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Tom Lea's depiction of a gunner scanning for enemy warplanes.

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Story by Chris Burrows | Photos by Eric W. Pohl

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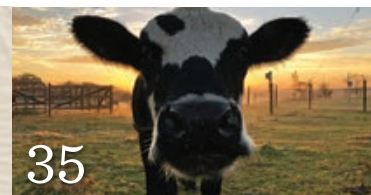
By E. Dan Klepper

## NEXT MONTH

**Drive In, Chill Out** Drive-in theaters, long past their heyday, remain as beacons of nostalgia.



TOM LEA ART: COURTESY TEXAS A&M PRESS



**ON THE COVER** Lil Kevin, a rescued potbelly, plods the grounds of his forever home, at Oinkin' Oasis in Gilmer. Photo by Eric W. Pohl

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## Other Blues Artists

The story [*Texas: A Blues State*, March 2019] would have been even better had it included Joe Tex (*Hold What You've Got*) and Joe Simon (*The Chokin' Kind*), notable blues and soul artists who performed in the Dallas area for years.

R.H. GRUY | GRANBURY  
UNITED COOPERATIVE SERVICES

## Under the Green Flag

There was a mix-up on the historical details explaining our event Under the Green Flag [*A Chapter in La Bahia's History*, Currents, February 2019]. Mexico was fighting to win its independence from Spain, not to free Texas from Spanish rule.

Bernardo Gutiérrez de Lara and Augustus William Magee were fighting to wrest Texas from Spanish rule with an idea of making it an independent country separate and apart from Spain or Mexico. The army they led was made up of Americans, Tejanos and Indians along with a handful of Spanish deserters.

SCOTT MCMAHON, DIRECTOR  
PRESIDIO LA BAHIA

## Raised in a Dance Hall

I was almost brought to tears when I saw *Hail the Halls* [February 2019]. I was raised in our local dance hall in Cypress—Cypress Gun and Rifle Club, aka Tin Hall. My dad remembered going there as a child with his dad in a horse and buggy. It was a huge two-story structure where people could meet and eat homemade pie downstairs while the two-steppin' went on upstairs on their immense wooden dance floor.

I slept on those chairs as a

## Long Live Texas Blues

I had so much fun reading about Texas blues artists [*Texas: A Blues State*, March 2019]. Every time I came to a name, I would type it into YouTube and listen to the artist's music. It really brought the article to life. Some of those early recordings were pretty rough and scratchy. Lightnin' Hopkins and T-Bone Walker are both stations on my Pandora playlist. Long live Texas blues.

LES MEADS | STOCKDALE | GUADALUPE VALLEY EC



child and learned to dance on my daddy's feet. Spent every Saturday night there while in high school.

SHERYL HENDRIX | GROESBECK  
NAVASOTA VALLEY EC

Your story brought back so many memories. I think my brother, sister and I were raised to the sound of polkas and waltzes in Hillje Hall. My uncles had a band, and my grandpa sold home-

brew behind the hall in the 1930s and '40s.

ROBERTA HOFBAUER | GUN BARREL CITY  
TRINITY VALLEY EC

Dave Shafer's radiant photos of dancers capture grace, exuberance and joy.

CARLOS RUMBAUT | CEDAR PARK  
PEDERNALES EC

## Sacrifice of Immigrants

As a 20-year Army veteran and retired major, Hispanic and the son of a Mexican immigrant, I was totally impressed with *A Hero in Any Language* [March 2019]. It will impress on a lot of people the appreciation we owe the nation's immigrants for their service and sacrifices.

Unfortunately, history

has a tendency to repeat itself, and today we find our government deporting our war veterans once again. Have we forgotten that we are a nation of immigrants?

ISRAEL HINOJOSA | HEBBRONVILLE  
MEDINA EC



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

Texas Co-op Power

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## HAPPENINGS

# Magnolia Days in Columbus

**WEB EXTRAS**  
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The 100-year-old live oak and magnolia trees on the courthouse square in **COLUMBUS** supply the shade, and the chamber of commerce furnishes the fun **MAY 17-18** for the town festival of **MAGNOLIA DAYS**.

A family fun zone and beer and wine gardens as well as vendors, food and live music provide activities for all ages.

