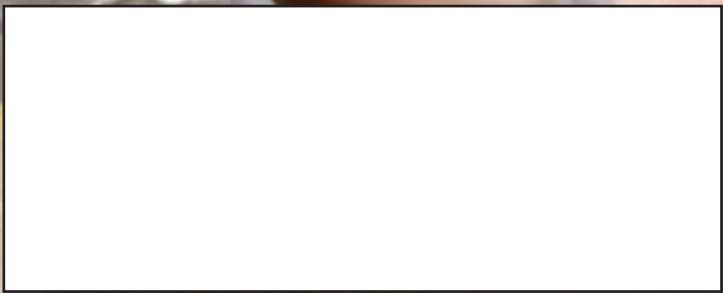


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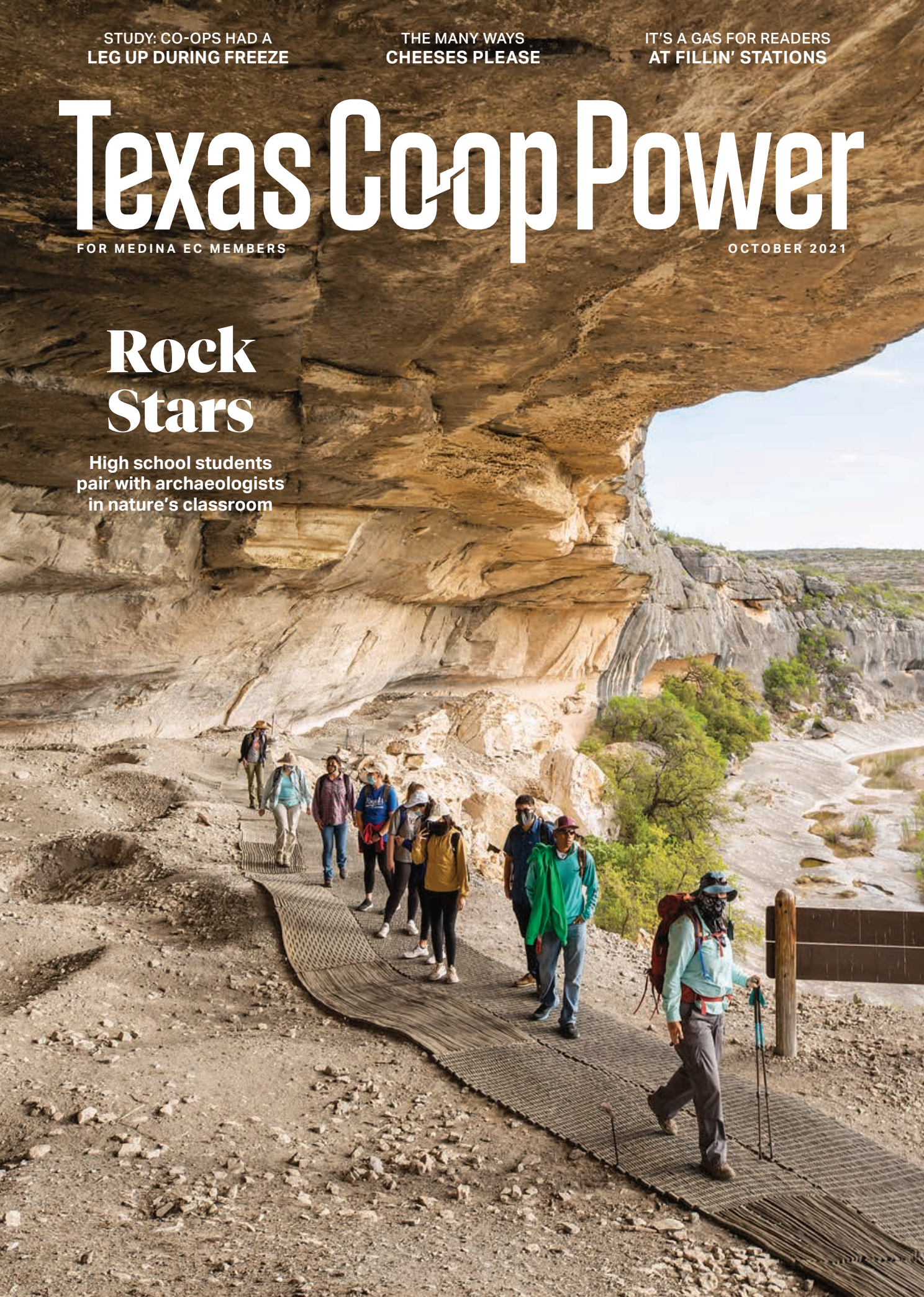
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October 2021



12

08 Learning Rocks

Comstock high school coursework includes rock art research with Shumla archaeologists.

*By Pam LeBlanc
Photos by Erich Schlegel*

Co-ops Shine

When 4.5 million homes and businesses lost power in February, consumers found the co-op response better than that of other power providers.

By Joe Holley

ON THE COVER

Karen Steelman of the Shumla archaeological research center leads students through the Fate Bell Shelter.
Photo by Erich Schlegel

ABOVE

A drone's view of Pedernales Electric Cooperative infrastructure.
Photo courtesy Pedernales EC

04

Currents

The latest buzz

06

TCP Talk

Readers respond

18

Co-op News

Information plus energy and safety tips from your cooperative

29

Footnotes in Texas History

Crossing the Wild Horse Desert
By W.F. Strong

30

TCP Kitchen

Cheese
By Megan Myers

34

Hit the Road

The Groove at Jefferson's Grove
By Chet Garner

37

Focus on Texas

Photo Contest: Fillin' Stations

38

Observations

Not About To Fixate
By Sheryl Smith-Rodgers

A Stacked Deck

BRYAN BERG HOLDS THE WORLD RECORD for tallest free-standing house of cards—25 feet, 9 $\frac{7}{16}$ inches—which he built October 16, 2007, at the State Fair of Texas in Dallas. A year earlier at the fair, he built the Dallas skyline as fairgoers waited in line for hours to watch.

Berg, who has an architecture degree, used more than 1,000 decks of cards, which weigh about 140 pounds, just for the tallest spire in his world-record tower.



America's Lifelines

Electric cooperatives, which celebrate National Co-op Month in October, own and maintain 42% of the electric distribution lines that serve American communities. That equates to 2.7 million miles of line, including 340,774 miles in Texas.



October 1

National Homemade Cookie Day

Find the best recipes by searching "cookies" at [TexasCoopPower.com/food](https://www.texascooppower.com/food).

NBA LAUNCHES IN TEXAS

The NBA came to Texas 50 years ago, when the San Diego Rockets migrated to Houston. A vibrant San Diego aerospace industry inspired the team name, and it fit perfectly in Houston, home of the Johnson Space Center.

The Houston Rockets lost their first game, 105-94, to the Philadelphia 76ers on October 14, 1971, at Hofheinz Pavilion.

“If sad, eat
cookie. If still
sad, talk to
doctor. Sounds
serious.”

—COOKIE MONSTER

FINISH THIS SENTENCE

I WISH I WAS
THERE WHEN ...

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 August prompt:

It's so hot ...

I saw the squirrels picking up nuts with a potholder.

PATSY CHEEK
VIA FACEBOOK

Lizards are crawling in the fire to get under the shade of the skillet.

GENE OSBORNE
WOOD COUNTY EC
HAINESVILLE

I had to get in my hot tub to cool off.

CHARLES BAUCH
VIA FACEBOOK

Popcorn's poppin' in the field.

LINDA HIGGS
VIA FACEBOOK

My chickens lay boiled eggs.

KAREN ALLISON
NUECES EC
ROBSTOWN

You catch precooked fish.

TERRI HARVEY
VIA FACEBOOK

To see more responses, read
Currents online.



Eggs-pert Students

LEAVE IT TO FIRST GRADERS to hatch solutions to a fun challenge: Can you drop eggs without breaking them?

Students at Dillman Elementary School in Muleshoe, with help from employees and a bucket truck from Bailey County Electric Cooperative, proved it's possible.

The kids protected raw eggs with methods that included exoskeletons of straws, boxes with packing, parachutes and even jars of peanut butter—ideas they concocted with their parents, teachers and fellow students. Then technician Matthew Edwards of Bailey County EC went up about 25 feet in the bucket and dropped dozens of them, one at a time. About half of the eggs landed intact.

“Their creativity was amazing,” says Letti Tovar, Dillman principal. “Some of those things I would have never thought of.”



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ERIC W. POHL

Goin' to the Chapel

I want to thank Chet Garner for his Hit the Road articles. One especially intrigued me: *Where Artistry Congregates* [March 2021].

My husband, Humberto, and I decided to visit the painted churches for our 50th wedding anniversary. Following Chet's lead, we grabbed kolache and started our tour in Dubina.

