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Andy Kaul works knots out of a horse's mane.

**FEATURE**

**8 The Healing Power of Horses** Relief from ailments and disabilities can be found astride therapy horses.

Story and photos by Julia Robinson

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**ONLINE**

**TexasCoopPower.com**

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**Texas USA**

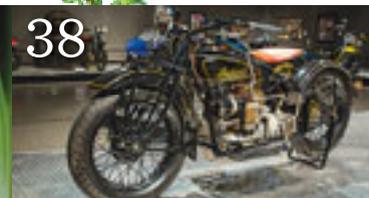
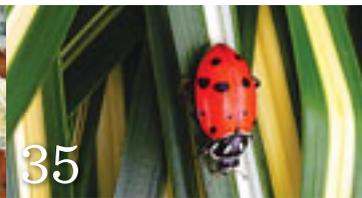
*Tangled Up in Fandangle*  
By Gene Fowler

**NEXT MONTH**

**A Hidden Man's Gem** Eccentric Elmer Kleb helped turn his family homestead into a woodland preserve.



HORSE GROOMING: JULIA ROBINSON. HUMMINGBIRD: LARRY DITTO



**ON THE COVER** Brooklyn caresses Neut after a riding lesson at REACH Therapeutic Riding Center in McGregor. Photo by Julia Robinson

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## Thoughts on Cookies

Normally, the recipes I have tried are very good. However, the Brown Butter Oatmeal Raisin Cookies [*All Hail the Cookie Jar*, September 2018] not only were a lot of trouble to make, but they also tasted horrible. Even my grandsons who eat anything would not finish the cookie.

DONNA HENDRICK | PALO PINTO

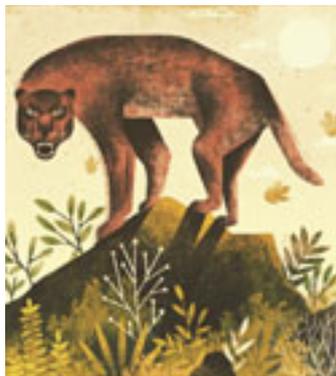
**Editor's note:** Cookie opinions run the gamut. Some found those cookies too salty, while others (including our photo shoot crew) claim they're fabulous. They're a favorite of Paula Disbrowe, our food editor, who suggests using less salt and regular butter (instead of browned) for a milder flavor.

I have a magnet on my icebox that says, "A balanced diet is a cookie in each hand." I so agree.

KAY PRYOR | VIA FACEBOOK

## About Bears and Dogs

I want to point out one error in *Bear Dogs of El Paso* [June 2018]. The second sentence says the ancient mammals were "ancestral to both bears and dogs," but it should have said



they were "closely related to the common ancestor of bears and dogs." The important point is that the relationship among bear dogs, dogs and bears is like that of cousins and not ancestors-descendants.

SUSUMU TOMIYA

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## Wait a Minute!

I enjoy Focus on Texas each month. Love the clocks [October 2018] but have to point out that thing about a clock being right twice a day only works if the clock is stopped.

DONNA ELLIOTT | AUSTIN

## Keep Your Eye on the Ball

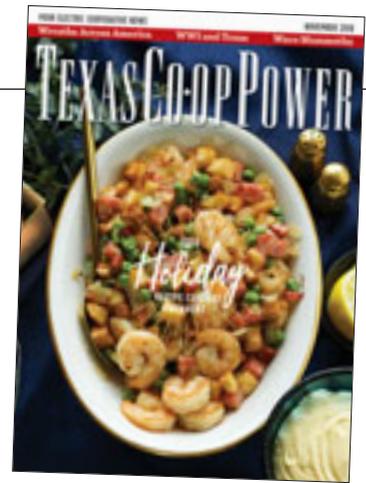
The first high-five by Dusty Baker [*Up for Discussion*, Currents, October 2018] brings back a great old memory. A few weeks prior, the Dodgers played the Astros in the

## Still a Winning Pastry

During the Christmas seasons of my youth in the 1960s, neighbors on our country road brought us delicious home-baked cakes, cookies and candies. My home economics teacher, Helen, was one of our neighbors, and every year we looked forward to her slightly sweetened yeast dough baked around a brown sugar and pecan filling that she called Danish Kringle [*Holiday Recipe Contest*, November 2018].

Although we loved seeing her, we waited in keen anticipation for her to leave. Her car would have barely left the driveway before we tore into the melt-in-your-mouth tenderness of the still-warm pastry.

LINDA RUSH | OAKHURST | SAM HOUSTON EC



Astrodome. We had great seats, about 10 rows up and directly behind first base.

Baker hit a line drive foul ball right at my wife's head. The good thing was she wasn't hurt. The bad thing was my red left palm and the ball in someone else's hand.

VARDY VINCENT | KINGSBURY

BLUEBONNET EC

## Reeves' Legacy

The idea that Bass Reeves [*Bass Reeves, Lawman Extra-ordinaire*, October 2018] was the inspiration for the Lone Ranger comes only from Reeves' descendants. The fictional character is much more likely based on the Zane Grey novel *The Lone Star Ranger*, based on the exploits of Texas Rangers Capt. John Hughes.

MIKE FRANKLIN | POTEET

KARNES EC

I enjoyed the article so much I am going to try and buy the book [*Black Gun, Silver Star: The Life and Legend of Frontier Marshal Bass Reeves*].

LILLIAN BEASLEY | COOKS POINT

BLUEBONNET EC

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# Santa Claus Is Coming to Town

It's time for the children around **FORT DAVIS** to be on their best behavior because Santa arrives **DECEMBER 8** via firetruck—as he always does—in the parade down State Street that kicks off **FRONTIER CHRISTMAS**.

Santa visits with children and sits for photos at Jeff Davis County Library after the parade. Outside, in Kelly Pavilion, enjoy hot cocoa, live music, crafts and a cookie-baking contest. Elementary schoolchildren serenade revelers with Christmas carols followed by the high school Spanish program's *baile folklórico*.

Fort Davis in far West Texas is a popular destination in part because of nearby attractions such as the Fort Davis National Historic Site, the Chihuahuan Desert Research Institute's nature center and botanical gardens, Davis Mountains State Park, and the University of Texas McDonald Observatory.

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#### WEB EXTRAS

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#### ANNIVERSARIES

## WE TURN 75!

**From time to time**, these pages of *Texas Co-op Power* commemorate milestone anniversaries and birthdays as a way to mark history and progress. Starting in January and continuing each month next year, we will celebrate an anniversary near to our hearts: 2019 marks 75 years of this magazine.

**Texas Co-op Power** started as an eight-page newspaper called *Texas Cooperative Electric Power* in July 1944. Electric cooperatives were still in their infancy, and members needed a way to stay informed about the benefits and innovations electricity delivered to rural living. Perhaps more important, members needed an ally and a soapbox because as co-ops spread across Texas, investor-owned utilities, who for years wanted nothing to do with rural folks, began trying to wrest business away from co-ops. *Texas Cooperative Electric Power* stood with members as co-ops persevered and spread.

