

THE WORLD
AS A CLASSROOM

THE INTRIGUING
FLAPPER BANDIT

LA PITADA
AND THE COWBOYS

Texas Coop Power

FOR BLUEBONNET EC MEMBERS

OCTOBER 2024

Crowning Mow-ment

Lawn mower racers
go low and
anything but slow



**BLUEBONNET
EC NEWS**

SEE PAGE 16

BUY 1,
GET 1

40% OFF

AND

Take an Extra
\$35

**OFF EACH WINDOW
AND DOOR¹**

ALL WINDOWS AND PATIO DOORS!¹

MINIMUM PURCHASE OF 4

MINIMUM PURCHASE OF 4

AND

NO Money Down | NO Monthly Payments | NO Interest for 12 months¹

MINIMUM PURCHASE OF 4 - INTEREST ACCRUES FROM THE DATE OF PURCHASE BUT IS WAIVED IF PAID IN FULL WITHIN 12 MONTHS

★★★★★ 4.7 OUT OF 5 BASED ON 95,000+ REVIEWS

"My overall experience was great. I love the window, and from sales to scheduling, the experience was very good. The installers are highly skilled professionals and I would recommend Renewal by Andersen to all my contacts."

LYNN F. | RENEWAL BY ANDERSEN CUSTOMER

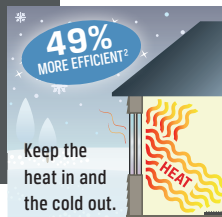
**More 5-Star
Reviews**



Than Other Leading Full-Service
Window Replacement
Companies[†]

KEEP THE HEAT IN AND THE COLD AIR OUT!

Solving your window problems and having a comfortable home is easy and enjoyable when you choose Renewal by Andersen. Take advantage of this great offer to save money on your window project – and help save on high energy bills for years to come!



Offer Ends December 31

Call for your **FREE** consultation.

888-874-9058

Visit findyourwindow.com



**RENEWAL
by ANDERSEN**
FULL-SERVICE WINDOW & DOOR REPLACEMENT



*Using U.S. and imported parts.

DETAILS OF OFFER: Offer expires 12/31/2024. Not valid with other offers or prior purchases. Buy one (1) window or entry/patio door, get one (1) window or entry/patio door 40% off, and 12 months no money down, no monthly payments, no interest when you purchase four (4) or more windows or entry/patio doors between 10/1/2024 and 12/31/2024. 40% off windows and entry/patio doors are less than or equal to lowest cost window or entry/patio door in the order. Additional \$35 off each window or entry/patio door, minimum purchase of four (4) required, taken after initial discount(s), when you purchase by 12/31/2024. Subject to credit approval. Interest is billed during the promotional period, but all interest is waived if the purchase amount is paid before the expiration of the promotional period. Financing for GreenSky® consumer loan programs is provided by federally insured, federal and state chartered financial institutions without regard to age, race, color, religion, national origin, gender, or familial status. Savings comparison based on purchase of a single unit at list price. Available at participating locations and offer applies throughout the service area. See your local Renewal by Andersen location for details. License numbers available at renewalbyandersen.com/license. Some Renewal by Andersen locations are independently owned and operated. ¹Values are based on comparison of Renewal by Andersen® double-hung window U-Factor to the U-Factor for clear dual-pane glass non-metal frame default values from the 2006, 2009, 2012, 2015, and 2018 International Energy Conservation Code "Glazed Fenestration" Default Tables. [†]Review aggregator survey of 5-star reviews among leading national full-service window replacement companies. January 2024 Reputation.com. "Renewal by Andersen" and all other marks where denoted are trademarks of their respective owners. © 2024 Andersen Corporation. All rights reserved. RBA13747

October 2024



10

06 Grassroots Movement

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

Story and Photos by Julia Robinson

Learning the Hard Way

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

By Pam LeBlanc

04

Currents

The latest buzz

05

TCP Talk

Readers respond

16

Co-op News

Information plus energy and safety tips from your cooperative

25

Footnotes in Texas History

The Flapper Bandit
By Martha Deeringer

26

TCP Kitchen

Pumpkin and Spice
By Vianney Rodriguez

30

Hit the Road

Dragons Not Included
By Chet Garner

33

Focus on Texas

Photo Contest:
Climbing High

34

Observations

There's No Party Like La Pitada
By W.F. Strong

ON THE COVER

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

ABOVE

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



TCP *Contests and More*

ENTER CONTESTS AT
TEXASCOOPPOWER.COM



\$500 RECIPE CONTEST

Pies, Pies, Pies

FOCUS ON TEXAS PHOTOS

I Love

RECOMMENDED READING

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

Latin America Celebrates

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

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



Night Vision

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

FINISH THIS SENTENCE

My favorite hand-me-down is ...

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

Here are some of the responses to our August prompt: **I can't wait to learn ...**

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

JANET KELLY
BLUEBONNET EC
ELGIN

How to make tamales from scratch.

JENNY CARPENTER
CENTRAL TEXAS EC
INGRAM

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

KATHY BOLSEN
PEDERNALES EC
SPRING BRANCH

About the world from my great-grandchildren.

KAT CROSS
HOUSTON COUNTY EC
CROCKETT

Visit our website to see more responses.

AUGUST 2024 Open Roads, Open Eyes

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

MARY HENDERSON HARP
VIA FACEBOOK



WYATT MCSPADDEN

Getting Electricity

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

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

Sheryl S. McNally
Pedernales EC
Marble Falls

Dimmitt, Darn It

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

Evelyn McAnelly
Medina EC
Hondo

Earthy Elocution

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

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

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

Charles Wukasch
Pedernales EC
Austin

Required Reading

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

Charles Patterson
Navarro County EC
Corsicana

TCP WRITE TO US
letters@TexasCoopPower.com

Editor, Texas Co-op Power
1122 Colorado St., 24th Floor
Austin, TX 78701

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

Facebook Instagram Twitter YouTube Pinterest Texas Co-op Power

TEXAS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chair Avan Irani, Robstown
Vice Chair Bryan Wood, San Augustine
Secretary-Treasurer Cameron Smallwood, Burleson
Board Members Dale Ancell, Lubbock
Matt Bentke, Bastrop • Kerry Kelton, Navasota • Mark McClain, Roby

