

OUTLANDISH CHARACTERS
OF BYGONE RODEOS

WHEN THE QUEEN
CAME TO TEXAS

CHET LOOKS AT
BUDDY HOLLY'S LEGACY

Texas Coop Power

FOR MEDINA EC MEMBERS

FEBRUARY 2022

Esports Enters the Arena

Students play their way
to scholarships and careers
in video gaming





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February 2022



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The booming business of esports finds eager participants in rural schools.

By Chris Burrows

Stretching the Blanket

Outlandish characters and hard-to-believe yarns defined the early days of Texas rodeo.

By Gene Fowler
Illustration by Douglas Jones

ON THE COVER

At 100,000 square feet, Esports Stadium Arlington is the largest dedicated gaming facility in North America.

Photo courtesy Arlington Convention & Visitors Bureau

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'Dillo Day

THE FOLKS IN BEE CAVE, just west of Austin, don't pay much attention to Punxsutawney Phil on Groundhog Day. Instead, they rely on an armadillo named Bee Cave Bob on February 2 to prognosticate the arrival of spring. Bob has served the role since 2012.



FINISH THIS SENTENCE

THE BABY OF THE FAMILY ALWAYS ...

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 December prompt: **The hardest job in the world has to be ...**

A single mom.

TISH CORTINAS
COSERV
MCKINNEY

That's easy. Utility lineman.

GINA SCHULTE HALLE
VIA FACEBOOK

Still being a rancher in Central Texas when you are 88 years old.

SCOTT SINGLETON
PEDERNALES EC
MARBLE FALLS

Taking care of your aging, ailing parents.

MARY DIAZ
GRAYSON-COLLIN EC
SHERMAN

The caretaker of a spouse with dementia.

SHARON MARTIN
UNITED COOPERATIVE SERVICES
GRANBURY

To see more responses, read Currents online.

TWOSDAY

February flaunts a special Tuesday this year with a rare numerical alignment: 2/22/22. And twice that day, at 2:22, deuces are really wild.

(If you insist on using the 24-hour clock, the second instance of twos aligning that day will be 22:22.)

Best Dressed

The nation's
electric co-ops
have deployed
enough wind
and solar power
capacity to
serve nearly

2.7
million
homes.



50 Years of Easy Joe

Mr. Coffee, the first automatic drip machine for home use, started making it a little easier to get going in the morning in 1972.



A **TEXAS A&M** University professor has developed water-based nanocoatings that, when added to military uniforms, protect against fire and UV light and change color in the presence of certain chemicals.

The softness of cotton and the strength of nylon are typically compromised when a protective property is added, but Jaime Grunlan has come up with a nontoxic solution that can add protection without changing the structure of the fabric. He hopes this technology can also benefit nonmilitary protective clothing.

TCP *Contests and More*

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Stone Fruits

FOCUS ON TEXAS PHOTOS
Industrial

RECOMMENDED READING
Chet Garner visited another West Texas spot with keepsakes from a musical legend, Roy Orbison, in *Wink's Spectacle* from September 2019.



A Wonderful Flick

"It is nice that this old black-and-white movie, *It's a Wonderful Life*, is still a treasure. I bet it will be for another 75 years."

STEPHANIE RIGGIN
BLUEBONNET EC
LOCKHART

Looking Out for Bison

I was born in the Ozarks at Evening Shade, Arkansas, but I got here as quickly as I could. I married a native Texas girl 20 years ago.

I am a true Texas history buff and love your monthly stories. I had never heard of the Texas State Bison Herd [*Last of Their Kind*, November 2021]. Please keep the stories coming.

J.D. Perkins III
Bluebonnet EC
Red Rock

What one animal said to another [*Safe Passage*, November 2021]: "Oh, let's don't cross here. Let's go down to the land bridge, which is 5 miles south of here. It's much safer."

JOHN PERRIN
VIA FACEBOOK

Snowbird Love

My husband and I are winter Texans. Your magazine teaches us about our winter home state and provides us with travel ideas while we are there.

Merlene S. DeZur
NEC Co-op Energy
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

True to Her Word

I live in the Maverick community [*Biography of a Word*, November 2021]. My house is near the old Maverick School, which I love to photograph. A roadside marker dedicated to Maverick is nearby. And, yes, I am a maverick.

Sherry York
Via Facebook

Reaching Readers

Carpe Diem, Mom [December 2021] so aptly expressed Babs Rodriguez's feelings in a clear and fun way. It also demonstrated her love of her parents and family, which is always nice to hear.

Greg Sethness
Central Texas EC
Sunrise Beach



ANNA GODEASSI

WRITE TO US
letters@TexasCoopPower.com

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Austin, TX 78701

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

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Sincerely, A. Macon, Williamsburg, VA

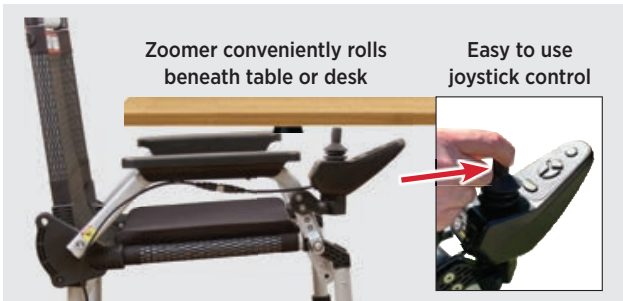
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A person is seen from behind, wearing large, black over-ear headphones. They are looking at a screen that displays a colorful, blurred image of a game, possibly a racing or sports game, with bright lights and a rainbow-like arc. The person's hair is dark and short. The overall scene is dimly lit, with the primary light source being the screen.

A Whole New Ballgame

**The booming business
of esports finds eager
participants in rural schools**

BY CHRIS BURROWS

Ryan Conger thought his athletics career was over.

Rounding third base in a baseball game in 2017, the LeTourneau University sophomore hit an uneven spot in the field. He heard a pop in his knee and knew right away it was his ACL. He was gutted.

"I was like, man, if I don't have baseball, I really don't know what I'm going to do," he said. "I make good grades, but it was only because I wanted to play baseball."

Sidelined with what can be a career-ending injury, Conger channeled his competitive energy into a video game called NBA 2K. The native of Palmer, south of Dallas, worked his way up the basketball game's rankings, playing against others from around the world, and was drafted in 2018 by a professional competitive gaming affiliate of the Dallas Mavericks NBA team.

In September, Conger and his team won their second straight championship on a virtual basketball court, marking Conger as one of the best NBA 2K players in the world and earning him a cut of a half-million-dollar prize. His competitive career wasn't over; it just looks a whole lot different now.

Conger and his teammates occupy one of the many big and bright stages of competitive video gaming—known as esports—and their work and winnings are made possible by the booming new industry that attracts 26.6 million monthly viewers who watch gamers compete in a vast array of virtual venues. Beyond sports games, the online universe extends to strategy and battle arena games and even traditional board games, like chess.

