

AGGIES' 12TH MAN
TURNS 100

SATISFYING
SOUPS AND STEWS

WINDOW SHOPPING
AT PRADA MARFA

Texas Coop Power

FOR MEDINA EC MEMBERS

JANUARY 2022

In the Care of Canines

How rescue dogs
are learning
to help people



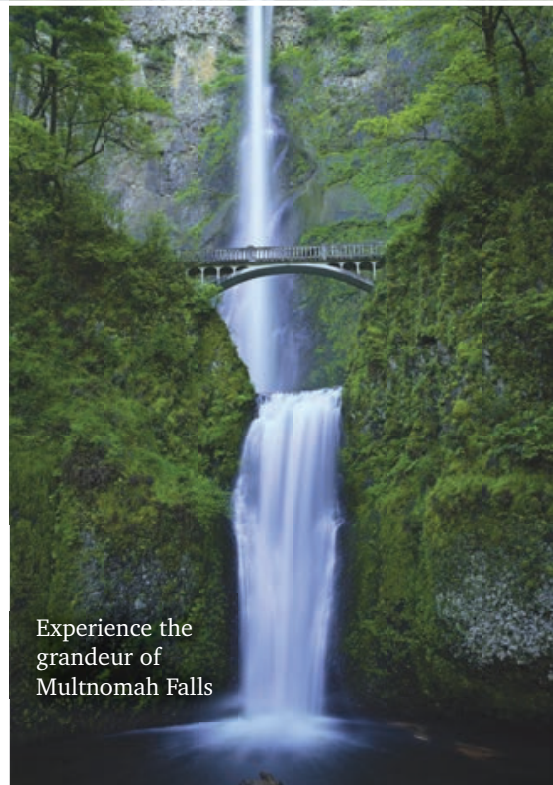


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A Texas organization trains rescue dogs to help people overcome challenges.

Story and photos by Laura Jenkins

Aggie Standouts

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

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By Martha Deeringer

ON THE COVER

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

ABOVE

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

High Alert

DON'T SAY THEY didn't warn you.

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



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

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

TCP Tell us how you would finish that sentence. Email your short responses to letters@TexasCoopPower.com or comment on our Facebook post. Include your co-op and town. Below are some of the responses to our November prompt: **A Texan Would Never ...**

Squat with their spurs on.

JULIE BAKER
BLUEBONNET EC
CALDWELL

Pick a bluebonnet.

TRACEY POWELL
TRI-COUNTY EC
ALEDO

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

DONNA FALDYN
VIA FACEBOOK

Turn down barbecue.

THELMA BEASLE
LIGHTHOUSE EC
MEMPHIS

Ask someone else to finish their sentence.

JAY GEIS
HEART OF TEXAS EC
MOFFAT

To see more responses, read Currents online.

A COLD, HARD FACT

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

66

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



TCP Contests and More

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FOCUS ON TEXAS PHOTOS
Feathered Friends

RECOMMENDED READING

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



What's New, Chet?

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



A Farsighted Mission

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





DAVID MOORE

Dad's Service Station

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

EDDIE BOLCH
BRYAN TEXAS UTILITIES
BRYAN

The Tormenting Cries

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

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

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

Roberta McLaughlin
Heart of Texas EC
Lorena



EARL NOTTINGHAM | TPWD

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

LETA MASSEY
VIA FACEBOOK

Our Old House

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

Kathy Bendele
Pedernales EC
Hye

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

Roberta Dunn Dobie
Via Facebook

Meaningful Learning

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

Felicity Hannay
Central Texas EC
Golden, Colorado

TCP WRITE TO US
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Austin, TX 78701

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

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The Invention of the Year

The world's lightest and most portable mobility device

Once in a lifetime, a product comes along that truly moves people. Introducing the future of battery-powered personal transportation . . . The Zinger.

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

"What my wife especially loves is it gives her back feelings of safety and independence which has given a real boost to her confidence and happiness! Thank You!"

—Kent C., California

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



Available in Green, Black (shown) and Blue



The Zinger folds to a mere 10 inches.

folding and unfolding – when folded it can be wheeled around like a suitcase and fits easily into a backseat or trunk. Then, there are the steering levers. They enable the **Zinger** to move forward, backward, turn on a dime and even pull right up to a table or desk. With its compact yet powerful motor it can go up to 6 miles an hour and its rechargeable battery can go up to 8 miles on a single charge. With its low center of gravity and inflatable tires it can handle rugged terrain and is virtually tip-proof. Think about it, you can take your **Zinger** almost anywhere, so you don't have to let mobility issues rule your life.

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POWER OF OUR PEOPLE

Furred Responders

A Texas organization trains rescue dogs to help people overcome challenges



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



STORY AND PHOTOS BY LAURA JENKINS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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



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

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

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

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

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

stayed in bed for nearly two years.

