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READER PHOTOS:
HISTORIC TEXAS

Texas Coop Power

FOR MEDINA EC MEMBERS

MAY 2021

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May 2021



08

Serendipity Spinners

Members of a San Angelo cooperative spin wool from their own flock.

*By Brenda Kissko
Photos by Kristin Tyler*

12 Listening to Texas

How folklorists saved the soundtrack of the Lone Star State.

By Gene Fowler

ON THE COVER

Colorful skeins of yarn created by the Serendipity Spinners.

ABOVE

Peggy Tharp, Ruth Jordan and Sandy Pederson of the spinning club.
Photos by Kristin Tyler

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By E. Dan Klepper

A Preponderance of Orthographers

YOUNG TEXANS have proven masterful at spelling words that seemingly come from a jostled Scrabble board. They have pretty much owned the Scripps National Spelling Bee in recent years.

Three of the eight co-champions in 2019 came from Texas. Sohum Sukhatankar of Dallas dazzled with his winning word, *pendeloque*. Abhijay Kodali of Flower Mound spelled *palama*. And Rohan Raja of Dallas aced *odylic*.

They followed in the footsteps of 2018 champion Karthik Nemmani of McKinney, who hoisted the trophy after spelling *koinonia*.

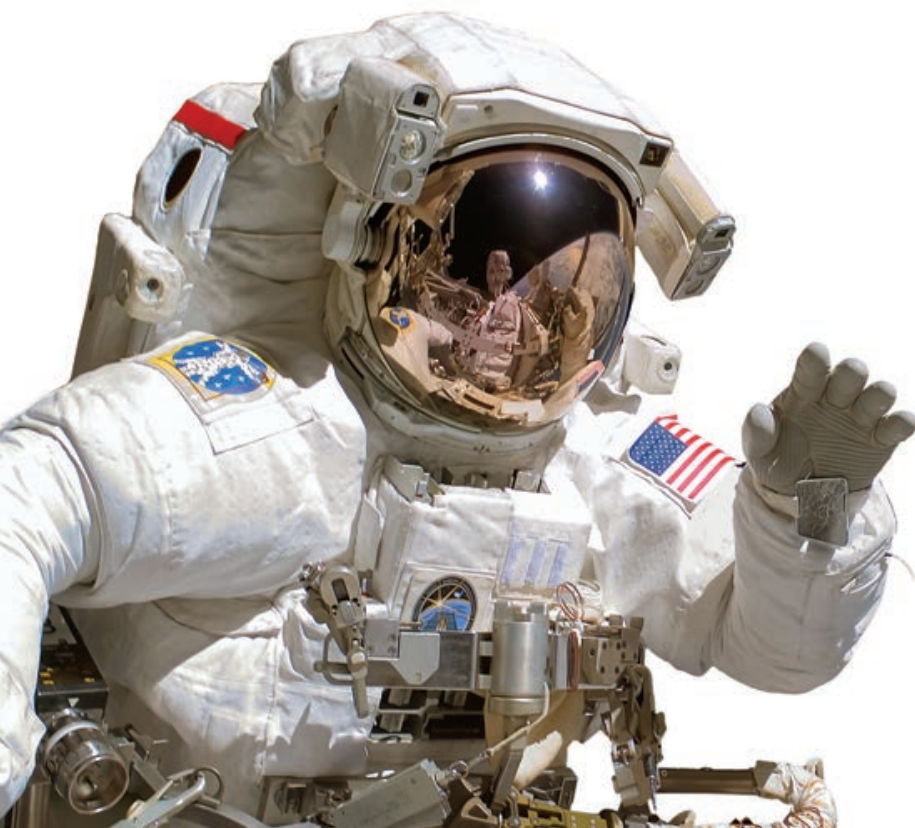
Nihar Janga of Austin shared the title in 2016 after spelling *Gesellschaft*.

The COVID-19 pandemic caused the cancellation of the 2020 bee. The 2021 finals are scheduled for July 8.

May 5

NATIONAL ASTRONAUT DAY

An etymology dictionary cites 1880 as the earliest use of the word "astronaut." That's when English writer Percy Greg coined it for a fictional spaceship.



FINISH THIS SENTENCE THIS MEMORIAL DAY, I HONOR ...

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 March prompt: **The song that got me through a year of pandemic is ...**

If We Make It Through December by Merle Haggard.

INOCENCIA MARTINEZ
MAGIC VALLEY EC
MERCEDES

Texas Sun by Khruangbin and Leon Bridges.

MELANIE BURRIS
NUECES EC
PORTLAND

Still Not Dead by Willie Nelson.

FD HERMAN
HAMILTON COUNTY EC
BIG VALLEY

We Shall Overcome by Pete Seeger.

SANJAY SHAH
COSERV
CARROLLTON

This Little Light of Mine.

PEGGY HOWARD
VICTORIA EC
VICTORIA

Don't Let Me Down by the Beatles.

JERRY CHANDLER
PEDERNALES EC
CANYON LAKE

To see more responses, read Currents online.

“Motherhood is the greatest thing and the hardest thing.”

—RICKI LAKE



TCP *Contests and More*

[ON TEXASCOOPPOWER.COM](http://ONTEXASCOOPPOWER.COM)

\$500 RECIPE CONTEST
Cheese

FOCUS ON TEXAS PHOTOS
Rust and Decay

RECOMMENDED READING
Double Exposure (July 2018) revisits a couple's pose at Cadillac Ranch.

LBJ Archives at 50

The LBJ Presidential Library at the University of Texas at Austin turns 50 on May 22. It was the first presidential library to be located on a college campus and the first anywhere in Texas.

The First Five Presidential Libraries

Opened June 30, 1941

Franklin D. Roosevelt

Hyde Park, New York

July 6, 1957

Harry S. Truman

Independence, Missouri

May 1, 1962

Dwight D. Eisenhower

Abilene, Kansas

August 10, 1962

Herbert Hoover

West Branch, Iowa

May 22, 1971

Lyndon B. Johnson

Austin, Texas



TWIN SISTERS
DANCE HALL
NEAR BLANCO

Care To Dance?

TEXAS DANCE HALL PRESERVATION donated \$262,520 to assist 32 historic dance halls with expenses in 2020.

Dance halls across the state were shut down for most of 2020, unable to hold dances, weddings, festivals and fundraisers because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

More than 1,000 dance halls, built mostly by European immigrants, once dotted parts of Texas. Today, fewer than 400 remain. Read *Hail the Halls* from February 2019 to learn more.



LBJ PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY



Flower Power

“Your March cover started my day with a happy smile. You all knocked it out of the ballpark with photos of Texas flowers in breathtaking colors.”

AUDNETTE CODY LARGENT
FAYETTE EC
EMORY

Family Roots

Some of the more interesting pass-along plants [*Putting Down Roots*, February 2021] were introduced by Lorenzo de Zavala when he was a minister to France when Texas was a republic. Roses were a gift from France and planted by Adina de Zavala, his granddaughter, in their Lynchburg homestead, eventually shared and spread into surrounding communities. These roses are still found in some of our older cemeteries.

Mike Shoup
Bluebonnet EC
Independence



Salsa was great during the snow-pocalypse [*Tacos*, March 2021]. Spicy food and soups for cold days and nights always seem to go good together.

DAVID NORTON
VIA FACEBOOK

A Flyer's Fate

Col. Carl Crane, my grandfather, and William Ocker were pioneers in instrumentation flying [*Flying Blind*, January 2021]. Had Crane not pursued this solution, I might not be here.

The story goes that he was flying a congressman's son in bad weather in Ohio when he became disoriented and almost crashed. Neon lights of a hotel that he saw at the last minute allowed Crane to get his bearings and correct his plane's direction, saving their lives.

Lisa Mittel
Southwest Texas EC
San Antonio

Bread and Butter

As a youngster in Boerne in the 1950s, one of my treats was simple well-buttered bread, and the butter was from either Falfurrias or the Comfort Creamery, depending on whether my parents shopped in San Antonio or at our local Boerne grocery [*A Name That Sticks*, February 2021]. Back then the butter was better than the bread.

Dell Hood
Pedernales EC
Wimberley



CHIARA VERCESI

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

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TEXAS MINT

We are excited to announce the release of the 2021 Texas Silver Round – Revolution Series. This is the second release of a four-year series commemorating the battles of the Texas Revolution. Each Texas Silver Round is one troy ounce .9999 fine silver.