The shrines were glorious. We were so reminded of our visits to Rome in all that splendor.

Nelda Martinez
Medina EC
Hebbronville



Hunter is a world changer [*Easing Life's Baggage*, August 2021].

TANYA RENEE
PANIAGUA
VIA FACEBOOK



COURTESY CHET GARNER

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Easing Life's Baggage

“Day 1 Bags needs to be in every state. Such an incredible project that has helped so many. I love the idea of supporting high school foster kids.”

MICHELE JAQUISS
VIA FACEBOOK

Sparkling Review

I enjoyed learning about John S. Chase in *An Unlikely Blueprint* [July 2021]. Gems like this make me appreciate *Texas Co-op Power* and keep me looking forward to the next issue.

Les Meads
Guadalupe Valley EC
Saint Hedwig

No Stopping McVea

Opposing teams had no solution for Warren McVea's speed and agility [*Ground-breaking Cougar*, Currents, July 2021]. It was a couple of years later that the old Southwest Conference started recruiting Black athletes. Neither McVea nor the University of Houston got their just due for opening the door for Black athletes in Texas.

Phil Dolezal
Trinity Valley EC
Sugar Land

Limitless Appreciation

Parent Imperfect [June 2021] spoke to me on a personal level. It reaffirmed the feeling of embarrassment most of us have as adolescents that lovingly grows into a limitless appreciation for that “imperfect parent” as we go through adulthood and realize we also are the imperfect parent.

Nadalynn Jenkins
HILCO EC
Glenn Heights

WRITE TO US
letters@TexasCoopPower.com

Editor, Texas Co-op Power
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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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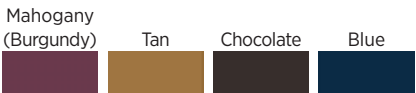
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LEARNING ROCKS

Comstock high school coursework includes rock art research with Shumla archaeologists

BY PAM LEBLANC • PHOTOS BY ERICH SCHLEGEL

The Maker of Peace sculpture stands outside the Seminole Canyon State Park and Historic Site visitors center.



LEFT Comstock student Sammy Isaac reaches into a hole where grains or paint dust were stored some 2,000 years ago inside the Fate Bell Shelter. ABOVE Students found a projectile point while working with Shumla archaeologists at Seminole Canyon.

that line this canyon in the Lower Pecos Canyonlands. “This is one of the best places to study hunter-gatherers. We can see more than stone tools. We can see how they lived.”

The rock shelters—more than 300 have been identified in Val Verde County—also serve as valuable classrooms for students in their final year of high school in Comstock, a tiny, one-school town of fewer than 300 people about 30 miles northwest of Del Rio. Every senior in the Comstock Independent School District—there are seven for the 2020–2021 school year—works alongside archaeologists and chemists as they study the region’s renowned rock art.

In the past few years, students from the school have helped build a plasma oxidation instrument that scientists will use to extract organic material from paint flakes so they can date the rock art. Previous classes have labeled rock art murals, measured painted images, entered data into computers and learned how to use imaging software. In short, the program, introduced in 2013 and structured as an interdisciplinary internship, allows the students from a small school in South Texas to learn sophisticated archaeological analysis and physical sciences from the pros.

The class not only helps Shumla, a nonprofit organization founded more than 20 years ago to study and document rock art in the region, but also gives the students hands-on experience in a working laboratory.

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, class looks a little different this year. Steelman and Tims meet with the students two or three times a week via Zoom. Besides studying various styles of rock art and learning how ancient people used animal fat and crushed minerals to make paint, the students study plants that were used for food, clothing and shelter. They learned, for example, that cochineal, a type of scale insect that lives on prickly pear cactus, was used to make red and orange dyes.

ON A BREEZY APRIL MORNING, five Comstock high school seniors clamber around boulders and hop across a stream in Seminole Canyon on their way to inspect some of the finest examples of rock art in the world.

After a 20-minute hike, they reach the foot of Fate Bell Shelter, a curved hollow midway up a cliff wall that’s big enough for a game of baseball. The students, along with science teacher Kayme Tims and chemist Karen Steelman, scramble up to the rocky amphitheater, where they can see faded red, yellow and black images painted there more than 2,000 years ago.

“This place is so special, and it’s not just because of the rock art,” says Steelman, science director of the plasma oxidation lab at Shumla Archaeological Research and Education Center in Comstock, explaining that ancient fiber mats, sandals and rabbit furs have been found in the rock shelters

Science teacher Kayme Tims leaps across a stream in Seminole Canyon.

"I have two goals: first, teach some chemistry using the archaeology of the Lower Pecos as a framework. Second, teach students an appreciation for the amazing cultural archaeology that's right in our backyard," Steelman says.

That plan is working. At Fate Bell Shelter, the students use a smartphone app called DStretch to photograph the artwork and then enhance its color so the images are more clearly visible.

"I think it's pretty cool that it's right here in our backyard," says Sammy Isaac, 18, of Comstock as the images jump into focus.

"Can you imagine painting something and it lasting that long?" Steelman says as the students point out features of the Lower Pecos River style artwork—anthropomorphic figures with outstretched arms, holding bundles of what look like darts. "These were master artists; they were good."

SCIENTISTS AT SHUMLA recently helped secure National Historic Landmark status for the rock art in the Lower Pecos Canyonlands, one of the most important archaeological regions in the world, according to French prehistorian Jean Clottes.

And last year they completed comprehensive documentation of 233 rock art sites for the Alexandria Project, their effort to preserve these oldest "books" of painted texts in North America.

Together Steelman and Tims have taught successive groups of Comstock seniors about concepts from pigment analysis to radiocarbon dating. The educators say they hope the basic chemistry knowledge will give students an edge in college and an appreciation of the cultural importance of where they live.

"I hope they realize what we have here, that it's unique; they grew up somewhere with significance," Tims says.

Back in the Fate Bell Shelter, the students gather in front of the faint outline of a figure, one hand holding what looks like a bundle of sticks. They note that some of the figures' hair looks like it's standing on end—a characteristic known as piloerection that has various interpretations.

At one point, the five students line up in front of one section of the mural, laughing a little as they re-create a scene on the wall depicting five figures, one with its arms reaching

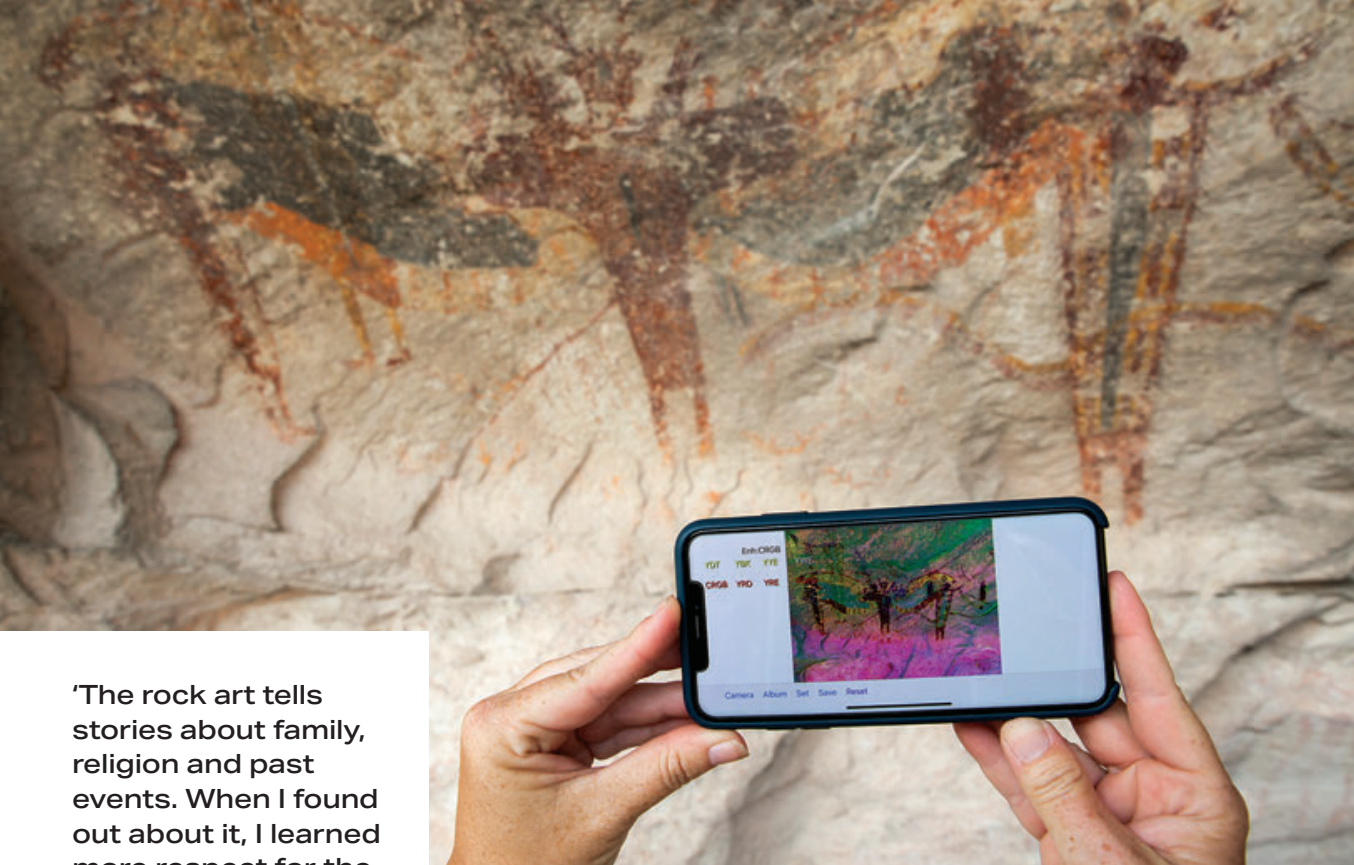


skyward. Experts don't know for sure, but some believe paintings like this represent spiritual or religious beliefs.

