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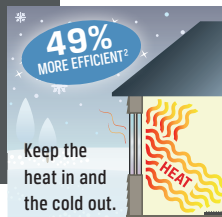
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Yard work doesn't cut it for the dedicated drivers and DIYers of lawn mower racing.

Story and Photos by Julia Robinson

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ON THE COVER

Jay Jones of College Station hurtles around a track in Gun Barrel City in his souped-up mower.
Photo by Julia Robinson

ABOVE

Texas Tech University student Kassidy Edwards hikes her bike out of Fresno Canyon in Big Bend Ranch State Park.
Photo by Jerod Foster



TCP *Contests and More*

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FOCUS ON TEXAS PHOTOS

I Love

RECOMMENDED READING

Read *Wiley's Sages* from December 2013 to learn more about the undisputably mighty Wiley College debate team. Melvin B. Tolson organized the team 100 years ago this month, October 28, 1924.

Latin America Celebrates

EVER WONDER WHY National Hispanic Heritage Month, commemorated each September 15–October 15, spans two calendar months?

The celebration begins in the middle of September to coincide with independence days in several Latin American countries: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua celebrate theirs September 15, followed by Mexico on September 16, Chile on September 18 and Belize on September 21. The month also overlaps with Día de la Raza, a Latin American holiday that for some replaces Columbus Day, October 12, to celebrate the region's mixed Indigenous and European heritage.



Night Vision

Lago Vista, a community nestled along Lake Travis in Central Texas, made history 65 years ago this month. The town, northwest of Austin, became the first rural community in the U.S. to get streetlights, October 20, 1959, thanks to Pedernales Electric Cooperative.

FINISH THIS SENTENCE

My favorite hand-me-down is ...

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: **I can't wait to learn ...**

How to quilt. Katie Phillips' story has inspired me [*In the Beginning*, August 2024]. It's never too late.

JANET KELLY
BLUEBONNET EC
ELGIN

How to make tamales from scratch.

JENNY CARPENTER
CENTRAL TEXAS EC
INGRAM

Something new every day so I don't grow old.

KATHY BOLSEN
PEDERNALES EC
SPRING BRANCH

About the world from my great-grandchildren.

KAT CROSS
HOUSTON COUNTY EC
CROCKETT

Visit our website to see more responses.

AUGUST 2024 Open Roads, Open Eyes

“Beautiful pictures and a great story. Texas does have wonderful scenery and vistas. We all need to slow down and see what’s out there.”

MARY HENDERSON HARP
VIA FACEBOOK



WYATT MCSPADDEN

Getting Electricity

I was born in 1944 and raised on a farm in southwest Iowa [In the Beginning, August 2024]. We did not get power until 1947 or 1948. Our house was wired for electricity, but all progress toward lighting up the homes stopped when the war started.

We had the light switches, which, of course, did nothing, and my mom would tell me that I played with those switches so much, she wondered if they would still work when we actually did get power. Lucky for me they did.

Sheryl S. McNally
Pedernales EC
Marble Falls

Dimmitt, Darn It

Having grown up in Earth, the photo on Page 8 caught my eye [Open Roads, Open Eyes; August 2024]. I don’t recall silage mounds back in the 1950s, but I do recall Dimmitt being spelled with two T’s.

Evelyn McAnelly
Medina EC
Hondo

Earthy Elocution

Lyndon B. Johnson could be earthy in his language at times, and many jokes and stories wouldn’t be suitable for a family magazine [Sense and Humor, August 2024].

One of the milder anecdotes involved a crisis in Greek politics between Prime Minister Georgios Papandreou and his son and political opponent Andreas Papandreou. LBJ called the Greek ambassador in to urge the Greeks to get their act together.

LBJ, who wasn’t good at lengthy foreign names, told the ambassador, “You tell old Papa-what’s-his-name to get together with that other Papa-what’s-his-name and work something out.”

Charles Wukasch
Pedernales EC
Austin

Required Reading

Finish This Sentence in the August issue hit a chord. Elmer Kelton’s books are classic, and the one noted, *The Time It Never Rained*, is a must-read.

Charles Patterson
Navarro County EC
Corsicana



CORBIS | GETTY IMAGES

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

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GRASSROOTS MOVEMENT

Yard work doesn't cut it
for the dedicated drivers and
DIYers of lawn mower racing





STORY AND PHOTOS BY JULIA ROBINSON

After first responders rushed over to Bobby Lechinger, who was face down on the dirt track after flipping his lawn mower, they tended to his injuries, including a fractured foot.

But Lechinger still had his eyes on a prize.

“Please don’t cut my racing pant leg,” the mower racer from Madisonville told the ambulance crew. “I have to race tomorrow.”

Lawn mower racing may sound like a joke, but the drivers are seriously dedicated to their sport.

With four wheels (mostly on the ground), cutting blades removed and a low center of gravity, lawn mower racing doesn’t make for many crashes, but it can still be dangerous. On this hot June morning in Gun Barrel City, southeast of Dallas, Lechinger was among a dozen drivers hurtling around a small dirt oval track tucked between baseball fields and a Baptist church. This is the home track for the Lone Star Mower Racing Association and for an unexpected blend of grassroots engineering, adrenaline-fueled competition, light-hearted humor and Texas grit.

The competitors don full-body motocross-style racing suits and safety gear and push their minuscule home-built machines to the edge. With the temperature pushing into the mid-90s before racing even starts, everyone is sweating but smiling. A small but curious crowd has filled the bleachers, some huddling under umbrellas for relief from the intense sunshine. As the green flag waves, the competitors roar across the starting line, and the dirt flies.

Lawn mower racing traces its origins, as you might expect, to a laugh in a bar.

In 1973, Irishman Jim Gavin and a group of his mates from West Sussex, in England, were bemoaning the increasing cost of motor sports, with sponsorships and professional drivers pushing out everyday enthusiasts. But they realized they all owned lawn mowers and decided to race them. Eighty competitors showed up for that first gathering of the British Lawn Mower Racing Association.

CLOCKWISE FROM OPPOSITE Kevin Council, a “horsepower junkie,” raced dirt bikes for 20 years before discovering lawn mower racing. Annsley Howard, with her dad, John, has been racing mowers since she was 9. Richard Wooley holds off Jesse Vick during the U.S. Lawn Mower Racing Association national finals in June in Gun Barrel City. Family, friends and curiosity seekers find the action way more exciting than watching grass grow.



Lawn mower racing embodies the spirit of Texas itself: bold, resilient and unapologetically fun.

In the U.S., there's an annual lawn mower race in Indiana that started in 1963, and there had been a few one-off races over the years at county fairs and rodeo sideshows. But nothing was formalized until 1992, when STA-BIL, an engine fuel additives brand, announced a publicity stunt on April Fool's Day: the first U.S. Lawn Mower Racing Association competition.

The promotion was a surprising success and 32 years on, lawn mower racing is still finding new fans and competitors, attracting racers from other motor sports drawn to the affordability and do-it-yourself engineering.

The Texas chapter—the Lone Star Mower Racing Association—formed in 1998, with a racing season that runs from roughly Labor Day to Memorial Day, skipping the hottest months when engine (and driver) performance suffers. Boerne, Bonham, Bulverde, Caldwell, Madisonville, Whitesboro and Wortham also host races and exhibitions. The rules are fairly simple: remove the cutting blades, build your mower to regulation rules and go faster than everyone else.