The obverse of the high-quality mint strike features Texas' iconic lone star in the foreground. The smooth engraving of the star is framed by a textured topographical outline of the state of Texas. "TEXAS" arches proudly over the top of the round's obverse in large capital letters, with "Precious Metals" presented inversely along the opposite side. The round's mintage year is engraved in the bottom left of the round, just southwest of what would be the Rio Grande bordering Texas and Mexico.

The reverse of the 2021 release displays a scene from the famous Battle of the Alamo. It depicts two Texian soldiers including the American icon, Davy Crockett, attempting to fend off Mexican soldiers attempting to breach the walls of the Alamo.



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BATTLE OF GONZALES

first in the series ● ● ● ●

The stunning 2020 Texas Silver Round depicts a scene from the Battle of Gonzales, with three Texian revolutionaries defending the famous Gonzales cannon, while brandishing the Come And Take It Flag.



BATTLE OF THE ALAMO

second in the series ● ● ● ●

The events of this famous battle took place on the days of February 23rd - March 6th, 1836. At the end of a 13-day siege, President General Antonio López de Santa Anna and his Mexican troops reclaimed the Alamo Mission, killing the Texian and immigrant occupiers.

The Texas Silver Round can be purchased in a monster box produced exclusively for the Texas Mint. Packaged in 20 protective tubes of 25 rounds each, the monster box holds 500 1-ounce Texas Silver Rounds. Built from durable cold-rolled steel and finished with a matte black powder coat, the monster box lid features an orange cutout of the state of Texas. Each sealed monster box is secured with a unique serial number and a holographic seal to ensure maximum product protection.

The Texas Silver Round is also available to purchase in a similarly designed and secured mini-monster box, which contains 10 protective tubes of 25 rounds each for a total of 250 silver rounds.



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Serendipity Spinners

MEMBERS OF A SAN ANGELO
COOPERATIVE SPIN WOOL
FROM THEIR OWN FLOCK

BY BRENDA KISSKO • PHOTOS BY KRISTIN TYLER

Yarn created by the
Serendipity Spinners gets
woven into a blanket.

Turning materials that nature provides into a handiwork can remind us of a simpler way of life and provide a reward beyond the finished product.

Such has been the experience of the Serendipity Spinners, who for 19 years have been starting from the ground up and spinning wool into yarn, which they then craft into prized possessions.

Although they come from varied backgrounds in and around San Angelo—doctors, businesswomen, retired teachers, certified public accountants—they share a common love for the spinning tradition. And they are members of their own co-op, which owns a flock of sheep, goats and alpacas whose wool, mohair and fiber they spin and blend into rugs, scarves, hats and other craft pieces. The group, which includes several members of Concho Valley Electric Cooperative, meets at Ruth Jordan's property on the South Concho River near San Angelo, where their flock lives on 11 acres.

"Each spinner brings her special knowledge and talent to the group," Jordan says. They share techniques, supplies and equipment, she explains. "Beginning spinners usually start with me as the teacher, with everyone pitching in for help and encouragement."

Even though the members chose the name Serendipity because they liked the sound of the word, its meaning holds relevance for original member Peggy Tharp. She had given up weaving because there was no place to buy materials in West Texas. Serendipity Spinners changed that.

Being involved in the process from the beginning—starting with animals and through the finished product—offers creative satisfaction. "Spinning is fulfilling and elemental," Tharp says. "This group got me to do something I'm not sure I could do otherwise."

The Serendipity Spinners continue a tradition of spinning that dates back more than 10 centuries, to a time when fibers were hand spun on spindles. The spinning wheel was invented in India and introduced to Europe in the Middle Ages. The wheel sped up the yarn-making process, which became mechanized during the 18th century.

Crafters who crochet typically buy yarn from big-box stores and craft shops, which mostly supply acrylic wool. Yarn spun from natural fibers can be harder to come by and costs more. Purists buy raw fibers and spin them into their own yarn. The Serendipity Spinners take it a step further by



ABOVE, FROM TOP Alpacas owned by the Serendipity Spinners near San Angelo are one source of the group's wool; unspun wool; Ruth Jordan spins wool into yarn.



LEFT Jordan feeds one of the Shetland sheep the Serendipity Spinners count on for the breed's desirable wool. BELOW The spinners gather in Jordan's home to enjoy their centuries-old craft.



Each spring, the group hires a local to shear their sheep and goats. The spinners shear the alpacas and do the skirting (the term for sorting and cleaning the wool) of all the fleeces themselves. The wool is then carded—combed—into roving so the fibers are lined up and ready to be spun into yarn.

When group members gather, they enjoy a potluck of food and fellowship. The room is filled with familiar smiles, the scent of fresh-baked treats and the gentle whirring of spinning wheels. The Serendipity Spinners are not in business to make a profit; they're in business to produce affordable fiber for members to use.

The group sells dryer balls made from their castoff scrap fiber at craft fairs and events at the Chicken Farm Art Center in San Angelo. The dryer balls are the one product the group sells collectively, and they use the proceeds to help with the cost of feeding and shearing their flock and processing their wool.

The Serendipity Spinners' flock came about during a spinning session when one of the ladies complained about the high cost of fiber. Jordan suggested the group invest in their own flock, so each member chipped in \$200, and they purchased four sheep.

They sought a variety of sheep breeds to produce a diversity of fibers. Their flock now includes Teeswater, Wensleydale, California variegated mutant, Jacob, merino and Rambouillet. Each breed has unique qualities in its fiber and yarn.

Mohair, produced by Angora goats, is glossy and strong and dyes beautifully. Merino is soft. Jacob is strong and ideal for rugs and handbags. Teeswater is lustrous. CVM offers larger fleece that's easy to spin and is often blended with other fibers. Alpaca fleece comes in a variety of shades and colors. Shetlands produce an especially desirable fiber for hand spinning in many colors.

San Angelo, well-known as one of the largest sheep, wool and mohair markets in the U.S., makes a fitting home for the Serendipity Spinners. The Texas Sheep and Goat

raising their own sheep to produce their own wool.

The group spins the wool into yarn on varied styles of spinning wheels: some Saxony, some Castle, some electric, some antique heirlooms.

"If only these wheels could tell us their stories," says Jordan, who owns several. She purchased one from northern Europe at a secondhand shop in Mason, concluding it probably came to Texas with the German pioneers who settled the Hill Country. Her Schacht Matchless wheel came from an estate sale, and she learned that its former owner, whose initials are painted on the wheel, traveled from New York to Mexico to teach spinning there.

Through her experience with different wheels, Jordan has become the mechanic of the Serendipity Spinners, troubleshooting occasional problems.

Though there are faster ways of acquiring a scarf nowadays, the machine-made one you select from the shelf at the department store won't be imbued with the same love a handmade scarf offers. The Serendipity Spinners take the wool from a sheep they've cared for and work it through every step of the process to become a warm wrap.



The spinners' livestock range on 11 acres along the South Concho River.

Raisers Association and the Mohair Council of America are headquartered in the city.

The Serendipity Spinners observe Roc Day, or St. Distaff's Day, each January 7, the traditional date that the cottage industry spinners in Europe resumed spinning the day after Epiphany. The San Angelo women celebrate with

a weekend spinning retreat at the Jordan Ranch near Menard. On that weekend they exchange handmade items.

"Fiber friends are the finest," Jordan says, smiling as she reflects upon her time with her fellow spinners. ■

3-12-51

Ramsey Farm

Capt McAdams
Capt. Bedford

Carter Folk quartette leader

Retrieve Farm

Alonso Curlee - (knew L.B.)
Howard Byater - (knew Iron Head)
Freddy Long
Dorothy Dickerson + 3 others (Alvin Johnson, Andrew P. Crane)



11



if no more.
turning down

Been gone looking.
nd
re

with The Son of God.

aa Big Day in Dallas
nna, David McFalls
Jacob, Winton, Bartlett
(M.C.)

by
Perry Wilson

John Avery Lomax records Richard Amerson at a home in Alabama. Ruby Terrill Lomax, at top, accompanied Lomax on many trips through the South and kept meticulous notes of the field recordings.

Listening To Texas

The late Blanche Inez “Aunt Tootsie” Bell Simmons of Pflugerville had never heard the fiddle music of her great-uncle, Peter Tumlinson Bell of Carrizo Springs, until she was nearly a century old.