"The rock art tells stories about family, religion and past events," says Courtney White, 18, of Del Rio. "When I found out about it, I learned more respect for the people who made it. What they painted was heartfelt. What was important to them should be important to me."

After 45 minutes of exploring the Fate Bell Shelter, the group climbs down and hikes another mile along the rugged creek bed, scrambling through underbrush, hopping over streams and climbing up smooth rock to another shelter, known to scientists as 41VV75. This site, Steelman tells the students, has been used for more than 8,000 years, although the images painted on its walls are half that age, according to radiocarbon testing. The students explore the site, noticing fibers from ancient mats made of plants. A few look down the canyon, talking about what it must have been like to live here.

Only a fraction of the rock art in the Lower Pecos Canyonlands has been radiocarbon-dated. "That's one thing students are helping me with—developing a labora-



‘The rock art tells stories about family, religion and past events. When I found out about it, I learned more respect for the people who made it. What they painted was heartfelt. What was important to them should be important to me.’



TOP A student uses the DStretch app to photograph and enhance rock art. ABOVE Students in the Shumla research lab.

TCP WEB EXTRA Find more photos with this story online and learn more about cochineal in *The Bugs That Make You See Red* from February 2019.

tory at Shumla so we can do more research and study the ages of different styles of art and how [the style] may have changed through time,” Steelman says.

After breaking for lunch next to huge boulders in the canyon, the students load up and head back to Shumla headquarters, housed in what was once a U.S. Border Patrol building in Comstock. There, they file into the lab to check out a plasma oxidation instrument built by the previous year’s students. The instrument spans nearly an entire wall, its row of orangey-red lights reminiscent of the heating lamps used to keep fried chicken or pies warm at a fast-food restaurant.

But this \$83,000 piece of equipment, funded through a grant from the National Science Foundation, won’t be used to warm lunch; Steelman and Lori Barkwill-Love, a college intern, will use it to extract organic material from dime-sized flakes of paint carefully obtained from rock art murals. That material will be sent to another lab for radio-carbon dating.

“The instrument is custom-built with all these parts, basically like Lego blocks,” Steelman says. “It was the perfect opportunity for students to come into the lab and help.”

This year’s class will build on the work of last year’s seniors. Before the school year ends, they will assemble a new electrode array for the plasma oxidation instrument in this world-class lab. The project requires scientific design as well as practical skills such as drilling through PVC pipe, threading copper wire through the piping and measuring twice so you only have to cut once.

And those are lessons that most students never get in high school. ■

Co-ops Shine

When more than 4.5 million homes and businesses lost power in February, consumers found the co-op response better than that of other power providers

Pedernales Electric Cooperative workers endured 165 consecutive hours of subfreezing temperatures.

BY JOE HOLLEY

Members counted on Texas electric co-ops during the deep freeze

WE TEXANS CAN TELL TALES about weather extremes, usually a devastating tornado or a hurricane, a flash flood or a lingering drought. Occasionally we'll recall a bone-chilling West Texas norther or a Panhandle blizzard, but we have less experience with the vicissitudes of winter cold.

Until February 13, 2021. That's when a polar vortex smashed its way into the record books, disrupting lives and livelihoods and laying claim to being one of the worst natural disasters in Texas history. We'll be telling stories about this winter for years to come.

More than 4.5 million homes and businesses lost power during the storm, which was likely the most expensive natural disaster in Texas history, causing more than \$295 billion in damages. The official death toll stands at 210.

So how do Texans feel about their electricity providers' response to the unprecedented crisis? That's the question the Hobby School of Public Affairs at the University of Houston asked 1,500 Texans served by the electric grid managed by the Electrical Reliability Council of Texas.

The answer? Consumers rated their electric cooperative's response better than did consumers of other power providers.

Survey results were clear. "Overall, electric cooperatives significantly outperformed their rivals in the eyes of their customers during the winter storm of 2021," the Hobby School concluded.

Some 52% of co-op members who lost power agreed that the power cuts in their area were carried out in an equitable manner. That's more than twice the positive response received by customers of investor-owned utilities operating in the state.

"Co-ops tend to be closer to their customers," said Kirk Watson, dean of the Hobby School when the study took place and a former state senator. "Those relationships matter when it comes to trust and even just giving the benefit of the doubt when times get rough. Also, my experience tells me that co-ops tend to communicate more routinely with folks, and of course that makes a world of difference in a crisis."

That valuable communication was noticed by co-op members.

"As a recent transplant to Fannin County, I just wanted to say how impressed I have been with your updates and communication this week," Joyce Buchanan wrote on Facebook. She's a Fannin County Electric Cooperative member who recently moved to McKinney from Ontario, Canada.

"They have been timely, informative and so helpful in letting us know what to expect from day to day, sometimes hour to hour."

The survey found that co-ops performed their

core functions better than the commercial utilities and consumers believed that co-ops were better able to respond to crises like the February storm than were other electric utilities.

Kathi Calvert is pretty sure she knows why. Calvert, general manager of Crockett-based Houston County EC for the past eight years, points out that the co-op's East Texas members were aware that co-op employees were right there with them, experiencing the same misery and hardships they were. They would not have known that about large, anonymous utilities headquartered who-knows-where.

They saw co-op employees leaving their own dark and powerless homes and making their way to work with several inches of snow and ice covering the ground, temperatures near zero. They saw bucket trucks in the community and linemen clambering up ice-encrusted poles.

She also made sure that when customers called in, they got their questions answered by a person—a member of their own community—even if the answer about such things as rotating outages may not have been what they wanted to hear. She had human resources and accounts payable employees—whoever was available—answering phones and keeping customers informed. She also made sure social media was providing the latest information.

"It was a team effort, a community-based effort," Calvert said. "That's why co-ops are trusted."

EVEN DURING THE STORM, co-op members expressed agreement with that sentiment. Brittany Brewer, a Fannin County EC member, posted this on the co-op's Facebook page February 18: "We are lucky to have such a transparent power provider."

Cameron Smallwood, CEO of United Cooperative Services, a Burleson-based co-op serving parts of North Texas, told Texas lawmakers a similar story during testimony before legislative committees in February. United not only prepared members in advance for the likelihood of debilitating winter weather, Smallwood explained, but the co-op used every means of communication available to keep its members informed.



They saw co-op employees leaving their own dark and powerless homes and making their way to work with several inches of snow and ice covering the ground, temperatures near zero. They saw bucket trucks in the community and linemen clambering up ice-encrusted poles.



LEFT The iced lines of Rio Grande EC.
ABOVE A San Bernard EC crew works to restore power.

Communications is “part of our DNA,” he said. “Our understanding is that customers from other utilities were watching our social media and information because they were lacking information [from their providers].”

State Rep. Shelby Slawson of Stephenville told Smallwood that she is a UCS member. “We’ve heard a lot about the importance of communication with the public. I want to openly commend you and United Co-op for the way you handled that,” she said.

Julie Parsley, CEO of Pedernales EC, reported to her board of directors a few weeks after life had pretty much returned to normal. She recalled that co-op linemen and other workers “were doing dangerous jobs in difficult conditions” during 165 consecutive hours of subfreezing temperatures. They were working 16-hour shifts in temperatures colder than Anchorage, Alaska. Information technology employees who had lost power at home worked out of their cars; member relations agents stayed in hotels close to PEC offices; and the co-op’s urgent team was on the job 24/7, dealing with snow, ice and mud even after the storm subsided.