At its core, lawn mower racing is a celebration of ingenuity and resourcefulness. With strict regulations governing engine size and modifications, racers must get creative to gain a competitive edge. Each mower is a testament to its owner's craftsmanship and dedication.

There are eight classes of competition based on engine size, horsepower, wheelbase and other specs. Kids as young as 6 can compete with stock mowers (6.5 horsepower or less) and top speeds around 20 mph. The fastest classes are the factory experimental classes—the Formula 1 of mowers—with FXS (single cylinder) and FXT (twin cylinder) machines that can exceed 100 mph.

Kevin Council, president of the LSMRA and a member of Houston County Electric Cooperative, competes in the fastest FXT class. Dressed in a red, white and blue NASCAR-style suit, Council greets me in front of his travel trailer, home to four mowers. He spent 20 years racing dirt bikes before retiring from the sport.

He saw his first LSMRA race in 2021, and "before the race



ABOVE Philip Fallis of Willis chats with fans after a race. OPPOSITE Council says he saw his first race in 2021 and "before the race was even over, I was on the internet looking for a mower."

was even over, I was on the internet looking for a mower. Two weeks later we drove to Michigan to pick it up, and that was four lawn mowers ago," Council says with a laugh. "I'm a horsepower junkie at heart, and there's nothing more redneck than going lawn mower racing."

He jokes that his racing number, 12K, is the start-up cost for his new racing habit but is quick to point out how accessible and affordable lawn mowers are compared to other motor sports. "This is really one of the cheapest sports you can get into horsepowerwise. The entry level is probably \$1,000–\$1,500."

Lawn mower racing thrives on the participation of everyday Texans who have formed and foster a tightly knit community of gearheads. There's more camaraderie than cutthroat competition. Sure, racers are eager to win, but they're just as likely to lend a helping hand to a fellow competitor. In the pits, racers swap tips, share tools and forge lasting friendships. There are no cash prizes in the sport—just trophies and bragging rights.



Back on the track, competitors have started the feature races, which have been shortened to 15 laps instead of the usual 20 due to the heat.

Brandi Vercher from Highlands is one of three women racing today and takes her first checkered flag after years of coming in second and third place in the GPT class.

Annsley Howard, 17, from New Ulm, takes first in the FXS class on her machine painted black and green. Howard, the 2023 state champion in the FXS class, has been racing since she was 9. "It's just fun. It's an adrenaline rush," she says with a smile.

Her father, John Howard, got involved with racing when a friend asked for help from his welding shop. "Two and a half weeks later, I built a mower that I couldn't even fit on," John says. "I had to get someone else to drive it. And then it just snowballed from there."

Lots of drivers have a story like this, in which a friend or family member enticed them into the sport. Sammie Neel, LSMRA secretary-treasurer and a customer of Bryan Texas Utilities, also races in the FXS class. "I like to say we've been ruining lawns since 1992!"

Neel's husband got into the sport first, then warmed her onto the track.

"Whenever I finally got out there, I was going slow," she says, drawing out the word "slow." "I got lapped like five times, and I was so mad when I got off the track, I said, 'You make that sucker go. If I'm going to be out here, I'm racing.'"

Then she couldn't stop. "You think you're just going to go out there and putt around, but once—and I mean once—somebody passes you, you're like, 'Ahh, I'm ready to go!'"

The timekeeper and scoring judge today is Kerry Evans, the USLMRA president, who drove in from Alabama. He's been in the sport since 1998 and has two national championships.

"When we started in the '90s, we had 30- and 40-mph lawn mowers," Evans says. "People started experimenting and tinkering, and in September of 2010, a group of us went to the Bonneville Salt Flats and set the land-speed record on the lawn mower at 96½ miles an hour."

Today's FXT mowers can surpass 100 mph. "It's just been rock and mow ever since," Evans says.

The spirit of the sport's April Fool's origin has never left, and many early racers had punny monikers: Sir Lawns A Lot, the Lawn Ranger, Blade Runner, Prograsstinator. These days everyone runs under their actual names, but the sport still gets chuckles.

"We tell people, hey, we race lawn mowers, and they'll just start laughing," Neel says. "And we're like, seriously, you know, laugh if you want, but come out to the races because they go fast."

"And then once they come out, they get excited. They're a fan after that."

Lawn mower racing embodies the spirit of Texas itself: bold, resilient and unapologetically fun. As long as there are lawns to mow and racers with a need for speed, the roar of mowers will continue to remind us that, sometimes, the most extraordinary adventures can be found in the most unexpected places.

"The mow, the merrier," Evans says. ■

College professors are taking students
way out of the classroom for educational adventures

LEARNING *the* HARD WAY

BY PAM LEBLANC

SOME OF THE MOST important lessons of college didn't come in a classroom for Thira Schlegel. They came during a 10-day trip to Tanzania in January, when the Southwestern University senior and 11 other students climbed to the summit of Mount Kilimanjaro.

During the trip, part of the university's Outdoor Adventure Program, Schlegel befriended a Tanzanian porter, a young man named Good Luck, who, like her, is an artist. Arriving in camp after difficult days of hiking at high elevations, Schlegel would unpack her art supplies and take in the rugged surroundings.

"I'd find a spot that inspired me and invite Good Luck to join," Schlegel says. "We painted the same scene together, sometimes in silence and sometimes talking about our lives and how they're similar and different."

That experience, Schlegel says, made her realize the privilege she has at home in Texas and inspired a series of paintings that incorporate themes of sustainability and adventure.

It also gave her confidence she'll carry with her the rest of her life.

TOP OF THE CLASS

Schlegel and the others' ascension of Kilimanjaro, which at 19,341 feet is the tallest peak in Africa, was part of a program led by mountaineer Brannndon Bargo. He's Southwestern's assistant director for outdoor adventure and executive producer and host of *The Highpointers*, a PBS series about Bargo and his brother, Greg, climbing the highest peaks in all 50 states.

The trip capped a year of shorter excursions that included mountain biking, kayaking, horseback riding and caving—all designed to help students feel more comfortable outdoors, find community and hone their leadership skills along the way.

"We want them to have fun but learn something," Brannndon Bargo says of the extracurricular program, which he hopes will eventually become a for-credit class at the



ABOVE Southwestern University student Thira Schlegel, left, with Good Luck, a Tanzanian porter she befriended on her trip to Africa. OPPOSITE Members of Southwestern's Outdoor Adventure Program at the summit of Mount Kilimanjaro.

university in Georgetown, north of Austin.

Baylor University, Texas A&M University, the University of Texas at Austin and other campuses also offer various forms of outdoor activities to round out their students' education.

"It's a way to retain students," Bargo says. "During COVID, we learned kids get really stressed out. They need a way to have community and find friends and de-stress. The university realizes this is a way to do that—and get students outdoors. They're putting an emphasis on it and money toward it."



MOUNT KILIMANJARO

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AFRICA'S HIGHEST POINT
WORLD'S HIGHEST FREE-STANDING MOUNTAIN

HOME OF WORLD'S LARGEST VOLCANIC
WORLD HERITAGE WONDER

SOUTHWESTERN
PIRATES



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT Anna DesHotels, a student in Texas Tech University's Adventure Media course, splashes through a muddy stretch of the Brazos River during a training ride. Tech's Jacob Hoebelheinrich, left, and Ryan Steele pitch a tent in Big Bend Ranch State Park. Tech students gather along a ridge overlooking the Madrid Falls watershed in the park.



