." WITH THIS ORDER, THE INSTITUTION OF AFRICAN

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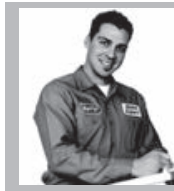


Based on an 1818 painting that depicts John Adams, Thomas Jefferson and Ben Franklin presenting a draft of the Declaration of Independence

A D V E R T I S E M E N T

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

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



Dear
Darryl

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

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

Clogged and Smelly – Lubbock, TX

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

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SeptiCleanse® Shock and Maintenance Programs are designed to work on any septic system regardless of design or age. From modern day systems to sand mounds, and systems installed generations ago, I have personally seen SeptiCleanse unclog and restore these systems in a matter of weeks. I highly recommend that you try it before spending any money on repairs. SeptiCleanse products are available online at www.septicleanse.com or you can order or learn more by calling toll free at 1-888-899-8345. If you use the promo code "TXS19", you can get a free shock treatment, added to your order, which normally costs \$169. So, make sure you use that code when you call or buy online.

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I guess I was a little bored. For the past hour, I'd been on the phone with Daniele, the head of my office in Italy, reviewing our latest purchases of Italian gold, Murano glass and Italian-made shoes and handbags.

"Daniele," I said, "What is the hottest jewelry in Italy right now?"

His reply? Woven gold bracelets studded with gems. He texted me some photos and I knew immediately that this was jewelry that Raffinato just had to have.

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The best part about these bracelets? The price. Because of our longstanding connections in Arezzo, the mecca of Italian goldsmithing, we can offer both bracelets together for just \$99, a fraction of the price you'll pay anywhere else for similar jewelry.

Order today. These bracelets are one of our hottest sellers this year, and with disruptions in the supply chain, we can only guarantee that we have ~~1,273~~ 861 of these bracelets on hand for this ad.

Make the next gift you give your loved one a trip to Italy with the Italiano Fantasia Bracelets, stunning accessories that are sure to turn heads.

Jewelry Specifications:

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- Fit wrists up to 7 ¼"

Italiano Fantasia Bracelet Collection

- | | |
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CEO
HERBERT "TREY"
GREBE III

Co-ops Keep It Local

I LOVE THE FEELING of being able to walk into my favorite locally owned shop, restaurant or store, knowing that its profit, product and staff make positive impacts on my community. The spirit of Main Street is embodied in these businesses, just as it is in Medina Electric Cooperative.

Electric cooperatives are as local and community-centered as they come. Founded as a way to bring electricity to communities that didn't interest investor-owned utilities, electric co-ops have been a cornerstone of community and economic development in rural Texas and beyond for decades.

That feeling I get when I visit small businesses in our community is the same feeling I get when I walk into work at the co-op every day. It's a feeling of pride. I'm proud to be part of an organization that serves my community instead of a group of shareholders who may never have set foot in our service territory.

Living on co-op lines is more than just knowing there are people out there working to bring you safe, reliable and affordable electric service. Living on co-op lines is an investment in our community and its members.

You see, Medina EC is a not-for-profit business. When we make more money than we need to keep

the lights on safely, affordably and reliably, we return it to our members (that's you!) in the form of capital credits. This means that after all co-op expenses are paid, any additional money we earn goes back into our community, instead of into a shareholder's pocket, which is pretty great!

And because we're owned by you, our members, we have a vested interest in making sure our community prospers. We do this by investing in economic development and community service projects and programs. We help our communities with water and monetary donations, educational scholarships (read more on page 22), Community Empowerment Program grants, and the countless outreach events our employees volunteer at.

I hope that you view Medina EC not just as your electric utility provider but as a local business that brings pride and prosperity to our part of Texas. We love living in and being a part of our communities, and we hope you feel the same way.

Until next time,
Trey



Do You Have a Medical Need for Electricity?

IF SOMEONE IN YOUR HOME depends on an electrically operated health aid, your account should be listed on Medina EC's Critical Care Registry. To be added, fill out the form at MedinaEC.org/Registry and attach a physician's directive or prescription.

Accounts on this list are notified before planned outages and are flagged as a priority for restoration during unplanned outages. Being on the registry does not guarantee uninterrupted electrical service and will not prevent you from losing power for reasons outside the cooperative's control or from being disconnected for nonpayment.

Individuals who rely on life-support equipment should have an emergency plan, including a place to go in the event of an extended power outage, and should consider obtaining backup equipment, such as a generator and any necessary fuel or a battery backup system.

Medina EC offers GenerLink as an option for members to safely operate a generator, should they own one. You can learn more about the requirements to connect a generator to our system at MedinaEC.org/Generators.

Protecting Your Privacy

MANAGING YOUR ELECTRIC ACCOUNT gives us access to personal and confidential information, and protecting that information is an integral part of the service we provide. We use your name and Social Security number to verify your identity when you sign up for service and when you call with questions on your account.

Your information is kept in encrypted files behind protected firewalls. Only qualified Medina EC employees who have a need to know can access the information. Our information technology department ensures that firewalls and antivirus applications prevent unauthorized access.

Printed documents containing member information are kept in locked shredding containers and destroyed.

Your information is never sold or given to anyone for the purpose of selling you something. Some information might be provided to third parties acting on behalf of Medina EC and can be disclosed as required by law.

We take the responsibility to protect your personal and confidential information very seriously. Failure of an employee to comply with Medina EC's privacy policy results in punishment and can include termination.

