

ARE THERE ALLIGATORS  
IN MINEOLA?

THERE'S NO KNIFE  
LIKE BOWIE'S

A PIONEERING  
ARCHITECT INSPIRES

# Texas Coop Power

FOR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE MEMBERS

FEBRUARY 2024

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# February 2024



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Finding everything else during a search for the elusive gators of the Mineola Nature Preserve.

*Story by Christine Switzer  
Illustrations by David Moore*

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The Texas puzzle-makers helping folks while away the hours and fill their kitchen tables with beauty.

*Story by Sheryl Smith-Rodgers  
Photos by Dave Shafer*

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*Photo by Dave Shafer*

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# Nasty Norther

**THE COLDEST TEMPERATURE** ever recorded in Texas happened in mid-February—but it wasn't during our recent icy winters.

On February 12, 1899, it dipped to minus 23 degrees in the Panhandle town of Tulia. This was during a norther that killed 40,000 cattle across the state overnight. In February 1933 thermometers also fell to minus 23 in Seminole in West Texas.

## Will You ... ?

Many wedding experts refer to the time from Thanksgiving to Valentine's Day as "engagement season," with as many as 40% of proposals happening during these months.



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### RECOMMENDED READING

National Women Physicians Day is February 3. Read *Dr. Sofie Herzog* in our archive and you'll meet a doc who cared for the people of Brazoria a century ago.

## FINISH THIS SENTENCE

### Campfires remind me of ...

**TCP** Tell us how you would finish that sentence. Email your short responses to [letters@TexasCoopPower.com](mailto:letters@TexasCoopPower.com) or comment on our Facebook post. Include your co-op and town.

Here are some of the responses to our December prompt: **Can't I have just one more ... ?**

Fishing trip with my dad.

RODNEY WHEELER  
BLUEBONNET EC  
LYTTON SPRINGS

Chance, officer.

SHELIA WORTHEY  
TRI-COUNTY EC  
FORT WORTH

Hour of sleep.

MARY MION-WEBB  
VIA FACEBOOK

Moment of peace and quiet.

DAVIE LEE GILES  
COSERV  
MCKINNEY

Martini.

SANDRA HOLT  
VIA FACEBOOK

Visit our website to see more responses.



DECEMBER 2023 How Texas Became a Desert

“Absent is my favorite John Wayne movie with a Texas storyline—*Red River*, loosely based on the creation of the legendary Chisholm Trail.”

BILL “COWBOY” LAMZA  
SAN BERNARD EC  
HEMPSTEAD



NICOLAS VIARD | DREAMSTIME.COM

**More Desert Classics**

This reminds me of a Davy Crockett movie starring Fess Parker [*How Texas Became a Desert*, December 2023]. When Crockett came from Tennessee to Texas, he would have passed through the Piney Woods of East Texas, right?

Well, in the movie, they get to the border, and Crockett says, “Well, there she is—Texas!” And they look out upon a mountainous desert land.

My wife and I almost fell on the floor laughing.

David Winkler  
Pedernales EC  
Dripping Springs

**Another Somber Memory**

I taught with Kathy Cox in 1963 [*A School Day Like No Other*, November 2023].

While we were glued to the TV, Father Baker came in and told us that they were taking all the kids into the church to pray for the president. The younger kids really didn’t comprehend what was

happening, but my sixth graders were pretty aware, and most of them were in tears.

Father came into the church a few minutes later to tell us that the president had died. After more prayers, the kids were all sent home early.

Diane Shalala Fritel  
Wolford, North Dakota

**Frankly, Almost a Texan**

As someone who has followed Texas music for roughly 72 years, I never thought of Frank Zappa as having much to do with Texas [*Art and Parts*, December 2023]. I always pictured him as the ultimate California dude.

Joe Brannen  
Sam Houston EC  
Livingston

**EDITOR’S NOTE** It’s true Zappa wasn’t really a Texan, but in some circles he was considered an honorary Austinite because of his repeated appearances at the Armadillo World Headquarters in the 1970s.



STEPHANIE 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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**TEXAS CO-OP POWER** Volume 80, Number 8 (USPS 540-560). *Texas Co-op Power* is published monthly by Texas Electric Cooperatives. Periodical postage paid at Austin, TX, and at additional offices. TEC is the statewide association representing 76 electric cooperatives. *Texas Co-op Power’s* website is TexasCoopPower.com. Call (512) 454-0311 or email editor@TexasCoopPower.com.

**SUBSCRIPTIONS** Subscription price is \$4.96 per year for individual members of subscribing cooperatives and is paid from equity accruing to the member. If you are not a member of a subscribing cooperative, you can purchase an annual subscription at the nonmember rate of \$7.50.  
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BY CHRISTINE SWITZER  
ILLUSTRATIONS BY DAVID MOORE

# Later, Gators?

Finding everything else during a search for the elusive gators of the Mineola Nature Preserve

**‘WHERE** are the alligators?” I can hear the frustration in my 8-year-old son’s voice as we scan the serene water of Beaver Pond in the southwest portion of Aquatic Loop. This is our second visit to the Mineola Nature Preserve, and we’ve just learned that some of the ponds are home to alligators.

Fifteen minutes earlier, we had passed a slightly winded hiker on Beaver Pond Trail, an old logging path that harks back to the land’s integral role in the East Texas timber belt a century ago.

The hiker smiled, greeted us and said his name was James. He chatted enthusiastically about the nearly 20-year-old preserve that spreads over close to 3,000 acres along the north banks of the Sabine River in Wood County, north of Tyler. James said he has been hiking at the preserve every week for a few years and loves this nature space.

“Most people don’t know about this place,” James said. He told us he thinks the preserve is one of the best nature areas in East Texas, with bird-watching and stargazing, catch-and-release ponds, plus many trails for horseback riding. Several hiking trails crisscross through the wetland areas around the ponds, and he said we might see wild animals at the preserve too, like beaver, deer and bobcats.

Then he asked, “Have you seen the alligators in the beaver pond?”







**SOON** we're leaning over the splintered railing of the wooden footbridge that spans Beaver Pond. I hear dragonflies and damselflies darting over the water and the occasional plip-plop of a fish leaping to catch one.

But no alligators in sight.

Once on the verge of extinction, the American alligator can now be found throughout the eastern third of Texas, according to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. The reptile has made a dramatic comeback over the past 50 years and is now a protected game animal in Texas.

"There are a couple of large ones who hang out at the beaver pond," James told us. "They like to sleep a lot at the bottom of the pond, but I've seen them several times."

I wonder to myself if they look like floating logs in the middle of the pond. Or if they lurk in the shady areas around the bridge, with only nostrils visible above the water.

"I'll be right back!" I call to my husband and move toward the opposite side of the pond, past the warning signs admonishing in bright red letters: "Beware of Alligators." I take a few pictures of a lone white egret standing amid a clump of soft rush.

"Don't stand too close to the bank," my husband calls. "Alligators move fast. Faster than you think."

**'MAMA,** a snapping turtle!" My son points to a partially submerged log, its distinctive beak stretched into the sunshine.

Several months have passed since our previous visit, but we haven't forgotten our conversation with James, so we search once again for the resident alligators in Beaver Pond.

Late spring humidity presses in on us. We hear the buzz of cicadas, grasshoppers and bees among the coral honeysuckle, purple coneflower and blue larkspur. We give wide

berth to the soggy, loamy sands banking the pond, where spring rains have left the ground saturated.

Once on the bridge traversing the pond, we look out over turquoise water shimmering like a dark mirror in the afternoon sun. Giant cutgrass clusters around the bridge. In the center of the pond, we see the remains of abandoned railroad trestles from when trains transported East Texas lumber to far points in the state.

