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May 2023



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08 Surf Your Turf

Texas doesn't have the best or the biggest waves, but that's never stopped surfers.

*By Jennifer Simonson
Photos by Kenny Braun*

In a Whole New Light

A Rio Grande Valley museum showcases a transcendental collection of century-old art.

*By Eileen Mattei
Photos by John Faulk*

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By Shane Torno

ON THE COVER

Surfers arrive at the beach on South Padre Island.

Photo by Kenny Braun

ABOVE

Te Deum, the Gelman Stained Glass Museum's largest work, invites contemplation.

Photo by John Faulk



EISENHOWER STATE PARK

A Most Scenic Century

ADVENTURER PAM LEBLANC, a frequent *TCP* contributor, appreciates the splendor of Texas' state parks about as much as anybody: "I don't own a ranch or a big chunk of Texas wilderness, but because of our state park system, I feel like part of this big, beautiful state belongs to me."

Thanks to state leaders 100 years ago, Pam and all Texans can escape to 89 state parks, historic sites and natural areas. The State Parks Board was created in May 1923 to begin setting aside land for parks, and in 1963 it merged with another agency to form the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. Happy trails, y'all.

May 20

National Be a Millionaire Day

Texas has some 650,000 million-aire households, second only to California.

Made in a Shade

Viva Magenta—a nuanced crimson that balances warm and cool—is the color of the year. The hue, announced last winter by Pantone Color Institute experts, was inspired by the red dye derived from cochineals. "This color merges the warmth of the natural world with the endless, rich possibilities of the digital space," says Pantone's Elley Chang. Learn more about the tiny insects called cochineals in our 2019 story *The Bugs That Make You See Red*.



TCP Contests and More

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FINISH THIS SENTENCE

MOM ALWAYS SAID ...

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 March prompt: **If I could fly, I would ...**

Finally take down all my Christmas lights.

WILLIAM MARTIN
SAN BERNARD EC
WALLER

Never be stuck in traffic again.

NANCY DABNEY
HILCO EC
HILLSBORO

Really hope I wasn't afraid of heights anymore.

JUDI RAISH
TRI-COUNTY EC
GRANBURY

Hope I could land.

KENNETH BRINSON
WISE EC
PARADISE

Not sit on power lines.

TERRY WOLBRUECK
HEART OF TEXAS EC
MOFFAT

Visit our website to see more responses.

Play It Safe

May is National Electrical Safety Month. It's also when many of us hit the water. Never swim near a boat, marina or launching ramp. Residual current could put anyone in the water at risk of electric shock drowning.

“I've learned that success comes in a very prickly package.”

—SANDRA BULLOCK



Ironing Out the Rough Edges

SOME 1,000 MEN and even more horses and mules trained in San Antonio 125 years ago in preparation for their participation in the Spanish-American War.

By the end of May 1898, Theodore Roosevelt, above center, and his Rough Riders were on their way to Florida before sailing to Cuba, where the future president led the charge up San Juan Hill.

While in San Antonio, the Rough Riders trained at what is now Riverside Golf Course, near the water hazard on the 16th hole.



COURTESY CHEF GARNER

'Lonesome' in a Library
 “The Wittliff Collections took us by total surprise. What a gem! This museum within a beautiful campus library offers surprisingly rich, diverse exhibits.”

SARA DUNN
 PEDERNALES EC
 WIMBERLEY

Allies in Aging

A Pet Project [March 2023] resonated perfectly. I have an 18-year-old black beauty named Rhiannan. She was my wife’s loyal companion until my wife passed away over five years ago and has since become very needy and close to me. She is skin and bones but eats well and fortunately does not appear to be in any distress or pain.

I am 82 myself, so we are dealing with aging together. I hope to outlive her so she won’t have to suffer.

Charles L. Glisan
 Pedernales EC
 Cedar Park

We need to honor and appreciate these men who risk their lives every day [First Responders, February 2023].

BETH CHAPMAN
 VIA FACEBOOK

Readers on a Roundup

Kudos to Eric Schlegel for his excellent photography and capturing the voices of the Huebner Bros. Cattle Co. cowhands in this fascinating story [Until the Cows Swim Home, March 2023].

As readers we felt we were moving across the Matagorda and Colorado waters, past the snakes, onto the island and back to the ranch.

Martha Everman Jones
 Victoria EC
 Victoria

Dove Doings

We had a *Lonesome Dove* party 30 years ago. Everyone had to dress as their favorite character of the miniseries/book. My husband dressed as Augustus McCrae, and I dressed as the stone-throwing Janey. My mother dressed as Peach and carried a live chicken under her arm.

Susan Mansell
 Coleman County EC
 Ballinger

CORRECTION

Though the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives had said in 2016 that the deadly 2013 fertilizer explosion in West was triggered by an intentionally set fire, other experts have since raised doubts about that finding [Rise Up West, April 2023].



ERICH SCHLEGEL

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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SACRED STONE OF THE SOUTHWEST IS ON THE BRINK OF EXTINCTION



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

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

We found a limited supply of turquoise from Arizona and purchased it for our *Sedona Turquoise Collection*. Inspired by the work of those ancient craftsmen and designed to showcase the exceptional blue stone, each stabilized vibrant cabochon features a unique, one-of-a-kind matrix surrounded in Bali metalwork. You could drop over \$1,200 on a turquoise pendant, or you could secure 26 carats of genuine Arizona turquoise for just \$99.



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SURF



YOUR



TURF

Texas doesn't have the best or the biggest waves, but that's never stopped surfers

DURING THE HOT SUMMER months, thunderstorms develop in Central Africa each afternoon like clockwork. If the monsoon is at least partially active, a disturbance can intensify over North Africa as it marches west before being thrust out over the Atlantic Ocean near Cape Verde. Sometimes storms peter out right there, but if the ocean is warm and the conditions are right, a storm can continue its trek across the Atlantic, picking up power along the way until it reaches the Gulf of Mexico.

That's when a small but mighty group of Texas surf enthusiasts break out their boards.

Hurricanes bring world-class waves to the sluggish waters of the Texas Gulf Coast—waves that area surfers sometimes wait years for. When a storm begins tracking on the radar and swell reports look promising, pent-up surfers call out sick, miss family obligations and put plans on hold to head to the nearest beach.

“Most people are driving away from the ocean during hurricanes, but Texas surfers are driving towards it,” says William “Boog” Cram, owner of Ohana Surf & Skate in Galveston.

The existence of a passionate surfing community in Texas might come as a surprise to many—even those who grew up here. But surfing culture in Texas dates back to the 1960s, when the surf craze perpetrated by the Beach Boys, the documentary *The Endless Summer* and Gidget movies swept the nation. Much more recently, a renewed interest in the sport began when the pandemic pushed more people to embrace outdoor activities. Landlocked Texans wanting to escape city lockdowns headed to the beach, rented surfboards and tried their hand at a sport many people don't realize exists here.

“Usually when you tell people that you surf in Texas, the immediate response is: ‘There is surf in Texas?’” says Frank Floyd, longtime surfer and owner of Wind & Wave Watersports in Corpus Christi. That question is often followed up with a curiosity of what it's like to surf in Texas.

Are Texas waves large? No.

Do they have power behind them? Also no.

But can one surf in crystal clear water so beautiful that they forget about the waves? Absolutely not.

Surfing in Texas is not for the faint of heart. The state's 367 miles of coastline have a reputation for producing small, choppy, inconsistent surf in water with a less-than-ideal hue, and the Texans who surf here accept that. There's no false bravado that even the waves are bigger in Texas. What there is among surfers is an unwavering appreciation for the waves in their backyard.

“Texans are extremely enthusiastic about surfing in Texas. We have an amazing culture here,” Brad Lomax says. “To be a surfer in Texas you need to be an optimist with low standards.” A good sense of humor helps, too. Lomax has sold T-shirts that read, “Texas Waves: Slow, mushy and hard to catch” and “Texas Surfing: It is better than it looks.”

Lomax has been surfing the waters of the Coastal Bend since the mid-1960s. Originally from San Antonio, he spent his teenage summers selling T-shirts on the beach in Port Aransas just to live near the ocean. The surfer teen grew into a businessman who never left. After the success of his first Corpus Christi restaurant in 1983, Lomax opened the Executive Surf Club in 1990.

“My friends and I all had jobs, but we also surfed as much as we could, so we called ourselves the Executive Surf Club,” he says. “I wanted to open a place with a vibe where everyone could come together—guys from the refinery, old ladies, surfers, everyone—and unwind after a long day of work.”

There's no missing the surf vibe when walking into the brick building originally built in the 1800s. Surfboards line the walls, hang over the bar and are used as tables.

Fifteen years after opening the Executive Surf Club, Lomax along with a good friend, surfing legend Pat McGee, opened the Texas Surf Museum next door. Before it closed in September, the institution told the story of the evolution of Texas surfing with photos, vintage memorabilia, newspaper clippings, short videos and more than 30 legendary surfboards.