**Over time**, *Texas Co-op Power* grew into the general interest magazine it is today. It is still produced for co-op members and still delivers important co-op messages, reaching 1.56 million members monthly.

**Each month in 2019**, *Currents* will showcase a timeline that highlight major events and people during our 75-year history. In addition, we'll feature a retro recipe tweaked to accommodate evolving tastes and cooking methods. And each quarter, *Texas History* will shine a spotlight on the magazine.

## Where To Find Happiness



The Texas towns of Plano, No. 5, and Grand Prairie, No. 10, are among the happiest cities in the U.S., according to personal finance website WalletHub, which ranked 182 large cities based on emotional and physical well-being, income and employment, and community and environment. No. 1 is Fremont, California.



CO-OP PEOPLE

# Bright Light in Shelbyville

**CADE FOEHNER**, 21, electrified audiences last spring with a thrilling run on *American Idol*, ascending to the final five of 24 contestants culled from tens of thousands who vied for a spot nationwide. He hails from Shelbyville, where his dad, Rick, is a serviceman at Deep East Texas Electric Cooperative.

**FOEHNER TRANSFIXED** viewers with his smoky vocals and soulful take on classic rock standards *All Along the Watchtower* and *Simple Man*, dedicating the latter to his mom on the show's Mother's Day episode.

**THE HOMEGROWN CELEBRITY** shared a stage with fellow Texas musician Gary Clark Jr. on the show's season finale. Foehner, Clark and co-contestant Dennis Lorenzo delivered a scorching performance of Clark's *Bright Lights*, with its driving refrain, "You're gonna know my name by the end of the night." We certainly know it now.

TECH KNOWLEDGE

## EVERYTHING CLICKS

**This month marks 50 years** since the debut of the technology-changing oN-Line System. Douglas Engelbart and his team at the Stanford Research Institute essentially kicked off the personal computer revolution with what has come to be described as "the mother of all demos."

**On December 9, 1968**, in San Francisco, Engelbart demonstrated text and images displayed simultaneously on separate devices, functional video-conferencing and working hypertexts. He also showcased the first model of the common computer mouse.

**"That hour and 40 minutes** was, in the end, one of the most impactful technological presentations to be delivered since Gutenberg got some people together for cocktails, crudités and a show of how he'd hacked a wine press," Megan Garber wrote in *The Atlantic* in 2013.

ALMANAC

## Christmas Past

***Silent Night*** turns 200 years old. *Stille Nacht* was heard for the first time in a village church in Oberndorf, Austria, at midnight Mass in 1818.

**A *Christmas Carol***, Charles Dickens' classic, debuted 175 years ago in London. Six thousand copies were published December 19, 1843. By Christmas Eve, it was sold out.

# THE HEALING



# POWER OF

# HORSES



## RELIEF from ailments and disabilities can be found astride therapy horses

STORY AND PHOTOS BY JULIA ROBINSON



**T**he kids show up for their riding sessions right on time. They strap on their helmets and calmly lead their horses from the cool shade of the barn into the hot, dusty arena at REACH Therapeutic Riding Center in McGregor, 20 miles southwest of Waco.

Twelve-year-old E.J. works on cinching a saddle strap. “Pull, pull, pull,” cheers side-walker Jesse Allen. E.J. grimaces with the effort as his horse, Jessie, a 22-year-old black-and-white paint, stands quiet and calm. With just a little more oomph, E.J. maneuvers the leather strap into the correct hole and breaks into a wide grin. “He couldn’t do that at all five months ago,” Allen says.

Offering health and mobility gains with the aid of horses is the mission of Larry Barnett, a retired U.S. Air Force pilot who became a therapeutic riding instructor in 2004. He founded REACH in 2007 to use equine therapy, or hippotherapy, to improve the physical and mental well-being of children and adults with special needs.

“This was his dream,” says Kristin Bolfing-Volcik, REACH executive director. “He went to a bunch of different riding centers to study what they did, and he had a lot of mentors from around Texas.” The result of that research and dedication is

the REACH Therapeutic Riding Center, opened in 2008 and situated on 30 acres of pastureland donated by Gary and Diane Heavin, the founders of Curves International fitness studios. The REACH barn has stalls for 10 horses, an office, a viewing room, therapy room, tack room, wash

**Top and left: Brooklyn, 12, maneuvers 20-year-old quarter horse Newt around the arena at REACH Therapeutic Riding Center in McGregor. Far left: Tina Tillert first came to REACH as part of a veterans outreach program but now volunteers at the facility.**





## AN INSTRUCTOR gives directions and encouragement, but the kids are in charge of these animals more than 10 times their weight.



stalls and wheelchair-accessible restrooms. The center has recreational use of the rest of the Heavens' 400-acre property, which includes an extensive network of riding trails for therapeutic group rides.

Bolfing-Volcik, a Waco native and Heart of Texas Electric Cooperative member, started volunteering with the nonprofit organization in 2008 and went on to become certified by Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International as a therapeutic riding instructor. She helped the operation grow to its current size, serving 130 kids as young as 3 as well as adults and veterans of all ages. The center helps people with varying needs and disabilities, including those with muscular dystrophy and autism, trauma survivors, and patients in addiction recovery.

Greek physician Hippocrates was the first to write about the "healing rhythm" of riding horses in the fifth century B.C. In modern times, equine therapy was developed to treat soldiers wounded during World War I and came to the U.S. in the 1950s and 1960s after a Danish rider disabled by polio won a silver medal for dressage riding in the 1952 Olympics.

Equine therapy is a tool rather than a profession. Licensed therapists—physical therapists, occupational therapists and speech-language pathologists, for example—become certified by PATH International or the American Hippotherapy Association to use equine therapy as part of their practice.

According to PATH International, hippotherapy provides three-dimensional movement that mimics human walking. "You could work out every single day, and you're still sore when you get off that horse because you're moving all those different muscles," Bolfing-Volcik says. The movement of the horse provides stimulation to the parts of the body involved in walking, provides a sense of rhythm and gait, and allows for more repetition per

session than using machines in an office or gym setting. Performing regular barn chores and grooming can be healthy exercise for those building dexterity, balance or strength.

Horses are prey animals and

**Top: Christopher, 12, performs a 360-degree turn on Stanley during an obstacle course exercise. Left: E.J., 12, sits tall in the saddle during his riding lesson. Far left: Tina Tillert leads Stanley out of his stall for a trail ride.**

# “HORSES can feel your energy, so when you calm yourself down and then the horse calms down, it’s like looking at yourself in the mirror.”

are sensitive to the emotions of those in their herd, Bolfig-Volcic explains. This makes them an emotional mirror for humans working through anxiety, trauma, addiction or other emotional disturbances. Because horses don’t hide their emotions, people learn to identify and correct their own behaviors to further their relationship with the animal.