Magnolia, settled in the 1820s, is along the Colorado River, about 25 miles west of downtown Houston.

**INFO** ► (979) 732-8385, [magnoliadays.org](http://magnoliadays.org)

## PHILANTHROPY

## ALL HANDS ON DECK

**Time and saltwater** are scoring direct hits on the USS Texas, something the battleship mostly evaded during both world wars. The Texas, commissioned in 1914, is sinking where it sits docked in the Houston Ship Channel.

**“Due to constant** exposure to saltwater, the battleship Texas is suffering from damages and more than 300,000 gallons of water leaks each day,” says Tony Gregory, chairman of the Battle-ship Texas Foundation. The foundation’s Come and Save It campaign continues to gather petition signatures and collect donations in the hope of saving the ship. The petition will try to persuade state lawmakers to act on behalf of the ship.

**The goal** of a permanent dry dock solution could cost more than \$50 million. The effort to buoy the battleship welcomes supporters at [comeandsaveit.com](http://comeandsaveit.com).

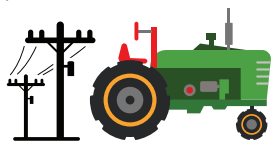
## ◀ LOOKING BACK AT ELECTRICITY AND ENERGY THIS MONTH



**FROM THE SPREAD OF ELECTRICITY** thanks to co-ops to the dawn of the fracking industry, harnessing and consuming electricity and energy have hit many milestones since 1944, the year *Texas Co-op Power* debuted.

### 1940s

**1944** The Pace Act extends the mission of the federal Rural Electrification Administration indefinitely beyond its original 1946 expiration date.



**1946** More than 50 percent of U.S. farms are electrified.

**1948** WBAP in Fort Worth becomes the first TV station in Texas.

### 1950s

**1951** Willie Wiredhand, composed of a lamp’s socket head, wire arms, two-pronged plug legs and a lineworker’s insulated gloves, is adopted as the official electric cooperative mascot.

**1951** The first commercial color TV broadcast takes place.

**1954** Bell Labs demonstrates the first practical silicon solar cell, powering a radio transmitter and toy Ferris wheel with energy from the sun.

### 1960s

**1964** Sony develops the first VCR for home use.

**1965** The Great Northeast Blackout plunges all of New York, portions of seven neighboring states and parts of eastern Canada into darkness for up to 12 hours.

**1969** Beginnings of the internet.

**1969** The first automated teller machine in the U.S., devised by Dallas engineer Donald Wetzel, is installed on Long Island.



## POWER OF OUR PEOPLE

# A Butterfly's Touch

**KATY HAMNER** was more nervous leaving the hospital with her 10-year-old daughter, Avery Graves, than when she took her home as a newborn. A simple visit to their family doctor, which revealed Graves had Type 1 diabetes, had turned into days in the intensive care unit.

"We had nobody when she was first diagnosed—nobody to turn to," Hamner said.

Things didn't get much better when they got home. Graves had a hard time coping with a new lifestyle that included checking her blood sugar levels multiple times a day—a painful process.

So Hamner and Graves, now 12, members of Medina Electric Cooperative, started the Painless Butterfly Project, which funds painless lancing devices for children with Type 1 diabetes. They've funded and distributed 25 of the devices in the Hondo area, west of San Antonio, forming a community along the way.

"It's been really good for her," Hamner said. "When she starts getting ... kind of upset about things, we'll have a kid or doctor that calls us, and I'll be like, 'Time to go.' And it kind of brings her back: 'OK, I'm not the only one.'"

**INFO** ► [thepainlessbutterflyproject.org](http://thepainlessbutterflyproject.org)

**POWER OF OUR PEOPLE** recognizes co-op members who improve their community's quality of life. Nominate someone at [TexasCoopPower.com](http://TexasCoopPower.com).



## LIFESTYLES

# Here Comes the Sun

**May is Skin Cancer Awareness Month**—a good time to think about the dangers of exposure to the sun and ways to lower your skin cancer risk.

**About 90 percent** of nonmelanoma skin cancers and 85 percent of melanoma cases are associated with exposure to ultraviolet radiation from the sun. Melanoma is the most dangerous form of skin cancer.