RESPECTING THE UNEXPECTED

At Texas Tech University, students in the Adventure Media class, offered in the spring semester, bicycled 100 miles through the rugged canyons and cactus-studded plateaus of West Texas this year, gathering video and photos and collecting scientific data to create a three-part YouTube series about desert botanicals.

Jerod Foster co-teaches the program, created in 2014 and originally geared toward students interested in working in outdoor media. Today it's offered as an elective to students in all majors, but they must apply and interview for a spot.

"About half the class are folks interested in media production and storytelling, and the other half are folks from engineering, business, arts and humanities who are interested in a unique experience that lets them dive into areas their majors don't let them focus on," Foster says.

The signature experience of each session is a bike backpacking trip during spring break. Last year students biked 150 miles through New Mexico. This year's class pedaled 100 miles through prickly Big Bend Ranch State Park, along the Rio Grande.

"The primary takeaway is for them to get a very real-world taste of what it's like to go into the field as a professional and work through an incredibly intense challenge, then get to the other side and produce a quality project," Foster says. "They grow in confidence and resilience, both physically and mentally. They become a lot more aware of the purpose they are driving themselves toward."

It's something that today's students, whether they realize it or not, are craving, says Foster, who's also a prolific travel and nature photographer. "They want to be pushed out of

their comfort zone. This lets them experience a reality that's not augmented, and that's a precious commodity."

Such programs might look and feel foreign compared to the traditional classroom experience, but—particularly post-pandemic—institutions that are not adopting such immersive, hands-on experiences are getting left behind, Foster says.

"Students learn incredibly well in these settings," he says. "We need more of these things. They're not for everybody. We've had to deal with concussions and crashes. Some of these students have never ridden a bike before this class, and we don't go to adventure-light locations."

But students learn what not to sweat and how to deal with the unexpected.

"They have to be adaptive," Foster says. "We tell them, 'This is not going to go the way you imagined it, and that's OK.' It makes for great experience."

And that, perhaps, is the most important lesson of all.



PHOTOS COURTESY JERROD FOSTER

GETTING OFF-CAMPUS

Other outdoor adventure programming at Texas universities:

Baylor University's Outdoor Adventure Living-Learning Community offers a for-credit adventure sport class that includes climbing, mountain biking and outdoor living.

Texas A&M University offers about 15 climbing, paddling, hiking and camping trips each year through its Outdoor Adventures program.

Texas State University's mass communication department offers a for-credit Mobile Storytelling in the Outdoors course. Students use smartphones and other mobile tools to produce video and social content.

The University of Texas' Outdoor Recreation program offers trips each semester. Past excursions have included canoeing Buffalo National River in Arkansas and backpacking in Hawaii.

UPHILL ONE WAY

At Southwestern, 82 students applied for the Kilimanjaro trip. Bargo whittled it down to a dozen, looking for people interested not only in the physical challenge but those who wanted to learn about other cultures too. It wasn't easy, but ultimately all 12 students reached the summit.

"We had cold rain every day, even though it wasn't rainy season," Bargo says. "They did well as the trip started, but as they passed 14,000 feet, nearly everyone struggled. One of the greatest things was seeing how they rose to the occasion and helped each other."

The students arrived quiet, nervous and unfamiliar with one another but returned talking and laughing. "It gives them a sense of place and community," Bargo says. "It helps them learn who they are and builds perseverance and determination."

For Schlegel, who graduated in May, the adventure marked her first trip overseas.

"I went to Kilimanjaro and saw how big the world truly is," she says. "It was the hardest thing I've ever done."

But besides instilling confidence, it inspired new themes in her artwork.

"I read about how shoes are such a big contributor to our carbon footprint," she says. "I got the idea to cut up old running shoes to use the sole and fabric to imprint onto landscape paintings."

Schlegel gathered pieces of running shoes she found while inching her way up the mountain. The porters often wear shoes given to them by hikers and use them until they fall apart. She dipped those bits of rubber soles—still with dirt on them—into paint and pressed them onto landscapes to imprint a metaphorical carbon footprint onto her paintings.

"It allowed my artwork to carry a totally different meaning, even deeper than it was before," she says. "I realize we need to sustain the things we have for as long as we can and be grateful for all the gear we use and use it sustainably."

Schlegel says she hopes to donate proceeds from some of her Kilimanjaro-inspired work to an organization that supports the porters or an elementary school in Africa.

"My mindset has totally changed after this trip. I have this yearning to give back." ■

Myth Busting with Geothermal Heat Pumps

by Brian Shaw, Texas Territory Manager
WaterFurnace

“Well, you could have a geothermal heat pump, but...”

...You Need a Bunch of Land

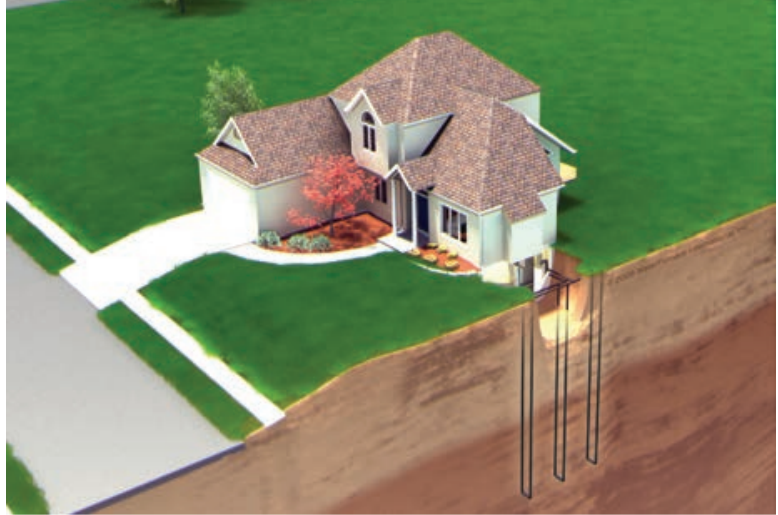
As one old timer put it, “If you have a lawn mower, then I can put in a geo unit.” With numerous options for the underground loop systems, that’s actually true. A vertical loop is often installed under driveways or even 10’ x 10’ patches of ground. There are many other options including using an existing water well, a pond, or if in fact you have more than ½ an acre, a long horizontal ditch is a great solution. If you Google “ground heat exchanger options” you will find a variety of solutions that might work for you.

...It Isn’t Safe

Since geothermal heat pumps are 100% electrical, there is no combustion of gas or oil in the home for heating. So, there’s no chance of smelly fumes, explosions, or carbon monoxide poisoning. Because heat pumps are certified by independent laboratories, they include safety cutoff switches for every circuit in the system.



A geothermal unit easily integrates into your current heating and cooling system.



When using a geothermal unit, about 75% of the heating and cooling energy comes from the earth.

...Electric Heat is Expensive to Operate

Some geo systems are installed with electric strip heat for extreme cold weather. And yes, that can add to your electric bill. However, modern systems are designed to operate without backup heat down to extremely low temperatures. And if your underground system (the “loop”) is sized right, no backup heat is needed at all.

...It’s Too Expensive to Install

Installing geothermal heating and

cooling for your home or building is an investment, no doubt about it.

Geo system owners quickly realize their systems are saving so much money they are recouping their investments in 5-7 years. With the 30% tax credit and other incentives geo can even cost less than a new boiler or HVAC system to install. When you consider the loop will outlive anyone alive today and the heat pump will deliver twice the useful life of most alternatives, that makes for a much more attractive investment.