PRESIDENT/CEO Mike Williams, Austin

COMMUNICATIONS & MEMBER SERVICES COMMITTEE
Mike Ables, Bellville • Kathi Calvert, Crockett
Marty Haught, Burleson • Tachi Hinojosa, Fredericksburg • Gary Miller, Bryan
Zac Perkins, Hooker, Oklahoma • Bryan Story, Blossom • Buff Whitten, Eldorado

MAGAZINE STAFF

Vice President, Communications & Member Services Martin Bevins
Editor Chris Burrows
Associate Editor Tom Widlowski
Production Manager Karen Nejtek
Creative Manager Andy Doughty
Advertising Manager Elaine Sproull
Communications Specialist Samantha Bryant
Digital Media Specialist Caytlyn Calhoun
Assistant Production Manager Alex Dal Santo
Senior Designer Stacy Coale
Print Production Specialist Grace Fultz
Food Editor Vianney Rodriguez
Communications Specialist Claire Stevens
Proofreader Louie Bond

TEXAS CO-OP POWER Volume 81, Number 4 (USPS 540-560). *Texas Co-op Power* is published monthly by Texas Electric Cooperatives. Periodical postage paid at Austin, TX, and at additional offices. TEC is the statewide association representing 76 electric cooperatives. *Texas Co-op Power’s* website is TexasCoopPower.com. Call (512) 454-0311 or email editor@TexasCoopPower.com.

SUBSCRIPTIONS Subscription price is \$4.44 per year for individual members of subscribing cooperatives and is paid from equity accruing to the member. If you are not a member of a subscribing cooperative, you can purchase an annual subscription at the nonmember rate of \$7.50. **Co-op members:** Please notify your co-op of address changes or other subscription requests.

POSTMASTER Send address changes to *Texas Co-op Power* (USPS 540-560), 1122 Colorado St., 24th Floor, Austin, TX 78701. Please enclose label from this copy of *Texas Co-op Power* showing old address and key numbers.

ADVERTISING Contact Elaine Sproull at (512) 486-6251 or esproull@texas-ec.org for information about purchasing display ad space in *Texas Co-op Power* and/or in our 26 sister publications in other states. Advertisements in *Texas Co-op Power* are paid solicitations. The publisher neither endorses nor guarantees in any manner any product or company included in this publication.

COPYRIGHT All content © 2024 Texas Electric Cooperatives Inc. All rights reserved. Reproduction of this issue or any portion of it is expressly prohibited without written permission. Willie Wired-hand © 2024 National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.



CORBIS | GETTY IMAGES

GRASSROOTS MOVEMENT

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





STORY AND PHOTOS BY JULIA ROBINSON

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

But Lechinger still had his eyes on a prize.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"The mow, the merrier," Evans says. ■

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

LEARNING *the* HARD WAY

BY PAM LEBLANC

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

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

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

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

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

TOP OF THE CLASS

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

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

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



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

university in Georgetown, north of Austin.

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

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





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



RESPECTING THE UNEXPECTED

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



PHOTOS COURTESY JERROD FOSTER

UPHILL ONE WAY

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

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

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

GETTING OFF-CAMPUS

Other outdoor adventure programming at Texas universities:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Myth Busting with Geothermal Heat Pumps

by Brian Shaw, Texas Territory Manager
WaterFurnace

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

...You Need a Bunch of Land

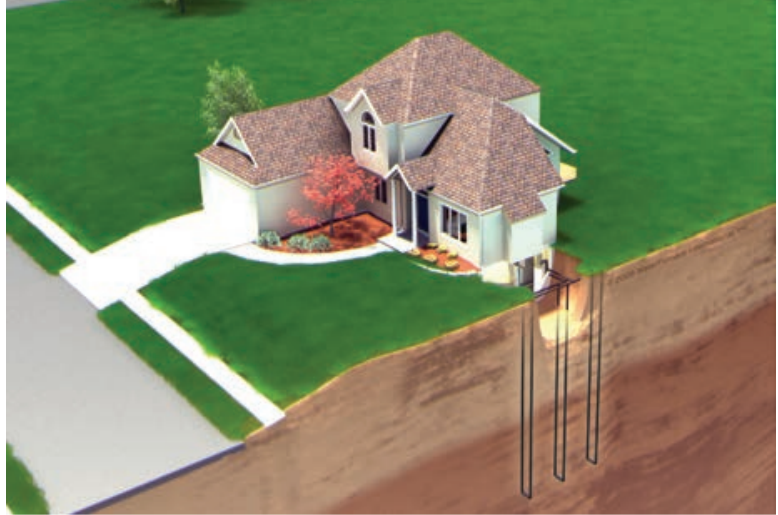
As one old timer put it, “If you have a lawn mower, then I can put in a geo unit.” With numerous options for the underground loop systems, that’s actually true. A vertical loop is often installed under driveways or even 10’ x 10’ patches of ground. There are many other options including using an existing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

...It Isn’t Safe

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



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



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

...Electric Heat is Expensive to Operate

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

...It’s Too Expensive to Install

Installing geothermal heating and

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

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

State of Texas

MONTHLY AVERAGE¹

\$53

for Geothermal Heating & Cooling



Symphony Insight

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

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



visit waterfurnace.com/TexasPower

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

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

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

The sport — a cross between tennis, badminton and pingpong — is becoming a smash across the Bluebonnet region.



PASSION *f*or PICKLEBALL



Pam LeBlanc gets a lesson in pickleball to see how suited she is at the low-impact sport. *Scott van Osdol photo*

Get Going WITH Pam LeBlanc

One in a series of stories on fitness, recreation and outdoor adventure in the Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative region.

By Pam LeBlanc
Photos by Sarah Beal

I probably look goofy. I'm holding what looks like a pingpong paddle, standing on what looks like a miniature tennis court and attempting to whack what looks and feels like a Wiffle ball. Pickleball mania has taken over the Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative region, and I'm determined to find out why.

Here in the air-conditioned comfort of Lost Pines Pickleball Club in Bastrop, a few pickleball enthusiasts are showing me the finer points of the fastest-growing sport in America for three years in a row, according to the Sports & Fitness Industry Association.