**More than 5.4 million** cases of non-melanoma skin cancer were treated in more than 3.3 million people in the U.S. in 2012, the most recent year statistics were available, according to the Skin Cancer Foundation.

**More people** are diagnosed with skin cancer each year in the U.S. than all other cancers combined.

**The best way** to defend against the sun's harmful UV rays is to shield your skin with clothing, sunscreen and shade.

## LOOKING BACK AT SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY NEXT MONTH ►

### 1970s

**1976** The Apple I computer is introduced.

**1977** The U.S. Department of Energy is formed.

**1979** The Three Mile Island nuclear accident occurs.



### 1980s

**1980** The first U.S. wind farm opens—in New Hampshire.

**1984** A power plant using tidal waves opens in Canada, the first of its kind in North America.

**1986** IBM unveils the PC Convertible, the first laptop computer.

**1988** South Texas Project Electric Generating Station near Matagorda becomes Texas' first nuclear power plant.

### 1990s



**1996** The first modern electric car, General Motors' EV1, rolls off the production line.

**1999** Deregulation of the electric industry takes effect in parts of the state.

### 2000s

**2008** Hydraulic fracturing begins in the Eagle Ford Shale in South Texas.



**2017** Eighteen percent of Texas' energy is generated from wind and solar power, with wind making up the majority of the state's total renewable power generation.



# THIS LITTLE PIGGY

BY CHRIS BURROWS | PHOTOS BY ERIC W. POHL





## When pet potbellies **outgrow expectations**, rescuers step in

**T**he stories always seem to start the same: with a precious photo and a short conversation. Melanie Bolling's pet pig story began exactly that way.

"I saw a cute little piglet on Facebook, and I'm like, 'Oh my gosh, I need one,' " she said of when she and her husband, Stephen, added weeks-old Pearl, a miniature potbellied pig, to their family in 2015. "It just kind of snowballed from there."

Soon Bolling found an online community of Metroplex-area pet pig parents, many of whom were looking for new homes for their animals. Since the Bollings live on 10 acres in Wills Point, east of Dallas, she felt compelled to help. She took in three pigs in 2016 and another 30 in 2017. Then 90 in 2018.

That's when Bolling realized most of the stories end the same way. Miniature pigs only start out that way, often outgrowing their owners' lifestyles and expectations—sent instead to the wilds of the internet or worse. Miniature pigs, so named because they're smaller than farm pigs, which can weigh up to 500–800 pounds, comprise more than a dozen breeds and can reach 200 pounds or more.

Experts estimate 90 percent of mini pig owners end up finding new homes for their pigs in their first two years. In response, dozens of rescues have cropped up across the state.

The Bollings started one of them. My Pig Filled Life, powered by Trinity Valley Electric Cooperative, is home to more than 130 pigs across three barns. It's a big commitment that's only getting bigger.

"I could take in a hundred [pigs] today and not make a dent in the amount of calls," Bolling said.

### THE PROBLEM

**M**itsy Wempe will be the first to tell you that she and her husband, Jason, made a mistake.

The two animal lovers were looking to share their 10-acre plot in Gilmer when they came across miniature pigs for sale in 2014.

"I saw the piglets, and I'm like 'Oh my gosh.' They were so stinkin' adorable," Wempe said. "As soon as my eyes laid upon



them, I literally was hooked to the pigs."

They brought home Abigail first. Then many other pigs followed when friends and friends of friends realized the Wempes had space and were "the pig people," she said. "So then it turned into, 'Hey, I know somebody who has a pig and doesn't want it anymore, do you want it?'"

Soon the Wempes had their first male pig. That's when they slipped.

"We thought it would be interesting—fun, cool—to bring in an unneutered male and let him get my smallest pig pregnant because, of course, we were so ignorant," Wempe said. "Because, you know, if you mate it with a small pig, you'll have small pigs, right? Of course, that's not how it works."

Instead, unbeknownst to the Wempes, Magnus bred with four of their pigs, which led to 22 piglets in 30 days. He was neutered the next weekend, and the couple founded Oinkin' Oasis, a sanctuary served by Upshur Rural EC that houses more than 90 pigs, which will live out their days there.