Esports brought in more than \$1 billion in revenue for the first time in 2021 and has given rise to a whole host of career paths for professionals in marketing, information



technology, game design, broadcasting and many other fields—in addition to the game-playing pros on arena stages and online. Now educators at schools are preparing students to take advantage.

"Esports is not the five professionals sitting on the stage," said Matt Tarpley, a member of the Texas Scholastic Esports Federation board. "There's 10 times more people behind the scenes doing all sorts of other work."

In 2018, Tarpley approached the principal at the high school in Merkel, west of Abilene, where he worked in IT. He pitched a gaming team that would be managed by an esports-centered marketing class.

"I said, 'Man, I don't necessarily understand this, but I do understand that our kids are going to be into it, so let's try it,'" Principal James Stevens said. Tarpley taught the class and coached the team, and more than two-thirds of the school's students expressed interest in the class.

"We used to get in trouble for playing video games, but now it's really cool because we see that video games help us develop our problem-solving skills, our critical-thinking skills," said Jansen Wilhite, who took over for Tarpley in 2021. "These are all great skills to have for when we enter the job force."

Wilhite grew up with video games, playing Donkey Kong as a child and World of Warcraft with her husband as an adult. Her degree is in microbiology, but she teaches physics and now Merkel's gaming course, where her students learn all about the types of video games, how they're developed and how to foster positive gameplay environments.

"I never anticipated a career in video games, but here we are," Wilhite said. "It's really cool for me to get to use both halves of myself at work."

ABOVE Ryan Conger competes in the 2021 NBA 2K league playoffs four years after an ACL tear ended his college baseball career. Conger said he planned to use his winnings to help his father open a food truck.



Wilhite also runs Merkel's after-school esports team, which competes in online chess and other video games against teams across Texas. Like the team at Sabine High School, in Upshur Rural Electric Cooperative's territory in Northeast Texas, where technology director Randy Cox was surprised by the buy-in he received from the superintendent.

"When you tell someone you want to start a program where we do competitive video games, I expected to get a little bit of a laugh, but he was very supportive," Cox said. "It's one more thing that students can get involved in with our school."

Merkel, Sabine and more than 400 other high schools across Texas now field esports teams, and even some middle schools are beginning to form clubs—part of a pipeline forming to feed some 250 colleges across the country that offer nearly \$15 million in scholarships to esports competitors and to feed the array of fields that support all of it.

Dallas public schools boast 60 esports clubs, but rural districts like Merkel and Sabine are making sure their students don't get left behind. They're working cooperatively to learn what's working and what isn't, how to get buy-in from administrators, where to get resources for

computers and equipment, and how to form leagues while the University Interscholastic League ponders official esports inclusion. Not every school has gamers on staff, fast internet or money for high-powered computers.

"Our rural schools in our area have always said, 'Hey, we understand that we can't do this by ourselves, but if we come together, we can get things done,'" said Shawn Schlueter, a

Esports brought in more than \$1 billion in revenue for the first time in 2021.

Now educators at schools are preparing students to take advantage.

technology consultant who works with educators in 13 counties. "We're starting to see that where administrators and even interested teachers are calling us and saying, 'You know, I see that [esports] could be valuable. How do I get going with it?'"

That value extends beyond the classroom. Esports can have profound benefits for students who aren't interested in traditional sports, extending to them the positive effects of team building, communication and community support that have long been available to athletes.

"I always say that esports programs are primed for the kids who slip through the cracks of schools," Schlueter said. "Even in a rural school where everybody has to do something, there are groups of

OPPOSITE PAGE The Mavs Gaming Hub in Dallas, site of last year's NBA 2K playoffs. THIS PAGE, FROM TOP The Merkel High School esports marketing class hosts a tournament. University of North Texas students celebrate at a national tournament. Texas Wesleyan University students compete.



kids that do nothing, and this helps engage those kids.”

Principal Stevens has seen it firsthand at Merkel.

“It’s attracted a lot of the kids who showed up at 8 and left at 4,” he said. “I’ve seen better participation, better grades, better attendance out of all those students, and it gave them something to be proud of involved with the school.”

Some of those students followed Tarpley to McMurry University in Abilene, where he now coaches the esports program.

“They’re on track to get a degree all because of esports,” Stevens said.



In Texas, dozens of smaller and lower-profile colleges like McMurry are cashing in by enticing competitors with scholarship money. The University of North Texas and the University of Texas at Dallas field some of the most competitive esports programs in the nation, part of a burgeoning esports hotbed in the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex, where the \$10 million Esports Stadium Arlington—the largest such venue in North America—has space for 2,500 spectators.

But there are opportunities everywhere for esports professionals like Kyle Murto.

He was preparing for a college soccer career when a string of injuries put him in the hospital, where he cracked open his laptop and climbed the ranks. Pro teams didn’t come calling, but Blinn College did. Now Murto helps coach the Brenham-based school’s esports team, which competes against Division I giants—and wins.

“Smaller schools don’t have that name recognition, so we have to go out and make a name for ourselves before the universities really get into the game,” Murto said.

At McMurry, Tarpley is focused on education and personal growth, not wins and losses. He holds workshops for content creation, personal branding and livestreaming and finds graphic design, statistics, broadcasting and other work for students to master.

“Everybody wants to be in this space,” he said. “It’s going to be everywhere eventually. It’s just a matter of time.”

Tarpley’s team meets regularly with a mental health coach—esports’ version of an athletic trainer—and he strives to make sure women are included in an activity that’s been dominated by men. He’s not forming the next Ryan Conger but the next Jansen Wilhite—multiskilled gamers and leaders who can cultivate programs like Merkel’s.

“I had several local schools call me, several local principals that know me. They’re like, ‘Hey, we hear y’all are doing esports. Can you tell me about it?’” Stevens said. “Of course, my first thing is, to be really successful you have to have a Matt Tarpley.” ■

TCP Go online to watch the University of North Texas take down LSU in a national playoff game.



★ "HACKBERRY SLIM" ★
★ "FOGHORN" ★



★ "BUCK" ★ "MR RODEO" ★



STRETCHING THE BLANKET

Outlandish characters
and hard-to-believe
yarns defined the early
days of Texas rodeo

RODEO COWBOY Hackberry Slim Johnson came clean in 1956 when he described the 1906 train-jumping accident near Dalhart that cost him half a leg. “I’ve told so many damned lies about losing that leg,” he told an interviewer. But soon after this brief walk on the straight and narrow path of truth, Johnson reverted to his usual yarn about losing the appendage in a “wreck with a wild horse.”

Even though lies might be too harsh a term for the tall tales whipped up by early rodeo cowboys, Johnson was simply following the Texas tradition of stretching the blanket. Even when characters like him, Buck Steiner, Milt Hinkle and Foghorn Clancy told the truth, the stories still sounded like whoppers.

In its beginnings in the late 19th century, mirroring the recently shuttered American frontier, rodeo presented a vast stage for self-invention. “For decades, rodeo was busy defining itself,” says W.K. Stratton, author of *Chasing the Rodeo* and other books. “The sport was based on the Mexican charreada tradition, which subsequently inspired ‘cowboy contests’ on ranches and in small cattle towns in the West. The advent of Wild West shows and their showbiz elements influenced rodeo as well.