In 2008, Austinite Dan Foster, who researches old-time fiddlers and fiddle music, brought Tootsie copies of a compact disc, *P.T. Bell—Master Texas Fiddler*.

The fiddle tunes on the CD were captured on an ancient Vibromaster recording machine by folklorist William A. Owens in Carrizo Springs in 1941, when the musician Bell was 74. The Vibromaster recorded directly to aluminum discs. Verner Lee Bell said that among his first memories was sitting on the floor while his grandfather fiddled into the recorder as little curls of aluminum twisted away and fell under the table as the recording was made. Owens wrote that the audio on the aluminum discs was played back with a cactus needle.

Owens was following a tradition begun by John Avery Lomax, among the best known of all field recorders. Originally funded by Harvard University, Lomax traveled through Texas with his son Alan and wife, Ruby Terrill Lomax, recording authentic, undocumented folk songs until his death in 1948.

One man Lomax recorded, whose name was only given as Blue, at the Smither Farm in Walker County concluded his singing by addressing President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and urging him to come to Texas and do something for the poor folks on tenant farms. Alan Lomax later wrote that his experience at the farm changed his life and the mission for his work. From that point forward, he believed he needed to record the views of the unheard people in rural America.

A similar drive to preserve rural cultural traditions motivated other field recorders. Though some recordings were made in urban settings, these traditions were largely rural, and they continue to influence Texas music and lifeways in the 21st century.

Others who took on this mission include Américo Paredes and Tary Owens (no relation to William Owens). Field

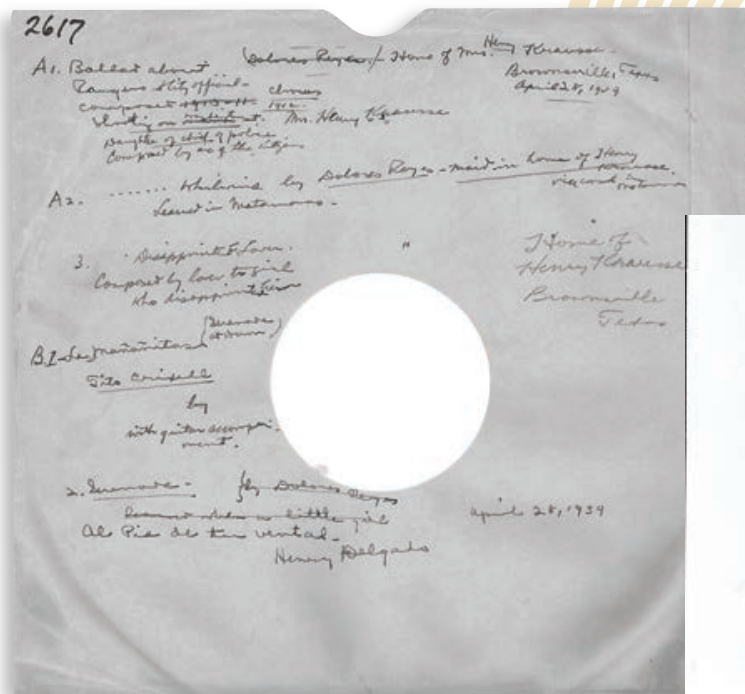


Jack Thorp was a pioneer in collecting and preserving homespun ballads.

recorders preserved cowboy songs, Old World ballads, Appalachian reels, Black spirituals, *corridos* and *canciones* that had been handed down through families from pioneer days. If not for the work of the field recorders—those truly listening to Texas—these musical traditions might well have disappeared.

Some of these recorded traditions became part of American culture. Cowboy Jack Thorp collected sagebrush songs in Texas in 1889 and produced a booklet titled *Songs of the Cowboys* in 1908. Based on that publication and John Lomax’s 1910 publication, *Cowboy Songs and Other Frontier Ballads*, the oral history of Western music seeped into mainstream American culture. As a direct result, the 1920s saw the creation of an archetype, the singing cowboy, on radio and records. And with the advent of “talkies,” motion pictures with sound, in the 1930s, the crooning caballero was firmly established as an American icon.

William A. Owens spent much of the 1930s and early ’40s trekking the state in search of songs. Born in Lamar County



Américo Paredes studied the stories, humor and border ballads—*corridos*—of the Rio Grande Valley for decades after becoming the first Mexican American to receive a doctorate in English from the University of Texas.



Corrido de Kiansis, about the famed trail drives from South Texas. “Many of the trail drivers were Mexicans,” he writes, “some taking their own herds, others working with Anglo outfits.”

Other border songs collected by Paredes include the stories of Texas journalist Catarino Garza, who led a revolt against Mexican dictator

Porfirio Díaz, and Goliad native Ignacio Zaragoza, who led a Mexican force that defeated the French at the Battle of Puebla on May 5, 1862—a victory celebrated today as Cinco de Mayo. The song *A. Zaragoza* was sung at 1867 Cinco de Mayo festivities in San Ygnacio by a local *guitarrero* named Onofre Cárdenas and remained in the borderlands’ oral tradition until Paredes learned it from the Zapata County singer Mercurio Martinez in 1950.

Tary Owens became one of Paredes’ students at the University of Texas in the 1960s and earned a Lomax Foundation grant to record such artists as country bluesmen Mance Lipscomb and Bill Neely as well as piano legends Robert Shaw and Roosevelt Williams, also known as Grey Ghost. As Ruth K. Sullivan wrote in the *Journal of Texas Music History*, Owens documented a wide range of styles in Texas and “helped provide ... a much more complete understanding of the unique and complex musical heritage of the Lone Star State.”

Some of Owens’ 1965 tapes were recently released on CD as *Teodar Jackson With T. J. Jackson: African-American Fiddling From Texas*. Foster explains that this music is “something rare and old as yet unheard in the familiar sound of old-time fiddling today. Teodar’s recordings have much to teach us about the sound of African American music in its own right.”

Thanks to Owens’ field recordings and the discovery of Teodar Jackson by young audiences, the fiddler was slated to play the Newport Folk Festival in 1966, where an even greater audience awaited his music—but he died before that happened. Listen to Jackson’s fiddle, and you’re truly listening to Texas. ■

TCP WEB EXTRA Experience John Avery Lomax’s East Texas Tour virtually.

in 1905, he returned home to Pin Hook to record singers in the early days of rural electrification. “A mystery, at times a superstition about electricity penetrated folk minds,” he wrote in his 1983 book, *Tell Me a Story, Sing Me a Song*.

Owens’ quest took him from the streets of Dallas’ Deep Ellum to the King Ranch to the woods of Texas’ deepest east. In East Texas he was often guided by Irvin “Cocky” Thompson of Silsbee, who, Owens wrote, “knew the paved roads ... the wagon roads, the trails that led to lonely cabins or became lost in the rootings of hogs hunting for mast.”

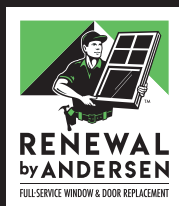
In the unincorporated Houston County community of Austonio, Lemuel Jeffus—who could reportedly “make people grin like possums with his crazy old songs”—gathered locals and families from Bug Hill to record sacred harp singing for Owens. Marveling at the aluminum disc on the folklorist’s machine, they testified quietly, “I ain’t never heered my own voice.”

In Brownsville and Matamoros, Owens recorded a young Paredes and his then-wife, the future Queen of the Bolero, Chelo Silva. One performance seems especially emblematic of listening to Texas. “Chelo sang a version of the traditional Spanish *Cielito Lindo*,” Owens wrote, “that progressed from the original, through a *guapango* [huapango], a Negro blues, and ended as a cowboy yodel. To them, such a mixture seemed natural on the border.”

Though authorities did not allow Owens to take his Vibromaster into Mexico, a Matamoros cantina singer taught Paredes the words and melody to another song, the story of Gregorio Cortez, a ranch hand who fled Texas after a tragic struggle with the sheriff of Karnes County. Paredes’ dissertation on the story and its corrido, published as the 1958 book, *With His Pistol in His Hand*, has become a bed-rock text in Mexican American studies.

Paredes rounded up a lifetime of border music in his 1976 book, *A Texas Mexican Cancionero*.

He included the oldest complete Tex-Mex corrido, *El*



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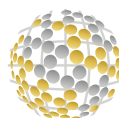
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Two legends come together for epic jewelry



“White Buffalo Stone is stunning with its striking black & white contrast, and to our knowledge, this is the only unique vein in the world.”