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

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

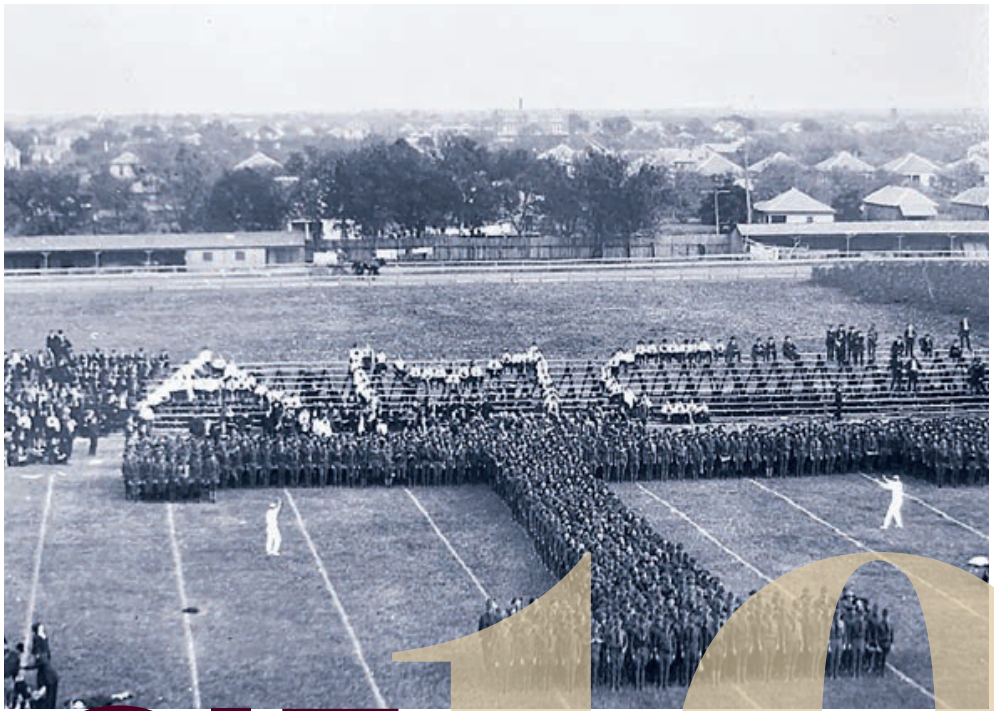


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TCP POWER OF OUR PEOPLE

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AGGIE 100 STANDOUTS

BY RHONDA REINHART

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

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

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

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

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

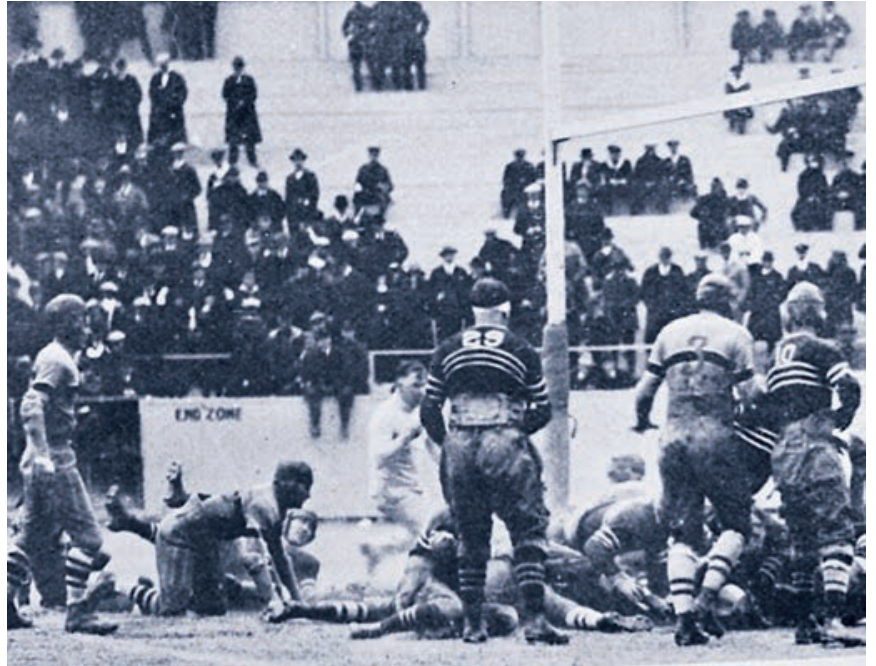
part of the squad traveling to the bowl game. He did, however, hitchhike from College Station to Dallas to see his buddies play at Fair Park, and he was up in the press box helping Waco sports writer Jinx Turner identify players on the field. But as the number of injured players quickly swelled, Bible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