“There was no national sanctioning organization, no set rule-book, so rodeos varied from town to town. People expected to be entertained, and cantankerous old-timers were always a big draw. While elements of showbiz remain, today rodeo is made up of sanctioned athletic contests with standardized events and judging.”

But in its wild and woolly days of old, characters ran the show.

MR. RODEO

MILT HINKLE, aka Mr. Rodeo, first glimpsed daylight in 1881 on the patch of Texas Panhandle that became the town of Bovina, which grew from a camp that was part of the XIT Ranch. In 1904, he claimed, Hinkle became the second man to accomplish the act of bulldogging, first performed by the Black cowboy Bill Pickett and known today as steer wrestling. In another boast, Hinkle bragged that he was the first to apply the term “rodeo” to a roundup event.

In 1919 a *Saturday Evening Post* correspondent wrote about having seen Hinkle suffer a hip injury at a rodeo in Bovina. Three months later, having escaped from the hospital, Hinkle was spotted in Cheyenne, Wyoming, by the same reporter, who described him as “a howling, squawking maniac,” hobbling on crutches as he got ready to bulldog.

The Laredo Times credited Hinkle with the world record for bulldogging from an automobile traveling at 68 mph in 1931. That same year, he agreed to stand in for an “aerial bulldogger” in Nuevo Laredo during the annual Washington’s Birthday Celebration. As Mr. Rodeo prepared to leap onto the running bull, however, *el toro* turned and charged the aircraft, wrecking it. The border paper reported that Hinkle was not seriously injured.

Decades later, however, Hinkle repeatedly told scribes that he landed successfully on the bull, breaking its neck, and that he himself suffered a crippling hip displacement. Mr. Rodeo had become a promoter, and before his death at 91, he relived the wild old days, lugging his scrapbooks around to reporters and writing for *True West* and *Frontier Times Magazine*.

FOGHORN

ONE YEAR YOUNGER than Hinkle, famed rodeo announcer Frederick Melton “Foghorn” Clancy tried his hand at bronc riding in an 1898 cowboy tournament in San Angelo. The contest was won by the great Samuel Thomas “Booger Red” Privett, the Erath County native whose legend says he was never thrown, no matter how “outlaw” a horse he drew. And while Foghorn didn’t fare so well in the saddle, the experience opened another career door.

Clancy was working as a hand on the Hittson Ranch in Palo Pinto County when the Spanish-American War broke out. He quit to join the Army but was turned down for being underweight, so he began selling newspapers in the health resort town of Mineral Wells, bellowing headlines to drive sales. Local press observed that he “sounded like a foghorn at sea,” which provided a nickname and a second job as town crier. “I would ride horseback through the little resort,” he wrote in his 1952 autobiography, *My 50 Years in Rodeo*, “singing out about the attractions at the summer opera house or pavilion.”

Clancy’s stentorian reputation had preceded him in San Angelo, and after his unceremonious buck-off, the folks hosting the ropin’ and ridin’ contest offered him a job as announcer. This was a time before public address systems, but Foghorn lived up to his name, announcing rodeos from one-horse Western towns to Madison Square Garden.

Shortly after he died in 1957, the *Hereford Brand* reported on a quest by Fort Worth’s Pioneer Days celebration, held at the historic stockyards, to find the loudest Texan. Clancy would have been a shoo-in, and organizers recalled how, in “the old days of the rodeo, the mighty voice of the late Foghorn Clancy rattled the windows.”

“I would ride horseback through the little resort singing out about the attractions at the summer opera house or pavilion.”

“When I die, I want to go in style. With my boots on. Dancing, maybe, or maybe while riding a buffalo.”

Dancing, maybe, or maybe while riding a buffalo.”

In 1979, shortly after appearing in the Willie Nelson film *Honeysuckle Rose*, the 91-year-old white-whiskered cowboy danced to Nelson’s band playing *Milk Cow Blues*, then sat back down and slipped into the sunset. ■

BUCK

BORN IN BASTROP in 1899, T.C. “Buck” Steiner lived to see two centuries turn. But long before he died in 2001, the crusty cowpoke had packed several lifetimes into one.

He started early, leaving grade school to pursue the cowboy life. After driving cattle through the streets of Austin, he left home at age 12 to perform in rodeos and Wild West shows, sharing bills with the likes of Annie Oakley and Tom Mix. Steiner demonstrated proficiency at roping, wrestling and riding spirited stock, but he developed a specialty of riding bulls facing backward. As he recalled in endless press features, riding backward was far more lucrative than riding frontward.

Around age 16 he worked for a time at the San Antonio Stockyards. Then at some point, according to the biography of Buck in the *Handbook of Texas*, a law enforcement career was cut short when he shot at a carload of politicians while working traffic management during a parade. While trailing cattle from Mexico to San Antonio, Steiner reportedly downed a few drinks with Pancho Villa. Later, it’s said, he bent elbows with Al Capone.

Back home in Austin, where a German immigrant ancestor had owned the town’s first harness and saddlery shop, Steiner bought and sold land, operated his own touring rodeos, rented his stock to other rodeos, and opened Capitol Saddlery in 1930. News reports say that he had as many as 96 saddle makers working for him and supplied Montgomery Ward and Sears, Roebuck and Company. In a 1950s rodeo tour of Cuba with Gene Autry, Autry and Steiner got caught up amid Fidel Castro’s revolution. An emergency call to Sen. Lyndon B. Johnson saved their bacon.

The Steiners have been called the royal family of rodeo. Son Tommy Steiner ran the rodeo business until closing it in 1984, and grandson Bobby Steiner won the bull riding world championship in 1973. Buck’s great-grandson, Sid Steiner, won the steer wrestling world championship in 2002.

HACKBERRY SLIM

TOWARD THE END of his long life, Hugh “Hackberry Slim” Johnson II carried his scrapbooks around to newspaper offices in towns where he’d rodeoed in days gone by. Time and again the “only one-legged bronc buster, bulldogger, steer rider and calf roper” in rodeo told the story

of his first prosthetic leg, made from a hackberry tree. He talked about working on the XIT and rodeoing with Hoot Gibson and Will Rogers, about the time he drove a bull through a Georgetown furniture store and about winning all-around cowboy in Harlingen in 1933.

He often talked about bison. Hackberry bought his first bison, named Chihuahua, in 1923 and was still producing his “buffalo rodeos” in his 80s. “When I die, I want to go in style,” he often said. “With my boots on.

THE FIFTH C?

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- Our window helps make homes more comfortable because our Fibrex[®] material is **two times stronger than vinyl**
- To lock in this Presidents' Day Special, call on or before **Monday, February 28th** and schedule your free Window and Door Diagnosis



Call to schedule your appointment. Limited appointments are available.



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CEO

**HERBERT "TREY"
GREBE III**

Great Things Ahead In 2022

AS MANY OF YOU HAVE HEARD, Medina Electric Cooperative started the new year with a new CEO. As I write this, I have been on the job at Medina EC just a short time.