State of Texas

MONTHLY AVERAGE¹

\$53

for Geothermal Heating & Cooling



Symphony Insight

With WaterFurnace, the average Texan pays \$53/mo. to provide heating, cooling and hot water for their home.

WaterFurnace homeowners across the country are reaping the benefits of geothermal heat pumps by utilizing the unlimited reservoir of stored solar energy underground. A WaterFurnace geothermal system taps into this free and renewable resource to provide savings of up to 70% on heating, cooling, and hot water—with a comfort you have to experience to believe. Right now you can save thousands on installation thanks to a 30% federal tax credit². Contact our WaterFurnace Concierges Team to learn more today!



visit waterfurnace.com/TexasPower

WaterFurnace is a registered trademark of WaterFurnace International, Inc. ©2024 WaterFurnace International Inc.

1. 14.5¢ kWh - June 2024 Texa's Monthly Electricity Rate Average | Actual data powered by Symphony

2. ENERGY STAR rated units qualify for 30% through 2032, 26% through 2033 and 22% through 2034



CEO

**HERBERT "TREY"
GREBE III**

October Is National Cooperative Month

Why we celebrate our unique business model

EVERY OCTOBER, cooperatives from all sectors across the country celebrate National Cooperative Month. The purpose of this annual celebration is to recognize the cooperative difference and remind you, the members of our co-op, about Medina Electric Cooperative's purpose.

I must admit that occasionally, I have been somewhat cynical of PR "holidays" that fill up social media, but National Cooperative Month has a genuinely special purpose that's near and dear to me.

This month is all about celebrating co-ops' unique business model, based on the Seven Cooperative Principles: Voluntary and Open Membership; Democratic Member Control; Members' Economic Participation; Autonomy and Independence; Education, Training and Information; Cooperation Among Cooperatives; and Concern for Community.

In the U.S., there are more than 30,000 co-ops in many industries. These diverse yet connected businesses join together this month to educate members—and nonmembers—about the community of cooperatives.

There are more co-ops in our local community than most people realize. Co-ops are even represented on the shelves at our local grocery stores, such as Land O'Lakes, Welch's, Organic Valley, Cabot Creamery, Sunkist, Ocean Spray and many more.

In fact, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, more than 350 million people belong to a co-op in the U.S. alone, and co-ops employ more than 2 million Americans and generate more than \$700 billion in annual revenue.

For co-op employees and members who are familiar with the principles, the month of October is a great opportunity to renew our connection to each other and the purpose of our co-op.

Medina EC's core purpose is to provide safe and reliable electricity to our more than 21,000 members. We are owned by our members who then elect our nine-person board of directors who oversee the operating policies for the cooperative. The cooperative difference doesn't stop there. We also offer many programs and services our members can take advantage of such as scholarships and the Government-in-Action Youth Tour. As a cooperative, we place a high importance on supporting the communities we serve.

We are proud to provide safety demonstrations for the public, participate in career days at schools, give back with monetary donations and grants, donate retired vehicles for volunteer fire departments and provide community support with employee volunteer time. Medina EC is continually working to make a difference for our members and our communities.

The Seven Cooperative Principles speak to the heart of why we must take every opportunity to celebrate and teach others about the cooperative business model.

You can plan your own co-op celebration by purchasing products provided by co-ops, do business with other co-ops right here in our service area and be an active member of Medina EC.

Until next time,
Trey Grebe



DEJAN_DUNDJERSKI | ISTOCK.COM

Have Your Say as a Co-op Voter

Support your co-op by knowing the issues and getting involved.

IF YOU COULD SHAPE THE FUTURE of our community by voting, would you? While it might seem like a simple question, the 2024 general elections will take place nationwide next month, giving Medina Electric Cooperative members—like you—the opportunity to make your voice heard on issues that affect our community. This election is our opportunity to elect candidates who support energy policies that promote safe, reliable, affordable energy.

Medina EC understands the importance of getting involved, being heard and voting with co-op issues in mind. Here are a few ways you, our members, can help.



Scan this code or visit voicesforcooperativepower.com to get involved.

Voices for Cooperative Power is a grassroots network of co-op members that was created to help elected officials better understand the many ways your electric co-op supports you and your community. By joining the VCP movement, you can receive updates on the issues that matter most and, when needed, information on how to contact your elected officials to voice your opinions.



Scan this code or visit cooperative.com/pacdonation to make a donation.

America's Electric Cooperative PAC is a federal political action committee of the nation's electric cooperatives. The PAC is funded by grassroots contributions from electric co-op members and employees in 48 states. By giving support to America's Electric Cooperative PAC, you are financially helping to build the collective strength of co-ops' voices in Washington, D.C.



Scan this code or visit texas-ec.org/about/coop-advocacy to make a donation.

Rural Friends of Electric Cooperatives is similar to America's Electric Cooperative PAC but with a focus on the representatives of and in the state of Texas. Founded in 1976, Rural Friends supports candidates who will speak for and protect the interests of electric cooperatives and our consumer-members.



Scan this code or visit vote.coop to learn more.

Co-ops Vote is a national, non-partisan initiative focused on enhancing co-op's political strength through relationship-building with policymakers and keeping members informed with a list of candidates and current elected officials in each state.



CONTACT US

Toll-Free 1-866-632-3532

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

Kenneth White, (830) 232-6541

Joe Foley, (830) 261-1304

Voting District 3

Annette Sorrells, (361) 231-0173

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

Rodolfo H. Rodriguez, (210) 846-1092

CEO

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

Call us.

TOLL-FREE

1-866-632-3532

Option 2: Report an outage

Option 3: Pay bill, get account balance

Option 5: Speak to a representative

OFFICE LOCATIONS

Bruni 1300 FM 2050 N., Bruni 78344

Dilley 1718 W. FM 117, Dilley 78017

Hondo 237 Highway 173 N., Hondo 78861

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

Uvalde 2604 Highway 90 E., Uvalde 78801

Corporate Office 2308 18th St., Hondo 78861

VISIT US ONLINE

MedinaEC.org



This institution is an equal-opportunity provider and employer.

Para más información sobre todos los programas y servicios que ofrece Medina Electric Cooperative están disponibles en español al llamarnos al 1-866-632-3532 o visitando una de nuestras oficinas.

Medina EC's Member Service Representatives: Going Above & Beyond for Our Members!

October 7–11 is National Customer Service Week. During this week, we want to show appreciation to Medina Electric Cooperative's team of member service representatives, who are often the face and voice of Medina EC assisting our members with their needs.

The official theme for 2024 is "Above & Beyond," and this team does just that, going above and beyond for Medina EC members every day! They answer questions, take payments, create new service accounts and exceed our members' expectations every chance they get.