Systems and equipment occasionally failed, “but the spirit and the resiliency of our employees surpassed that,” Parsley reported. “Our next step is to bring our systems up to the level of our employees, frankly.”

Less than one-fourth of co-op members rated poor or very poor how their co-op handled the rolling outages ERCOT required to reduce power demand. Well more than half of all other power providers’ customers rated their utility’s performance as poor or very poor.

So why did Texas’ 66 electric distribution cooperatives perform better than the municipal and investor-owned utilities? Those who conducted the survey—Watson, senior director and researcher Renée Cross, and Rice University political scientist Mark Jones—suggest that co-ops have built up a reservoir of trust among their members over decades of community-focused service.

“The customers of electric cooperatives are more likely

to believe their electric utility has their best interests at heart than do the customers of commercial electric utilities,” the report said, “and therefore ... are more likely to rate their electricity utility in a positive manner.” ■

TCP WEB EXTRA Find the complete Hobby School report with this story online.

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It took three years of development and \$26 million in advanced Swiss-built watchmaking machinery to create the *Magnificat II*. When we took the watch to renowned watchmaker and watch historian George Thomas, he disassembled it and studied the escapement, balance wheel and the rotor. He remarked on the detailed guilloché face, gilt winding crown, and the crocodile-embossed leather band. He was intrigued by the three interior dials for day, date, and 24-hour moon phases. He estimated that this fine timepiece would cost over \$2,500. We all smiled and told him that the Stauer price was less than \$100. A truly magnificent watch at a truly magnificent price!

Try the *Magnificat II* for 30 days and if you are not receiving compliments, please return the watch for a full refund of the purchase price. The precision-built movement carries a 2 year warranty against defect. If you trust your own good taste, the *Magnificat II* is built for you.

Stauer Magnificat II Timepiece \$399*

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Rating of A+

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*The Stauer
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- Luxurious gold-finished case with exhibition back
- 27-jeweled automatic movement
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Co-op Month Is Cause for Celebration



MESSAGE
FROM CEO

MARK
ROLLANS

EVERY OCTOBER for most of the past century, non-profit cooperatives of all types have recognized National Cooperative Month—and we continue that tradition this year at Medina Electric Cooperative.

Although Co-op Month was celebrated for years before a national proclamation, the U.S. officially lauded co-ops in 1964, when U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Orville Freeman proclaimed October as National Cooperative Month.

This year, members from more than 29,000 cooperatives nationwide proclaim the advantages of cooperative membership and the benefits and value that co-ops deliver.

Co-ops—including Medina EC—are not-for-profit, democratically controlled, member-owned businesses. Co-ops provide value to their members through highly personal customer service; economic development, conservation and service programs; the retirement of capital credits; and democratic representation in business decisions.

Electric co-ops like Medina EC are owned by the consumers they serve. That's why those who receive electric service from America's electric cooperatives are called members, not customers. Co-ops exist to serve their members, and we strive to keep our level of service high even during the toughest times.

From attending an annual meeting to serving on the board, members are encouraged to be actively

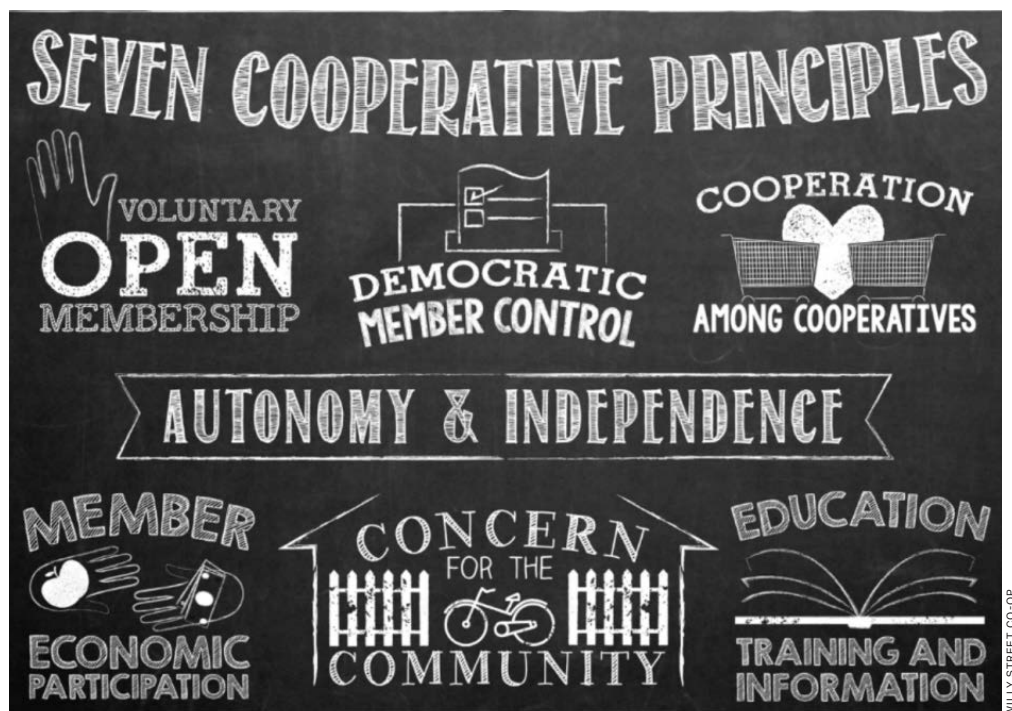
involved in the business of their cooperatives. Members maintain democratic control of their co-op, which means they elect fellow members to represent them on the board of directors.

The cooperative business model also gives members economic control. Because cooperatives are owned and controlled by the people who use their services, decisions are made with the best interests of co-op members in mind—not to financially benefit corporate stockholders. Instead of issuing stock or paying dividends to outside shareholders, co-ops return margins ("profits") to their members in the form of capital credits at the end of the year when they're able.

Another principle that sets co-ops apart from other businesses is their concern for community. Cooperatives have a special responsibility and desire to participate in and support the areas in which their members live and work.

Co-ops are more personal and accessible than other types of businesses because their employees work and live alongside those they serve. Co-ops are dedicated to powering communities and empowering members.

Here at Medina EC, we think the cooperative difference is worth celebrating this year and every year. ■



THEN. NOW. ALWAYS.

We're proud to power your life. We have been part of the communities we serve since 1938, and will continue to be for years to come.

October is National Co-op Month.

#PowerOn

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

Wayne W. Scholtz, (830) 426-1328

Ken Weyand, (830) 426-0762

Third board member pending election

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

Mark Rollans, 1-866-MEC-ELEC, ext. 1045

Outage? Call us.

TOLL-FREE

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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.

Luck of the Draw

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



Chance 1: Register your account on SmartHub.

Sign up at MedinaEC.SmartHub.coop, or download the app and register your account there. SmartHub allows you to report outages with one click, view past electric use and see your use before you get your monthly bill.



Chance 2: Sign up for automated payments.

Have your bill automatically charged to your credit or debit card or bank account each month. Set it up online through SmartHub or by calling 1-866-MEC-ELEC (632-3532).



Chance 3: Choose paperless billing.

Opt out of receiving a paper bill every month and have your bill emailed to you instead. Change your account settings in SmartHub, or call us at 1-866-MEC-ELEC (632-3532) and staff will change it for you.



Chance 4: Join Operation Round Up.

Sign up your account for Operation Round Up and have your monthly electric bill rounded up to the next whole dollar. That spare change is used to make donations to community members and families in need. Sign up at MedinaEC.org/ORU or by calling 1-866-MEC-ELEC (632-3532).



Chance 5: BONUS drawing for all four programs!

If you are signed up for all four programs, you will be entered into an additional drawing for a \$100 bill credit.

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

There will be five separate drawings, and five \$100 bill credits will be awarded and automatically issued as bill credits.

Winners in each category will be randomly selected and announced in the December issue of *Texas Co-op Power*.



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. 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 5. You can apply for both Operation Grocery Give and Operation Round Up.



Get all the details on Grocery Give and general ORU donations at MedinaEC.org/ORU. Applications for both are due on **November 5**.



My Co-op Is Cool

Each month, you have a chance to win a custom Medina EC Coleman cooler as a thank-you for your membership!

MedinaEC.org/Cooler



Summer 2022 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 2022? The Government-in-Action Youth Tour may be for them. Apply Now!

Deadline is January 7.

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

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





Co-op Connections Corner: A Variety of Savings

MEDINA EC KNOWS that our members would like to save money on a variety of purchases they make. Here are a few of our local Co-op Connections business partners that would like to help you save money in Medina EC's service area.