The Wempes weren't the first to experiment with breeding, but they're among the few to decline the easy money it can bring in. "It really opened our eyes to—we are the problem,"

Wempe said. "That's when we decided we were going to rescue."

Since the 1980s, when Canadian farmer Keith Connell brought 19 straight-tailed potbellied pigs to the U.S. from Europe, untold thousands of breeders have taken a less noble path than the Wempes, breeding miniature pigs at runaway rates. Celebrities fueled a pet pig craze in the 2000s, when Tori Spelling, Denise Richards and Paris Hilton had reality TV shows that included leashed potbellies. The animals can fetch thousands of dollars each—prices that can be inflated with false descriptors, such as "teacup" and "micro."

"I try to remind people that it is very uncommon for a healthy pig to weigh less than 80 pounds as an adult," wrote Dr. Evelyn MacKay, a veterinary resident at Texas A&M University, in an email. "Although we have all seen pictures of cute, tiny pigs on the internet, the average pet pig is usually over 100 pounds."

Over many generations, dogs have been bred to take on a range of looks and sizes. Unscrupulous miniature pig breeders have claimed similar progress over mere decades.

"They sell this micro teacup lie," Bolling said.

Some unscrupulous breeders are worse, said Dan Illescas,

**Opposite: Melanie Bolling watches Rusty, one of the rescued potbellied pigs at My Pig Filled Life in Wills Point.**





**Mitsy Wempe interacts with P.J., one of the rescued pigs at Oinkin' Oasis in Gilmer, which she operates with her husband, Jason.**

who co-founded Central Texas Pig Rescue, a member of Bluebonnet EC, in Bastrop in 2016. Some breed pigs that aren't fully

grown—to give the illusion of tiny mothers—and even advise owners to underfeed pigs to keep them small, he said. Buyers who succumb to these tactics have few options.

"If I told you to only feed it a tablespoon of food a day, and you did that and it died—it's on you," Illescas said. "You either feed the pig and it gets bigger than you wanted, or you don't feed the pig and it dies."

## IN SEARCH OF SOLUTIONS

It was Pearl's cute features that got Bolling's attention, but it was her personality that forged a strong bond between them.

"When people reach out, I tell them my greatest need is always belly rubbers," Bolling said. "These animals are super social, and physical contact and connection is what they crave most."

According to findings published in the *International Journal of Comparative Psychology*, pigs live in complex social communities. They are adept at solving mazes and other tests, have excellent long-term memories, feel a range of emotions and respond to one

another's emotional states. Some experts claim pigs can outwit dogs, but don't confuse their behavior.

As animals that live their life as prey, not predators, "pigs have different drives than dogs do," Illescas said. "I have to tell people five times that pigs aren't dogs. ... I explain it: 'I know you know that pigs aren't dogs, but what you don't know is that your brain is telling you to look for dog behavior.'"

Owners frustrated by their pigs often turn to the internet, where misinformation abounds.

"When you have this big pig, but you have this information

## WEB EXTRAS

► Read this story on our website to find ways to help the pig rescues featured here.





Experts estimate  
**90 percent**  
of mini pig owners end  
up finding new homes  
for their pigs in their  
first two years.

**Left:** Rescued pigs love the attention and affection they get from Jason Wempe at Oinkin' Oasis.  
**Below:** Pigs move through the grounds at Oinkin' Oasis.

much longer. They're sensitive to the weather because they can't sweat and have hair, not fur. They require special attention. That's why Bolling, who specializes in rehoming pigs, requires a rigorous process for prospective adopters.

"We have a great facility here, so if [a pig is] leaving here—and they may have been rehomed one, two, 10 times before—I need to know that it's a permanent place where they're going," she said. "I try to tell people, 'Think about the life you would have with a 3-year-old, and if you can't accommodate that life for 20 years, then don't take a pig.'"



#### WORTH THE WORK

A pig can change a person. Wempe stopped eating meat when pigs came into her life. A chance sighting of Wayland, one of her rescued farm pigs, through a kitchen window struck something in her.

"I literally was standing there frying up some bacon, and I just saw him and it killed me," she said. "We used to hunt. I got a rifle for Christmas one year. We were on a deer lease. We were those people."

