

TEXAS CO-OP POWER

what the
DEVIL?

Prickly plants,
creepy critters
and other thorny
things Texans
love to hate

BLUEBONNET NEWS
SEE PAGE 18



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The inhospitable, bedeviling landscape in Big Bend Ranch State Park

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BIG BEND RANCH STATE PARK: CHASE A. FOUNTAIN | TPWD. PAIL: MATT BENOIT | SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

ON THE COVER *Ocotillo, a desert plant with spiny stems, is also called devil's walking stick.* Photo by James H. Evans

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Other Musical Poets

Slaid Cleaves must be included [*Musical Frontier*, January 2018]. For y'all not convinced, see this on YouTube to get you started: *Slaid Cleaves Texas Love Song*. You should hear his yodeling these days. He sat at the feet of Don Walsler.
S.K. MEYER | CANYON LAKE PEDERNALES EC

How can you not mention Mac Davis? He is one of the most successful singer/songwriters in the country.
SALLY MACHOST | LIVINGSTON
SAM HOUSTON EC

Roosevelt's Flight

Before Air Force One [Currents, January 2018] jogged my memory. My dad, Woodrow D. Nichols, was a young soldier in the U.S. Army Air Corps in World War II. I remember him telling me that he saw President Franklin D. Roosevelt when the president landed in Morocco in 1943. He said that as the motorcade passed, President Roosevelt looked and made eye contact with him. It really made the day for my dad. Then in April 1943 in North Africa, he received word that he had just had a son born in March. That happened to be me!
LARRY NICHOLS | MIDLOTHIAN
HILCO EC

Pop's Story

Ellen Stader, this made me cry [*Pop and Spike*, December 2017]. Y'all are such beautiful humans.
NICOLE POULIOT VIA FACEBOOK
BROOKLYN, NEW YORK

What a stunningly beautiful, inspiring and uplifting tribute.

Not a Crazy Idea

I've read *Musical Frontier* [January 2018] three times and still can't find a mention of Steven Fromholz. You know, the musician who was the poet laureate of Texas for 2007.

"I'd Have To Be Crazy" to think Gene Fowler omitted Mr. Fromholz on purpose.

THOMAS MILYO | KELLER | TRI-COUNTY EC

Editor's note: Fowler did omit Fromholz on purpose but only because Fowler's story centered on the Texas Heritage Songwriters' Association Hall of Fame, and Fromholz is not a member.



You write with such heart about what our generation is currently going through and what every generation will experience: caring for our beloved seniors. Don't they make the best subject matter? Say hey to your pop from the Cannons.
PAUL LEE CANNON VIA FACEBOOK
OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA

Editor's note: Pop, Bob Stader, died January 7 in Austin. He lived in Texas 14 months.



Game of the Century

When Houston and UCLA played the Game of the Century in 1968 [*A Hoops Home Run*, Currents, January 2018], the longest winning streak in basketball belonged to a Texas college: Tarleton Junior College in Stephenville. The team won 86 consecutive games between 1934 and 1938. Then, after losing one game, it won 25 more in a row.
JERRY HAMRICK | GLEN ROSE
UNITED COOPERATIVE SERVICES

Coach Guy Lewis from Arp and Elvin Hayes from Rayville, Louisiana, played a large role in the Houston Cougars knocking the wind out of the Bruins. Matter of fact, we Texans of old will never forget the look on the faces of UCLA player Lew Alcindor [now Kareem Abdul-Jabbar] and coach John Wooden.

How about next time naming and quoting Texans—not the other guys.
VARDY VINCENT | KINGSBURY
BLUEBONNET EC

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   Texas Co-op Power

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HAPPENINGS

Hit the Trail

The Chisholm Trail, the path followed by millions of cattle from Texas to Kansas, celebrated its 150th anniversary in 2017, prompting cowboy entertainer K.R. Wood to create a Western variety show in its honor.

The next staging of the **OLD CHISHOLM TRAIL WESTERN VARIETY SHOW** is **MARCH 17** in **FREDERICKSBURG** as part of Celebrate Texas! at the Texas Rangers Heritage Center.

Wood, a member of Pedernales Electric Cooperative, and his troupe tell the story of the Chisholm Trail through songs, poems and action. “I call it historical and hysterical,” Wood says. The show includes a trick roper, pistol twirler, bull whipper and wrangler.

Wood is enthusiastic about the Chisholm Trail’s place in history. “It helped elevate Texas out of the post-Civil War depression,” he says. “It established the legend of the cowboy.”

Wood’s album, *Songs and Tales of the Old Chisholm Trail*, won the 2017 President’s Award from the Western Music Association.

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WEB EXTRAS
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BY THE NUMBERS

That’s the annual value of agricultural production in Texas, which ranks third among U.S. states, behind California and Iowa. Hug your favorite farmer March 20, National Ag Day.

CO-OP PEOPLE

WOMEN AT WORK

International Women’s Day, March 8, is a fine time to celebrate electric cooperative lineworkers. That’s because Texas women are climbing the ladder—er, utility pole—in the field of electric line work. In 2017, women lineworkers distinguished themselves in training programs and competitions as well as in the field.

The first known female to compete in the Texas Lineman’s Rodeo joined the field last year. And the Power Line Worker program, offered at Victoria College in conjunction with Victoria Electric Cooperative, produced its first female graduate.

Both women now work as apprentice lineworkers at their respective co-ops—and both downplay their groundbreaking status, preferring to focus instead on doing their jobs well.

VARIETY SHOW & HAPPY BIRTHDAY: BART BROWNE. CORN: BERGANONT | SHUTTERSTOCK.COM. STAR: MANBETTA | SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

Congress Makes Time

One hundred years ago, Congress authorized time zones and approved daylight saving time. The Standard Time Act was passed March 19, 1918. Daylight saving time, which goes into effect March 11 this year, was repealed in 1919 but re-established during World War II.

Did you know?



IDAHO was accidentally included in the central time zone, an error that wasn't corrected until 2007.



HISTORY LESSON

Happy Birthday to a Song

THE SONG MOST FREQUENTLY SUNG in the English language came into being 125 years ago. Kentucky sisters Patty and Mildred Hill composed *Good Morning to All* in 1893. Patty sang it daily to her kindergarten class. For birthdays, the lyrics were changed to the *Happy Birthday* song that we know today.



THE ORIGINAL LYRICS:

*Good morning to you
Good morning to you
Good morning dear teacher
Good morning to all*

IN 2015, A U.S. DISTRICT COURT RULED that the copyright to the lyrics was no longer valid, placing it in the public domain, meaning anybody can sing the song anywhere without having to pay royalties.

WORTH REPEATING

“I shall not seek, and I will not accept, the nomination of my party for another term as your president.”

—**PRESIDENT LYNDON B. JOHNSON**,

announcing to the nation 50 years ago, March 31, 1968, that he would not seek re-election

HONORS



A TEXAS STAR

Texans celebrate Independence Day on March 2, the date in 1836 when the Texas Declaration of Independence was signed. George C. Childress is widely credited with writing the document, with which Texas broke free from Mexican rule. Ten days later, he offered a resolution providing that “a single star of five points, either of gold or silver, be adopted as the peculiar emblem of this republic.”



WHAT THE DEVIL?

**EXPLORING LUCIFER'S
POINTED INFLUENCE
ON NAMING TEXAS PLACES,
CRITTERS AND PLANTS**

The Devils River snakes through 94 miles of scenic yet hostile terrain southwest of Sonora. Before the mid-19th century, the river was reportedly called the San Pedro or Saint Peter. In 1848, Jack Hays led a scouting expedition of Texas Rangers and Delaware Native Americans in the region.

BY SHERYL SMITH-RODGERS

A story goes that when Hays came upon a forbidding gorge bottomed with water, he asked a native what the river was named. When told, Hays sputtered, “Saint Peter, hell! It looks like the devil’s river to me.”

The name stuck. But did Hays name the river?

Read another account of that conversation, and the details could differ. Or, if you’re like Midland author Patrick Dearen, you may dig deeper and discover little-known information. While writing *Devils River: Treacherous Twin to the Pecos, 1535–1900*, Dearen studied the 1848 journal of rancher Samuel Maverick,

who accompanied the Hays expedition. Upon reaching the waterway, Maverick recorded in his notebook, “Mouth of Devil’s River.”

The earlier date of Maverick’s entry, Dearen believes, challenges the Hays version, later reported in a newspaper. Quite possibly, the men “may have only reaffirmed the name ‘Devil’s’ rather than coined it,” the author theorizes.

Such uncertainty bedevils those seeking to learn how or why the horned hellion came to be a namesake for so many places, plants and points of interest in Texas. Few names can be referenced to a specific source, except perhaps for mentions by folklorists. No matter the origin, the devilish names in nearly all cases hint at a trait or demeanor so unpleasant or vile that only the devil himself must have inspired their creation.

No doubt, topographic features in West Texas were often named after the devil because the land can be so inhospitable, says Dearen, who grew up in dusty Sterling City in West Texas.

“I’m reminded of Ann Kelton, the wife of the late author



COULD YOU, WOULD YOU CANOE THE DEVILS RIVER?

AWW, BUT THEY'RE SO CUTE...



DEVIL'S HORSE (PRAYING MANTIS)



DEVIL'S DARNING NEEDLE (DRAGONFLY)



DEVIL BIRD (BLUE JAY)

Elmer Kelton," he recalls. "A native of Austria, where forests and streams abound, she was shocked when Elmer first brought her to his home near Crane. As she once told me, as they got closer and closer to Crane, she thought she had reached the 'jumping-off place to hell.' "

Hot and dry describe the Trans-Pecos region, where the devil and his Spanish counterpart, *el diablo*, lurk amid fearsome canyons and rugged mountains.