"I don't see any alligators," my son says. Unfortunately, neither do I.

"You should probably go around 3 or 4 in the afternoon," my friend Laura advises. She has heard my story about looking for the preserve's reptile residents, and she has responded in typical Texas Master Naturalist fashion. She has looked things up on the iNaturalist website.

"According to iNat," she continues, "most of the alligator sightings in the preserve have been mid-afternoon. Maybe you'll have more luck then."

Alligators are native to this part of the state, but I haven't seen one in the wild yet in the 10 years I've lived in North Texas. We plan another visit to the preserve, hoping we will finally glimpse the elusive crocodilian.

**'OH, NO!** my son exclaims. "Not the alligators again!" With the steady increase of summer heat indices in East Texas, his enthusiasm for alligator hunting has definitely cooled.

We crunch over the gravel of the city-owned and -managed park's Rawhide Trail, under the welcome shade of thorny locust, willow oak and sugar hackberry trees, our faces shiny from the late June heat.

As we approach Beaver Pond, I hear the low, resonant bugle of a bullfrog and the cry of a hawk overhead. Summer blooms of climbing prairie roses and meadow pinks cluster alongside the path. Ahead of us, half a dozen monarchs the size of my palm scatter in a swirl of tangerine.

Leaning over the railing of the now-familiar bridge, we scan the tranquil, algae-laden water for any signs of an enormous reptile. A tiny green anole darts away from us on the splintered wood. We watch a great blue heron lift off in flight above our heads.

"No," I say. "Not the alligators." ■

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



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

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

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# PUZZLING TIMES

BY SHERYL SMITH-RODGERS • PHOTOS BY DAVE SHAFER

**These Texas puzzle-makers help folks while away the hours and fill their kitchen tables with beauty**

**GROWING UP,** JB Manning remembers putting puzzles together with his grandmother at her home in Minnesota.

“She always had a puzzle spread out on the table,” he says. “She enjoyed working on them, and they became an activity that we all did with her.”

Jigsaw puzzles have been drawing people together for centuries. Most historians credit British mapmaker John Spilsbury for creating the first puzzles in the 1760s. He pasted hand-colored European maps onto thin mahogany



boards and cut them into pieces along political borders. His “dissected” maps were marketed as educational tools to teach children about geography.

In the 19th century, dissected puzzles evolved into jigsaw puzzles, named for the bladed tool used to cut the pieces. Only the wealthy could afford to buy the handcrafted wooden creations. But as manufacturing improved, makers began to utilize plywood and then sturdy cardboard, which reduced costs and enabled mass production. Interlocking pieces were introduced to keep puzzles together.

Fast-forward to the COVID-19 pandemic, when game-makers reported in April 2020 that puzzle sales nationwide skyrocketed more than 300%. Stuck at home, people took to their kitchen tables to pass the time and relieve stress.

In Texas, two small companies have cut out their own niches with special touches that make their puzzles stand out from the ordinary.

Outside San Marcos, in Wimberley, Manning—who owns the Wimberley Puzzle Co.—often worked long hours during

the pandemic to make and ship 100 puzzles a day. Orders have since returned to a daily average of 15 to 20 puzzles. The more relaxed pace suits Manning, who quit a stressful corporate job in Houston in 2011.

He then began traveling through national parks with his digital Nikon camera. While crisscrossing states in 2014, he bought a postcard, wrote on it, cut it up and mailed it in an envelope.

“Puzzle postcards were my original idea,” says Manning, a Pedernales Electric Cooperative member. “But I decided they’d be hard to sell. I got the idea about puzzles while I was sitting on an outcrop that overlooked a waterfall at Glacier

CLOCKWISE FROM OPPOSITE A signature of JB Manning’s puzzles is including pieces with whimsical shapes—and he signs a piece in every order. A buck-shaped piece stands out in a field of bluebonnets. A computerized laser cutter navigates the myriad shapes of Manning’s creation. It also cuts the pieces for his plywood boxes.



# JIGSAW PUZZLES

have been drawing people together for centuries. Most historians credit British mapmaker John Spilsbury for creating the first puzzles in the 1760s.

National Park. I decided I'd use my own photos of places that people know, have been to or want to go."

He moved to Wimberley in 2017 and set up his workshop. The Wimberley Puzzle Co. released its first puzzles, made of sturdy cardboard and packaged in cardboard boxes, early the next year. They featured such iconic Texas scenes as wildflowers along the Willow City Loop near Fredericksburg, Gorman Falls at Colorado Bend State Park, and Fischer Dance Hall between San Antonio and Austin.

That fall, Manning bought a travel trailer and set up a mobile workshop. He continued on the road, taking photos while making and shipping his products.

When the pandemic closed parks, Manning returned to Wimberley. He couldn't find cardboard when supply chains slowed to a crawl in 2021. So he transitioned to Baltic birch plywood to make his puzzles and matching boxes with sliding lids.

Today his computerized equipment includes a large-format printer and a laser cutter. The wooden puzzles, which range from 130 pieces up to 1,000, are usually made to order. His nine-page online catalog has grown to include striking scenes (and animals) from other states, national parks, Route 66 and even Africa, where he traveled in 2014.

From the start, Manning's puzzles have included whimsical pieces that help tell the puzzle image's story. For instance, his best-selling Bluebonnet Sunset, photographed near Navasota, between Houston and College Station, features pieces shaped like a butterfly, dove, bee, live oak and flowers. As a special touch, he always signs a piece, such as one shaped like Texas.

Manning tucks a folded envelope inside each box with information about his company and how customers can order a lost piece. He also includes a small wooden easel for displaying the box lid or glued puzzle as desktop art.

**F**INE ART of a different kind inspired siblings Ericka Chambers of Little Elm and William Jones of Sachse—towns in the Metroplex—to tap into their roots and launch their own puzzle company.

"We grew up doing puzzles together as a family," says Chambers, a CoServ member. "But we had a hard time finding diversity in puzzle images. Then, when I was pregnant, I wanted to decorate my nursery around a puzzle. But there were very few to choose from."

A painting of a Black woman by artist Kwanzaa Edwards of San Antonio sparked an idea. The vibrant colors and fanciful imagery intrigued Chambers, and she suggested making a puzzle of one of Edwards' paintings. "William thought that was a great business idea," Chambers says.

Thus was born Puzzles of Color, which exclusively licenses and features artwork created by the siblings' favorite Black artists as well as Native American, Latino

and Asian American artists. In fall 2020, they partnered with a company to print the artwork and another to mount the pieces on cardboard.

At night, Chambers, then a product manager for Capital One, and Jones, a freelance graphic designer, would cut the boards on a roller die cutter in Chambers' garage. Then they boxed up the puzzles. Their parents and spouses helped, too. They still do.

A big break came in January 2021, when a local news report on the company aired nationwide. Orders shot up so much that all production had to be outsourced.

Since then, Puzzles of Color has steadily grown, both in sales and merchandise. Puzzles are available online and at special events. "They're in some boutique stores and museums, too," Chambers says. "Last February, Target carried our puzzles during Black History Month. We're working to be there year-round."

So far they've licensed with nearly 30 artists from across the country and also Kenya to create puzzles that range from kid-friendly 20- and 60-piece jigsaws up to 1,000 pieces.



ABOVE William Jones breaks up a puzzle after a die cutter did its work. OPPOSITE Nearly 30 artists illustrate the puzzles that siblings Ericka Chambers, left, and Jones have in stock.