Galveston also draws surfers despite its similarly less-than-stellar waves. The continental shelf along the barrier island is long and shallow, creating small swells. The wimpy waves are welcoming for newcomers to the sport. Every summer, children in surf camps can be seen on the beach practicing pop-ups and in the water riding waves with a face full of concentration, arms up, hands pointed

OPPOSITE FROM TOP Rachel Gore takes on a wave at Isla Blanca Park on South Padre Island. A classic woody, the most iconic of surfmobiles.

Where To **HANG 10** in Texas

1 Surfside Beach Just south of Galveston, in Brazoria County, you'll find a variety of waves, including big swells, for a range of skill levels.

2 Matagorda Peninsula Specifically, where the Colorado River empties into the Gulf. The strong waves there, thanks to the area's deep ocean floor, are best for experienced surfers.

3 Port Mansfield Jetty The cut that separates North and South Padre islands is incredibly isolated but has arguably the best waves in the state—for seasoned surfers.

4 South Padre Island Jetties The gentle beach-break waves here, where the continental shelf drops off dramatically, are great for long-boarding—from beginners to pros.

5 Boca Chica Beach Just a little farther south, Boca Chica is known for occasionally producing barreling waves when the swells are strong. With sometimes serious undertow, this beach is for the best of the best.



toward the shore—just like they're taught. The shallow water, relatively flat sandy bottom and lack of rocks make area beaches a great place to learn.

"If you can surf here, you can surf anywhere," Cram says from his surf shop in Galveston. "When you can master the wave here, you can take those skills to any waves around the world."

Cram started surfing in Galveston in the early 1970s after inheriting a hand-me-down surfboard from a friend's older brother. He and a friend would ride bikes 1 mile to the 47th Street break, between them holding the 9-foot board weighing close to 40 pounds. He has been surfing and skateboarding the island ever since. In 2005, Cram opened his brightly colored, Hawaii-style surf and skate shop across from one of Galveston's most popular surf spots—



the Pleasure Pier. His team teaches surfers to catch a wave even in the worst conditions.

While the beaches near Galveston are perfect for newbie surfers, as one travels south along the coast, the waves become bigger and more powerful. This is because the shallow continental shelf of the Gulf gradually deepens near the southern point of South Padre Island.

Beaches with the best waves, like Port Mansfield Jetty, are often in secluded areas requiring four-wheel-drive vehicles. Because of that, most surfers stick to their local beaches for an afternoon surf session. Weather patterns can change quickly and never last long. When the perfect conditions don't arrive, surfers make do.

"Texas gets some great quality surfers because we have to make something out of nothing," Floyd says.

When traveling, Texas surfers tend to have the most fun of anyone in the water, Floyd says. They appreciate waves that other surfers might take for granted, knowing that they're probably better than the waves at home. Unless, of course, a hurricane is on its way.

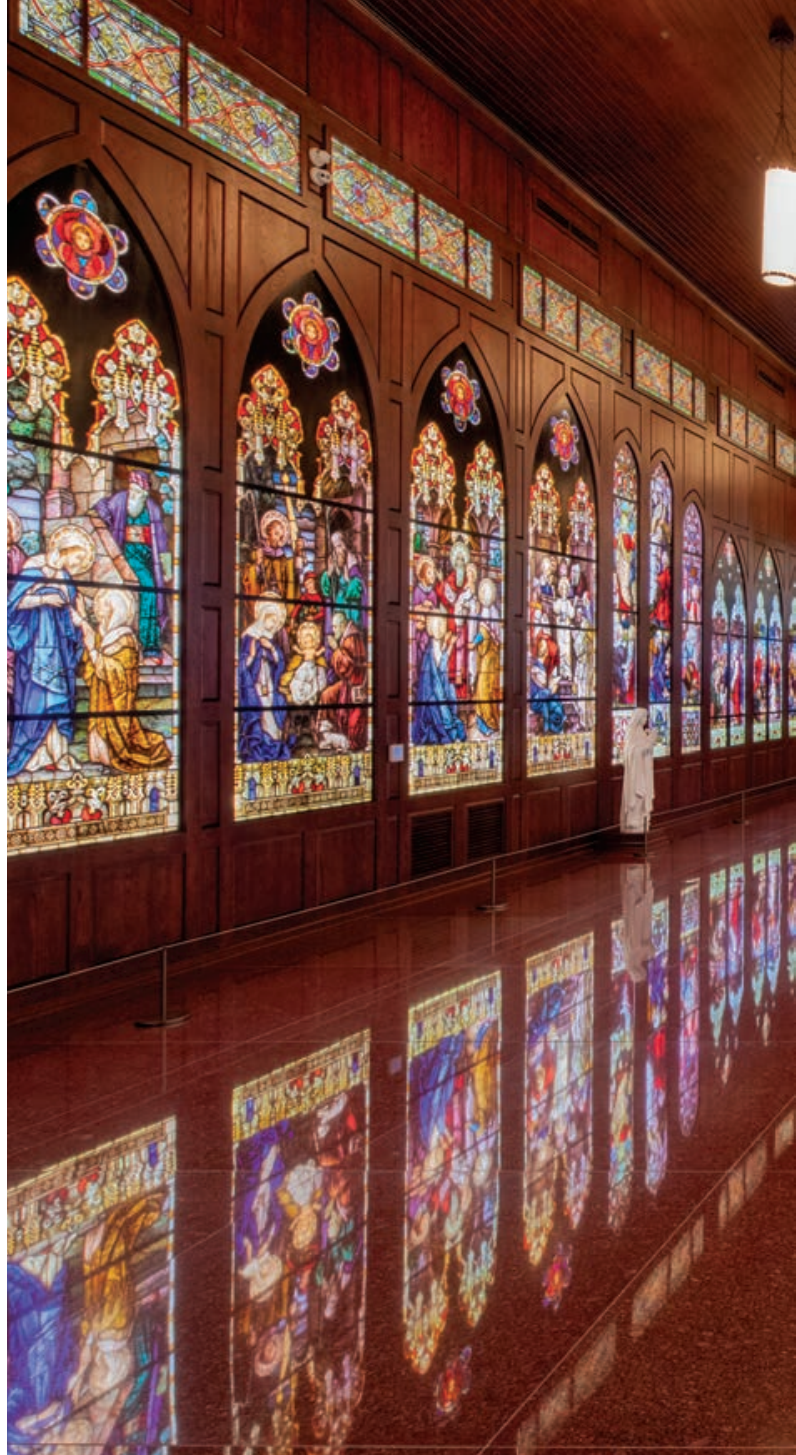
"We have to work at getting good in Texas," he says. "Then we can go anywhere." ■

CLOCKWISE FROM OPPOSITE PAGE Catching a wave off Port Aransas. Aarin Hartwell, with baby Brixton, is founder of SPI Sessions, a surf and water sports shop on South Padre Island. Brad Lomax has been surfing the waters of the Coastal Bend since the mid-1960s. A board, a bike and, down the road, a beach. Henry Fry's surfboards were some of the first made in Texas, in the 1960s.