For a short time, the Diablo Dam and Reservoir existed only in name. That's because officials of the time deemed the evil connotation inappropriate for a future international lake to be fed by the Devils and Rio Grande rivers. In 1959, U.S. President Dwight Eisenhower and Mexican President Lopez Mateos agreed on *amistad*, Spanish for "friendship." Amistad Dam was dedicated in September 1969.

Archaeology buffs may know of the Devil's Mouth Site in Val

Verde County. From 1959 to 1967, archaeologists worked to examine the prehistoric remains of a campsite near the mouth of the Devils River before the new Amistad International Reservoir flooded the site. The stratified excavations produced ancient pollen records and stone projectile points called Golondrina.

Ghost stories galore haunt the Devil's Backbone, a ridge of rolling hills in Comal County. Along a scenic stretch of Ranch Road 32 once promoted as Devil's Backbone Skyline Drive, a roadside park offers stunning views. In Montague County, another ridge called Devil's Backbone served as a lookout for Comanches and Kiowas.

Near Rocksprings, Devil's Sinkhole State Natural Area protects a gaping cavern that hosts a huge Mexican free-tailed bat colony from late spring through early fall. No one is certain who initially discovered the hole, but a firsthand account credits some pioneer women with naming it in May 1876.

While searching the area for Indians, rancher Ammon Billings

MANTIS: CORRID | SHUTTERSTOCK.COM | DRAGONFLY: COURTESY TEXAS A&M PRESS. JAY: SHELIANA POOTE | SHUTTERSTOCK.COM



DEVIL'S SINKHOLE

and his posse came upon the dark chasm. They invited their wives to see “a helluva hole in the ground.” His wife, Lucinda Billings, later recalled, in a story printed in the *Kerrville Mountain Sun* in August 1949, that the women, who agreed the hole was impressive, suggested that the less profane name of Devil’s Sinkhole “would do just as well.”

Devilish names once stigmatized a few fauna. Native Americans and hunters called blue jays “devil birds” because their raucous cries alert other animals of danger. According to Texas folklore, the devil’s horse (praying mantis) was poisonous. Thus, a man would go blind if one spit in his eye, and a cow would die if she swallowed one. Another devil’s horse was the scary-looking but harmless walking stick, also once called the devil’s darning needle.

According to *A Dazzle of Dragonflies*, old-time believers feared another devil’s darning needle, the dragonfly.

Co-author James Lasswell’s grandmother was certain that “devil’s darning needles” were poisonous (they are not) and “told us that if they stung us we would be sick for a long time and might even die.”

In the plant kingdom, the devil also appears frequently. *Historical Common Names of Great Plains Plants* lists more than 50 species besmirched with diabolical names. Devilwood, also called American olive, is hard to split. Elephant’s-foot, a perennial herb, also goes by the name of devil’s grandmother. Three plants share the name devil’s shoestring. One, commonly known as trumpet vine, spreads aggressively. Another is also called goat’s rue, a silvery plant with stringy roots that contain a toxic substance called rotenone. And one is a grasslike agave that’s also called beargrass.

Devil’s head cactus, also called devil’s pincushion and horse crippler, grows wide but low to the ground, making it hard to spot. On the frontier, cowboys sometimes would slice off a devil’s head and use the level surface to play mumblety-peg, a game typically played with pocket knives that required the loser to remove a peg driven

WEB EXTRAS

► Read this story on our website to read the poem *Hell in Texas*.



in the ground (or cactus) with his teeth.

Devil cholla grows in a small region of Presidio County. Ocotillo, a spiny-stemmed, woody shrub of the desert, is also called devil’s walking stick.

Treacherous thorns and prickly leaves arm another devil’s walking stick, a native tree also known as Hercules club and prickly ash. Its creamy yellow flowers attract honeybees and other pollinators. Birds and other wildlife relish its purplish-black berries, which may be toxic to humans.

Devil’s claw refers to the bizarre seedpods of *Proboscidea louisianica*, a low-spreading, bushy annual with pastel-colored flowers. Its tender, edible seedpods resemble okra. When dried, they split lengthwise into two curved, sharp claws that latch onto furry animals and scatter the black seeds inside.

Devil’s claws serve other purposes. In a December 1888 issue



HANG ON! AREN'T THOSE DEVIL'S CLAWS?

DEVIL'S SINKHOLE & DEVIL'S BACKBONE: LAURENCE PARENT; DEVIL'S CLAWS: W.P. ARMSTRONG



DEVIL'S BACKBONE

of the *Stephenville Empire*, a columnist advised young boys to collect and bundle the “common, hooked nuisances” to make Christmas gifts “fit for a king.” Used as toothpicks, devil’s claws “are very tough, do not splinter off, and curve to suit the mouth,” she wrote. Modern hobbyists fashion the claws into sculptures, dream catchers and wreaths.

The town of McLean in the Panhandle hosts an ominous place called the Devil’s Rope Barbed Wire Museum. Inside the brick building, you’ll find a huge collection of barbed wire strands, not to mention posthole diggers, barbed-wire sculptures and antique fencing tools. “When barbed wire began to be used in the 1870s, livestock were not used to it,” explains Delbert Trew, former museum curator. “Because many animals were injured by it, religious people considered barbed wire to be the work of the devil. Hence, the name devil’s rope.”

Blistering heat likely inspired *Hell in Texas*, a lyrical poem that humorously tells how the devil negotiated with God for a plot of land, where he could torment men. As folklore will do, *Hell in Texas* (also titled *The Devil Made Texas*) evolved to describe various locales in the Southwest, such as Arizona and New Mexico.



ANY WONDER WHY THIS CACTUS IS CALLED DEVIL'S PINCUSHION?



HE'S BEEN HERE, TOO ...

- Devil's Ridge (Hudspeth County)
- Sierra Diablo (Hudspeth/Culberson)
- Diablo Plateau (Hudspeth)
- Devils Draw/Devils River Canyon (Val Verde)
- Devil's Pocket (Newton)
- Devil's Den (Big Bend)
- Devil's Hall Trail (Guadalupe Mountains)
- Devil's Waterhole (Burnet County)
- Devil's Water Hole Spring (McMullen)
- Devil's Hill (Comal)
- Devil's Ford Creek (Sabine)
- Devil's Toenail (Llano)
- Devil's Creek (Childress and Cottle)
- Devil's Courthouse Peak (Tom Green)



The Best Loved Poems of the American People, published in 1936, reprinted a longer version of *Hell in Texas* attributed to an “unknown” writer. According to a 1944 Texas Folklore Society publication, attorney E.U. Cook of Iowa, who managed a land and cattle company in Frio County, probably penned the original text after witnessing the effects of a severe drought that lasted from 1885 to 1887. He later returned to Texas during a greener year, which inspired another poem that omitted any mention of the devil.

Its title? *Texas a Paradise*. But that’s another story. Sheryl Smith-Rodgers, a member of Pedernales EC, lives in Blanco.





**LEGENDARY
CHISHOLM
TRAIL
CELEBRATED**

(WHEREVER IT WAS)

After all, the Lone Star State just about has more things named for the Chisholm Trail than it does cattle. From skateparks to quilt guilds and dental clinics—if it’s a thing, somebody in Texas has named it for the Chisholm Trail. Still, Ludwig reported finding scant evidence that the term was used in Texas before the days of singing cowboys and Western movies.

Symposium speaker Tom B. Saunders IV, a rancher and historian whom I would honor with the title of old-timer, provided a living link to the cattle-drive era. Saunders’ great-great-uncle, George W. Saunders, went up the trail with several herds in the 1870s and later founded the Trail Drivers Association. In 1931, the association adopted a formal resolution declaring that “the Chisholm Trail proper crossed the Red River at the community known as Red River Station and extended north to Abilene” in Kansas and that “the herds originating at all points in Texas drove north over the western or eastern Texas-Kansas cattle trails.”

I’m not sure that Shakespeare’s dog-eared maxim, “A rose by any other name would smell as sweet,” would apply to a cattle trail. Though most folks in Saint Jo, about 11 miles from the Red River, agree with the Trail Drivers Association, there’s no need to chisel “Chisholm” off trail markers and other signage that has acquired the name through a century of regional tradition. The association offered its resolution “merely in the interest that Texas history may be properly preserved to posterity.”

Or as Ludwig expressed it in his talk, quoting a proverb from the film, *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance*, “This is the West, sir. When the legend becomes fact, print the legend.”

Nomenclature aside, everyone agrees that the main cattle-drive era started after the Civil War and lasted a couple of decades, and that Texas cowboys and cowgirls escorted millions of cattle

Few place names evoke the spirit of Texas and the Old West more than the storied Chisholm Trail. The very words make me hear spurs a-jingle-janglin’ and yippie-ti-yi-yos a-yodelin’. Last year, folks up and down the trail celebrated its 150th anniversary.

What most Texans might not know is that the Chisholm Trail never existed in Texas. The story made its best-documented appearance at the Real Chisholm Trail Symposium, held last May in Saint Jo. That’s when Wayne Ludwig, founder of the Facebook-only Texas Cattle Trails History Group, who confessed to being a little nervous at the time, officially broke the story.

Hold your horses! That’s pretty much like forgetting the Alamo. Trying to buy tickets to a Cowboys home game in Dallas, Georgia. Asking the band to play Ernest Tubb’s timeless tune, *Waltz Across Rhode Island*.

to shipping points in Kansas. Most histories say that the trail north of the Red River was named for the Indian trader Jesse Chisholm. Others have speculated it was named for Denton County cowman John Chisum. Some say it should be called the Black Beaver Trail, for a Delaware scout who led Union soldiers out of the Indian Territory during the Civil War and showed the trail to Chisholm.

It's almost easier to name a spot through the middle of Texas that isn't associated with the Chisholm Trail than to cite all the spots that celebrate their role in the trail's legacy. We'll mosey

⇒⇓ **NOMENCLATURE ASIDE**, everyone agrees that the main cattle-drive era started after the Civil War and lasted a couple of decades, and that Texas cowboys and cowgirls escorted millions of cattle to shipping points in Kansas.