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

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



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



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

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

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

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

Cameron Smallwood, class of 1996 and CEO and general



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



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

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

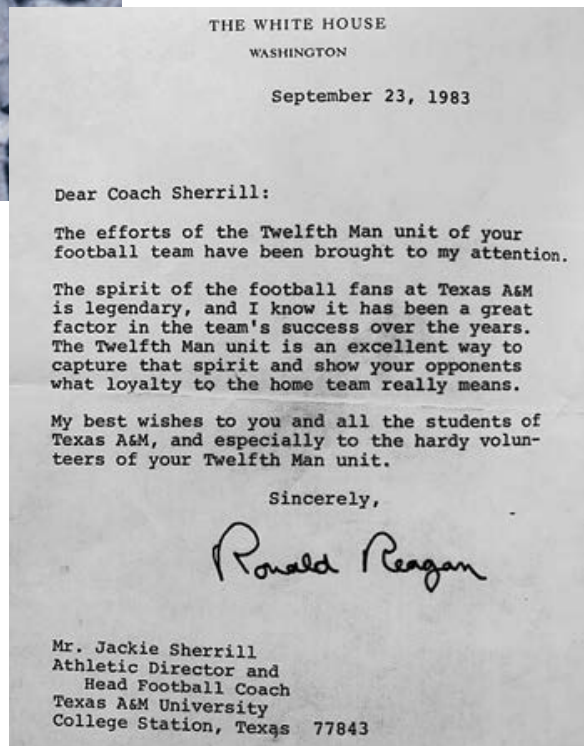


manager at United Cooperative Services, attended games as a student and has held season tickets for football and basketball games for many years since. “It’s like being part of a big family there cheering on the team,” he says. He likens the student spirit at A&M—and that eagerness to pitch in when needed—to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

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

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

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



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

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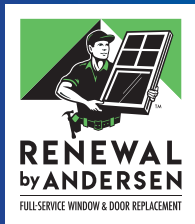
Rating of A+



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

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Goodbye 2021 Window & Patio Door Event



**Goodbye 2021 Event
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for 1 year!²



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

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



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

Medina Electric Cooperative Announces New CEO

Grebe will join the cooperative on January 3



NEW CEO

**HERBERT "TREY"
GREBE III**

FOLLOWING A SIX-MONTH executive search, Medina Electric Cooperative has hired a new CEO.

Herbert "Trey" Grebe III will begin January 3. Grebe has more than 20 years of senior management level experience in electric cooperatives and a demonstrated history of success working with electric utilities. Grebe will become MEC's ninth CEO. MEC provides affordable, reliable electric service for more than 19,000 member-owners across 17 South Texas counties.

"Trey's extensive experience and expertise are perfectly suited to helping us continue our mission of providing safe, reliable electricity at the lowest possible cost to our member-owners," said MEC Board President Kenneth G. White.

For the past five years, Grebe served as assistant general manager of Wheatland Electric Cooperative in Scott City, Kansas.

Grebe is a native of Taft, Texas, and earned a Bachelor of Business Administration in marketing from Texas State University in San Marcos. He also is a certified procurement professional and a certified energy manager. Trey has been actively involved with community and professional organizations throughout his career.

Grebe said, "I'm truly honored to become a part of this amazing organization. I look forward to working with the talented employees serving the membership of Medina Electric."

Team Members Reach Important Milestones

MEDINA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE CELEBRATED several special work anniversaries for employees between July and December of last year.

Work anniversaries are celebrated in five-year increments, also known as service awards. For service awards, the cooperative donates \$100 in honor of each employee to an organization of their choice. In the last two years, employees have chosen various community organizations to receive a total of \$2,700 through service award donations.

Please join us in celebrating these Medina EC employees!



JOSH ROBERTS
Vegetation Management
Coordinator | Hondo
5 years

DONATION TO
Hondo VFD



JUANITA MOLINA
Office Supervisor | Dilley
20 years

DONATION TO
Dilley VFD



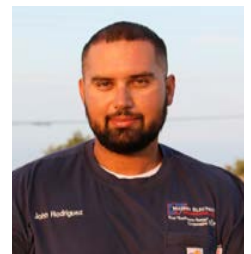
BEN GARCIA
Journeyman | Uvalde
10 years

DONATION TO
Uvalde VFD



REUBEN AYALA
Journeyman | Dilley
20 years

DONATION TO
Cotulla FFA Booster Club



JOHN RODRIGUEZ
Journeyman | Rio Grande
City | 10 years

DONATION TO
Friends of the Rio Grande
City Public Library

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[MEDINAEC.ORG/CONNECTIONS.](https://medinaec.org/connections)

Medina Electric
Cooperative



CONTACT US

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

Email Info@MedinaEC.org

Web MedinaEC.org - Chat Feature Available

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Voting District 1

Larry Huesser, (830) 363-7651

Wayne W. Scholtz, (830) 426-1328

Ken Weynand, (830) 426-0762

Voting District 2

Jimmie Raines, (830) 591-8437

Chris Surles, (830) 965-5538

Kenneth White, (830) 232-6541

Voting District 3

Annette Sorrells, (361) 231-0173

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

Rodolfo H. Rodriguez, (210) 846-1092

CEO

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

Outage? 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 Hwy. 173 N., Hondo 78861

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

Uvalde 2604 Hwy. 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.

Community Empowerment Grants Available

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Up to \$5,500 will be awarded in 2022.
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.



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

COUNTIES WHERE GRANTS CAN BE AWARDED

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

LAST YEAR'S RECIPIENTS

Alexander Memorial Library, Cotulla

\$500 to purchase new computer tables and bookcases.