— Tony Otteson, 2019

To show exquisite details, jewelry shown is not exact size.

A RARE MEETING OF THE MINES

The American Southwest is steeped in legend. From untamed deserts to Wild West towns, its stories are as rich and mysterious as its beautiful expansive vistas. So we made the trek to two remote mines in this captivating region to join two of the Southwest's most legendary stones into one epic collection.

First we went to the only source of the illusive White Buffalo stone in the world—the Otteson Mine located in Tonopah, Nevada. White Buffalo has a bold, captivating presence with a distinctive white background and black matrix and is named after the white buffalo—a symbol of sacred life and abundance to Native Americans.

Then we went to one of the few places on earth that produce rare, natural turquoise—the Kingman Turquoise Mine nestled in the Acerbate Mountains of Arizona. Kingman is one of the oldest and largest turquoise mines in the world. It was mined by prehistoric Native American tribes dating back over a thousand years. The beautiful, high-quality stones from this mine feature an array of green and blue shades with exquisite veining and marbled patterns.

The *Two Legends Collection* celebrates the unique and rare beauty of these legendary stones with generous cabochons of White Buffalo accented with rounds of the coveted Kingman turquoise. The antiqued silver-finished settings showcase these rare desert gems beautifully.

100% Satisfaction Guaranteed. Experience what it's like to wear a legend for 30 days. If you're not happy, send it back for a refund of the item price. We want your experience to be epic.

Limited Availability. Stones with only one source are hard to come by. Don't miss out on owning a legend. Call today!

Two Legends Collection

A. White Buffalo & Kingman Turquoise Ring (4 1/2 ctw)
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- Antiqued silver-finished settings • Ring: whole sizes 5-10

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MESSAGE
FROM CEO

**MARK
ROLLANS**

Our Best for the People We Serve

AT MEDINA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, we care about the people we serve.

That service has historically resulted in high marks in customer service surveys for electric cooperatives, which consistently deliver a higher level of service than other electric utilities nationwide. Research conducted by the American Customer Satisfaction Index in 2020 shows that members rated co-ops higher than did customers of investor-owned and municipal utility companies.

But the ACSI Energy Utilities Report revealed a distressing trend for energy utilities overall. Overall customer satisfaction with the energy utilities sector declined, even for electric cooperatives.

Challenges since 2019 likely affected people's opinions of their utilities. Many have been hit hard by unprecedented natural disasters, including wildfires, hurricanes and winter storms, not to mention a pandemic that upended our day-to-day operations. Meanwhile, consumers, including co-op members, are expressing their desires for cleaner energy, smarter technology and energy-saving practices, according to the ACSI.

Electric cooperatives still rank higher in terms of customer satisfaction than their investor-owned and municipal counterparts. Cooperatives' customer satisfaction score was a 73 out of 100. Medina EC did even better than that, with an average ACSI score of more than 89 during 2020.

Co-op members across the country have historically given their local co-op employees high marks for understanding their needs and having the flexibility to address their individual concerns. Co-op employees also typically get good grades for delivering state-of-the-art service and for caring about consumers and the communities they serve. We have seen those same results in the annual member surveys that we have done. In fact, in survey after survey, our employees get positive comments.

But at Medina EC, we always want to do better. Not just to be better than our utility neighbors but better for the sake of our members—the people we serve.

The trust and loyalty electric cooperatives have earned over our long existence give us the ability to continue to work for your best interests. Medina EC staff, management and directors are united in our desire to provide you with the best service available

anywhere in the country, even if we have to work a little harder to get your approval.

The ACSI report says co-op members want better service, easy-to-understand bills and faster outage restoration. The feedback also shows that although cooperatives support their communities and provide energy efficiency information, members want more.

We encourage you to reach out to us when you have suggestions or comments about what would help us serve your needs. It's the spirit of cooperation that helps make Medina EC unique and a great utility.

Electric cooperatives know that to be a great utility company, you have to make people your first priority. To be successful in this business, you have to care about the people you serve. Let us know what you think. ■





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

Never break a meter seal.

Never open a meter base.

Never remove a meter or alter an entrance cable in any manner.

For safety reasons, only Medina EC personnel are permitted to remove meters from a meter socket. This includes situations where the meter needs to be removed, even if there is a licensed electrician present and even for temporary work to be done. These instances must be scheduled ahead of time with the cooperative.

If Medina EC finds evidence of meter tampering at a location or receives notice a meter was removed from a socket, it will result in a trip fee of \$125 and a \$500 tampering charge.

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

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Wayne W. Scholtz, (830) 426-1328

Ken Weynand, (830) 426-0762

Voting District 2

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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

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

Option 2: Report an outage

Option 3: Pay bill, get account balance

Option 5: Speak to a representative

OFFICE LOCATIONS

Bruni 1300 FM 2050 N., Bruni 78344

Dilley 1718 W. FM 117, Dilley 78017

Hondo 237 Hwy. 173 N., Hondo 78861

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

Uvalde 2604 Hwy. 90 E., Uvalde 78801

Corporate Office 2308 18th St., Hondo 78861

VISIT US ONLINE

MedinaEC.org



This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Información sobre todos los programas y servicios que ofrece Medina Electric Cooperative están disponibles en Español al llamarnos al 1-866-MEC-ELEC o visitando una de nuestras oficinas.



BLACKCAT | ISTOCK.COM

Remember Electrical Safety This Month

MAY'S DESIGNATION AS National Electrical Safety Month makes it a good time to review electrical hazards and think about how to keep common household dangers at bay.

Each year, electrical malfunctions account for 35,000 home fires causing more than 1,130 injuries, 500 deaths and \$1.4 billion in property damage, according to Electrical Safety Foundation International. Because the average American home was built in 1977, many can't keep up with the demands of today's electrical appliances and devices.

To help prevent adding to the sobering statistics about electrical dangers, watch for the warning signs of an overloaded electrical system, which include:

- ▶ Frequent circuit breaker trips or blown fuses.
- ▶ Lights dimming when other devices are turned on.
- ▶ Buzzing sounds from switches or outlets.

- ▶ Discolored outlets.
- ▶ Appliances that seem underpowered.

To maintain an electrically safe home, be sure that the following safety devices are installed according to updated codes:

- ▶ Arc-fault circuit interrupters protect against electrical fires caused by malfunctions.
- ▶ Surge protective devices safeguard against surges that can damage or reduce the life spans of electrical systems and devices.
- ▶ Ground-fault circuit interrupters protect against electric shock.
- ▶ Tamper-resistant receptacles have an internal shutter system to prevent foreign objects from being inserted into an outlet.

About 3,300 home fires are started by extension cords every year, so it's important to follow these safety tips:

- ▶ Don't substitute extension cords for permanent wiring.

- ▶ Don't run cords through walls, doorways, ceilings or floors. If a cord is covered, heat cannot escape, which is a fire hazard.

- ▶ Don't use an extension cord for more than one appliance.
- ▶ Make sure the extension cord or temporary power strip you use is rated for the products it powers and is marked for either indoor or outdoor use.
- ▶ Don't use a cord that has a lower rating than the appliance or tool you are plugging in.
- ▶ Never use a cord that feels hot or is damaged in any way.
- ▶ Never use three-prong plugs with outlets that only have two slots.
- ▶ Ensure your extension cord has a polarized or three-prong plug.

Understanding Power Outages

ALTHOUGH MEDINA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE does everything it can to reduce the possibility of power outages, they still occur. Despite our best efforts, storms, falling tree limbs, vehicles and animals can cause outages. Sometimes all it takes is a squirrel climbing critical electrical equipment to cause a short circuit.

Regardless of the reason, your co-op always works as fast as it safely can to get your power restored.

Our number one focus will always be public safety. That means our crews will first clear lines and equipment that could pose safety hazards to the public. Next they will turn their attention to generation facilities that provide the actual electricity that powers our distribution system. After that come transmission line and substation equipment repairs. Then your co-op will focus on feeder lines that can serve as many as 3,000 members, then tap lines that provide power to 20–30 homes or businesses, and finally connections to individual members.

During this process, crews will generally first make repairs to lines that power facilities critical to public health and safety—like hospitals, police and fire stations, water treatment plants, and communications systems. How long it takes to get your power restored depends on the extent of any damage, the number of outages and when it becomes safe for co-op personnel to get to damaged areas.

Whether it's a long outage or a short one, these tips can help keep your family safe and comfortable:

Call Medina EC immediately to report the outage.