'round a few sites along the trail and its feeder routes—with apologies to any we might miss.

Down in the Rio Grande Valley, the Donna Hooks Fletcher Historical Museum in Donna has exhibits about the town's role as "an early pass-through on the Chisholm Trail," according to the Texas Historical Commission. A historical marker commemorates Chisholm booster P.P. Ackley, who cowboied up the trail in 1878. In the 1930s, as a winter Texan based in Donna, he placed cast-iron and granite markers from Kansas to the Rio Grande. Historians say Ackley had many of his facts wrong, but you can't fault his style and enthusiasm. A sign outside his Donna home read "End of the Chisholm Trail," and neighbors long recalled his handlebar mustache, chaps and the longhorns mounted on his Chrysler coupe.

The Chisholm Trail Heritage Museum in Cuero makes a good case for the 150th birthday falling a year earlier, in 2016, and for a local cowpoke providing the trail's name. Trail boss Thornton Chisholm headed north from Cardwell Flats, a DeWitt County trading post and stagecoach stop, April 1, 1866, with 30 cowboys and 1,800 rangy longhorns. It took the drovers seven months to reach the railhead at St. Joseph, Missouri.

Some accounts have the Chisholm Trail starting in San Antonio, where the Witte Museum features the George West Trail Drivers Gallery and the courtyard Trail Drivers Monument. Others point to Lockhart, where the Caldwell County Museum exhibits a gallery of Chisholm Trail cowboys. Descendants of Lockhart cattleman John Jacob Myers have passed down oral testimony from other trail drivers that the Texas leg of the Chisholm maybe should be called the Myers Trail.

Learn about Lizzie Johnson Williams, who took her own herd up the Chisholm, at the Hays County Museum in San Marcos'

1909 Hays County Courthouse. At Round Rock, a bronze sculpture in Chisholm Trail Crossing Park titled *The Pioneer Woman* pays tribute to trail driver Hattie Cluck. Seventeen storytelling bronze panels make up the Chisholm Trail Monument at the Bell County Museum in Belton.

Drovers herding 25 longhorns in the bronze sculpture park at the Brazos River in Waco include a Mexican vaquero and an African-American cowboy. You can walk out on the 1870 Waco Suspension Bridge and imagine the herds clattering across, a nickel per head. The famous cowboy song collector John Lomax

grew up near the trail in Meridian, and some of his papers are archived at the Bosque County Collection.

The Chisholm Trail Outdoor Museum in Cleburne brings pioneer days to life on a 10-acre site where drovers camped. An immense Chisholm Trail Mural at Sundance Square in downtown Fort Worth prepares visitors for the "real thing" in the Fort Worth Stockyards Historic District, where cowboys "drive" cattle on East Exchange Avenue twice daily.

In 2015, the Denton County Trail Marking Committee concluded that the trail ran through the western part of the county. Jack Waide of Bolivar said, "My grandfather, Joe Dillon Waide, told me that he watched cattle drives pass by that were sometimes over a mile wide and took all day to pass by while he was sitting on the front porch."

Steel sculptures of cowboys and longhorns recall the drives at Chisholm Trail Memorial Park in Bowie. The 1873 Stonewall Saloon in Saint Jo served rye whiskey to many a trailhand. Cowboys also could cut loose in Spanish Fort, now somewhat of a ghost town, before crossing to Indian Territory at Red River Station. Drovers could order a new pair of boots from H.J. Justin in Spanish Fort from 1879 to 1889, when he moved to Nocona.

WEB EXTRAS

► [Read this story on our website to learn about songs of the Chisholm Trail and listen to one of them.](#)

They needed good boots. They weren't just sashaying up and down a cow path, pilgrim; they were on the Chisholm Trail. "Most of those boys didn't make but one trip," Saunders said. "And once they got home alive, they were so tickled to be back that they didn't want to risk it again."

Gene Fowler is an Austin writer who specializes in history.

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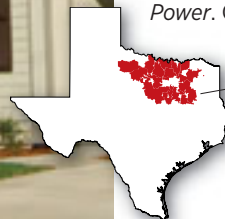
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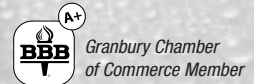
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A year's worth of love, sweat and determination culminates in the arena of the junior livestock show

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SHOW RING DREAMS



By Ed Crowell

It's showtime, the moment when a year of grit and grime is about to shine. All across Texas, big barns are filling with children and teens and the farm animals they have spent thousands of hours in close contact with over the past year or more. Junior livestock shows are down-to-earth celebrations, giving young people a chance to share the show ring limelight with their beloved critters.

A junior livestock show is not a pet parade. You will see (and hear and smell) cattle, hogs, goats, lambs, rabbits and chickens. But these animals mean business. They have been selected, trained, fed, groomed and nurtured by young people who hope their animals will win awards and be auctioned for big bucks.

The public is welcome at junior livestock shows. Expect a petting zoo vibe, educational Q&As with the young animal handlers,

and up-close views of grooming, feeding and handling. Just bring a sense of curiosity and a hay bale-size dose of support for the tireless young caretakers who, if successful, may have to say goodbye to their animals when they are auctioned off.

Kamrie Stewart, 10, a fourth-grader at Giddings Elementary School, will be one of about 250 young people at the Lee County Junior Livestock Show this month. She won Grand Champion (first place) and Reserve Grand Champion (second place) awards at last year's county show with two halter heifers. For her, and many other Texas children,

showing animals in a junior livestock competition is a family tradition.

Kamrie's large extended family — five households altogether — live on or adjacent to the 350-acre Schatte Hereford Ranch that was started more than a century ago in the community of Serbin, about 7 miles southwest of Giddings. A herd of 100 to 150 Hereford cattle grazes there.

In 2017, Kamrie brought Oreo, her black steer, and Callie and Allie, two brown-and-white heifers, to the competition. She had

Continued on page 20



Photo from Trevor Dickschat



Sarah Beal photos



Above, Kamrie Stewart of Serbin, now 10, shows Allie, one of her heifers, at the 2017 Lee County Junior Livestock Show. She won Grand Champion with Allie and will compete again this year. At left, 2-day-old chicks arrive at the office of Trevor Dickschat, head of Lee County's Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. The ideal age for show chickens is 6 weeks old. The Grand Champion Broiler at last year's show sold for \$5,000. Below, 4-H and FFA members learn how to show their goats at a clinic last year in Giddings.

Think it's easy to steer a show animal?



HEIFERS AND STEERS They are big — up to 1,000 pounds and some taller than their handlers. By nature, cattle less than 2 years old can be hyperenergetic and hard to break on halters. They can kick and jerk suddenly, knocking down a show entrant or stepping on a handler's foot.



HOGS They behave well if worked with daily at home. In the show ring, hogs without halters are turned out in the show ring in groups of 10 or more. An entrant must separate his or her hog without touching it, using only a short whip called a bat to guide the hog and turn it to face a judge.



GOATS AND LAMBS They are docile and people-friendly if worked with a lot by the entrants. If not, they may try to escape and climb the show ring fence. To present the goat or lamb to judges, an entrant holds a hand under the animal's jaw without touching it.



CHICKENS Three birds per cage are removed and presented to judges by the entrant and two helpers. A well-handled bird will not squawk or flap its wings.



RABBITS They breed quickly, like rabbits. The goal is to pick three look-alikes and raise them to the same weight and breed standards for showing. Entrant must cradle and turn them belly up for judges to check toenails, teeth and ears. Fur, of course, must look its best.



At her home earlier this year, Kamrie Stewart, right, presents Molly, one of the heifers she will compete with at the 2018 Lee County Junior Livestock Show. Below, Kamrie uses a vacuum to clean and fluff the fur of one of her heifers during the 2017 show, with the support of her grandpa, Monroe Schatte Jr.



Upcoming youth livestock shows

LEE COUNTY March 1-3

CALDWELL COUNTY March 2-3 in Lockhart

BASTROP COUNTY Bastrop, March 2-3; Smithville, April 7; Elgin, January 2019

FAYETTE COUNTY March 22-24

WASHINGTON COUNTY Sept. 19-22

BURLESON COUNTY Sept. 24-29

AUSTIN COUNTY Oct. 9-13

TRAVIS COUNTY Jan. 17-19, auction Jan. 25, 2019 (dates tentative)

County comparison by head of cattle



WASHINGTON COUNTY 67,000



LEE COUNTY 63,000



BURLESON COUNTY 59,000



BASTROP COUNTY 58,000



CALDWELL COUNTY 39,000

Source: National Agricultural Statistics Service 2017 estimates

Continued from page 18

help washing and brushing the animals from mom Kari Stewart, dad Conner Stewart and uncle Erich Schatte. Grandpa Monroe Schatte Jr. stopped by to offer encouragement.

The junior livestock show, which began in 1973, is a popular annual event in Lee County, where agriculture retains a strong presence halfway between the urban sprawls of Houston and Austin. The nearby counties of Burleson, Washington, Bastrop and Caldwell, all served by Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative, also stage junior livestock shows throughout the year.

Agriculture on family farms and ranches is a challenge today in Central Texas as land prices continue to soar amid the high costs of feed, fertilizer, fuel and equipment. Like Kamrie's parents, many members of agriculture families turn to other occupations and professions off the land for their primary income sources.

The junior livestock shows allow young people to learn responsibility and economics as they buy and raise an animal in hopes of a profitable payoff. They must follow detailed show rules to certify their animals for judging, put in the daily work of feeding and grooming, and display poise and control of their animals in the show ring. The financial return can be substantial if the animal places well and is auctioned for several thousand dollars. Buyers are usually local residents or businesses.