Laurie Van Damme
Chief Financial Officer



Raegan Mazurek
Manager of Member Services

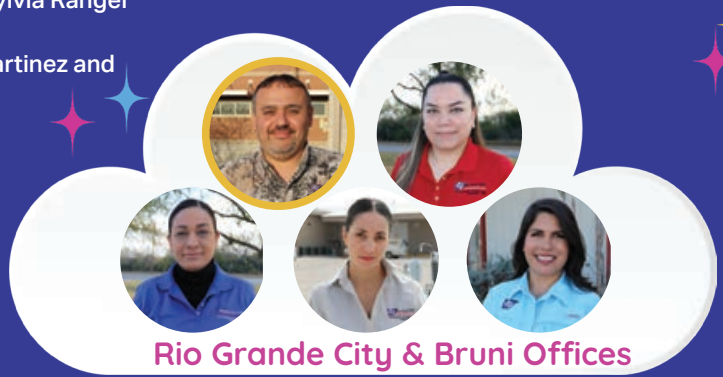


Dilley & Uvalde Offices

Office Supervisor: Juanita Molina

Dilley office MSR: Cindy Few, Sylvia Rangel and Tracy Gonzales

Uvalde office MSR: Chasity Martinez and Valerie Victorino



Rio Grande City & Bruni Offices

Office Supervisor: Gabriel Perez

Rio Grande City office MSR: Daniela Hinojosa, Sandra Hinojosa and Yvette Garza

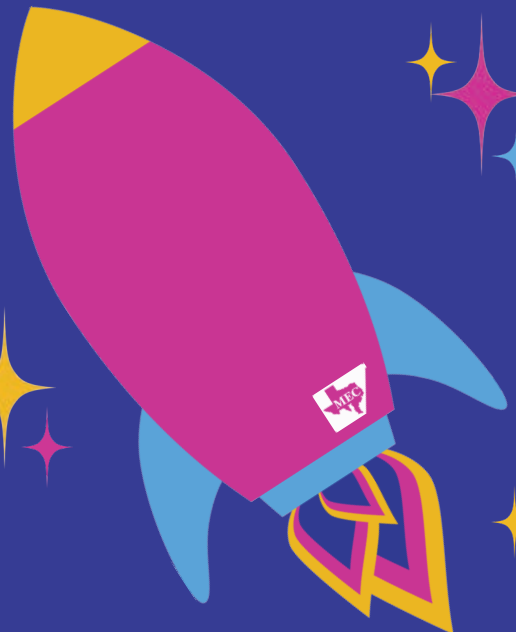
Bruni office MSR: Liandra Carrizales



Hondo Office

Office Supervisor: Alexandra Stallworth

Hondo office MSR: Amanda Wren, Bobby Contreras, Jennifer DeLeon and Terry Ybarra



Member Benefits Bingo!

You have FIVE lucky chances to win a \$100 credit toward 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, view electricity use and manage your account details.

Chance 2: Verify your mobile contact methods in SmartHub

Verify your contact methods in SmartHub to ensure your account information is up to date. This will also enroll you in outage alerts and allow you to sign up for other notifications. Go to “Contact Methods” on SmartHub to verify your phone number and email address.

Chance 3: Build your home profile

Residential members can enhance their consumer analytics by completing the “Build Your Home Profile” section in SmartHub. You can find this under the “Usage” tab. Learn more at MedinaEC.org/ConsumerAnalytics.

Chance 4: 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 1-866-632-3532.

Chance 5: 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 1-866-632-3532 and staff will change it for you.

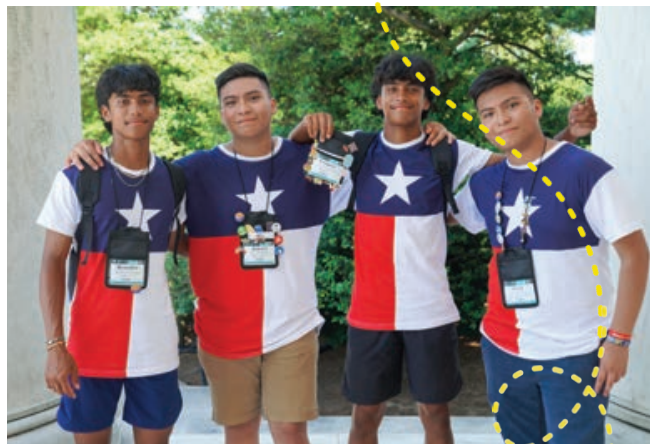
Members enrolled for each of these programs as of 5 p.m. November 1 will be entered. This includes members who are already signed up for these options and any new sign-ups between now and November 1.

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

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



Would your teen enjoy a **FREE** trip to Washington, D.C., in June 2025? The Government-in-Action Youth Tour may be for them. **Apply now!**



YOUTH TOUR | TEXAS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES

Deadline to apply is **January 10.**

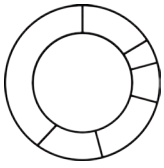
BONUS: Winners will also receive a **\$2,000 college scholarship!**

Scan here to apply and learn more!



SIGN UP FOR SMARTHUB

SmartHub is a great tool to manage your account and here are a few of the reasons why!



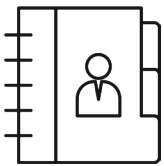
ENERGY USE ANALYTICS

Residential members have access to advanced analytics detailing their energy use by appliance. As a result, Medina EC members can gain a deeper understanding of their energy usage, specifically pinpointing which appliances are driving up electric bills and by approximately how much.



ALERTS & NOTIFICATIONS

Members enrolled in SmartHub with a verified mobile number on their account receive text messages notifying them when their meter is out of power and when power is restored. You can also sign up for other notifications like bill alerts and more.



UPDATE CONTACT INFORMATION

Using SmartHub, members can update their contact information including mailing address, mobile phone numbers and emails. Updated information is important for the co-op to communicate with members.

Haven't Set Yours Up?

Scan this QR code or visit
MedinaEC.SmartHub.Coop



Questions or Need Help?

Learn more at MedinaEC.org/SH or call us at 1-866-632-3532.

Joe Foley Achieves CCD Certification

MEDINA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE board member Joe Foley recently received the Credential Cooperative Director certification from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

An ever-changing business environment has imposed new demands on electric cooperative directors, requiring increased knowledge of changes in the electric utility business, new governance skills and a solid grasp of the cooperative principles and business model for the benefit of Medina EC members.

The NRECA CCD program requires attendance and demonstrated understanding of the basic competencies contained in five core courses, including director duties and liabilities, understanding the electric business, board



operations and process strategic planning, and financial decision making.

NRECA represents the nation's more than 900 private, consumer-owned electric cooperatives, which includes Medina EC.

Medina EC Celebrates HR Professionals

MEDINA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE'S Human Resources team works tirelessly to ensure we have the best employees to serve our members, managing everything from employee onboarding and retention to benefits, resources, and records retention.

Their responsibilities extend far beyond these tasks, including policy development, supporting board projects, handling legal matters, managing workers' compensation, paid family and medical leave, employee development, and more.

The HR team is essential in shaping a positive work culture and ensuring that our employees and the cooperative are set up for success.

National Human Resource Professional Day is September 26, and we would like to recognize our HR team for the work they do for all Medina EC employees.

THE HUMAN RESOURCES TEAM



Patti Taylor

Chief Administrative Officer



Melissa Nietenhoefer

Records and Human Resources Supervisor



Theresa Rivera

HR Specialist

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 1-866-632-3532. 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 1-866-632-3532 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 1-866-632-3532. 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, Rio 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 1-866-632-3532 o visite MedinaEC.org para reporter algun apagón de luz o un problema de servicio.