Horses also provide motivation for those who are otherwise bored, daunted or disengaged. “Some of these kids are in clinic a lot and they don’t want to do the work, but then they come out here and they’re riding a horse and they don’t even know they’re working,” Bolfig-Volcic says.

**B**rooklyn knows that feeling. The 12-year-old was diagnosed with cognitive and speech delays at a young age. “Every day, she went to school, went to her [speech] therapy and then came home. There was no excitement, and she fell into a rut,” explains her mother, LuCretia Denkins. School was a source of depression and struggle for Brooklyn, but she always loved horses. “She’s obsessed and wants me to buy her one,” Denkins says.

An insurance liaison discovered the REACH program and applied for Brooklyn to attend. She was approved for seven lessons last summer. “She has blossomed so much,” Denkins says. “It’s really amazing to see.”

Out in the arena, Brooklyn and the other students check their saddle girth and the length of their stirrups. Unlike E.J., Brooklyn has plenty of strength to tighten the straps. Her struggle is with memory. “If you tell her three things, she can remember one, maybe two,” Denkins says. “But with the horses, she has memorized everything. She knows what it really means to want to learn something.”

The students mount up

**Top: “If I have a hard day, I know I have to present to the horses in a calm manner,” says veteran Dalysé Mayo, brushing Jessie. Far right: E.J. trots with the assistance of Jesse Allen, right, and Emily Mosher. Right: Volunteer John Boyd, left, shows new veteran attendee Andy Kaul how to brush a horse.**







**Christopher, right, leads Stanley from the stable to the arena. REACH students learn to care for horses as well as ride them—grooming the animals and helping with chores around the stable.**

from a mobility-assisted platform, the horses patiently waiting for the riders to find their stirrups. They warm up slowly, the side-walkers taking the reins as the kids circle their arms out to the side and make torso twists from the saddle. The movement of the horse adds a level of difficulty for kids who are building muscle and improving mobility.

After a few more exercises, the kids take the reins and lead the horses around cones and barrels and through a short maze made of poles on the ground. Then they perform a 360-degree turn inside a box marked on the dirt. An instructor gives directions and encouragement, but the kids are in charge of these animals more than 10 times their weight.

“There’s no words in the human vocabulary that can explain the emotional and spiritual experience going on between you and that 1,200-pound creature,” says Charity Martin, a barn assistant. “You are trying to trust, and it’s trying to build trust with you.”

**A**llen agrees. He became involved with REACH as a participant in a post-traumatic stress disorder treatment program through the Waco office of the Department of Veterans Affairs. Allen was a firefighter and paramedic before joining the Army and experienced the effects of PTSD after his service ended.

“I came home from Afghanistan in 2010, and I didn’t care anymore,” Allen says. “Eight years of PTSD therapy, medication, groups, blah, blah, blah. ... You’re never fixed, but this is the one thing that helped me the most.”

Allen was anxious on that first trip to the barn in the summer of 2017. “Horses can feel your energy,” he says, “so when you calm yourself down and then the horse calms down, it’s like looking at yourself in the mirror.” Allen kept coming back and devel-

#### **WEB EXTRAS**

► **Read this story on our website to watch a video about veterans in equine therapy.**

oped a special bond with Kit, a paint with a large white blaze down his forehead. When his program ended, Allen asked to continue on as a volunteer, first with veterans, then with kids. Allen began enjoying life again, and other people saw it. “People said they had their old Jesse back,” he says. “My enthusiasm came back, and I’m back to helping people.”

Allen credits the staff but mostly the horses for his transformation. Now he gets to see the same transformation in those he helps. “We have kids in this barn right now who in the last five months have gone from little bratty little kids who are in their shells and shut down or no emotions at all to the sweetest, kindest, hardest-working little people,” Allen says.

Earlier this year, Allen took on a paid position as veteran program director and hosts *Horses for Warriors*, a Monday veterans-only program with unstructured riding time, optional group activities and a catered dinner. “The amount of good and help it does—people don’t realize,” he says. “I’m all about Western medicine as a paramedic. I’m not a naturopathic person, but this is an unused resource that can seriously help people out—kids and veterans.”

Near the end of Brooklyn’s session, the instructor tells the kids it’s time to trot. Brooklyn emits a small yelp and raises her arms with excitement. The students form a line at the end of the arena and one by one get their horses up to speed. The side-walkers jog along with them, and the kids beam as they bounce along in the rising dust.

At the end of class, they dismount, wiping the dust from their jeans and hands. Brooklyn pets the face of Newt, a 10-year-old quarter horse, and gives his cheek a scratch. It’s only been an hour, but the students walk taller and lighter than when they entered the arena. “I haven’t seen her that happy in a long time because school has beaten her down so much,” Denkins says. “She talks all about horses all the way home. She went from not talking at all to nonstop talking, and that’s amazing.”

Learn more about **Julia Robinson** at [juliarobinsonphoto.com](http://juliarobinsonphoto.com).

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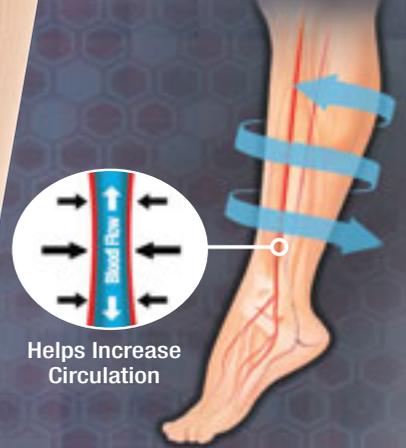
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# How Can We Better Serve You in 2019?



MESSAGE FROM  
**GENERAL MANAGER ALAN LESLEY**

**COMANCHE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE ASSOCIATION STRIVES TO** provide safe, reliable electric service to our members—but we do more than that. Another of our goals is to find ways to help you control your energy costs. That's why we communicate with you about ways we can work together to help ease the burdens on your wallet.

It may seem strange that we encourage you to use electricity efficiently, which actually reduces the number of kilowatt-hours you buy from us. But as a member-owned cooperative, our focus is on service—not profit. We want to sell you every kilowatt-hour you need—and want you to need every kilowatt-hour you buy.

We continually offer recommendations for energy efficiency improvements and practices and implement procedures and programs to help you manage your electricity consumption. And our member services staff is available to provide one-on-one assistance to help you make the most of every energy dollar.

We will continue to focus on energy efficiency in the coming year, but as 2018 winds down, we want to know your energy priorities. How can we serve you better in 2019?

We encourage you to let us know—stop by, give us a call or send an email. However you choose to communicate, we're ready to listen.

Whether you have questions about energy efficiency, electric service or any of our products or services, just ask us. When we know what you want, we're in a better position to successfully deliver results. So drop in and see us—we're always glad to hear from you.