Kamrie helped pick out the steer and heifers for last year's show

Continued on page 22



Hogging the limelight

Katelyn Iselt, 17, a junior at Lexington High School, with her Hampshire pig Boots, below, is one of the many students showing hogs at the Lee County Junior Livestock Show this month. Katelyn and her sister, Marla, 14, a freshman at Lexington High, have been showing goats and pigs since they were about 8.

Preparation starts when the pigs are about 2 months old, getting them used to being around humans, walking them at least every other day, and as showtime nears, washing them every other day, conditioning their skin and adjusting their feed to enhance certain aspects of their appearance. Katelyn enjoys showing pigs because of their personality, she said. 'They're easy to get attached to.'

Above, the sisters show off their champion belt buckles. Katelyn won hers for Champion Pig at the 2017 Texas Junior Livestock Association Fall Classic in Waco. Marla won for Grand Champion Goat at the 2017 Lee County show, inset below. Their mother, Ronica Iselt, said showing livestock is a family affair, and the road trips, hard work, wins and losses bring them closer together.



From the beginning: 46 years of shows

In the early 1970s, John Smith was an ag teacher at Giddings High School who thought his students should have a livestock show like many other Texas counties.

With the help of the Lee County ag agent and 4-H and FFA clubs, the first junior livestock show was in 1973, and 23 youths brought in cows and hogs raised on their farms. No auction was included, but the winners received cash awards from the First National Bank of Giddings.

“The kids and their parents then didn’t really know about clipping and grooming animals for show. They worked their farms and the kids couldn’t even do sports because they had to go home in the afternoon for chores,” Smith said.

The second show in 1974 doubled the number of entrants, and the third show in 1975 initiated the auction sales that were traditional at more established junior shows. “It was raining that third year and we needed a place for the buyers, so we borrowed a tent from a local funeral home,” he said.

Livestock shows have a rich history in Texas. The first show, in Fort Worth in 1896, was only for adult competitors. The shows soon spread around the country. The Houston livestock show, now one of the largest, started in 1932. Junior livestock shows began in the 1920s and expanded after World War II.

Smith, who still raises cattle on his land near Dime Box, taught at Giddings High for 30 years and is proud that nine of his students became veterinarians. He plans to be at this month’s Lee County Junior Livestock Show. “I’ve never missed one,” he said.



John Smith, a former ag teacher at Giddings High School, helped get junior livestock shows started in Lee County in 1973. At left, at his home, he holds the ribbon his daughter won that first year, as seen in the newspaper clipping above.



Continued from page 20

from the family’s ranch soon after they were born in the fall of 2015.

To raise the animals for showing, Kamrie spent three to four hours caring for them after school most every day. They were haltered near her house much of the time and given special feed. She worked to train them to set their feet in the right position for showing. And they were groomed – incessantly.

In the show barn a day before last year’s competition, Kamrie was happy to show off her big box of grooming supplies: brushes and combs to make lower parts of the animals’ coats stand up, others to make upper parts lay down, shampoos, polishes and brightening agents for white sections of hair. But when she asked her mother, a pediatric nurse cradling her baby daughter in a sling, if she could go off with her friends elsewhere in the show barn, the answer was no.

“There’s lot to do here. The weigh-in is coming up, there’s more grooming you can help with and they’ve got to be fed,” said Kari Stewart, who showed animals in livestock shows when she was young.



The next day, showtime arrived and Kamrie was ready. She performed with the practiced confidence passed down from a family steeped in the livestock shows of Lee County.

The results: Grand Champion in the halter heifer judging and Reserve Champion in the overall judging of different breeds. Her heifers were not put up for auction. With her steer the next day, Kamrie did not place but she won a jacket award for showmanship in her age group.

Her interest in livestock comes naturally. Her uncle and great-uncle are ag teachers at different high schools.

Kamrie's uncle Erich also is a veteran of the Lee County Junior Livestock show. He's a new ag teacher at Sealy High School in Austin County. The key to success at the shows, he said, "is paying attention, watching and learning. And putting a lot of work into it on the ranch. I spent hours and hours in our barn. I didn't want to go into the house and do homework."

Rusty Mertink, an ag teacher at Lexington High School, is the uncle of Erich and Kari, and great-uncle to Kamrie. The Lee County show is "one of the biggest community events we have," he said. "We've set records in total sales in recent years despite the economy's ups and downs."

Two of his sons, Cole and Clay, were in the 2017 show. "What I like most is seeing generations stacked upon generations here," Mertink said. And each generation learns responsibility by caring for and feeding the animals. Economics lessons come from keeping a budget of upfront animal purchases and feed and grooming costs. When they go up against one another to show their animals, the young people learn about the spirit of friendly competition.

County agents from the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service traditionally serve as ad-



Trevor Dickschat, head of the Lee County office of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, assists at junior livestock shows around the state. The shows 'provide an environment that is fun, and you meet people and get skills that will serve you well later in life,' he said.

County ag agents are expected to "make sure the animals are being nourished and cleaned and groomed properly," Dickschat said. "We look for any hormones or other drugs being used with the animals. They are supposed to be raised without that, according to the show rules."

Some big-city livestock shows "turn into popularity contests over whose family name is represented by the entrants and the bidding

for the winning animals goes that way," Dickschat said. "Lee County does a very good job of guarding against that. Bidders here can't top the amount that the grand champion goes for. I've seen shows in other places where the grand champion goes for \$3,000 and the reserve champion for \$8,000 just because that entrant is from a prominent family."

The state of agriculture in Lee County — mostly hay-growing and cattle-breeding operations — is stable for now, Dickschat said. Land fragmentation (large ranches and farms sold off in small pieces) is likely to reduce the acreage devoted to animals and crops in coming years, he said, adding that "people from Houston and Austin want to have a country place and they look around here for 10 acres or such to put a house on," he said.

More landowners are turning to hunting leases to earn money, he said. Part of the ag agent's job is to supervise wildlife leases because those animals are considered an agricultural commodity.

During the 2018 Lee County show March 1-3, Kamrie Stewart will compete for her second year. Her mom said Kamrie "is more relaxed and knowledgeable about getting the animals set up in position fast and remaining calm if they move." She plans to again enter two heifers and a steer.

She also plans to enter a German chocolate cake she'll make from her babysitter Carmen Gonzales' recipe.

There's more than livestock competition at the shows. The county's 4-H clubs support photography, literary and musical interests, and baking. The cake competition has two categories: regular and decorated. Last year, the auctioned Grand Champion regular cake brought \$3,000 and the decorated \$1,900.

For Kamrie, it could make for one more sweet ending to the Lee County show. ■

visers to junior livestock show organizers and competitors. Trevor Dickschat, head of Lee County's extension office, spends much of his time assisting at livestock shows around the state, primarily the big ones in major cities. He grew up in the Brenham area and raised hogs for junior livestock shows before attending Texas A&M University and then serving in the extension office in Brady.

Summing up the show experience, Dickschat said: "A few minutes before judges means a great deal to these kids."

The money young people can bank when their animals are auctioned off at the end of shows is important, but the ag agent says the shows also "provide an environment that is fun, and you meet people and get skills that will serve you well later in life."

A variety of college scholarships also are awarded through 4-H and FFA (formerly Future Farmers of America) and by area civic organizations to competitors who have demonstrated academic achievement, even if their animals don't place at the top.

Dickschat said some visitors come to livestock shows just to see animals they don't get to see up close that often. "We use youth show 'ambassadors' to explain to the public what parts of the animal become what cuts of meat or to put on demonstrations, such as how cows are milked."

He wants people not only to learn where agricultural products come from but to understand that what the livestock show youth are doing is important to the economy.

Rusty Mertink, an ag teacher at Lexington High School and Kamrie Stewart's great-uncle, said the Lee County show is 'one of the biggest community events we have. We've set a record in total sales each year despite the economy's ups and downs.'



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

Bluebonnet, LCRA grants help with community projects

Bluebonnet



The Delhi Community Center will get upgrades so the historic building can continue to serve as a meeting place for area residents, thanks to a \$25,000 grant from LCRA and Bluebonnet. From left are Rick Arnice, LCRA Governmental and Regional Affairs representative; Gary McMullen, Delhi Community Center president; Ray Rodgers, community center trustee; Milton Shaw, Bluebonnet director; Lori A. Berger, LCRA Board member; David Reininger, community center trustee; Danney Rodgers, community center trustee; Joyce Buckner, Bluebonnet community and development services representative; and Johnny Sanders, Bluebonnet manager of community and development services.



The McMahan Volunteer Fire Department is getting new personal protection equipment, thanks to a \$16,000 community development grant. From left are Rick Arnice, LCRA Governmental and Regional Affairs representative; Walt Joaquin, firefighter; Brian McNabb, VFD chief; Barbara Decker, firefighter; Herb Decker, firefighter; Linda White, VFD support; Stramer White, firefighter; Lori A. Berger, LCRA Board member; Chris White, firefighter; Milton Shaw, Bluebonnet director; Joyce Buckner, Bluebonnet community and development services representative; Helen Eaton, VFD support; Johnny Miranda, VFD assistant chief; and Johnny Sanders, Bluebonnet manager of community and development services.



Washington County Emergency Medical Service is getting a new swift-water rescue boat, thanks to an \$18,500 grant from LCRA and Bluebonnet. Front row, from left, are P.J. Ellison, LCRA Board member; Lori A. Berger, LCRA Board member; Ben Flencher, Bluebonnet board chairman; Kenneth Mutscher, Bluebonnet board vice chairman; Phil Wilson, LCRA general manager; Hondo Powell, Bluebonnet community and development services representative; and Johnny Sanders, Bluebonnet manager of community and development services. Back row, from left, are Clint Harp, LCRA chief of staff; John Brieden, Washington County judge; Kevin Deramus, Washington County EMS director; and Robert Mikeska, Bluebonnet director.



The Lower Colorado River Authority and Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative have provided multiple grants to nonprofit groups and first responders in Bluebonnet's service area. The grants are part of LCRA's Community Development Partnership Program.