The first few days have been busy meeting the employees and board members, getting the lay of the land and getting settled in. Everyone at the cooperative and in the community has been so friendly and welcoming; it already feels like home. I am so happy to have been selected for the CEO role at this cooperative, and I am looking forward to serving the members and employees of Medina EC over the coming years.

Being the "new guy" in town, I wanted to give you a little information on my background. I was born and raised in Taft, Texas, and graduated from Texas State University. I most recently worked in Kansas as the assistant general manager at Wheatland Electric Cooperative for over 5 years. Prior to Kansas, I have worked my entire career in Texas with 15 years in the Texas Hill Country at Pedernales Electric Cooperative and 16 years at American Electric Power in the South Texas and Rio Grande Valley areas. With family living in the Central and South Texas area, my wife and I are also excited about being back closer to them (especially the grandkids).

The cooperative business model is something that is close to my heart. As the CEO of a not-for-profit cooperative, my mission is to be sure we are doing all we can to deliver reliable, safe and affordable electricity to each of you. Throughout my more than 20 years as a cooperative leader, I have always been guided by the Seven Cooperative Principles. I appreciate the value in being member owned and having governances that does not focus on profit but on the best interest of the members and the communities we serve.

One of our most important cooperative principles is Concern for Community, and I am looking forward to getting out in the communities and meeting many of you, our members, over the next few months. I will also be keeping my eye on any legislative issues that could affect you, our member-owners.

As we move forward in 2022, you can expect Medina EC will be working to Exceed Member Expectations in Everything We Do.

The nominating meetings are just around the corner in February, and I hope to get to meet some of you at those events. You can find the dates and locations for those on Page 19.

Great things are ahead of us in 2022!

Until Next Time,
Trey Grebe

Connect with Us!



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@MedinaECTalks



@ourmec

@Medina Electric
Cooperative, Inc.

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.

Members who attend their nominating meeting will be entered to win a \$50 bill credit or gift card! One will be awarded at each meeting.

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.

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



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

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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 while 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.

Do Not Tamper With Your Electric Meter



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

- >> Never break a meter seal.
- >> Never open a meter base.
- >> Never remove a meter or alter an entrance cable in any manner.

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





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EASY AND QUICK USE!



We Want Your Feedback

MEMBER SURVEY CALLS START IN FEBRUARY

Beginning the week of February 7, 350 members will be randomly selected to answer Medina Electric Cooperative survey questions by phone (calls will come from an 844 or 507 area code) or email.

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

The phone or email survey should take less than 5 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 2022. The feedback helps staff and management evaluate what practices and processes need improvement.

The surveys are carried out by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. If you do not get a phone call or email but would like to share feedback or an idea with the cooperative, email us at MyCoop@MedinaEC.org. ■

Last Chance:

\$25,000 in Scholarships

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

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

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

MedinaEC.org/Scholarships

Applications due 11:59 p.m.* March 4

**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.*

TOUCHSTONE ENERGY



PrePaid Electricity:

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PrePaid Electricity will change how you pay for electricity.

Like gas for your car, you fill up your “electric tank” and then pay again when you’re running low. No deposit required.

It’s just another option for members!

Learn More:
MedinaEC.org/PrePaid

Solar Installations Are Available

SOLAR ARRAYS AND INSTALLATIONS ARE AVAILABLE for Medina Electric Cooperative members interested in this service. Through Solar by Medina EC, members can purchase a 5-kilowatt, ground-mounted solar photovoltaic system with installation for \$15,000 plus tax. There can be additional installation charges, but those would be determined by cooperative staff during the site visit. Members will be informed of any additional costs before they make a purchasing decision. Full payment is due before materials can be ordered.

All construction and installation will be done by Medina EC staff or an approved contractor. Medina EC's licensed staff electrician will perform the final inspection and connect the system to the location and grid.



PRODUCTION

The amount of energy produced by a system varies based on the time of the year and hours of sunlight. A good rule of thumb when looking at solar PV systems is that for every kilowatt of capacity, the system should produce about 125 kilowatt-hours per month. Using those figures, a 5-kW system should produce about 625 kWh per month.

SELLING POWER BACK

The cooperative purchases electricity produced by distributed generation systems in excess of electricity consumed at an avoided cost rate. The avoided cost rate is the cost the cooperative would have incurred had it purchased the energy from a wholesale power supplier. It varies monthly and is based on the prior 12 months' total wholesale power purchase cost, excluding some fees.

You can view the current and historical avoided cost rate at MedinaEC.org/AvoidedCost.

The cooperative does not allow banking, or storing, of electricity credits. That means you cannot save excess power to offset use later in the same day or billing period; if it is not consumed, electricity is purchased at the avoided cost rate when it is generated.

Because of that, savings will vary depending on when you are producing and using power. A 5-kW system would equate to about \$62.50 in savings each month if you are producing the energy at the same time you are using it, but savings would be lower if you are putting power back on the grid and selling it at the avoided cost rate.

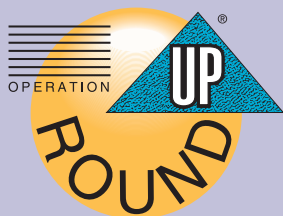
If you are considering a solar PV system, there are various resources that can help you determine if it is the right purchase for you. Do your homework, and research what you are told by salespeople. Even if you are looking at another vendor and don't intend to purchase a system from Medina EC, our staff is happy to answer questions to help you. Certain paperwork and requirements that apply regardless of who you purchase a system from can be found at MedinaEC.org/DG.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

ON SOLAR BY MEDINA EC: MEDINAEC.ORG/SOLAR

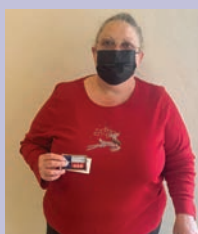
ON INSTALLING ANY DISTRIBUTED GENERATION SYSTEM: MEDINAEC.ORG/DG

1-866-MEC-ELEC (632-3532) | INFO@MEDINAEC.ORG



THANK YOU

to all members who donate change from their monthly bill to the Operation Round Up program. Here are a few people that you positively impacted over the holiday season!



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 February 4, May 6, August 5 and November 4. Applications can be found at MedinaEC.org/ORU and submitted online.

Learn more and sign your account up to make a difference at

MedinaEC.org/ORU

Stay Warm on the Coldest Days

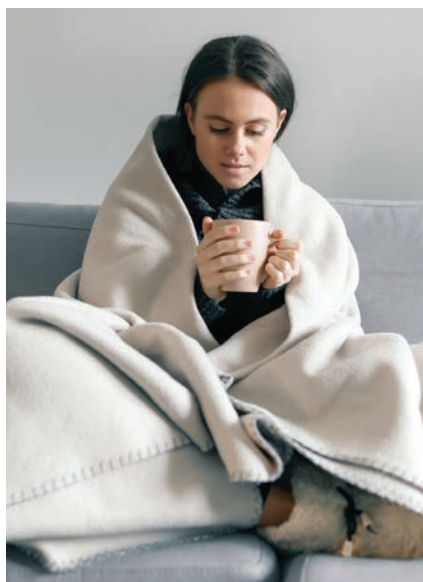
FEBRUARY CAN BE one of the coldest months of the year. But there are ways you can stay warm and save money on your electric bill.

