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Monarch Matriarch

One woman's quest to protect
the butterfly's future



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October 2022



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How one woman is earnestly spreading the word about monarch migrations through Texas.

By *Laura Tolley*
Photos by *Julia Robinson*

Reading Between the Lines

Decades after new tech started taking over, meter readers are still a valued part of co-op connections.

By *Chris Burrows*
Illustration by *Michael Koelsch*

ON THE COVER
Monika Maeckle in her pollinator-friendly backyard in San Antonio.
Photo by *Julia Robinson*

ABOVE
Meter readers have ready friends in Co-op Country. Ready enemies, too.
Illustration by *Michael Koelsch*

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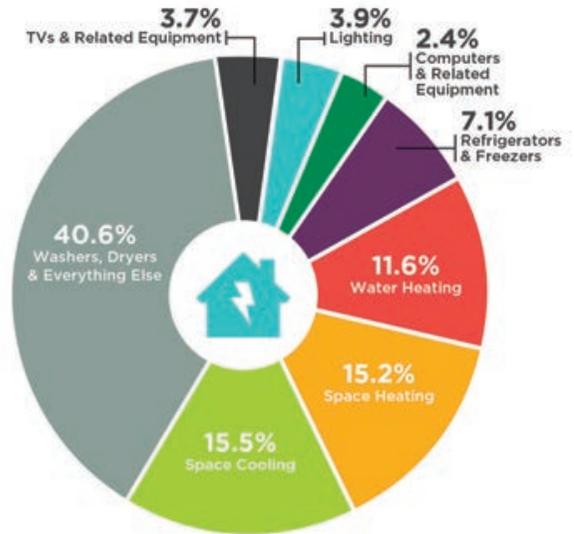
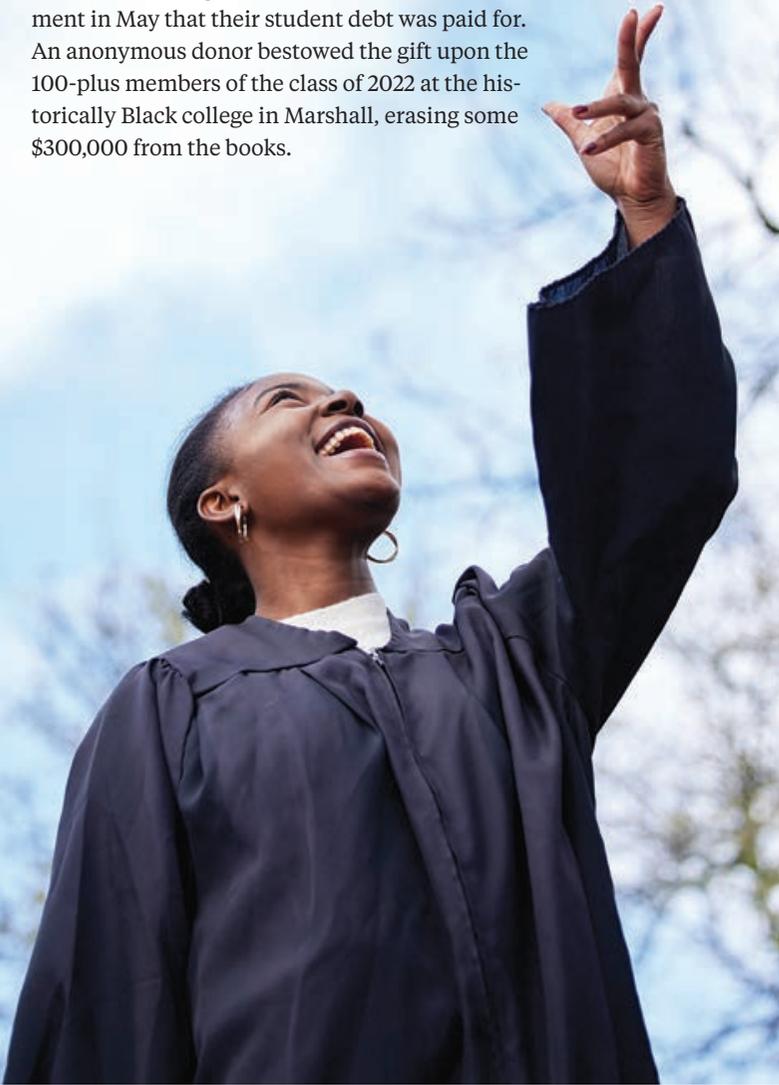
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By *Caytlyn Phillips*

Extra Credit

WILEY COLLEGE graduates learned at commencement in May that their student debt was paid for. An anonymous donor bestowed the gift upon the 100-plus members of the class of 2022 at the historically Black college in Marshall, erasing some \$300,000 from the books.



How We Use Electricity

This National Co-op Month, your electric cooperative and trusted energy adviser wants to show you where your money goes—and where you might focus on cutting back.

Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration

FINISH THIS SENTENCE

THE BEST CHRISTMAS GIFT I EVER GAVE WAS ...

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

Here are some of the responses to our August prompt: **The song that takes me back to high school is ...**

1999 by Prince. I graduated high school in 1999, and we played the song all year.

JENNIFER MAYFIELD OKERE
VIA FACEBOOK

Before the Next Teardrop Falls by Freddy Fender.

PEGGY DARSEY
VIA FACEBOOK

Bohemian Rhapsody by Queen. Every time I hear the song, I have to sing along and let my mind wander back to those glorious high school days.

JACINDA MOORE
TRI-COUNTY EC
GRANBURY

Don't Bring Me Down by Electric Light Orchestra. It was playing every day at lunch on our cafeteria jukebox.

LESLIE CHATHAM JAMES
WISE EC
PARADISE

To see more responses, read Currents online.

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Gourd as Gold

When Sherry Nelson attended a Texas Gourd Society show in 2017, she was stunned by the gourds she saw. "It's just amazing what people can do with them," she said. "But I thought I could never do that."

She was hooked. The Kerrville native and Central Texas Electric Cooperative member joined TGS and took classes. After a *Texas Co-op Power* illustration by David Danz in March 2021 caught her eye, she reached out to TCP for permission before spending three weeks burning it into a gourd for a Kerr Arts and Cultural Center contest in May.

It won—beating out 151 other gourds. "I'm going to enjoy this win for a while," she said.



Rangers Flashback

HALL OF FAME outfielder Ted Williams was a phenomenal baseball player, but he met little success as a manager.

His four-year managerial career started with the Washington Senators in 1969 and ended 50 years ago this month, in 1972, when the Senators relocated to Arlington and became the Texas Rangers.

Williams went out with a whimper, losing the season finale 4-0 on October 4 and finishing with a 273-364 record as manager.

Did You Know?

That Rangers team played in Arlington Stadium, a converted minor-league ballpark originally called Turnpike Stadium. Whatever the name, the summer heat plagued players and fans alike. One writer called the outfield stands "the world's largest open-air roaster."



WYATT MCSPADDEN

Why'd the Chicken Cross the Pit?

“I have tried barbecued chicken at Kreuz Market and around the state. Most (including Kreuz) do a great job, but the best is at Mumphord’s Place BBQ in Victoria.”

JOHN GEORGE
VICTORIA EC
VICTORIA

Raving and Squawking

If you haven't tried the Kreuz Market barbecued chicken, you need to [*Why'd the Chicken Cross the Pit?*, July 2022]. It's great.

Tom Faulkner
Pedernales EC
Leander

We were motivated to visit Kreuz after reading your glowing endorsement. What a disappointment. The chicken did not taste any better than a \$5 deli chicken from Sam's Club.

Gary and Gaye Kriegel
Pedernales EC
Williamson County

Walked a few yards onto it once and crawled back [*Colorado's Texas Bridge*, July 2022].

MARTHA BEIMER
VIA FACEBOOK

The Coach's Coach

The story about Tom Landry and his senior football season at Mission High School does not identify who his coach was [*The Most Glorious Autumn*, August 2022]. I believe it was my uncle, Robert Martin, as he was a lifelong friend of Landry and took Landry's father to many Cowboys games.

Ralph E. Martin Jr.
Medina EC
New Braunfels

EDITOR'S NOTE Landry's coach at Mission was indeed Robert L. "Bob" Martin.

The Cotton Patch

My family farmed west of Krum [*Prized Fibers*, July 2022]. Many days I was in the cotton patch hoeing weeds. I "missed" out on the picking as Dad hired a crew of pickers.

Ken Fairman
Wise EC
Krum



FOCUS ON SPORT | GETTY IMAGES

TCP WRITE TO US
letters@TexasCoopPower.com

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1122 Colorado St., 24th Floor
Austin, TX 78701

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

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A woman wearing a wide-brimmed straw hat, glasses, a white long-sleeved shirt, and blue patterned shorts stands in a natural, wooded area. A brown and black dog is sitting on the ground next to her. The background features a large, gnarled tree on the left and a rocky hillside on the right. The overall scene is bright and natural.

Funnel Vision

How one woman is earnestly spreading the word about monarch migrations through Texas



Monika Maeckle found her passion in a dry streambed of the San Saba River.

It was October 2004 when she and her husband drove from their ranch, a Hill Country getaway on the Llano River, over to a friend's place near tiny Hext for a "tagging event." She didn't know what that was really, but Maeckle likes an adventure and loves the outdoors.