The program provides economic development and community assistance grants to cities, counties, volunteer fire departments, regional development councils and other nonprofit organizations in LCRA's electric and water service areas. The program is part of LCRA's effort to give back to the communities it serves. Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative is one of LCRA's wholesale electric customers and a partner in the grant program.

The Prairie Lea Parent Teacher Organization updated the playground at the Prairie Lea school with new, safer equipment, thanks to a \$22,104 grant from LCRA and Bluebonnet. Front row, from left, are Tamika Meraz, Prairie Lea PTO treasurer holding Elitatia Santos; Samantha Santos, PTO president; Kay Markert, PTO volunteer coordinator; Lori A. Berger, LCRA Board member; Larry Markert, Prairie Lea ISD superintendent; Joyce Buckner, Bluebonnet community and development services representative; and Jill Russell, PTO vice president. Back row, from left, are Milton Shaw, Bluebonnet director; Pat Johnson, grandparent/volunteer holding Reid Russell; Jack Johnson, grandparent/volunteer holding Everett Russell (not seen); Beverly Watwood, Prairie Lea Baptist Church representative; and Helen Long, Prairie Lea ISD school board member.

The South Lee County Volunteer Fire Department is getting a new tender truck that will allow firefighters to respond more efficiently and safely to emergencies, thanks to a \$50,000 community development grant. From left are Charles Murray, Lee County commissioner; Charles Becker, South Lee County Volunteer Fire Department vice president; Delvin Boriack, VFD volunteer; Joyce Bise, VFD volunteer; Raymond Arldt, firefighter; Wilbert Noack, firefighter; Hondo Powell, Bluebonnet community and development services representative; Wayne Gallip, firefighter; Johnny Sanders, Bluebonnet manager of community and development services; Russell Kappler, firefighter; Paul Fischer, Lee County judge; Mark Johnson, Bluebonnet community and development services representative; Curtis Oltman, firefighter; Lori A. Berger, LCRA Board member; Russell Jurk, Bluebonnet director; John Hinze, firefighter; Phil Wilson, LCRA general manager; Ron Zoch, VFD secretary; Michael Krause, VFD treasurer; Nick Hinze, firefighter; Carson Becker, firefighter; Shawn Bigon, drill captain; Clint Harp, LCRA chief of staff; Kyle Jenke, firefighter; and Philip Tharp, firefighter and Bluebonnet control center operator.

SAVE THE DATE

Bluebonnet to elect Board members May 8

Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative's Annual Meeting will be May 8 at The Silos, formerly the Sons of Hermann Hall, in Giddings. Three of 11 seats on the Board of Directors will be up for election that day, and co-op officials will present members with the annual state-of-the-co-op report.

Board members serve staggered three-year terms. Seats up for election this year represent District 1 for Caldwell, Guadalupe, Gonzales and Hays counties; District 2 for Travis County; and District 3 for Bastrop County.

The deadline to declare candidacy and file required documentation and fees in order to seek a seat on the Board was Feb. 7. Look for information about all candidates and more details about this

year's Annual Meeting in the April issue of Texas Co-op Power magazine or on our website.

The Silos is at 1031 County Road 223, Giddings. Registration will begin at 1:30 p.m. May 8, and the meeting will begin at 2:30 p.m.

If you are unable to attend, you can vote by proxy. Proxy forms will be mailed to Bluebonnet members this month and must be postmarked, or dropped off at any of Bluebonnet's member service centers in Bastrop, Brenham, Giddings, Lockhart or Manor, by 5:30 p.m. May 1.

Questions about the meeting? Call 800-842-7708 from 7 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, or email memberservices@bluebonnet.coop.

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Questions? Call Karen Urban at 512-332-7961 or email karen.urban@bluebonnet.coop

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NOW \$289.99

Wheel kit sold separately. **\$339.99**

COMPARE TO HONDA MODEL: EM0005X **\$1,999** **SAVE \$1,709**

ITEM 69676/69729/63080/63079 shown
ITEM 69675/69728/63090/63089, CALIFORNIA ONLY

LIMIT 4 - Coupon valid through 7/7/18*

PITTSBURGH

1 TON CAPACITY FOLDABLE SHOP CRANE

• Boom extends from 36-1/4" to 50-1/4"
• Crane height adjusts from 82" to 94"

Customer Rating **★★★★**

NOW \$99.99

COMPARE TO HUSKY MODEL: HD00120 **\$179.99** **SAVE \$80**

ITEM 69512/61858/69445 shown

LIMIT 3 - Coupon valid through 7/7/18*

CHICAGO

12" SLIDING COMPOUND DOUBLE-BEVEL MITER SAW

• Laser guide

Customer Rating **★★★★**

NOW \$129.99

Blade sold separately. **\$194.99**

COMPARE TO KOBALT MODEL: SM305SLW **\$299** **SAVE \$169**

ITEM 61969/61970
69684 shown

LIMIT 5 - Coupon valid through 7/7/18*

BADLAND

2500 LB. ELECTRIC WINCH WITH WIRELESS REMOTE CONTROL

• Weighs 14.3 lbs.
• 11-1/8" L x 4-1/2" H

Customer Rating **★★★★**

NOW \$499

COMPARE TO SUPERWINCH MODEL: 1125220 **\$799** **SAVE \$130**

ITEM 61840/61297/63476/61258 shown

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LIMIT 3 - Coupon valid through 7/7/18*

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• Great outdoor accent lighting
• Super bright light

Customer Rating **★★★★**

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COMPARE TO HAMPTON BAY MODEL: 62936-0558 **\$29.97** **SAVE 66%** **\$13.99**

ITEM 62533/63941/68353 shown

LIMIT 9 - Coupon valid through 7/7/18*

drillmaster

4-1/2" ANGLE GRINDER

Customer Rating **★★★★**

NOW \$9.99

COMPARE TO PERFORMAX MODEL: 2411-1 **\$25.80** **SAVE 61%** **\$14.99**

ITEM 69645/60625 shown

LIMIT 5 - Coupon valid through 7/7/18*

PITTSBURGH

ATV/LAWN MOWER LIFT

Customer Rating **★★★★**

• 300 lb. capacity
• Weighs 72.5 lbs.

NOW \$79.99

COMPARE TO PRO LIFT MODEL: T-5508B **\$179.99** **SAVE \$100**

ITEM 60395
62325/62493
61523 shown

LIMIT 4 - Coupon valid through 7/7/18*

COVER PRO

10 FT. x 20 FT. PORTABLE CAR CANOPY

Customer Rating **★★★★**

NOW \$999

ITEM 63054/62858 shown

COMPARE TO SHELTER LOGIC MODEL: 28322 **\$205.99** **SAVE \$106** **\$129.99**

LIMIT 3 - Coupon valid through 7/7/18*

KRAUSE & BECKER

AIRLESS PAINT SPRAYER KIT

Customer Rating **★★★★**

NOW \$169.99

COMPARE TO GRACO MODEL: 262800 **\$299** **SAVE \$129** **\$214.99**

ITEM 62915/60600 shown

LIMIT 4 - Coupon valid through 7/7/18*

CENTECH

2/10/50 AMP, 12 VOLT BATTERY CHARGER/ENGINE STARTER

Customer Rating **★★★★**

NOW \$299

COMPARE TO SCHUMACHER ELECTRIC MODEL: SE-1259 **\$69.99** **SAVE 57%** **\$49.99**

ITEM 60581/60653 shown

LIMIT 5 - Coupon valid through 7/7/18*

HaulMaster

12 VOLT MAGNETIC TOWING LIGHT KIT

Customer Rating **★★★★**

NOW \$99

COMPARE TO OPTRONICS MODEL: TL21BK **\$335.99** **SAVE 70%** **\$109.99**

ITEM 63100

LIMIT 5 - Coupon valid through 7/7/18*

WARRIOR

29 PIECE TITANIUM DRILL BIT SET

Customer Rating **★★★★**

NOW \$99

COMPARE TO DEWALT MODEL: DW1969 **\$179.99** **SAVE 83%** **\$60**

ITEM 62281/61637 shown

LIMIT 7 - Coupon valid through 7/7/18*

drillmaster

1500 WATT DUAL TEMPERATURE HEAT GUN (572°/1112°)

Customer Rating **★★★★**

NOW \$8.99

COMPARE TO BLACK & DECKER MODEL: HG1390 **\$14.99** **SAVE 67%** **\$28.06**

ITEM 62340/62546
63104/96289 shown

LIMIT 9 - Coupon valid through 7/7/18*

Bunker Hill Security

WIRELESS SECURITY ALERT SYSTEM

Customer Rating **★★★★**

NOW \$9.99

COMPARE TO SWANN MODEL: SW900A-BURVEA **\$15.99** **SAVE 58%** **\$23.99**

ITEM 69590/61910
62447/93068 shown

LIMIT 7 - Coupon valid through 7/7/18*

PORTLAND

7 AMP ELECTRIC POLE SAW 9.5" BAR

Customer Rating **★★★★**

NOW \$59.99

COMPARE TO WORX MODEL: WG509 **\$79.99** **SAVE \$39**

ITEM 68862/63190/62896 shown

LIMIT 5 - Coupon valid through 7/7/18*

SUPER COUPON

FULL-MOTION TV WALL MOUNT

Customer Rating **★★★★**

• Fits most 37" to 80"

NOW \$399

ITEM 64037
63155 shown

COMPARE TO ROCKETFISH MODEL: RF-RTVMM170C **\$149.99** **SAVE \$110** **\$49.99**

LIMIT 4 - Coupon valid through 7/7/18*

CHICAGO ELECTRIC POWER TOOLS **SCISSOR SUPER COUPON**

2.5 HP, 10" INDUSTRIAL TILE/BRICK SAW Customer Rating **★★★★★**

Blade sold separately.