IN A WHOLE NEW LIGHT

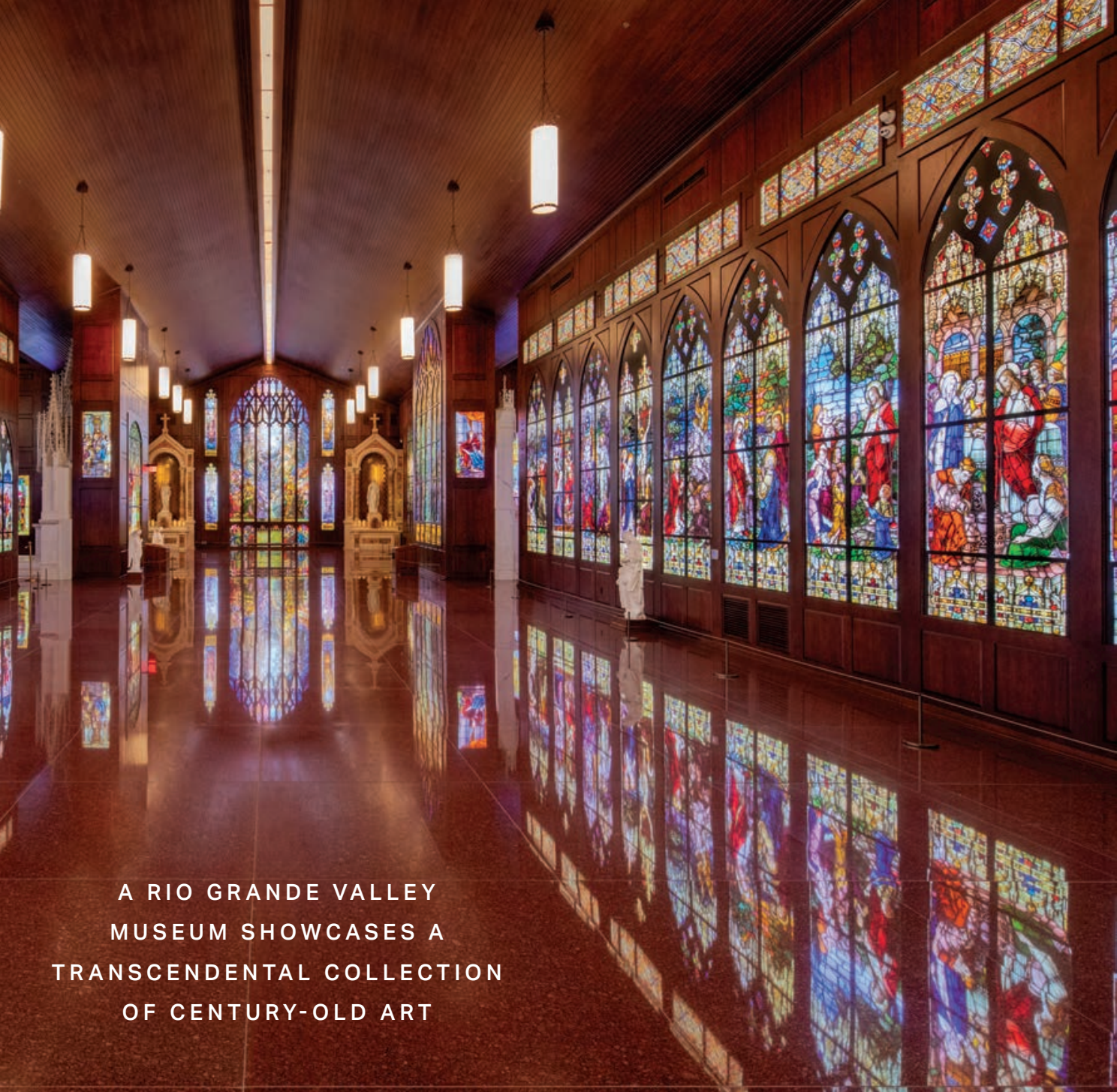


ABOVE The museum boasts eight Tiffany stained-glass windows depicting the Beatitudes, or blessings, including Blessed Are the Merciful. OPPOSITE A navelike passage illuminates works from now-closed churches.



I PULL OPEN THE DOOR of the Gelman Stained Glass Museum and step inside a kaleidoscope. More than 150 stained-glass windows and their reflections in the highly polished red granite floor immerse me in light, color and space. Then my eyes and brain begin to separate the profusion of shapes and colors into windows of religious scenes ranging from 10 to 25 feet tall, illuminated by what seems to be heavenly light.

Inside a gray stone building just off the highway in the heart of San Juan, in the Rio Grande Valley, the narrow, cross-shaped space is cool and dim. Most of the stained-glass windows in the museum, which opened in November 2021, originally graced now-closed East Coast churches, where they had been dedicated as memorials to departed loved ones. In their safe, new climate-controlled home, the complex LED arrays that backlight all the windows provide



A RIO GRANDE VALLEY
MUSEUM SHOWCASES A
TRANSCENDENTAL COLLECTION
OF CENTURY-OLD ART

a steady, otherworldly glow that compensates for variations in the thickness of the glass and paint amid the absence of natural light.

About 30 years ago, an auction catalog prompted Lawrence Gelman, an Edinburg anesthesiologist, to go to Atlanta, Georgia, to view a stained-glass window as it was being repaired. He later phoned in his winning auction bid and purchased the 4-by-7-foot landscape. “There’s something about the vividness of colors when light passes through stained glass,” Gelman says.

Captivated by the art, Gelman delved into the history and mastery involved, collecting more and more stained-glass windows until he had enough to fill a museum, which he chose to locate in San Juan, near the Basilica of Our Lady of San Juan del Valle. That shrine annually receives more than 1 million

visitors, an audience primed to appreciate Gelman’s collection.

“Dr. Gelman wanted to replicate a sacred, transcendental experience,” says Miriam Cepeda, the museum’s director.

He has succeeded, no question.

Created between 1880 and 1910 by 12 master glasswork artists and studios of the art nouveau era, the works comprise the largest American museum collection of stained-glass windows. And with 71 Louis Comfort Tiffany windows, the Gelman has the largest collection of Tiffany glass windows in the U.S. Other noted glass artists represented here include John La Farge, Mary Elizabeth Tillinghast and those at J&R Lamb Studios—the oldest continuously operating glass studio in the nation, dating to 1857.

Cepeda gives me a quick explanation of stained glass. Traditionally, stained glass was actually painted glass.



WITH 71 LOUIS COMFORT TIFFANY WINDOWS, THE GELMAN HAS THE LARGEST COLLECTION OF TIFFANY GLASS WINDOWS IN THE U.S.

The glass panels are supported and joined by flexible channels of lead called comes—and, in some cases, by copper foil. Tiffany Studios popularized the use of opalescent glass and layered glass to achieve shimmering, flowing colors for landscapes. Looking closely, I notice that even the faces and hands of Christ, the apostles and other religious figures have been painted onto the glass.

MANY OF THE WINDOWS represent biblical scenes, such as the Nativity, flight into Egypt, Good Shepherd, and Madonna and child, as interpreted by the artists. But La Farge's works here mostly portray medieval scenes.

The vivid jewel tones of Franz Mayer's stained-glass windows contrast with the luminous blues and greens of Tiffany Studios' masterpieces, such as the *Te Deum*. The museum is just one glorious work of art after another.

An eye-catching group of eight Tiffany windows portrays angels as stern warriors and loving guardians presenting the Beatitudes—sayings attributed to Jesus. These windows adorned a private mausoleum, out of the public eye for 108 years, until Gelman put them on display.

Similar memorial inscriptions evoke a bygone time, such as "To the Glory of God and in Loving Memory of Charles Chamberlain Gay 1835–1913." One narrow window honors the memory of three women who died in the wreck of a ship called the Paul Jones in January 1899 in the Gulf of Mexico.

The small but magnificent north chapel shimmers with windows rich in pastels. In the south chapel, a large pipe organ and an electronic organ, backed by superb sound systems, enhance the sensory feast. The museum hosts orchestral and chamber music concerts and has been the setting for weddings, workshops and secular celebrations.

The museum chose not to add interpretive displays to the windows, instead providing guests a compact map with QR codes that, with a click of your phone camera, link to in-depth descriptions of the windows, their artists and their techniques. The map also identifies the marble altars, statues and mosaics throughout the building.

La Casa del Vitral, an art studio in Edinburg, took on the restoration of the century-old windows and installed the glass art in the museum. They also made replicas of several windows held in other museums.

Admission to the Gelman Museum is by appointment only, made through its website, gelmanmuseum.org.

Once visitors are inside, benches invite sitting and contemplating. Subtle light washes over me while I listen to recorded voices raised in Gregorian chant. Peace and beauty. ■

The Good Shepherd, baptism of Jesus and flight into Egypt are among the biblical stories portrayed in stained glass framed by red oak paneling.



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How To Rock a Walking Stick

An essential part of a gentleman's wardrobe



In the 17th century, the walking stick overtook the sword as an essential part of a gentleman's wardrobe. Though it was primarily used as a decorative accessory, it could also function as a weapon if necessary. For men of the era, these walking sticks were a statement piece, and a way to communicate their wealth and refinement.

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— Steven, Arlington, VA



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— Chas, Placida, FL

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CEO
HERBERT "TREY"
GREBE III

Prioritize Safety Year-Round

AT MEDINA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, we recognize Electrical Safety Month every May, but we also know the importance of practicing safety year-round. We recognize that everyone—from our co-op crews to you—has a part to play in prioritizing safety.

Thousands of people across the U.S. are critically injured or electrocuted as a result of electrical fires and accidents in their own homes, according to Electrical Safety Foundation International. Many of these accidents are preventable. Electricity is a necessity that powers our daily lives, but we

know firsthand how dangerous electricity can be because we work with it every day.

To me, safety is much more than a habit. It's a way of life.

As the manager of your cooperative, it's my responsibility to keep our employees safe, but we also want to help keep you and all members of our community safe. That's why you'll see Medina EC hosting safety demonstrations at community events and in schools throughout the year, to emphasize the dangers of electricity.

We discuss emergency

scenarios, such as what to do in a car accident involving a utility pole or downed power lines. We caution students on the dangers of padmount transformers and overloading household circuits with too many electronic devices.

Here are a few practical electrical safety tips.

Replace frayed wires. Power cords can become damaged or frayed from age, heavy use or excessive current flow. If cords become frayed or cut, replace them before they cause a shock or fire.