Unfortunately, after about 30 minutes of thwacking, I lower my paddle and admit defeat. My partner and I have been officially “pickled,” meaning we've lost the match, 11-0. I'd like to blame the brace on my knee for the less-than-gold-medal performance — I'm recovering from ACL surgery — but I think it's more about my lack of skills. This mashup of tennis, badminton and pingpong might look simple, but to become top pickle, players need practice.

The game traces its origin to 1965, according to USA Pickleball. That's when Joel Pritchard and some friends were looking for a way to entertain their families. Pritchard, who had been a member of Congress from Washington state, had an old badminton court, but not enough rackets to go around. So the group gathered up a few pingpong paddles, found a Wiffle ball and strung up a net.

There's nothing remotely picklelike in the sport, so the source of the name is hotly debated. Some say the plastic ball used in those first games belonged to Pritchard's dog, Pickles, who would chase and occasionally abscond with the ball. Others say the name came from the term “pickle boat,” which refers to a crew of randomly selected rowers in a race.

Regardless, after a while, pickleball got popular. The U.S. Amateur Pickleball Association was formed in 1984, and by 1990 people in all 50 states were playing. Pickleball's popularity exploded during the coronavirus pandemic. People could play outdoors, stay socially distant, get some exercise and have much-needed social interaction. Play increased by more than 223% in the last three years.

Today an estimated 36.5 million Americans — some say that number is low — play pickleball, and more than 50,000 courts are located across the U.S., according to 2023 statistics from the Association of Pickleball Players. The organization had 78,766 members and sanctioned 195 tournaments last year, including the national championships held in Farmers Branch, Texas.

Pickleball is booming in Texas, with more than 3,500 individual courts at more than 850 locations, according to Pickleheads, an online site dedicated to the sport. That doesn't include private courts, or spur-of-the-moment setups on basketball and tennis courts, or any asphalt or concrete surface with the required 20-by-44-foot space.

The easy-to-play but nuanced game has spread beyond cities and moved into

Continued on Page 18



On the courts

FRANK ROBINSON, Lockhart

When did you start playing? I started in July or August of 2023 at the Methodist church in Lockhart. When I'm in town, I try to play twice a week, Mondays and Wednesdays.

How did you get hooked? It took me about four months before I really got into it. It's so much fun, and it's not very stressful.

Why do you love it? It gets you moving, but it's not too strenuous — although some folks make it very strenuous. There are lots of laughs. I told someone we should make a video of people chasing the ball around, trying to pick it up before they serve.

Tip for beginners: Start off slow and don't run backward!

More inside

- On the courts with Bluebonnet-area pickleballers, **PAGES 18-21**
- The game, **PAGE 20**
- The gear, **PAGE 20**
- The court, **PAGE 21**
- The lingo, **PAGE 21**

Where to play pickleball in the Bluebonnet region

- **Bastrop Area Pickleball Association**, 141 Tahitian Drive, Bastrop; bit.ly/3X6OkPW
- **Fisherman's Park**, 600 Hill St., and **Bob Bryant Park**, 600 Charles Blvd, Bastrop; bit.ly/4fFWBc
- **Lost Pines Pickleball Club**, 1099 Texas 71 W., Bastrop; lostpinespbc.com
- **Bellville Pickleball Club**, 59 S. Bell St., Bellville; bit.ly/4fJ5PNj
- **Jackson Street Park**, 1300 S. Jackson St., Brenham; bit.ly/4dpPD22
- **John E. Hejl Park at Davidson Creek**, 1105 Commerce St., Caldwell; bit.ly/4dq1woK
- **Dale Community Center**, 47 Civic Drive, Dale; bit.ly/4dwrQh6
- **Elgin Recreation Center**, 361 N. Texas 95, Elgin; bit.ly/3SQNu7p
- **Veterans Park**, 118 E. Richmond St., Giddings; bit.ly/3X4uG73
- **West End Community Park**, 725 Main St., Industry
- **Pride High School gym annex**, 419 Bois D'Arc St., Lockhart; bit.ly/4dwgKIL
- **Frisch Auf! Valley Country Club**, 575 Country Club Drive, La Grange; favcc.club
- **First Methodist Lockhart activity center**, 313 W. San Antonio St., Lockhart; fmlockhart.org
- **Rio Vista Courts**, 555 Cheatham St., San Marcos; bit.ly/4crFall
- **San Marcos Activity Center**, 501 E. Hopkins St., San Marcos; bit.ly/4coJQsl
- **Smithville Recreation Center**, 106 Royston St., Smithville; bit.ly/3X5bLf

For more information, visit bluebonnet.coop/pickleball. Do you know about other pickleball courts in the Bluebonnet region? Email us at socialmedia@bluebonnet.coop with the information.



Mike and Wanda Royce of Lexington celebrate a pickleball match victory at John E. Hejl Park at Davidson Creek.

On the courts



JOSIE MARTINEZ, Martindale

When did you start playing? I started in September 2022, after retiring, following a friend's suggestion to try it for exercise.

How did you get hooked? Immediately. It was a lot of fun. The people I play with range from 50 to 90 years old.

Fun fact: I trained for two 5K races last year by playing pickleball and fetching balls. I placed first in one race and second in another in my age group.

Tip for beginners: You just have to get out there and try it.

LINDA GAAS, Somerville area

How often do you play? I play pickleball at least four times a week and have traveled to Arkansas, Oklahoma and Alabama for pickleball tournaments with a friend. I'm the USA Pickleball ambassador for the Caldwell area.

Where do you play? Mainly at the public courts at Davidson Creek Park in Caldwell. Players gather at 7 or 8 a.m. daily for open play. I also travel to Brenham, Navasota, Bellville, Bryan/College Station and Bastrop to play.

In her spare time: I'm a retired accountant with five grandchildren. I love to spend time with them — if I'm not at a pickleball tournament.

Tip for beginners: Don't get frustrated and take your time. It's a learning process.



Continued from Page 16

rural communities, including those in the Bluebonnet region. Courts, clubs, leagues and pickup games are scattered across the cooperative's 3,800-square-mile service area.