You can also take steps to ensure that your private information stays private and that you don't unknowingly fall victim to a utility scam.

If you get an email that you aren't expecting, don't click on links or reply to it, and don't give out personal information (name, Social Security number, etc.). If the email appears to come from someone you do business with, call them to verify.

Never allow anyone into your home to check electrical wiring, natural gas pipes or appliances unless you have scheduled the appointment or reported a problem. Don't be afraid to ask a utility employee for proper identification. If they are on your property, you have every right to verify that they are who they say they are.

Medina Electric
Cooperative



CONTACT US

Toll-Free 1-866-MEC-ELEC (632-3532)

Email Info@MedinaEC.org

Web MedinaEC.org - Chat Feature Available

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Voting District 1

Larry Huesser, (830) 363-7651

Wayne W. Scholtz, (830) 426-1328

Ken Weynand, (830) 426-0762

Voting District 2

Jimmie Raines, (830) 591-8437

Kenneth White, (830) 232-6541

Voting District 3

Annette Sorrells, (361) 231-0173

J. L. Gonzalez, (956) 286-1863

Rodolfo H. Rodriguez, (210) 846-1092

CEO

Trey Grebe, 1-866-MEC-ELEC, ext. 1045

Call us.

TOLL-FREE

1-866-MEC-ELEC (632-3532)

Option 2: Report an outage

Option 3: Pay bill, get account balance

Option 5: Speak to a representative

OFFICE LOCATIONS

Bruni 1300 FM 2050 N., Bruni 78344

Dilley 1718 W. FM 117, Dilley 78017

Hondo 237 Highway 173 N., Hondo 78861

Rio Grande City 601 N. FM 3167,
Rio Grande City 78582

Uvalde 2604 Highway 90 E., Uvalde 78801

Corporate Office 2308 18th St., Hondo 78861

VISIT US ONLINE

MedinaEC.org



This institution is an equal-opportunity provider and employer.

Información sobre todos los programas y servicios que ofrece Medina Electric Cooperative están disponibles en español al llamarnos al 1-866-MEC-ELEC o visitando una de nuestras oficinas.

Capital Credits Allocations on Your June Bill: What It Means for You

MEDINA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE MEMBERS WILL SEE their 2022 capital credits allocations printed on their June bill. These totals represent the 2022 margins that are being assigned to you, and you may be wondering exactly what that means.

At the end of each fiscal year, the funds remaining after expenses have been paid—or net margins—are allocated to members' accounts based on the amount of electricity they used in that year. The allocation totals do not represent cash owed to you at this time nor can they be applied to your current bill. You may be asking why you can't have the money that is allocated to your account.

As a member of Medina EC, you reinvest in the cooperative through your capital credits allocations. These funds are used to repay long-term debt, make system improvements, repair storm damage and take care of other capital needs to provide safe, reliable electricity at the lowest possible cost.

At the end of each year, the board of directors determines if any portion of capital credits allocations can be retired based on the financial condition of the cooperative, its bylaws and policy provisions, and lender requirements. The amount retired, if any, can change from year to year depending on the financial needs of the cooperative.

Once capital credits are retired, members receive them as either a credit on their bill or a check. Each retirement is a portion of the total allocation that has been assigned to your account.

"Cooperatives operate for our members," noted CEO Trey Grebe, "and capital credits is just one of the many things that makes us different than other utilities."

To learn more about capital credits and see a list of unclaimed credits, visit MedinaEC.org/CapitalCredits.

It's important to keep your address up to date, even after you're no longer a member, so we can return any future capital credits retirements to you. In the event of the death of a member, contact us to see if the account is eligible for early retirement. You can update your account by calling 1-866-632-3532 or logging in to your SmartHub account.

"Cooperatives operate for our members, and capital credits is just one of the many things that makes us different than other utilities."

—CEO TREY GREBE



Linemen Recognized at Rodeo

IN APRIL, a group of Medina Electric Cooperative linemen participated in the third annual Coastal Bend Lineman Rodeo, hosted by Nueces Electric Cooperative in Robstown. Utility linemen have been participating in lineman rodeos for years, but this was the first formal team for Medina EC which had participants in both the apprentice and journeyman divisions. Apprentices included Michael Cardoza from Hondo and Justin Cortez and David Perez, both from Bruni. In the journeyman division was Serapio Guzman from Uvalde, Mario Lopez from Bruni and Felipe Moreno from Laredo.

Events in the rodeo included the transformer arrester changeout, crossarm changeout, hurt man rescue and speed climbing.

"We gather[ed] in the cooperative spirit with our sister cooperatives to provide essential skills training and some friendly competition for our linemen. Many of the skills required in the competition ... are less frequently used in the day-to-day work but remain critical line skills," said Nueces EC CEO Varzavand "Avan" Irani in respect to the annual rodeo. Medina EC CEO Trey Grebe added, "This is a great opportunity for our linemen to see how other co-op's teams work together and practice much-needed skills. The thrill of competition makes it that much more exciting!"

Medina EC Journeyman Serapio Guzman was recognized as the All-Around Journeyman Lineman after winning first place in speed climbing with a time of 10.28 seconds, second place in crossarm changeout and second place in hurt man rescue.

Forty-five participants from seven cooperatives participated in this training event. Medina EC looks forward to competing again in 2024.