Use safe, nonelectric food preparation methods.

A barbecue grill is an excellent way to cook, but always grill outdoors.

Have a storm kit prepared in advance. It should include flashlights, a battery-operated radio, batteries and first-aid supplies.

Turn off electrical appliances and unplug major electronics. Power sometimes comes back in surges. Your circuits could overload when power returns if all your electronics are still plugged in and turned on. Leave one light on to indicate when power has been restored. Once it has, wait a few minutes and then turn on other appliances, one at a time. ■





THE GRISSOM FAMILY WITH THEIR GRANT.

Operation Round Up Winners

MEDINA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE'S OPERATION ROUND UP PROGRAM has been making a difference in the lives of community members since 2006. The ORU committee, made up of cooperative members, meets quarterly to review applications and carefully make donation decisions. They met in early March to look over applications submitted in February and discuss emergency awards made in December and January.

The committee decided to provide the following individuals and families with grants for help after house fires and to help with medical expenses and for home winterization.

- ▶ Maggie and Jason Alvarez of Hondo—\$1,000
- ▶ Cindy Balderrama of Devine—\$1,500
- ▶ Sharon and Nathan Grissom of Rio Medina—\$1,000
- ▶ Amanda Hammett of San Isidro—\$1,000
- ▶ Jeffery and Robyn Pope of Moore—\$1,000

Operation Round Up is funded by Medina EC members who choose to have their monthly electric bills rounded up to the next dollar. The spare change is then added to the ORU fund to help community members in need. ORU has helped families pay medical bills, receive therapies, repair homes and rebuild after house fires.

If you or someone you know needs financial help, apply for a donation from Operation Round Up. Applicants do not need to be Medina EC members but must live in one of the 17 counties served by the cooperative. The remaining deadlines for 2021 are May 7, August 6 and November 5. The application and information are available at MedinaEC.org/ORU.

THE POPE FAMILY, LEFT, AND THE ALVAREZ FAMILY, RIGHT, RECEIVING THEIR ORU DONATIONS.



DID YOU KNOW?

May is National Electrical Safety Month. Time to inspect your home for any lamps, appliances, electronics, cords, plugs or outlets that need repair or replacement to prevent hazards.

PHOTOEVENT | ISTOCK.COM



POWER TIP

Avoid putting heat-producing electronics near your home's thermostat during the cooling season. Heat from a lamp can raise the temperature, causing the air conditioning to turn on more often.

SOLARIS IMAGES INC. | ISTOCK.COM



Co-op Connections Corner: AC Services

Whether you need to get your AC system serviced before the summer heat arrives or your unit suddenly needs to be replaced, these local business partners offer discounts in Medina EC's service area.

A/C Technical Services—Castroville

(210) 677-0001 | AC-Technical-Svcs.com

5% discount on complete AC equipment system replacement; cannot be used in conjunction with other discounts or programs.

Comfort Commander Air Conditioning and Heating—Devine

(210) 509-4653 | ComfortCommander.com

10% discount on AC and heating repairs.

Lonestar Comfort Services—Castroville

(830) 538-9450 | LSComfort.com

10% discount on parts or labor; present Co-op Connections card before services are provided.

BONUS AC HELP: If you have trouble finding the correct filter size or keep forgetting to change your air filters, sign up for replacements and reminders at MedinaEC.org/Products via FilterChange.Coop. You can order a case of six or 12 shipped to your house at discounted prices! You will also receive a filter change reminder with your order.



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



Save With the Energy Star Sales Tax Holiday

EVERY YEAR AROUND MEMORIAL DAY in Texas, certain Energy Star-certified products are tax-free to encourage consumers to save more energy at home.

This year's Energy Star sales tax holiday runs May 29–31. In addition to shopping in stores, you can buy qualifying Energy Star products online or by phone, mail or any other means, tax-free. Items must be both delivered to and paid for by the customer during the exemption period or at least ordered and paid for during that period for immediate shipment, even if delivery is made after the period ends.

Qualifying products:

- Air conditioners (with a sales price of \$6,000 or less)
- Refrigerators (with a sales price of \$2,000 or less)
- Ceiling fans
- Lightbulbs
- Clothes washers
- Dishwashers
- Dehumidifiers
- Some programmable thermostats

Nonqualifying products:

- Water heaters
- Clothes dryers
- Freezers
- Stoves
- Attic fans
- Heat pumps
- Wine refrigerators
- Kegerators
- Beverage chillers

Get more info at Comptroller.Texas.Gov.



Summer Grid Updates

What you need to know about the upcoming summer and the power grid

THE ELECTRIC RELIABILITY COUNCIL OF TEXAS, which oversees 90% of the state’s power grid, including Medina Electric’s service area, released its preliminary Seasonal Assessment of Resource Adequacy report for summer 2021. This report provided an outlook for the coming season and is released each summer and winter.

As of the March 25 report, ERCOT is anticipating “sufficient generation to meet the summer 2021 peak demand based on expected system conditions.” The preliminary SARA predicts a summer peak of 77,144 megawatts and notes that “generators in Texas are typically built to maximize performance during hot weather conditions.” ERCOT anticipates “nearly 87,000 MW of resource capacity available for summer peak.”

The record peak demand was set in August 2019 and was 74,820 MW. In general, a megawatt of electricity can power about 200 Texas homes.

As in the past, ERCOT will issue alerts and declare energy emergencies if needed. Alerts help consumers, including Medina EC members, know that conservation is needed. Declaring an emergency allows the grid operator to take advantage of additional resources. If grid conditions continue to worsen, the grid operator can implement forced outages across the state. Members saw this occur in February of this year and in 2011. If this occurs again, it is likely to happen very quickly and it will not be possible for the cooperative to provide advance notice of impacted areas or estimates of how long outages will last.

As always, Medina EC will monitor ERCOT’s grid conditions and recommendations for any conservation requests. If emergency requests are made by ERCOT, Medina EC will comply with those as required and will send email alerts and post updates at [MedinaEC.org](https://www.MedinaEC.org) as quickly as humanly possible.

ERCOT will release their final summer SARA report in early May. Previous SARA reports are posted at ercot.com/gridinfo/resource.

TEXT

ENERGY TO (830) 423-5032

TO SIGN UP FOR CONSERVATION ALERTS.

CONSERVATION IS IMPORTANT

Medina EC encourages all members to practice energy conservation, especially on extremely hot days, and the cooperative offers conservation text alerts for those wanting to help conserve energy on crucial days.

If you would like to help, text ENERGY to (830) 423-5032. You can find more energy conservation tips at [MedinaEC.org/Hot](https://www.MedinaEC.org/Hot).

WHAT DOES THE COOPERATIVE DO?

To help combat peak demand in summer months—June through September—Medina EC offers a load management program for members on the cooperative’s irrigation rate.

Through this program, irrigators allow the co-op to shut off power to their irrigation pumps when needed to reduce energy use and strain on the grid. By shedding irrigation load at critical moments, the cooperative can reduce power costs. It also reduces load on the statewide grid during the highest-use times of the summer.

More information about the program is available at [MedinaEC.org/LM](https://www.MedinaEC.org/LM).

Receive Outage Texts for Your Account

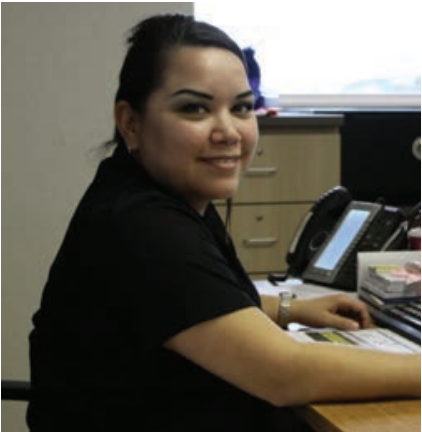
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We Want Your Feedback

STARTING THE WEEK OF MAY 3, 350 members will be randomly selected to get a call or email to answer some survey questions about Medina Electric. Your answers will help the cooperative to see how we can improve service to and better communicate with our members.

The survey, email or phone call should take less than five minutes. This feedback is important to the cooperative, and we appreciate members taking time out of their busy schedules to provide it to us.

The surveys are being done by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. Phone calls will come from an 844, 952 or 712 area code. Emails will show Medina Electric in the “from” line.

The cooperative is doing these surveys quarterly. Additional surveys will take place in August and November.