At sunset, monarch butterflies started cascading from the sky. The group caught them in long nets, carefully plucking the bright orange marvels out to tag their wings with coded stickers. They tagged a couple hundred monarchs that evening, then set them free. Maeckle was completely smitten.

"It was a passion play from the beginning," says Maeckle, a member of Pedernales Electric Cooperative. "It was this magical thing. I was entranced."

The San Antonio-based communications and marketing pro spent the following months reading and researching everything she could find about the monarchs' annual migration to Mexico. A year later, on a Saturday in October, Maeckle climbed into her kayak and ventured out on the clear-running Llano near Mason. She was equipped with tags, each about as big around as a pencil eraser.

"I figured they had to be at our place, too, because everything they needed was here: water, tall trees, nectar up against a limestone escarpment that shielded them from wind and held the heat during the cool nights," she says.

She guided the kayak to a spot near three pecan trees, and as she stepped out, there they were.

"I started tagging and ripped through a sheet of 25 tags in about 15 minutes, went back and got another sheet and tagged 25 more," she says. "They weren't dropping from the sky that day; they were already fluttering around, finding a spot to spend the night."

What captured Maeckle's heart, and a lot of her time, is the splendid monarch butterfly and its remarkable migration—up to 3,000 miles—from the northeastern United

States and southeastern Canada to the mountain forests of central Mexico, where they hibernate during the winter. The Central and South Texas region, called the Texas funnel, is part of the path south for all monarchs east of the Rocky Mountains.

Adult monarchs are easily identifiable, with two pairs of deep orange wings that have black veins and white spots along the edges. On average they weigh about as much as half of a dollar bill, with a wingspan of about 4 inches. Tagging doesn't harm the delicate creatures.

Maeckle is part of a groundswell of advocates who are tagging and tracking the monarchs' migration as well as planting and sustaining habitat that will help attract and protect them and other important pollinators, including bees.

But she's an overachiever when it comes to monarchs. The citizen scientist launched an educational website called the Texas Butterfly Ranch, writes and gives talks about monarchs, and is the founding director of the Monarch Butterfly and Pollinator Festival, the seventh of which will be held October 8 at San Antonio's Brackenridge Park.

The free one-day festival offers children and adults opportunities to learn about the monarch migration and the importance of other wildlife pollinators to our own food sources. The festival also features arts and crafts activities and other entertainment, as well as monarch butterfly tagging demonstrations. An estimated 2,500 people attended last year's festival, and more than 550 butterflies were tagged.

Monarchs Matter

The monarch population has been in decline in recent years, but there is hope for this fall's migration despite the continuing drought and its detrimental effect on native habitat.

The World Wildlife Fund announced in May that a survey found that the number of monarch butterflies in Mexico's forests last winter actually increased 35% from the previous year. The rise "marks a sign of recovery—albeit a fragile one—and gives some reason for hope against a backdrop of several decades of decline for the iconic species," the organization said in a release.

"The increase in monarch butterflies is good news and indicates that we should continue working to maintain and reinforce conservation measures by Mexico, the United States and Canada," says Jorge Rickards, general manager of WWF's Mexico office. "Monarchs are important pollinators, and their migratory journey helps promote greater diversity of flowering plants, which benefits other species

OPPOSITE Monika Maeckle launched the website Texas Butterfly Ranch and is the founding director of the Monarch Butterfly and Pollinator Festival in San Antonio. ABOVE A monarch feeds on a blue mistflower.



in natural ecosystems and contributes to the production of food for human consumption.”

Butterflies are pretty, fanciful things that don’t bite or sting, and that makes them interesting to humans, prompting a willingness to help them, which can help all pollinators, says Judit Green, urban wildlife biologist for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. She calls the monarch an “ambassador for all pollinators.”

“Our beautiful rural Texas landscapes are in existence because pollinators helped pollinate it, producing the various native plants from wildflowers, bunchgrasses, vines, shrubs, small trees to canopy trees,” Green says. “These plants make up habitat for a host of wildlife. Therefore all wildlife benefit from actions we take to support our pollinators.”

These insects also support crop production, which the scientific world is quick to remind not to take for granted. “They say, ‘Thank a pollinator with every third bite you take,’ since about 33% of the food we eat is pollinated by pollinators,” Green says.

How To Help

There are simple steps Texans can take to attract monarchs and other pollinators: Grow and cultivate native plants, and don’t use pesticides, Green says. In addition, you can plant native milkweed, the host plant for monarch caterpillars, which feed on the leaves. Migrating monarchs lay their eggs on these plants.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP Monika Maeckle paddles the Llano River. Yellow cestrum planted beside the San Antonio River Walk. Queen butterflies fuel up on frostweed at the Llano River. Bees collect pollen from a coneflower plant. ABOVE A child holds a monarch at the San Antonio festival.

FESTIVAL: COURTESY DRAKE WHITE. BUTTERFLIES: COURTESY MONIKA MAECKLE



Maeckle is part of a groundswell of advocates who are tagging and tracking the monarchs' migration as well as planting and sustaining habitat that will help attract and protect them and other important pollinators, including bees.

There are larger endeavors underway as well. The city of San Antonio's advocacy for monarchs dates back to 2015, when then-Mayor Ivy Taylor signed the National Wildlife Federation's Mayors' Monarch Pledge, a commitment to creating better habitats for pollinators and educating the public about them. Today 42 Texas mayors have active pledges through NWF, including those from small towns like Cuero, Liberty and Nolanville.

NWF named San Antonio the first Monarch Champion City, and current Mayor Ron Nirenberg has continued those efforts. The city's pledge consisted of 24 specific actions, including holding or supporting a butterfly festival to raise awareness about pollinators. Not surprisingly, Maeckle took on that challenge.

"When I say I'm going to do something, I do it," says Maeckle, who, with her husband, Robert Rivard, founded a nonprofit digital news website now called the San Antonio Report.

Green says the Monarch Butterfly and Pollinator Festival has been important to raising awareness about the problems pollinators face and how the public can help.

"Getting the public to support our pollinators, like the monarch, is crucial," Green says.

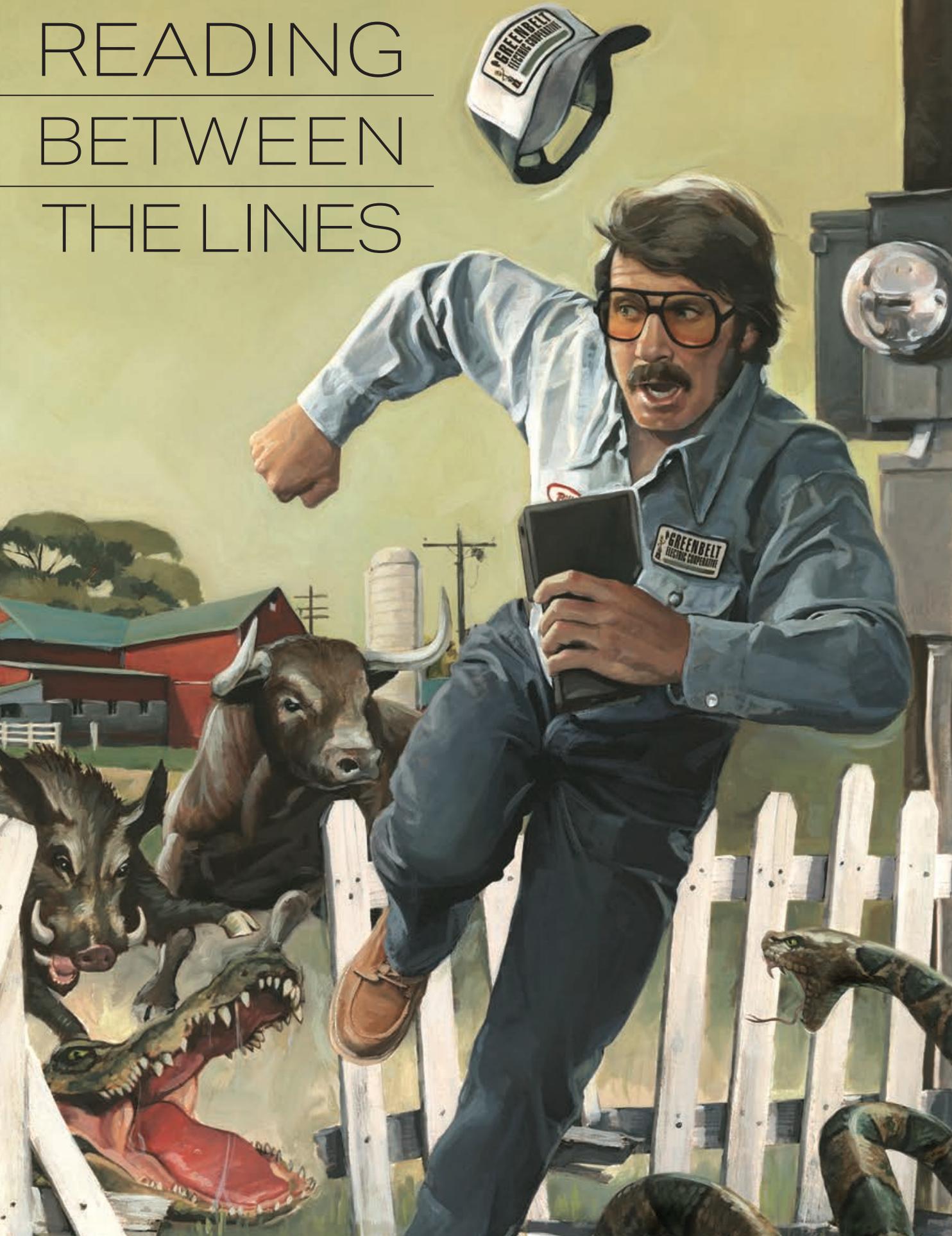
Cheri Tondre, an instructional specialist for San Antonio Independent School District, participated in a 2017 festival workshop that led to the creation of a pollinator garden at Collins Garden Elementary. She says the festival offers children the chance to explore the natural world.