Boehle's Signs & Graphics—Hondo

(830) 426-4690 | Boehlesigns@yahoo.com
10% off business card orders

Connell's Hardware—Sabinal

(830) 988-2423
10% discount on nonsale items

Executive Inn of Hondo—Hondo

(830) 426-2535
10% off posted rates; must ask for discount before check-in

Kaiser Medical Management—San Antonio

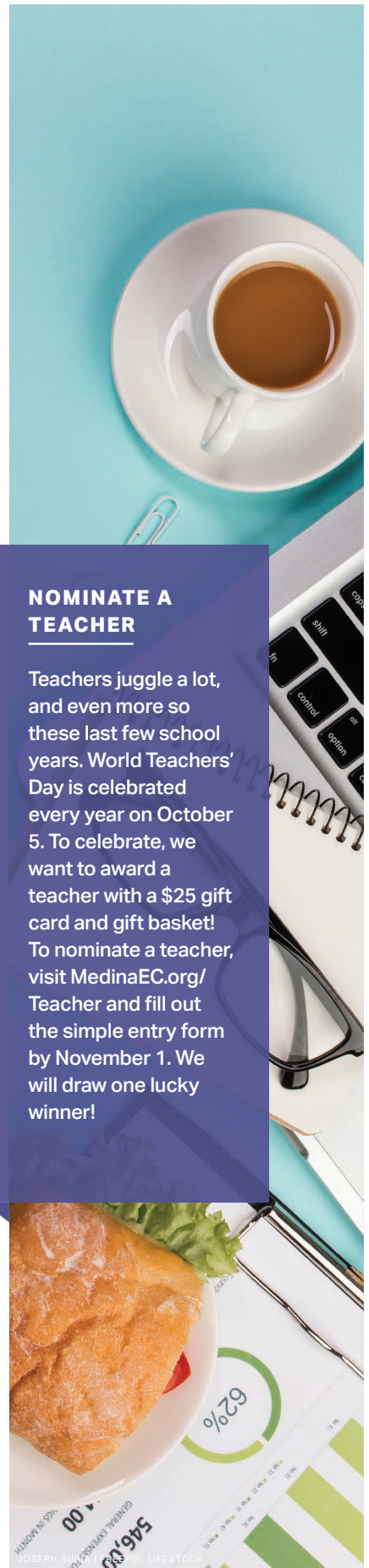
(210) 764-0418 | KaiserMedicalManagement.com
50% off health or wellness fairs, corporate wellness lectures, and on-site vitamin shot clinics; 20% off biometrics and blood work

Landmark Inn State Historic Site—Castroville

(830) 931-2133 | LandmarkInnStaff@THC.Texas.Gov
20% off the regular price of any admissions, max. discount \$25; one complimentary admission when a second admission of equal or greater value is purchased



Learn more about all the benefits of Medina EC's Co-op Connections program at MedinaEC.org/Connections or on the app.

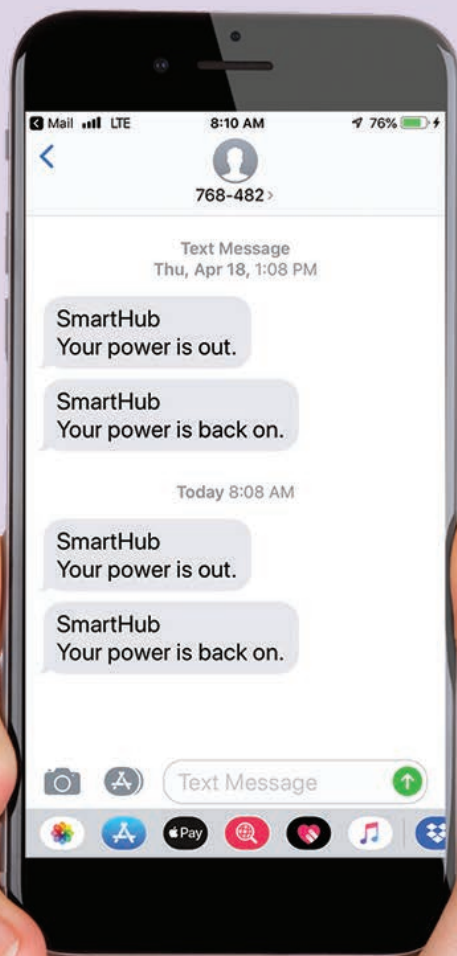


NOMINATE A TEACHER

Teachers juggle a lot, and even more so these last few school years. World Teachers' Day is celebrated every year on October 5. To celebrate, we want to award a teacher with a \$25 gift card and gift basket! To nominate a teacher, visit MedinaEC.org/Teacher and fill out the simple entry form by November 1. We will draw one lucky winner!

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CHAT FEATURE ON MEDINAEC.ORG

Members can easily connect with a member service representative without having to make a call.

In the bottom right corner when you visit MedinaEC.org, you will see a chat bubble. Click there to chat with a member service representative between 8 a.m. – 5 p.m., Monday through Friday.



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Tips To Lower Winter Bills

IT SEEMS INTUITIVE that electricity use increases during winter, when sunlight is limited, days are shorter and temperatures are much lower. You're surely aware of the battle to keep your home a decent temperature during those colder months.

How can you also keep money in your wallet while being comfortable? Use the tips below to conserve energy and save money.

Prevention is key. Use SmartHub to monitor your electric use. This tool contains helpful weather data that can help you better understand why a bill may have been lower or higher than you were expecting.

Seal your home, and be sure you have adequate insulation. In the winter, the goal is to keep the air that you paid to heat inside your home, so seal any gaps that create drafts in your home.

Reduce wasted heat by installing a programmable thermostat. Most importantly, be sure to program it after it is installed so that you won't waste energy and money heating your home when you aren't there. The U.S. Department of Energy recommends 68 degrees as the winter setting when you are home, and a few degrees lower if you can.

Avoid space heaters. They are generally inefficient and add up when used. The average space heater costs about 15 cents an hour in electricity to operate. That may not sound like much, but if you use it all month it could add more than \$100 to your bill. If you have to use a space heater, limit it to one room and only use it while you are in the room.

Turn off lights when not in use. Replace incandescent light bulbs with LEDs, which use at least 75% less energy.

Lower the temperature on your water heater. The U.S. Department of Energy recommends using the warm setting (120 degrees) during fall and winter months.

Open blinds and curtains during the day to allow sunlight to warm your home. Close them at night to keep cold, drafty air out.

Wash clothes in cold water, and use cold-water detergent whenever possible.

Get additional tips to help you save money this winter at MedinaEC.org/Cold, or if you have questions about your bill, call our member service representatives at 1-866-MEC-ELEC (632-3532). ■

Get tips on how to
save energy and
money during
cold weather at
MedinaEC.org/Cold.

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All three blades in the *Triple Play Knife Collection* are made with genuine 440A stainless steel and measure an impressive 52-58 on the Rockwell scale for hardness. There's the reliable lockback blade, designed to open up and never let you down. The two-blade trapper knife, engineered for those who trap small game, and a solid, simple, fine fixed blade measuring 9" in overall length, and the antler-textured handles on every knife complete the expert hunter look. **Satisfaction Guaranteed or Your Money Back.**

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*Discount is only for customers who use the offer code versus the listed original Stauer.com price.

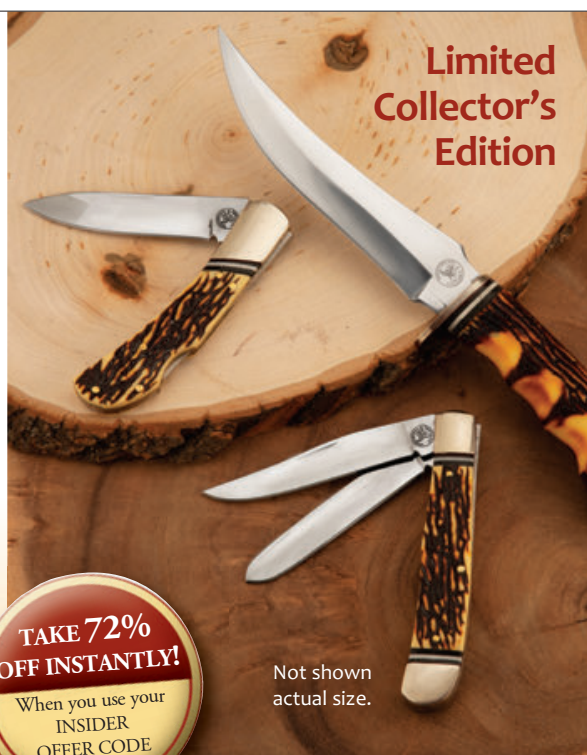
What customers are saying about Stauer knives...

★★★★★

"First off, the shipping was fast and the quality is beyond what I paid for the knife. Overall I am a satisfied customer!"

— D., Houston, Texas

California residents, please call 1-800-333-2045 regarding Proposition 65 regulations before purchasing this product.