Camp Wood Public Library, Camp Wood

\$800 to help the library fund interior security cameras to help monitor activities in the library and safeguard the library's assets.

Charlotte Public Library, Charlotte

\$1,000 to purchase DEAR Little Free Libraries to provide free reading material and promote reading to all ages.

Devine Food Pantry, Devine

\$500 to purchase security cameras inside and outside the food pantry to protect the goods within.

Literacy Volunteers of Laredo, Laredo

\$1,200 for an innovative printer and its accessories to print resources for future courses.

Nuevos Horizontes de Starr County, Rio Grande City

\$500 to create an outdoor classroom and recreation area for students.

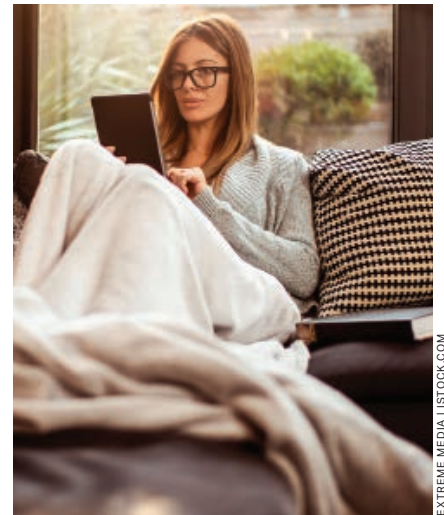
South Texas Empowerment of Women, Rio Grande City

\$500 will be used to help purchase, install and maintain outdoor lighting for the facility.

Texas Ramp Project, Medina County

\$500 to purchase lumber and materials for two average-length wheelchair ramps in Medina EC's service area.

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



Energy Efficiency All Year Long

2022 BRINGS A fresh start. If you can focus on mastering one energy-saving habit a month, your power bill will be better for it.

January: Turn off ceiling fans when you leave the room.

February: Instead of turning up the heat, put on an extra layer of clothing or get under a cozy blanket.

March: Turn off lights when you leave a room.

April: Plant a tree to shade your home in warm months.

May: Decorate your backyard or porch with solar-powered lights and keep outdoor electric lights off.

June: Take short showers instead of baths.

July: Dry heavy linens outside on a clothesline instead of using the dryer.

August: Set a reminder to change the air conditioner filter every 60–90 days.

September: Turn off running water when you brush your teeth.

October: Unplug energy vampires, including gaming consoles and computers.

November: Wash clothes with cold water.

December: Decorate for the holidays with LED lights. ■

\$2.15 Million in Capital Credits Returned to Members

Members saw credit on their December bill

CAPITAL CREDITS are an important part of the cooperative difference.

As a not-for-profit cooperative, Medina Electric Cooperative allocates any margins to members and retires them as the financial position of the cooperative allows. At the November meeting, the board reviewed the cooperative financials to determine what money needs to be reinvested in the system and made a decision to approve the retirement of \$2.15 million in capital credits this year.

For current members, these were issued as a credit on December bills. If you look at the back of your December bill, where charges are broken down, you will see a line item that shows your capital credits return. Members who connected service with the cooperative within the last year may not have a bill credit, but they can look forward to one in future years.

For former members who are due a return, credits were mailed as checks. That is one reason it is important to keep your mailing address updated with the cooperative if you move out of Medina EC's service area.

More than \$36 million in capital credits have been returned to members since Medina EC was formed in 1938.

To learn more about capital credits and how they are allocated to members' accounts and eventually retired, visit MedinaEC.org/CapitalCredits. Sometimes, capital credits checks remain uncashed and unclaimed. To check if you or anyone you know has unclaimed capital credits, search by last name on the MedinaEC.org/CapitalCredits page.

There really is a difference in the cooperative business model: You get reliable, affordable electricity—and money back in the form of capital credits.

MedinaEC.org/CapitalCredits

TexasCoopPower

Feeling lucky?

Hey, Chet here! Join me at the all-new **TexasCoopPower.com** for your chance to win! Check out our monthly \$500 recipe contest plus contests for reader photos, getaways and more!



Medina EC Awarding 25 \$1,000 Scholarships

EACH YEAR MEDINA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE offers scholarships to students pursuing higher education.

This year, the cooperative is offering five scholarships for adults pursuing higher education and 20 for high school seniors. Applications must be completed online and submitted by 11:59 p.m. March 4.*

Eligible applications will be entered in a drawing and scholarship winners will be selected at random at the April board meeting.

For more information, visit MedinaEC.org/Scholarships or contact us at 1-866-MEC-ELEC (632-3532) or Scholarship@MedinaEC.org.