"Opportunities to engage with science, nature and community are important to engage students in the type of learning we need," Tondre says. "They need to know they are part of the problem and solution."

Maeckle sees the monarch as an access point for viewing a number of complex issues—migration, climate change, sustainability. And she still takes joy in recalling how that evening in Hext ignited a lasting passion.

"They had always been there; I just hadn't realized," Maeckle says. "And it underscores the connectedness of us all." ■

READING
BETWEEN
THE LINES



Decades after new tech started taking over,

METER READERS are still a valued part of co-op connections

BY CHRIS BURROWS • ILLUSTRATION BY MICHAEL KOELSCH

Connie Turner can tell you all about the time she cracked three ribs battling a gate over a cattle guard, slipping on ice in the process. Or about the time an electric meter exploded in her hands, knocking her unconscious. Or the time she injured her foot jumping from a fence.

“And since then, I’ve had shoulder surgery,” she says. “I really think that that injury came from the repetition of pushing on gates.”

But in the last week of her 40-year career at Coleman County Electric Cooperative, Turner can also tell you that she misses working as a country meter reader, despite the toll it took on her body. Seventeen years into that career, she was able to move into an office role, but her injuries weren’t the only factor in that move.

Another was the folks on her route. They were like family to her—and aging.

“I could hardly stand to go out there, and they wouldn’t be there anymore,” she says. “A lot of them kind of adopted me. I used to load furniture; I’d get the lawn mower started for them and help them pick their garden. I just did everything that you wouldn’t really think that a meter reader would be out there doing.”

Turner was part of a group like no other—one accustomed to outsmarting dogs, boars, snakes, and the odd alligator or goose; to knowing the roads, power grid and land better than anyone; and to dealing with the occasional unhappy member, flat tires and whatever else came their way as they scoured the countryside, read dials and displays, and relayed kilowatt-hour usage to co-op accounting departments for accurate billing.

But ever since co-ops started installing automated meter reading systems in the 1990s, these neighborly, workaday men and women seemed doomed to be replaced by the very devices they regularly visited.

However, many still haven’t been. Sure, there aren’t as many meter readers working today, but Texas co-ops still employ dozens. And now many of them are armed with more technical skills than ever.

A GOOD READ

John Gross is one of them. For 19 years he’s been reading meters on his rural routes in Parker County, west of Fort Worth, for Tri-County Electric Cooperative.

“People didn’t know that we still walked around,” he says.

As others in his line of work do, he has plenty of stories. Like the time he tore his ACL climbing a fence to get to a meter—“I actually read about three more meters until I said I can’t keep doing this because I was hopping on the one good leg,” he says—or the time a bull chased him around a meter pole (he still got the reading).

“You don’t know what you’re going to walk into: coyotes, cows, deer, bulls,” he says. “A lot of times you have to run. Otherwise you’re going to have to tangle with some of the dogs.”

Gross says he drives hundreds of miles daily and gets plenty of walking in, but since TCEC started to deploy smart meters across its system in 2019, he’s part of a shrinking team.

Gross, co-worker Bobby Collins and a handful of others at TCEC no longer read all the co-op’s 125,000 meters. Collins has read meters for 23 years in an upscale area closer to Fort Worth, where he’s met celebrities Terry Bradshaw, Sandra Bullock and Josh Hamilton in the course of his work, but it’s the everyday folks who he especially appreciates.

“They’ll start a story, and you’ll end up leaving; and then next month, they’ll pick up right where they left off,” Collins says.

THE FUTURE IS HERE

Economist David Autor famously pointed out that the invention of the ATM in the 1970s seemed sure to spell the end for bank tellers. But a funny thing happened: As ATMs quadrupled between 1995 and 2010, the number of tellers actually increased over that period.

“The last 200 years, we’ve had an incredible amount of automation,” Autor said in a 2017 interview with CBS News. “We have tractors that do the work that horses and people used to do on farms. We don’t do bookkeeping with books. But this has not, in net, reduced the amount of employment.”

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Since the 1990s, when electric utilities began to implement AMR systems, jobs for electric meter readers in the U.S. fell by more than half, from a peak of 55,000 in 1996 to 24,000 in 2021, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Today, nearly all co-ops in Texas have deployed some form of advanced metering infrastructure—a further revolution in metering technology that unleashed myriad benefits for co-ops and their members. But like any complex system, even AMI needs humans to watch over it and fix it when it falters.

When that happens, a worker still has to drive out, find the meter, get a reading and make a fix.

“We generally troubleshoot,” says Kevin Gray, one of two meter readers at Fort Belknap Electric Cooperative. “If we have a meter not sending a reading in, you go out to see: Is the transformer fuse blown? Is the AMR itself dead and not sending a reading? We check transformer connections, look for trees burning on the line.”

As meters have become more complex, so too have the jobs of meter readers like Gray, who has developed new skills to troubleshoot issues in the field.

“I can remember back when the technology began to get a good foothold in the market, obviously the meter readers got very nervous,” says Mike Cleveland, manager of meter products at Texas Electric Cooperatives, the statewide association for co-ops. He says a lot of co-op leaders initially used that as an excuse to delay upgrading to the new meters.

“It took a while for people to understand the benefits and understand that you can take meter readers and turn them into more advanced technicians for running the AMR system,” Cleveland says. “You’re implementing something that has to be babysat all the time. It’s a complex piece of technology that doesn’t just run on autopilot in the background. Somebody has to monitor and manage it.”

MORE THAN METERS

In the 1970s and '80s, many electric cooperatives started meter reading departments, some citing frustrations with the self-reporting postcards that most utilities of the era relied on.

At Southwest Texas Electric Cooperative, that meant closing the office for about a week every month. Each of the co-op’s employees would grab a pickup, take a meter route and gather readings from rural West Texas. General Manager Buff Whitten did his part when he started at the co-op in 1977.

“You don’t get to see the system like we once did,” he says. “You’re looking at poles, you’re looking at crossarms, you’re able to see the system and recognize problems that you take back, keep track of and correct. And there’s always an opportunity, when you’re out there, to meet the members.”

AMI won’t spot a broken crossarm or start a lawn mower for a member, but these systems of smart meters, communications networks and data management systems can do so much more. The granular data they capture increases

Binoculars for reading meters from the road.

Extra meters and meter seals for making repairs in the field.

Nontoxic dog repellent.

Sunglasses, hat and sunscreen.

Fiberglass hot stick for adjusting lines and transformers.

Four-wheel-drive pickup.

Keys for Co-op Country gates.

Car jack, for fixing flats.

Fence stretcher for slinking through barbed wire.

reliability by enabling advanced outage management systems and troubleshooting and provides cost savings for co-ops and their members.

“The old mechanical meter, as good as it was, it was pretty dumb,” Cleveland says. “All it could sit there and do was just count revolutions, but these new meters, they just have so much horsepower under the hood. They’re very powerful instruments.”

Meter readers Mario Manriquez and Donald Priesmeyer keep Wharton County Electric Cooperative’s powerful instruments humming.

“My main thing right now is helping with the AMI system,” says Manriquez from the side of a South Texas road where he and Priesmeyer are installing a communications relay for WCEC’s AMI system.

Over 23 years at WCEC, Manriquez’s work has changed a lot, but the dangers of the job haven’t. “I almost stepped on a snake once,” he says. “They say good snake, bad snake. I say all bad snakes.”

But Scott Thomas, who was the last full-time meter reader at PenTex Energy in North Texas, will tell you that it’s still the folks at the end of the line who make his job so gratifying.