Establecimiento De Crédito | Usted puede ser requerido establecer crédito, proporcionando una carta de crédito de una utilidad similar, una garantía satisfactoria por escrito para obtener el pago, demuestra un buen historial crediticio, o dar un depósito. El total de todos los depósitos, no excederá una cantidad equivalente a una cuarta parte de la facturación anual. Cuando no está disponible información de facturación anual las siguientes cantidades de depósito será requeridas para los solicitantes de servicios generales: Residencia Ocupada - \$400.00, Campamento de Cacería - \$300.00, Noria de agua - \$200.00 y otro Servicios Generales - \$200.00. Cantidades de depósito para todos otros servicios se determinarán basadas en requisitos de la carga y uso estimado. Medina Electric Cooperative pagará interés compuesto anualmente a partir de la fecha de depósito hasta la fecha que se devuelva el depósito, a una tasa anual fijada por Medina Electric Board of Directors en diciembre del año subsecuente y se devolverá su depósito más los intereses tras su desconexión del servicio, o después de haber pagado las facturas de doce (12) facturas consecutivas sin tener servicio desconectado por falta de pago y sin tener más de dos ocasiones en que un pago sea delincente y cuando la factura corriente no es delincente. Un depósito adicional puede ser necesario si: (1) la cantidad de depósito coleccionado es menos del 25% de la facturación anual del cliente; y (2) un aviso de delincente se ha dado más de dos veces para la cuenta dentro de los 12 meses anteriores. Ningún depósito en efectivo se requiere a solicitantes de servicio residencial permanente que sean mayores de 65 años de edad o que no tengan una cuenta pendiente con Medina Electric Cooperative u otra utilidad eléctrica dentro de los últimos dos años.

Asistencia Financiera | Usted puede ser elegible para asistencia financiera para ayudar a pagar su factura de servicios. Para solicitar información, puede llamar a uno o todos los siguientes: Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs, Energy Assistance Section, P. O. Box 13941, Austin, TX 78711-3941, 1-877-399-8939 o (512) 475-1099; Public Utility Commission of Texas, 1701 N. Congress Ave., P.O. Box 13326, Austin, TX 78711-3326, (gratis) al 1-888-782-8477; o comuníquese con la cooperativa y le proporcionaremos una lista de agencias que pueden ayudarlo.

Enfermo Y/O Discapacitado | Si está usted enfermo y/o discapacitado se le recomienda a identificarse como tal y se tomarán medidas especiales para explicar el proceso y los requisitos para su cuenta y configurarse como una "cuenta de carga crítica". La Cuenta de Carga Crítica se define como un cliente residencial que tiene una necesidad crítica de servicio eléctrico debido a que un residente en el hogar requiere servicio eléctrico para sustentar la vida. El número TTY de Public Utility Commission of Texas para las personas sordas o con problemas de audición es 512-936-7147.

Ley De No Discriminación | Medina Electric Cooperative ofrece todos los servicios disponibles sin importar la raza, nacionalidad, color, religión, sexo o estado civil. El historial de crédito se aplica igualmente para un período de tiempo razonable a un esposo(a) o ex-esposo(a) que ha compartido los servicios de Medina Electric Cooperative.

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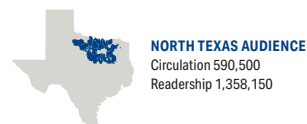


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The Flapper Bandit

She finally fooled bank employees and briefly absconded with a stack of cash

BY MARTHA DEERINGER

REBECCA BRADLEY ROGERS was a 21-year-old graduate student at the University of Texas and a stenographer in the office of the attorney general in December 1926 when she ran out of tuition money.

Rogers had taken a second job working for a professor who handled business affairs for the Texas State Historical Association, but she mismanaged the funds while the professor was on summer vacation and ended up owing \$1,200 (more than \$21,000 in today's money) to TSHA. To make matters worse, Rogers' mother, who had been fired from her job in Fort Worth, moved in with her and was spending Rogers' paychecks freely.

Deep in debt, Rogers decided she had one option to solve her financial woes:

rob a bank.

Her first attempt, which involved setting fire to a house in Round Rock, north of Austin, as a distraction and then hustling into the nearby bank and yelling "fire!" failed. None of the bank's employees raced outside so she could grab cash in the chaos.

She had better success at Farmers National Bank in Buda, south of the capital, the very next day.

A pretty, petite young lady dressed in the distinctive fashion of the Roaring '20s, Rogers posed as a newspaper reporter in the bank lobby, asking questions of customers and recording their responses. Then she asked to use a typewriter in the tellers' cage and, once inside, pulled out a pistol. She locked

two male employees in the safe at gunpoint after grabbing \$1,000 in new \$5 bills, but first she asked politely if they would have enough air to survive for 30 minutes inside the vault.

Alas, someone wrote down Rogers' license number as she drove away with the cash in her Ford Model T. On the way back to Austin, her car got stuck in the mud and had to be pulled out by a passing dairyman and a team of horses. She took the Ford to be washed upon her return to Austin, and when she came back to get it, the sheriff was waiting for her.

Rogers was arrested and thrown in the clink. She was supposedly still wearing her muddy satin slippers.

Secretly married for over a year to Amarillo lawyer Otis Rogers, Rebecca at first denied that she was married but had to fess up when her husband arrived to help with her defense. The Flapper Bandit or Girl Bandit, as newspapers nationwide labeled her, pleaded insanity, but the prosecutor replied, "Insanity is a disease that criminals get when they are caught."

Otis had his wife examined by three psychologists who testified that she suffered from dementia praecox, which makes a patient unable to determine right from wrong. Today dementia praecox is known as schizophrenia. Many sympathized with the pretty young thief, and it was difficult to find jurors willing to participate in her trials.

Her armed robbery and arson trials both ultimately ended in hung juries—after a successful appeal overturned a robbery conviction and then an insanity plea won over enough jurors. After seven years of litigation, Rogers got off scot-free.

She and her husband moved to Fort Worth, where the fame Otis gained during his wife's trials led to a lucrative criminal defense practice. Rebecca, despite her shady dealings with the law, served as his legal secretary. ■

Pumpkin and Spice

Kick-start your holiday baking with these seasonal treats

BY VIANNEY RODRIGUEZ, FOOD EDITOR

Indulge in the flavors of fall with this delightful dessert. It combines the moist, spiced richness of pumpkin cake with the sweet crunch of pecans, creating a perfect blend. Ideal for gatherings, this treat brings a festive touch to any occasion.

Texas Pumpkin Sheet Cake With Candied Pecans

CAKE

- 2 cups flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon pumpkin pie spice
- 4 eggs
- 2 cups sugar
- 1 cup vegetable oil
- 1 can pumpkin purée (15 ounces)

FROSTING

- 1 cup (2 sticks) butter, softened
- 1 package cream cheese (8 ounces), softened
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 3 cups powdered sugar

CANDIED PECANS

- ½ cup brown sugar
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 2 tablespoons water
- 1 cup chopped pecans

1. **CAKE:** Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Coat a 13-by-18-inch rimmed baking sheet with cooking spray.
2. In a bowl, whisk together flour, baking soda, salt, baking powder, cinnamon and pumpkin pie spice. In another bowl, combine eggs, sugar, vegetable oil and pumpkin purée until fully incorporated. Slowly add the flour mixture, stirring well after each addition, until fully incorporated.
3. Pour the batter onto the prepared baking sheet and spread evenly. Bake 25–30 minutes or until a toothpick inserted comes out clean. Let cool completely.
4. **FROSTING:** Cream together butter and cream cheese in a mixing bowl until light and fluffy. Add vanilla and powdered sugar, and mix until smooth.
5. **CANDIED PECANS:** Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. In a skillet over medium-high heat, combine brown sugar, salt, cinnamon and water. Cook, stirring 1–2 minutes or until the sugar dissolves and the mixture is slightly bubbling.
6. Stir in pecans and cook for an additional 2 minutes, stirring to coat pecans. Remove from heat and spread pecans evenly on parchment paper. Allow to cool completely.
7. Spread frosting evenly over cooled cake and sprinkle with candied pecans.