Today's session at Lost Pines wasn't my first attempt at pickleball. My husband and I picked up a pair of beginners' paddles, met some pickleball-playing friends, set up a portable net on a basketball court and practiced hitting balls earlier this year. Sports that require serious hand-eye coordination are not my thing, but a little time spent smacking that airy ball around gave me confidence: I can do this.

That led me to Lost Pines Pickleball, 1099 State Highway 71 in Bastrop, for some training. The facility, which opened in November 2023, is one of the largest in the region with 13 courts — nine in an air-conditioned, indoor facility and four outdoors, lighted. Members play for \$99 a month, and nonmembers pay \$7 per person, per hour to play there.

Not far from Lost Pines, at 141 Tahitian Drive, another large facility — with 10 lighted outdoor courts — is run by the Bastrop Pickleball Association. Dues there are \$20 a month, or \$200 a year, but visitors are welcome to play a few times for free. The public can play at free clinics at 6 p.m. every Tuesday.

But most courts across the region are open to the public for little to no cost, including Fisherman's Park, 1200 Willow

St., and Bob Bryant Park, 600 Charles Blvd., in Bastrop

Other residents of the region are playing pickleball from Brenham to Caldwell, Smithville to Bellville and lots of courts in between. See a list of Bluebonnet-area courts on Page 17.

Pickleball's appeal goes beyond being simple: It is inexpensive and low-impact. At the recreational level, it's a fun way to goof around with friends and family. A pair of inexpensive beginner wooden or fiberglass paddles that can cost less than \$25 and a regular pair of sneakers are sufficient. The scoring throws some folks off, but our guide to the game on Page 20 can help.

At competitive levels, pickleball is fast-paced, requiring agility, dexterity and a bit of power. Get caught up in the sport, and it can get pricey: Pro-level paddles can cost more than \$200, and even the balls can get fancy. I tried a \$150 paddle made by Pickleball Apes, and it was lighter and more responsive than my cheap one.

Around the Bluebonnet service area, picklers, the nickname for those who adore the sport, are eager to spread the word.

Vicki Bruce of Brenham, a 69-year-old former physical education teacher, started playing about eight years ago, after her husband passed away and a friend suggested they try. Brenham didn't have any public courts then, so the pair persuaded city officials to set up four courts using temporary nets on two old tennis courts.



Top: Wanda and Mike Royce, from left, from Lexington, play against Linda Gaas from near Somerville and Vicki Bruce of Brenham. They were playing at John E. Hejl Park in Caldwell. **Above:** Participants gather for League Night at the pickleball courts on Jackson Street in Brenham this summer.

People started showing up. The city eventually marked off six pickleball courts and installed permanent nets at Jackson Street Park, 1300 S. Jackson St.

“Seniors are an underserved population when it comes to anything active,” Bruce said. “Before you knew it, we had 40 or 50 people playing. Now we have 190 people in our club.”

Pickleball, she says, offers something more than a fun game to play.

“We’ve had people who have had cancer, lost husbands, gone through divorce, and some who are just lonely,” she said. “I think it fills whatever need you’re looking for, whether it’s social, competitive or exercise. I didn’t realize all the benefits I was

going to gain when I started, but these people are closer than family.”

Bruce Forester lives near Lockhart and started playing about eight years ago. He and his wife, Ann Forester, would drive to the San Marcos Activity Center’s indoor courts to play until Covid shut things down. In 2021, he and some other members of First Methodist Lockhart asked trustees if they could set up a pickleball court in the church’s activity center on Monday and Wednesday afternoons. They’ve been playing – and attracting others – ever since.

“A lot of it is social,” Forester said.

“You’ll meet people you never knew, never

Continued on Page 20

On the courts



Scott van Osdol photo

LANELL BECKLES, Bastrop

How did you get hooked? Coming from a tennis background, I found pickleball to be easier to pick up and more community-based. I’ve met a lot of people in pickleball, but I also found a sport I can excel at without tearing down my body. Easy to start, not easy to master.

In his spare time: I’m a fitness trainer and pickleball coach. I also love riding my motorcycle, going to movies, and helping others with their social media content creation. I’m helping another company start a podcast and improve their brand recognition.

Tip for beginners: Watch a high-level pickleball match. When you see how that kind of game is being played, you’ll know what to strive for. You’ll get an idea of how to win points — and it’s not hitting the ball hard every chance you get. Also, play as much as possible.

BRUCE FORESTER, Lockhart area

When did you start playing? About eight years ago. My brother-in-law introduced me to the game while on vacation. It was fun, and I saw the potential for me: I am a heart patient, and it was a good cardio workout.

Fun fact: I have the most fun when I’m playing with others who have the same skill level I have.

In his spare time: I enjoy nine-pin bowling.

Tip for beginners: Find a wall and bounce the ball off of it to build up your hand-eye coordination. It will also build your confidence. Don’t be shy — jump in feet first.

On the courts



VICKI BRUCE, Brenham

When did you start playing? I learned about pickleball from my friend Helen, whom I met through a grief recovery group after we both lost our husbands. Helen heard about the game while visiting friends in Galveston about eight years ago. After her trip, we found someone to teach us how to play.

Why do you love it? It continues to amaze me how pickleball brings people together who would not normally be together. I play with people with a wide range of backgrounds, personalities and skill levels. But when we come to the pickleball court, it's one big family.

Fun fact: I've probably got two dozen paddles. I have my favorite, a ProKenneX, and I love that paddle because it's gentle on my elbow and shoulder. I always go back to it.

Tip for beginners: Stay back and don't rush the net.

MIKE AND WANDA ROYCE, Lexington

Where do you play? We play everywhere we go. We love the group in Brenham; we play at Fisherman's Park in Bastrop on Thursday and Saturday mornings. We have a Tuesday morning group in Caldwell. We always take our pickleball bags with us wherever we go. We have met so many wonderful people through pickleball.

Fun fact: People ask us how many days a week we play. We say "all of them that end in a Y."

Tip for beginners: Play as often as possible and try to play with people of all ability levels. Learn from advanced players and help teach the newbies.

Continued from Page 19

thought you'd make friends with. Some are new to the game and are just now learning, while others are veterans who want to compete."

You don't have to be a super athlete to get something out of the game, said Lanell Beckles, who once coached tennis in Maine and now works as a fitness and pickleball coach. "It awakens the ability to enjoy sports for a lot of people who never played sports."