Dress in layers. Wearing socks with your slippers and staying active are no-cost, no-tech ways to stay cozy indoors even if all you can see for miles is snow and ice.

Block drafts. If your windows are old or made from a single pane of glass, it's time to upgrade. Energy-efficient glass—and windows with double panes—will go a long way toward keeping cold air from blowing into your house. They also could reduce the amount you spend on winter energy bills.

Seal leaks. Also great draft-blockers, weatherstripping and caulk can plug holes around windows and doors and wherever the inside of an outdoor wall is penetrated by a cable or phone line.

Make the bed. An electric blanket—one with an automatic shut-off and the mark of a recognized testing laboratory like UL—can keep you cozy at bedtime even when you turn the whole-house thermostat down to save energy overnight. ■



VALERII HONCHARUK / ISTOCK.COM

Cooperation Powers You

WHEN YOUR POWER GOES OUT, your first response is probably to alert Medina Electric Cooperative. After all, Medina EC is the name that appears on your electric bill. We deliver power to your home, and when there's an issue with that power, it's typically our employees who are tasked with getting your lights back on.

But that's just a small part of the vast infrastructure required to light up your home. Your local co-op builds and maintains the lines and equipment that deliver power, but we don't generate electricity. That's the job of our generation and transmission cooperative.

G&T cooperatives are wholesale power suppliers owned and governed by electric distribution co-ops, like Medina EC. They produce electricity directly or buy it in bulk from other companies, then dispatch that electricity over high-voltage transmission lines to local distribution cooperatives.

Our primary G&T is South Texas Electric Cooperative, which generates its own electricity and purchases power from other providers. South Texas EC's energy mix includes natural gas, coal and renewables.

Just as you are a member of Medina EC, Medina EC is a member of South Texas EC. In all, STEC's nine member co-ops serve hundreds of thousands of consumer-members like you across 47 South Texas counties. STEC itself is also a member of San Miguel Electric Cooperative, another G&T that owns and operates a 391-megawatt lignite coal-fueled power plant.

By joining forces with other distribution cooperatives through the G&T, we reduce our individual costs. STEC's diverse energy mix combined with the long-term nature of our power purchase agreements help maintain reliability and price stability.

That said, we can't control every aspect of our power costs. Fuel supply fluctuations, extreme weather and unexpected events can cause the cost of power to surge.

When power costs increase or decrease, STEC passes those costs or savings along to its member co-ops. Medina EC covers those costs or savings through a component on your bill that adjusts to reflect changes in the price of electricity, called the PCRF, or power cost recovery factor. We collect only the amount needed to cover the power costs, and if the market cost of power drops, so does your bill.

Medina EC doesn't mark up the cost of power to turn a profit—nor does STEC. Rather, any revenue we receive in excess of our expenses is called margins. As member-owned electric cooperatives, we allocate those margins each year to you—the members—as capital credits and eventually return that money to you when it becomes financially feasible.

Capital credits are an integral part of Members' Economic Participation, one of the seven principles that guide all co-ops and allow us to deliver on the promise of safe, reliable and affordable electricity.

People—not profits—that's the co-op way. ■

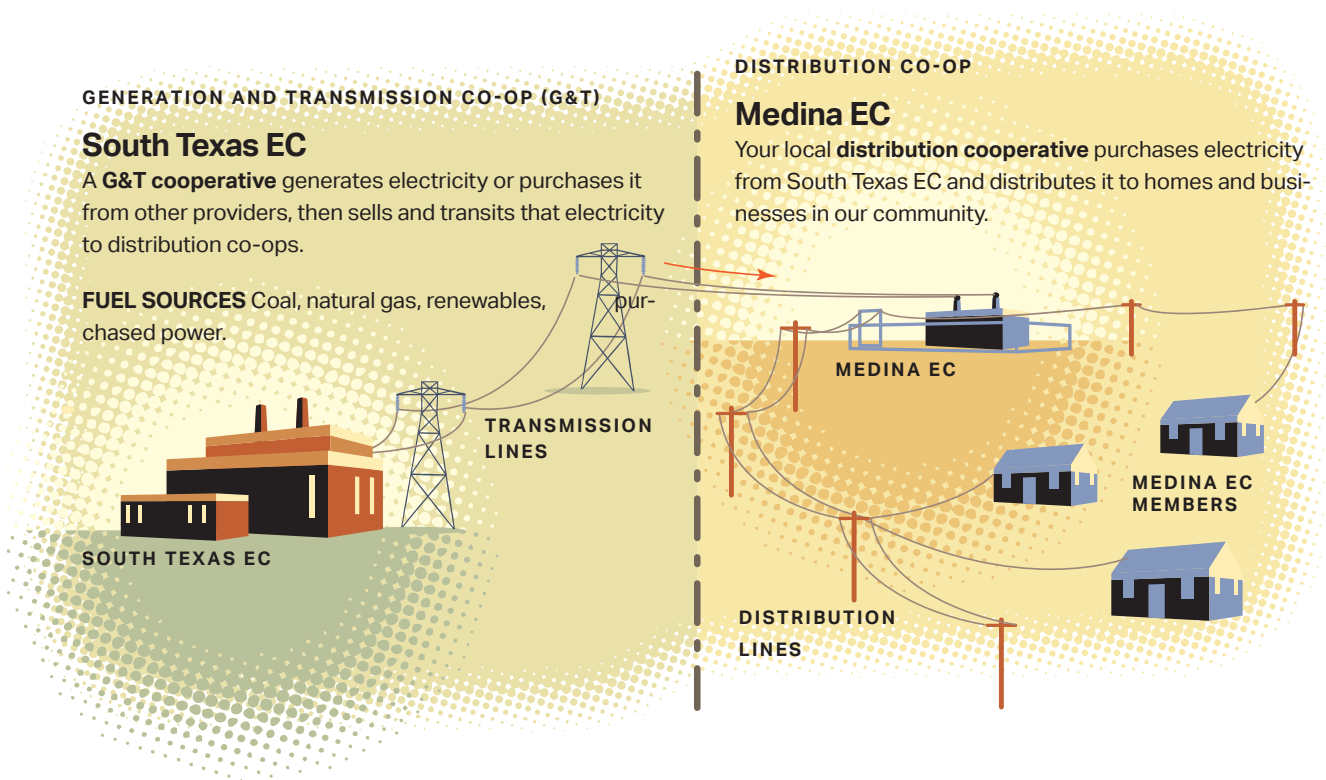


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Each year, millions of collectors and silver stackers around the world secure freshly struck American Eagle Silver Dollars. Minted in one Troy ounce of 99.9% pure U.S. silver, these legal-tender coins are hugely popular now, but may soon become even more popular! Keep reading to find out why.