Illescas stopped eating meat, too, and has forged a relationship with the vegan community in Austin, which helps with fundraising. CTPR spent more than \$85,000 on operations in 2017, Illescas said, before its population more than doubled. CTPR, which adopts out pigs in good health, focuses on pigs in greatest need—those with health issues that may have suffered from abuse or neglect. Veterinary students at Texas A&M benefit from caring for CTPR's pigs, which aren't always a focus of vet curricula.

"All veterinary students receive education on swine health, diseases and management practices, though this is a smaller part of the curriculum compared to dogs, cats, horses and cows," wrote MacKay, who helps care for CTPR pigs. "The focus has traditionally been on production-type swine medicine."

Mini pigs are a big commitment, a message Bolling, Illescas and Wempe hope to spread among veterinarians and the public. They're not quitting on their pigs.

"I'm a big believer in the Lord, and I felt like this was the place he was calling me to be, and it's opened so many doors," Bolling said.

Their stories won't end like the rest.

Chris Burrows is a TEC senior communications specialist.

you found on the internet that says pigs don't get big, you get kind of confused because you're not really sure what you're dealing with," Illescas said. "The truth is really mystified."

CTPR, which houses more than 250 pigs, fights misinformation with likes, shares and adorable photos. The rescue's Facebook and Instagram accounts count more than 35,000 followers, who are exposed to the realities of pet pigs. Still, it's an uphill fight, Illescas said.

"The people who have the information—us, other rescues, people who have pigs and learned the hard way—we have enough to do," he said.

Pet pig owners who do manage to find harmony at home know it's a lifestyle. Pigs can't be boarded like dogs, and they can live



# TOM LEA'S WAR



## Battlefield paintings by El Paso artist express the tragedy and pathos of World War II

**T**om Lea—noted muralist, author and war correspondent—grew up in El Paso, spending his childhood in the shadow of the Mexican Revolution during the second decade of the 20th century. Lea, son of a prominent lawyer who served two years as El Paso mayor, enjoyed the safety of an affluent household despite the dangers posed by the revolution's proximity. Decades later, he would witness a battlefield once again and provide Americans with a realistic and compassionate view of World War II as a war correspondent and illustrator for *Life* magazine.

Lea's chronicle of the tragedies and victories of the war created perhaps his most compelling artworks. The images he produced on the battlefield captured the heartfelt emotions of conflict in real time and under duress.

"Tom Lea started the artist-correspondent program for *Life* magazine as an 'embed,' recording real battles, not just paintings from news reports," explains Adair Margo, founder of the Tom Lea Institute in El Paso, in an email. "It remained the most vivid part of his life and turned him from painting to writing. After WWII, Tom knew he needed words, not only paint, to express mankind's living and dying."

As *Life* described to readers in 1941, Lea was one of several artists whom the magazine commissioned to create "America's first gallery of defense art." The assignment was deemed a success, and soon *Life* had turned Lea into a special kind of war correspondent, traveling to the North Atlantic and South Pacific. He made sketches of what he saw. In one instance, after the ship on which he had been embedded was sunk, along with the photographic files on



Top: Tom Lea as he heads to war. Above: *Fighting Hornet* depicts the height of the Battle of Santa Cruz. Opposite: *That 2,000 Yard Stare* has become an iconic image of the effects of war on the human psyche.









**Going In shows a Marine during the landing on Peleliu in 1944.**

board, Lea's drawings became the only record of the engagement. "In the fall of 1941," Lea wrote, "I went to sea aboard a U.S. Navy destroyer on duty in the submarine-haunted North Atlantic, as an Accredited War Artist-Correspondent of *Life Magazine*. ... I became, for deeply felt reasons, an eye-witness reporter, in drawings and paintings, of men and their machines waging a war worldwide."

Lea's work from this period, 82 pieces in all, portrays the war at its worst and Lea's illustrative skills at their best. Unsparring in its depiction of the true human cost of battle, it expresses an understanding of tragedy and pathos that required an unflinching eye, never turning away until an image was completed.

In 2008, Texas A&M University Press published a collection of Lea's remarkable sketches and powerful paintings and his firsthand written accounts of his assignments for *Life*. Margo wrote the foreword for the book.