# Nontraditional Scholarship Awarded

**CYNTHIA STEPHENS OF GUSTINE RECEIVED QUITE A SUPRISE WHEN SHE LEARNED SHE** was the winner of a \$1,000 nontraditional scholarship. The scholarship, sponsored by Comanche Electric Cooperative Association's Operation Round-Up Program for the third year, offers an opportunity for adults seeking higher education to reduce some of the financial burden that returning to school can create.

Stephens is a full-time student in Tarleton State University's Department of Nursing while also working full time as a patient care technician at Brownwood Regional Medical Center's emergency room. She is raising three children, ages 14, 13 and 9. Following graduation, she plans to work in an intensive care unit or emergency department and with local nonprofit air ambulance.

"I am thankful there are programs like CECA's," Stephens said. "I am a single mom working toward a goal of going to school, and this is a great help."

We wish Stephens the best in her new career!



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## EASTLAND OFFICE

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Eastland, TX 76448

## OFFICE HOURS

**Comanche Office:** Monday–Friday,  
7:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

**Early Office:** Monday, Wednesday  
and Friday, 7:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m., closed  
1–2 p.m.

**Eastland Office:** Tuesday and  
Thursday, 8 a.m.–4 p.m.

## General Manager

Alan Lesley

## Board of Directors

Randy Denning, District 1  
Pete McDougal, District 2  
Ruby Solomon, District 3  
Monty Carlisle, District 4  
Troy Stewart, District 5  
Loren Stroebel, District 6  
Phil Taylor, District 7

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# Blessings Rain Down at CECA Annual Meeting

**WITH THE FORECAST PREDICTING A 100 PERCENT CHANCE OF** rain, Comanche Electric Cooperative Association's customer service representatives fielded a lot of questions leading up to CECA's annual meeting at Comanche City Park: "Will you still have it?" "Will it be moved from the park?" The answer was consistent: "Yes, it will go on as planned, and we have made preparations for the rain and feel confident we can keep you dry!"

Adjustments had to be made, but the 80th annual meeting of the cooperative's membership did go on as planned and was a success. CECA employees were ready with John Deere all-terrain vehicles from Clark Tractor to ferry members from their vehicles to the tent.

Due to the weather, the health fair included fewer vendors, but members still braved the rain to make their way to the pavilion for flu shots and cholesterol screenings and to pick up all the latest information on healthy living.

The Sam Whiskey Band began playing at 8:30 a.m., entertaining the crowd with a mixture of country music from the 1970s, '80s and '90s. They rocked the tent until the food

arrived, when the circuits became overloaded and we threw the breakers. But everyone willingly gave up the last 15 minutes of entertainment to ensure that food would be ready and plentiful when the meeting was over.

One of the main purposes of the annual meeting is to elect your board of directors. Up for election this year were directors for districts 1 and 7. District 1 met August 16 at the Comanche High School auditorium; members unanimously nominated Randy Denning to represent them. District 7 met August 14 at Gunsight Baptist Church; members nominated Seth Shortes and incumbent Phil Taylor to be presented to the membership at the annual meeting. Shortes declined the nomination due to his busy work schedule, making Taylor the sole nominee for that district.

Don Richards, CECA attorney, opened the voting with a call for nominations from the floor. With no additional nominations made, Denning and Taylor were re-elected by acclamation.

General Manager Alan Lesley spoke to the membership concerning rates, reliability, customer service and the retire-

**Comanche Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts made an impressive presentation of the colors. Brooklyn Richmond of Early performed a beautiful rendition of the national anthem.**





It takes more than a little rain to dampen the spirits of these cooperative employees and members! CECA employees spent the morning in the deluge ensuring members stayed as dry as possible in John Deere ATVs, donated by Clark Tractor in Comanche and De Leon. Even the popcorn stayed crisp and buttery!

ment of capital credits. Following his talk, CECA employees reaching five-year milestones were awarded service pins. Those employees were Larry Morgan and Bobby Reed, 35 years; Alan Lesley and Tim Palette, 20 years; Keith Steward, 15 years; and Jake Schwartz, 5 years. Morgan and Reed also were presented with custom knives handmade by Danny Marlin to commemorate their dedication to the cooperative.

As members made their way to the buffet line, door prizes were drawn. After a delicious meal of fried catfish and chicken with all the usual sides, catered by Catfish Corner, the meeting adjourned and members returned home to enjoy the rain from the comfort of their homes.

We invite you to make plans for the 2019 annual meeting, which will be held in the new CECA building on Industrial Boulevard in Comanche.

The Sam Whiskey Band took the stage early in the morning and regaled the membership with music from the 1970s, '80s and '90s, as well as some original songs.



Stage decorations were provided by Sorrells Farm Retail, 409 E. Central in Comanche, and Holland Country Store, 6235 Highway 67/377 in Comanche.



State Rep. J.D. Sheffield brought the members up to date on some of the key issues in the coming legislative session.





Above: Even our youngest members enjoyed the festivities! Though the weather was not conducive to playing on the park equipment, CECA provided bright yellow hard hats, coloring books and crayons to amuse children while the adult members attended the festivities.



Right: Health fair professionals set up under a pavilion behind the big tent. Members received flu shots and cholesterol screenings and had the opportunity to enter raffles provided by AccelHealth and Comanche County Medical Center. Other health care and disaster officials were on hand with important information for the membership.



Above and right: A large crowd of approximately 550 members and their families stayed warm and dry under the big tent.

# Annual Meeting Prizewinners

Gifts donated by Texas Electric Cooperatives, Schneider Engineering, Brazos EC, Horton Tree Service and Patty Brown with The Nitsche Group.

<b>Rodney Carlisle</b>	Black & Decker jigsaw	<b>Steve Campbell</b>	Lasko ceramic tower heater
<b>Robert Kleen</b>	Samsung Blu-ray player	<b>Deeann Crawford</b>	Lux Instant Pot
<b>Max Reed</b>	\$25 Home Depot gift card	<b>Raymond Wheeler</b>	Shop-Vac wet/dry vacuum
<b>Tommy Elliott</b>	Lasko ceramic tower heater	<b>Douglas Brown</b>	\$25 Home Depot gift card
<b>Glen Casbeer</b>	\$50 CECA electric service credit	<b>Patricia Brown</b>	Farberware oilless fryer
<b>David Wheeler</b>	\$50 Walmart gift card	<b>Connie Cross</b>	Vizio 32-inch TV
<b>Christine Locke</b>	Keurig coffee maker	<b>R.M. Hash</b>	Black & Decker leaf blower
<b>Robert Whitefield</b>	1,000-watt work light	<b>Mary Lou Hall</b>	\$50 Walmart gift card
<b>Jennifer Green</b>	\$25 Home Depot gift card	<b>Gerald Reynolds</b>	\$100 CECA electric service credit
<b>Roy Watson</b>	Black & Decker 5.2-amp drill	<b>S.B. Sisk</b>	Keurig coffee maker
<b>Robert Doege</b>	Black & Decker Mouse detail sander	<b>Barbara Collins</b>	Shop-Vac wet/dry vacuum
<b>Zanna Kerr</b>	\$100 CECA electric service credit	<b>J.W. Odom</b>	Pioneer Woman slow cooker
<b>Randel Mackey</b>	Bella copper grill	<b>L.E. Wilson</b>	\$100 Cabela's gift card
<b>Bruce Griffin</b>	Briggs & Stratton air compressor	<b>Isabell Jacques</b>	Brazos EC meter lamp
<b>Gregory Owen</b>	Hyper Tough 7.5-amp leaf blower	<b>Victor Rodriguez</b>	\$50 Walmart gift card
<b>Anne Price</b>	Samsung 32-inch HDTV	<b>Lonnie Abels</b>	\$50 Walmart gift card
<b>Harvey McKinley</b>	\$100 Walmart gift card	<b>Edward White</b>	\$100 CECA electric service credit
<b>Cecil Chappell</b>	Samsung Blu-ray player	<b>W.W. Woolsey</b>	LG 49-inch LED TV
<b>Jim Hewitt</b>	\$25 Home Depot gift card	<b>Keith Mangelsdorf</b>	Samsung 50-inch smart TV
<b>Deja Stanley</b>	\$50 Walmart gift card		