Beckles discovered pickleball a few years ago when he saw some people playing at Fisherman's Park in Bastrop. A player spotted him watching and suggested that he give it a try. "I made all the mistakes," Beckles said. "I stepped into the 'kitchen.' But I needed a competitive sport I could play again."

Beckles stuck with it, drawn by the camaraderie and the welcoming vibe. "Pickleball is so diverse. You can play with a beginner or a pro, and you'll all get something out of it," he said.

Back at Lost Pines Pickleball Club, after my defeat, I've plopped down on a chair. A

TV on a nearby wall is streaming professional pickleball players in action, where balls fly, players pivot and things move so quickly I can hardly keep up. It's a far cry from the mellow game I just finished.

"Watch what the pros do," Beckles, the coach, told me. "That's one way to get better."

He recommends beginners take a lesson to familiarize themselves with the rules and to avoid developing bad habits. "Most people when they start say, 'This game is easy and I can figure it out.' But you don't really understand it until you play with people who are better at it, and you understand the rules and nuances," he said.

After a few hours of trying, I know he's right. I'm motivated to get back out and learn some skills. It doesn't matter if I look goofy, and I don't need to play on a fancy indoor court.

This sport's got at least one more new fan — me. ■

Pam LeBlanc writes about fitness, adventure and recreation in regional, state and national publications.

How to play pickleball

The game

- Each rally begins with a serve — a player on the right side of the court serves from behind the baseline diagonally to opponent's service area. The ball must land beyond the 'kitchen.' Serves are typically underhanded.
- The ball must bounce once on each side before it can be volleyed (hit in the air).
- A point is lost when ball is hit out of bounds or into the net, bounces twice on one side, cannot be returned or if a serve doesn't go beyond the kitchen.
- When the ball is within the kitchen area near the net, it must bounce once before being returned. No volleys in the air if you are in the 'kitchen.'
- You only win points on your or your teammate's serve. You keep serving until you lose a point. Then your teammate serves. Then the other team's players serve.

The gear

- Paddles: 2 to 4 wooden or composite paddles start at less than \$25 and can go up to more than \$300. Get one that is USAPA, or U.S.A Pickleball Approved. Paddles get pricier based on attributes like control vs. power, sweet-spot size, ability to generate spin and more.
- Balls: Pickleballs are made with different plastics, weights, hardness, number of holes, plus bounce and speed levels. Some are better for indoor play. A three-pack starter set is about \$8.
- Regular sneakers, although any athletic shoes made for court play will do.
- Hat, sunscreen, water



Wanda Royce tries to stay out of the court's 'kitchen' as she returns the ball.





From left, Gale Lindsey, Bruce Forester, Karen Ivey and Frank Robinson meet at the net for the traditional 'paddle tap' between players after a game at the court in the Family Life Center at First Methodist Church in Lockhart.

On the courts



LISA KEESLER, Brenham

When did you start playing? In March of 2014, a CBS News segment about a little-known sport called pickleball caught my attention. I ordered a paddle and a few balls and hit against the practice board at the tennis courts a few times.

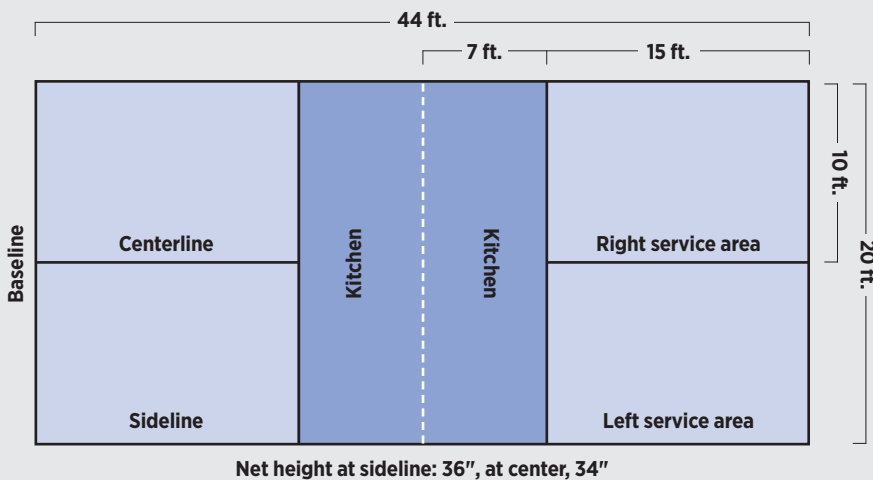
How did you get hooked? On February 24, 2017 — the first day I played the game! I met Vicki Bruce at the courts along with two other players, and we laughed and had an amazing time. She was so encouraging. We have since become doubles partners, and have competed and won in many tournaments. As USA Pickleball and US Senior Pickleball Ambassadors in the region, our role is to promote the sport and share our love for the game with others.

Fun fact: My secret sauce is Dr Pepper! It's what keeps me going. There's no water in my water bottle.

In her spare time: I'm a full-time office nurse in a busy practice. Sunday mornings and Wednesday nights are reserved for church. All other times are "game on!"

Tip for beginners: Take your time. It's a fast-moving game. You have to think and react fast, but you've got more time than you know. Relax, slow down and see your shots. And have fun!

The court



The lingo

- Bagel or pickled:** Shutout game; in standard pickleball, an 11-0 finish
- Dink shot:** Soft shot that barely clears the net and plops into non-volley zone
- Falafel:** Short shot caused by hitting the ball with too little oomph
- Kitchen:** Non-volley zone, a 7-foot-deep section of court on either side of the net
- Opa!** Sometimes shouted after third shot, when open volleying starts
- Pickle!** Warning shouted by server letting others know they are about to serve
- Pickler:** Pickleball enthusiast who can't stop talking about the sport
- Pukaball:** Alternate name for pickleball, used primarily in Hawaii
- Volley llama:** Illegal move, when player hits a volley while in the kitchen

Can't get enough? Tune in to pickleballtv.com for nonstop streaming pickleball action.

Sources: USA Pickleball, Sports & Fitness Industry Association, Association of Pickleball Professionals, pickleheads.com



National Cooperative Month

October is National Cooperative Month, a time to celebrate you — the members of Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative. The cooperative's employees are driven by service to the community, and members are at the heart of everything Bluebonnet does.