SERVES 24

TCP Follow Vianney Rodriguez as she cooks in Cocina Gris at sweetlifebake.com, where she features a recipe for Pumpkin Cream Cheese Tamales.



Pumpkin Praline Pie

BECKY FRASER
UNITED COOPERATIVE SERVICES

This pie is the perfect addition to your fall baking. The combination of creamy pumpkin filling and a crunchy praline pecan topping creates a symphony of textures and flavors. Try this if you can't decide between a pumpkin pie or pecan pie.

PIE

- 1 can pumpkin purée (15 ounces)**
- 1 can sweetened condensed milk (14 ounces)**
- 1 egg**
- ½ teaspoon salt**
- ½ teaspoon ground nutmeg**
- ½ teaspoon ground ginger**
- ¾ teaspoon ground cinnamon**
- 1 9-inch frozen pie crust, unbaked**

CRUMBLE

- ¾ cup pecan halves**
- ½ cup brown sugar**
- 4 tablespoons (½ stick) butter, at room temperature**

- 1. PIE:** Preheat oven to 375 degrees. In a bowl, stir together pumpkin purée, sweetened condensed milk, egg, salt, nutmeg, ginger and cinnamon. Pour into unbaked pie shell. Place filled pie on a baking sheet and bake 25 minutes.
- 2. CRUMBLE:** While pie bakes, stir together pecans, brown sugar and butter in a bowl until well incorporated.
- 3.** Remove pie from oven and sprinkle crumble over the top. Return pie to oven and bake an additional 30 minutes. Remove from oven and cool completely. Place in fridge and chill 1 hour before serving.

SERVES 8

[MORE RECIPES >](#)

\$500 WINNER

Cinnamon Streusel Pumpkin Coffee Cake

KIM PRYOR
FARMERS EC



Great with coffee, this irresistibly delicious cake is sure to become a seasonal favorite.

SERVES 8-10

STREUSEL

- ½ cup flour**
- ½ cup packed brown sugar**
- ¾ teaspoon ground cinnamon**
- ⅛ teaspoon ground nutmeg**
- ⅛ teaspoon ground cloves**
- ⅛ teaspoon ground ginger**
- 4 tablespoons (½ stick) butter, melted**
- ¼ cup chopped pecans**



CAKE

- ½ cup sugar**
- 6 tablespoons (¾ stick) butter, at room temperature**
- ¾ cup pumpkin purée**
- 2 tablespoons milk**
- 2 tablespoons sour cream**
- 1 egg**

- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract**
- 1 cup flour**
- 1¼ teaspoons baking powder**
- 1½ teaspoons ground cinnamon**
- ¾ teaspoon ground nutmeg**
- ¼ teaspoon ground cloves**
- ½ teaspoon ground ginger**

GLAZE

- ¾ cup powdered sugar**
- ½ teaspoon maple extract**
- 1 tablespoon milk, or more as needed**
- Chopped pecans, for garnish**

- 1.** Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Line a 9-inch round cake pan with a circle of parchment paper in the bottom and coat with cooking spray.
- 2. STREUSEL:** In a bowl, combine all but the pecans, and mix with a fork until all ingredients are incorporated. Set aside.
- 3. CAKE:** In a bowl, beat sugar and butter until light and fluffy, 3-4 minutes. Add pumpkin purée, milk and sour cream, and mix until well incorporated. Add egg and vanilla extract and mix until smooth. In another bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder, cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves and ginger. Add dry ingredients to batter and mix until smooth.
- 4.** Spread half the cake batter in the bottom of the prepared cake pan. Top batter with about half the streusel mixture. Spread remaining cake batter over streusel. Sprinkle chopped pecans and remaining streusel over the top of the cake batter.
- 5.** Bake 24-26 minutes or until a toothpick inserted comes out with only a few crumbs. Remove cake from oven and allow to cool in the pan about 5 minutes. Remove to finish cooling on a cooling rack.
- 6. GLAZE:** Combine powdered sugar, maple extract and milk in a small bowl and whisk until smooth. You can always add a little more milk or sugar, if needed. Drizzle the glaze over the coffee cake. Garnish with chopped pecans.

\$500 Recipe Contest

PIES, PIES, PIES DUE OCTOBER 10

We hated math until we learned about Pi Day (3/14). Celebrate with us by sharing your favorite pie recipe, and you just might be adding \$500 to your name. Enter by October 10.



Pumpkin Cornbread With Whipped Cinnamon Honey Butter

PAM KINKEMA
UNITED COOPERATIVE SERVICES

This seasonal twist on classic cornbread features the rich, earthy flavors of pumpkin and a light, fluffy texture. Topped with creamy, spiced honey butter, it's a great addition to any meal, offering warmth and comfort in every bite.

CORNBREAD

1 cup flour
1 cup cornmeal
1 teaspoon baking powder
½ teaspoon baking soda
½ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
½ teaspoon ground ginger
¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg
¼ teaspoon ground cloves
½ cup light brown sugar
4 tablespoons (½ stick) unsalted butter, melted



1 cup canned pumpkin purée (15 ounces)
½ cup sour cream
2 eggs

CINNAMON HONEY BUTTER

½ cup (1 stick) butter
⅓ cup honey
¼ cup powdered sugar
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

1. CORNBREAD: Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Coat an 8-by-8-inch baking dish

with cooking spray.

2. In a bowl, whisk together flour, cornmeal, baking powder, baking soda, salt, cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg and cloves. Make a well in center of flour mixture and set aside.

3. In a separate bowl, stir together brown sugar, melted butter and pumpkin purée. Add in sour cream and eggs, and stir until well blended. Pour mixture into well of flour mixture and fold until just combined and no streaks of flour remain.

4. Spread batter in an even layer in prepared pan. Bake 25–30 minutes, until toothpick inserted comes out clean. Cool slightly on wire rack, then cut into squares.

5. CINNAMON HONEY BUTTER: Whip butter with mixer until smooth. Add honey, powdered sugar and cinnamon, and mix on low speed until combined, then increase to high speed and whip until light and fluffy.

6. Serve bread with whipped butter.

SERVES 9

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COURTESY CHET GARNER

Dragons Not Included

Newman's Castle near Bellville puts visitors in a real-life fairy tale

BY CHET GARNER

LIKE MANY YOUNG boys, I grew up pretending to be a medieval knight, fighting dragons and rescuing damsels in distress. My castle was usually a cardboard box or a pile of couch cushions. Mike Newman had the same boyhood fantasies but was brave enough to turn them into a royal reality.

Nestled in the woods outside of Bellville, a town of about 4,200 residents about an hour west of Houston, lies the architectural wonder known as Newman's Castle. Newman started the project in 1998, and over the next decade, the local baker personally constructed the castle that would make any fairy tale king jealous. There's a moat and fortified walls protecting the place Newman built as his private home powered by San Bernard Electric Cooperative.

Sadly, the hero of our tale died in March, but his castle is still open for tours, which can be reserved by calling Newman's Bakery. My tour started at the Bellville bakery, followed by a group caravan to the castle, where we were given wooden swords and knighted into the king's court. After crossing the moat, I was tasked with raising the drawbridge by running inside a human-sized hamster wheel. I immediately regretted the extra kolach I had eaten on the drive over.