TOP: MEDINA EC LINEMEN COMPETE IN DIFFERENT EVENTS. BOTTOM: FROM LEFT, MEDINA EC LINEMAN RODEO TEAM—MICHAEL CARDOZA, FELIPE MORENO, SERAPIO GUZMAN, JUSTIN CORTEZ, DAVID PEREZ AND MARIO LOPEZ.

Unplug To Connect this Father's Day



ALLISTAIR | ADOBE STOCK

AUTHOR ANNE LAMOTT cleverly captures the benefits of unplugging in today's device-driven, multitasking world: "Almost everything will work again if you unplug it for a few minutes, including you." Keeping up with work, family and school activities or the latest trends on social media makes most of us feel compelled to constantly check our devices.

It might be tempting to buy Dad another tech gadget this Father's Day,

but it's also a good opportunity to unplug from our devices and enjoy the great outdoors with family and friends. Research has shown that we all need downtime to recharge after a busy day—even though we may resist it. Take a moment to slow down and enjoy some peaceful hours with each other and away from technology.

While you're unplugging from your devices, take a look around your home to identify electronics that consume energy even when they're not in use. This is known as "vampire" energy loss. TVs, gaming consoles, phone chargers and computers are some of the biggest culprits.

Putting away devices allows you to take time to recharge your relationships and be more present with those you love. Attend a community event or enjoy some beautiful surroundings with your family and friends.

Speaking of spending time outdoors, you can also enjoy energy savings by incorporating LED products and fixtures

for outdoor use, such as pathway, step and porch lights. Many include features like automatic daylight shut-off and motion sensors. You can also find solar-powered lighting for outdoor spaces.

Save energy by keeping warm summer air outside where it belongs. Add caulk or weatherstripping to seal air leaks around doors and windows. You can also employ a programmable thermostat to adjust the settings a few degrees higher when no one is home.

In our hyperconnected world, we have forgotten how to slow down. We multitask and text. We check email, then voicemail, then Facebook. Do yourself and Dad a favor: Put down the device and smell the fresh air.

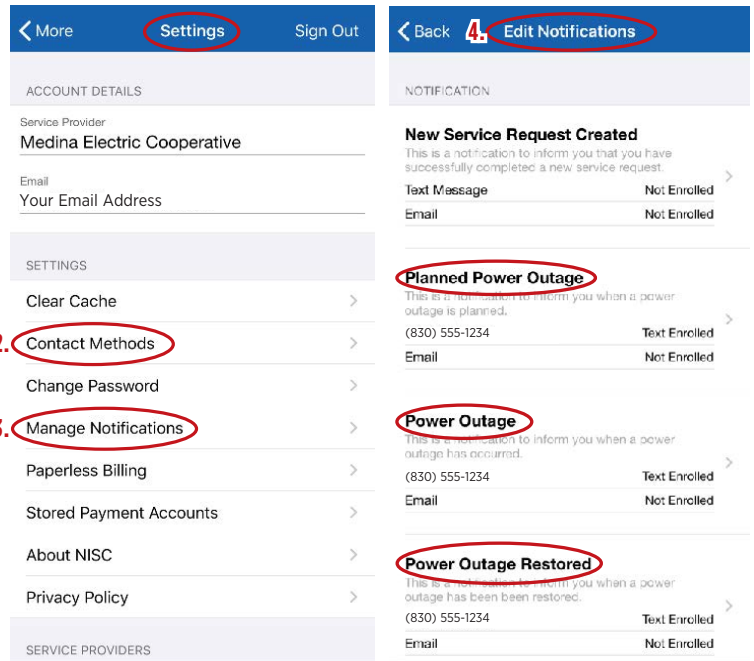
When you do plug back in, Medina Electric Cooperative is just a call or click away to help you save money and energy by connecting you with our energy-saving programs and services. ■

Outage Notifications in the Palm of Your Hand

THOUSANDS OF MEDINA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE members are managing their bills and monitoring their power use by using the free SmartHub app, but many don't know that they can sign up to also get text and email notifications for outages. If our outage system recognizes an interruption in power at your meter, we'll be able to notify you when power is out and restored. If you do not receive outage alerts, you're still encouraged to report your outage through SmartHub or by calling 1-866-632-3532.

How to enable text notifications in SmartHub:

1. Once you have logged in, click the Menu icon at the top left (for Android users) or More in the bottom right (for Apple users).
2. Choose Settings and Contact Methods. This helps to ensure you have the correct phone number associated with your account.
3. Go back to the Menu/More and choose Settings then Manage Notifications and Service.
4. When you're in the Edit Notifications menu, enroll in the options you wish to receive notifications for. For power outages you will want to enroll in Power Outage, Planned Power Outage and Power Outage Restored.



Learn more about SmartHub at MedinaEC.org/SH.

We're Ready for Storm Season. Are you?



NOW THAT SUMMER IS IN FULL SWING, many of us welcome more opportunities to be outdoors and enjoy the warmer weather. Summertime brings favorite activities like cooking out with family and friends, afternoons on the water, and simply slowing down a bit to enjoy life.

But summer months also make conditions right for dangerous storms, which can wreak havoc on our electrical system. But we want you to know that Medina Electric Cooperative's crews are ready to respond should power outages occur in our area. When major storms knock out power, our line crews take all necessary precautions before they get to work on any downed lines. We encourage you to also practice safety and preparedness to protect your family.

The Federal Emergency Management

Agency offers these recommendations as a starting point for storm and disaster preparedness.