Among their first puzzles was Edwards' dreamy depiction of a Black woman called *To Be Loved*. Paul Kellam of Jacksonville, Florida, depicts a Black family gathered near a Christmas tree and Kwanzaa table in his *Comfort & Joy*. Steph Littlebird of Las Vegas created *Wapato Woman*, a portrait of a powerful Native American woman.

Puzzles of Color boxes tell the company's story and those of the featured artists.

"We also interview all our artists in a podcast so we can share their methods and how they got into art," Chambers

says. "Each puzzle has a musical playlist on Spotify with songs connected to the artist's inspiration and what music they're into. So as people are doing a puzzle, they can get into the artist's mindset.

"We've had people tell us they don't do puzzles," she adds. "But they're so enamored with the art that the experience of putting our puzzles together gives them a feeling of being an artist. And that's cool!" ■



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<sup>1</sup>Subject to availability, on a total purchase of 3 or more. Buy 2 windows or doors and get the third window or door, of equal or lesser value, 60% off - applied to lowest priced window and/or door products in purchase. Cannot be combined with other offers. To qualify for discount offer, initial contact for an appointment must be made and documented on or before 2/29/24 with the purchase then occurring on or before 3/10/24. \*Review aggregator survey of 5-star reviews among leading full-service window replacement companies. December 2020 Reputation.com. Products are marketed, sold and installed (but not manufactured) by Renewal by Andersen retailers, which are independently owned and operated under Central Texas Windows & Doors LLC, d/b/a Renewal by Andersen of Austin and San Antonio. North Texas Windows & Doors LLC, d/b/a Renewal by Andersen of Dallas/Fort Worth and West Texas. See complete information and entity identification at [www.rbaguidelines.com](http://www.rbaguidelines.com). ©2024 Andersen Corporation. ©2024 Lead Surge LLC. All rights reserved.

<sup>2</sup>Plan 4521. Subject to credit approval. Rates range from 14.26% - 21.19% APR (interest rates range from 15.99% - 24.99%). Loan amount and rate will vary based on your income and creditworthiness. 12 month promotional period ("Promo Period") during which interest is billed but will be waived if the amount financed is paid in full before Promo Period expires. Monthly payments are not required during the Promo Period. Any unpaid balance and amounts owed after Promo Period will be paid over 84 monthly payments. For example, assuming the full credit limit is used on loan approval date and no payments are made during Promo Period, for every \$1,000 financed at a fixed interest rate of 24.99%, 12 monthly payments of \$0 followed by 84 monthly payments of \$28.29. This example is an estimate only. Actual payment amounts based on amount and timing of purchases. Call 866-936-0602 for financing costs and terms. Financing for the GreenSky® consumer loan program is provided by Equal Opportunity Lenders. GreenSky® is a registered trademark of GreenSky, LLC, a subsidiary of Goldman Sachs Bank USA. NMLS #1416362. Loans originated by Goldman Sachs are issued by Goldman Sachs Bank USA, Salt Lake City Branch. NMLS #208156. [www.nmlsconsumeraccess.org](http://www.nmlsconsumeraccess.org).





CEO

HERBERT "TREY"  
GREBE III

## Always Scan for Scams

As technologies evolve and expand, so do criminals

**IN TODAY'S TECH-DRIVEN** world, scams seem to be around every corner. Criminals will try just about anything—from purporting legal action involving the IRS to turning off power to your home—to separate you from your money.

Medina Electric Cooperative wants to make you aware of the current wave of utility scams, which often involve an individual posing as an employee of your cooperative. The scammer may use threatening language to frighten you into offering your credit card or bank account information.

**Don't fall victim to utility scams. Understand the threats and know what to do.**

If someone calls you demanding that you pay your electric bill immediately, hang up. Scammers often use threats and urgency to pressure you into

If they can't be verified, call 911 and do not allow the individual access to your home. It's not uncommon for a scammer to steal things from your home while you're distracted on the phone.

**Look out for these other types of scams.**

Government agencies like the IRS will never call to inform you that you have unpaid taxes or other liens against you. You will always receive this type of information in the mail. If someone calls claiming to be the IRS, hang up.

If you receive an email from an unknown sender, an email riddled with spelling errors and typos, or an email threatening action unless a sum of money is paid, do not click any links provided within the email and don't respond to the email. Sometimes these phishing emails will look legit—like they're from a company or someone you know.

But if it seems fishy, delete the email and move on. One wrong click could give a scammer access to all the information on your computer, including your private financial data.

If someone calls you and claims your grandchild is in jail and needs bail money, the best option is to hang up. If you have concerns that this could be true, ask the caller for the name of the facility reportedly holding them, then hang up. Look up the facility yourself and call that number or check their website. This is sadly a common scam that plays to the heartstrings of grandparents.

If someone calls your home claiming to have discovered a virus on your computer, hang up. This caller's intent is to gain access to personal information on your computer.

It's unfortunate that such constant suspicion is necessary, but it's important to be vigilant. Scammers are determined, creative and always working on their next ploy.

If you ever have any concerns about someone claiming to be with Medina EC, please call us directly. We want to make sure you avoid any and all types of scams that could put you or your financial information in jeopardy.

Until next time,  
Trey Grebe



INSIDE CREATIVE HOUSE | ISTOCK.COM

giving them your bank information or loading a prepaid credit or debit card. Medina EC will never ask you to offer up personal finance information over the phone. If you have any doubts about the status of your electric bill, contact Medina EC at 1-866-632-3532.

If someone comes to your home claiming to be an employee of Medina EC who needs to collect money or inspect parts of your property, call us to verify they are, in fact, an employee before letting them into your home. Medina EC does not collect money in the field. Contractors working for Medina EC will have a form of credentials with them as proof of working with Medina EC.



# How Could We Help Your Community?

\$5,500 in grants available!

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Up to \$5,500 in grants will be awarded in local communities in 2024. Could your organization or community use any of that money for a special project? Apply for a grant from Medina Electric Cooperative’s Community Empowerment Program.

Application deadline: April 1, 11:59 p.m.\*  
Emphasis will be placed on projects that:

- >> Encourage economic diversity.
- >> Contribute to community health and development.
- >> Improve the quality or quantity of services essential for the development of viable communities.

Applicants do not need to be a member of or receive electricity from Medina EC to apply. They only need to provide services in one of the counties served by Medina EC, which are listed below.

*\*Technical support will not be available outside of normal business hours. Encountering technical issues while turning in the application on the last day will not be grounds for an extension.*

## COUNTIES WHERE GRANTS CAN BE AWARDED

Atascosa	Kinney	Webb
Brooks	La Salle	Zapata
Dimmit	McMullen	Zavala
Duval	Medina	
Edwards	Real	
Frio	Starr	
Jim Hogg	Uvalde	

**View eligibility information and apply online at [MedinaEC.org/Grant](https://MedinaEC.org/Grant).**

### CONTACT US

Toll-Free 1-866-632-3532  
Email [Info@MedinaEC.org](mailto:Info@MedinaEC.org)  
Web [MedinaEC.org](https://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  
Joe Foley, (830) 261-1304

**Voting District 3**  
Annette Sorrells, (361) 231-0173  
J. L. Gonzalez, (956) 286-1863  
Rodolfo H. Rodriguez, (210) 846-1092

**CEO**  
Trey Grebe, 1-866-632-3532, ext. 1045

## Call us.

**TOLL-FREE**  
1-866-632-3532  
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](https://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.



# Team Members Reach Important Milestones

MEDINA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE CELEBRATES work anniversaries in five-year increments and honors each employee with an award for their years of service. For each service award, the cooperative donates \$100 to an organization of the employee's choosing. In 2023, Medina EC employees donated \$3,100 to various local organizations in honor of employee anniversaries.