A catered luncheon of fried fish, chicken strips and all the fixings was provided by Catfish Corner. While members were piling their plates high, CECA employees transformed the tent from a meeting place to a lunchroom—they weren't going to let a little rain get in the way of a scrumptious meal!





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- Save energy by setting a timer for outdoor lighting and decorations. Program the timer so the lights turn on in the evening and turn off later at night when you typically go to sleep.

*Source: Dept. of Energy*



**“There are so many people in the co-ops of Texas who do extraordinary things for other people.”**

—NANCY JOHNSON, whose Little Hats, Big Hearts program builds awareness of congenital heart defects. *Texas Co-op Power*, February 2017

WYATT MCSADDEN

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**Let us know about your local hero! Nominate a co-op member in your area who improves the community's quality of life.**

Email your nomination to [people@texascooppower.com](mailto:people@texascooppower.com).

Include name, co-op affiliation and a short description of their work in the community.

We'll highlight select nominees in a future issue of *Texas Co-op Power*.

**TEXAS CO-OP POWER**



# Merry Christmas

We wish you a Christmas filled with the wonder of the birth of Christ, the warmth of the holiday spirit and the love of family and friends.

**To allow our employees to enjoy the holidays with their families, Comanche Electric Cooperative will be closed Monday–Tuesday, December 24–25, for Christmas and Tuesday, January 1, for New Year’s.**



# holiday GIFT GUIDE

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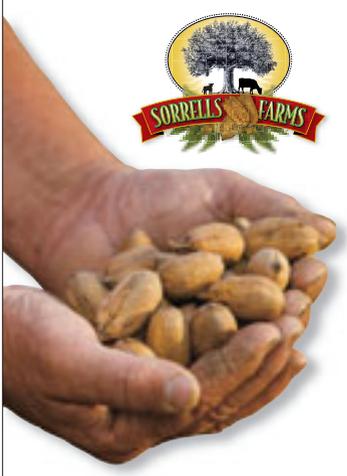
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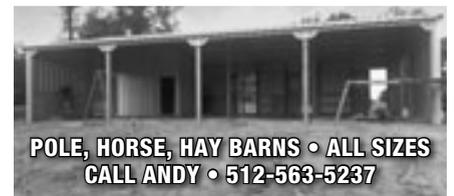
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# The Armadillo Strikes Again

Armadillo World Headquarters: from incubator to Austin music legacy

EXCERPT BY EDDIE WILSON  
WITH JESSE SUBLETT

DURING ITS REMARKABLE AND UNLIKELY 10-year run, the Armadillo helped nurture and grow an Austin music scene, spreading its gospel around the world. In the 35 years since, the reputation of Austin as a music city has experienced exponential growth, and no small part of that is due to the work we did at Armadillo World Headquarters. Today, Austin is renowned for having an astounding abundance of resident musicians, venues, studios and other essential organs for a thriving music scene infrastructure, along with music festivals that are the envy of the world.

At the Armadillo, we were heavily involved in video production and had been putting performances on cablevision ever since the place opened. In fact, we produced a show called the *Armadillo Country Music Review* in partnership with KLRU, then KLRN, in July 1973 and were involved in various aspects of developing a music series when the TV station decided to produce its own show. Some of my cohort remained involved for a time, even after that show was produced and picked up in 1975 as a series under the name *Austin City Limits*.

In my opinion, AWHQ was quite simply the best music hall in the country—maybe even the whole world. Thousands of musicians played there: Willie Nelson, Frank Zappa, Bruce Springsteen, Taj Mahal, AC/DC, Charlie Daniels, the Ramones, Roy Buchanan and Bette Midler, to name a random few. The interesting thing is that so many of them kept coming back. They loved the place: the acoustics, the people who worked there, the huge nachos and other scrumptious food we served them, and the way the Armadillo



made them feel a part of something bigger.

Another secret to our tenacity might have been our affinity for the lowly nine-banded armadillo. We named the place Armadillo World Headquarters primarily because the anachronistic armored mammal had already been established by Jim Franklin as the icon of the Texas hippies and, as such, we identified with the armadillo for spiritual as well as artistic reasons.

Artists at the University of Texas humor magazine the *Ranger* first began incorporating armadillo images in satirical pieces in the early sixties. Frank Erwin—the head of the UT Board of Regents who was held in special disdain by our community—reacted as if the snide references to the mammal were evidence of some sort of leftist plot or cult, a reaction that naturally inspired even greater demand for armadillo imagery and *Dasyus novemcinctus* itself.

In the late sixties, artists Gilbert Shelton and Jim Franklin pioneered a new visual style and vocabulary for the under-

**One of Jim Franklin's iconic posters.**

ground scene. Franklin had taken over from Gilbert at the Vulcan Gas Company. Armadillo images figured prominently in their handbills and other work created to promote the venue. Gilbert departed for San Francisco, and the Vulcan folded in 1970, but Franklin dug in his heels in Austin and brought the emerging visual vocabulary and attitude to the Armadillo on day one.

Music historians have also credited the Armadillo with being the place where two previously clashing groups of people—red-necks and hippies—found themselves under the same roof, enjoying a new blend of country music and rock, along with cold beer and cheap pot. The movement was already underway before Willie Nelson played AWHQ, but once he did, he joined our armored mammalian mascot as another icon of the cultural melting pot.

Excerpted from *Armadillo World Headquarters* by Eddie Wilson with Jesse Sublett. Published in 2017 by TSSI Publishing and distributed by University of Texas Press.