Stock your pantry with a three-day supply of nonperishable food, such as canned goods, energy bars, peanut butter, powdered milk and instant coffee, as well as water and other essentials, such as diapers and toiletries.

Confirm that you have adequate sanitation and hygiene supplies, including toilettes, soap and hand sanitizer.

Ensure your first-aid kit is stocked with pain relievers, bandages and other medical essentials, and make sure your prescriptions are current.

Set aside basic household items you will need, including flashlights, batteries, a manual can opener, and a battery-powered radio or TV.

Organize emergency supplies so they are easily accessible.

In the event of a prolonged power outage, turn off major appliances, TVs, computers and other sensitive electronics. This will help avert damage from a power surge and will also help prevent overloading the circuits during power restoration. That said, do leave one light on so you will know when power is restored. If you plan to use a generator, make sure it's rated to handle the amount of power you will need and always operate it safely, including the proper use of a transfer switch.

We hope we don't experience severe storms this summer, but we can never predict Mother Nature's plans. At Medina EC, we recommend that you act today because there is power in planning.



SYED F. HASHEMI | UPSLASH

Safe Travels, Youth Tour Delegation

THREE STUDENTS FROM THE MEDINA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE service area will join 1,800 others from across the country on the trip of a lifetime June 11–19 as part of the Government-in-Action Youth Tour. In addition to the trip, the contest winners will each receive a \$500 scholarship toward their educational expenses after they graduate from high school. The students will first visit the state Capitol in Austin and then head to Washington, D.C., where they will visit major landmarks, meet their elected officials, and learn about the U.S. and electric cooperative history.

Youth Tour has a long record of educating young people about our government. Senator Lyndon Baines Johnson inspired the trip when he addressed the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association Annual Meeting in Chicago in 1957. The senator declared, “If one thing goes out of this meeting, it will be sending youngsters to the national capital where they can actually see what the flag stands for and represents.”

Since then, more than 75,000 young Americans have participated in this educational program. Medina EC has sent 42 students on the trip since 2007. More information about Medina EC’s Youth Tour program can be found at MedinaEC.org/YouthTour.

And the Winners Are ...



ABIGAIL ARNETT
D'HANIS



MOLLY LESSING
HONDO



BREANNA SLAUGHTER
D'HANIS

Applicants were asked to write an essay in response to the following prompt: If you had the opportunity to change one thing about your school or community, what would it be and why? Additionally, how would you go about making the change? Applicants were also asked to provide a list of their extracurricular activities and community involvement and to describe their career goals and why they wanted to attend Youth Tour.

Read a snippet of the 2023 recipients’ essays or sign up to receive information about the 2024 Youth Tour trip at MedinaEC.org/YouthTour.



PRESSMASTER | ADOBESTOCK

Why Is My Electric Bill More Than My Neighbor’s?

YOU HAVE A TV, microwave, electric range and cooktop, refrigerator, heat pump, and computer. So does your next-door neighbor. So why is your electric bill almost twice as high every month?

Consider: How well are your walls insulated compared to your neighbor’s? Do you take longer, hotter showers? Are you cooking complicated meals or baking from scratch while your neighbor opts to microwave? Does the TV keep you company even when you’re not watching it?

Just as no two families are alike, no two electric bills are the same. Comparing your monthly statement to anyone else’s would be like comparing your weekly grocery tabs. It’s unlikely that any two families will spend the same amount on food because tastes and habits differ.

Think about the conveniences you might be willing to pay for that your neighbor isn’t. Are you more comfortable sleeping in an extra-cool house on summer nights? Maybe your neighbor’s thermostat setting is a few degrees warmer at bedtime.

The best way to lower your electric costs is to use energy more efficiently before the bill comes. If your neighbor’s bill is lower than yours, ask for some tips about how to save money by conserving energy around the house. ■

Medina EC Awards \$25,000 in Scholarships

TWENTY-FIVE AREA STUDENTS have an extra \$1,000 to help with their education expenses next school year.

Medina EC awarded \$25,000 in scholarships to area students this May. The scholarship program is an important part of the cooperative's commitment to community and to education. Since it began in 2000, the co-op has awarded more than \$677,000 in scholarships to 494 students from our service area.

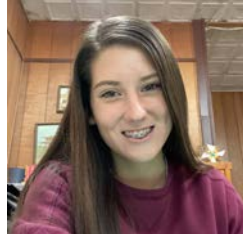
Learn more about the scholarship program requirements and eligibility at MedinaEC.org/Scholarships. The scholarship applications generally open up and have a deadline in the first few months of each year. If you have applied in the past and not won, watch for information on next year's scholarship program in January or February 2024.