Please join us in celebrating these Medina EC employees who reached milestones between October and December!



**CHASITY MARTINEZ**

Member Services Rep.  
Uvalde office  
10 years

DONATION TO  
Uvalde CISD PTO



**JASON GOMEZ**

Journeyman  
Uvalde office  
15 years

DONATION TO  
Flights to Forever



**Jose Montalvo**  
Network Administrator

Corporate office  
5 years

DONATION TO  
Uvalde CISD PTO



**BROOKE BADER**

Accounting Assistant  
Corporate office  
5 years

DONATION TO  
Hondo Animal Shelter



**MARIO FACTOR**

Journeyman  
Laredo office  
5 years

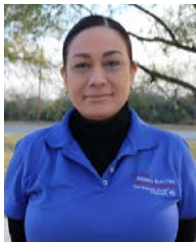
DONATION TO  
Smiles From Heaven



**JOSELITO MORALES**

Journeyman  
Dilley office  
5 years

DONATION TO  
Dilley ISD FFA



**SANDRA HINOJOSA**

Member Services Rep.  
Rio Grande City office  
5 years

DONATION TO  
St. Jude Children's  
Research Hospital



**OSCAR CHAPA**

Manager of Southern  
Region Operations  
Bruni office  
35 years

DONATION TO  
Bruni Lions Club

# Last Chance: \$25,000 in Scholarships

Medina Electric Cooperative is offering five scholarships for adults pursuing higher education and 20 scholarships for high school graduating seniors.

Eligible applicants will be entered in a drawing, and scholarship winners will be selected at random during the March board meeting.

For more information and to apply, visit [MedinaEC.org/Scholarships](https://MedinaEC.org/Scholarships) or contact us at 1-866-632-3532 or [Scholarship@MedinaEC.org](mailto:Scholarship@MedinaEC.org).

**[MedinaEC.org/Scholarships](https://MedinaEC.org/Scholarships)**  
Applications are due by 11:59 p.m. March 1.\*

*\*Technical support will not be available outside of normal business hours. Encountering technical issues while turning in the application on the last day will not be grounds for an extension.*



YSLEA GOMEZ, 2023  
SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT

# Powering Up After an Outage

When the power goes out, we expect it to be restored within a few hours. But when a major storm or natural disaster causes widespread damage, extended outages may result. Our line crews work long, hard hours to restore service safely to the greatest number of consumers in the shortest time possible. Here's what's going on if you find yourself in the dark:



## 1. High-Voltage Transmission Lines:

Transmission towers and cables that supply power to transmission substations (and thousands of members) rarely fail. But when damaged, these facilities must be repaired before other parts of the system can operate.

## 2. Distribution Substation:

A substation can serve hundreds or thousands of consumers. When a major outage occurs, line crews inspect substations to determine if problems stem from transmission lines feeding into the substation, the substation itself or if problems exist further down the line.

## 3. Main Distribution Lines:

If the problem cannot be isolated at a distribution substation, distribution lines are checked. These lines carry power to large groups of consumers in communities or housing developments.

## 4. Tap Lines:

If local outages persist, supply lines (also known as tap lines) are inspected. These lines deliver power to transformers, either mounted on poles or placed on pads for underground service, outside businesses, schools and homes.

## 5. Individual Homes:

If your home remains without power, the service line between a transformer and your residence may need to be repaired. Always call to report an outage to help line crews isolate local issue.



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# Upcoming Nomination Petition Deadlines

Any members interested in running for one of the three board positions up for election in the fall can be placed on the ballot through the petition process. Petitions will be completed online. Candidates wishing to run can find the online petition\* at [MedinaEC.org/Nominee](https://MedinaEC.org/Nominee). The board of directors represents the interests of members and governs the cooperative.

If you have questions about the process or need assistance, please contact us at [MyCoop@MedinaEC.org](mailto:MyCoop@MedinaEC.org) or call 1-866-632-3532.

## Petition Details

Members who are interested in running for a position on the board of directors will need to get at least 30 valid signatures from members who have service in the voting district the potential nominee wishes to represent. For example, members wishing to be nominated for the Voting District 1 board position will need signatures from members who have electric service in Voting District 1.

## Petition Deadlines

All petitions are due **March 1**.

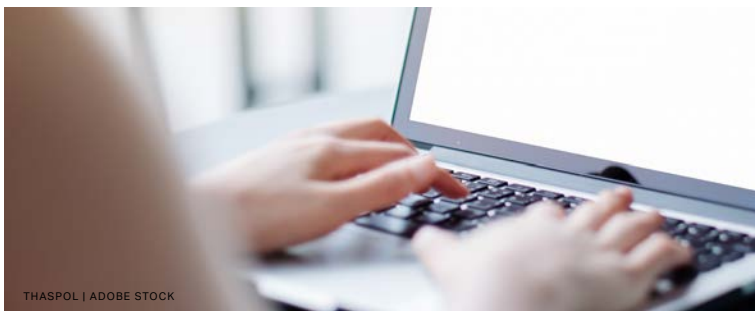
In compliance with the Department of Agriculture, in reference to assurance of nondiscrimination among beneficiaries of Rural Utilities Service programs, the Medina EC bylaws pertaining to nomination and election procedures for the election of board members can be found at all Medina EC offices and at [MedinaEC.org/CorpDoc](https://MedinaEC.org/CorpDoc). The section that primarily pertains to nomination and election procedures is Article 4—Board of Directors.

Learn more and find the online petition\* link at [MedinaEC.org/Nominee](https://MedinaEC.org/Nominee).

\*Nominations will be completed by online petitions only. There will be no in-person nominating meetings this year.

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## Is Your Contact Information Up To Date?



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](mailto:Info@MedinaEC.org).

## PREPAID ELECTRICITY

Medina Electric Cooperative offers members prepaid electricity!

You make an initial payment towards your account. Each day, we calculate the cost of the electricity you used that day, and we subtract it from the available amount in your account. When your account only has \$25 left, we will call, text and/or email reminders to make a payment based on your notification settings. When you make a payment, we will add that to your account. If you choose not to make a payment, your account will be disconnected when your credit is zero. Learn more at [MedinaEC.org/Prepaid](https://MedinaEC.org/Prepaid).



## Generator Installation Requirements

[MedinaEC.org/Generators](https://MedinaEC.org/Generators)

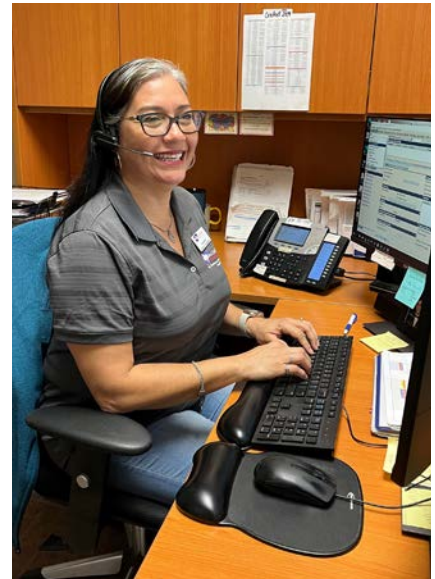
Medina Electric Cooperative understands that sometimes you may need to use a generator to keep power on during an outage. If the proper steps aren't taken to ensure a generator is connected correctly, it could become hazardous and even deadly for our line crews and members.

Members interested in having a standby generator installed at their property need to follow the necessary steps to connect to Medina EC's distribution system. This is for the safety of the member and our crews. The requirements for noncommercial emergency and standby generation are available at [MedinaEC.org/Generators](https://MedinaEC.org/Generators).