A collection of his work is archived at the U.S. Army Center of Military History at Fort Belvoir, Virginia, and it tours periodically, including an exhibition at Fredericksburg's National Museum of the Pacific War.

"Although I had seen pictures of Tom Lea's World War II work several times, I was stunned when I viewed the originals at the National Museum of the Pacific War exhibition," says retired Marine Corps Gen. Michael William Hagee, president and CEO of the Admiral Nimitz Foundation, which supports the museum. "Tom had a unique ability to bring the horror of war and the sacrifice and dedication of those who served and fought to his art. He obviously understood the fear, bravery, compassion and camaraderie of individuals on the battlefield. Having served in several conflicts, I have seen no artist that captures better the emotions

one experiences on the faces of his subjects."

Lea's creative training began at 18, with two years of formal instruction at the Art Institute of Chicago followed by a five-year apprenticeship with Chicago muralist John Norton and a period in Italy studying Renaissance frescoes. He returned to El Paso in his late 20s, an accomplished professional with a number of major works to his name.

"A singular aspect of Lea, sometimes overlooked, is the sheer versatility of his creative talents," says Victoria Ramirez, director of the El Paso Museum of Art. "Along with his prodigious output as a visual artist, he wrote novels, some of which are considered classics of Southwest literature. And in the realm of art, he was a master draftsman, illustrator and artist-reporter during World War II in addition to his substantial work in easel painting and murals."

#### WEB EXTRAS

► Read this story on our website to see more paintings and learn about the Tom Lea Trail.

Lea's considerable achievements made the founding of his namesake institute a necessity as much as an opportunity. The Tom Lea Institute, founded in 2009, is dedicated to documenting, exhibiting and sharing his works through a digital library, exhibitions and publications. The institute partners with academic foundations statewide that archive Lea's work, including the El Paso Museum of Art, the University of Texas at El Paso and the Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas at Austin. The institute was also a key component to realizing its director's personal vision.

"In founding the Tom Lea Institute," Margo explains, "I've found joy in sharing a person and a place that I love." Texans who love history and art will no doubt appreciate her efforts.

Photographer, author and artist **E. Dan Klepper** lives in Marathon.





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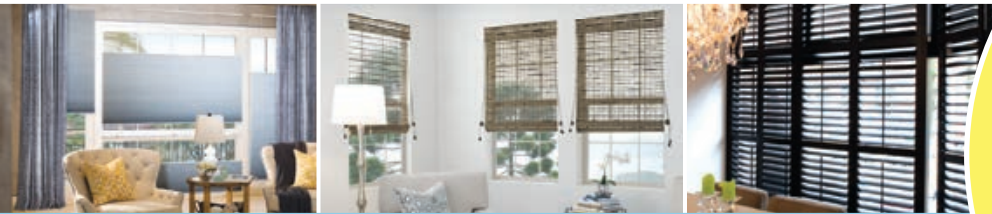
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# Clogged, Backed—up Septic System...Can anything Restore It?

**DEAR DARRYL:** My home is about 10 years old, and so is my septic system. I have always taken pride in keeping my home and property in top shape. In fact, my neighbors and I are always kidding each other about who keeps their home and yard nicest. Lately, however, I have had a horrible smell in my yard, and also in one of my bathrooms, coming from the shower drain. My grass is muddy and all the drains in my home are very slow.



My wife is on my back to make the bathroom stop smelling and as you can imagine, my neighbors are having a field day, kidding me about the mud pit and sewage stench in my yard. It's humiliating. I called a plumber buddy of mine, who recommended pumping (and maybe even replacing) my septic system. But at the potential cost of thousands of dollars, I hate to explore that option.

I tried the store bought, so called, Septic treatments out there, and they did Nothing to clear up my problem. Is there anything on the market I can pour or flush into my system that will restore it to normal, and keep it maintained?

*Clogged and Smelly – Lubbock, TX*

**DEAR CLOGGED AND SMELLY:** As a reader of my column, I am sure you are aware that I have a great deal of experience in this particular field. You will be glad to know that there IS a septic solution that will solve your back-up and effectively restore your entire system from interior piping throughout the septic system and even unclog the drain field as well. **SeptiCleanse® Shock and Maintenance Programs** deliver your system the fast active bacteria and enzymes needed to liquefy solid waste and free the clogs causing your back-up.