The cooperative doesn't just deliver safe, reliable and affordable electricity. It is committed to providing excellent service to its members, around the clock.

As a Bluebonnet member, you are not just a customer — you are an owner. Members decide who governs the co-op and they receive a share of annual profits through capital credits. They belong to an organization that is deeply involved in the communities it serves, because we live here, too.

This month and every month, we are proud to have you as a member of Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative.

Bluebonnet's Lockhart-area community representative Jo Anna Gilliland connects with members at the Hays County Preparedness Fair.



Sarah Beal photo



Sarah Beal photo

Bluebonnet marks Breast Cancer Awareness Month

Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative's five member service centers will shine pink at night throughout October for Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Trucks will display pink ribbon decals, and field crews will wear pink hard hats like Michael Guajardo above. Visit a member service center — in Bastrop, Brenham, Giddings, Lockhart or Manor — from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday, to pick up a free pink ribbon pin and show your support.

A better way to budget.



SteadyPay

PREDICTABLE PAYMENTS EACH MONTH

FIND OUT MORE AT BLUEBONNET.COOP/STEADYPAY



that was **THEN**

A few years after Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative powered the first light bulbs in rural Central Texas, a traveling show featuring the latest home appliances would make stops in the region. The events, launched by the federal Rural Electrification Administration, often took place under circus tents and drew crowds of thousands nationwide. By the 1940s, electric appliance sales were skyrocketing. Bluebonnet members could stop at the cooperative's then-headquarters in Giddings — rather than a retail showroom — to look over the newest electric items.

this is **NOW**

Bluebonnet still showcases its commitment to home efficiency by hosting a renewable energy event every year. Instead of appliances, today's members can learn about solar energy systems, battery storage and electric vehicles. Bluebonnet partners with the Texas Solar Energy Society to host an installer fair at the Energy Expo, so members can talk with solar and battery system vendors. A Solar 101 presentation teaches the basics of solar power and battery storage. This year's Energy Expo will be 9 a.m. to noon on Saturday, Oct. 19, at the cooperative's headquarters, 155 Electric Ave., in Bastrop.



Top: In rural Central Texas' early days of electricity, new appliances were displayed by electric cooperatives, including this event in the Bluebonnet region in the mid-1940s. *Bluebonnet archive photo*

Above: At last year's Energy Expo, Bluebonnet member service representatives Roxanna Aquilar, left, and Roxana Ocampo talk to member Luis Rodriguez of Manor about what members who have solar energy systems see on their electricity bills. *Sarah Beal photo*

In 2024, Bluebonnet celebrates 85 years of providing safe, reliable and affordable electric service to its fast-growing membership. Throughout the year, join us in celebrating this milestone as we honor our past and plan for the future.



★ STILL THE TRACTOR PACKAGE LEADER ★



Pkg. includes 4' Box Blade and Cutter

MT-122 & MT-125 Subcompact Tractor Packages

22 & 25 HP Diesels, 4x4, Hydro Trans, ROPS, R4 Industrial Tires, Quick Attach Loaders and Buckets, 4' Rotary Cutter and 4' Box Blades

AS LOW AS \$239 per month

0 down @ 3.9% interest for up to 84 months WAC



Pkg. includes 6' Box Blade and Cutter

MT-355 H Full Size 55 HP Tractor Package

55 HP diesel, 4x4, Hydro Trans, R4 Tires, ROPS, Quick Attach Front Loader & Bucket, 6' Rotary Cutter and 6' Box Blade included

AS LOW AS \$449 per month

0 Down @ 3.9% Interest for up to 84 months WAC



Pkg. includes 5' Box Blade and Cutter

MT-225 H 25 HP Compact Tractor

4x4, Hydro Trans, Quick Attach Front Loader, and Skid Steer Bucket, R4 Tires, ROPS, 5' Rotary Cutter and 5' Box Blade included

AS LOW AS \$315 per month

0 Down @ 3.9% Interest for up to 84 months WAC



Pkg. includes 6' Box Blade and Cutter

MT-458 CPS 58 HP Cab Tractor Package

Power Shuttle Trans, 4x4, R4 Tires, 2 Sets of Rear Hydraulic Remotes, AC & Heat, Stereo Ready, Quick Attach Loader and Bucket, 6' Rotary Cutter and 6' Box Blade, Fully Loaded With All Options!

AS LOW AS \$625 per month

0 Down @ 3.9% Interest for up to 84 months WAC

DELIVERY AVAILABLE



FOSTER'S WORK & PLAY

936-967-0011 • Text 713-899-7976 After Hours • fostersworknplay.com

3601 US Hwy 190 W • Livingston, Texas 77351 • sales@fostersworknplay.com

All horsepower ratings are approximate engine horsepower ratings from manufacturer. Prices and payments approximate with approved credit by AGCO Finance. 0% Interest Rates may be blended slightly because of implements other than MF Brand. All prices and payments may not include freight, set up, insurance or delivery if applicable



Bank C.D.'s Due? CALL US NOW

1-800-359-4940 TEXAS TOLL-FREE
www.mattsonfinancialservices.com

BLAKE MATTSO, CFP™
Signal Securities, Inc., 5400 Bosque, 4th Floor, Waco, TX 76710
Serving Customers All Over Texas

All C.D.'s are insured to \$250,000 per institution by the F.D.I.C. All C.D.'s are subject to availability. Securities offered thru Signal Securities, Inc., Member FINRA/SIPC 700 Throckmorton, Ft. Worth, TX 76102. (817) 877-4256.

Steel Mobile Home Roofing

Leaks? High energy bill? Roof rumble?

PERMA-ROOF®
from Southern Builders



800.633.8969 • roofover.com



If North Texas Is Your Market, We've Got You Covered.

Target customers close to home with the North Texas advertising section of *Texas Co-op Power*. Be part of a statewide magazine—without the statewide cost. Call or email today.



NORTH TEXAS AUDIENCE
Circulation 590,500
Readership 1,358,150

TexasCoopPower

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

WE BUY MINERALS

We pay cash for producing or non-producing mineral interests.