Avoid overloading circuits. Circuits can only cope with a certain amount of electricity. An overload happens when you draw more electricity than a circuit can safely handle—by having too many devices running on one circuit. If a fuse blows or a circuit breaker is tripped, don't just replace or reset it. Find out what caused the circuit to overload and correct the problem.

Label circuit breakers to understand the circuits in your home. Contact a qualified electrician if your home is more than 40 years old and you need to install multiple large appliances that use a lot of electricity.

Use extension cords properly. Never plug an extension cord into another extension cord, and don't exceed the wattage of the cord. Doing so risks overloading the cord and creating a fire hazard. Extension cords should be used as temporary solutions, not permanent fixes.

Make sure you have ground-fault circuit interrupters installed and that they're working properly. Many older houses were built prior to advanced electrical codes. GFCIs are especially important in parts of the home near water—in the kitchen and bathrooms and in laundry areas.

Our top priority is providing an uninterrupted energy supply 24/7, 365 days a year. But equally important is keeping our community safe around electricity.

Until next time,
Trey Grebe



MEDINA EC EMPLOYEES JACKIE MUENNINK (TOP) AND FELIPE MORENO (BOTTOM) DEMONSTRATE THE DANGERS OF ELECTRICITY AT LOCAL EVENTS.

May is National Electrical Safety Month

plug into safety



Electricity brightens our daily lives—but it also requires caution to help keep your family safe.



Never use electrical equipment near water and other liquids.



Never use electrical cords that are frayed or damaged.



Do not overload electrical outlets.



Never use lightbulbs that exceed the recommended wattage for any lighting unit or fixture.



Medina Electric
Cooperative



CONTACT US

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

Email Info@MedinaEC.org

Web MedinaEC.org - Chat Feature Available

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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.

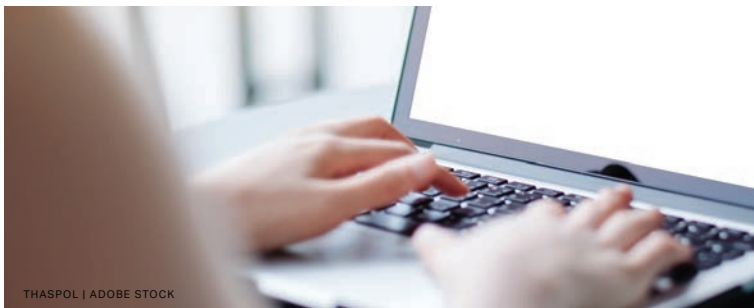
Información sobre todos los programas y servicios que ofrece Medina Electric Cooperative están disponibles en español al llamarnos al 1-866-MEC-ELEC o visitando una de nuestras oficinas.

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

Is Your Contact Information Up to Date?



THASPOL | ADOBE STOCK

MEDINA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE is asking members to contact the cooperative to update any changed account information.

This information includes:

- name on the account
- cellphone and landline numbers
- email address
- mailing address
- primary use for electricity
- gate code

It's important to inform Medina EC of any updates to your account so we can continue to provide better service and communication to members.

If at any time you have a change to your account information, please call us at 1-866-632-3532 or email Info@MedinaEC.org.

SMARTHUB OUTAGE ALERTS

With SmartHub, you can opt in to receive outage alerts via text and email. You will receive these alerts when we show you have an outage and when power has been restored.

If we show power has been restored and you are still without power, it is important that you report your outage again. That helps crews know that you have an individual outage.

Outages can be reported using SmartHub or by calling 1-866-632-3532.



Operation Round Up Recipients

Medina Electric Cooperative's Operation Round Up committee met in March and awarded donations to the following applicants.

- **Kim Avila**—\$500 gift card
- **Adelina Rodriguez**—\$500
- **Isaias and Edna Bazan**—\$200

Operation Round Up is funded by Medina EC members who choose to round up their monthly electric bills to the next dollar.

If you or someone you know needs financial help, apply for a donation from ORU. Applicants do not need to be Medina EC members but must live in one of the 17 counties served by Medina EC. ORU funds cannot be used to pay electric bills, solar panels or anything else related to electricity. The remaining 2023 application deadlines are May 5, Aug. 4 and Nov. 3.

Learn more and apply at MedinaEC.org/ORU.



OASISAMUEL | ADOBESTOCK

Get Ready for the Energy Star Tax Holiday

MARK YOUR CALENDAR for the Energy Star Sales Tax Holiday, May 27–29. Texas shoppers wanting a break on energy-efficient items can buy qualifying Energy Star products in stores, online or by phone, mail, custom order or any other means (including in-store purchases) tax-free, when either: The item is both delivered and paid for during the exemption period or you order and pay for the item and the seller accepts the order during the exemption period for immediate shipment, even if delivery is made after the exemption period ends.

If you pay sales tax on qualifying items during the sales tax holiday, you can ask the seller for a refund of the tax paid or a refund form to send directly to the Texas comptroller's office.

Qualifying Products

- Air conditioners with sales price of \$6,000 or less
- Refrigerators with sales price of \$2,000 or less
- Ceiling fans
- Incandescent and fluorescent lightbulbs
- Clothes washers
- Dishwashers
- Dehumidifiers

Nonqualifying Products

- Water heaters
- Clothes dryers
- Freezers
- Stoves
- Attic fans
- Heat pumps
- Wine refrigerators
- Beverage chillers

Learn more at Comptroller.Texas.gov.



METER TAMPERING

Meter tampering can result in electric shock, is illegal and increases electricity rates for other co-op members.

If you know or suspect that someone has tampered with their meter, please contact us immediately.



Electrical Safety Month Quiz

MAY IS NATIONAL ELECTRICAL SAFETY MONTH. Take this quiz from Electrical Safety Foundation International to find out how much you know about electrical safety in your home.

1. True or false? Using a corded phone during a lightning storm is safe.
 - a. True
 - b. False

2. Why do some power outlets have three holes?
 - a. To provide more voltage
 - b. The third prong is the "ground."
 - c. To accommodate foreign appliances
 - d. It keeps the plug from falling out.

3. Smoke alarm batteries should be changed every:
 - a. month
 - b. six months
 - c. year
 - d. two years

4. The proper way to safely move away from a downed power line is to _____ until you are 35 feet away.
 - a. take small hops with your feet together
 - b. skip so that only one foot is on the ground at a time
 - c. crawl on all fours

5. True or false? You can be electrocuted using a tree trimmer near a power line even if you don't touch the wires.
 - a. True
 - b. False

6. True or false? Swallowing a button cell battery can be fatal.
 - a. True
 - b. False

7. Birds are able to perch on power lines without risk of injury because:
 - a. The unique skin on the feet of birds protects them.
 - b. Sitting on one wire does not provide a ground or connect a circuit, so the current doesn't leave the wire and continues on its path.
 - c. Birds' bones are hollow, allowing the current to pass through them without harm.

8. Across the U.S., a fire department responds to a fire once every:
 - a. 23 seconds
 - b. 7 minutes
 - c. 28 minutes
 - d. 52 minutes

Summer Supply for ERCOT Grid

IN EARLY MAY the Electric Reliability Council of Texas is expected to release its Seasonal Assessment of Resource Adequacy report for summer 2023. This report will provide an outlook on the available generation and a prediction for energy demand during the summer season. You can find the assessment on ERCOT's website, ERCOT.com.

The record peak demand in 2022 was 80,038 megawatts, set in July. In general, a megawatt of electricity can power about 200 Texas homes.

As in the past, ERCOT will issue alerts and declare energy emergencies if needed. Alerts help consumers, including Medina Electric Cooperative members, know that conservation is needed. Declaring an emergency allows the grid operator to take advantage of additional resources. If grid conditions continue to worsen, the grid operator can implement forced outages across the state. If this occurs, it is likely to happen quickly with little warning or time for advance notifications. Medina EC will do its best to notify members as quickly as humanly possible.

Learn more about what to do during a load shed event, energy conservation, our notification process and more at MedinaEC.org/ERCOT or scan the QR code above.

Cooperatives Conserve

MEDINA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE encourages all members to practice energy conservation, especially on extremely hot days. The cooperative offers conservation text alerts for those wanting to help conserve energy on high-demand days.

If you would like to receive voluntary conservation alerts on high demand days, text **ENERGY** to **1-855-429-1119**. We'll send you a text notification with an energy conservation tip. You can also find more energy conservation tips at MedinaEC.org/EnergySavings.

To help combat peak demand in summer months—June through September—Medina EC offers a

load management program for members on the irrigation rate.

Through this program, irrigators allow the co-op to shut off power to their irrigation pumps when needed to reduce energy use and strain on the grid. By shedding irrigation load at critical moments, the cooperative can reduce power costs. It also reduces load on the statewide grid during the highest-use times of the summer.

More information is available at MedinaEC.org/LM.

OPERATION ROUND UP

helps organizations too!