Members with a 200-ampere or smaller service who want the convenience of operating a standby generator without installing transfer switches, subpanels and rewiring work may want to have a GenerLink device. GenerLink is installed behind your meter by Medina EC crews and is billed monthly on your electric bill.

If you have any questions, please call 1-866-632-3532 or email [Info@MedinaEC.org](mailto:Info@MedinaEC.org).

BILDLÖVE | ADOBE STOCK



## We Want Your Feedback

### **MEMBER SURVEY EMAILS START IN FEBRUARY**

Beginning the week of February 5, 350 members will be randomly selected to answer an online survey for Medina Electric Cooperative.

These answers will help the cooperative learn how we can improve service to and better communicate with our members.

The online survey should take less than five minutes. This feedback is important to the cooperative, and we appreciate members taking time out of their busy schedules to provide it to us.

The cooperative has been conducting these surveys quarterly throughout the last few years and will continue during 2024. The feedback helps staff and management evaluate what practices and processes need improvement.

The surveys are conducted by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. If you do not get an email but would like to share feedback or an idea with the cooperative, email us at [MyCoop@MedinaEC.org](mailto:MyCoop@MedinaEC.org).



# Department Spotlight: Engineering

Medina Electric Cooperative's engineering department, composed of six divisions, does a lot to maintain the reliability and plan for system growth for the cooperative. In honor of National Engineers Week, recognized February 18-24, we're featuring our engineering department, which is adept at handling the day-to-day challenges in the engineering world. They utilize high levels of math, science and technology to be on the cutting edge of the utility industry.



## Engineers

Keith Calle is the chief engineering division officer who oversees all six divisions of the engineering department. He brought his wide variety of electrical engineering experience to Medina EC in early 2019. Alexandra Noonan recently joined the team as a graduate engineer after interning with Medina EC for two summers while studying at Schreiner University.



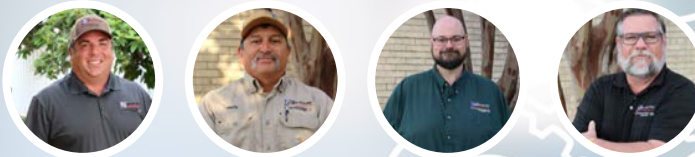
## System Operations

Zachary Lyle, Deborah DeLeon, Chris Muennink, Susie Zerr, Matthew Gregor, Ory Garner and Dylan Carroll monitor and control the grid to reliably manage the flow of electricity, including outage management and dispatching lineworkers to restore power as well as working closely with Medina EC's wholesale power supplier. In addition, they provide situational awareness of field crews and their location while improving the safety of Medina EC employees, contractors and the public.



## Line Design

The line design team is made up of Jeff Hier, Ben Falcon, Lindsey Muennink, Isaac Solis, Janet French, Emilio Hernandez, Roger Besares and Leonel Garcia III. They are responsible for designing new service and line extension projects and creating cost estimates and material lists.



## Distribution Automation & Metering

Our meter infrastructure recently completed a upgrade, due largely to work by Philip Crow, Marty DeLeon, Matthew Stinson and Monte Tschirhart. This team manages the meters and communication technology to support reliable reads of our meters and communication down-line equipment.

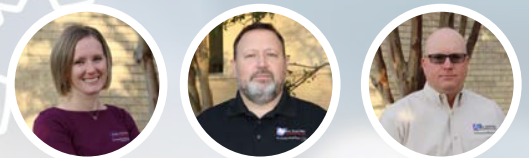
## Geographic Information Systems

Rachel Solis, our geographic information systems technician, helps maintain a connected model of co-op assets. Mapping equipment and technology allows us to store, analyze and manage data geographically.



## Equipment Technicians & Electricians

Joel Gonzales, Ricky Cerna, Eduardo Chapa, Marcos Munoz, Fernando Rangel, Darrell Ritchie and Roland Elizondo make up this team. They manage much of the equipment that goes into a reliable and safe electric infrastructure.

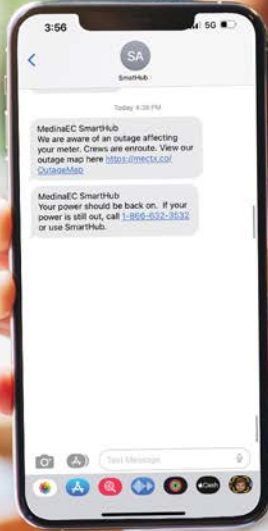


## Key Accounts

Katie Haby, Brian Bell and Michael Harkins work to build relationships with key accounts and new prospective businesses in our service area. They also oversee the member rebate program and our solar and generator installations.



# Outage text notifications to begin this month!



**Be sure to save this number:  
1-833-649-0801**

Eligible accounts registered for SmartHub will be automatically opted-in to receive outage notifications via text message beginning late February. Learn more about this feature at [MedinaEC.org/SH](https://MedinaEC.org/SH).

FARKNOT ARCHITECT | ADOBESTOCK

## MEDINA EC FOOD DRIVE

Please help us collect nonperishable food items and canned goods. Collected food will be given to organizations that help feed people in the 17 counties served by Medina EC.

### DROP-OFF:

Where: Any Medina EC office location  
When: February 1 - 29



### MARK YOUR CALENDAR

#### Operation Round Up Applications Due

Friday, February 2  
Learn more and apply at [MedinaEC.org/ORU](https://MedinaEC.org/ORU).

**Valentine's Day**  
Wednesday, February 14

**President's Day**  
Monday, February 19  
Our offices will be closed.  
As always, crews will be on call.

**National Tortilla Chip Day**  
Saturday, February 24

EL\_ASENOVA | ISTOCK.COM



# See the Forest Through the Trees

*Mighty Conifer Knife at an Impossible Price!*



What Stauer Clients Are  
Saying About Our Knives



"Outstanding knife of high quality  
and a great price. I now have a  
number of your great cutlery in  
my growing collection!"

— Robert F., Richardson, TX

We know you. You're not interested in everyday, run-of-the-mill, common cutlery. You want something with a story, a unique feature that you can brag about. We've got just the thing for you. Our *Mighty Conifer Knife* is a unique tool with a Damascus steel blade and a handle crafted from an enhanced and stabilized natural pinecone. While our competitors are charging hundreds for similar knives, we're offering the Mighty Conifer for **JUST \$99!** That's what we call our Stauer Impossible Price.

JOIN MORE THAN 389,000 SHARP  
PEOPLE WHO COLLECT STAUER KNIVES

Each pinecone — and therefore, each knife — has its own unique characteristics. And the back of the handle features hand tooling, a further demonstration of each piece's individual nature.

The blade is nothing to scoff at either. Constructed of Damascus steel, a modern reworking of the legendary steel forged by ancient swordsmiths, this nearly 5-inch blade features 256 layers of steel that have been folded on top of each other to increase its durability. Our competitors are charging hundreds for boring, run-of-the-mill knives with no features worth bragging about. We're asking **JUST \$99** for a knife unlike any you've seen before!

With its full-tang construction and high-quality genuine leather sheath, the Mighty Conifer Knife is the perfect blade for the

person who wants to stand out. **CALL NOW!** If you're one of the first 700 587 callers for this ad, we'll throw in a pair of *Stauer 8x21 Compact Binoculars* — a \$99 value — **ABSOLUTELY FREE!** Satisfaction guaranteed or your money back!