CALL US TODAY! 1-888-735-5337



SKID STEER MOUNTED SHEAR

• 1/2" to 6" diameter trees and brush.
• Perfect for cedar, shin oak, persimmon, mesquite.

(512) 263-6830 • www.brushshark.com



TCP E-news

TCP Sign up now
TexasCoopPower.com/join



TCP Gift Shop

TCP Shop now
TexasCoopPower.com/shop





The Flapper Bandit

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

BY MARTHA DEERINGER

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

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

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

rob a bank.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Pumpkin and Spice

Kick-start your holiday baking with these seasonal treats

BY VIANNEY RODRIGUEZ, FOOD EDITOR

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

Texas Pumpkin Sheet Cake With Candied Pecans

CAKE

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

FROSTING

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

CANDIED PECANS

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

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

SERVES 24

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



Pumpkin Praline Pie

BECKY FRASER
UNITED COOPERATIVE SERVICES

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

PIE

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

CRUMBLE

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

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

SERVES 8

[MORE RECIPES >](#)

\$500 WINNER

Cinnamon Streusel Pumpkin Coffee Cake

KIM PRYOR
FARMERS EC



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

SERVES 8-10

STREUSEL

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



CAKE

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

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

GLAZE

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

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

\$500 Recipe Contest

PIES, PIES, PIES DUE OCTOBER 10

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



Pumpkin Cornbread With Whipped Cinnamon Honey Butter

PAM KINKEMA
UNITED COOPERATIVE SERVICES

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

CORNBREAD

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



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

CINNAMON HONEY BUTTER

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

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

with cooking spray.

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

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

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

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

6. Serve bread with whipped butter.

SERVES 9

Heirloom Seed Kits

- 100% NON-GMO • 100% NON-HYBRID -



125 VARIETY SEED VAULT - \$119

(With Ammo Storage Box) Includes 22,000+ seeds & 125 varieties of vegetables & herbs.

VIEW MORE SEED KITS ONLINE!

- Tomato 10-Pack\$25
- Herb 12-Pack\$25
- Wildflower Mix\$20
- 25 Variety Kit\$27⁵⁰
- 50 Variety Kit\$49
- 125 Variety Kit\$119

100% Non-GMO
100% Non-Hybrid



 **HEARTGOOD**
— F A R M S —

Family-Owned & Operated.
Cave Springs, Arkansas

Order Online Or By Phone:

HeartgoodFarms.com

(866) 861-7111



HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE

In the magazine and on TexasCoopPower.com, we make it easy to shop for friends and family.



Homegrown Texas Pecans and Pecan Treats

Berdoll's has been family-owned for 45 years. We make delicious pecan pies, chocolate pecans, honey-glazed pecans and more. Shop our retail store or let us ship the perfect gift for you!

800-518-3870
berdoll.com



Ideal Arm Protection for Any Activity

Helps Prevent Bruising and Protects Those With Thin Skin! Soft leather protective sleeves help protect you from 100's of injury-prone chores you do at work, home, farm, or ranch. Even has adjustable airflow!

(651) 492-4830
armchaps.com

COMES IN 4 COLORS AND 7 SIZES



Made in Texas, Y'all

Cast-iron cookware with a smooth cooking surface. Our durable, heirloom-quality cast-iron cookware made in Fredericksburg, Texas, is a great gift that can be shared with family and friends for generations.

fbgcastiron.com
instagram.com/fbg_castiron



Texas Bluebonnet Calendar

Large 20-by-15-inch calendar with 12 watercolor scenes. Enjoy nature's beauty year-round with this 2025 calendar by Texas State Artist George Boutwell. \$17.50 plus tax and \$4.50 shipping. See website for quantity pricing.

1-800-243-4316
gboutwell.com



Texas Red Grapefruit and Avocados

Always a gift in good taste. Orchard-fresh grapefruit and other Texas products are all hand-selected, carefully packed and shipped to be delivered just in time for the holidays.

1-800-580-1900
crockett farms.com



Fudge and Divinity for the Holidays

The Best Fudge in Texas. The Best Divinity in the World. Bring back those childhood memories of Christmas with the sweet gift of fudge and divinity from Holiday Farms.

holidayfarmscandy.com
divinitybydave.etsy.com





COURTESY CHET GARNER

Dragons Not Included

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

BY CHET GARNER

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Know Before You Go

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

OCTOBER

10

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

11

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

12

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

16

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

18

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

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

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

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

19

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

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

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

25

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

26

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

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

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

31

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

NOVEMBER

1

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

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

TCP *Submit Your Event*

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



TUB OR SHOWER FROM **\$9,995.00** INSTALLATION INCLUDED

SPECIAL SAVINGS!

YOUR CHOICE OF A **WALK-IN SHOWER OR WALK-IN TUB**

Lifetime Warranty
Custom Sizes Available
100% Financing Available
A+ BBB Rating
Good Contractors List



BEST BUY WALK-IN TUBS
FEATURING "SEALTITE" TECHNOLOGY

Trusted by Texans for 19 Years
Tubs and Showers
Made in America
Visit Our Texas Showroom

Call for More Info
682-205-3532 • 888-825-2362
bestbuywalkintubs.com



80
TEXAS CO-OP POWER
1944-2024

Cast-Iron Skillet Giveaway Contest

To celebrate 80 years of Texas Co-op Power, we're giving away 80 handcrafted, heirloom-quality No. 12 skillets from Fredericksburg Cast Iron Co.

TCP *Enter Today*
TexasCoopPower.com/contests



Join Texas A&M Forest Service, as we celebrate the centennial anniversaries of our state forests with family-friendly festivals.

FESTIVAL DATES

Saturday, October 19, 2024
W.G. JONES STATE FOREST

Saturday, April 26, 2025
I.D. FAIRCHILD STATE FOREST

Coming Fall 2025
E.O. SIECKE STATE FOREST

TEXAS A&M
FOREST SERVICE

DETAILS AT
tfsweb.tamu.edu/StateForest100.asp

STRENGTH OF THE WEST

Men's Turquoise Bracelet



Impressively Sized Genuine
Turquoise Cabachon

Solid Stainless Steel with
Ion-plated 24K Gold Accents

Genuine Black
Leather

Capturing the Proud Heritage of AMERICA'S WILD WEST

This black genuine leather bracelet is hand-crafted of solid stainless steel and ion-plated 24K-gold accents, and features an impressively sized genuine turquoise cabochon at the center. One of the oldest stones known to man, and used extensively in jewelry from America's Southwest, it makes a strong statement along with the images of American bison.