If you are a nonprofit organization that helps communities in one of Medina EC's 17 counties, consider applying for ORU!



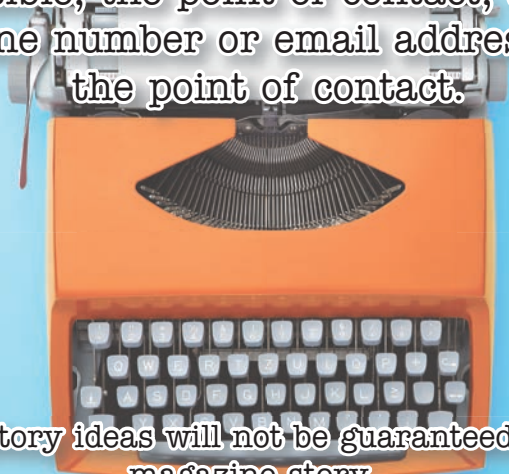
Learn more and apply at
MedinaEC.org/ORU.

HELLO-PIXEL | FREEPIK.COM

Do you have an idea for a story you want to share with other Medina EC members?

Send it to **MyCoop@MedinaEC.org** to be considered*.

Include: as many details as possible, the point of contact, and a phone number or email address for the point of contact.



*Story ideas will not be guaranteed a magazine story.

BIGBLUESTUDIO | ADOBESTOCK

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

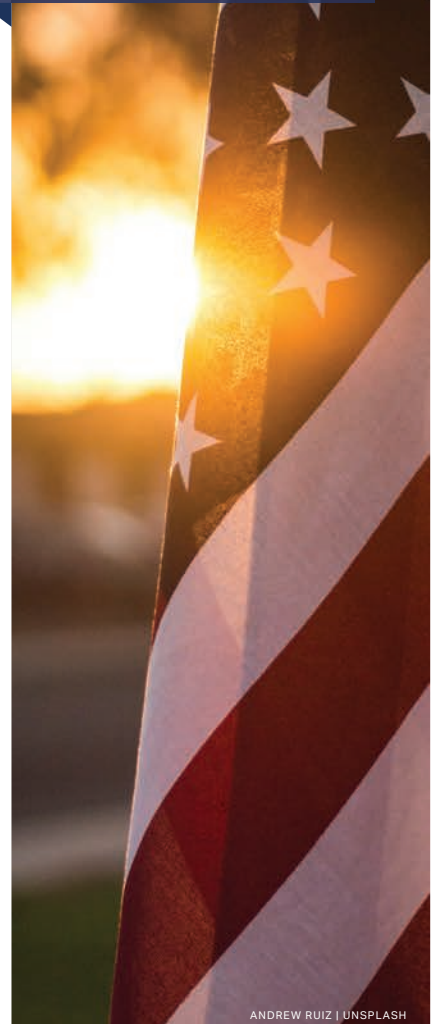
Operation Round Up Applications Due

Friday, May 5
Learn more about ORU and apply at MedinaEC.org/ORU.

Mother's Day Sunday, May 14

Armed Forces Day Saturday, May 20

Memorial Day
Monday, May 29
Our offices will be closed in observance of the holiday. As always, crews will be on call.



ANDREW RUIZ | UNSPLASH

Saying Yes to an Exchange Year

STORY AND PHOTOS BY JACKIE MUENNINK AND KATIE HABY

JACKIE

This month will end a nine-month exchange year for Kaja Marfurt from Switzerland and Chiara Carusone from Italy, who both participated in the International Student Exchange for the 2022–2023 school year at Hondo High School. Kaja took residence with my family—my husband, my 5-year-old son and 3-year-old daughter—and Chiara lived with Katie Haby, her husband and 9- and 6-year-old daughters.

Here's how two co-op employees—Katie Haby and I—came to each host an international student in our homes in Hondo, Texas.

KATIE

Jackie and I have worked closely together for more than eight years. Lots of time spent together between meetings and travel time in our service area opened the door for great brainstorming opportunities and extraordinary ideas; well, at least most were extraordinary. In one of those conversations the topic of an exchange student came up. Going to high school in Uvalde, we always had exchange students, and I loved making friends with them, learning about their cultures and teaching them about ours. I always thought it would be neat to host one and mentioned that to Jackie at some point, but not in total seriousness. Or so I thought. One day Jackie sent me a screenshot of a post from a Facebook group that included details from the agency looking for families to host a student from abroad. This post was legitimate—looking for families in the Hondo area to open their homes and their hearts to young kids wanting to study in America.

The next parts seemed to happen so quickly. I asked my husband if he would ever consider hosting; he said he would consider it. To me, that was a yes, so I sent off paperwork—much to his

surprise—and background checks, interviews with references and working with ISE to find a student for our family followed.

JACKIE

Katie said yes first. But then the Facebook posts kept coming. "We have several loving students who are waiting on an amazing host family to say yes." Shortly after the Haby family matched with Chiara, my family also agreed to start the process of hosting a student. It made the most sense—if we were going to seriously consider it, it would probably be better to do so at the same time as the Habys so we could help each other out.

There is a whole pool of students from all over the world wanting to experience American life. Through this particular agency, the students don't pick the location. They get selected by a family. We looked through profiles of many students who we thought might fit our family. Kaja's profile stuck out because she has a sibling, similar religious beliefs and was interested in being a kindergarten teacher. Perfect for two little kids looking for a "sister."

KATIE

Once we were matched with Chiara, we were able to video chat during the months and weeks leading to her arrival. We were able to virtually "meet" her entire family and visit with them through Chiara, her Dad and her sister, who all spoke English and translated to her Mom and brother. I could tell my little girls were getting excited when we had the time to video chat. The last few weeks of summer were spent preparing a room for Chiara. That's one of the requirements for families to provide—a bed and a place to study. But we also wanted to provide her a space she could make her own. So we stole an



idea from Jackie and had Chiara's family secretly send us photographs of friends and family back in Italy that we could print and frame for her.

JACKIE

I remember driving to the airport the night that Kaja flew in. Andrew and I actually waited at the wrong escalator for a while because we'd never flown or picked up anyone who's flown internationally. Thankfully, the San Antonio airport isn't too large to run through and we realized our error in time to meet Kaja as she came riding down those disappearing stairs. It was almost movie-like, waiting with our "Welcome" sign so Kaja would know to find us. We had only video-chatted a couple of times before her arrival, and after a long day of traveling, I was worried she would be shy and quiet, and possibly not recognize us. Flying as an adult is already stressful—I couldn't imagine making a 24-hour international trip by myself at 16. But she had made it. And we were

Meet Kaja

FROM SEENGEN, SWITZERLAND



Tell us about yourself. I'm from a small town in Switzerland—about 4,500 people. I live near a lake, so in summer, I go to that lake a lot with my friends. I'm also part of a sport group (in Switzerland, sport groups belong to towns instead of schools). I also really like skiing, but I can only do that in winter, because we don't have snow all year. I go to a school about 20 minutes away from my town, but because I can't drive yet, I travel there by train and bus. It takes me about 40 minutes to get there.

What was your favorite thing to share with your host family or new friends?

The best part is telling [everyone] things they don't know about. I love showing them food, but unfortunately I can't cook or bake very good... I also love showing them Swiss music!

What was your favorite thing about American high school?

I love that there is always so much going on because of [the] sports! It was great for me, because that's where I met my friends.

What was the biggest difference between your school back home and your school in America? In school in Switzerland, we can't choose our classes. We also only have one

"class," so about 20 people we go to every period with and it's always the same people.

What will you miss the most about America? My host family and my friends! And just being here—like going to the games and being part of Hondo's everyday life.

What would you tell other families interested in hosting an exchange student? I think it's an experience for everyone and they'd learn a lot about other countries too, but maybe that's wrong. But it would definitely change the family's everyday life!



KAJA WITH THE MUENNINK FAMILY.

Meet Chiara

FROM APRILIA, ITALY



Tell us about your hometown.

The town I'm from is a big town. There are different schools you can attend after middle school that focus on different subjects like languages, science, math, human body, electronics or hairdresser. We always go out during the weekend, and we usually just walk around town or we go to the movies. When the weather starts warming up we go to the beach a lot.

What was your favorite thing to share with your host family or new friends?

My favorite thing I got to

share was probably how life works in Italy and all the food I brought from there.

What was your favorite thing about American high school?

My favorite things I have to say is sports during school, the relationship between the teachers and the students, and all the choices you have when you choose the classes you want to attend.

What was your least favorite thing about American high school?

Probably having to do homework late at night or while going out of town because you don't really

have much time when you're playing a sport or you're involved in other activities.

What will you miss the most about America?

All the friends I made here, my host family, the school and sports in school, and also some of the fast foods.

What would you tell other families interested in hosting an exchange student?

Sometimes it can be challenging but you're making their dreams come true and they will forever be grateful about this.