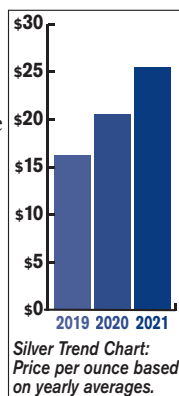
Higher Values + Slowed Production = DEMAND!

Over the last three years, average monthly values of silver bullion have increased nearly 57%! At the same time, the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in the U.S. Mint slowing production of freshly struck Silver Eagles and using branch mints to help increase supply, but only in limited quantities.

What This Means for You

Silver values are up, and silver is in high demand in the marketplace. In addition, many experts believe that the price of silver could continue to increase in the next 12 to 24 months. And while no one can accurately predict the future, there are two questions you should be asking yourself right now:

- 1) Do I own enough physical silver?
- 2) Which silver coins are right for me?



Guaranteed By the U.S. Government

These 2022 Silver Eagles have just been released by the U.S. Mint. They are guaranteed for weight and fineness by the U.S. government. They're the world's most liquid and secure one-ounce silver coins. They're also recognized around the world, making them easier to sell when the time is right if you make that decision in the future. Silver Eagles are the safest way to buy silver—period!

Don't Wait —

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Last year, when the new design first became available, demand was high, and many paid a premium for Silver Eagles. Call now to lock in our low prices, and your 2022 U.S. Silver Dollars will ship directly to your door. Don't pay more for the 99.9% fine silver you want for you and your family. The more you buy, the more you save, plus receive a FREE U.S. Mint Tube when you buy 20 or more.



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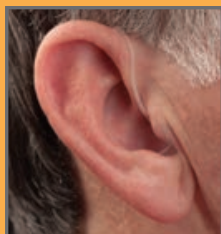
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— Sherri H., Granville, NY

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Queen Elizabeth II walks with Gov. Ann Richards.

TCP Listen to W.F. Strong read this story on our website.



Houston. She even took a ride on the San Antonio River on a beautifully decorated barge.

When Elizabeth arrived at Dallas' Love Field, she was greeted with strains of *The Yellow Rose of Texas*. The words to *God Save the Queen*, the British national anthem, were recited before the playing of the song so that the mostly Texan audience wouldn't sing *My Country 'Tis of Thee* to the familiar tune.

While in Dallas, she knighted Cecil Howard Green, an honorary title for the British-born founder of Texas Instruments and co-founder of the University of Texas campus there.

Prince Philip, the duke of Edinburgh, accompanied Elizabeth on the visit, part of their 13-day trip to the United States. Sitting next to him at the dinner commemorating the 150th anniversary of Dallas' founding was Louise Caldwell, president of the Dallas Historical Society. She remarked, "It was very hard to find anything that he didn't know more about than me, including Texas history."

The queen recounted the story in which a man tells his son: "Never ask a man where he's from. If he's from Texas, he'll tell you. Otherwise no use embarrassing him by asking."

At the Capitol, Gov. Ann Richards hosted the queen, and 8,000 people gathered to catch a glimpse. The queen declared, "No state commands such fierce pride and loyalty. Lesser mortals are pitied for their misfortune in not being born Texans." And she, the most traveled monarch in the world, knows what she's talking about. ■

Her Majesty's Visit

Queen Elizabeth II's 1991 trip to Texas was a momentous occasion

BY W.F. STRONG AND LUPITA STRONG

DURING HER 70-YEAR reign, Queen Elizabeth II has witnessed many of the world's pivotal events, and one honorable mention where she became the event is her 1991 two-day visit to the Lone Star State.

Elizabeth was the first British monarch to visit Texas, and Texans gave her an impressive tip of the Stetson. She loved it. She asked her U.S. chief of protocol, "Why didn't I come here sooner?"

Texas has long had a special relationship with Great Britain, one of the first nations to recognize the Republic of Texas. Texans even flirted with the notion of becoming part of the British Empire in the 1840s, but the U.S. had other plans.

Five years before the queen was here, her majesty's son, Charles, the Prince of Wales, came to Texas to help celebrate

the Texas sesquicentennial. He cut into the 45-ton world's largest birthday cake with a 3-foot sword. I mean, it was Texas; what else was he supposed to use?

At the Capitol, the prince was given a giant gavel. He laughed and said that it was the biggest he had ever had and "extremely appropriate coming from Texas." While touring San Jacinto later that week—it was February but warm—he remarked, "If it's this hot in the winter, I'd like to see what it's like in the summer."

Texas has had 14 kings, but it was a queen who was most celebrated by Texans. In May 1991, Elizabeth visited Austin, San Antonio, Dallas and Houston with an itinerary that included visits to the River Walk, the Alamo, NASA and Antioch Missionary Baptist Church in

Pasta

This most flexible staple anchors a variety of dishes and flavors

BY MEGAN MYERS, FOOD EDITOR

Pasta has been a staple in our home for as long as I can remember. And why not? It's economical, filling and can be made into so many different dishes. Whether you have hungry kids in the house or just need something hearty on a cold night, there are plenty of options. This Pesto-Baked Penne is perfect for transforming leftover chicken and pesto into something new. You can easily make this recipe vegetarian by swapping in mushrooms or roasted winter squash for the chicken.

Pesto-Baked Penne

16 ounces penne pasta

1 tablespoon olive oil

1 cup ricotta cheese

⅓ cup pesto

2 tablespoons heavy cream or half-and-half

¼ cup chopped oil-packed sun-dried tomatoes

2 cups diced chicken

½ cup shredded mozzarella

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees and coat a 9-by-13-inch casserole dish with cooking spray. Cook penne just to al dente, according to package directions. Reserve ¼ cup pasta water, drain and transfer to a large bowl. Toss pasta with olive oil and set aside.

2. In another bowl, stir together ricotta, pesto and cream until blended. Add reserved pasta water to thin, if desired. Pour sauce over pasta and stir well to coat. Stir in the tomatoes and chicken, then transfer to prepared dish. Sprinkle mozzarella on evenly.

3. Cover with foil and bake 30 minutes. Remove foil and bake another 5–10 minutes, until cheese on top is melted, if preferred.

SERVES 8

TCP Follow along with Megan Myers and her adventures in the kitchen at stetted.com, where she features a recipe for Roasted Butternut Squash Lasagna.





Gleason Family Goulash

SAMANTHA GLEASON
BANDERA EC

This recipe is a great option for a make-ahead meal, as the flavors are even better the next day. In a clever trick, Gleason adds baking soda to help reduce the acidity from the tomatoes.

- 2 cups uncooked pasta (rotini, elbow or bow tie)**
- 2 tablespoons olive oil**
- 2 teaspoons minced garlic**
- 1 pound ground beef or turkey**
- 1 pound yellow squash or zucchini, diced**
- ½ sweet onion, chopped**
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano**
- 1 teaspoon dried sweet basil**
- 1 teaspoon Italian seasoning**
- ¾ teaspoon garlic powder**
- ½ teaspoon salt**
- ½ teaspoon pepper**
- 2 cans (14.5 ounces each) fire-roasted diced tomatoes, undrained**
- ¾ cup ketchup**
- 1 tablespoon sun-dried tomato paste**
- 1 can (8 ounces) tomato sauce**
- ½ cup water or beef broth**
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce**
- ½ teaspoon baking soda**
- 3 tablespoons balsamic vinegar**

1. Cook pasta in lightly salted water according to package directions. Drain and set aside.
2. Meanwhile, in a large saucepan or deep-sided skillet over medium heat, add olive oil and garlic and cook 2 minutes, stirring to prevent burning. Add ground beef and cook 5 minutes, then add squash and onion. Continue to cook until beef is browned, stirring as needed.