If you do not get a phone call or email to take the survey but would like to share your feedback or an idea with the cooperative, email us at MyCoop@MedinaEC.org.

IN THE NEWS:

Moissanite is a game changer... A hot trend in big bling—an alternative to diamond..."

— Today Show on NBC



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The most brilliant fine stone on earth. According to the GIA (Gemological Institute of America), Moissanite outperforms all jewels in terms of its brilliance, fire, and luster. Moissanite has "double refraction"—which means light goes down into the stone and comes out not once, but twice. No diamond can do this. The way the light dances inside Moissanite is something to behold.

The genius of affordability. A one-carat diamond of this color and clarity sells for more than \$5,000. Two years ago Moissanite was over \$1,000 a carat. Now, for the first time in history, our

team of scientists and craftsmen have mastered the innovative process, enabling us to price 2 carats of moissanite in precious sterling silver for less than \$100. It's pure genius. Our Nobel Prize-winning chemist would be proud.

Satisfaction guaranteed or your money back. Experience the beauty of Moissanite for 30 days. If she's not completely head over heels send it back for a full refund of the item price. But we have a feeling she'll be over the moon.



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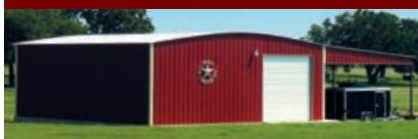
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Now, THIS is a Knife!

This 16" full tang stainless steel blade is not for the faint of heart —now **ONLY \$99!**

In the blockbuster film, when a strapping Australian crocodile hunter and a lovely American journalist were getting robbed at knife point by a couple of young thugs in New York, the tough Aussie pulls out his dagger and says "That's not a knife, THIS is a knife!" Of course, the thugs scattered and he continued on to win the reporter's heart.

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

Secured in a tooled leather sheath, this is one impressive knife, with an equally impressive price.

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

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

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

Limited Reserves. A deal like this won't last long. We have only 1120 *Down Under Bowie Knives* for this ad only. Don't let this beauty slip through your fingers at a price that won't drag you under. Call today!

Down Under Bowie Knife ~~\$249~~*

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— H., Arvada, CO



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TCP WEB EXTRA

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read this story.



The Hero of Cinco de Mayo

A Texan named Zaragoza led the battle against the French in Mexico

BY W.F. STRONG • ILLUSTRATION BY RAUL ALLEN

I HAVE LONG KNOWN that 19th-century Mexican general Ignacio Zaragoza Seguín was a Texan, but I didn't know how deep his Texas roots went until I did some digging—pun intended. I learned that he was born in Goliad in 1829, when Texas was still part of Mexico. My research told me that his mother, María de Jesús Seguín, was from San Antonio and a cousin of Tejano hero Juan Seguín, who fought Gen. Antonio López de Santa Anna in the Texas Revolution and for whom the city of Seguin is named.

Zaragoza's father owned 11 leagues, or just under 50,000 acres, along the Red River in Northeast Texas, according to the Texas General Land Office. He

bought it for 100 pesos a league in 1830. That's mind-blowing. You couldn't even buy a square foot of that land today for 100 pesos. All this proves Gen. Zaragoza's Texas bona fides.

When Zaragoza was in his early 20s, he joined the revolutionary army of Benito Juárez and eventually led an army of volunteers in defeating Santa Anna. Yes, that same Santa Anna. Zaragoza's victory effectively removed Santa Anna as dictator of Mexico. That's another reason we should recognize Zaragoza. Like all good Texans, he despised the dictator and wanted him dead so democracy could live.

It is astonishing that Santa Anna was once again in power 20 years after his

humiliating loss to Sam Houston's army at San Jacinto. But Santa Anna had more political lives than a cat and was president of Mexico 11 times. No one ever failed so often and so badly and still managed to claw his way back into power.

In 1862 the French, under Napoleon III, wanted to make Mexico their own colony. They sent an impressive force of 8,000 crack troops to take the country by storm. Juárez directed Zaragoza to Puebla to defend Mexico from the French invasion. This was Mexico's San Jacinto moment because Zaragoza commanded half as many men as the French and was definitely the underdog in the battle to defend Puebla.

The French army's commander, Gen. Charles Latrille de Lorencez, held the same haughty attitude toward his Mexican opponents that Santa Anna had about the Texans in 1836. Latrille wrote that the Mexicans he faced "were of a lower race, poorly organized, poorly disciplined, of low morals," and in a uniquely French insult of a military force, said that they "lacked good taste."

Despite their poor taste, Zaragoza and his army achieved a stunning victory May 5, 1862, over those French troops. The French lost 500 men, while the Mexicans lost only 100 and sent the French back to the coast, licking their wounds. The French hadn't lost a battle in 50 years, so this was a demoralizing defeat, and the contribution of the victory to Mexico's national pride cannot be overstated. Sadly, Zaragoza died four months later of typhoid fever. He was just 33.

So we raise our glasses on Cinco de Mayo to salute native Texan Ignacio Zaragoza Seguín for his San Jacinto-like victory at Puebla and for helping to remove Santa Anna from power. Again. ■

Potluck Dishes

It's all about sharing, including these family favorites

BY MEGAN MYERS, FOOD EDITOR

Though they're on hold for now, potlucks have historically been a large part of gatherings, especially across the South. Author and journalist Toni Tipton-Martin brings this to light beautifully with her award-winning cookbook *Jubilee*. Here's her recipe for baked beans, which is sure to become your new go-to.



TONI
TIPTON-
MARTIN



Baked (Barbecued) Beans

6 slices bacon, divided use
1 cup minced onion
½ cup minced green bell pepper
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 cup packed dark brown sugar
½ cup molasses
½ cup ketchup or tomato sauce
2 tablespoons mustard
2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
1 tablespoon liquid hickory smoke (optional)
½ teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
¼ teaspoon pepper
2 teaspoons salt, or to taste
1 pound cooked navy beans, plus 3 cups cooking liquid; or 3 cans (15.5 ounces each), undrained

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Cut 3 slices of the bacon into 1-inch strips. In a skillet, cook the cut bacon until browned and crisp. Use a slotted spoon to remove to paper towels to drain.
3. In the same pan, sauté the onion, bell pepper and garlic over medium heat until tender and the onion is translucent, about 5 minutes. Stir in the brown sugar, molasses, ketchup, mustard, vinegar, liquid smoke (if using), red pepper flakes, pepper and salt. Mix well. Cook over medium-low heat until the sugar is dissolved, about 1½ minutes.
4. In a large bowl, combine the beans, their liquid, the sauce and the cooked bacon. Pour into a 9-by-13-inch baking dish or a 3-quart casserole dish. Place the remaining 3 slices of bacon on top of the beans. Cover and bake 45 minutes. Uncover, increase the oven temperature to 425 degrees, and bake 15 minutes more to brown the bacon slices.

SERVES 6-8

Reprinted with permission from *Jubilee: Recipes From Two Centuries of African American Cooking* by Toni Tipton-Martin (Clarkson Potter, 2019).

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



Hawaiian Pineapple Upside-Down Cake

DEBORAH ANDERSON
COSERV

Coconut and pecans make this cake even more special. Anderson shares her grandmother's secret recipe, which is a crowd-pleaser.

- ¼ cup (½ stick) butter**
- 1 can (20 ounces) sliced pineapple**
- Maraschino cherries**
- 1 cup unpacked brown sugar**
- 1 cup pecan halves**
- 1 cup shredded, sweetened coconut**
- 3 cups Bisquick**
- 1 cup sugar**
- 2 eggs**
- 1 cup milk**
- 4 tablespoons shortening**
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract**

COOK'S TIP In place of Bisquick, you can substitute 3 cups flour, 1½ tablespoons baking powder and 1½ teaspoons salt, and increase the shortening to 6 tablespoons.

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Melt butter in a 10- or 12-inch cast-iron skillet on a stovetop. Remove from heat. Add pineapple in a circular design and insert a cherry into the center of each pineapple ring. Sprinkle brown sugar, pecans and coconut on top and in between the pineapple rings.
2. In a large bowl, beat Bisquick, sugar, eggs, milk, shortening and vanilla using an electric mixer, scraping the bowl as needed, until batter is smooth. Pour on top of the fruit and nuts in the skillet, making sure to cover completely.
3. Bake 40–50 minutes or until toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean and the cake's surface is golden brown. To prevent sticking, immediately flip cake

CONTINUED >



\$500 WINNER

Arroz con Pollo Estilo Panameño

SUZANNE FULTON
BLUEBONNET EC



A hit at family meals, this recipe was passed down to Fulton from her mother, who learned it while living in Panama. Don't skimp on the olive juice, which adds a unique briny flavor to the dish.