Once inside the walls, we toured the chapel, ate in the banquet hall and climbed to the top of the 60-foot bell tower. We even got to try out the castle's dungeon of medieval torture devices, including a mythical iron maiden, stocks and a bed of nails. As the grand finale, we launched stones at imaginary dragons using a massive historically accurate trebuchet.

It felt like a real trip into the depths of Newman's ingenuity. His lasting legacy helps us realize that the make-believe doesn't always have to stay in our imagination. ■

ABOVE Chet, left, and the late Mike Newman at Newman's Castle.

TCP See the castle for yourself with the video on our website. Find all his Texplorations on *The Daytripper* on PBS.



Know Before You Go

Call ahead or check an event's website for scheduling details, and check our website for many more upcoming events.

OCTOBER

10

Corsicana Bellamy Brothers, (903) 874-7792, corsicanapalace.com

11

Grapevine Barn Dance, (817) 410-3185, grapevintexasusa.com

12

Burnet Texas State Button Society Fall Workshop & Sale, (214) 808-5610, texasstatebuttonociety.com

Corsicana Airsho, (903) 654-4847, coyotesquadron.org

Granbury Monarch Fest, (817) 326-6005, actonnaturecenter.org

Luling Night in Old Luling, facebook.com/nightinoldluling 2022

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

Chappell Hill [12-13] Scarecrow Festival, (979) 836-6033, chappellhillhistoricalsociety.com

Edom [12-13] Art Festival, (903) 258-5192, edomarts.com

16

Corpus Christi Lobster Feast, (361) 883-8405, corpuschristi seamenscenter.org

18

Fairfield [18-19] Big T Memorial State Championship BBQ Cookoff, bigtmemorial cookoff@gmail.com, goldencircletx.com

Levelland [18-19] Petticoats on the Prairie Premier Vintage Market, (806) 894-4161, facebook.com/petticoatsontheprairie

Woodville [18-19] Harvest Festival, (409) 283-2272, heritage-village.org

Brenham [18-20] Texas Arts and Music Festival, (979) 337-7580, texasartsandmusicfestival.com

19

Giddings Cars & Coffee, (979) 542-3455, giddingstx.com

New Braunfels Dia de los Muertos Festival, (830) 625-2385, nbchamber.com

Fayetteville [19-20] Lickskillet Days, (979) 378-2800, greaterfayettevillechamber.org

25

Brenham [25-26] heARTfest, (979) 836-7248, facebook.com/heartfestbrenham

26

Sanger Sellabration, (940) 222-9440, sangertexas.com

Weatherford Fall Fling Car, Truck and Motorcycle Show, parkercountycruisers.com

Granbury [26-27] Harvest Moon Festival of the Arts, (682) 936-4550, granburysquare.com

31

Levelland Trunk or Treat, (806) 894-9079, downtownlevelland.com

NOVEMBER

1

Oakville Dobie Dichos, (361) 319-3067, dobedichos.com

Ingram [1-3] Texas Arts and Crafts Fair, (830) 367-5121, txartsandcraftsfair.com

TCP Submit Your Event

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Climbing High

There are lots of reasons to climb high: to get a better view, to reach something in need of repair or simply to prove to oneself that it can be done. This month, let's crane our necks and see who has scrambled their way to the top.

CURATED BY GRACE FULTZ

1 KAYLE GRAHAM
TRI-COUNTY EC

"My dog, Cooper, and I love to hike. We always try to find a really high rock to climb and enjoy the views."

2 NICKI KLEIN
BLUEBONNET EC

Colorado River climber.

3 MEAGAN BENAVIDES
NUECES EC

"DJ climbs a pole as he competes for his chance to join the NEC rodeo team."

4 GUYNA POLASEK
GVEC

"Just had it set up and wanted a closer look."



Upcoming Contests

- DUE OCT 10** I Love
- DUE NOV 10** Small Spaces
- DUE DEC 10** Characters



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There's No Party Like La Pitada

After a Cowboys win, the biggest grassroots celebration is way down south

BY W.F. STRONG
PHOTO BY ERICH SCHLEGEL

MORE THAN 500 miles from AT&T Stadium, there's a Dallas Cowboys tradition that's unlike any other. You might expect it in Dallas or Arlington, but to find it in a Brownsville neighborhood, in far South Texas, is surprising, loud and heartwarming. It's called La Pitada.

The name means "the honking." After every Cowboys victory, hundreds of vehicles and a few thousand people hit Southmost Road in a cacophony of honking, whistling, music and victorious *gritos* (shouts). It's a moving feast, a mobile tailgate, an impromptu parade—a sacred rite of celebration for the Cowboys faithful.

Fans drive slowly, honking vigorously, windows down, collectively expressing their joy. And to make it all the more joyful, taquerias fill the air with the scent of their aromatic spices.

I went to a recent *pitada* with photographer and friend Erich Schlegel so that he could capture the display of chaotic bliss for *Texas Co-op Power*. He took photos like a combat photographer while I held the light, risking our lives in the middle of the street for the perfect shot.

I like that there is no official organization behind La Pitada. There's nothing top-down about it. It's a grassroots tradition, of the people, by the people and for the people.

All that's needed is a Cowboys win. As soon as that happens, *la gente* jump into whatever vehicle is handy—including hot-rods and low-riders—wearing Cowboys hats, caps or helmets and take off with window flags flapping.

Some kids stand up through sunroofs, waving pennants. Pickups mount 6-foot Cowboys flags that billow to full length. Motorcyclists, sometimes with faux Cowboys cheerleaders riding behind them, rev their engines. There's even a house along the route painted in silver and blue.

La Pitada is raucous but peaceful. Celebratory whistles never cease. "Go Cowboys" is heard often, but the most common mantra uses more colorful verbiage.

La Pitada started in the glory days of the 1990s when the Cowboys won three Super Bowls. In the late '70s, the Cowboys came to be known as America's Team, but they also became Mexico's team after Spanish-language broadcasts of the games aired in Mexico. It helped that the Cowboys for decades had kickers with roots in Mexico and soccer: Efrén Herrera, Rafael Septién and Danny Villanueva.

Southmost is an old immigrant community where Spanish is the first language of the majority of people. They have strong familial ties to Mexico.

If the Cowboys ever win the Super Bowl again, La Pitada that day will be legendary. Might just be bigger than Dallas! ■

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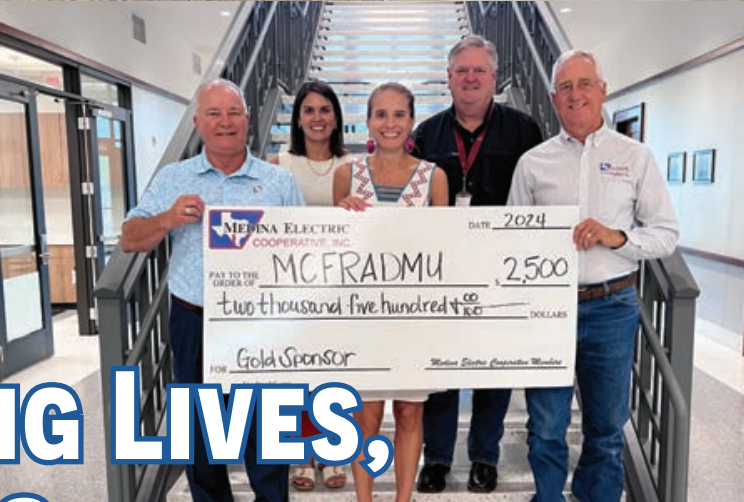


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