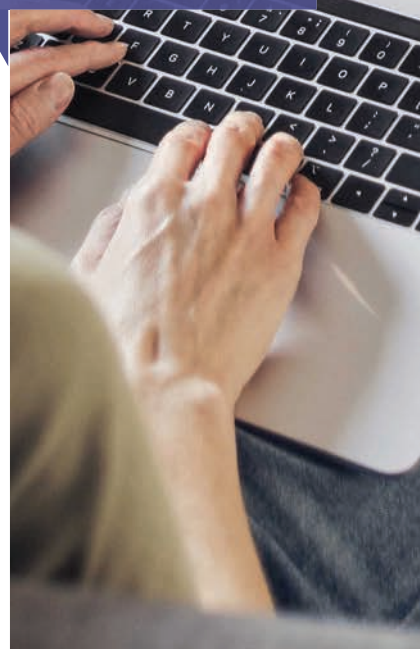
**Technical support will not be available outside of normal business hours. Encountering technical issues turning in the application on the last day will not be grounds for an extension.*

MedinaEC.org/Scholarships

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Upcoming Nominating Meetings

Any members interested in running for one of the three board positions up for election in the fall should plan to attend the nominating meeting for their voting district. If you are not able to attend your nominating meeting, you can also be placed on the ballot through the petition process. You can download a petition at MedinaEC.org/Nominee. The board of directors represents the interests of members and governs the cooperative.*

*Learn more and download a petition at **MedinaEC.org/Nominee**.*

Voting District 1 Meeting

Medina county

Tuesday, February 22, 6 p.m.

Medina EC General Office, 2308 18th St., Hondo

Voting District 2 Meeting

Edwards, Real, Kinney, Uvalde, Zavala, Frio and Atascosa counties

Monday, February 21, 6 p.m.

Medina EC Dilley Office, 1718 West FM 117, Dilley

Voting District 3 Meeting

Dimmit, La Salle, McMullen, Webb, Duval, Zapata, Jim Hogg, Brooks and Starr counties

Wednesday, February 23, 6 p.m.

Medina EC Rio Grande City Office, 601 N. FM 3167, Rio Grande City

In compliance with the United States 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. The section that primarily pertains to nomination and election procedures is Article 4 - Board of Directors.

*If you have meters in multiple voting districts, you may choose one meeting to attend in any of those voting districts. If you are unsure which voting district your meters are in, visit MedinaEC.org/NomMtg or contact our office.

Operation Round Up Gives Back During the Holidays

AT MEDINA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, we know how special the holiday season is for all our members. The cooperative also knows that many in our communities may be struggling. Operation Round Up participants did their part to help community members, rounding their bills up to make donations to those in need. Because of their generosity, ORU was able to offer both general donations and Operation Grocery Give gift cards, a special program offered during the holiday season that allows families to apply for a \$150 HEB giftcard to assist with buying their holiday meals.

In December, Medina EC's ORU committee awarded applicants \$6,250, including \$3,000 in the form of \$150 H-E-B gift cards.

General Donation Recipients

Anna Trevino, Salineno – \$500

Enedelia Trevino, Salineno – \$500

Mary and Trey Sprawls, Batesville - \$1,500

Vida and Joseph Martinez, Dilley - \$750

Grocery Give Recipients

Amelia Terrezas, Batesville

Annette Perales, Castroville

Brandy Key, Devine

Candy and Waylon Finto, Devine

Danyca and Kenneth Russell,

Devine

Diana and Fernando Mascorro,

San Antonio

Edward and Martha Martinez,

Pearsall

Emily De La Fuentes, Hondo

Francine Covarrubias, Roma

Frank Ornelas, Moore

Jessica Salinas, Zapata

Justine and Byron Hruzek,

Devine

Linda Garcia, Yancy

Mary Schultze, Hondo

Roberto and Melida Escobar,

Roma

Romero Arjona and Maria

Cepeda, Rio Grande City

Saraita Martinez, Bruni

Theresa Chapman, Hondo

Thomas and Judy Sedillo, Devine

Yadira and Juan Ramos, Natalia

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. The 2022 deadlines are Feb. 4, May 6, Aug. 5 and Nov. 4.



Learn more and submit an application at MedinaEC.org/ORU. The next application deadline is February 4.

Aggies and Your Cooperative

THIS MONTH'S FEATURE on the 12th man tradition on Page 12 offers a look at one of the Aggie traditions.

Behind the scenes at Medina EC, there are a few Texas A&M graduates. Here are their favorite school traditions.

BRETT WILLIAMS

CLASS OF '00

Aggie War Hymn at Kyle Field with some Aggie football and the 12th Man.



KEITH CALLE

CLASS OF '05

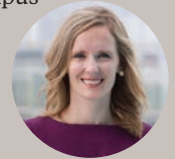
Midnight yell.



KATIE HABY

CLASS OF '06

Silver Taps on campus and Aggie Muster.



MAKENNA LANGE

CLASS OF '12

The Aggie Ring.



WESLEY BOHL

CLASS OF '18

Aggie Muster and the Penny on Sully.



Be Smart With Your Generator

Portable generators are a godsend during a prolonged electrical outage—just be sure to use extreme caution while operating them.

Never try to power your home by plugging the generator into a wall outlet. This dangerous practice, known as backfeeding, reverses the electricity flow and sends it out of your house, endangering electric workers and your neighbors. If you must connect the generator to the house wiring, have a qualified electrician do it or opt for a Generlink device, available through Medina Electric Cooperative.