- 3-piece set: 9" overall fixed knife with 5" blade; 4 1/8" trapper knife with two 3 3/8" blades; 4" overall lockback knife with 3" blade
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– Sherri H., Granville, NY

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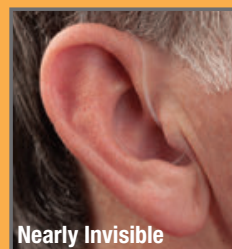
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TCP WEB EXTRA

Listen to W.F. Strong read this story.

Proving Ground

Future presidents crossed the Wild Horse Desert together on a military mission

BY W.F. STRONG

HE WAS 23 YEARS OLD, riding his horse south of Corpus Christi in the region that would later be called the King Ranch. But that now-legendary, sprawling ranch would not be founded for another eight years.

This vast stretch of sandy prairie was then known as the Wild Horse Desert. In some ways it was a spooky place—ghostly. Visitors could see horse tracks everywhere—but no people. There were plenty of well-worn trails, but the population was only four-legged in August 1845.

Folks reckoned that these horses were the descendants of those that arrived with Hernán Cortés more than three centuries earlier, when he came to conquer the Aztecs. Some of his horses escaped,

migrated north and bred like rabbits (if you can say that about horses).

Our young man—a graduate of West Point and a newly minted second lieutenant—rode with a regiment of soldiers under the command of Gen. Zachary Taylor. They were under orders to establish Fort Texas on the Rio Grande and enforce that river as the southern border of the United States. Fort Texas would shortly become Fort Brown, the fort from which Brownsville would take its name.

The young lieutenant, who had excelled as a horseman at West Point, was so impressed with the seemingly infinite herds of wild horses in South Texas that he made a note in his journal. He wrote:

“A few days out from Corpus Christi, the

immense herd of wild horses that ranged at that time between the Nueces and the Rio Grande was directly in front of us. I rode out a ways to see the extent of the herd. The country was a rolling prairie, and from the higher ground, the vision was obstructed only by the curvature of the Earth. As far as the eye could reach to the right, the herd extended. To the left, it extended equally. There was no estimating the number of animals in it; I doubt that they could all have been corralled in the state of Rhode Island or Delaware at one time. If they had been, they would have been so thick that the pasture would have given out the first day.”

Both Taylor and his second lieutenant would distinguish themselves on that journey through South Texas.

Taylor had no idea that his visit to the Wild Horse Desert would lead him on to victories in the Mexican-American War that started the next year with an attack on his troops near the Rio Grande—and to political victory back home. He would become the 12th president of the United States.

Taylor’s dashing second lieutenant would also ascend to the presidency, 20 years after him. The young man on high ground, surveying the astounding scene of wild mustangs grazing by the thousands, would become the hero of many battles.

He would ultimately lead Union forces to victory in the Civil War and become the youngest president of the U.S. His presidential memoirs would become a runaway bestseller published by Mark Twain, who would describe the book as “the most remarkable work of its kind since *Caesar’s Commentaries*.”

It was written by Hiram U. Grant. Well, that was his birth name. But when he entered West Point, a clerical error deleted the name Hiram and his middle name became his first name, and that is the name you know him by: Ulysses. He was Ulysses S. Grant. ■



Cheese

Four dishes, four ways to present the charm of cheese

BY MEGAN MYERS, FOOD EDITOR

Savory recipes are always a go-to with cheeses, but around here we love sweet too. In her new cookbook, *Southern Sugar*, Belinda Smith-Sullivan features a variety of delectable cheesecakes, including this recipe using sweet cushaw squash. If you can't find this crookneck squash, then butternut squash, pumpkin or white sweet potatoes are suitable substitutes.



BELINDA
SMITH-SULLIVAN

Sweet Cushaw and Pecan Cheesecake

CRUST

- 1¾ cups gingersnap crumbs**
- 2 tablespoons sugar**
- ¼ cup (½ stick) unsalted butter, melted**
- ¼ cup finely chopped pecans**

FILLING

- 3 packages cream cheese (8 ounces each), room temperature**
- 2 cups cooked and puréed cushaw squash**
- 1 cup light brown sugar**
- 3 eggs, room temperature**
- ¼ cup sour cream, room temperature**
- ¼ cup heavy cream, room temperature**

- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon**
- ¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg**
- ½ teaspoon ground ginger or allspice**
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract**
- ½ cup chopped pecans**

TOPPING

- ¾ cup packed brown sugar**
- ¼ cup (½ stick) butter, room temperature**
- ¼ cup heavy cream, room temperature**
- 1 cup coarsely chopped pecans**

1. CRUST Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In a medium bowl, blend crumbs, sugar, butter and pecans and press into the bottom of a 9-inch springform pan. Wrap the bottom and outside of the pan with foil.

2. FILLING Using a stand mixer, beat cream cheese and squash until fluffy. Gradually add brown sugar, then add eggs one at a time. Add sour cream and heavy cream and continue to beat. Add cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger and vanilla and beat until smooth. Fold in pecans and pour filling into prepared pan.

3. Place cheesecake pan in another larger

pan and place in preheated oven. Fill the larger pan halfway with hot water. Bake 60–70 minutes or until slightly firm in the center. Turn off oven, leaving door ajar about 8 inches, and allow cheesecake to cool in oven 1 hour. Remove pans from oven, remove cheesecake pan from water bath and cool completely in pan.

4. TOPPING In a small, heavy saucepan, combine brown sugar and butter over low heat, stirring until sugar dissolves. Increase heat and bring to a boil. Remove from heat and stir in cream and pecans. Let cool slightly. Pour warm topping over cooled cheesecake in pan and refrigerate. When ready to serve, remove the sides of springform pan and place cheesecake on a serving dish.

SERVES 12

Reprinted with permission from *Southern Sugar* by Belinda Smith-Sullivan (Gibbs Smith, 2021).

TCP WEB EXTRA Follow along with Megan Myers and her adventures in the kitchen at stetted.com, where she features a recipe for Goat Cheese Crackers With Herbs.



Cheese Grits

ANNA LOUISE EVANS
PEDERNALES EC

Evans has been making this dish since 1970, when as a teenager she won a blue ribbon with the recipe at a county fair. It's easy to see why, as these grits are fluffy, creamy and cheesy all at once.

¾ cup hominy grits
3 cups water
½ teaspoon salt
6 tablespoons (¾ stick) butter
8 ounces sharp cheddar cheese, grated
½ teaspoon hot sauce
Dash of seasoned salt
2 eggs, beaten
Dash of paprika

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees and grease a 2-quart baking dish.
2. Cook grits in water and salt as directed on package. Add butter, cheese, hot sauce and seasoned salt, stirring to melt. Slowly pour in eggs, stirring the entire time to prevent scrambling.
3. Pour into prepared baking dish and sprinkle paprika over the top. Bake 1 hour, until puffed and golden brown.

SERVES 6

\$500 WINNER

Grilled Ham and Cheese Panini With Collard Greens and Tomato

RICKY PATTERSON
COSERV



Garlicky greens turn this grilled cheese sandwich into a filling, crave-worthy meal. Don't neglect pressing the sandwich, which helps meld the flavors together. If you happen to have an electric panini press at home, the process is a cinch.

SERVES 1-2



3 leaves collard greens or kale
2 tablespoons olive oil
3 cloves garlic, minced
3 tablespoons water
⅓ cup (¼ stick) butter, softened
2 large slices sourdough bread
4 slices provolone cheese
2 slices ham
2 slices (¼ inch each) ripe tomato
Salt and pepper

1. Wash greens and pat dry. Remove stems, then stack leaves and slice into thin ribbons. Set aside.
2. In a large skillet, heat olive oil on medium. Add garlic and sauté until sizzling. Add greens and stir to wilt. Add water, then cover skillet and cook about 5 minutes, until water evaporates. Remove greens from pan, press out excess liquid and set aside. Wipe pan.
3. Butter one side of each bread slice. Place one slice, buttered side down, in skillet. Top with 2 slices provolone, 2 slices ham, cooked greens and tomato slices. Season with salt and pepper. Top with remaining 2 slices provolone and bread, buttered side up.
4. Lay a piece of foil over the sandwich and place a cast iron or other heavy skillet on top of foil to press sandwich down. Cook on medium heat 5-7 minutes, until bottom is golden brown. Remove and reserve foil and flip sandwich. Place foil, buttery side down, over flipped sandwich. Weigh down and continue cooking 5-7 minutes, until other side is golden brown and cheese is melty. Let sit 2-5 minutes before cutting in half.

TCP \$500 Recipe Contest

TEXAS' BEST DUE OCTOBER 10

What stands out in your kitchen as classic Texan cuisine? Enter at TexasCoopPower.com/contests by October 10 for a chance to win \$500.