CHIARA WITH THE HABBY FAMILY.

ready. Off we were to start our journey as an exchange family—but not without a quick stop first at Whataburger.

KATIE

Whataburger must be the first stop for many exchange students, because it is also the first place we took Chiara. We could tell she was tired, also, but we woke her up the first morning, after just a few hours of sleep, to go watch some Hondo Owl volleyball since she intended to try out for the team.

The agency stresses that when the students come to live with you, you are expected to treat them as family. They are not guests in your home. They should help with regular chores and participate in family activities. That was hard for us at first, because we recognized that she was in a new spot and dealing with so much change. But being placed with our families also meant lots of participation in many other things. My little girls wasted no time in ensuring Chiara was "one of the family." That meant participating in family game night, including trying to learn some Italian card games, unloading the dishwasher, and racing from sports event to sports event.



JACKIE

It was fun being able to support Chiara and Kaja in their high school journey. Some things we find normal in the U.S., and especially in Texas,

aren't so normal in Europe—pep rallies, Friday night lights, homecoming and mums, school buses, prom, and the list goes on. It seems, based on their input, everything really is bigger in Texas: bigger stores, roads, cars. Chiara played volleyball and soccer, was a basketball manager and ran track. Kaja played soccer, was in the drama club and became a state-qualifier for Business Professionals of America.

And while many things can come as a culture shock when hosting an exchange student, many high school girl tendencies are global. If you're a parent of a teenage girl, you probably know what I'm talking about: friendships, boys, messy rooms, clothes and occasional tears.

KATIE

It's crazy to think while telling this story that this journey is almost over. In just nine short months, we went from being complete strangers and having lots of nerves to having additional family members that we include in family jokes. But we are going to say goodbye to very soon. There are so many sweet memories made this year with Chiara in our home: exposing her to chasing wild hogs and helping vaccinate cows, dragging her on early morning adventures like a hike up Enchanted Rock, getting a puppy at Christmas, which was an experience she would never have in Italy because of her mom's aversion to dogs, and more. Turns out teenage girls globally like sleeping in, but we told her she could sleep in when she got back to Italy. Having both Chiara and Kaja here and getting to see them embrace the experience has been so rewarding.

One of the things I will always remember is when, just a few days in, I asked Chiara if her experience so far was what she expected. She answered, "Well, I didn't really come here with expectations." What an "a-ha" moment that was for me, who enters most situations with expectations and sometimes struggles when those expectations are not met. That was a huge life lesson that I have carried through this year and

will continue to carry. All from an 18-year-old Italian that I was supposed to be sharing advice with.

JACKIE

In addition to learning our American ways, Kaja also shared her culture with us. I enjoyed learning how to bake zopf, the Swiss bread. For World Communion Day, she offered us a German prayer and sang *Silent Night* in German for our Christmas Eve service—German is one of the official languages of Switzerland.

I loved watching the bond between Kaja and our family grow. She definitely achieved sister status quickly—some days all three kids got along great, and other days the sibling rivalry was intense. We had fun watching her show us up on the slopes with her extreme Swiss skiing skills over spring break, going on a first day hike at Garner State Park, RV camping and of course visiting the beach and my hometown of Corpus Christi. Also, I made her run a 5K on Thanksgiving morning—how American!

I will cherish the photographs that remind me of the moments that we'll wish had lasted longer. It's been such a special experience. I knew we could open our homes—that wasn't ever the issue—but opening our hearts and our families to a stranger was a bit scary; if I'm being honest. But now, it's almost scarier thinking how we look to a future where Kaja isn't here and part of our daily lives. We spent this time of "firsts" with Kaja, but also "lasts" knowing this wasn't forever. She'll always be a part of our family, but it's just going to be ... different. I know my kids are going to miss their sweet Swiss sister and our Italian friend.

For more information on hosting an exchange student through ISE, contact Angel Puente at angel@iseusa.org.

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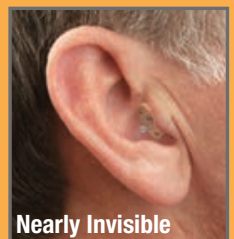
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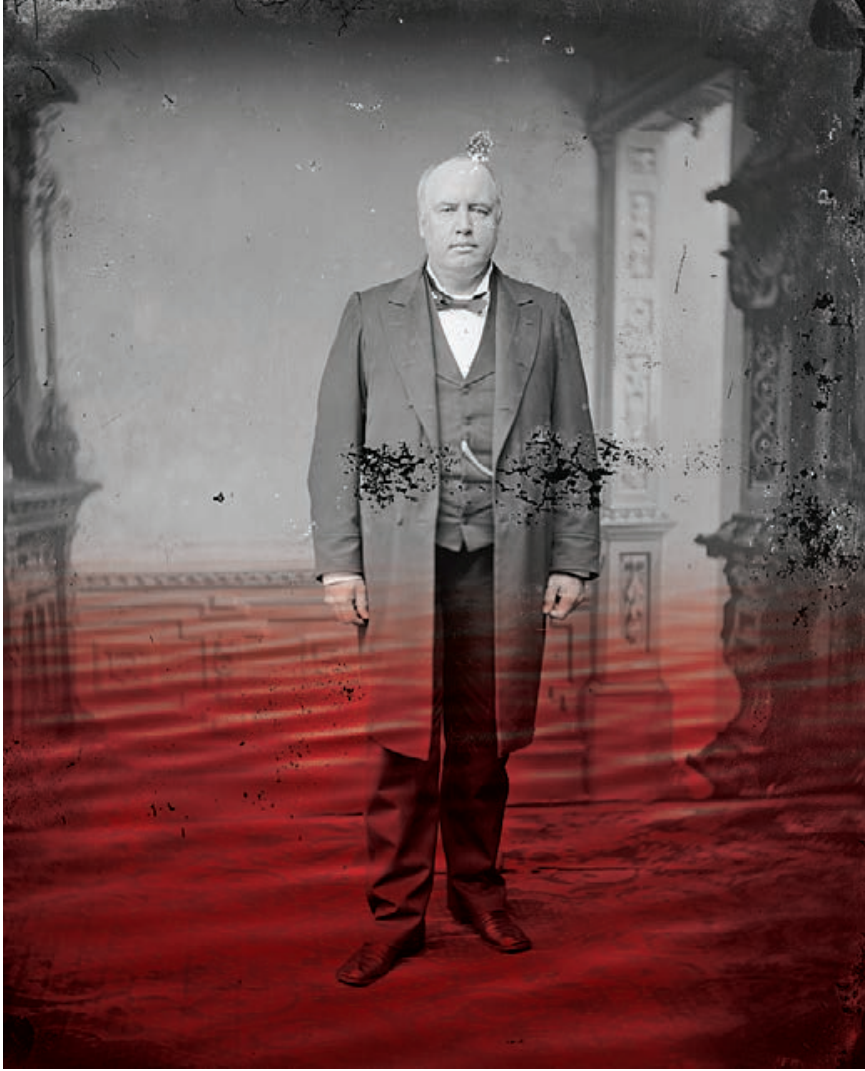
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Redwater Christening

East Texas residents washed away their sins—and their town's original name

BY W.F. STRONG

GO EAST OF DALLAS on Interstate 30 past Sulphur Springs until you reach U.S. Route 67. Take that east and before you reach Texarkana, you'll arrive in a little town of about 1,000 named Ingersoll. Well, it *was* called Ingersoll.

The name was unofficially changed to Redwater about 10 years after its 1875 founding—a change that was made official by the post office almost a decade after that.

Founders of the town admired Robert Green Ingersoll and decided to name their town after him. You may have never heard of Ingersoll, but that's only

because you didn't live in the late 1800s in America.

Back then, Ingersoll was one of the most famous people in the nation. He was friends with presidents and Mark Twain. He was a giant among politicians of the day, and any Republican who wanted to succeed at the national level needed and lusted after Ingersoll's endorsement—and his oratorical talents.

Had he wanted to, he would have made a formidable candidate for the presidency himself, except for the little problem of his nickname: the Great Agnostic.

Despite Ingersoll's reputation as a free-

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



thinker and anti-religious zealot, he was widely liked.

His central creed was this: "Happiness is the only good. The place to be happy is here. The time to be happy is now. The way to be happy is to make others so."

Ingersoll, a devoted reader of Shakespeare and, ironically, the Bible, was known as the most brilliant wordsmith of his age. He mesmerized audiences with his genius for creating poetic oratory. His voice was captivating in tone, and his articulation was flawless.

Ingersoll was ahead of his time. The New York native who served as the 16th attorney general of Illinois after commanding a Union cavalry regiment in the Civil War was an outspoken abolitionist and supported voting rights for Black people and women.

But Ingersoll's fame died with him, in 1899. It seemed he would be confined to the century that had defined him.

Even in Texas. A revival meeting was held in the early 1890s in the East Texas town that was named for Ingersoll, and it was a mighty successful one.