“The best part is going out into the community and visiting with the customers because every one of them liked to talk and visit,” he says, in between greeting folks by name at the co-op’s annual meeting in April. “You had a schedule, and you tried to stay on schedule, but you had to visit.” ■

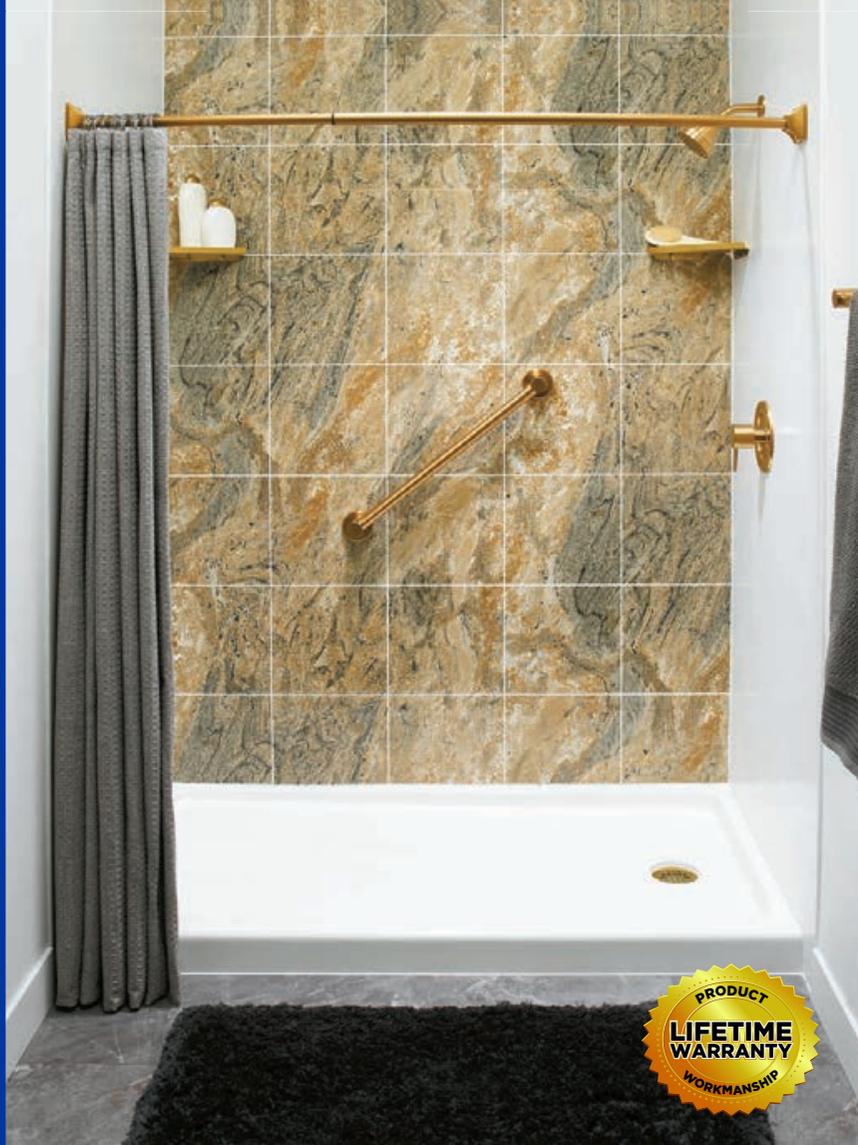


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 Circulation 590,500
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Texas Co-op Power

Contact Elaine Sproull at (512) 486-6251 or advertising@TexasCoopPower.com

LONE STAR STATE PRIDE



**6.5 Carat Created
Star Sapphire**

**Rich Sterling Silver
Plating with
18K Gold-plated Accents**

**Powerful Texas Images in
Sculpted Relief on Either Side**



“THE LONE STAR” TEXAS TRIBUTE RING

“The Lone Star” Texas Tribute Ring is crafted in a custom design that speaks to the spirit of Texas in every aspect of its bold look. The centerpiece is a 6.5 carat deep blue created star sapphire—a magnificent symbol of the Texas Lone Star that will always shine bright as a reminder of the state’s fight for independence. On either side of the ring, which is plated in sterling silver, are more custom details: the outline of the state on one side, and the state flag with its Lone Star and stripes representing courage, liberty and loyalty on the other side. Both stand out in raised relief against a tooled leather-look pattern, and both are plated in 18K gold along with the rope borders around the Texas images and the center stone. As a final tribute, the ring is engraved inside the band with *“Texas Pride.”*

A Remarkable Value...With Satisfaction Guaranteed

An exceptional value at \$149.99*, the ring is payable in 5 installments of just \$30.00 each and is backed by our 120-day guarantee. Each ring is made to order in mens’ whole and half sizes from 8 to 15 and arrives in a custom case along with a Certificate of Authenticity. To reserve yours, send no money now; just mail the Priority Reservation. This custom designed ring is exclusive to The Bradford Exchange. You won’t find it anywhere else, and this is a limited time offer. So don’t delay... order your ring today!

Order online at
bradfordexchange.com/29311

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RESERVATION**

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Bradford Exchange**
• Since 1973 •

**SEND NO
MONEY NOW**

P.O. Box 806, Morton Grove, IL 60053-0806

YES. Please reserve *“The Lone Star” Texas Tribute Ring* for me as described in this announcement. **Ring Size** _____ (if known)

Limited-time Offer... Please Respond Promptly

Signature _____

Mrs. Mr. Ms. _____

Name (Please Print Clearly)

Address _____

City _____

State _____

Zip _____

E-mail (optional) _____

*Plus a total of \$16.00 shipping and service, plus sales tax (see bradfordexchange.com). All sales are subject to product availability and order acceptance.

01-29311-001-E54801



CEO

HERBERT "TREY"
GREBE III

It's a Matter of (Co-op) Principles

ALL COOPERATIVES, INCLUDING Medina Electric Cooperative, adhere to the same set of seven principles that reflect our core values of honesty, transparency, equity, inclusiveness and service.

October is National Co-op Month, so this is the perfect time to reflect on these principles that have stood the test of time and provide a framework for the future.

Voluntary and Open Membership

In 1938, a group of neighbors banded together for the benefit of the whole community, and the newly established electric lines helped power homes and provide economic opportunity in our communities. For almost 84 years, we have continued to power our members' lives and empower our communities. Membership is open to everyone in our service territory.

Democratic Member Control

Our co-op is well-suited to meet the needs of our members because we are locally governed. Each member gets a voice and a vote in how the co-op is run, and each voice and vote are equal. Our board members live locally on co-op lines, and they have been elected by neighbors just like you.

Members' Economic Participation

As a utility, our mission is to provide safe, reliable and affordable energy to our members. Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of Medina EC. At least part of that capital remains the common property of the cooperative. Members allocate surpluses for co-op programs, initiatives, capital investments and supporting other activities.

Autonomy and Independence

Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members. If we enter into agreements

with other organizations, including governments, or raise capital from external sources, we do so on terms that ensure democratic control by our members and maintain cooperative autonomy.

Education, Training and Information

Medina EC values education for our employees, our members and the community. We invest in ongoing training for our team to ensure they have the skills needed to best perform their job. We also participate in communitywide events to promote the cooperative story and electrical safety and share current utility information.

Cooperation Among Cooperatives

From offering aid to other cooperatives after storms and tragic events to supporting cooperatives lighting the way in developing countries, co-ops are stronger because we work together locally, regionally, nationally and even internationally with other co-ops.

Concern for Community

As a co-op, we are here to power our members but are also motivated by service to the community rather than profits. We work for the sustainable development of the communities we live in and serve.

Because we are guided by the Seven Cooperative Principles, it's not just about dollars—it's about opportunity for all and being fair when engaging with our members. We're proud to serve you as a co-op, and hope that you may better understand the cooperative difference.

Until next time,
Trey Grebe



Summer 2023 Plans:

- ✓ Have unforgettable experiences
- ✓ See national treasures
- ✓ Make new friends
- ✓ Go on the trip of a lifetime

Would your teen enjoy a FREE trip to Austin and Washington, D.C., in June 2023? The Government-in-Action Youth Tour may be for them. Apply Now!

Deadline is January 6.

Application and eligibility information can be found at MedinaEC.org/YouthTour.

BONUS: Winners will receive a \$500 college scholarship!

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 Surlles, (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 Highway 173 N., Hondo 78861

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

Uvalde 2604 Highway 90 E., Uvalde 78801

Corporate Office 2308 18th St., Hondo 78861

VISIT US ONLINE

MedinaEC.org



This institution is an equal-opportunity provider and employer.

Para mas 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.



AN Appreciation FOR Service

Alexandra Stallworth, Flordo Office

CELEBRATING OUR SERVICE REPRESENTATIVES

Medina EC's member service representatives play a critical role on our team. They are eager to serve our members with a smile!

Medina EC would like to recognize and show appreciation for the significant work that our member services team provides.

National Customer Service Appreciation Week is October 3-7, 2022.



RAWPIXEL.COM | FREEPIK.COM

Halloween Safety by the Letter

EVERYONE LOVES a good scare on Halloween but not when it comes to child safety. These tips will help make the festivities fun and safe.

Swords and costume accessories should be short, soft and flexible.

Avoid trick-or-treating alone. Walk in groups or with a trusted adult.

Fasten reflective tape to costumes or carry glowsticks to be easily seen.

Examine treats before eating them. Limit the amount of treats you eat.

Hold a flashlight while trick-or-treating to help you see and others see you.

Always test makeup first and remove it promptly after coming home.

Look both ways before crossing the street. Use crosswalks wherever possible.

Lenses in the eyes or decorative masks can hinder vision or cause injury.

Only walk on sidewalks or on the far edge of the road facing traffic.

Wear well-fitted costumes and shoes to avoid tripping and falling.

Eat only factory-wrapped treats. Don't eat homemade treats made by strangers.

Enter homes or accept rides only from those you know, never strangers.

Never walk near lit candles or luminaries. Wear flame-resistant costumes.

Medina EC Updating Member Information



MEDINA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE is verifying account information to include name on the account, primary use for electricity, and contact information.

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

Residential account members may receive an email from the co-op verifying information. If you

receive an email, please take the time to check that the information on file is correct.

Having updated account information is important for the cooperative to better serve you.

POWER TIP

An average household dedicates 5% of its electricity budget to lighting. Switching to energy-efficient LED lighting is a fast way to conserve.