SERVES 8

- Olive oil or vegetable oil**
- Salt and pepper**
- 8 chicken thighs**
- 2 onions, diced**
- 4 cloves garlic, minced**
- 3 tablespoons paprika**
- 2 large carrots, sliced thinly**
- 1 can (28 ounces) crushed tomatoes**
- 7 cups water**
- 3 cups basmati rice, uncooked**
- 1 bag (10 ounces) frozen petite green peas, thawed**
- 1 bunch fresh parsley, chopped**
- 1 jar (5.75 ounces) sliced salad olives, juice reserved**

1. Heat the olive oil in a large, heavy-bottomed stock pot. Salt and pepper the chicken, and brown on all sides, working in batches so as not to crowd the pot. Set chicken aside.
2. Using the same pot, sauté onions and garlic with paprika, scraping the bottom as you stir. Add carrots and cook 2 minutes, stirring often. Add tomatoes and water and bring to a boil. Add chicken and cook 5 minutes.
3. Stir in rice and cook over low heat, covered, until rice has absorbed most of the liquid, about 15 minutes.
4. Remove lid and add peas, then continue cooking until rice begins to stick to the bottom and chicken is falling apart, about 10 minutes more. Stir in parsley and olives. Add olive juice to taste. Adjust salt if needed.

TCP \$500 Recipe Contest

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Ooey gooey, savory and even sweet, cheese enhances a wide range of recipes. What's your favorite? Enter at TexasCoopPower.com/contests by May 10.

BEANS: JERRELLE GUY | CLARKSON POTTER. TIPTON-MARTIN: PABLEAUX JOHNSON. READER RECIPES: MEGAN MYERS. WINNER: COURTESY SUZANNE FULTON

RECIPES CONTINUED

onto a serving dish, holding plate firmly to the cake while flipping.

SERVES 8-10



Kickin' Chicken Spaghetti

JAMIE MUNIZ
GRAYSON-COLLIN EC

There are probably as many chicken spaghetti variations as there are Texan families—and for good reason. This creamy, cheesy dish is a favorite for Sunday dinners.

- 1 pound spaghetti**
- 3 cups shredded chicken**
- 1 can (10.5 ounces) cream of chicken soup**
- 1 can (10.5 ounces) cream of mushroom soup**
- 2 cups shredded cheddar cheese**
- 1 orange bell pepper, diced**
- 1 jar (4 ounces) diced pimiento peppers**
- 2 cans (4 ounces each) diced green chiles**
- 1 teaspoon seasoned salt**
- ½ teaspoon cayenne pepper**
- 1 cup shredded pepper jack cheese**

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Boil spaghetti until it's al dente. Drain noodles and pour into a large bowl.

2. Mix in shredded chicken, soups, cheddar cheese, bell pepper, pimientos, green chiles, seasoned salt and cayenne pepper.

3. Pour into a lightly greased 9-by-13-inch casserole dish. Sprinkle on pepper jack cheese. Bake 45 minutes, until bubbly.

SERVES 8

Potluck Safety Tips

BY MEGAN MYERS

- ▶ Don't reuse marinades from raw meats. If you need to baste while cooking, set aside some marinade ahead of time.
- ▶ Use a meat thermometer to ensure dishes are fully cooked.
- ▶ Set cold foods over a bowl or shallow baking dish filled with ice. For hot foods, use a chafing dish or serve in a slow cooker.
- ▶ Cream cheese- or whipped cream-based desserts will melt in warm temperatures. Keep them in the fridge or cooler until serving time.
- ▶ Discard food that has been out of the refrigerator or off the grill for more than two hours. If it's above 90 degrees where the food is, discard after one hour.

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COURTESY CHET GARNER

Used Cars

Visit Amarillo's Cadillac Ranch to leave your mark on an art shrine

BY CHET GARNER

IF YOU USED a can of spray paint in an art museum, you'd be escorted out immediately. If you visit Amarillo's most iconic art installation without paint, you will be left out, with no way to leave your mark on the ever-changing sculpture known as the Cadillac Ranch.

Fueled by steak and eggs from the stockyard cafe inside the Amarillo Livestock Auction, I set out in search of cattle—cattle-acks. That is, the 10 Cadillac sedans half-buried nose down in the Texas prairie in 1974 by the art collective known as the Ant Farm. This automotive Stonehenge has become a must-stop destination for travelers on historic Route 66.

The Cadillac Ranch is unmissable. The distinctive tail fins are the only thing taller than a fence post on the southern horizon just west of town. A dozen vehicles parked nearby confirm that this is my stop. Since painting the Cadillacs is encouraged, I grab my spray paint and head into the field to see this High Plains anomaly firsthand.

Vibrant coats of fresh paint cover every inch of the classic Caddies. The cars are so beat up that the layers of paint might be the only thing holding them together. I felt like I was exploring a junkyard and a holy shrine, a sensation possibly caused by the fact that the cars are buried at the same angle as the sides of the Great Pyramid of Giza.

After a few minutes of contemplation, I pondered what timeless contribution I could add to the sculpture. Knowing that anything I sprayed would soon be covered by another pilgrim's paint, I wrote my name and reveled in the knowledge that once it does get covered, it will be forever entombed in one of Texas' most famous sculptures. That alone was worth the trip. ■

ABOVE Chet tagged Cadillac Ranch, as many visitors do.

TCP WEB EXTRA See Chet's video from Cadillac Ranch and check out his Texplorations on *The Daytripper* on PBS.

Know Before You Go

Some events may have been affected by COVID-19. Call or check an event's website for scheduling details.

MAY

01

Denton [1–8] Materials:
Hard and Soft,
(940) 382-2787,
dentonarts.com

Corpus Christi [1–9] Bucca-
neer Days, (361) 882-3242,
buccadays.com

Brenham [1–2, 6–9, 13–16]
Ben Butler, (979) 830-8358,
unitybrenham.org

06

Mesquite [6–Aug. 5] Court-
yard Concert Series,
(972) 216-8132,
mesquiteartscenter.org

07

New Braunfels John Conlee,
(830) 627-0808, brauntex.org

Palestine Texas State Rail-
road: Wines in the Pines,
1-855-632-7729,
texasstaterailroad.net

Weimar [7–8] Gedenke!,
(979) 725-9511,
weimartexas.net

Fredericksburg [7–9]
175th Anniversary Opening
Weekend Ceremonies,
(830) 998-4738, 175th.org

Ingram [7–8, 14–15]
I Ought To Be in Pictures,
(830) 367-5121, hcaf.com

08

Fredericksburg Texas Flower
Country Women's 5K/10K
Run, info@runintexas.com,
runintexas.com/flower

Huntsville Wine Down
Shop Small Street Fair,
(469) 853-0425,
huntsvilledba.com

Irving Las Colinas Symphony Orchestra:
Daniela Liebman, (972) 252-4800,
lascolinassymphony.org

Lufkin Winter Dance Party,
(936) 633-5454,
angelinaarts.org

Bulverde [8, 15, 22, 29] Saturday Night Rodeo,
(830) 980-2226,
tejasrodeo.com

Waxahachie [8-9, 15-16, 22-23, 29-31] Scarborough Renaissance Festival,
(972) 938-3247,
srfestival.com

14

Columbus [14-15] Magnolia Days Festival, (979) 732-8385,
magnoliadays.org

15

Jefferson [15-16] Historic Jefferson Train Show,
(903) 665-3733, historicjeffersontrainshow.com

New Braunfels [15-16] Old Gruene Market Days,
(830) 832-1721,
gruenemarketdays.com

20

New Braunfels Come and Taste It: Virtual Wine Tasting, (830) 629-5077,
grapevineingruene.com

21

Georgetown Cory Morrow Live at Reunion Ranch,
(512) 868-9544,
faithinactiongt.org/events

Del Rio [21-22] George Paul Memorial Xtreme Bull Riding, (830) 775-9595,
georgepaulmemorialbullriding.com

MORE EVENTS >

TCP Submit Your Event

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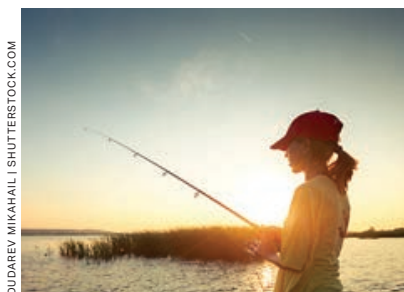


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Pick of the Month

Babes on the Bay

Fulton, May 14–15
(361) 205-0182
babesonthebay.com

This fishing tournament describes itself as the largest women's angling event in the country. The Coastal Conservation Association created the tournament in 2000 to make the sport more inclusive and teach conservation-minded approaches to saltwater fishing. The event includes live music, vendors and educational outreach by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and other conservation organizations.