That week 110 people were baptized, or "born again," in the community. It suddenly became thoroughly devout and could not suffer the indignities of living under the name of a famous agnostic. So they agreed to rename the town Redwater, after a well that had recently been dug there was found to yield red water. Perhaps they also saw some religious significance in the name. In the Old Testament's telling, God parted the Red Sea to save Moses and the Israelites.

That's how Ingersoll became Redwater and one more reason that the man himself became, as *The Washington Post* called him in 2012, "the most famous American you never heard of." ■

Berries

Make a grand entrance with your favorite diminutive delights

BY MEGAN MYERS, FOOD EDITOR

Berries have long been my favorite kind of fruit. Not only are they wonderful eaten out of hand, these versatile little gems shine in recipes of all kinds. For these cornmeal pancakes, blueberries are combined with jalapeño for a tart, sweet, slightly spicy topping.



Cornmeal Pancakes With Blueberry Jalapeño Sauce

PANCAKES

- 1 cup self-rising flour**
- 1 cup cornmeal**
- 2 tablespoons sugar**
- ½ teaspoon baking powder**
- 1 cup buttermilk**
- 2 eggs**
- 4 tablespoons (½ stick) butter, melted, plus more for the pan**

SAUCE

- 1½ cups blueberries**
- 2 tablespoons sugar**
- 1 jalapeño, seeded and diced**
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice**

1. PANCAKES In a large bowl, stir together flour, cornmeal, sugar and baking powder. Whisk in buttermilk and eggs until smooth. Let batter rest while you make the sauce.

2. SAUCE In a small saucepan, combine blueberries, sugar, jalapeño and lemon juice and stir well. Set over medium heat and cook 5 minutes, stirring occasionally and mashing blueberries with the back of a spoon. Turn heat to low and let simmer while you cook the pancakes.

3. Warm a nonstick skillet over medium heat. Add a small amount of butter to the pan and swirl to coat.

4. Stir the 4 tablespoons melted butter into the batter. Scoop ¼ cup of batter and pour into the prepared pan, repeating as allowed for pan size.

5. Cook pancakes until edges are dry and bubbles appear (1–2 minutes), then flip and cook an additional 2 minutes. Remove to a plate and repeat until all the batter is used. Serve immediately with warm sauce.

MAKES 1 DOZEN PANCAKES

TCP Follow along with Megan Myers and her adventures in the kitchen at stetted.com, where she features a recipe for Raspberry White Chocolate Cookies.



Strawberry Burfee

SHUBHADA KORE
PEDERNALES EC

This burfee, an Indian dessert similar to fudge—also spelled burfi, barfi, barfee or borfi—is a wonderfully easy treat. Top it with coconut, sprinkles or chopped nuts for festive flair.

- 1 cup strawberries**
- 1 cup almond flour**
- 1 cup brown sugar**
- ½ cup desiccated coconut**
- 1 tablespoon butter**

COOK'S TIP Desiccated coconut can be made by pulsing shredded coconut in a food processor until finely chopped.

1. Wash, trim and purée strawberries until smooth. Set aside.
2. In a nonstick pan over low to medium heat, roast almond flour for 5 minutes or until it is lightly browned and aromatic. Pour into a bowl and set aside.
3. Return the pan to the heat and add strawberry purée and brown sugar. Cover and cook 2–3 minutes on low to medium heat.
4. Once the berry and sugar mixture is bubbling, remove lid and stir in almond flour and coconut. Mix well, then stir in butter. Cook on low, stirring constantly, until mixture comes together into a dough, about 5–6 minutes. It will be somewhat sticky, with excess moisture cooked off.
5. Let the mixture cool slightly and then spread onto greased parchment or into a buttered square pan, using a spatula to shape into ½-inch thickness. Let cool completely and slice into squares or diamonds to serve.

SERVES 8–10

[MORE RECIPES >](#)

\$500 WINNER

Berry Burst Pavlova

JUANITA GUERRA
MAGIC VALLEY EC



Pavlovas are always impressive on the table, especially when layered with a creamy filling and fresh fruit. Make sure not to open the oven during baking and cooling so the pavlova dries fully.

SERVES 12



PAVLOVA

- ¼ cup fresh or frozen berries of choice**
- ¾ cup egg whites at room temperature (about 6 eggs)**
- 1 cup superfine sugar**
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch**
- 1½ teaspoons cream of tartar**
- ½ teaspoon lemon or almond extract (optional)**

FILLING

- ¼ cup fresh or frozen berries of choice**
- 8 ounces cream cheese, softened**
- 1 can sweetened condensed milk (14 ounces)**
- ¼ cup lemon juice**
- ½ teaspoon lemon or orange extract**
- 1 pound mixed fresh berries**

1. **PAVLOVA** Preheat oven to 240 degrees. Draw an 8-inch circle on a sheet of parchment and set aside.
2. Microwave berries for 1 minute, smash with a fork and drain off any excess liquid. Set aside.
3. In a large bowl, whisk egg whites using an electric mixer on low until soft peaks form, 5–6 minutes. Continue to whisk, adding sugar 1 tablespoon at a time, waiting 15 seconds between each addition. Once all the sugar is added, increase mixer speed to high and whisk meringue to stiff peaks and until mixture is smooth. Sift in cornstarch and cream of tartar, add extract (if using), and whisk to incorporate.
4. Drop the heated berries into five areas on top of the mixture and fold in lightly with a spatula to create swirls.
5. Place a small amount of meringue onto each corner of a baking sheet and set the parchment, pencil side down, on top of it, sticking the corners down. Scoop the meringue onto the parchment, using the spatula to spread and fill the circle shape evenly. Bake 1½ hours, then turn oven off and let the meringue cool with the door closed for at least 2 hours.
6. **FILLING** Microwave berries 1 minute, smash with a fork and drain off any excess liquid. Set aside.
7. In a medium bowl, beat the cream cheese until fluffy. In another bowl, mix together the condensed milk, lemon juice and extract until smooth. Add to the cream cheese and whip until smooth and fluffy. Drop the heated berries into five areas on top and fold in lightly to make swirls.
8. To assemble, carefully transfer the cooled pavlova to a serving plate. Spread the filling into the middle and top with fresh berries.

\$500 Recipe Contest

BEANS DUE MAY 10

Submit your most delicious bean dishes, and we'll award \$500 for the winning recipe.



Raspberry Bread Pudding

JANELLE NIX
NUECES EC

Excellent for breakfast or dessert, this bread pudding is bursting with tart raspberries. It's topped with a creamy vanilla sauce, which Nix's mother has been making for decades.

BREAD PUDDING

1 loaf French bread
3 eggs
2½ cups half-and-half
1 cup sugar, divided use,
plus 2 tablespoons
½ cup brown sugar
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
½ teaspoon salt
2½ cups fresh raspberries
¼ cup water
Zest of 1 small orange
Butter for the pan

VANILLA SAUCE

½ cup sugar
2 tablespoons cornstarch
Dash of salt



1½ cups half-and-half
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
2 tablespoons (¼ stick) butter

- 1. BREAD PUDDING** Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Slice bread into ½-inch cubes to yield 5 cups of cubes and spread onto a baking sheet. Bake 7–10 minutes, until dry. Set aside.
- 2.** In a large bowl, whisk together eggs, half-and-half, ½ cup sugar, brown sugar, vanilla and salt. Fold in the toasted bread, coating evenly. Let soak for 30 minutes.

3. Place the raspberries in a bowl. In a small saucepan over medium heat, combine water, orange zest and ½ cup sugar, stirring to dissolve sugar. Cool syrup slightly, then pour over raspberries and stir to coat.

4. Lightly coat a 9-inch square baking pan with butter. Pour ¾ of the bread mixture into the pan, then spoon raspberries and syrup over the top. Add remaining bread mixture, then sprinkle on 2 tablespoons sugar. Bake 50–60 minutes, until center is set.

5. VANILLA SAUCE While the bread pudding is baking, make the sauce. In a small saucepan, whisk together sugar, cornstarch and salt. Whisk in half-and-half, then set over medium heat. Cook, stirring constantly, until mixture thickens and coats the back of a spoon, about 10–15 minutes. Remove from heat and whisk in vanilla and butter until blended and smooth. Serve on top of the bread pudding.

SERVES 8



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COURTESY CHET GARNER

Underwater Wonderland

At Mammoth Lake Texas, it's what's inside that counts

BY CHET GARNER

I WAS WALKING like an awkward, eager duck with all my gear shaking like heavy tail feathers behind me. Mammoth Lake Texas attracts divers from all over the country, and I understood why as soon as I submerged myself into its strange underwater menagerie.

You can use your fingers to count the number of inland scuba diving destinations in Texas. Some offer a natural glimpse of spring-fed pools (like San Solomon Springs at Balmorhea State Park), and others offer swims through sunken objects. Mammoth Lake in Clute mixes the natural and artificial to create an underwater amusement park.