\$500 WINNER

Seafood Manicotti Alfredo

ANECIA HERO
COSERV



This seafood manicotti feels fancy but is easy enough to put together on a weeknight. It's important to not overcook the pasta and handle it gently so it doesn't tear, so consider cooking a few extra shells just in case.

SERVES 4



PASTA

- 8 manicotti shells**
- 8 ounces cooked shrimp, tails removed, diced**
- 4 ounces cooked crabmeat, flaked**
- 1 egg, lightly beaten**
- 1 cup ricotta cheese**
- ¼ cup shredded Parmesan cheese**
- ¼ cup shredded mozzarella cheese**
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice**
- 1 teaspoon Creole seasoning**
- ¼ teaspoon garlic powder**

SAUCE

- ¼ cup (½ stick) butter**
- 1 cup heavy cream**
- 1¼ cups shredded Parmesan cheese**
- Salt and pepper, to taste**

1. **PASTA** Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Lightly coat a 2-quart baking dish with cooking spray and set aside. Cook pasta in lightly salted boiling water for 7 minutes. Drain and transfer to a lightly greased baking sheet to cool.
2. In a large bowl, combine shrimp, crab, egg, ricotta, Parmesan, mozzarella, lemon juice, Creole seasoning and garlic powder. Stir until uniformly combined, then transfer to a piping bag or large zip-close bag. Cut off the bag tip and carefully pipe filling into cooked shells; fill one end of the shell, then the other. Transfer shells to prepared baking dish.
3. **SAUCE** In a small saucepan over medium-low heat, melt butter. Add heavy cream and Parmesan and cook, whisking often, until cheese is melted and sauce is thickened and smooth. Season to taste with salt and pepper.
4. Pour half of the sauce over the pasta, reserving the remaining sauce for serving. Cover dish with foil and bake 20 minutes. Serve with additional warmed sauce on top.

TCP \$500 Recipe Contest

STONE FRUITS DUE FEBRUARY 10

How do you turn peaches, plums, cherries and apricots into the stars of your kitchen? Submit your recipes online by February 10 for a chance to win \$500.



CONTINUED >

RECIPES CONTINUED

3. Stir in oregano, basil, Italian seasoning, garlic powder, salt and pepper, then stir in diced tomatoes with their juices, ketchup and tomato paste.

4. In a small bowl, whisk together tomato sauce, water, Worcestershire sauce and baking soda. Slowly add the mixture to the pan, stirring until foaming stops. Cover and simmer 10 minutes, stirring occasionally.

5. Add cooked pasta and balsamic vinegar and stir well. Cover again and simmer another 10–15 minutes.

SERVES 8

Meaty Mexican Mac and Cheese

CHUCK BURGESS
HEART OF TEXAS EC

Perfect for those who love their mac and cheese fully loaded, Burgess' "3MC" gets its kick from a medley of favorite taco flavors. Make it as mild or as spicy as you like, with hot sauce and tortilla chips served on the side.



2 tablespoons vegetable or olive oil
1½ pounds lean ground beef
1 pound ground pork sausage
1 large onion, chopped
2 teaspoons salt
1 tablespoon chili powder
1 can (10 ounces) Ro-Tel tomatoes, mild (or to taste)
½ cup salsa, mild (or to taste)
1 can (4 ounces) diced green chiles, mild (or to taste)
1 pound uncooked macaroni pasta
1 pound Queso Blanco Velveeta
10 ounces queso fresco, crumbled

1 cup Mexican crema or heavy cream
Pepper jack cheese, shredded

1. In a large pot with a lid over medium-high heat, heat oil, then add meats and onion. Cover and cook until meat is browned, stirring occasionally. Add salt, chili powder, tomatoes, salsa and chiles. Stir well and cook 10–15 minutes, stirring occasionally.

2. Meanwhile, cook pasta to al dente according to package directions. Drain and return to original cooking pot; set aside.

3. In a microwave-safe bowl, add Velveeta, queso fresco and cream and microwave 3 minutes. Stir well and continue to cook in the microwave in 30-second increments, stirring after each time, until melted and smooth. (Or combine ingredients in a saucepan and melt over medium heat.)

4. Stir cheese sauce into macaroni to coat, then pour pasta into the meat mixture. Heat on low 5 minutes or until heated through, stirring to blend well. Serve with pepper jack cheese on top.

SERVES 8–10



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COURTESY CHET GARNER

A Glimpse of Buddy Holly

Lubbock museum honors native son's enduring musical legacy

BY CHET GARNER

I REMEMBER THE first time I heard Buddy Holly. My older brother bought the soundtrack from the film *Stand by Me*, and for weeks the song *Everyday* was stuck in my head. Soon I discovered *Peggy Sue*, *Rave On* and other classic hits. My feet have been tapping ever since.

It wasn't until decades later that I learned Holly was born and raised in Lubbock and that the world's best Buddy Holly museum sits in the heart of the Hub City.

The first thing I noticed as I turned off Crickets Avenue was a larger-than-life set of Holly's signature black-rimmed glasses. Holly once considered wearing contact lenses to help his rock star image, but contacts hurt his eyes and he needed glasses to see the crowd. That's a good thing, as the glasses became as much a part of his timeless look as the electric guitar in his hands. This is just one of many facts I learned inside Lubbock's Buddy Holly Center.

The museum is full of artifacts and a complete timeline of how a kid from Lubbock forged a new rock 'n' roll sound that changed the world. One display shows mementos from Holly's high school days, including his baseball mitt and Converse high-tops. Another display holds items from Buddy's rise to fame, including a tweed sports coat he wore on tour and a pair of super-hip suede shoes.

It's hard to believe that Holly's career lasted only a few years, cut short by a plane crash in Iowa. His black-rimmed glasses recovered from the wreckage now sit silently in a case at the end of the museum's timeline.

The center gives every generation a connection to the man and his music. As the title of one of his hit songs says, his legacy will *Not Fade Away*. ■

ABOVE Chet visits the Buddy Holly Center in Lubbock.

TCP Check out the Buddy Holly Center through Chet's eyes on our website. You'll want to see all his Texplorations on *The Daytripper* on PBS.