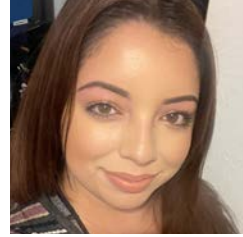
ADA STOPSCHINSKI
BRENHAM



ALLYSON LUTZ
SABINAL



AMBER DUBOSE
DEVINE



ANAISSA DIAZ
NEW BRAUNFELS



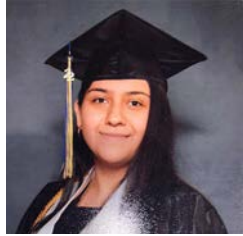
ANDREA RUIZ
CASTROVILLE



CARLOS CONTRERAS
HONDO



CHLOE TSCHIRHART
SAN ANTONIO



EVELYN MARTINEZ
RIO GRANDE CITY



GIOVANNI CASTILLO
HONDO



HALEY SOLIS
RIO GRANDE CITY



HARPER PARSON
DEVINE



ISAAC RIOS
NATALIA



ISAIAH SALDIVAR
COTULLA



JACOB BAILEY
HONDO



KARELY GARCIA
RIO GRANDE CITY



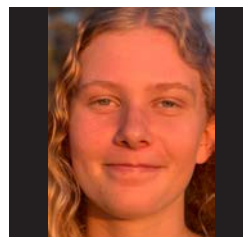
KARIBETH BINGHAM
UVALDE



LACEY SHOOK
DEVINE



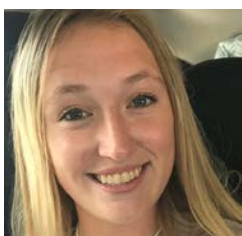
MIRANDA GRUBB
BIGFOOT



MOLLY CLAMON
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RYAN ORNELAS
SAN ANTONIO



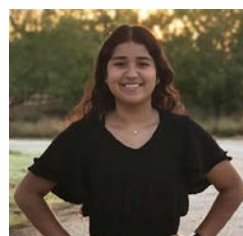
TORI JOHNSON
D'HANIS



VIANEY TALAMANTE
RIO GRANDE CITY



VICTORIA MARTINEZ
CASTROVILLE



YSELA GOMEZ
HONDO



ZOE FAUST
UVALDE




Farmers Market Feature

We are looking to feature local farmers markets in the August issue of *Texas Co-op Power*.

Send the location of the market and any contact or additional information to

MyCoop@MedinaEC.org by June 16.

EQROYI | ADOBESTOCK



CALLING ALL BEEKEEPERS AND HONEY PRODUCERS!

We are looking for local honey to give to members at our annual meeting this year. If you or someone you know produces and sells honey in one of Medina EC's 17 counties, send their contact information to MyCoop@MedinaEC.org by July 1!

GERTRUDDA | ADOBESTOCK



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Special Delivery

How a crudely scrawled message 300 years ago saved its sender's life

BY W.F. STRONG • ILLUSTRATION BY JOHN WILSON

THE LUCKIEST LETTER in Texas took six months to reach its destination. But the fact that it arrived at all was a miracle within a miracle, and it saved the sender's life. This was more than 300 years ago, when Texas was under Spanish rule. It was a Hail Mary mailing.

François Simars de Bellisle was just 24 when he left France to come to America in 1719. He was headed for Louisiana on a small ship, but his captain overshot their destination, ending up near present-day Galveston, about 300 miles off course.

Bellisle and four other French passengers took meager supplies—biscuits, guns, swords—and went ashore to determine their location and seek help. They slept well that first night, but when they

awoke the next morning, their ship was gone. They had been abandoned.

They walked east to what was likely the mouth of the Sabine River, where they could go no farther because of deep mud. Soon they began to succumb to starvation, and within two months, Bellisle had buried all his friends. He was alone and desperate.

Bellisle believed he was living his last days. He had made his way back to Galveston Bay, out of bullets and reduced to eating boiled grass and worms. Then one clear morning, he saw the first Native Americans he had seen since being stranded. They were Akokisas and his only hope for survival.

He made his way across the bay in a

TCP Listen as W.F. Strong narrates this story on our website.



crude boat he had found. The Akokisas took his goods and stripped him. He wrote that he was forced into labor, ordered about mercilessly and beaten regularly—but fed.

After a forced 150-mile walk to the Brazos River to hunt buffalo, he couldn't help but marvel at the landscape, later writing, "This is the most beautiful country in the world. The earth is black. Grass grows there to a prodigal height, and in abundance, which is a certain sign that the earth is good."

Bellisle soon realized his situation was still dire. So he retrieved one of the few pieces of paper he had, carved a crude pen out of wood, and made ink out of charcoal and water. He wrote a letter begging for rescue from anyone who might receive it and gave it to visitors from the Bidai tribe.

Then the miracle: Members of the Hasinai tribe, which had close ties to the French, took it to the commander of the garrison at Natchitoches, Louisiana. The commander, Louis Juchereau de Saint-Denis, wrote a letter in return and ordered the Hasinai to bring the cast-away back, dead or alive.

When Bellisle's rescuers reached the Akokisa camp, they gave Bellisle the letter that informed him the Hasinai would escort him to Natchitoches. His captors relented.

It still took him months to get to Natchitoches, but at least Bellisle was free. He had sent what was the land version of a message in a bottle. It caught the best currents and washed up on the perfect shore. His literacy—and luck—saved him. ■

Texas Seafood

The catch of the day sparkles in these inventive dishes

BY VIANNEY RODRIGUEZ, FOOD EDITOR

Growing up near the Gulf, my mami loved getting shrimp from local shrimpers. One evening she surprised us with shrimp *albóndigas*, succulent meatballs swimming in a rich tomato broth. Served with warm corn tortillas, this dish is comfort at its best. I am excited to share my mami's recipe—a bit of her love from my home to yours. Enjoy!