Operation Grocery Give

\$3,000 in H-E-B gift cards are available for those in need



THIS PROGRAM IS MADE POSSIBLE BY OPERATION ROUND UP.



- ▶ Twenty H-E-B gift cards of \$150 each will be awarded.
- ▶ The ORU committee will review all applications and make award decisions. Recipients will be notified in early December.
- ▶ You can apply for yourself or on behalf of someone else at [MedinaEC.org/ORU](https://www.MedinaEC.org/ORU). The applicant does not have to be a member of Medina EC but must live in one of the 17 counties the cooperative serves. Applications are also available in Spanish.
- ▶ General ORU applications are also due on November 4. You can apply for both Operation Grocery Give and Operation Round Up.

Get all the details on Operation Grocery Give and general ORU donations at [MedinaEC.org/ORU](https://www.MedinaEC.org/ORU). Applications for both are due on **November 4**.

Medina EC Celebrates Pollinators

Expert interview with Medina EC's certified wildlife biologist

MEDINA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE IS COMMITTED to preserving and maintaining good stewardship of any natural resources that we may have an impact on, which is why we've created an environmental stewardship program.

One part of this program is Medina EC's new monarch waystation, hosted at our corporate office in Hondo, which benefits the recently endangered species. Since one of this month's feature stories in *Texas Co-op Power* is about praising pollinators, we asked our certified wildlife biologist, Paula Pohler, to answer a few questions!

What is a monarch waystation?

Monarch waystations provide resources for monarchs during their migration from Mexico. Planting a waystation is a simple way for providing a food source for not only monarchs and other butterfly species but also bees and other pollinators. Texas is a monarch migratory funnel, and it is important that we provide the resources they need during spring and fall migrations.

What are the requirements for it to be official?

- Plant milkweed! This is a monarch's host plant and the only one that they can use for its egg and larva stages.
- Plant one or more perennial nectar plants and one or more annual or biennial nectar plants.
- Participate in at least one sustainable management practice such as watering the plot, stopping insecticide use or mulching.

Submit your efforts on MonarchWatch.org.

What is Medina EC doing to protect pollinators?

We make many concerted efforts to protect natural resources across our service area, and pollinators are one of those natural resources. We educate members and local communities on the importance of pollinators and what they can do to help.

What can members do to help protect and attract pollinators?

Members can create their own monarch waystation! Adding just a couple of pollinator plants in your landscaping can make a difference. You can also encourage your local schools and other public spaces to grow pollinator plants. Be mindful of pesticide and herbicide sprays and wind-driven drafts when spraying them. Many of these sprays can negatively affect insects and bees.

Why are native wildflowers important to pollinators?

Planting flowers that are native to the area provide the best food source to pollinators. Being that native plants have already adapted to the environment; they can require minimal amount of water or care when compared to non-native species. They are also not susceptible to as many diseases and reduce the chance of spreading disease that may otherwise be detrimental to pollinators throughout their life cycle.

How do members find out what plants are native to their area?

The Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center at Wildflower.org is a great resource to find which plants are native in your part of the state! Visit your local nursery, and if you don't find what you're looking for ask them to stock specific plants.

What can be done in the fall and/or winter?

Although wildflowers are typically thought of as a spring plant, many that benefit pollinators begin their growth in the fall. In Texas, fall can be the best time to plant wildflower seeds. If you think about it, this is when they would naturally drop their seeds anyway. With warmer weather, rains and sun,

the flowers will bloom in the spring and summer times.

Learn more about Medina EC's environmental efforts at [MedinaEC.org/EnvironmentalStewardship](https://www.MedinaEC.org/EnvironmentalStewardship).

“Texas is a monarch migratory funnel, and it is important that we provide the resources they need during spring and fall migrations.”

—PAULA POHLER



Paula Pohler is a GIS technician at Medina EC and is also a certified wildlife biologist. She manages Medina EC's environmental stewardship efforts including the Avian Protection Plan and the monarch waystation at the corporate office in Hondo.

Luck of the Draw

You have FIVE chances to win a \$100 credit on your electric bill.

- **Chance 1:** Register your account on SmartHub.
- **Chance 2:** Sign up for automated payments.
- **Chance 3:** Choose paperless billing.
- **Chance 4:** Join Operation Round Up.
- **Chance 5:** BONUS drawing for all four programs!

All members signed up for each of the programs above as of 5 p.m. on November 1 will be entered, including members who are already signed up for these options and any new sign-ups between now and November 1.

Learn more at
MedinaEC.org/Lucky

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Farmers Day
Wednesday, October 12

National First Responders Day
Friday, October 28

Halloween
Monday, October 31

Operation Round Up Applications Due
Friday, November 4

BEWARE OF ENERGY VAMPIRES!



Standby power accounts for 5% to 10% of home energy use.

Your Rights as a Member

Applies to residential accounts

Rate And Service Information | You may, either by phone, mail, or personal visit to the Cooperative's business offices, request copies of any portion of the Cooperative's rate and service tariffs and rules. Bill payments can be made at office locations or by calling 1-866-MEC-ELEC (1-866-632-3532). All offices are open Monday through Friday, except holidays. The following offices are open 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.: 237 Hwy 173 North, P.O. Box 69, Hondo, TX 78861; 1718 West FM 117, P.O. Box 49, Dilley, TX 78017; 2604 Hwy 90 East, P.O. Box 1810, Uvalde, TX 78802; 601 North FM 3167, P.O. Box 496, Rio Grande City, TX 78582. The following office is open 9:30 to 11 a.m. and noon to 3:30 p.m. or by appointment from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.: 1300 FM 2050 North, P.O. Box 88, Bruni, TX 78344.

Meter Testing | As provided by the rules of the Medina Electric Cooperative Tariff, you may request a test of your electric meter if you believe that the meter is not accurately reflecting your actual electric consumption. The test will be made at no charge to you provided you did not request the meter to be tested during the previous four years. In the event that you request another test within the four years and the meter is not defective, you will be required to pay a fee of \$75.00 for the test.

Due Date | Under the tariff of this Cooperative, bills are due upon receipt and delinquent 16 days from billing date. A bill for utility service is delinquent if not received at the Cooperative or at the Cooperative's authorized payment agency by the Cooperative's close of business on the date indicated on the bill. If the due date falls on a holiday or weekend, the due date for payment purposes shall be the next workday after the due date. If payment is not made by the due date a notice of termination may be issued.

Termination Of Service | With proper notice you may be disconnected for the following reasons (proper notice will consist of a separate mailing at least ten (10) days prior to a stated date of disconnection, or the next working day if that date falls on a holiday or weekend): 1) Failure to pay a delinquent account or failure to comply with the terms of a deferred payment agreement; 2) Violation of the Cooperative's rules pertaining to the use of service in a manner which interferes with the service of others or the operation of nonstandard equipment, if a reasonable attempt has been made to notify the customer and the customer is provided with a reasonable opportunity to remedy the situation; 3) Failure to comply with deposit or guarantee arrangements where required; 4) Failure to grant unrestricted access to Cooperative facilities; 5) Failure to pay for damages to Cooperative facilities by customer. You may be disconnected without notice for the following reasons: 1) A known hazardous or unsafe condition exists; 2) When tampering with the Cooperative's meter or equipment, bypassing the same; 3) When service has been connected or reconnected without authority; 4) Other instances of diversion as defined in the Tariff.

Billing Disputes | If you disagree with the Cooperative regarding the amount of your electric bill, you will not be required to pay more than your monthly average bill until such time as the dispute is resolved, not to exceed 60 days. You will not have service terminated during the resolution of this dispute so long as you pay the required average bill and future monthly bills.

Alternate Payment Plan | Deferred Payment: The Cooperative may offer, upon request, a Deferred Payment Plan to any residential customer who has expressed an inability to pay all of his or her bill. If that customer: (1) has not been issued more than two disconnection notices at any time during the preceding 12 months, or (2) has not been issued a Deferred Payment Plan in the preceding 12 months, said customer may qualify for the plan. This plan may include a five percent (5%) penalty for late payment. Service may be disconnected with proper notice if you do not fulfill the terms of the plan. **Budget Payment Options:** The Cooperative offers Levelized and Average Billing Plans. Contact the cooperative for information concerning these billing options.

Service Reconnection | If your service is interrupted for any of the reasons listed above, you may reestablish service when all outstanding and delinquent bills are paid, a deposit or other evidence of payment guarantee is provided to the Cooperative, when the unsafe condition

is corrected, or when you enter into a deferred payment agreement. A disconnect and reconnect fee may be assessed before reconnection.

Service Complaints | If you have a complaint about the service of the Cooperative you have the right to contact the Cooperative office by letter, by telephone, or by internet. You also have the right to contact the Public Utility Commission of Texas at P.O. Box 13326, Austin, Texas 78711-3326; (512) 936-7120 or in Texas (toll-free) 1-888-782-8477; fax (512) 936-7003; email address: customer@puc.texas.gov; puc.texas.gov; TTY (512) 936-7136 and Relay Texas 1-800-735-2989. In the event you are dissatisfied with the Cooperative's investigation of complaint, you have the right to request a supervisory review. Electric service will not be disconnected pending completion of a review; however, service may be disconnected with proper notice under standard disconnect procedures if you do not participate in the review or make other arrangements within five (5) days after the review is requested.

Outages | Call 1-866-MEC-ELEC or visit MedinaEC.org to report an outage or service problems.