Know Before You Go

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

FEBRUARY

10

Lufkin My Funny Valentine, (936) 633-5454, angelinaarts.org

Port Aransas Chocolate Crawl, (361) 749-5919, portaransas.org

Round Rock [10-13] Texas Basket Weavers Association Annual Conference, (512) 925-3596, texasbasketweavers.com

11

Fredericksburg [11-12] Luckenbach Hug-In & Valentine Ball, (830) 997-3224, luckenbachtexas.com

Port Lavaca [11-12] South Texas Square and Round Dance Association February Frenzy, (361) 575-2665, stsda.org

Fredericksburg [11-13, 18-20, 25-27] Clue: The Musical, (830) 997-3588, fredericksburgtheater.org

12

Jefferson Queen Mab Ball, (903) 742-1405, mardigrasupriver.com

New Braunfels Love the Run You're With 5K, (830) 626-8786, athleteguild.com

Dallas [12, 19, 26] The Dinner Detective Murder Mystery Dinner Show, 1-866-496-0535, thedinnerdetective.com

15

Gladewater [15-March 15] Helen Lee Estate Daffodil Gardens, (903) 845-5180

17

West Tawakoni [17-19]
Catmasters Classic on Lake
Tawakoni, (325) 998-2191,
thecatmasters.com

18

Brenham The Funniest
Night of Your Life With
Todd Oliver, (979) 337-7240,
thebarnhillcenter.com

Brenham [18-19] Hearth
and Home Quilt Show,
 (979) 661-4761,
friendshipquiltguild.weebly.com

Kerrville [18-19] Hill Country
Quilt Guild Winter Quilt
Show, (281) 974-6220,
hillcountryquiltguild.com

Ozona [18-19] Ozona
Land Stewardship Blowout,
 (325) 392-3737

Fredericksburg [18-20]
Trade Days, (210) 846-4094,
fbgtradedays.com

Galveston [18-20, 25-27,
March 1] Mardi Gras!
Galveston, (409) 763-8676,
galveston.com

Victoria [18-20, 24-27]
Ring of Fire, (361) 570-8587,
theatre victoria.org

19

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

Mesquite Daddy-Daughter
Dance, (972) 204-4925,
visitmesquitetx.com

Palacios African American
Heritage Day, (310) 650-9352,
citybytheseamuseum.org

West Columbia Market
Day, (979) 345-4656,
visitvarnerhoggplantation.com

Nocona [19-26] Mardi
Gras Nocona Style,
 (940) 825-3526, nocona.org

MORE EVENTS >

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Pick of the Month

Texas Independence Day Celebration

Huntsville, March 2
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March 2 is Texas Independence Day and Sam Houston's birthday. Huntsville, where the Texas statesman is buried, and Sam Houston State University hold annual celebrations for the occasions, including a graveside ceremony.

25

La Grange [25-26] Best Little Quilt Show in Texas, (979) 242-3514, coloradovalleyqg.com

Lubbock [25-26] Friends of the Lubbock Library Last Friday BookStore, (806) 775-2852, lubbockfol.org

26

Granbury JazzFest, (650) 265-1193, granburyjazzfest.com

Henderson Mardi Gras Gumbo Cook-Off, (903) 392-0691, visithendersontx.com

Irving Irving Symphony Orchestra: Musical Treasures From the World, (972) 831-8818, irvingsymphony.org

27

Lufkin Croce Plays Croce, (936) 633-5454, angelinaarts.org

MARCH

FEBRUARY EVENTS CONTINUED

20

Fredericksburg Lone Star Brass, (830) 997-6523, fredericksburgmusicclub.com

23

Lufkin [23-24] Rob Schneider, (936) 633-5454, angelinaarts.org

24

Corsicana The Magic of Bill Blagg, (903) 874-7792, corsicanapalace.com

Kerrville Symphony of the Hills: Heart of the Strings, (830) 792-7469, symphonyofthehills.org

Port Aransas [24-27] Whooping Crane Festival, (361) 749-5919, portaransas.org/whooping-crane-festival

04

Fredericksburg Texas A&M Singing Cadets, (830) 997-3588, fredericksburgtheater.org

Lubbock [4-5] Lubbock Area Square and Round Dance Federation Conclave Dance, (806) 786-8589, squaredancelubbocktx.com

05

Kerrville Looking Back with John Moore, (830) 896-8976, lookingbackjm22@gmail.com

06

Lufkin Bella Gaia, (936) 633-5454, angelinaarts.org

Orange Fiddler on the Roof, (409) 886-5535, lutch.org

Public Art

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—Charles Schulz, creator of the *Peanuts* comic strip

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1 STEPHANIE EHLERT
GREENBELT EC
"I found this beauty driving
through Brady."

2 GLENN TIMMONS
SOUTH PLAINS EC
Parking meter art east of
Lubbock.

3 DEBRA CZERNY
BLUEBONNET EC
Tom Besson painted this
mural in downtown Elgin.

4 CARMEN GALLO
PEDERNALES EC
A recycled bicycle at Yellow
Bike Project in Austin.



Upcoming Contests

DUE FEB 10 Industrial
DUE MAR 10 Morning Glory
DUE APR 10 Motorsports



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

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



The Muse in Museum

Artistic inspiration abounds in the comfort of the Kimbell Café

BY BABS RODRIGUEZ
ILLUSTRATION BY LAURA LIEDO

WHEN I TRAVEL, I seek out museums. As a writer always in search of a quiet place where my laptop is welcome, museum cafés help me meet deadlines and recharge in ways coffeehouse clatter never could.

The atmosphere of a good museum café pulls me out of time and settles me in a world—my chair, stool or booth—literally surrounded by artistic inspiration. Masterpieces a glance away, these settling-in spots are elevated musing favorites for any number of reasons: They are sure to be more subdued than the average coffee shop; the people-watching is stellar; and there's a hum in the atmosphere that inspires some of my best thinking.

Why it took me decades of courting the creativity muse in distant cafés only to discover I could have coffee with her

in my hometown of Fort Worth, I do not know. I do remember the moment it occurred to me that I had too long overlooked such a prime location for contemplation. Just before Christmas one year, I stopped at the Kimbell Art Museum for a gift shop run. I plodded up the broad limestone steps to the gallery level, overwhelmed by obligations, my head full of deadlines.

Drawn into the light that fills Louis I. Kahn's vaulted masterpiece, I headed straight for the Kimbell Café. From my seat I could see Aristide Maillol's *L'Air*, a bronze female figure, floating in a courtyard. European masterworks beckoned from across the corridor. Immediately I was transported. That's the other bonus that comes from stopping into a hometown museum: There is a sense of excitement that I associate with travel. Without planes or trains, I can step out of the workaday world and feel I am on a journey—even when I'm less than a mile from home.

Seated beneath fragments of a sixth-century mosaic, cupping my warm coffee mug, I realized I was steps away from Michelangelo's first known painting. And just like that, I lay my burdens down.

Now I return regularly to the Kimbell's café for creative therapy. I can energize myself in 10 minutes or 20, view one painting or a dozen, before or after my coffee. Or I can simply sit quietly. No entrance fee and no passport required.

And while the soup-and-sandwich lunch options are dependably tasty, a post-pandemic offering of an afternoon tea service takes me to happy memories served up abroad. It also offers up my favorite sort of nibbling—scones with housemade jam, finger sandwiches, cookies—and because it's served as “tea for two,” I'm sometimes inspired to share with a friend.

That is, of course, when I'm not meeting my muse. ■



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