Plug appliances directly into the generator or use an extension cord that is rated (in watts or amps) at least equal to the sum of the connected appliance loads. Check that the entire cord is free of damage and that the plug has all its prongs.

Keep the generator dry and do not use it indoors, in a garage, near open doors or windows, or in rainy or wet conditions.

Medina EC encourages you to always practice electrical safety.



SAFEELECTRICITY.ORG

Stay Warm, Fed and Safe During Storms

WHEN WINTER CONDITIONS strike, staying safe and warm can be challenging. Medina Electric Cooperative cares about your safety, and we want you to be prepared.

During a power outage, our crews will always work as quickly and safely as possible to restore power, and there are a few things you can do to protect yourself.

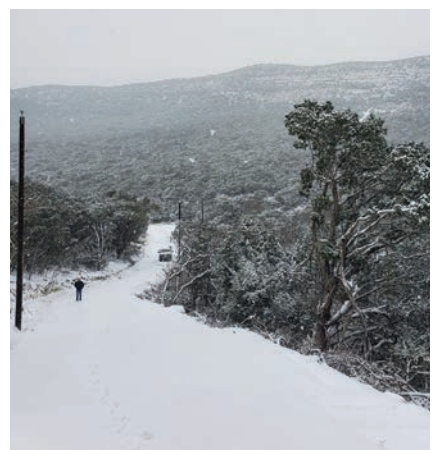
Stay warm. Plan to use a safe alternate heating source, such as a fireplace or wood-burning stove during a power outage.

Stay fed. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends keeping handy several days' supply of food that doesn't need to be cooked. Five gallons of water per person should also be available.

Stay safe. When an outage occurs, it usually means power lines are down. If you must travel during a winter storm, take a survival kit and do not travel alone. Stay as far away from downed power lines as possible, and report hazardous situations to Medina EC.

Medina EC is ready for what Mother Nature has in store, and we want you to be ready too.

This winter, we will also be closely monitoring the ERCOT market and working to keep our members informed of any supply issues the state may encounter. To learn more, visit [MedinaEC.org/ERCOT](https://www.MedinaEC.org/ERCOT). ■



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 snatched it up 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**.

Your satisfaction is 100% guaranteed. If you aren't completely happy with your purchase, send it back within 30 days for a complete refund of the item price.

The supply of Arizona turquoise is limited, don't miss your chance to own the Southwest's brilliant blue treasure. Call today!

Jewelry Specifications:

• Arizona turquoise • Silver-finished settings

Sedona Turquoise Collection

- | | | | |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| A. Pendant (26 cts) | \$299* | \$99 +s&p | Save \$200 |
| B. 18" Bali Naga woven sterling silver chain | \$149 | | |
| C. 1 1/2" Earrings (10 ctw) | \$299* | \$149 +s&p | Save \$150 |
| Complete Set** | \$747* | \$299 +s&p | Save \$448 |

** Complete set includes pendant, chain and earrings.

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— Smithsonian.com

A.

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Bad to the Bone

Full tang stainless steel blade with natural bone handle —now **ONLY \$79!**

The very best hunting knives possess a perfect balance of form and function. They're carefully constructed from fine materials, but also have that little something extra to connect the owner with nature.

If you're on the hunt for a knife that combines impeccable craftsmanship with a sense of wonder, the **\$79 Huntsman Blade** is the trophy you're looking for.

The blade is full tang, meaning it doesn't stop at the handle but extends to the length of the grip for the ultimate in strength. The blade is made from 420 surgical steel, famed for its sharpness and its resistance to corrosion.

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

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

But we don't stop there. While supplies last, we'll include a pair of \$99, 8x21 power compact, binoculars and a genuine leather sheath **FREE** when you purchase the **Huntsman Blade**.

Your satisfaction is 100% guaranteed. Feel the knife in your hands, wear it on your hip, inspect the impeccable craftsmanship. If you don't feel like we cut you a fair deal, send it back within 30 days for a complete refund of the item price.

Limited Reserves. A deal like this won't last long. We have only 1120 **Huntsman Blades** for this ad only. Don't let this beauty slip through your fingers. Call today!

Huntsman Blade ~~\$249*~~

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- 12" overall length; 6 1/2" stainless steel full tang blade
- Genuine bone handle with brass hand guard & bolsters
- Includes genuine leather sheath

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Stauer® 8x21
Compact
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Rating of **A+**

BONUS! Call today and you'll also receive this genuine leather sheath!



**What Stauer Clients
Are Saying About
Our Knives**

"The feel of this knife is unbelievable...this is an incredibly fine instrument."

— H., Arvada, CO

Stauer... *Afford the Extraordinary.*®



Joined by a Fence

How rural America turned barbed wire into telephone lines

BY W.F. STRONG

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

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

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

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

TCP WEB EXTRA

Listen to W.F. Strong read this story.



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

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

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

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

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

Soups and Stews

Stir up satisfying comfort food with a variety of ingredients

BY MEGAN MYERS, FOOD EDITOR

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



Beef Bulgur Soup

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

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

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

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

SERVES 4–6

TCP WEB EXTRA Follow along with Megan Myers and her adventures in the kitchen at stetted.com, where she features a recipe for Black Bean Soup.