Albóndigas de Camarón (Shrimp Meatballs)

½ pound Roma tomatoes
½ pound tomatillos
6 cups shrimp or vegetable broth, divided use
1 pound shrimp, peeled and deveined
1 egg
2 teaspoons dried oregano
1–2 tablespoons masa harina (corn flour)
2 tablespoons olive oil
½ onion, diced
2 stalks celery, diced
2 medium carrots, diced
2 cloves garlic, minced
2 teaspoons cumin
3 teaspoons salt
2 teaspoons ground black pepper
½ cup rinsed and chopped cilantro
Rice, steamed (optional)
4 corn tortillas, for serving
Sliced radishes, for garnish
Cilantro, rinsed and chopped, for garnish

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Place tomatoes and tomatillos on a baking sheet. Roast until skins have charred, turning occasionally, 10–13 minutes. Remove from oven and allow to cool.
2. Blend the cooled tomatoes and tomatillos in a blender or food processor with 1 cup broth until smooth. Set aside.
3. Pulse shrimp in cleaned food processor until finely ground.
4. Move ground shrimp to a bowl. Add egg, oregano and masa harina. Mix by hand until well combined.
5. Lightly oil clean hands and form shrimp mixture into ¾-inch meatballs. Place meatballs on baking sheet and refrigerate to keep firm.
6. In a stock pot or Dutch oven, add olive oil over medium-high heat. Add onion, celery and carrots and sauté until tender, about 4 minutes. Stir in garlic and cumin and cook 30 seconds. Stir in tomato mixture and cook an additional 2 minutes.
7. Add remaining broth and bring soup to a boil. Reduce heat to low and season with salt and pepper. Gently add meatballs to broth. Simmer without stirring 8–10 minutes. Stir in cilantro.
8. Serve over steamed rice or alone as a soup. Garnish with radishes and cilantro and serve with warm tortillas.

SERVES 4

TCP Follow along with Vianney Rodriguez while she cooks in Cocina Gris at sweetlifebake.com, where she features a recipe for Skillet Pico de Gallo Shrimp.



Hatch'en Cocktails

ANN CYCHOSZ
TRI-COUNTY EC

Cychosz stashes away a few hatch peppers when they're in season to whip up these shrimp cocktails, a neighborhood favorite. Feel free to use canned roasted hatch peppers. Served in cocktail glasses, this appetizer will be a hit at any gathering.

SHRIMP

- 1 tablespoon salt**
- 2 pounds Gulf shrimp, peeled and deveined**

COCKTAIL SAUCE

- 3 cups ketchup**
- 2 tablespoons horseradish**
- 2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce**
- 1 teaspoon hot chili sauce**
- 1 teaspoon ground black pepper**
- Juice of 2 limes**
- 3 avocados, pitted and cut into ¼-inch cubes**
- ½ cup diced red onion**
- ¼ cup chopped cilantro**
- 1 cup chopped roasted hatch peppers**
- Tortilla chips, for serving**

- 1. SHRIMP** Bring a pot of water to a boil and add salt. Add shrimp and cook 2–3 minutes, or until shrimp are cooked through.
- 2.** Remove shrimp with a slotted spoon, place on a baking sheet and allow to cool.
- 3.** Cut shrimp into ¼-inch pieces.
- 4. COCKTAIL SAUCE** In a large bowl, stir together ketchup, horseradish, Worcestershire sauce, hot chili sauce, pepper and lime juice.

\$500 WINNER

Escabeche

KARA HILL
WOOD COUNTY EC



Hill's husband has fond memories of his Filipino mom cooking fresh fish that he, his brother and dad caught. This escabeche has the perfect level of acidity to pair wonderfully with black drum, a white fish with a mild, sweet flavor.

SERVES 6



FISH

- 6 black drum fillets (about 2 pounds total), skin removed**
- Salt and ground black pepper**
- ¼ cup flour**
- 2 tablespoons olive oil**

ESCABECHE

- ½ cup white vinegar**
- 1 cup water**
- ⅓ cup brown sugar**
- 2 teaspoons soy sauce**
- 2 tablespoons cornstarch**
- ¼ cup cold water**
- 2 tablespoons olive oil**
- 4 cloves garlic, minced**
- 2 tablespoons minced ginger, fresh or jarred**
- 1 medium onion, sliced**
- 1 small red bell pepper, sliced**
- 1 small green bell pepper, sliced**
- 1 small yellow bell pepper, sliced**
- 2 medium carrots, julienned**
- 3 cups cooked rice**

- 1. FISH** Preheat oven to 250 degrees. Gently pat down fish with paper towels. Season fish with salt and pepper. Place flour in shallow dish.
- 2.** Lightly dredge fish in flour, coating each side, and shake off excess. Place on baking sheet and repeat until all fillets are coated.
- 3.** In a large skillet, heat oil over medium-high heat. Pan-fry fish until golden-brown on each side, 2–3 minutes. Place on baking sheet, then repeat until all fillets are fried.
- 4.** Place fish in oven.
- 5. ESCABECHE** In a bowl, stir together vinegar, water, brown sugar and soy sauce.
- 6.** Dissolve cornstarch in cold water.
- 7.** In a large skillet, heat oil over medium-high heat. Sauté garlic and ginger until fragrant, stirring often, about 3 minutes. Do not let the garlic and ginger brown.
- 8.** Add onion, bell peppers and carrots and sauté for 2 minutes. Pour vinegar mixture into skillet. Cover and bring to a boil.
- 9.** Remove cover, add cornstarch mixture, and return to a boil, stirring until sauce has thickened. Serve fish over rice, then top with escabeche.