29

Belton ASCO Spartacus Dash, (254) 340-4577, ascospartacusdash.com

Hunt Jack Nelson, (830) 238-4441, cridersrandd.com

Kerrville Family Free Day, (830) 896-2553, museumofwesternart.com

Seguin Lone Star Book Festival, (512) 554-9560, lonestar.bookfestival.network

Abilene [29–30] Kristen Hertenberg and Her All-Star Band, (325) 677-6710, abilenephilharmonic.org

JUNE
03

Stephenville [3–5] Moo-La Fest, (254) 552-1222, visitstephenville.com

04

New Braunfels Aaron Watson, (830) 964-3800, whitewaterrocks.com

Amarillo [4–5] Coors Cowboy Club Ranch Rodeo, (806) 376-7767, coorsranchrodeo.com

Hearne [4–5] Crossroads Home Town Festival, (979) 402-1337

05

Jacksonville All Smiles Tomato Fest 5K Run and 1 Mile Fun Run, (903) 586-0741, jacksonvilletexas.com

Leander Old Town Street Festival, (512) 259-1907, oldtownstreetfestival.com

Sherman [5–7, 11–14, 18–21, 25–28], Mamma Mia, (903) 893-8525, scptheater.com

06

New Braunfels Travis Tritt, (830) 964-3800, whitewaterrocks.com

MAY EVENTS CONTINUED

22

New Braunfels Jon Wolfe, (830) 964-3800, whitewaterrocks.com

27

Kerrville [27–July 2] Southwest Gourd Fine Art Show, (830) 895-2911, kerrvilletexascvb.com

28

Brenham Bob Wills' Texas Playboys Starring Jason Roberts, (979) 337-7240, thebarnhillcenter.com/events

Groesbeck [28–30] Heritage Festival, (254) 729-6123, groesbeckchamber.com

Kerrville [28–30] Texas Masters of Fine Art and Craft Invitational Exhibition, (469) 223-4162, texasmasters.com

Jacksonville [28–31] Memorial Day Mudbug Ride, (903) 724-4100, riverrunpark.com

Historic Texas

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GRACE FULTZ



CLOCKWISE FROM FAR LEFT

DAVID WHITTLE
DEEP EAST TEXAS EC
San Felipe United Methodist Church in San Felipe.

CHRISTENA STEPHENS
LYNTEGAR EC
The chapel at the World War II prisoner-of-war camp near Hereford.

CYNTHIA BANDA
MAGIC VALLEY EC
San Antonio Missions National Historical Park.

SHERRI JEFFERY
GRAYSON-COLLIN EC
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TCP WEB EXTRA See Focus on Texas on our website for more photos from readers.



TCP WEB EXTRA

Find places in Texas with official Dark Sky status.

Universal Appeal

The night skies of far West Texas bring celestial wonders to light

STORY AND PHOTO
BY E. DAN KLEPPER

I AM OFTEN SURPRISED by the way the night skies of far West Texas remind me of scenes in science fiction movies. Above the silhouette of a mountain horizon, nighttime skies are at their most dramatic, offering unobstructed views of comets, satellites, meteors and galaxies, all unraveling in a dreamlike firmament.

Long past sunset, in the late hours after midnight, the sky seems particularly otherworldly. Perhaps it's because in these later hours the sky's recognizable touchstones—Orion, Sirius, the dipper—are hanging askew rather than in their accustomed places or, in concert with the Earth's rotation, have disappeared altogether. Or maybe it's the mischievous temperament of the sky itself, aware that the few who glance up into deep night are bleary and disoriented

and easier to lure away from reason. These darkest moments provide the wily universe with a chance to perform atmospheric wonders unlike those that ever inhabit our waking hours.

As a lifelong astronomy enthusiast with only a basic understanding of how the universe actually works, my lack of knowledge about the science of stars and planets means I am astonished every time I look through a telescope—a sort of blessing disguised as ignorant bliss. The first time I peered at the spiraling Andromeda galaxy through professional optics, in Fort Davis at one of the McDonald Observatory's star parties, it made my head spin. I couldn't look away, irritating the other visitors in line behind me who were waiting for a turn at the eyepiece. But each time I would begin to draw back, I was pulled in again, as if the galaxy's spiraling movement—eons in the turning—could be felt as well as seen.

When I was a kid growing up in South Texas, I had my own telescope—an inexpensive junior scientist scope my parents gave me for Christmas one year. By today's standards, it was a toy. But the optics were good enough to extend my visible reach skyward, much farther than I had ever experienced, and I spent hours outside, just staring into the craters of the moon. Fifty years later my enthusiasm for the universe survives in the Big Bend, beneath one of the darkest skies in Texas. Waking from a deep sleep to pull on a pair of boots and lumber outside to witness meteor showers, comets and lunar eclipses never disappoints. Many of these astronomical events occur overhead for just a moment each year, or once in a lifetime, and sometimes only once in a millennium, but they are fleeting proof of the mythic fires in the sky, highlighting a short list of events that have yet to feel the compromise of a human-made world. ■



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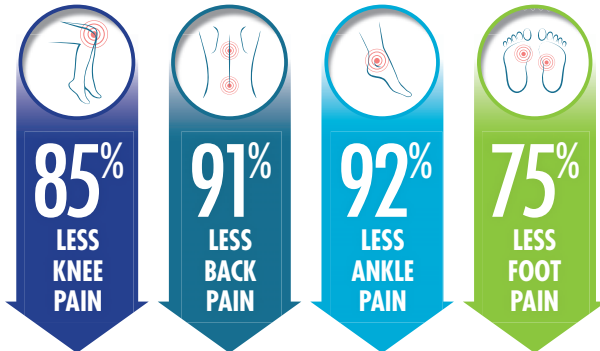


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Qualification: Advertised price requires credit qualification and 24-month commitment. Upfront activation and/or receiver upgrade fees may apply based on credit qualification. Offer ends 7/14/21. 2-Year Commitment: Early termination fee of \$20/mo. remaining applies if you cancel early. Included in 2-year price guarantee for additional cost: Programming package upgrades (\$79.99 for AT120+, \$89.99 for AT200, \$99.99 for AT250), monthly fees for upgraded or additional receivers (\$5-\$7 per additional TV, receivers with additional functionality may be \$10-\$15). Regional Sports: RSN Surcharge up to \$3/mo. applies to AT120+ and higher packages and varies based on location. NOT included in 2-year price guarantee or advertised price (and subject to change): Taxes & surcharges, add-on programming (including premium channels), DISH Protect, and transactional fees. Premium Channels: 3 Mos. Free: After 3 mos., you will be billed \$30/mo. for Showtime, Starz, and DISH Movie Pack unless you call or go online to cancel. Remote: The DISH Voice Remote with the Google Assistant requires internet-connected Hopper, Joey, or Wally device. Customer must press Voice Remote button to activate feature. The Google Assistant Smart Home features require Google account and compatible devices. Google is a trademark of Google LLC. Other: Netflix streaming membership required. All packages, programming, features, and functionality and all prices and fees not included in price lock are subject to change without notice. After 6 mos., if selected, you will be billed \$9.99/mo. for DISH Protect Silver unless you call to cancel. After 2 years, then-current everyday prices for all services apply. For business customers, additional monthly fees may apply. Free standard professional installation only. Indiana C.P.D. Reg. No. – 19-08615. ©2021 GoDISH.com. All rights reserved. Internet speeds, prices, and providers vary by customer address. \$40 price refers to widely available plan from multiple providers. Restrictions apply. Nationwide availability of 25 Mbps plan is subject to change without notice. The application of "Unlimited Data with no Hard Data Limits" varies by provider, but commonly mean that your access to the internet will not be stopped by going over a data limit, but that speeds may be lowered. Call for details. Internet not provided by DISH and will be billed separately.