#### Knife Specifications:

- 9 1/2" overall length. Full-tang construction
- Damascus steel blade and natural pinecone handle
- Genuine leather sheath

#### Mighty Conifer Knife

~~\$299~~ \$99\* + S&P **Save \$200**

*\*You must use Insider Offer Code: MCK160-01 to get this price.*

*California residents please call regarding Proposition 65 regulations before purchasing this product.*

## 1-800-333-2045

Your Insider Offer Code: MCK160-01

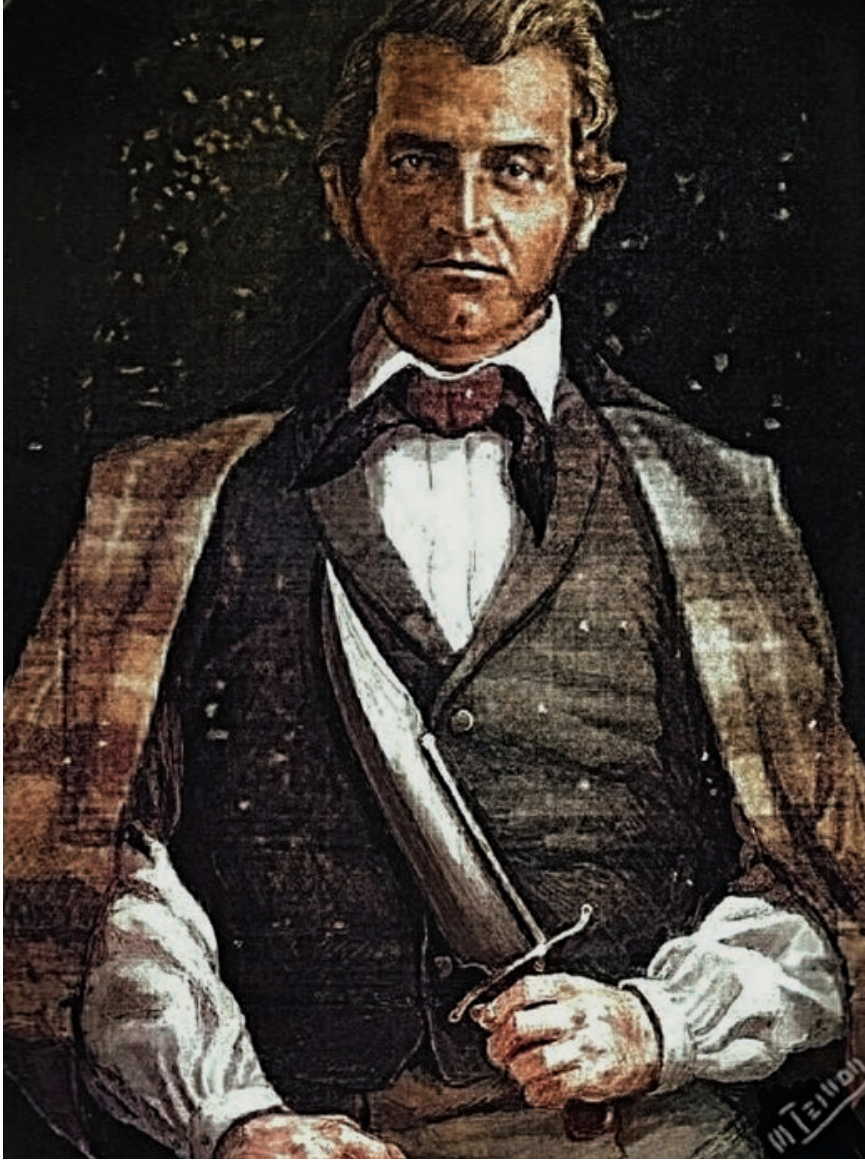
**EXCLUSIVE  
FREE**

Stauer 8x21  
Compact Binoculars  
a \$99 value  
with your purchase  
of the Mighty  
Conifer Knife



Stauer, 14101 Southcross Drive W., Ste 155, Dept. MCK160-01, Burnsville, MN 55337 [www.stauer.com](http://www.stauer.com)

Stauer® | AFFORD THE EXTRAORDINARY®



# A Cut Above

No knife influenced the world like Jim Bowie's behemoth

BY W.F. STRONG • ILLUSTRATION BY MARK LEMON

A RELATIVELY NEW phenomenon in modern society is the rise of social media influencers, personalities skilled at persuading followers to pay attention or even buy things. But how many of today's influencers will still be known in 200 years?

How many can compare to the lasting magic of Jim Bowie?

Many assume Bowie became famous defending the Alamo in 1836. In truth, he was already quite famous 10 years before—as a knife fighter and designer, frontiersman, and all-round world-class badass. He was truly a “man’s man” by any standard.

His world-renowned Bowie knife was probably first made at the direction of his brother, Rezin Bowie. But later versions with Jim’s modifications became the enduring design.

Jim Bowie used the earlier knife in a bloody skirmish called the Sandbar Fight, when Jim was nearly killed by two assailants who shot him on a Mississippi River sandbar in 1827. One man stabbed Bowie with a cane sword, but the sword bent when it hit Bowie’s sternum, giving him a moment to spring upon his attacker with his huge knife, killing him. Bowie then badly wounded the second assailant.

You see, in those days, you wanted to

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



take a knife to a gun fight because guns were notoriously unreliable. Bowie miraculously survived, and the account of the Sandbar Fight went global, thanks to a journalist who witnessed it. Bowie and his blade were thus immortalized.

What made the knife stand out was its size. The original was almost a foot long, but the subsequent model was even longer—and razor sharp. About one-third of the top of the knife, the clip point, was honed to a fine edge—so it cut both ways.

Its lethality became legendary. The *Red River Herald* of Natchitoches, Louisiana, wrote that after the Sandbar Fight, “all the steel in the country, it seemed, was being converted into Bowie knives.” That’s influence!

When Bowie arrived at the Alamo nine years later, with his notoriety on the rise and his famous knife at his side, even Davy Crockett was impressed. He said the sight of a Bowie knife “makes you queasy ... especially before breakfast.”

Bowie’s last stand at the Alamo elevated his fame. It was widely claimed, at least what I heard as a kid, that he took out 10 Mexican soldiers with his knife in close-quarters combat. This is improbable given that Bowie was critically ill from typhoid fever, but a good legend will kill probability any day of the week.

I do like what Bowie’s mama said when she learned of his death: “I’ll wager no wounds were found in his back.”

Soon after, various versions of the Bowie knife began to be made by blacksmiths. Texas Rangers carried them. The Marines had their own version. In popular films, Rambo never left home without his and neither did Crocodile Dundee.

It’s as famous as the Swiss Army knife or Buck knife. Given the ubiquity of Bowie’s blade in the world today—nearly 188 years after his death—I’d say Bowie is a greater influencer than any social media star you can name. ■



# Chocolate

Think outside the box with these delectable delights

BY VIANNEY RODRIGUEZ, FOOD EDITOR

This twist on a traditional tres leches cake begins with a boxed cake mix. And when one of the tres leches—three milks—poured over the warm cake is chocolate, you know you're in for sinfully sweet goodness.



## Quick and Easy Chocolate Tres Leches Cake

### CAKE

- 1 package white cake mix (14.25 ounces)
- 3 eggs, room temperature
- $\frac{2}{3}$  cup milk
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup (1 stick) butter, room temperature
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 can sweetened condensed milk (14 ounces)
- 1 can evaporated milk (12 ounces)
- 1 cup chocolate milk

### TOPPING

- 1 cup heavy whipping cream
- 3 tablespoons powdered sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 cup semisweet chocolate chips

1. CAKE Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Coat a 9-by-13-inch pan with cooking spray.
2. In a bowl, beat together cake mix, eggs, milk, butter, vanilla and cinnamon until smooth.
3. Pour into prepared baking pan. Bake 25–30 minutes or until a toothpick inserted comes out clean.
4. Cool in pan 10 minutes.
5. Use a fork to pierce holes in cake. Slowly pour the sweetened condensed milk, evaporated milk and chocolate milk over the cake.
6. Allow cake to cool completely. Cover and chill overnight in the refrigerator.
7. TOPPING In another bowl, beat whipping cream, powdered sugar and vanilla until light and fluffy.
8. Spread over cake and top with chocolate chips.