TCP \$500 Recipe Contest

HOLIDAY DESSERTS DUE JUNE 10
We'll help cap off your holiday feasts with reader recipes in the November issue. Submit yours online by June 10 for a chance to win \$500.



CONTINUED >

5. Add shrimp, avocado, red onion, cilantro and hatch peppers. Stir gently to combine. Chill until ready to serve. Serve with tortilla chips.

SERVES 12

Jamaica Beach Snapper

GEORGE GRALL
UNITED COOPERATIVE SERVICES

Dinner ready in under 15 minutes? Yes, please. Baked snapper served warm with a chili butter sauce is the ultimate week-night dinner. Roast or steam vegetables while the fish bakes and have dinner ready in a snap.

4 red snapper fillets (6 ounces each)
½ cup (1 stick) butter, melted
2 tablespoons garlic powder
1 tablespoon chili powder
1 large lemon, cut into wedges
Parsley (optional)

1. Preheat oven to 425 degrees.



2. Generously coat a 9-by-11-inch pan with cooking spray and place snapper fillets in the pan.

3. Bake 15 minutes or until the fish flakes easily with a fork.

4. Combine melted butter, garlic powder and chili powder in a bowl and stir until well blended.

5. Drizzle butter mixture over fish and serve with lemon wedges and garnished with parsley, if desired.

SERVES 4

Shiphape Shrimp

BY VIANNEY RODRIGUEZ

Texas Gulf shrimp is a great ingredient for meals that can come together in under 30 minutes. Not sure how to buy and store fresh shrimp? Follow these tips, then check out two amazing shrimp recipes in this month's issue:

Look for firm, translucent shrimp.

Avoid shrimp with slimy shells and any that smell like ammonia.

Place fresh shrimp in a bowl on ice to maintain freshness in the fridge.

Uncooked shrimp stay fresh in the fridge for up to three days.

Freeze shrimp for up to two months.

Thaw frozen shrimp overnight in the fridge.

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COURTESY CHET GARNER

Kilgore's Kickers

The Rangerette museum preserves the legacy of the iconic drill team

BY CHET GARNER

FOOTBALL IS AN EXPERIENCE in Texas. It's about much more than just what happens when the players snap the ball. I mean, what would the Dallas Cowboys be without their cheerleaders? They certainly couldn't be America's team without America's sweethearts, right? And if you've ever danced in a drill team or enjoyed the precise high kicks and jump splits of these athletes, then you have the women of Kilgore College to thank.

I traveled to East Texas to pay my respects and visit the official museum of the Kilgore Rangerettes—America's first precision dance drill team.

After filling my belly with pork ribs at Country Tavern Bar-B-Que, I cruised Kilgore, between Tyler and Longview, and passed the towering oil derricks of the "World's Richest Acre," which once held 24 wells on one city block. In the 1930s, Kilgore was the definition of a boomtown.

While football games at Kilgore College were popular, the college's president became irritated with fans leaving at half time and drinking under the stands. So in 1940 he tasked teacher Gussie Nell Davis with figuring out a way to keep fans in the stands. Her solution was to bring a group of talented dancers onto the field. It launched a multibillion-dollar industry.

I stepped into the Rangerette Showcase and Museum and was immediately impressed with mannequins showcasing the evolution of the uniforms. While the skirts may have been scandalous at the time—they dared to show knees—the uniform is now iconic. I appreciated the short film giving context to the stories and was blown away by the number of photos depicting Rangerettes with celebrities and presidents throughout the decades.

I'll never think of drill team dancing the same way again. Now to work on my high kick! ■

ABOVE Chet's style might not be *precisely* what the Kilgore Rangerettes look for in a dancer.

TCP The Rangerettes' perfected routines are exactly what drew Chet to Kilgore. See the video on our website and see all his Texplorations on *The Daytripper* on PBS.



Know Before You Go

Call ahead or check an event's website for scheduling details, and check our website for many more upcoming events.

JUNE

08

Coleman [8-10] Rodeo, colemanrodeo.com

09

Johnson City Dive-In Movies, (830) 868-7111, johnsoncitytx.org

Blanco [9-11] Lavender Festival, (830) 833-5101, blancolavenderfest.com

Ingram [9-10, 16-17, 23-24] Newsies, (830) 367-5121, hcac.com

Kerrville [9-10, 16-18, 23-25] Beer for Breakfast, (830) 896-9393, caillouxperformingarts.com

10

Brenham Tapestry: The Carole King Songbook With Suzanne O Davis, (979) 337-7240, thebarnhillcenter.com

Fredericksburg Craft Beer Festival, fbcraftbeerfestival.com

Nacogdoches Texas Blueberry Festival, (936) 560-5533, tbf.nacogdoches.org

Terrell [10-11] Antique Tractor and Engine Show and Pull, (214) 497-1611, north-texas-antique-tractor-and-engine-club.net

11

Lufkin Madagascar the Musical, (936) 633-5454, angelinaarts.org

15

Stonewall [15-17] Peach Jamboree and Rodeo, (830) 644-2735, stonewalltexas.com

Galveston [15-19]
Juneteenth Celebrations,
 (409) 457-3570,
visitgalveston.com

17

Linden Underground Railroad Quilt Auction and Performance,
 (903) 826-2495,
lindenpubliclibrary.org