Establishing Credit | You may be required to establish credit by furnishing a letter of credit from a like utility, a satisfactory written guarantee to secure payment, demonstrate a satisfactory credit rating, or a deposit. The total of all deposits will not exceed an amount equivalent to one-fourth of the actual annual billing. Where actual annual billing information is not available, the following deposit amounts will be required for General Service rate applicants: Occupied Residence-\$400.00, Hunting Camp-\$300.00, Water Well-\$200.00 and other General Service-\$200.00. Deposit amounts for all other rate schedules will be determined based on load requirements and estimated usage. Medina Electric Cooperative will pay interest, compounded annually from date of deposit until date deposit is returned, at an annual rate set by Medina Electric Board of Directors in December of the subsequent year and will return your deposit plus interest upon disconnection of service or after you have paid bills for twelve (12) consecutive billings without having service disconnected for nonpayment and without having more than two occasions in which a bill was delinquent and when the current bill is not delinquent. An additional deposit may be required if: (1) the amount of deposit collected is less than 25% of customer's actual annual billings; and (2) a Delinquent notice has been issued more than twice for the account within the previous 12 months. No cash deposit is required of permanent residential service applicants who are 65 years of age or older who do not have an outstanding account balance with Medina Electric Cooperative or another electric utility within the last two years.

Financial Assistance | You may be eligible for financial assistance to help pay your utility bill. To inquire you may call one or all of the following: Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs, Energy Assistance Section, P.O. Box 13941, Austin, TX 78711-3941, 1-877-399-8939 or (512) 475-1099; Public Utility Commission of Texas, 1701 N. Congress Ave., P.O. Box 13326, Austin, TX 78711-3326, (toll free) 1-888-782-8477; or contact the Cooperative and we will provide you a list of agencies that may assist you.

Ill And/Or Handicapped | If you are ill and/or have a disability, you are encouraged to identify yourself; special action will be taken to explain the process and requirements for your account to be set up as a "Critical Load Account." Critical Load Account shall be defined as a residential customer who has a critical need for electric service because a resident on the premises requires electric service to maintain life. The Texas Public Utility Commission's TTY number for the deaf and hard of hearing is (512) 936-7147.

Nondiscrimination | Medina Electric Cooperative provides all available services without regard to race, nationality, color, religion, sex, or marital status. Credit history is applied equally for a reasonable period of time to a spouse or former spouse who has shared Medina Electric Cooperative's services.

Sus Derechos Como Miembro

Lo siguiente se aplica a las cuentas residenciales solamente

Información De Precio Y Servicio | Usted puede, ya sea por teléfono, correo o visitar personalmente las oficinas de la cooperativa, solicitar copias de cualquier parte de nuestros precios y tarifas del servicio y las reglas de la cooperativa. Los pagos de facturas se pueden hacer en las oficinas o llamando al 1-866-MEC-ELEC (1-866-632-3532). Todas las oficinas están abiertas Lunes a Viernes, excepto vacaciones. Las siguientes oficinas están abiertas de 8 am a 5 pm: 237 Hwy 173 North, P.O. Box 69, Hondo, TX 78861; 1718 West FM 117, P.O. Box 49, Dilley, TX 78017; 2604 Hwy 90 East, P.O. Box 1810, Uvalde, TX 78802; 601 North FM 3167, P.O. Box 496, Río Grande City, TX 78582. La siguiente oficina está abierta de 9:30 a.m. a 11 a.m. y 12 p.m. a 3:30 p.m. o por cita de 8 a.m. a 5 p.m.: 1300 FM 2050 North, P.O. Box 88, Bruni, TX 78344.

Prueba De Medidor De Electricidad | Conforme a las reglas de la Tarifa de Medina Electric Cooperative, puede solicitar una prueba de su medidor eléctrico si usted cree que su medidor no refleja exactamente su consumo eléctrico. La prueba se hará sin cargo, a condición de que usted no haya solicitado una prueba del medidor durante los cuatro años anteriores. En caso de que usted solicite otra prueba dentro de los cuatro años, y el medidor no está defectuoso, se le requerirá que pague una cuota de \$75.00 para la prueba.

Fecha De Vencimiento | En la tarifa de esta cooperativa, las cuentas se vencen al recibir y delinquentes 16 días después de la fecha de facturación. La factura de servicio de utilidad es delincente si no se recibe en la cooperativa o en agencia de pago autorizado, por cierre de las operaciones de la cooperativa en la fecha indicada en la factura. Si la fecha de vencimiento cae en días festivos o fin de semana, el vencimiento del pago será el próximo día laborable después de la fecha de vencimiento. Si el pago no es hecho por la fecha de vencimiento puede concederse una notificación de terminación.

Terminación De Servicio | Con la notificación apropiada puede ser desconectado por las siguientes razones (aviso apropiado consistirá por el correo al menos diez (10) días antes de la fecha determinada de desconexión, o el siguiente día laborable si la fecha cae en días festivos o fin de semana): 1) Falta de pago de una cuenta delincente o no cumplir con los términos de un acuerdo de pago diferido; 2) La violación de las reglas de la Cooperativa que pertenecen al uso de servicio en una manera que interfiere con el servicio de otros o la operación del equipo, si se ha hecho un intento razonable de notificar al cliente y al cliente se le proporciona una oportunidad razonable para remediar la situación; 3) Incapacidad para cumplir con el depósito o garantizar acuerdos donde se requiera; 4) Fracaso de conceder el acceso sin restricciones a la propiedad de la Cooperativa; 5) Falta de pago por daños a la propiedad de la Cooperativa por el cliente. Usted puede ser desconectado sin previo aviso por las siguientes razones: 1) Una condición peligrosa o insegura conocida existe; 2) Manipulando el medidor o equipo de la Cooperativa, evitando lo mismo; 3) Cuando el servicio se ha conectado o reconectado sin autoridad; 4) Otros casos de desviación como definido en la Tarifa.

Disputas De Facturación | Si no está de acuerdo con la Cooperativa con respecto a la cantidad de cobro de la factura de electricidad, usted no será obligado a pagar más de su factura mensual promedio hasta que la disputa se resuelva, no debe exceder de 60 días. Su servicio no será cancelado durante la resolución de esta disputa mientras que usted pague la factura promedio requerida y facturas futuras mensuales.

Plan De Pago Alternativo | **Pago Diferido:** La Cooperativa puede ofrecer, a solicitud, un plan de pago diferido a cualquier cliente residencial que haya expresado una inhabilidad de pagar toda su factura. Si al cliente: (1) No se le han dado más de dos avisos de desconexión en cualquier momento durante los 12 meses anteriores, o (2) No se ha dado un plan de pago diferido en los 12 meses anteriores, Este plan puede incluir una multa de cinco por ciento (5%) por pago retrasado. Su servicio puede ser desconectado con aviso apropiado si no cumple con los términos del plan.

Opciones De Pago Del Presupuesto: La Cooperativa ofrece planes de facturación promedio y nivelados. Póngase en contacto con la cooperativa para obtener información sobre estas opciones de facturación.

Reconexión De Servicio | Si su servicio es interrumpido por cualquiera de las razones mencionadas anteriormente, se puede restablecer su servicio cuando se paguen todas las facturas pendientes y delinquentes cuando un depósito u otra evidencia de la garantía de pago es proporcionada a la

cooperativa. Cuando se corrige la condición insegura, o cuando usted se comprometa en un acuerdo de pago diferido. Un cobro adicional por la desconexión y conexión de servicio será agregada a su cuenta antes de que su servicio de electricidad sea reestablecido.

Quejas Del Servicio | Si usted tiene alguna queja sobre el servicio de la cooperativa, tiene el derecho de ponerse en contacto con la oficina de la Cooperativa por carta, por teléfono o por internet. Usted también tiene el derecho a comunicarse con Public Utility Commission of Texas a la siguiente dirección: P.O. Box 13326, Austin, Texas 78711-3326, (512) 936-7120 o en el estado de Texas (gratis) al 1-888-782-8477, fax (512) 936-7003, dirección de correo electrónico: customer@puc.texas.gov, dirección de internet: puc.texas.gov, TTY (512) 936-7136 y Relay Texas 1-800-735-2989. En caso de que usted no esté satisfecho con la investigación de la Cooperativa de su queja, usted tiene el derecho de solicitar una revisión y supervisar su caso. Su servicio eléctrico no se desconectará pendiente la conclusión de la revisión; sin embargo el servicio puede ser desconectado con el aviso apropiado, bajo las normas de procedimientos de desconexión, si usted no participa en la revisión o hace otros preparativos dentro de cinco (5) días después de que se solicite la revisión.

Cortes De Luz | Hable al 1-866-MEC-ELEC o visite MedinaEC.org para reportar algún apagón de luz o un problema de servicio.

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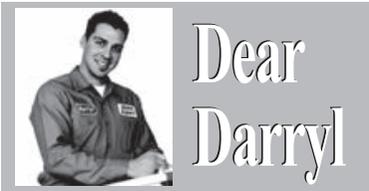
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A D V E R T I S E M E N T

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

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



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

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

Clogged and Smelly – Austin, TX

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

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Our Aussie friend would approve of our rendition of his "knife." Forged of high grade 420 surgical stainless steel, this knife is an impressive 16" from pommel to point. And, the blade is full tang, meaning it runs the entirety of the knife, even though part of it is under wraps in the natural bone and wood handle.