SERVES 12

**TCP** Follow Vianney Rodriguez while she cooks in Cocina Gris at [sweetlifebake.com](http://sweetlifebake.com), where she features a recipe for Mole Braised Brisket.





## Marlene's Chocolate Doughnuts

TINA WEBB  
BLUEBONNET EC

Making homemade chocolate doughnuts is easier than you think. Webb's recipe, passed down through generations, begins with a batter that comes together in a snap.

- 1½ teaspoons distilled white vinegar**
- 1 cup milk**
- 1 teaspoon baking soda**
- 3 cups flour**
- 1 cup sugar, plus 4 tablespoons for dusting**
- ½ teaspoon salt**
- 3 teaspoons baking powder**
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon, divided use**
- 2 eggs**
- 2 tablespoons (¼ stick) butter, melted**
- 1½ ounces unsweetened chocolate (1½ squares), melted**
- 1½ teaspoons vanilla extract**
- 1 cup vegetable oil**

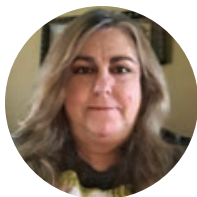
1. In a bowl, combine vinegar and milk and stir in baking soda to dissolve.
2. In another bowl, sift together flour, 1 cup sugar, salt, baking powder and 1 teaspoon cinnamon.
3. Stir in milk mixture, eggs, butter, chocolate and vanilla.
4. Roll out dough to ½-inch thickness on a floured surface, adding additional flour if dough seems too moist.
5. Cut dough into doughnuts using a doughnut cutter.

CONTINUED >

\$500 WINNER

## Hershey Bar Chocolate Cake

KAREN HOLMES  
JASPER-NEWTON EC



This customer favorite at the tearoom for which Holmes baked became her husband's requested birthday cake each year. Rich, gooey cake layers sandwiched between thick, fluffy icing is a chocolate lover's dream.

SERVES 12



CAKE

- 2 cups flour**
- ½ cup sugar**
- 1 teaspoon baking soda**
- ½ teaspoon salt**
- ¼ cup unsweetened cocoa powder**
- 3 eggs**
- ½ cup buttermilk**
- 1 cup water**
- 1 cup vegetable oil**
- 1½ teaspoons vanilla extract**

FROSTING

- 1 package cream cheese (8 ounces), room temperature**
- 2 cups sugar**
- 1 cup powdered sugar**
- 1 container whipped topping (12 ounces)**
- 4-ounce chocolate bar, chopped**
- ½ cup chopped pecans**

1. **CAKE** Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Coat two 9-inch round cake pans with nonstick spray.
2. In a bowl, whisk together flour, sugar, baking soda, salt and cocoa powder.
3. In another bowl, whisk together eggs, buttermilk, water, oil and vanilla.
4. Pour wet ingredients over dry ingredients. Mix well for about 2 minutes.
5. Divide batter evenly between cake pans. Bake 30 minutes.
6. Let cakes cool and remove from pans.
7. **FROSTING** In another bowl, cream together cream cheese, sugar and powdered sugar.
8. Fold in whipped topping.
9. Spread half the frosting over one cake. Top with second cake and spread remaining frosting over top.
10. Decorate with chopped chocolate and pecans.

## TCP \$500 Recipe Contest

**FROZEN TREATS** DUE FEBRUARY 10

We all know it won't be too long before we're trying to beat the heat. Share your favorite recipes for cold desserts—ice creams, popsicles and beyond—for a chance to win \$500. Go online and submit your favorite by February 10.





RECIPES CONTINUED

6. Heat oil to medium-high in a medium skillet and fry doughnuts until golden-brown on both sides.

7. In a small bowl, combine 4 tablespoons sugar and remaining 1 teaspoon cinnamon and dust over hot doughnuts.

MAKES ABOUT 24-30 DOUGHNUTS



## Chocolate Cobbler

LINDA J. MOORE  
SOUTH PLAINS EC

Moore says she prefers dark chocolate cocoa powder in the batter of this family favorite, which comes out of the oven fudgy and brownielike.

### BATTER

- ½ cup (1 stick) unsalted butter
- 1½ cups sugar
- 4 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder

- 2 cups flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1 cup milk
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract

### TOPPING

- 2 cups sugar
- ½ cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 3 cups boiling water
- Whipped topping (optional)
- Unsweetened cocoa powder (optional)

1. BATTER Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Melt butter in oven in a 9-by-13-inch baking dish, removing from oven once butter has melted.
3. In a bowl, stir together sugar, cocoa powder, flour, baking powder, salt, milk and vanilla. Spoon mixture over melted butter, but do not stir.
4. TOPPING In another bowl, stir together sugar and cocoa powder and sprinkle over batter in pan.
5. Pour boiling water over all, but do not stir. Bake until top has set, 35-40 minutes.
6. Allow cobbler to cool 15 minutes. Serve with whipped topping and dust with cocoa powder, if desired.

SERVES 8

**TCP** Not enough chocolate? You'll find many more recipes in our online archive. Just search "chocolate."

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COURTESY CHET GARNER

## Texas' Heartbeat

San Felipe de Austin was home for the first Texans 200 years ago

BY CHET GARNER

IT WAS EARLY MORNING, and I was flying down Interstate 10 with my radio on full blast, a fresh cup of coffee in my hand and the air conditioning cranked. Needless to say, it was a far cry from the way the first pioneers traveled through this same stretch of Texas in the 1820s to settle one of our most important towns.

I needed to connect with my past and so I set my GPS for the San Felipe de Austin State Historic Site in Sealy.

Nestled on the banks of the Brazos River, this charming site was once the headquarters for Stephen F. Austin's colony and is now a fascinating glimpse into the lives of early Texans. I stepped into the museum and was amazed at the interactive exhibits, artifacts and displays that told the story of how Austin led 297 families—the Old Three Hundred—here and established the unofficial capital of Texas. This act of courage earned Austin the title of the Father of Texas.

For more than a decade, San Felipe was a major hub, and everyone important to the Texas Revolution passed through here.

I walked the timeline of how the town grew exponentially but was then abandoned and burned to the ground in a moment of fear known as the Runaway Scrape in 1836. Until recently, visitors had to use their imagination to envision the bustling townsite. But today, visitors can step inside meticulously recreated buildings, including a cabin and Austin's empresario office. Fully costumed reenactors transported me back 200 years.

Visiting San Felipe gave me a new appreciation for the lifestyle and struggle of Texans. Whether you're a history enthusiast, a nature lover or simply need to be reminded of how thankful you are for modern conveniences, this is a must-see destination. ■

ABOVE Chet, right, with Bryan McAuley, manager at the San Felipe de Austin State Historic Site.