SAVE \$279 **COMPARE TO \$499** **NOV \$219.99** ~~\$289.99~~

ITEM 62391/69275 shown

86447601

LIMIT 4 - Coupon valid through 7/7/18*

HARDY **SCISSOR SUPER COUPON**

MECHANIC'S GLOVES Customer Rating **★★★★★**

SAVE 73% **COMPARE TO \$14.99** **NOV \$3.99** ~~\$5.99~~

ITEM 62434, 62426, 62433, 62432, 62429, 62428 shown

86449041

LIMIT 8 - Coupon valid through 7/7/18*

Bauer **SCISSOR SUPER COUPON**

20 VOLT LITHIUM CORDLESS 1/2" COMPACT DRILL/DRIVER KIT Customer Rating **★★★★★**

• 450 in. lbs. of torque
• 1.5 amp hour battery
• Weighs 3.4 lbs.

SAVE \$34 **COMPARE TO \$99** **NOV \$64.99** ~~\$74.99~~

ITEM 63531

86450229

LIMIT 4 - Coupon valid through 7/7/18*

HaulMaster **SCISSOR SUPER COUPON**

3-POINT QUICK HITCH Customer Rating **★★★★★**

• 2000 lb. capacity
• 27-3/16" Clearance

NOV \$199.99 ~~\$99.99~~

SAVE \$120 **COMPARE TO \$199.99**

ITEM 97214

86450523

LIMIT 5 - Coupon valid through 7/7/18*

HaulMaster **SCISSOR SUPER COUPON**

1000 LB. CAPACITY SWING-BACK TRAILER JACK Customer Rating **★★★★★**

• Height range: 12-1/2" to 24"

NOV \$179.99 ~~\$259.99~~

SAVE 60% **COMPARE TO \$44.99**

ITEM 69780 41005 shown

86460012

LIMIT 6 - Coupon valid through 7/7/18*

Apache Model 1800 **SCISSOR SUPER COUPON**

ULTRA-LIGHT, CRUSH PROOF WEATHER-RESISTANT LOCKABLE CASE Customer Rating **★★★★★**

NEW

• 9-3/16" L
• 7-1/2" W
• 4-1/2" H

NOV \$99.99 ~~\$149.99~~

SAVE 76% **COMPARE TO \$42.95**

ITEM 63518

Case contents and locks not included.

86465696

LIMIT 5 - Coupon valid through 7/7/18*

PORTLAND **SCISSOR SUPER COUPON**

1750 PSI ELECTRIC PRESSURE WASHER Customer Rating **★★★★★**

• 1.3 GPM
• Adjustable spray nozzle

NOV \$199.99 ~~\$99.99~~

SAVE \$99 **COMPARE TO \$179.99**

ITEM 63255/63254 shown

86483491

LIMIT 4 - Coupon valid through 7/7/18*

HaulMaster **SCISSOR SUPER COUPON**

STEP STOOL/WORKING PLATFORM Customer Rating **★★★★★**

• 350 lb. capacity

NOV \$199.99 ~~\$299.99~~

SAVE 65% **COMPARE TO \$57.55**

ITEM 62515 66911 shown

86490233

LIMIT 7 - Coupon valid through 7/7/18*

HaulMaster **SCISSOR SUPER COUPON**

TRI-FOLD ALUMINUM LOADING RAMP Customer Rating **★★★★★**

• 1500 lb. capacity

NOV \$149.99 ~~\$199.99~~

SAVE \$74 **COMPARE TO \$44.99**

ITEM 69595/60334/90018 shown

86491463

LIMIT 3 - Coupon valid through 7/7/18*

HaulMaster **SCISSOR SUPER COUPON**

TRIPLE BALL TRAILER HITCH Customer Rating **★★★★★**

NOV \$199.99 ~~\$339.99~~

SAVE 60% **COMPARE TO \$49.99**

ITEM 61914

86492655

LIMIT 6 - Coupon valid through 7/7/18*

HaulMaster **SCISSOR SUPER COUPON**

72" x 80" MOVING BLANKET Customer Rating **★★★★★**

SAVE 70% **COMPARE TO \$19.99** **NOV \$5.99** ~~\$8.99~~

ITEM 69505/62418/66537 shown

86498703

LIMIT 9 - Coupon valid through 7/7/18*

PREDATOR **SCISSOR SUPER COUPON**

6.5 HP (212 CC) OHV HORIZONTAL SHAFT GAS ENGINE Customer Rating **★★★★★**

NOV \$99.99 ~~\$119.99~~

SAVE \$230 **COMPARE TO \$329.99**

ITEM 60363/69730 CALIFORNIA ONLY

86499200

LIMIT 5 - Coupon valid through 7/7/18*

CENTRAL PNEUMATIC **SCISSOR SUPER COUPON**

3/8" x 50 FT. RETRACTABLE AIR HOSE REEL Customer Rating **★★★★★**

NOV \$599.99 ~~\$799.99~~

SAVE \$39 **COMPARE TO \$99**

ITEM 69265/62344/93897 shown

86516540

LIMIT 4 - Coupon valid through 7/7/18*

HaulMaster **SCISSOR SUPER COUPON**

18" x 12" MOVER'S DOLLY Customer Rating **★★★★★**

• 1000 lb. capacity

NOV \$79.99 ~~\$109.99~~

SAVE 51% **COMPARE TO \$16.43**

ITEM 61899/63095/63096/63098/63097/93888 shown

86516920

LIMIT 9 - Coupon valid through 7/7/18*

UNION SAFE COMPANY **SCISSOR SUPER COUPON**

1.51 CUBIC FT. SOLID STEEL ELECTRONIC DIGITAL FLOOR SAFE Customer Rating **★★★★★**

22-3/4"

NOV \$89.99 ~~\$119.99~~

SAVE \$85 **COMPARE TO \$175**

ITEM 91006/62678/62977 shown

86532950

LIMIT 4 - Coupon valid through 7/7/18*

SCISSOR SUPER COUPON

10" PNEUMATIC TIRE Customer Rating **★★★★★**

• 300 lb. working load

NOV \$3.99 ~~\$5.99~~

SAVE 60% **COMPARE TO \$10**

ITEM 69385/62388/62409/62698/30900 shown

86534765

LIMIT 7 - Coupon valid through 7/7/18*

Grant's GARAGE **SCISSOR SUPER COUPON**

SHOP TOWELS PACK OF 50 Customer Rating **★★★★★**

Mechanic's Choice

NOV \$9.99 ~~\$12.99~~

SAVE 44% **COMPARE TO \$17.98**

ITEM 63365/63360 shown

86538540

LIMIT 8 - Coupon valid through 7/7/18*

SCISSOR SUPER COUPON

8" HUNTING KNIFE WITH SURVIVAL KIT Customer Rating **★★★★★**

• Includes compass, sewing kit, safety pins, fishing line, matches, fire starting paper, lanyard & sheath

ITEM 61733 90714 shown

NOV \$7.99 ~~\$9.99~~

SAVE 59% **COMPARE TO \$19.97**

86544750

LIMIT 9 - Coupon valid through 7/7/18*

CENTECH **SCISSOR SUPER COUPON**

3-IN-1 PORTABLE POWER PACK WITH JUMP STARTER Customer Rating **★★★★★**

NOV \$399.99 ~~\$549.99~~

SAVE 33% **COMPARE TO \$599.99**

ITEM 64083 62376/38391 62306 shown

86544850

LIMIT 5 - Coupon valid through 7/7/18*

COVER PRO **SCISSOR SUPER COUPON**

10 FT. x 17 FT. PORTABLE GARAGE Customer Rating **★★★★★**

NOV \$169.99 ~~\$199.99~~

SAVE \$100 **COMPARE TO \$270**

ITEM 62859/63055/62860 shown

86545410

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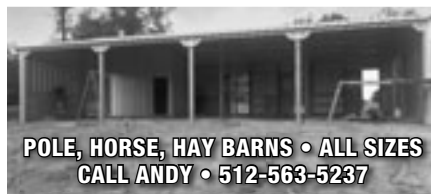
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A Texan Saves French Wines

Viticulturist Thomas Volney Munson's living legacy is on display in Denison

BY DAWN COBB

PLUMP, PURPLE GRAPES, GROWN FROM rootstock developed by a Denison viticulturist more than a century ago, dangle from a vine near Valley View.

That viticulturist, Thomas Volney Munson, discovered a wild species of mustang grape along the banks of the Red River and ultimately developed more than 300 varieties. He also is credited with saving the French wine industry in the 19th century.

Today, a new generation of winemakers learns the skills required to successfully cultivate vineyards with information preserved through the Grayson College Viticulture and Enology program. Viticulture covers the cultivation of grapes, and enology is the study of wine.

To have that connection with that history is incredible, says Meredith Eaton, a 2014 Grayson College graduate. She planted her own vineyard in southern Cooke County near the banks of Ray Roberts Lake, where the microclimate and sandy loam soil create conditions ideal for growing grapes. She joined an industry that brings more than \$2.27 billion in economic value to Texas.

In 1887, Munson rode horseback with French scientist Pierre Viala along the Red River during Viala's search for a hearty species resistant to phylloxera. The small aphid had wreaked havoc throughout France, destroying an estimated 80 percent of the country's vines.

Munson, an expert in grape botany and plant grafting, was Viala's last hope for a solution to the problem. Munson directed Viala to western Bell County, where the limestone soil approximated that of the French countryside. Viala found three native species thriving in poor soil conditions and, through grafting European vines to the phylloxera-resistant Texas rootstock, replenished French vineyards wiped out by the epidemic.



WEB EXTRAS

► Read this story on our website to learn more about Denison and Texas wine.

A year later, France recognized Munson as *Chevalier du Mérite Agricole* in the French Legion of Honor.

On a hill west of U.S. 75 in Denison, Grayson College students learn the art and science of cultivating grapes from 65 varieties grown in the T.V. Munson Memorial Vineyard and the nearby T.V. Munson Center, which houses the viticulturist's research, a classroom and tools of the trade.