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Bison at the Brink

When just 23 were left in Yellowstone National Park, a Texan revived the herd

BY W.F. STRONG • PHOTO BY JULIA ROBINSON

IF IT WEREN'T FOR TEXAS, there would likely be no bison in Yellowstone National Park. This is a large claim, but it's not without merit.

To be honest, Texas had considerable liability in driving the poor bison to near extinction in the first place. However, once people finally realized the range just wouldn't be as happy a home if the buffalo didn't roam, Texas took a leading role in saving these magnificent creatures. Here's how it came about.

In the early 1900s, the U.S. Army, which patrolled the park in those days, estimated that there were just 23 bison left in Yellowstone. They believed that

those might be all the bison that remained in the whole of the wild, wild West. Imagine—just 23 bison left when, 100 years before, there had been some 30 million of them on the American plains. At one time, there were 10 bison for every American, but by 1900, they were nearly gone.

Despite efforts to protect the Yellowstone herd, the poachers poached away. After all, one impressive bison head could fetch \$2,000 to forever gaze across a bar in someplace like Chicago. That's \$60,000 in today's money. Profit was high, and the risk was low. This was the reality that nearly doomed the creatures.

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



After the Army managed to intimidate and scare off most of the poachers, Yellowstone needed some good, purebred bulls to rebuild the meager herd. And it needed them fast.

The problem was that most of the bison then in captivity were cattalo—a mixture of bison, or buffalo, and cattle. But in Texas the famous Charles Goodnight—perhaps the most omnipresent figure in Texas history—had his own herd of bison. His herd had been gathered and nurtured by his wife, Mary Ann Goodnight, who personally saw to it that the orphans found wandering the ranch were saved and protected. And so Goodnight, at his own expense, sent three fine, purebred bulls up to Yellowstone to help rebuild that herd.

It worked. Today there are some 5,500 bison in Yellowstone, thanks in part to Goodnight. True, Congress created Yellowstone, and the U.S. Army did its part to help protect the herd from poachers in that enormous park. But it was Goodnight's gift that truly saved the majestic creatures.

In fact, Yellowstone now says it has too many bison, and the herd needs culling. If you add those to the herd that Goodnight donated to Caprock Canyons State Park in Texas, you can say that Texas is largely responsible for bringing bison back from the brink of absolute extinction. And that's no bull. ■

Nuts About Nuts

These tasty treats draw unique flavors out of their shell

BY MEGAN MYERS, FOOD EDITOR

While walnuts are traditional in Greece, and Turkey uses pistachios, in Texas our thoughts naturally turn to pecans for baklava. This sticky, nutty dessert is easier than it seems—it's simply a matter of layering. Use a basting or pastry brush to lightly apply the butter to each layer, taking care to not rip the delicate phyllo dough.



Pecan Baklava

1 cup water
1½ cups sugar, divided use
½ cup honey
1 tablespoon lemon juice
4 cups pecan halves, finely chopped in a food processor
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
¼ teaspoon ground cloves
1 pound (1 box) phyllo dough, thawed according to package instructions
¾ cup (1½ sticks) butter, melted

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In a small saucepan, combine water, 1 cup sugar and honey, and bring to a boil over medium heat, whisking to dissolve sugar. Once boiling, reduce heat to low and simmer 5–7 minutes. Remove from heat, stir in lemon juice and let syrup cool.
2. In a bowl, combine pecans, remaining ½ cup sugar, cinnamon and cloves.
3. Unroll phyllo dough and trim as necessary to fit a 9-by-13-inch pan. Brush a thin layer of melted butter on the bottom and sides of the pan, then begin building the baklava.
4. Lay down a sheet of phyllo and brush butter over it. Repeat until you have 15 layers. Spread 1 cup of pecan mixture on top. Add 5 layers of phyllo, brushing on butter between each layer, then add 1 cup of pecans. Repeat twice until all pecans are used, then place on remaining phyllo layers, buttering between each.
5. Using a very sharp knife, cut baklava into squares or diamonds, making sure to cut through each layer. Hold the phyllo in place as you cut. Pour over any remaining butter.
6. Bake 40–50 minutes, turning the pan halfway through. Remove from oven and immediately pour the cooled syrup over the top; you should hear it sizzle. Let cool completely before serving.

SERVES 24

TCP Follow along with Megan Myers and her adventures in the kitchen at stetted.com, where she features a recipe for Honey Pistachio Shortbread.



Bostock (Almond Toast)

MELISSA TIDWELL
PEDERNALES EC

If you're a fan of bakery almond croissants, you'll love this easy bostock (BOH-stock) recipe. It's perfect for serving at brunch, and you can also freeze the unbaked slices and simply bake one or two as desired.

- 1 loaf challah or brioche**
- 1 cup sliced almonds, divided use**
- 6 tablespoons (¾ stick) butter**
- ⅓ cup sugar**
- 2 teaspoons flour**
- 1 teaspoon cornstarch**
- 1 egg**
- ½ teaspoon almond extract**
- Powdered sugar, for serving**

- 1.** Preheat oven to 350 degrees and line a baking sheet with parchment. Slice the bread into ½-inch slices and arrange on the baking sheet.
- 2.** In a food processor, pulse ¾ cup almonds until finely chopped. Add butter, sugar, flour, cornstarch, egg and almond extract. Purée until a smooth almond cream is formed.
- 3.** Spread 2–3 tablespoons of the almond cream onto each slice of bread, leaving a small border around the edge to allow for spreading. Sprinkle each piece with a few of the reserved sliced almonds.
- 4.** Bake 15–20 minutes, until almond cream is puffed and browned. Let cool 5–10 minutes, then serve with powdered sugar sprinkled on top.

SERVES 6

[MORE RECIPES >](#)

\$500 WINNER

Spaghetti Squash With Cashew Pesto

RHAE BROWN
SAM HOUSTON EC



Fresh and flavorful, this dish uses cashews to create a dairy-free pesto you'll love. Depending on the size of the squash you use, you might have leftover sauce. Use it as a zesty vegetable dip or spread on crusty bread.

SERVES 2–4



- 1 spaghetti squash**
- ¼ cup plus 1–2 teaspoons olive oil, divided use**
- ¾ cup raw cashews, divided use**
- 2 lemons**
- 2 cups fresh basil**
- 1 avocado, pitted**
- 3 tablespoons water**
- 1 clove garlic**
- 1 teaspoon salt**
- ½ teaspoon pepper**

- 1.** Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Line a baking sheet with parchment. Halve the spaghetti squash and scoop out the seeds. Rub the insides of the squash with 1–2 teaspoons olive oil, then place cut-side down on the baking sheet. Bake 40 minutes or until tender.
- 2.** Meanwhile, chop ¼ cup cashews, then toast in a dry pan over medium heat until golden brown. Set aside for topping.
- 3.** Zest 1 lemon for topping if desired, then juice both. Measure out ¼ cup juice and set aside the rest.
- 4.** In a food processor, combine basil, remaining cashews, avocado, ¼ cup lemon juice, remaining olive oil, water, garlic, salt and pepper. Blend until a smooth pesto forms. Taste and add more lemon juice, salt or pepper if desired.
- 5.** Once the squash is done, use a fork to shred the inside to make "noodles" and scoop into a bowl. Add pesto and mix well. Serve topped with toasted cashews and lemon zest.

TCP \$500 Recipe Contest

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Walnut Surprise

GALE HEEP
TRI-COUNTY EC

This simple dessert is a cross between a cookie, a bar and a candy. Heep recommends it warm with ice cream, but it's just as good enjoyed simply with a cup of tea.

- ½ cup flour
- ⅞ teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 egg

- 1 cup brown sugar
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 cup chopped walnuts

1. Preheat oven to 325 degrees and coat an 8-inch square pan with nonstick spray.
2. In a small bowl, combine flour, baking soda and salt. In another bowl, beat egg until foamy, then stir in brown sugar and vanilla. Add flour mixture and stir until completely incorporated. Stir in walnuts; the batter will be thick.
3. Spread the batter into the prepared pan, using a greased spatula or spoon to spread to the edges, if needed.
4. Bake 18–25 minutes, until golden brown.

SERVES 9

TCP Find more recipes on our website that make the most of nuts—as the featured or accompanying ingredient. They're perfect heading into the holidays, and most come from the kitchens of *Texas Co-op Power* readers.

Tips for Toasting Nuts

BY MEGAN MYERS

Many recipes call for toasting nuts, which enhances their flavor and makes them deliciously crunchy.

Stovetop method: Set a dry skillet over medium heat and add nuts in a single layer. Cook 3–5 minutes, stirring, until fragrant and starting to darken.

Oven method: Place nuts in a single layer on a rimmed baking sheet. Bake at 350 degrees until fragrant and starting to darken, 5–8 minutes depending on the nut.

To prevent burning, remove nuts from heat as soon as they are toasted.



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COURTESY CHET GARNER

Oodles of Oompahs

A Schulenburg museum preserves polka's enduring power

BY CHET GARNER

IF YOU PASS THROUGH the rolling prairies northeast of San Antonio and listen carefully to the wind, chances are you'll hear the faint sound of a tuba and an accordion floating along. Follow the sound to its source and you could end up in any of dozens of old German and Czech dance halls as polka bands play the music of their ancestors.