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**SeptiCleanse® Shock and Maintenance Programs** are designed to work on any septic system regardless of design or age. From modern day systems to sand mounds, and systems installed generations ago, I have personally seen SeptiCleanse unclog and restore these systems in a matter of weeks. I highly recommend that you try it before spending any money on repairs. SeptiCleanse products are available online at [www.septicleanse.com](http://www.septicleanse.com) or you can order or learn more by calling toll free at 1-888-899-8345. If you use the promo code "TXS8", you can get a free shock treatment, added to your order, which normally costs \$169. So, make sure you use that code when you call or buy online.

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# Summer Electric Bills



MESSAGE FROM  
GENERAL MANAGER ALAN LESLEY

**MOST PEOPLE THINK OF FAMILY VACATIONS OR SCHOOL BEING** out when they think of summer. That's not necessarily true of your co-op's employees. We tend to think of summer as high-bill complaint season.

When I say I feel your pain, I'm not just paying lip service. My own electric bills rise along with the heat index—just like yours and those of the folks I work with here at Comanche Electric Cooperative. Once those kilowatts have marched through the electric meter that records them, it's difficult to do anything about them, other than pay the bill.

But before you throw your hands up in exasperation, here's a little secret: You can do something about those higher summertime electric bills. The secret is you have to do something now—before you use the electricity.

most cost-effective measure you can take. If you install a programmable thermostat, it can do this for you.

- ▶ Have a qualified professional check out your air conditioner (and the heating system, too, while they're at it). Preventive maintenance can save you money as well as preclude temperature discomfort.

- ▶ Shade your outdoor air conditioning unit to up its energy efficiency.

- ▶ Change air conditioner filters monthly. Clogged filters force the AC unit to work harder and increase operating costs.

- ▶ Portable and ceiling fans can make you feel cooler; when you feel cooler, you can set the thermostat higher. But when you leave the room, turn off the fan.

- ▶ Installing and using a whole-house fan can help reduce air conditioning costs. These fans draw outside air in through open windows and should be used only when the outside air temperature is lower than the desired inside temperature.

- ▶ Seal doors and windows with caulk and weatherstripping. And, if your windows are single-pane, consider replacing them. Double- and triple-pane windows are substantially more energy efficient.

- ▶ Shading and evaporative cooling from trees reduce the air temperature around your home. Plant trees, shrubs and vines with leaves that fall off in the winter on the east, south and west sides of your home. They'll provide shade in the summer but allow sunshine in the winter. Position trees to shade windows now; when they mature, they'll also shade the walls and roof.

- ▶ It's well worth your investment to wrap any uninsulated ducts with at least 2 inches of fiberglass insulation. Sealing the duct system to prevent leaks is even more important if the ducts are located in an uncooled area, such as the attic. Most leaks will be found where the air duct attaches to the air conditioning unit and where ducts are joined together.



Fans can make you feel cooler; when you feel cooler, you can set the thermostat higher.

## Here's how to cut back on your electricity usage:

- ▶ You can save as much as 10 percent a year on your cooling (and heating) bills by simply turning your thermostat back 10 to 15 percent for eight hours a day. In the summer, raise the thermostat when you go to work or whenever you're away from home (from 76 degrees to 85, for example). That's the single



# CASHBACK

# \$\$\$

## CECA and Brazos EPC Return **\$928,000** to Members

If you were a member of Comanche Electric Cooperative between 1961 and 1984, you may have received a capital credits return recently. Brazos Electric Power Cooperative, CECA's generation and transmission supplier, allocated \$928,103.45 in capital credits to CECA, which the co-op returned to the co-op's membership. This allocation paid 100 percent of capital credits due to members from 1961 to 1983 as well as a portion of 1984's capital credits.

If you received a check you are not sure about, or if you feel you should have received a check and did not, contact one of our service representatives at 1-800-915-2533 or at [memberservices@ceca.coop](mailto:memberservices@ceca.coop).