Chicken and Ginger Soup

JENNIFER BRANNEN
BLUEBONNET EC

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

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

COOK'S TIP Make fried garlic chips by frying ¼ cup of thinly sliced garlic cloves in ½ cup of canola oil until golden. Strain the garlic through a sieve but keep the garlic-infused oil for other uses.

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

SERVES 4–6

[MORE RECIPES >](#)

\$500 WINNER

Chicken and Dumplings Soup

AMANDA DECESARO
TRINITY VALLEY EC



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

SERVES 6



SOUP

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

DUMPLINGS

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

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

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

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

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

TCP \$500 Recipe Contest

WEEKNIGHT DINNERS DUE JANUARY 10

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





Potato Leek Soup With Dill

REXANNE MEAUX
PEDERNALES EC

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

1 tablespoon butter

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

2 large russet potatoes, peeled and cubed

¾ cup white wine, divided use

4 cups chicken broth

1 cup heavy cream

2 tablespoons chopped fresh dill, plus more to taste

¾ teaspoon salt

½ teaspoon pepper

Fresh dill sprigs, for garnish

1. In a stockpot or Dutch oven, melt butter over medium heat. Add leeks and sauté 10 minutes or until tender. Add the potatoes, ½ cup wine and broth. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to low and simmer, uncovered, 1 hour and 15 minutes or until the potatoes are very tender.

2. Transfer soup in batches to a blender and blend until smooth. Return the soup to the pot and add remaining ¼ cup wine, heavy cream, dill, salt and pepper. Heat through and serve, garnishing bowls with fresh dill.

SERVES 4-6

Soup Improv

BY MEGAN MYERS

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

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

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

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

Chopped fresh herbs are a great finish to any soup.

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

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

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² Based on datasheet review of websites of top 20 manufacturers per IHS, as of April 2021.

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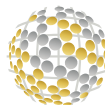
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COURTESY CHET GARNER

Faux Chic, for Sure

Like a desert mirage, Prada Marfa perplexes

BY CHET GARNER

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Know Before You Go

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

JANUARY

08

Frisco NCAA Division I FCS Football Championship, (972) 292-5250, visitfrisco.com

Kerrville Symphony of the Hills: Outlaws and Heroes, (830) 792-7469, symphonyofthehills.org

Monahans Sandhills Resolution Run, (432) 943-2187, monahans.org

San Marcos Purgatory Trail Run, (877) 806-3987, athleteguild.com

Temple Family Day—Cabin Fever: Stargazing, (254) 298-5690, templeparks.com

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

Dallas [8, 15, 22] The Dinner Detective Murder Mystery Dinner Show, 1-866-496-0535, thedinnerdetective.com

15

Fredericksburg Luckenbach Blues Festival, (830) 997-3224, luckenbachtexas.com

Granbury 7 Bridges: The Ultimate Eagles Experience, (817) 573-5548, thenewgranburylive.com

Lake Jackson Bird Banding, (979) 480-0999, gcbo.org

McKinney Night Hike, (972) 562-5566, heardmuseum.org

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

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

16

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

17

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

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

20

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

22

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

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

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

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

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

MORE EVENTS >

TCP Submit Your Event

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



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JANUARY EVENTS CONTINUED

22

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

23

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

27

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

29

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

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

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

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

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

FEBRUARY

03

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

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

05

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

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

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

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

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

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

Fired Up!

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

BY GRACE FULTZ

1 TONYA CARLIN
CECA

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



1

2 PATTY DISHMAN
PEDERNALES EC

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



2

3 BROOKE WILLIAMS
TRINITY VALLEY EC

Homecoming parade in Forney.



3

4 CADEN WILSON
UNITED COOPERATIVE
SERVICES

Cowtown rodeo.