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## Quick and Easy Holiday Appetizers

HOLIDAYS ARE A TIME OF ABUNDANCE—too much of just about everything except time. As much as I love a cooking project (like rolling out gingerbread cookies or smoking a ham), I'm grateful for timesaving recipes that create something delicious in a flash. I love to kick off a meal with Creamy Kale Toasts, a recipe from my latest cookbook, *Any Night Grilling*. The kale is charred on the grill and then stirred into a luscious spread. The smoky flavor intensifies overnight, so you can make the spread in advance and serve it with grilled bread, whole-grain crackers or crudité's—and a cup of cheer.

PAULA DISBROWE, FOOD EDITOR

### Creamy Kale Toasts

- 1 cup Greek yogurt
  - 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for drizzling
  - 2 teaspoons fresh lemon juice
  - 1 teaspoon finely grated lemon zest
  - Pinch of red pepper flakes
  - Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
  - ½ cup grated aged goat cheese (such as Cypress Grove Midnight Moon)
  - 1 bunch (12 ounces) lacinato kale
  - 8 thick slices levain or other rustic Italian bread
  - 1 clove garlic, halved lengthwise
- Flaky salt

1. Prepare a charcoal grill for two-zone cooking and build a medium fire, or heat a gas grill to medium-high. Carefully wipe the preheated grill grates with a lightly oiled paper towel. Using a grill brush, scrape the grill grates clean, then carefully wipe with a lightly oiled towel again.
2. In a large bowl, combine the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 32



JAMES RANSON | FOOD52

# Recipes

## Quick and Easy Holiday Appetizers



### THIS MONTH'S RECIPE CONTEST WINNER

PATTI GRAFF | MEDINA EC

Use a retro pantry staple—cheese spread—to create this savory baked snack. “My mom included this in a recipe book she compiled and gave to me when I got married 37 years ago,” Graff says. “It’s always a favorite, especially at our annual Christmas brunch.” Assemble the puffs in advance and freeze so you can bake as many as you need at a moment’s notice.

### Olive Cheese Puffs

- ½ cup (1 stick) butter, softened
- 1½ cups flour
- 2 jars (5 ounces each) cheese spread
- 50 pitted olives (black olives, manzanillo or a combination)

1. Using a wooden spoon, combine the butter, flour and cheese spread in a mixing bowl (or use cold butter and combine the ingredients in a food processor). When dough is smooth and has a uniform texture, form into 1-inch balls. Flatten each ball and shape the dough around an olive. Place the dough-covered olive on a waxed paper-lined baking sheet. Repeat with remaining dough and olives, then freeze.

Once frozen, place the olives in a sealable plastic bag and store in freezer up to 2 months.

2. To bake, heat oven to 450 degrees. Place the olives on a rimmed baking sheet, spacing them 1 inch apart, and bake 15–20 minutes, until golden and slightly brown on the bottom. Serve the olives warm or at room temperature. ▶ Makes 50 olive cheese puffs.



IF YOUR RECIPE IS FEATURED, YOU'LL WIN A TCP APRON!

### \$100 Recipe Contest

May’s recipe contest topic is **Layer Cakes**. What’s the special occasion this month—Mom, bridal shower, graduation? Share the cake that gets rave reviews at your celebrations. The deadline is **December 10**.

ENTER ONLINE at [TexasCoopPower.com/contests](http://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.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 31

yogurt with the olive oil, lemon juice, zest and pepper flakes. Season with kosher salt and pepper, then fold in the cheese.

3. Working in batches, grill the kale leaves perpendicular to the grates so they won’t fall through. Cook over direct heat until lightly charred, 1–2 minutes on each side. Transfer to a cutting board and cool slightly. Use a knife to trim the thick ribs from each leaf, then finely chop the kale leaves. Fold into the yogurt mixture.

4. Grill the bread over direct heat until charred, about a minute on each side. While still warm, rub one side of each toast with the cut side of the garlic. Top each toast with a layer of the creamy kale and arrange the toasts on a platter. Drizzle with olive oil and sprinkle with flaky salt. ▶ Makes 8 toasts, with leftover spread.

Reprinted from *Any Night Grilling* (Ten Speed Press, 2018)

### Two-Ingredient Hummus

CHRISTINA LANE | GRAYSON-COLLIN EC

What could be easier than a delicious dip that calls for only two ingredients? Lane’s creamy, satisfying purée pairs beautifully with pita chips, grilled flatbread or crudités. For the best flavor, taste the mixture after blending and add salt or olive oil as desired.

- 1 can (15 ounces) chickpeas, drained and rinsed
  - 1 jar (6 ounces) marinated artichoke hearts, undrained
- Pita chips, for serving

1. Combine the chickpeas and artichoke in food processor and purée until smooth. Serve with pita chips, if desired. Leftovers can be stored in the refrigerator for up to 3 days. ▶ Makes about 2½ cups.

**COOK’S TIP** This speedy dip also can be made using canned white beans instead of chickpeas.

### Easy Gougères

KIMBERLY MARX | PEDERNALES EC

*Gougères* are a classic French appetizer made by combining choux pastry with a strongly flavored grated cheese, such as Gruyère, Emmenthal or aged cheddar. They are delicious on their own, crispy and warm from the oven or at room temperature, and with any number of fillings.

- ½ cup whole milk
- ½ cup water
- ½ cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, cut into 4 pieces
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 cup flour
- 5 eggs, room temperature
- 1½ cups (about 6 ounces) coarsely grated aged cheese (such as Gruyère, Asiago or sharp cheddar)

**1.** Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Line two baking sheets with silicone baking mats or parchment.

**2.** Combine the milk, water, butter and salt in a heavy-bottomed medium saucepan over high heat. Whisking constantly, bring the mixture to a rapid boil, then add flour. Lower the heat to medium-low and immediately stir vigorously with a wooden spoon or heavy whisk. The dough will come together, and a light crust will form on the bottom of the pan. Continue stirring another 1–2 minutes to dry dough (at this point it should be very smooth).

**3.** Turn the dough into a stand mixer (or a large bowl if you're using a hand mixer or wooden spoon). Allow the dough to sit 1–2 minutes, then add the eggs one at a time, beating well after each addition, until the dough is thick and shiny. Make sure each egg is completely mixed in before adding the next. (The dough may separate until the last egg is incorporated.) Beat in the grated cheese, then spoon out immediately.

**4.** Drop tablespoonfuls of dough onto the prepared baking sheets, leaving a 2-inch space between each. Place baking sheets into oven, immediately reducing temperature to 375 degrees, and bake 12 minutes. Rotate the pans from front to back and top to bottom, and continue baking until the gougères are golden, firm and puffed, another 12–15 minutes. Serve warm or transfer the pans to racks to cool. ▶ Makes about 36 gougères.