Since the late 1800s, polka has been the soundtrack of life for many residents of Fayette County. To learn more about how this unique musical style keeps the beat, I headed to the Texas Polka Music Museum in downtown Schulenburg.

I stepped into the small repository on Lyons Avenue and immediately felt my feet bouncing to the signature "oompah-oompah" playing on the speakers. I was helpless to repel the power of the polka. The walls are covered in pictures, records and stories of the numerous polka artists who have hailed from the Lone Star State—bands like Vrazel's Polka Band, which toured Texas for more than 50 years.

There are also dozens of cases and displays filled with instruments and mementos going back well over 100 years, including booths from local radio DJs that kept the polka power going around the clock. Of course, any proper polka band needs an accordion, tuba and saxophone. But just as important are the matching outfits. This museum has some that would give Elton John a run for his money.

Like most folks, I don't listen to a lot of polka music, but after visiting this museum, I discovered a newfound appreciation for the art and culture of polka. I even bought a CD so I could oom-pah-pah all the way home. ■

ABOVE Chet takes in the polka grooves that resonate in Fayette County.

TCP Toe-tap with Chet in 2/4 time to this nearly two-century-old music. Our website features his latest video, and watch all his Texplorations on *The Daytripper* on PBS.



Know Before You Go

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OCTOBER

07

Fredericksburg [7-9] Texas Mesquite Arts Festival, (830) 997-8515, texasmesquiteartfestivals.com

08

Lexington Blue Volunteer Fire Department Fund-raiser, (512) 229-8533, facebook.com/bluevfd

Stonewall Fish Fry, (830) 990-8793, stonewallvfd.com

Tyler Rose City Music Festival, (903) 593-6905, therosecitymusicfestival.com

Chappell Hill [8-9] Scarecrow Festival, (979) 836-6033, chappellhillhistoricalsociety.com

Edom [8-9] Art Festival, (903) 258-5192, edomarts.com

Pearland [8-9] Art on the Pavilion, (281) 997-5971, visitpearland.com

13

Collinsville 42 Bed Bash, (903) 465-6041, texomafamilyshester.com

Tyler [13-16] Texas Rose Festival, (903) 593-6905, texasrosefestival.com

14

Kyle Halloween Movie in the Park, (512) 262-3939, cityofkyle.com

Canton [14-15] Texas Star Quilters Guild Quilt Show, (903) 312-5252

Henderson [14-15] Rusk County PRCA Rodeo, (903) 657-3699, visithendersontx.com

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Driftwood [14-16] Austin String Band Festival,
(512) 644-0212, aftm.us

Canyon Lake BBQ Cook Off, (830) 964-2223,
canyonlakechamber.com

Clifton FallFest,
(254) 675-8337,
cityofclifton.org

Conroe Fall Herb/Vegetable and Succulent Sale,
(936) 539-7824, mcmga.com

Frisco The Boho Market at Frisco Square,
(214) 202-2668,
thebohmarket.co

Plano International Festival,
planointernationalfestival.org

Waco Oakwood Cemetery's Walking Tales, (254) 717-1763

Brenham [15-16] Texas Arts & Music Festival,
(979) 337-7580,
texasartsandmusicfestival.com

21

Cisco [21-22] Pie Fest,
(254) 334-9621,
ciscotxpiefest.com

Austin [21-23] Gem Capers,
(512) 458-9546,
agms-tx.org

Plano [21-23] Hollydays Market, (972) 941-5840,
visitplano.com

22

Burnet Zombie Color Run,
(512) 756-6182,
burnet.revtrak.net

Fredericksburg Food & Wine Fest, (830) 997-8515,
fbgfoodandwinefest.com

MORE EVENTS >

TCP *Submit Your Event*

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

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www.kerrvillechalk.org



www.KerrvilleTexasCVB.com • 830-792-3535



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Pick of the Month

Festival of the Wolves

Navasota, October 15
(936) 894-9653
saintfranciswolfsanctuary.org

Learn about wolves and wolf-dogs, browse booths, dine at food trucks, bid on items at a silent auction, and have a howling good time at the Saint Francis Wolf Sanctuary.

28

Imperial [28–29] Horse-head Crossing Trails of Time, (432) 336-6316, pecoscountyhistoricalcommission.org

Kerrville [28–30] Texas Fleece and Fiber Festival, (361) 537-0503, texasfleeceandfiber.com

29

Copperas Cove Fall-O-Ween Festival, (254) 542-2719, www.copperascovetx.gov

Llano Llano River Pumpkin Float, (325) 247-5354, llanochamber.org

Sanger Sellabration, (940) 458-7702, sangertexas.com

Salado [29–30] Table-rock's Fright Trail, (254) 308-2200, tablerock.org

OCTOBER EVENTS CONTINUED

22

Kyle Center Street Trick-or-Treat, (512) 262-3939, cityofkyle.com

Palestine Hot Pepper Festival, (903) 723-3014, visitpalestine.com

Plano Fall Harvest Festival and Outdoor Market, (469) 467-9995, visitplano.com

Round Rock Diwali Festival, info@rrdiwalifest.com, rrdiwalifest.com

Cottonwood Shores [22–23] Legends of the Falls, (830) 693-3830, cottonwoodshores.org

Kerrville [22–23] Mountain Bike Festival, (830) 896-6864, kerrvillemountainbikefestival.com

25

Kenney [25–29] Hodges Farm Antique Show, (979) 865-9077, hodgesfarmtexas@gmail.com

31

Kerrville Family Fright Night, (830) 257-7300, kerrvilletx.gov

NOVEMBER

04

New Braunfels [4–13] Wurstfest, (830) 625-9167, wurstfest.com

05

Brenham Radney Foster & Darden Smith, (979) 337-7240, thebarnhillcenter.com

Jefferson Fall History Haunts and Legends Event, (903) 601-3375, visitjeffersonstexas.com

07

Georgetown Wurstbraten 50th Sausage Festival, (512) 863-3065, zionwalburg.org

Hometown Pride

Sports, artwork, history and landmarks all make us proud as peacocks to call our town home, no matter the size. These reader offerings just make us beam with Texas pride. So pull up a lawn chair and gather the kids. Here comes the parade.

CURATED BY GRACE FULTZ



1 JOAN WILSON
BLUEBONNET EC

Wilson's granddaughter, Maddie Wilson, gets an early start experiencing Friday night lights with the Hendrickson Hawks cheerleaders in Pflugerville.

2 JONNIE ENGLAND
NUECES EC

Pecos, in far west Reeves County, shows hometown pride with the Pecos Boot Trail, a public art project.

3 JULIE TUPY
HILCO EC

Willie Nelson, painted on a downtown garage in his hometown of Abbott.

4 KATE MANRRIQUEZ
WHARTON COUNTY EC

Taylor Manriquez plays first base for the El Campo High School Ricebirds.



2



3



4

Upcoming Contests

- DUE OCT 10** First Responders
- DUE NOV 10** Land, Sea or Sky
- DUE DEC 10** Riding the River



Enter online at TexasCoopPower.com/contests.

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



Quay Rathbone of Victoria was the first Turkey Trot sultana, in 1913.

TCP Go to our website to see Caytlyn Phillips' documentary, *Because Two Birds Raced*.



turkey capital of the world.

Thus began the Great Gobbler Gallop, with a Cuero turkey perpetually named Ruby Begonia facing Worthington's Paycheck ("nothing goes faster than a paycheck").

Ruby Begonia heads to downtown Worthington for the first leg every year at King Turkey Day, a month before Turkeyfest. Then the birds race again along Main Street in Cuero, a frenzy of feathers spurred on by crowds lining the way. The bird with the best cumulative time claims the Traveling Turkey Trophy of Tumultuous Triumph for its town.

It's no surprise that the gallop is one of my fondest childhood memories. Cuero's peculiar history with gobblers has long been my favorite aspect of my hometown and even became the focus of my master's thesis. It's not every day that you get to see flightless fowl excitedly plod down an ordinarily busy street. Our silly little tradition enthralled me and drew me in every October.

But the birds barely scrape the surface. It's the enriching union of the communities that brings the festival to life.

Turkeyfest organizers are still moved to tears recalling the generosity of their Worthington friends over the years. Five years ago, when Hurricane Harvey's winds whipped through Cuero, Worthington's residents sent a tractor trailer loaded with essentials, including bottled water and cleaning supplies, to our community.

So at Turkeyfest this year, October 7–9, we will again relish gathering with friends, family and visitors. We'll enjoy cool beverages, good food and all kinds of fun activities. And we'll treasure our bond with that faraway town up north.

It's true: Birds of a feather do flock together. ■

Not for the Birds

Trotting turkeys—and so much more—unite towns separated by a thousand miles

BY CAYTLYN PHILLIPS

AMID THE PASTURES on the main road between San Antonio and the Gulf Coast sits the turkey-centric town of Cuero.

Its long history with the fowl dates back to 1908, when its first turkey processing plant opened. Crowds flocked to witness farmers parade their poultry down the streets, and the town seized the opportunity, dubbing it the Turkey Trot. The first one occurred in 1912, and they continued intermittently into the 1970s.

Fifty years ago this month, the Turkey Trot shifted to a four-day festival known as Turkeyfest. No longer did thousands of turkeys march down Main Street. Instead, Cuero partnered with rival turkey town Worthington, Minnesota, and they jointly decided an annual turkey race was the best way to determine the

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