Roy Renfro started the Grayson College program in 1974 and transformed Munson's family home into the Vinita House museum. He also co-wrote *Grape Man of Texas*, a biography of Munson published in 2004.

The college works with the Texas A&M University AgriLife Extension Service, which has confirmed viticulture as a prospering industry in the state. Texas has eight American Viticultural Areas, with Denison covering 3,650 square miles in the Texoma viticultural area.

Nestled in a neighborhood within the city of 23,000 is the two-story Vinita House, where Munson raised his family. Upon his arrival in Denison, Munson is said to have announced, "I have found my grape paradise." His home still suggests his activity. Sketches of machines he envisioned lie atop one desk. Photos of past vineyards and

a nursery line the walls beside family portraits.

Dinnerware and place settings fill a formal dining table, as if awaiting guests.

A grand piano in the living room and a tiny wooden cradle in the master bedroom add to the sense of a 19th-century home.

Munson's legacy continues to bear fruit. Eaton recalls her studies in Denison, working in the hilltop vineyard, learning in the nearby classroom, reviewing Munson's research and visiting the Vinita House.

Turning their hobby into a business, Eaton and her husband, George, planted cabernet sauvignon, merlot, tempranillo, roussanne and chambourcin, a French-American hybrid, among other varieties on three acres in CoServ's service territory.

One summer morning, Eaton carefully holds a grape cluster. The slight dimpling signals time for harvest. A blaring radio keeps deer at bay day and night. Her vision is now reality: She is ready for a lifelong pursuit in viticulture and enology.

And it's all thanks to T.V. Munson.

Dawn Cobb is the PR communication specialist at CoServ, the electric co-op in Corinth.

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Luck of the Irish: Potatoes

IT'S THAT TIME OF YEAR: CORNED beef, cabbage, new potatoes and Irish beer dominate the supermarket aisles. Even if you're not Irish, it's hard to resist the St. Patrick's Day appeal of a pint and some hearty cuisine—especially if you're a potato lover. Potatoes were introduced to Ireland in the 16th century, and because they grew vigorously in Irish soil, became a staple food. Today, potatoes still promise a dish that's comforting, filling and easy to love.

Pommes Anna With Sage and Oregano

This classic French dish transforms humble spuds into an elegant side dish of crispy, golden rounds. The fresh herbs are not traditional, but I love how they infuse the potatoes with fragrance—and they're pretty, especially when you use small, individual leaves.

- ¼ cup (½ stick) butter, divided use
- Olive oil as needed
- 3 large russet potatoes, washed but not peeled
- Kosher salt
- 2-3 tablespoons fresh sage, thyme and oregano leaves

1. Heat 2 tablespoons butter with a generous drizzle of olive oil in a cast-iron skillet over medium-low heat until butter melts and just starts to foam, then shut off heat.
2. Using a mandoline slicer, slice the potatoes into very thin (but not paper-thin) slices.
3. Arrange the slices tightly, carefully shingling the rounds around the pan in concentric circles, starting at the outer edge of the pan and working your way into the center. Season the first layer with a little salt and a scattering of the fresh herbs. Repeat with each potato and remaining herbs until you achieve three tight layers.
4. Turn the heat back on at medium under the pan. Drizzle the potatoes

CONTINUED ON PAGE 32



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Recipes

Luck of the Irish: Potatoes



THIS MONTH'S RECIPE CONTEST WINNER

MIKE DWYER | FARMERS EC

With a zippy dressing (kicked up with red wine vinegar and whole-grain mustard) and a whiff of smoke, Dwyer's green onion-flecked potato salad will steal the show at potlucks and complement steaks, chicken thighs, ribs—anything off the grill.

Smoked Potato Salad

- 12 medium red potatoes, scrubbed and pierced
- ¼ cup thinly sliced green onions
- ¼ cup red wine vinegar
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 3 tablespoons whole-grain mustard
- ¼ cup mayonnaise, or more if desired
- Salt and pepper to taste

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees, then bake unpeeled potatoes 45 minutes. While the potatoes bake, prepare your smoker.
2. Smoke potatoes 1 hour in low heat (250 degrees or less). When finished, remove from smoker and dice into

1-inch chunks, or larger as desired.

3. Combine remaining ingredients in a large bowl and whisk to combine. Fold in the potatoes (mixing gently so they hold their shape). Adjust seasonings as desired and serve immediately or refrigerate for up to 3–4 days. For the best texture and flavor, take the salad out of the fridge 30 minutes before serving. ▶ Serves 6–8.

COOK'S TIP To rev up the smokiness, smoke the potatoes in chunks (instead of whole) 30 minutes, with a bowl of water in the smoker. You also can parboil the potatoes before smoking: Simmer in generously salted water until just tender, 18–20 minutes.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 31

with another generous pour of olive oil and dot pats of the remaining butter around the pan. Season with salt.

5. When the ingredients begin to sizzle, place a lid on the pan and seal tightly for a couple minutes (this will steam the potatoes and help them soften). Remove the lid and swirl the pan to see if the potatoes are binding together as their starch begins to heat up. If they slip loosely and lose their shape, tuck the slices back into the tight circle using a heat-proof rubber spatula and allow to cook longer uncovered. (You should hear the potatoes sizzling.)
6. When the potatoes start to turn golden and crisp, swirl the pan again to confirm that the potato layers have formed a cake, and then flip the entire cake and cook the other side until golden and crispy.
7. Slide onto serving plate or cutting board, season with salt and cut into wedges. ▶ Serves 4–6.

COOK'S TIP Don't be tempted to soak the slices in water before assembly; you'll wash off the necessary starch that binds them together. The only tricky part is flipping the cake. For best results, use a slope-sided skillet, or place a large serving plate over the pan and use two hand towels to invert the skillet—then slide the cake back into the skillet.

Shrimp Potato Boats

KATHY MILLS | DEEP EAST TEXAS EC

"When we lived down on the Gulf Coast, we would always have a seafood dinner for Easter," Mills says. "These potato boats were always the star of the show! We ate them as a side to all the other seafood we prepared, but they could certainly stand alone as an entrée with just a salad."

- 4 large baking potatoes
- ½ cup (1 stick) butter
- ½ cup half-and-half
- ¼ cup finely chopped green onions
- 1 cup grated sharp cheddar cheese
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 pound peeled, deveined and cooked Texas Gulf shrimp, coarsely chopped

Paprika
Chopped fresh parsley, for garnish



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\$100 Recipe Contest

August's recipe contest topic is **The Secret of Salsa**. With temperatures sweltering, we raise the bar with another kind of heat (tomatillo? habanero? a blistering pico?). Send us yours. The deadline is **March 10**.

ENTER ONLINE at TexasCoopPower.com/contests; MAIL to 1122 Colorado St., 24th Floor, Austin, TX 78701; FAX to (512) 763-3401. Include your name, address and phone number, plus your co-op and the name of the contest you are entering.

1. Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Scrub potatoes, then bake 45 minutes, until tender and cooked through.
2. When the potatoes are cool enough to handle, remove the top third of each and scoop out the pulp, leaving about 1/4 inch of the shell. Combine the potato pulp, butter, half-and-half, green onions, cheese and salt in a large bowl and whip at medium-high speed until smooth. Use a rubber spatula to fold in the shrimp.
3. Stuff potato shells with the shrimp mixture, sprinkle with paprika and bake 10 minutes.
4. Garnish with chopped fresh parsley, if desired, and serve warm. ▶ Serves 4 as an entrée, 6–8 as a side dish.

COOK'S TIP To cook thawed shrimp, plunge them into a pot of generously salted boiling water. The minute the water returns to a boil (1–2 minutes), the shrimp should be cooked. Avoid overcooking the shrimp, since they'll be heated again in the oven. To kick up the spice level, cook the shrimp in water that's been flavored with shrimp boil.

Twice-Baked Potato Poppers

JOHN PORTERFIELD | BANDERA EC

Warm and crispy from the oven, these potato rounds are fun to eat—and hard to stop eating—especially when they're dosed with hot sauce. They can be made in advance and refrigerated up to two days.

- 2 pounds russet potatoes, baked, skins removed
- 1/4 cup (1/2 stick) butter, room temperature
- 1/2 cup grated cheddar or Monterey Jack cheese
- 2 tablespoons thinly sliced green onion tops
- 3 tablespoons minced jalapeño or serrano pepper, or more as desired for heat
- 4 strips bacon, fried crisp and crumbled
- Salt and black pepper to taste
- 1 cup flour
- 1/2 teaspoon Cajun seasoning
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 egg
- 1 cup milk
- 4 ounces butter cracker crumbs

1. Preheat oven to 425 degrees.
2. Mash skinned potatoes into pulp, then combine with butter, grated cheese, onion tops, minced pepper and crumbled bacon. Season conservatively with salt and pepper to taste. Form into golf ball-sized spheres and set aside.
3. In a shallow bowl, whisk together flour, Cajun seasoning and salt. In a separate shallow bowl, whisk the egg and milk together. Place the cracker crumbs in a third bowl.
4. Roll potato balls in flour mixture, then egg mixture; repeat. After second round of flour-then-egg coating, roll balls in cracker crumbs, making sure they're well-covered.
5. Place on a cookie sheet and bake 35–40 minutes until brown and crispy, carefully flipping the spheres once after 15 minutes. ▶ Makes 20–24 poppers.

COOK'S TIP If the potato rounds are not chilled before baking, they'll be soft and somewhat malleable; a vented fish spatula is helpful for flipping them.



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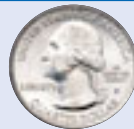
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WEB EXTRAS ▶ See Focus on Texas on our website for more photos from readers.

◀ **RON HASTY**, CoServ: “Denton has a great music scene. You will often see an artist playing on the square in the evening.”