4

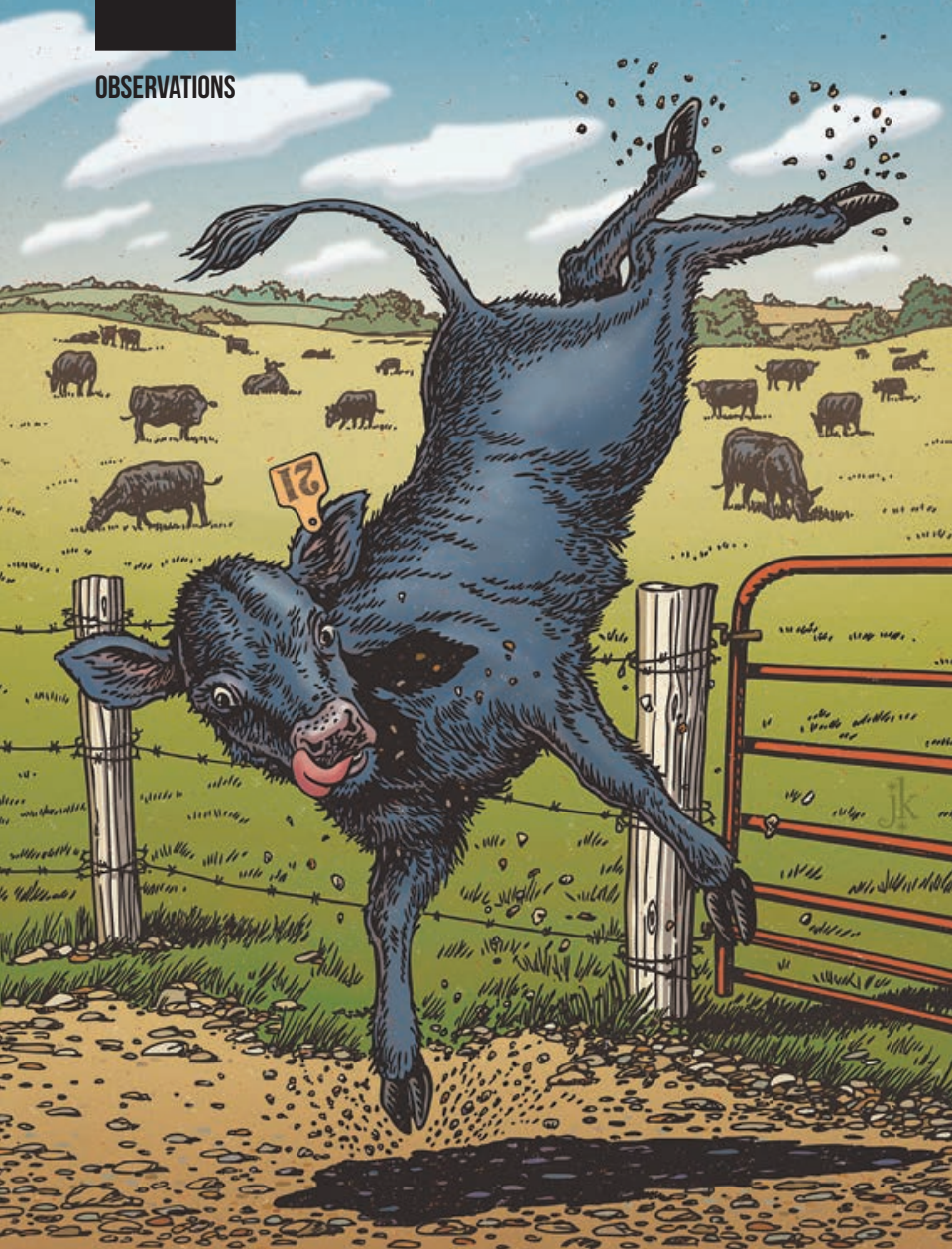
Upcoming Contests

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



Enter online at TexasCoopPower.com/contests.

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



Buck's Pluck

What we learned from a spunky calf

BY MARTHA DEERINGER
ILLUSTRATION BY JOHN KACHIK

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

Except for Buck Rogers.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Qualification: Advertised price requires credit qualification and 24-month commitment. Upfront activation and/or receiver upgrade fees may apply based on credit qualification. Offer ends 4/13/22. 2-Year Commitment: Early termination fee of \$20/mo. remaining applies if you cancel early. Included in 2-year price guarantee at \$69.99 advertised price: America's Top 120 programming package, local channels, HD service fees, and Hopper Duo Smart DVR for 1 TV. Included in 2-year price guarantee for additional cost: Programming package upgrades (\$84.99 for AT120+, \$94.99 for AT200, \$104.99 for AT250), monthly fees for upgraded or additional receivers (\$5-\$7 per additional TV, receivers with additional functionality may be \$10-\$15). Regional Sports: RSN Surcharge up to \$3/mo. applies to AT120+ and higher packages and varies based on location. NOT included in 2-year price guarantee or advertised price (and subject to change): Taxes & surcharges, add-on programming (including premium channels), DISH Protect, and transactional fees. Premium Channels: 3 Mos. Free: After 3 mos., you will be billed \$30/mo. for Showtime, Starz, and DISH Movie Pack unless you call or go online to cancel. Remote: The DISH Voice Remote with the Google Assistant requires internet-connected Hopper, Joey, or Wally device. Customer must press Voice Remote button to activate feature. The Google Assistant Smart Home features require Google account and compatible devices. Google is a trademark of Google LLC. Other: Netflix streaming membership required. All packages, programming, features, and functionality and all prices and fees not included in price lock are subject to change without notice. After 6 mos., if selected, you will be billed \$9.99/mo. for DISH Protect Silver unless you call to cancel. After 2 years, then-current everyday prices for all services apply. For business customers, additional monthly fees may apply. Free standard professional installation only. Indiana C.P.D Reg. No. - 19-08615. ©2021 GoDISH.com. All rights reserved. Internet speeds, prices, and providers vary by customer address. \$40 price refers to widely available plan from multiple providers. Restrictions apply. Nationwide availability of 25 Mbps plan is subject to change without notice. The application of "Unlimited Data with no Hard Data Limits" varies by provider, but commonly mean that your access to the internet will not be stopped by going over a data limit, but that speeds may be lowered. Call for details. Internet not provided by DISH and will be billed separately.