[MORE RECIPES >](#)



Pumpkin, Pepper Jack and Poblano Enchilada Casserole

LINDA STEINHARDT
PEDERNALES EC

Perfect for a large family, this enchilada casserole features a pumpkin-based sauce and plenty of vegetables for a comforting, hearty dish. You can use flour or corn tortillas, and keep in mind you might need extra tortillas to fit across the casserole dish.

CASSEROLE

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 onion, diced
- 2 red bell peppers, diced
- 8 ounces sliced mushrooms
- 2 chicken breasts, cooked, cooled and shredded
- 1 can (15 ounces) black beans, rinsed and drained
- 2 poblano peppers, roasted, peeled and diced
- 6 tortillas, plus more as needed
- 8 ounces shredded pepper jack cheese

SAUCE

- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup pumpkin purée
- 1 can (15 ounces) tomato sauce
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup milk
- 2–3 chipotle peppers in adobo, plus a spoonful of the adobo sauce
- 2–3 cloves garlic
- 2 tablespoons chili powder
- 1 tablespoon cumin

1. CASSEROLE Preheat oven to 375 degrees.
2. In a large skillet, heat olive oil on medium-high. Sauté onion, bell peppers

and mushrooms until softened and slightly browned. Add chicken, black beans and poblanos and stir to combine. Remove filling from heat and set aside.

3. SAUCE In a food processor or large blender, purée sauce ingredients until smooth.

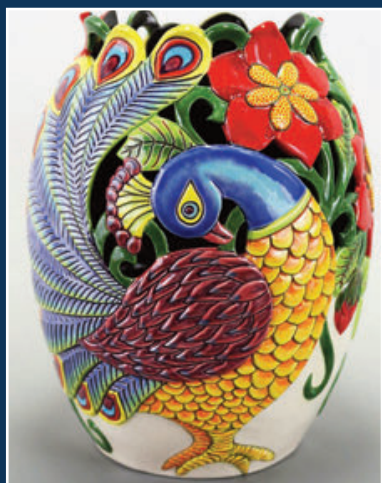
4. In a 9-by-13-inch baking dish, add a thin layer of sauce to coat the bottom. Layer dish with enough tortillas to cover the sauce (breaking if needed), half of the filling, $\frac{1}{3}$ of the sauce and $\frac{1}{3}$ of the cheese, then repeat. Finish with another layer of tortillas, remaining sauce and remaining cheese.

5. Bake 30–35 minutes, broiling for the last 2–3 minutes if you like the cheese a bit browned and crispy.

SERVES 8

TCP WEB EXTRA Cheese has long been a staple in Co-op Country kitchens. Visit the Food page at TexasCoopPower.com and search "cheese" to find hundreds of recipes featuring the yummy stuff.

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txartsandcraftsfair.com



Kerrville Outdoor Painters Event
Sept 22-26
kackerrville.com

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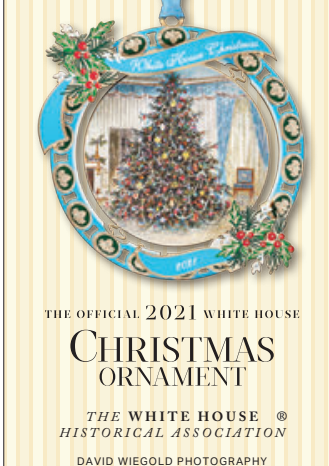
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LBJStore.com



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Celebrating 35 years of publication. Large 15" x 20" calendar with 12 watercolors by Texas State Artist George Boutwell. \$12.50 plus sales tax and \$3.50 shipping. Quantity price on website.

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COURTESY CHET GARNER

The Grove's Groove

Normal is a matter of perspective at a haunted Jefferson home

BY CHET GARNER

THE STORY ABOUT the lady in white was spooky. The tale of a barber who visits regularly was strange. Anecdotes of disembodied noises and unexpected presences left me unsettled. But the scariest part of my visit to the Grove—Jefferson's most haunted home—was my guide: Mitchel Whittington seemed totally normal.

He wasn't wearing a dark robe or making alarming pronouncements. He simply recounted his ghostly encounters as if describing his morning coffee routine. His matter-of-fact presentation left me with the unnerving conclusion that he was telling the truth. I was terrified and intrigued.

Jefferson sits in the northeast corner of Texas and was once a bustling port city from which barges laden with cotton steamed to New Orleans. The downtown retains its historical architecture and charm. Even so, every building seems haunted and underscores Jefferson's reputation as our state's most haunted town.

When I arrived for my tour of the Grove, I expected an ominous Victorian structure covered in spiderwebs. Instead, I found a well-kept, one-story home with Whittington on the front porch to welcome me with a smile. He led me room by room, describing mysterious events he has witnessed.

I asked if it's scary to live in a haunted house. Whittington laughed and said, "No, it isn't. It's a peek into the other side. And when I'm gone, I'm gonna come back and check on it."

I enjoyed the tour but was happy to leave safely on this side of reality. ■

ABOVE Chet found Mitchel Whittington, owner of the Grove, to be totally normal. Chet, not so much.

TCP WEB EXTRA See if Chet's video includes anybody from the other side greeting him. Watch all his Explorations on *The Daytripper* on PBS.

Know Before You Go

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

OCTOBER

07

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

08

New Braunfels [8-9] Willie Nelson & Family With Special Guest Pat Green, (830) 964-3800, whitewaterrocks.com

Fredericksburg [8-10] Texas Mesquite Arts Festival, (830) 997-8515, texasmesquiteartfestivals.com

Ingram [8-9, 15-16, 22-23, 29-30] The Bad Seed, (830) 367-5121, ctxlivetheatre.com

09

Brenham Johnny Cash Tribute by Bennie Wheels, (979) 337-7240, thebarnhillcenter.com

Fort McKavett Fall Star Party, (325) 396-2358, facebook.com/visitfortmckavett

Ingram Kerr County Celtic Festival, (830) 367-5121, kerrcountyceltic.com

Kyle Founders' Parade, (512) 262-3939, cityofkyle.com

Lago Vista St. Mary, Our Lady of the Lake Oktoberfest, (512) 267-2644, stmaryoktoberfest.org

Stonewall VFD Fall Fish Fry Drive-Thru, (830) 644-5571, visitfredericksburgtx.com

Chappell Hill [9-10] Scarecrow Festival, (979) 836-6033, chappellhillhistoricalsociety.com

14

Edom [9-10] Art Festival,
(903) 258-5192,
visitedom.com

15

**South Padre Island [14-16]
Hispanic Genealogical
Conference,** (956) 497-6680,
rgvhgs.org

**Victoria Project Tickled
Pink,** (361) 649-6190,
crossroadsguardiansofhope.com

**Canton [15-16] Texas Star
Quilters Guild Show,**
(214) 289-3936, texasstarquilters.wixsite.com/tsqq

**La Grange [15-16] Heritage
Fest & Muziky,** (979) 968-9399,
czechtexas.org

16

**Canton Van Zandt County
Veterans Memorial Military
Show,** (972) 896-0776,
vzcm.org

Creedmoor Oktoberfest,
(512) 243-6700,
cityofcreedmoortx.gov

**George West Michael Twitty:
Memories of Conway Show,**
(361) 436-1098,
dobie-westtheatre.com

**Lakehills Medina Lake
Fire Department BBQ,**
(830) 751-2525,
facebook.com/medinalakevfd

**McKinney Halloween at
the Heard,** (972) 562-5566,
heardmuseum.org

**Palestine Dogwood Double
5K/10K,** (903) 723-5100,
visitpalestine.com

**Ponder Denton County
Cowboy Church Family Fall
Festival,** (940) 479-2043,
dentoncountycowboychurch.org

MORE EVENTS >

TCP Submit Your Event

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

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Fredericksburg

Getaway Contest

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Pick of the Month

Texas Fleece & Fiber Festival

Kerrville, October 28–31

(361) 537-0503

texasfleeceandfiber.com

A small group of hand spinners and weavers organized this festival in 1989. It continues to promote natural Texas fibers by educating the public and marketing products of the animals the organizers raise. Read *Serendipity Spinners* from May 2021 on our website to learn more about the craft of spinning wool.