**TCP** Join Chet as he sees life as the Old Three Hundred did. 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.

## FEBRUARY

07

**Laredo [7–10] Birding Festival**, (956) 718-1063, [laredobirdingfestival.org](http://laredobirdingfestival.org)

08

**Brenham [8–11, 15–18, 22–25] The Crucible**, (979) 830-8358, [unitybrenham.org](http://unitybrenham.org)

09

**Boerne [9–10] Chocolate Walk**, (830) 248-1635, [ci.boerne.tx.us](http://ci.boerne.tx.us)

**Fredericksburg [9–11, 16–18, 23–25] How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying**, (830) 997-3588, [fredericksburgtheater.org](http://fredericksburgtheater.org)

10

**Amarillo Triosarachops Devours**, (806) 376-8782, [amarillosymphony.org](http://amarillosymphony.org)

**Round Top Valentine's Concert and Bybee Library Fundraiser and Reception**, (979) 249-3129, [festivalhill.org](http://festivalhill.org)

**Surfside Beach Marathon and Half Marathon**, [surfsidebeachmarathon.com](http://surfsidebeachmarathon.com)

**Bay City [10, 16–18, 23–29, March 1–2] Matagorda County Fair**, (979) 245-2454, [matagordacountyfair.com](http://matagordacountyfair.com)

15

**Alpine [15–17] Lone Star Cowboy Poetry Gathering**, (432) 216-2167, [lonestarcowboypoetry.com](http://lonestarcowboypoetry.com)

16

**Brenham [16–17] Texas Trails Quilt Show**, [friendshipquiltguild.weebly.com](http://friendshipquiltguild.weebly.com)

**Waller [16–17] Chili When It's Chilly Cook-Off**, [chiliwhenitschilly.org](http://chiliwhenitschilly.org)

17

**Lake Jackson** A Celebration of American Black Composers, (979) 265-7661, bcfas.org

**San Felipe Nature Talks: Invasives and Exotics**, (512) 461-4780, tpwd.texas.gov

19

**Brenham [19-24]** Fortnightly Club Annual Used Book Sale, (979) 830-5665, visitbrenhamtexas.com

23

**Luling [23-24]** American Legion Post 177 Chili and BBQ Cook-Off, (512) 554-5389, facebook.com/legion177

24

**Victoria** Tchaikovsky Spectacular, (361) 576-4500, victoriasymphony.com

26

**Decatur [26-March 3]** Wise County Youth Fair, wcyouthfair.org

29

**Brownsville [29-March 2]** Charro Days, (956) 542-4245, charrodaysfiesta.com

## MARCH

01

**San Angelo [1-2]** Brews, Ewes & BBQ; (325) 655-2345; facebook.com/brewsewesbbq

02

**Huntsville** Texas Independence Day and Gen. Sam Houston's Birthday Celebration, (936) 291-9726, huntsvilletexas.com

### TCP *Submit Your Event*

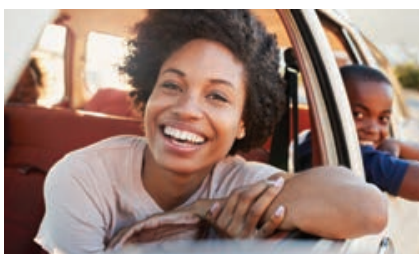
We pick events for the magazine directly from TexasCoopPower.com. Submit your May event by March 1, and it just might be featured in this calendar.

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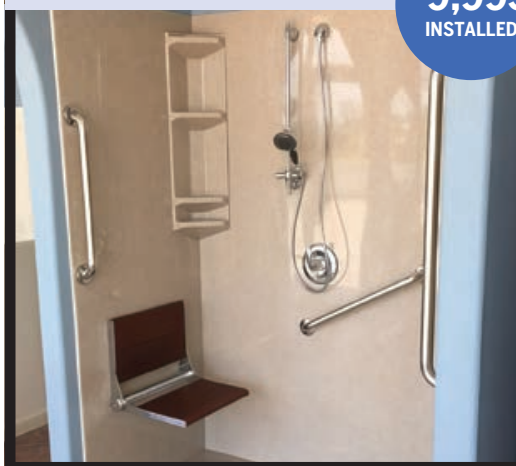


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# Vibrant Color

The sun rises, and the world becomes alive with color. As we marvel at hues both artificial and natural, some photographers are fortunate enough to capture the moment with vivid clarity. Come along as we wind down the back trails to see what catches the eye.

CURATED BY GRACE FULTZ

**1 KRISTEN BROWN**  
PEDERNALES EC

A grackle finds something to eat on the trail at Brushy Creek Park in Cedar Park.

**2 MARK HOLLY**  
BANDERA EC

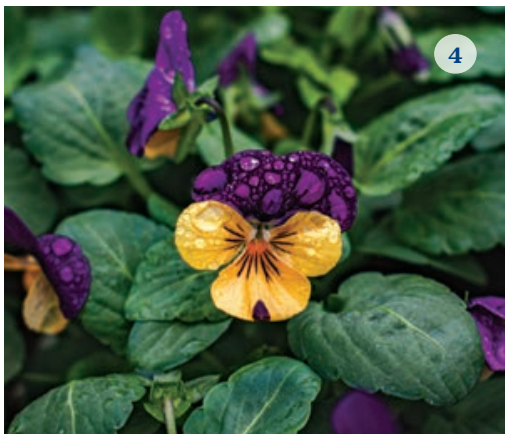
An iconic San Antonio holiday scene on the Riverwalk.

**3 DANNY VIVIAN**  
NUECES EC

"A fiery sunrise on a summer morning on Mustang Beach, the most beautiful sunrise spot in Texas."

**4 ALLISON MORROW**  
WOOD COUNTY EC

A horned violet.



## Upcoming Contests

- DUE FEB 10** Food and Cooking
- DUE MAR 10** Shells and Scales
- DUE APR 10** Textures



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

**TCP** See Focus on Texas on our website for many more Vibrant Color photos from readers.





## Progress by Design

Beverly L. Greene framed a future for architects like her

BY ARIANNA CANNON  
ILLUSTRATION BY  
JOHN JAY CABUAY

I KNEW AT A YOUNG AGE that I wanted to change the world.

What I didn't know was how to go about doing it or even who I was to think that I could change the world. I did know that I was drawn to architecture. Maybe that would be my purpose, the mode by which I would change the world.

But less than 100 years ago, I couldn't have pursued that purpose.

Beverly L. Greene needed to come along first. In 1942, she became the first known female African American licensed architect in the U.S. In a field dominated by white men, she stayed true to herself and pursued a path into the unknown.

She earned a degree in architectural engineering, overcame preconceived notions—even being forced to move to New York due to a lack of opportunities

for a Black female architect in Chicago—and persisted.

“I wish that young [Black] women would think about this field,” she said in an interview. “I wish some others would try it.”

I answered that rallying call by enrolling as an architecture student at Texas Tech University in 2021, knowing full well that despite the many years that have passed since Greene's historic achievements, the playing field is still not level.

While history was made in 2020 as the number of licensed female Black architects reached 500, the national registrar reported that just 0.5% of licensed architects were Black women. Not even 1% of architects look like me.

But if Greene could achieve all that she did—including working on the UNESCO headquarters in Paris—during segregation and a world war, then the only limitations on the legacy I create are me.

It's possible that pursuing architecture will have no effect on a global scale, and it's possible that I'll face criticism and setbacks. It's even highly likely that I will fail in this field, which has a higher dropout rate than engineering and medicine.

If learning about Greene taught me anything, it's that success in life is often-times transient and short-lived, but your effect on others—your creations, all those beautiful gifts—those outlive you.

So if someone asked me today what I want my life or my career to look like, I won't tell them that I want to help people in an unconventional but impactful way. I won't tell them that I want to create bonds through and with the built environment. I won't even tell them that I want to design a world in which everyone has access to safe, sustainable and affordable shelter.

Instead I'll tell them this: I want to be remembered like Beverly L. Greene because I helped shape the future for those who came after me. ■

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