**COOK'S TIP** To prepare them in advance, freeze mounds of the unbaked pastry on a baking sheet. When they're solid, lift off sheet and

## More Speedy Starters

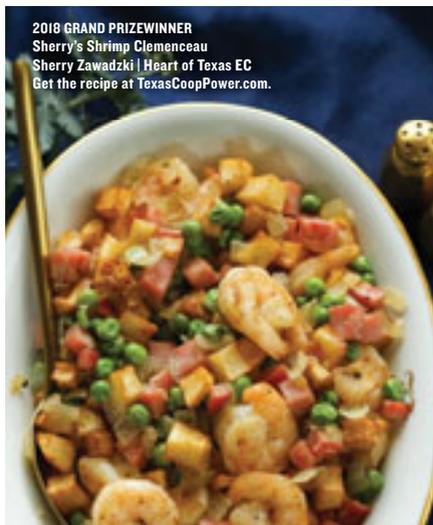
**Slather a round of brie** with your favorite jelly or jam, wrap with thawed puff pastry and bake at 400 degrees until golden brown.

**Top slices of toasted baguette** with an herbed cheese spread and cherry tomato halves.

**Toss pecans with melted butter**, Worcestershire sauce and chopped fresh rosemary, then toast in a 350-degree oven 7–8 minutes, until fragrant.

**Drizzle a wedge of blue cheese** with honey and serve with toasted walnuts and crackers. —PD

freeze in sealable plastic bags. (Follow the baking instructions, allowing a few more minutes in the oven.) Leftover baked puffs can be stored at room temperature overnight and reheated in a 350-degree oven, or they can be frozen and reheated before serving.



2018 GRAND PRIZEWINNER  
Sherry's Shrimp Clemenceau  
Sherry Zawadzki | Heart of Texas EC  
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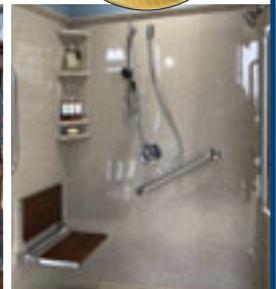
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MODEL: VEN145  
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MODEL: 112220  
**\$180.99** SAVE **\$130.99**

ITEM 61840/61297/63476/61258 shown

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## PORTLAND

### 1750 PSI ELECTRIC PRESSURE WASHER



• 1.3 GPM  
• Adjustable spray nozzle  
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# High Contrast

THIS MONTH, OUR READERS TAKE RISKS with light and shadow and play with every color under the sun to deliver some fantastic shots. **GRACE ARSIAGA**

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



▲ **TWILLA MALKERSON**, Farmers EC: Malkerson's calf on a freezing day in Emory.

▶ **CHARLES CARLSON**, Bandera EC: Cypress tree trunks and roots reflected on the Frio River at Concan.



▲ **THERESA MCKEE**, Fannin County EC: An old gas station painted in funky colors and abandoned under the hot Texas sun.



▲ **JON HOBSON**, Houston County EC: "My son, Isaac, and his friend Sean playing some basketball after a rain shower in Grapeland."



## UPCOMING CONTESTS

APRIL	MILES AND MILES OF TEXAS	DUE DECEMBER 10
MAY	ON THE RANCH	DUE JANUARY 10
JUNE	FEEDIN' TIME	DUE FEBRUARY 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](http://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.

◀ **SHAHBANU MALAK**, CoServ: "Spotted in my garden one fine morning."

## Pick of the Month Sanger High Craft Show

**Sanger** December 8  
(940) 206-0007

The craft show, which goes all day at Sanger High School, includes more than 140 booths featuring unique gifts, Christmas decor, home-made soaps, candles, jewelry and more. The sale benefits the Sanger FFA, Sanger FFA Alumni & Friends and area food banks. Find out more on the event's Facebook page.



ORNAMENT: TANCHES | DREAMTIME.COM. BIRD: DUCKS1000 | DREAMTIME.COM. WINE: S PHOTO | DREAMTIME.COM

## December

7

**Edinburg** Night of Lights, (956) 383-4974, edinburg.com

**Victoria** [7-8] Bethlehem Village, (361) 573-2232, gracelutheran-tx.org/bethlehem-village

**Burnet** [7-9, 14-16] Main Street Bethlehem, (512) 756-4481, fbcburnet.org

**Ennis** [7-8, 14-16, 21-22] *Where's Santa?*, (972) 878-5126, theatrerocks.com

8

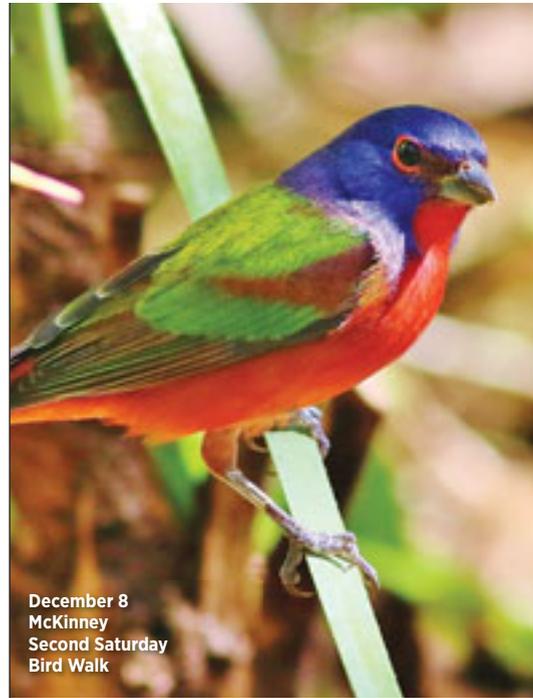
**Bastrop** Holiday Homes Tour, (512) 303-0057, bastropcountyhistoricalsociety.com

**Bonham** Holiday Open House, (903) 583-5558

**Bulverde** Living Christmas Drive Though Presentation, (830) 980-2813, redroofchurch.org

**Chappell Hill** Garden Club Christmas Home Tour, (713) 562-6191, chappellhillgardenclub.com

**Garrison** Christmas on the Square, (936) 347-2316



December 8  
McKinney  
Second Saturday  
Bird Walk

**Johnson City** Christmas Through the Years in LBJ Country, (830) 868-7128, nps.gov/lyjo

**McGregor** Lighted Christmas Parade, (254) 840-2292, mcgregorfoundersday.com

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**McKinney** Second Saturday Bird Walk, (972) 562-5566, heardmuseum.org