OCTOBER EVENTS CONTINUED

16

Waco Oakwood Cemetery's Walking Tales,

(254) 717-1763,

facebook.com/

heartoftexasstorytellingguild

Waxahachie St. Joseph Oktoberfest,

(972) 938-1953,

stjosephwaxahachie.com

17

Palacios First Baptist

Church of Palacios

Homecoming Sunday,

(361) 972-5486,

fbcpalacios.org

20

Lufkin Steep Canyon

Rangers, (936) 633-5454,

angelinaarts.org

21

Fredericksburg [21–23]

Food & Wine Fest,

(830) 997-8515,

fbgfoodandwinefest.com

Warrenton [21–30] Renck

Hall Antique Show,

(979) 966-7083,

renckhallandfield.com

22

Burton [22–30] La Bahia

Antique Show,

(979) 289-2684,

labahiaantiques.com

23

Brenham Quebe Sisters,

(979) 337-7240,

thebarnhillcenter.com

Hearne Sesquicentennial Celebration,

(979) 595-8150,

cityofhearne.org

Point Venture Holiday

Bazaar, (281) 799-0114,

facebook.com/

pvholidaybazaar

25

Jacksonville Trunk or

Treat, (903) 586-2217,

jacksonvilletexas.com

30

Sanger Sellabration,

(940) 458-7702,

sangertexas.com/

sellabration

Seguin Pecan Fest,

(830) 379-0933,

seguingonuts.com

NOVEMBER

04

Sulphur Springs [4–7]

The Wall That Heals,

(903) 243-2206,

thewallthatheals-sstx.org

06

George West A Day of

Stories, (361) 436-1098,

dobie-westtheatre.com

McKinney St. Gabriel

Holiday Boutique, (972)

542-7170, stgabriel.org

Granbury [6–7] Sesquicen-

tennial Celebration,

(817) 573-5548,

visitgranbury.com

Huntsville [6–7] Holiday

Market, (936) 661-2545,

huntsvilleantiqueshow.com

Fillin' Stations

Some are tourist attractions. Others are a bit more off the beaten path. Fillin' stations can transport us to another time and serve as a place to fill up our vehicles and our bellies. Load up the station wagon and drive down for some full-service fun and adventure.

BY GRACE FULTZ

CLOCKWISE FROM RIGHT

KIMBERLY FURNISH
KARNES EC

"An old pump in historic downtown Llano."

JANICE REAVES
JACKSON EC

"Thomas Reaves waiting to serve the next customer at an Humble station in Livingston, circa 1930s."

BILLY LAUDERDALE
PEDERNALES EC

Vintage Gulf full-service fillin' station in Waco, at North 15th Street and Washington Avenue.

THERESA LAGUNA
PEDERNALES EC

"Old-time gas station in Schulenburg."



Upcoming Contests

DUE OCT 10 Public Art

DUE NOV 10 The Texas Experience

DUE DEC 10 All Wet

Enter online at TexasCoopPower.com/contests.

TCP WEB EXTRA See Focus on Texas on our website for more Fillin' Stations photos.



Not About To Fixate

We love our old home, even without the wonders a makeover could bring

BY SHERYL SMITH-RODGERS
ILLUSTRATION BY
CHANELLE NIBBELINK

MY HUSBAND can watch fixer-upper programs for hours. Not me. I disappear while show hosts transform one outdated house after another into spectacular showcases. Thank you, but I'll keep our home's mostly original look and layout.

Still, sometimes a fixer-upper segment reels me in. I sneak glances at the TV while hosts work their magic on a house that will soon have a fresh design and sophisticated decor. As the reveal unfolds and the homeowners react with unbridled joy, I can't help but wonder ...

What if?

What if we remodeled our 1950s kitchen? What if we replaced the laminate countertops with glossy granite? Put in snazzy backsplashes and dramatic lighting? Maybe knock out some pine cabinets and add an island? Take down a dining

room wall for a more open feel? Pull up the vinyl tiles and put in plank flooring?

Years ago we splurged on upgrades to our bathrooms. We bought new sinks and light fixtures. A contractor did some tile work, but the same old vinyl floor tiles stayed. So did a white porcelain gas wall heater.

Guests love that heater. Our built-in ironing board, too. "My grandparents had those in their house," they recall fondly.

They also love our oak flooring in the bedrooms and living room. They don't see the water splotches, ugly scratches and other stains. I rarely do either. Likewise, I neglect to see claw marks on a pocket door. A back doorbell that's never worked. A walk-in closet without a door (so I hung a long curtain).

Oh, but if the kitchen's wooden drawers had rollers. Our utensil drawer sticks the worst. And the cabinets could really use fresh paint. As needed, I touch up worn spots. A few nicks reveal mustard yellow and fire engine red, bygone colors chosen by the couple who built the house in 1956.

She taught first grade in our town and hosted Easter egg hunts for her students in the backyard. He was the ag teacher at the high school. Together they raised their three children and later, both in their 70s, drew their last breaths in the house we've now called home for nearly two decades.

What if?

Yes, I wonder. I confess that sometimes fixer-upper shows sway me to think our house isn't good enough. That a remodel and updates would make me happier.

But would they?

Deep down I know the truth. We may not live in a showcase. But, scars and all, this house is where we feel the most content, comfortable and safe. We have everything we need. And, after all, isn't that what makes any house a true home? ■



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COLOR YOUR CO-OP

A CONTEST FOR KIDS | MEDINAE.CORG/COLORYOURCOOP

CONTEST OVERVIEW: Children who live in one of the 17 counties served by Medina EC are encouraged to participate in Medina EC's Color Your Co-op contest to design the 2022 water bottle labels.

Two entry categories:

1. **Freestyle:** Use the freestyle format to design your own label. Artwork must not contain any copyright material.
2. **Lightbulb Style:** Use the predesigned lightbulb label to creatively color. Children may only enter one category. A winner for each category will be chosen. Each winner will win a \$50 gift card. The contest begins on September 25, 2021, and ends November 30, 2021. Contest rules and dates may be changed at Medina EC's discretion. For every entry, Medina EC will make a \$1 donation to a local charity.

ELIGIBILITY: Children who live in one of the 17 counties served by Medina EC and are 4 to 17 years of age by November 30, 2021, are eligible. Employees and their immediate families are not eligible to participate.

CONTEST RULES: Artwork must be submitted or postmarked by Sunday, November 30, 2021, at 11:59 p.m. Late entries will not be accepted. Freestyle submission must be original work created by applicants. Each child may only submit one design total. Artwork must include the submission form. All submitted artwork is owned by Medina EC and may be shared throughout MEC communication channels including but not limited to website, social media and magazine. Winners and their parents or guardians agree to the use of the winner's name, age, school and/or city to promote the Color Your Co-op program.

DESIGN RULES:

- Artwork must be flat (two-dimensional) and may use crayon, markers, paint, pencil, ink, and/or pastels. Artwork may also be digitally designed using digital art software.
- Designs must not include copy-

righted material, including but not limited to company logos, product brands, store names, characters, etc.

- Designs must not be folded or damaged.
- Do not include the artist's name on the front of the artwork.

SUBMISSIONS: For Category 1: Freestyle: Artwork must be submitted using the template in the October issue of *Texas Co-op Power* or from MedinaEC.org/ColorYourCoop. Category 2: Lightbulb Style: Artwork must use the template included in the October issue of *Texas Co-op Power* or from MedinaEC.org/ColorYourCoop.

JUDGING: Entries will be judged by Medina EC staff based on creativity, uniqueness, overall visual appeal, composition and age appropriateness.

PRIZES: Two winners will be chosen; one for each category. Each winner will receive a \$50 gift card. Winners will be announced in December and their work will be featured on future Medina EC water bottles and in other Medina EC communication channels as needed.

For every entry submitted, Medina EC will make a \$1 donation to a local charity. The charity is TBD.

SUBMISSION: Include the submission form with entry.

In Person - Drop off your entry at any Medina EC office during normal business hours.

Mail - Mail your entry to:

Medina EC
ATTN Color Your Co-op
PO Box 370
Hondo, TX 78861

****Do not bend your entry!**** Entries will not be returned.

Digital

Upload a high-resolution version of your artwork at MedinaEC.org/ColorYourCoop or email MyCoop@MedinaEC.org. Please do not use your phone to take a picture of your entry to submit. If you want to submit digitally, please use a high-quality scanner to send a copy of the entry.

CHILD'S FIRST & LAST NAME

CHILD'S AGE & BIRTHDAY

CHILD'S SCHOOL & GRADE

PARENT OR GUARDIAN'S NAME

EMAIL ADDRESS

MAILING ADDRESS

RESIDENCE ADDRESS IF DIFFERENT

CATEGORY 1: FREESTYLE

CHILD'S FIRST & LAST NAME

CHILD'S AGE & BIRTHDAY

CHILD'S SCHOOL & GRADE

PARENT OR GUARDIAN'S NAME

EMAIL ADDRESS

MAILING ADDRESS

RESIDENCE ADDRESS IF DIFFERENT

CATEGORY 2: LIGHTBULBS

COLORS OF COOPERATIVES

THE 7 COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLES

VOLUNTARY AND OPEN MEMBERSHIP

DEMOCRATIC MEMBER CONTROL

MEMBERS' ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION

AUTONOMY AND INDEPENDENCE

EDUCATION, TRAINING AND INFORMATION

COOPERATION AMONG COOPERATIVES

CONCERN FOR COMMUNITY