Below the depths of this 65-acre lake lie more than 150 objects ranging from small sculptures to the entire fuselage of a C-130 cargo plane. With a reservation and a current dive license, visitors can rent gear and embark on the most unusual underwater scavenger hunt in the state—in the largest and deepest dedicated scuba lake in Texas. Most attractions are in 35–40 feet of water, but a deeper hole reaches down to 75 feet.

I was joined by a knowledgeable divemaster, Alex Amaro, who took us on an epic expedition through a World War II submarine and a fighter jet. There's even a life-size sculpture of a Columbian mammoth marking the spot where fossils were found when this was just a sand pit. My favorite stops were the decommissioned rides from Six Flags AstroWorld, which owner Jason Burlison bought and submerged.

All around us were bass, perch and turtles that seemed to be enjoying the sunken treasures as much as I was. Unfortunately we didn't get a glimpse of the 7-foot paddlefish that call the lake home—just another reason to come back. ■

ABOVE Instructor Alex Amaro, giving the diving OK sign, with Chet and Todd White, producer of *The Daytripper*.

TCP Follow along as Chet goes sightseeing underwater. See the video on our website and check out all his Texplorations on *The Daytripper* on PBS.



Know Before You Go

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

MAY

07

Ennis Cinco de Mayo, (972) 878-4748, visitennistexas.com

09

Amarillo [9–10] Fiddler on the Roof, (806) 378-3096, amarillociviccenter.com

11

South Padre Island [11–13] Shallow Sport Owners Tournament, (956) 233-9489, shallowsporttournament.com

Abilene [11–14] Western Heritage Classic, (325) 677-4376, westernheritageclassic.com

12

Johnson City Movies at the Memorial, (830) 868-7111, johnsoncitytx.org

Saint Jo Sporting Clay Event, (817) 296-3104, saintjosportingclay.com

Boerne [12–13] Hand-made Market, boernehandmademarket.com

Coolidge [12–13] Mesquite Tree Festival, (254) 203-6198, facebook.com/mesquitetreefestival

Lindale [12–13] Piney Woods Wine Festival, (903) 881-5103, visitlindale.com

McKinney [12–13] Y'all Had To Be Here Live, (214) 769-0645, thecomedyarena.com

Ingram [12–June 23] Of the Earth: Metal and Wood, (830) 367-5121, hcaf.com

13

Brenham T. Graham Brown, (979) 337-7240, thebarnhillcenter.com

Brownwood Lake Brownwood Bash, (325) 784-5223, tpwd.texas.gov

Fort Davis Mile-High Mountains Fest, (432) 426-3337, tpwd.texas.gov

Fredericksburg Cherry Mountain School Open House, (830) 685-3321, historicsschools.org

Mesquite Historic Mesquite Inc. Preservation Month Open House and Porch Party, (972) 216-6468, cityofmesquite.com

Texarkana Dragon Boat Festival, (903) 798-3211, texarkanadragonboat.com

The Woodlands Buzzfest, (281) 364-3010, woodlandscenter.org

Victoria Mother's Day Brunch, (361) 573-3734, goldencrescentcasa.org

18

Corsicana Yesterday & Today: The Beatles Experience, (903) 874-7792, corsicanapalace.com

Giddings [18-20] Lee County Fair, leecountyfairtx.com

19

Grapevine [19-21] Main Street Fest, (817) 410-3185, grapevintexasusa.com

Plano [19-21] Texas Mineral and Fossil Show, (972) 941-5840, planoeventcenter.org

MORE EVENTS >

TCP *Submit Your Event*

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

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Pick of the Month

Cinco de Mayo Celebration

Cleburne, May 7
 (817) 645-2455
 cleburnechamber.com

This festive celebration will feature vendors and Mexican dishes, plus ballet folklorico, dancing horses, live music, a custom car show, kids' zone and *luchadores* from Advanced Pro Wrestling.

26

McKinney [26-27] Erica Rhodes, (214) 769-0645, thecomedyarena.com

Bandera [26-28] Memorial Day Weekend Stampede, banderaprorodeo.org

Fredericksburg [26-28] Crawfish Festival, fbgcrawfishfestival.com

Kerrville [26-28] Texas Masters of Fine Art and Craft Invitational Exhibition, (469) 223-4162, texasmasters.com

27

Brenham Gunhild Carling, (979) 337-7240, thebarnhillcenter.com

New Braunfels [27-28] Randall King, (830) 606-1281, gruenehall.com

28

Lewisville Fiesta Charra, (972) 219-3401, visitlewisville.com

31

Navasota [31-June 10] Grimes County Fair, grimescountyfair.com

MAY EVENTS CONTINUED

19

Richardson [19-21] Wildflower Arts and Music Festival, wildflowerfestival.com

20

College Station Troubadour Festival, troubadourfestival.com

Hico Texas Steak Cook-off, (254) 485-4984, texassteakcookoff.com

La Grange Pat Byrne, (979) 968-9944, thebugleboy.org

Jefferson [20-21] Train Show, (903) 665-3733, visitjeffersonstexas.com

21

Fredericksburg The Moanin' Frogs, fredericksburgmusicclub.com

25

Grapeland [25-27] Memorial Day Gospel Bluegrass Festival, (936) 687-2594, salmonlakeresort.com

Kerrville [25-June 11] Folk Festival, (830) 257-3600, kerrvillefolkfestival.org

JUNE

01

Fredericksburg [1-4] Hill Country Film Festival, (866) 224-7714, hillcountryff.com

02

Hillsboro [2-3] Bond's Alley Art Festival, (254) 582-5499, hillsboromainstreet.org

03

Fredericksburg Car Fest, (830) 456-2735, fredericksburgcarfest.com

04

The Colony Take on the Heat Triathlon, (214) 370-9010, visitthecolonytx.com

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1 LARRY ALFORD
PEDERNALES EC

A great blue heron takes flight at Cypress Falls in Wimberley.

2 CRYSTAL MARTIN
FARMERS EC

Blue Angels soar over Pensacola Beach, Florida.

3 FAIN ZIMMERMAN
VICTORIA EC

A female ruby-throated hummingbird and thistle plant.

4 RACHEL SPENCER
CENTRAL TEXAS EC

"The turkeys here on the ranch are very busy in the fall. On this day they were flying across one of our creeks to find more food."



Upcoming Contests

- DUE MAY 10** Night Sky
- DUE JUN 10** Helping Out
- DUE JUL 10** Golden Hour



Enter online at TexasCoopPower.com/contests.

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



TCP Try your hand at working through the maze to reach the dewberries. See the solution online.

sharp thorns, so I wear thick leather gloves. However, you cannot pick delicate berries with rigid gloved hands, so I cut off the glove tips of my thumb and index finger on my right hand.

Since I'll be kneeling or lying in the pasture, I also wear thick long-sleeved shirts and heavy long pants, which are quite uncomfortable in the May heat and humidity.

I've discovered that these berry vines love the same environment as poison ivy, and often the two plants intermingle. Since I'm focused on berries, I sometimes miss the signature three leaves of poison ivy until I am neck deep. Thus, I keep a trash bag in my supplies so I can change out of and isolate exposed clothes.

Another hazard lurking in the berry patch is the diamondback rattlesnake. The warm spring days are a holiday for them, and a step in any direction is a leap of faith. So before plopping down in the bushes, I probe with a walking stick and listen for the warning rattle.

I have been chased from a berry patch by wild hogs more than once. That's why I keep a pistol on me, though I've never had to use it.

If it's been a wet spring, you can expect good berries but also lots of mosquitoes. Ticks and chiggers are also common pests, so I apply a high-grade bug repellent. I am fair skinned, too, so I wear a large hat and sunscreen to guard against the sun.

I often wonder why no one in my family enjoys the berry picking as much as I do. Oh, they eat them, but they have quit coming with me on the harvest adventure. Once I even offered to get my 15-year-old son out of school early to tag along with me, but he said he had homework. Odd for a Friday. ■

Crawling With Trouble

Harvesting wild dewberries takes patience, will—and an armory

BY SHANE TORNO
ILLUSTRATION BY
CHANELLE NIBBELINK

DEWBERRIES GROW WILD in the scrub brush country of South Texas, and as a child I would pick them with my grandparents. Most of what we picked we ate immediately, but often we would collect enough for my grandmother to bake a cobbler that she served warm, topped with vanilla ice cream—South Texas springtime perfection.

Over the years, I have found very few locations where wild dewberries grow, and they tend to be hard to access. When I do find berries to pick, I am careful to outfit myself properly.

Usually I pick them as they trail along the ground or climb among taller pasture weeds. I have to get on my hands and knees, sometimes even lying on the ground to pick them. Mind you, dewberry vines are covered in thousands of short,

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