**Port Arthur** Lighted Cultural Holiday Parade, (409) 983-8105, portarthurtx.gov

**Weslaco** Santa Dash and Lighted Christmas Parade, (956) 968-2102, weslaco.com

**Vernon** Christmas on the Western Trail, (940) 553-3766

**Washington** Christmas on the Brazos, (936) 878-2214, wheretexasbecametexas.org

**Brenham** [8-9] Holiday Crystal Wine Trail, (979) 836-3696, visitbrenhamtexas.com

**Tyler** [8-9] Interscholastic Equestrian Association Hunt Seat Show, (903) 882-8696, texasrosehorsepark.com

## 13

**Levelland** Fa La La Fun for the Ladies, (806) 894-3157, levelland.com

**Palo Pinto** Frontier Christmas, (940) 659-3573, palopintohistory.com

## 14

**Fredericksburg** [14-15] The Christmas Journey, (830) 997-2069, bethanyfredericksburg.com

**San Angelo** [14-16] *The Nutcracker*, (325) 284-3825, sanangelopac.org

## 15

**Kilgore** Jingle All the Way, (903) 988-4117, kilgoremainstreet.com



December 8-9  
Brenham  
Holiday Crystal  
Wine Trail

**Livingston** A Polk County Christmas Show, (936) 933-5852, polkcountycommercecenter.com

## 16

**Stonewall** LBJ Tree Lighting, (830) 644-2252, tpwd.state.tx.us/state-parks/lyndon-b-johnson

## 18

**Crockett** The Texas Tenors, (936) 544-4276, pwfaa.org

## January

### 5

**Bonham** Sam Rayburn Day, (903) 583-5558, thc.texas.gov/historic-sites

**Kerrville** The Fabulous 50s: Romance to Rock 'n' Roll, (830) 792-7469, symphonyofthehills.org

### Submit Your Event!

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

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# South Texas Riches

Daytrip includes Spanish colonial history, a salt lake and aloe galore

BY EILEEN MATTEI

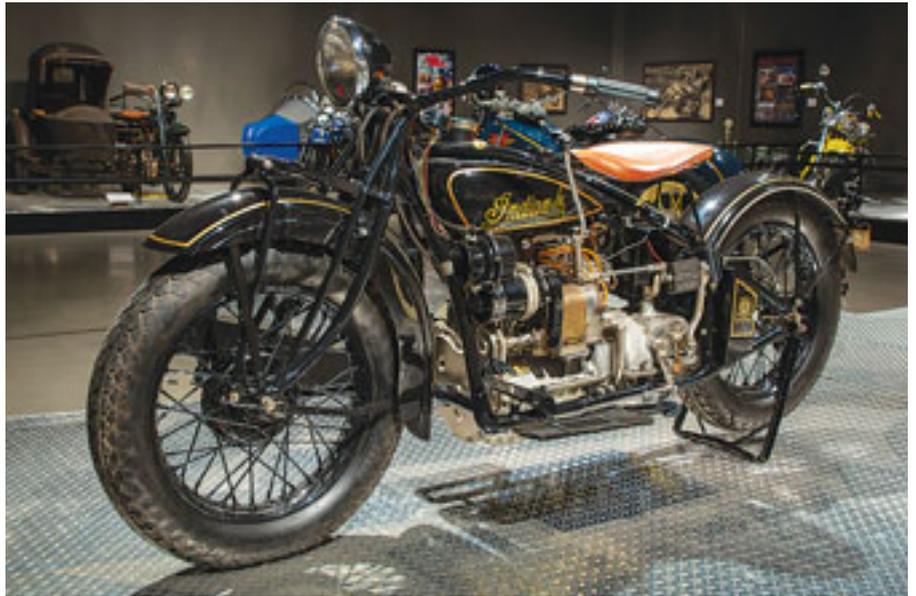
DRIVING FROM EDINBURG, THE HIDALGO County seat in the southern tip of Texas, east to Raymondville, the seat of adjacent Willacy County, requires less than an hour, but the transition covers more than just highway miles. Edinburg bustles with the campus of the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley at its heart, while the agricultural community of Raymondville invites you to savor nature and history.

When I spot Martin Aparicio, 14, in the **Museum of South Texas History** in Edinburg, he is wearing replicas of a Spanish helmet and breastplate from the 1600s. His aunt, Veronica Paz, and her daughters critique his fashion sense as he dons a leather tricorne hat and a long, black leather vest in the Spanish colonial hands-on corner. “A hands-on museum like this has more of an impact,” says Paz, who brought the teenagers from Chicago.

The museum promises a stroll through 500 years of South Texas history. I start in the late 1700s and wander through a colonial town inspecting saddles and a beehive stone oven. A few steps and a few decades later, I climb on board a Rio Grande steamboat to the sound of creaking barrels and the splash of a paddle wheel. Still later, I hear lonesome cowboy songs that herald chuck wagons and vaqueros. With World War II approaching, I peer through a German submarine’s periscope trained on a freighter in the Gulf of Mexico.

I leave one museum and head for the **South Texas Motorcycle Museum**, where highly polished motorcycles with sensuously curved fenders preen in spotlights that reflect off diamond-plate flooring and gleaming chrome. Eighty vintage bikes give the impression of sculptural forms.

The majority of the bikes (and the earliest ones do resemble bicycles) are Indians and Harley-Davidsons. A 1913 Indian



**A 1931 Indian Four is one of about 80 vintage motorcycles at the South Texas Motorcycle Museum in Edinburg.**

racing motorcycle, made without brakes or a transmission, sits near a gorgeous red 1947 Indian Chief, complete with sidecar. The oldest is a 1903 Harley, and the most recognizable may be a Captain America Chopper, a replica of the customized Harley in *Easy Rider*.

“All of them run,” says caretaker Dave Garcia, who owns the motorcycle shop next door.

I head north on Interstate 69C, then drive 4 miles on Texas Highway 186 to **La Sal del Rey**, the smallest of three hypersaline lakes in the Lower Rio Grande Valley National Wildlife Refuge. A wide gravel path leads a half-mile north to the 530-acre lake, which sparkles like a snowy field.

Since the 1500s, Native Americans, Spanish explorers, ranchers and soldiers have traveled to this deep salt dome for salt to preserve meat and hides. Sandhill cranes and long-billed curlews winter here.

As I walk along the shoreline, dry salt crunches underfoot. Wildlife obviously traipse across the salt-topped mud: Huge nilgai tracks and dainty sharp javelina and bobcat prints are visible. I scoop out a nil-

gai hoofprint and come up with a handful of salt flakes.

At the **Willacy County Historical Museum**, Elva Sayas guides me to Mifflin Kenedy’s La Parra Ranch exhibit. I gawk at the former Rio Grande riverboat captain’s 30-pound bulletproof vest. The 1554 Espiritu Santo shipwreck—the oldest in the U.S., which formed here when the Santo sank along with two Spanish galleons during a storm—resulted in a treasure trove of coins, jewelry and artifacts recovered from county beaches, now displayed here.

I drive on FM 491 to **Hilltop Gardens**, a historical botanical sanctuary where aloe vera has been grown commercially since 1939. Hilltop includes more than 200 species of aloes displayed in climbing, blooming and spiky exuberance. The sensory garden invites you to touch sandpapery anacua leaves, smell jasmine and citronella, and watch butterflies. The healing garden with its reflecting pool, herbs and tropical birds encourages relaxation and reflection on the Valley landscape.

Eileen Mattei, a Nueces EC member, is a Texas master naturalist in Harlingen.

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