The turquoise center stone is surrounded by a raised twisted rope design along with impressive scrollwork accents. On either side of the turquoise stone, you'll find masterfully sculpted images of the majestic bison on a black ion-plated background also framed by a raised twisted rope border. Decorative Western-style art motifs honoring the American

West complete the distinctive look. Adding to the meaning and value, the words "Strength of the West," are boldly etched on the back. A magnetic clasp allows for easy wear and it's designed to fit most wrists.

A Superb Value, Available Only for a Limited Time

This bracelet is an exceptional value at \$119.99*, payable in 4 easy installments of just \$30, and is backed by our unconditional 120-day full money-back guarantee. Each bracelet arrives in a velvet jewelry pouch along with a gift box and Certificate of Authenticity. To reserve, send no money now; just mail the Priority Reservation. Don't miss out—order yours today!



Order Today at bradfordexchange.com/298742

Connect with Us!



©2023 Bradford Exchange
01-29874-002-B1QR

Uniquely Designed. Exclusively Yours.

The Bradford Exchange

9345 Milwaukee Ave, Niles, IL 60714-1393

Yes! Please reserve the "Strength of the West" Men's Turquoise Bracelet for me as described in this announcement.

*Plus a total of \$10.98 shipping and service (see bradfordexchange.com). Please allow 4-6 weeks after initial payment for delivery. Sales subject to product availability and order acceptance.



Distinctive Message Etched on Back

PRIORITY RESERVATION

SEND NO MONEY NOW

Signature _____

Mrs. Mr. Ms. _____
Name (Please Print Clearly)

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____



SCAN HERE
TO SHOP

01-29874-002-E54801

Climbing High

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

CURATED BY GRACE FULTZ

1 KAYLE GRAHAM
TRI-COUNTY EC

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

2 NICKI KLEIN
BLUEBONNET EC

Colorado River climber.

3 MEAGAN BENAVIDES
NUECES EC

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

4 GUYNA POLASEK
GVEC

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



Upcoming Contests

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



Enter online at TexasCoopPower.com/contests.

TCP See Focus on Texas on our website for many more Climbing High photos from readers.



There's No Party Like La Pitada

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

BY W.F. STRONG
PHOTO BY ERICH SCHLEGEL

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Grab Your Piece of America's Silver Legacy



99.9% Fine Silver Bars

Actual size is 30.6 x 50.4 mm

Fill Your Vault with Morgan Silver Bars



Not only are these hefty bars one full Troy ounce of real, .999 precious silver, they're also beautiful, featuring the crisp image of a Morgan Silver Dollar struck onto the surface. That collectible image adds interest and makes these Silver Bars even more desirable. Minted in the U.S.A. from shimmering American silver, these one-ounce 99.9% fine silver bars are a great alternative to one-ounce silver coins or rounds. Plus, they offer great savings compared to other bullion options like one-ounce sovereign silver coins. Take advantage of our special offer for new customers only and save \$10.00 off our regular prices.

Morgan Silver Dollars Are Among the Most Iconic Coins in U.S. History

What makes them iconic? The Morgan Silver Dollar is the legendary coin that built the Wild West. It exemplifies the American spirit like few other coins, and was created using silver mined from the famous Comstock Lode in Nevada. In fact, when travelers approached the mountains around the boomtown of Virginia City, Nevada in the 1850s, they were startled to see the hills shining in the sunlight like a mirror. A mirage caused by weary eyes?

No, rather the effect came from tiny flecks of silver glinting in the sun.

A Special Way for You to Stock Up on Precious Silver

While no one can predict the future value of silver in an uncertain economy, many Americans are rushing to get their hands on as much silver as possible, putting it away for themselves and their loved ones. You'll enjoy owning these Silver Bars. They're tangible. They feel good when you hold them, You'll relish the design and thinking about all it represents. These Morgan Design One-Ounce Bars make appreciated gifts for birthdays, anniversaries and graduations, creating a legacy sure to be cherished for a lifetime.

Order More and SAVE

You can save \$10.00 off our regular price when you buy now. There is a limit of 25 Bars per customer, which means with this special offer, you can save up to \$250.

Hurry. Secure Yours Now!

Call right now to secure your .999 fine silver Morgan Design One-Ounce Silver Bars. You'll be glad you did.

One-Ounce Silver Morgan Design Bar
\$49.95 ea.

Special offer - \$39.95 ea. +s/h **BUY MORE SAVE MORE!**
SAVE \$10 - \$250

Limit of 25 bars per customer

Free 1-oz Silver Bullet - .45 Caliber Pistol Round Replica with every order over \$299 (A \$69.95 value!)



FREE SHIPPING over \$99!

Limited time only. Product total over \$99 before taxes (if any). Standard domestic shipping only. Not valid on previous purchases.

For fastest service call today toll-free

1-888-201-7144

Offer Code MSB236-04
Please mention this code when you call.

SPECIAL CALL-IN ONLY OFFER

GovMint • 1300 Corporate Center Curve, Dept. MSB236-04, Eagan, MN 55121

Asset Marketing Services, LLC d/b/a GovMint.com® ("AMS") is a retail distributor of coin and currency issues and is not affiliated with the U.S. government. The collectible coin market is unregulated, highly speculative and involves risk. Any prices, facts, figures and populations deemed accurate as of the date of publication may change significantly over time. All purchases are expressly conditioned upon your acceptance of AMS's Terms and Conditions (www.amsi-corp.com/terms-conditions). Purchasing any product or keeping your purchase means you agree to the Terms and Conditions. ©2024 Asset Marketing Services, LLC

GOVMINT®
THE BEST SOURCE FOR COINS WORLDWIDE



MUELLER METAL ROOFING

Protection and Style all with One Roof.

Beauty, strength, and durability are what you get with a Mueller metal roof. Select from our designer colors and various panel styles to complement your home. Protection and curb appeal from a company you can trust.



Learn more at: Muellerinc.com 877-2-MUELLER (877-268-3553)