22

Fredericksburg Women's Ranch Seminar,
 (830) 456-8956,
hillcountrycattlwomen.org

23

McKinney [23-24] Flip Orley: Comic and Hypnotist, (214) 769-0645,
thecomedyarena.com

30

Hemphill [30-July 2] Patriotic Weekend on Toledo Bend, (409) 787-2732,
sabinecounty-chamber.com

Ingram [30-July 28] Summer ArtMart, (830) 367-5121,
hcaf.com

JULY

01

Johnson City Fourth Fest Parade and Fireworks,
 (830) 868-7111,
johnsoncitytx.org

The Colony Liberty by the Lake, (972) 624-5253,
visitthecolonytx.com

03

Giddings [3-4] Freedom Fest and Fury on the 4th,
 (979) 542-3455,
giddingsstx.com

04

Kerrville 4th on the River, (830) 315-5483,
kerrvilletx.gov

TCP *Submit Your Event*

We pick events for the magazine directly from TexasCoopPower.com. Submit your September event by July 1, and it just might be featured in this calendar.



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The handle is made from genuine natural bone, and features decorative wood spacers and a hand-carved motif of two overlapping feathers—a reminder for you to respect and connect with the natural world.

This fusion of substance and style can garner a high price tag out in the marketplace. In fact, we found full tang, stainless steel blades with bone handles in excess of \$2,000. Well, that won't cut it around here. We have mastered the hunt for the best deal, and in turn pass the spoils on to our customers.

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— H., Arvada, CO



Dad

Sharing their passions and leading their families, dads play an important role in the everyday life of Texans. These reader entries warm our hearts and make us smile. Gather around the family album as we celebrate dear old dad.

CURATED BY GRACE FULTZ

1 HEATHER MEIFERT
COSERV

"This is daddy's little girl, Madison."

2 KARI ZIMMERMAN
HAMILTON COUNTY EC

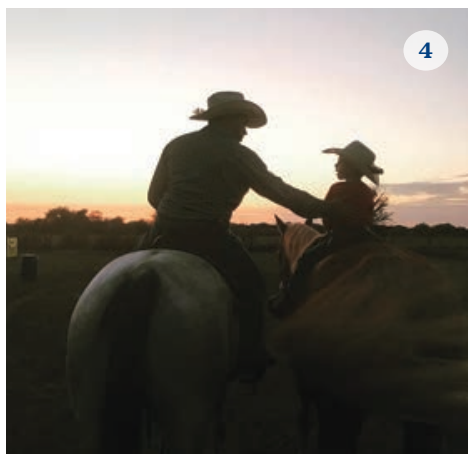
"My grandson shelling peas with his gramps. Such a sweet moment."

3 MONA PARISH
SAM HOUSTON EC

First piano lesson with Pops, the man behind the dad.

4 GALE STEVENS
BOWIE-CASS EC

"My son Jared Stevens of Campbell and his son Tyler ride almost every day and rodeo on weekends."



Upcoming Contests

- DUE JUN 10** Helping Out
- DUE JUL 10** Golden Hour
- DUE AUG 10** Mailboxes



Enter online at TexasCoopPower.com/contests.

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



Texas Water Safari participant Courtney Shaver collapses in her boat after a difficult portage.

Ending on a Sour Note

Here's a first: Accomplished competitor falls short of the finish line

BY PAM LEBLANC
PHOTO BY ERICH SCHLEGEL

I BAILED OUT OF THE BOAT in Cheap-side—which sounds like a line in a country-western song.

But this was no two-step. I staggered out of a racing canoe under a highway on the Guadalupe River, 154 miles into a 264-mile paddling race called the Texas Water Safari. It was the very first DNF of my life. I laid down my paddle, sobbed a bit and barfed.

My team went on without me.

Quitting's a weird thing. When I tell this story to friends, a lot of them nod and say, "You might have hurt yourself if you'd continued."

But that's not it, exactly. I quit because a tiny voice inside my head suggested I do it, and I listened. I didn't want to slog 100 more miles in 106-degree heat. And so, after 32 hours of nonstop paddling,

I bid my tough-as-nails teammates adieu.

Looking back, I foretold my meltdown. I was afraid of the heat and the low river flow.

In 2019, I finished the race, which starts at Spring Lake in San Marcos and ends at Seadrift on the Texas coast, in about 53 hours as part of a three-woman team. I vowed then never to do it again. But when veteran paddler Deb Richardson invited me to join her five-person crew, I forgot about the alligators, mud, log jams, spiders and hallucinations and signed up.

I began spending every weekend on the river. On race day last June, we lined up our 40-foot boat at the back of the pack. When the starting horn sounded, we sliced through the crowd like we were parting the Red Sea. Then, just a few hundred yards in, our rudder cable snapped, and we fell into last place.

Over the next six hours, we picked off boat after boat, clawing our way from 138th position to 100th, then 50th. We nailed every portage and cut through every rapid. That first night, the frogs were so loud you couldn't hear anything else. I was giddy.

But it was hot, and the water was so low, we had to drag through dozens of gravel bars. My muscles got weak, my butt sore. Racers don't stop to sleep or admire the scenery, and I got weepy.

After I quit and went home, I slept 12 hours. I woke up to news that my team had climbed into 18th place. I sped back to cheer them on.

In the end, half the 138 boats that started quit. My team finished in just under 77 hours, in one of the toughest years in the race's 59-year history.

I couldn't be prouder.

And this time I'm not kidding. I'm never doing it again. ■



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