▼ **RICK ROBERSON**, United Cooperative Services: “It is not unusual to hear someone tickling the ivories while strolling the streets of downtown Corsicana.”



▲ **DAVID LARGENT**, HILCO EC: Inside the general store at Dallas Heritage Village

▶ **JAMES EATON**, CoServ: The McKinney square under cover of snow



▲ **JAMES DOZIER**, Trinity Valley EC: The center arch of the Margaret Hunt Hill Bridge and the Ronald Kirk Bridge for pedestrians over the Trinity River in Dallas



UPCOMING CONTESTS

JULY	OPPOSITES	DUE MARCH 10
AUGUST	SCHOOL'S OUT	DUE APRIL 10
SEPTEMBER	WEDDING FUNNIES	DUE MAY 10

All entries must include name, address, daytime phone and co-op affiliation, plus the contest topic and a brief description of your photo.

ONLINE: Submit highest-resolution digital images at TexasCoopPower.com/contests. **MAIL:** Focus on Texas, 1122 Colorado St., 24th Floor, Austin, TX 78701. A stamped, self-addressed envelope must be included if you want your entry returned (approximately six weeks). Please do not submit irreplaceable photographs—send a copy or duplicate. We do not accept entries via email. We regret that *Texas Co-op Power* cannot be responsible for photos that are lost in the mail or not received by the deadline.



Pick of the Month Chili Cook-Off

Sutherland Springs March 17-18
(830) 446-1292

The cook-off, in its 10th year, offers a fun diversion and a bit of healing for the small town in Wilson County. "As you know, Sutherland Springs recently suffered an unimaginable tragedy, but we're slowly bouncing back," says Donna King, cook-off chairman and a member of Guadalupe Valley EC. Sutherland Springs is the site of Texas' worst mass shooting, when 26 were killed during Sunday morning services at First Baptist Church on November 5, 2017.

March

7

Frisco [7-10] Conference USA Basketball Championships, (214) 774-1375, conferenceusa.com

8

Columbus Chamber of Commerce Casino Night, (979) 732-8385, columbus-texas.org

9

New Braunfels Spring Gardening Seminar: Secrets in the Garden, (830) 620-3440, txmg.org/comal/events/seminar

Ingram [9, 10, 16, 17, 18, 23, 24] *Love Letters*, (830) 367-5121, hcaf.com

15

Beeville [15-17] Brush Country Photo Safari, (361) 834-0000, brushcountryphotosafari.com

16

Mansfield [16-17] St. Paddy's Pickle Parade and Palooza, (817) 239-0481, pickleparade.org

Round Top [16-17] Herbal Forum at Round Top, (979) 249-3129, festivalhill.org/calendar

17

Alto Gentle Yoga and Foraging, (936) 858-3218, visitcaddomounds.com

Burton Texas Ranger Day, (979) 836-3696, visitbrenhamtexas.com

March 17
Alto
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(817) 430-4343, skillsdriving.com/shop

Kyle Hooked on Fishing Spring Tournament,
(512) 262-3939, cityofkyle.com/recreation

Surfside Beach St. Patrick's Day Parade,
(979) 864-3414, beachblarney.com

Victoria Hwy 87 Trade Days, (361) 576-9899,
hwy87tradedays.com

**San Patricio [17-18] World Championship
Rattlesnake Races,** (361) 877-5037,
wcrattlesnakeraces.com

22

**Beaumont [22-April 1] YMBL South Texas
State Fair,** (409) 832-9991, beaumontcvb.com

23

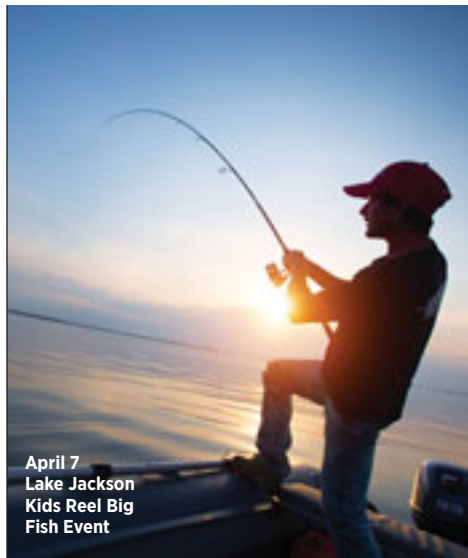
**Marshall [23-24] East Texas Square and
Round Dance Association Festival,**
(903) 393-3214, etsrda.com

**Tyler [23-24] Quilters' Guild of East Texas
Quilt Show,** (561) 251-7722, qgetx.org

**Hallettsville [23-25] South Texas Polka
& Sausage Fest,** (361) 798-2311, kchall.com

24

**Huntsville Herb Festival at the Wynne
Home,** (936) 891-5024, texasthymeunit.org



April 7
Lake Jackson
Kids Reel Big
Fish Event

Palmer Chili Cook Off & Cruise In,
(972) 895-2876, coffeewithcharacter.com

**West Columbia Governor Hogg's
Birthday Party,** (979) 345-4656,
visitvarnerhoggplantation.com

30

**Kerrville [30-April 1] Easter Hill Country
Bike Tour,** (281) 782-8743, ehct.com

April

7

**Grand Prairie Farmers Market Opening
Day & Get Fit 5K,** (972) 237-8115,
grandfungp.com

Jonestown Cajun Cook-Off, (512) 267-7952,
lagovista.org

Lake Jackson Kids Reel Big Fish Event,
(979) 297-4533, brazosport.org

Little Elm Spiked on the Beach,
(972) 731-1466, lakefrontlittleelm.com

**New Ulm Volunteer Fire Department Fish
Fry,** (979) 992-3487

**Texarkana Ark-La-Tex Challenge Bike
Tour,** (870) 774-9675, arklatexchallenge.com

Woodville Dogwood Festival,
(409) 283-2632,
tylercountydogwoodfestival.org

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Ancient Watering Hole

Lubbock Lake Landmark is an archaeological preserve on the High Plains

BY EILEEN MATTEI

DOMINATING THE ENTRANCE TO LUBBOCK Lake Landmark historic site, a Columbian mammoth sculpture poses as a life-sized rendering of the 8-ton animal that died here 11,500 years ago. Researchers at this archaeological preserve have uncovered mammoth bones as well as the stone tools used to kill and butcher mammoths and other animals at the end of the most recent ice age. The site is unique in North America because layers of sediment in its ancient stream bed reveal that nomadic people and their prey stopped at this water source for more than 10,000 years.

Journey through that history inside the Nash Interpretive Center, where you learn how spear and knife points were created. “We have evidence of people here for every culture through millennia: from Clovis people with stone-point spears hunting mammoths and bison to the hunters and early ranchers of the Comancheria in the 1800s. We are the latest in a long line of civilizations to live here,” says Deborah Bigness, Lubbock Lake Landmark operations manager. “Because of the *Ice Age* movies, kids think we’re really cool.”

The geological formation known as Yellow House Draw can be read like a book. If you know the language, you can “read” details about the plants, animals, cultures, geology and environment in each layer of the watercourse. “We learn as much, if not more, from what is around the artifact,” Bigness says. “Man first lived here at the end of the ice age, when the plant material shows the climate was much cooler and wetter.” Displays present shell beads and obsidian blades that suggest trade with distant tribes.

At different times, Lubbock Lake was a large lake, stream, ponds and marsh.



Archaeological digs continue at Lubbock Lake Landmark.

Along the way, giant short-faced bears, camels and mammoths disappeared from the area. Archaeologists can’t tell whether hunting or an inability to adapt to a changing climate triggered the extinctions.

Analyses of ancient bones have revealed that Folsom hunter-gatherers, who occupied central North America about 10,000 years ago, focused on hunting a now-extinct bison. Thanks to the Lubbock Lake Landmark’s 3-D replicas, you can feel the sharp edges of Folsom projectile points and the heft of bison bones.

Outside, past the giant short-faced bear sculpture and across the pedestrian bridge, you’ll find the 1-mile, self-guided archaeological trail that circles the ancient lake.

The archaeological site was discovered in 1936 when a steam shovel digging out the lake to rejuvenate the springs dumped a projectile point on a waste pile. Boys brought their find to West Texas University (now Texas Tech) professor Curry Holden. Today’s raised trail, built on the old dredge island, bisects the lake near its horseshoe bend and, initially, makes it difficult to picture the lake that was. But ample, lucid interpretive signs explain how archaeological digs unveil the mysteries of the past. Year-round, you can

schedule a guided tour for a more in-depth view of the site’s past and present.

“We think we’ve excavated about 5 percent of the material here,” Bigness says. The 335-acre landmark, part of the Museum of Texas Tech University and a national historic site, has held digs every year since 1972. Although the lake’s horseshoe bend was bone-dry in 2009, by 2016, rising water began flooding that year’s archaeological excavation. Orange sandbags higher up on the bank mark the 2017–2018 dig. Visitors can observe archaeology in action every July.

The landmark doubles as a natural history reserve, its landscape brimming with American basket flowers, buffalo gourds, prickly poppies and interpretive signs. Sightings of cottontails and the elusive Texas horned lizard reward visitors on the half-mile, ADA-accessible Llano Estacado Wildflower Trail boardwalk. The 3.5-mile trail across the restored shortgrass prairie circles back to the entrance, so you will never get lost—in time or space.

Eileen Mattei, a member of Nueces and Magic Valley ECs, lives in Harlingen.

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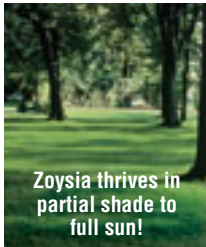
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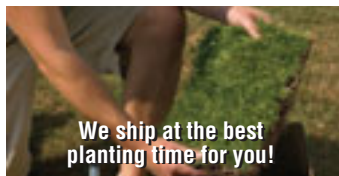
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