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**Early Office:** Monday, Wednesday  
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# Meet Your New Team Member



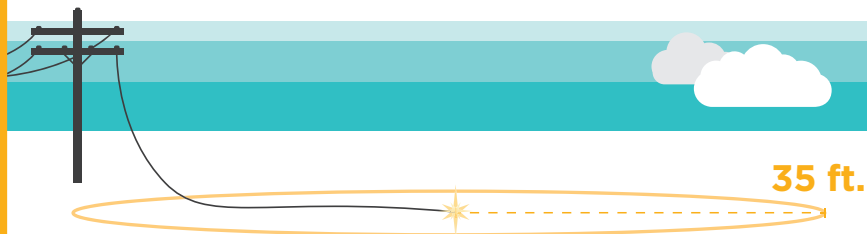
Klay Strickland is an apprentice lineman for Comanche Electric Cooperative. He was raised in Cisco and graduated from Cisco High School. Following graduation, Strickland attended Tarleton State University, where he earned a degree in business management. His hobbies include spending time with his wife, Kelsey, and working on antique cars with his father.



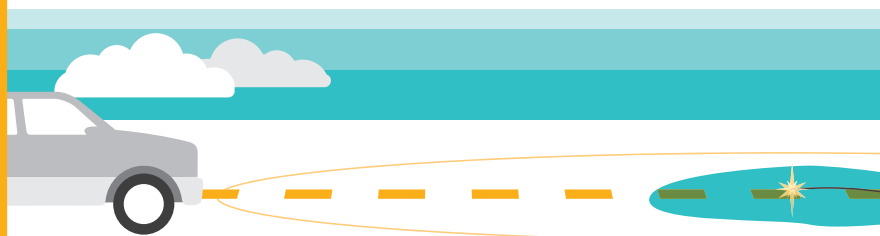


# Downed and Dangerous

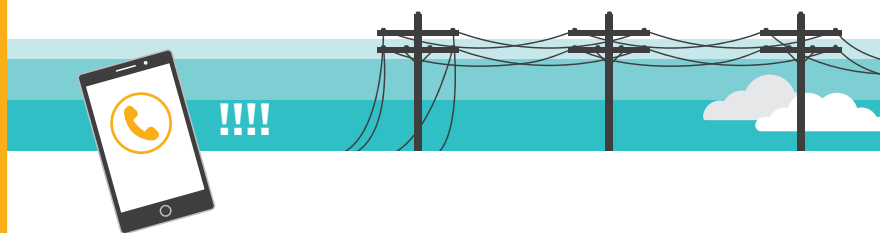
If you see a downed power line, always assume it is energized and dangerous. Avoid going near it or anything in contact with the line.



Downed power lines can energize the ground up to **35 feet** away—so keep your distance.



Never drive over a downed line or through water that is touching the line.



If you see a downed line, notify local authorities immediately.



Never try to move a downed power line, even if you think the line is de-energized or if you think you're using nonconductive protection—this cannot prevent injury or death.

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## May Is Electrical Safety Month

### EVERY MAY, NATIONAL ELECTRICAL

Safety Month reminds us to sweep our homes of hazards that could lead to accidents and fires. **This year, resolve to:**

#### **Install ground-fault circuit inter-**

**rupters.** These devices can protect your family from electrocution. In fact, the Consumer Product Safety Commission estimates that GFCIs could prevent half of all home electrocutions. Install them in any room that could get wet, including bathrooms, garages, kitchens and laundry rooms, and on outdoor receptacles and any outlet that's within 6 feet of a faucet.

#### **Prevent fires with arc-fault protec-**

**tion.** When electrical wiring or devices get damaged or overheated, an arc fault can occur. An arc fault is a discharge of electricity that turns into heat and can break down a wire's insulation. That can cause a fire. In fact, the National Fire Protection Association estimates that 47,000 home fires every year involve some sort of electrical malfunction, and half of those fires could be prevented by arc-fault circuit interrupters.

**Childproof your home.** Your 2- to 4-year-old child can remove plastic outlet caps within 10 seconds, according to research by Temple University. Foil your little one's attempts by installing tamper-resistant receptacles, which are designed with toddlers in mind. Every room of your house needs childproof outlets so your child can't insert anything into them, which would otherwise cause a shock.

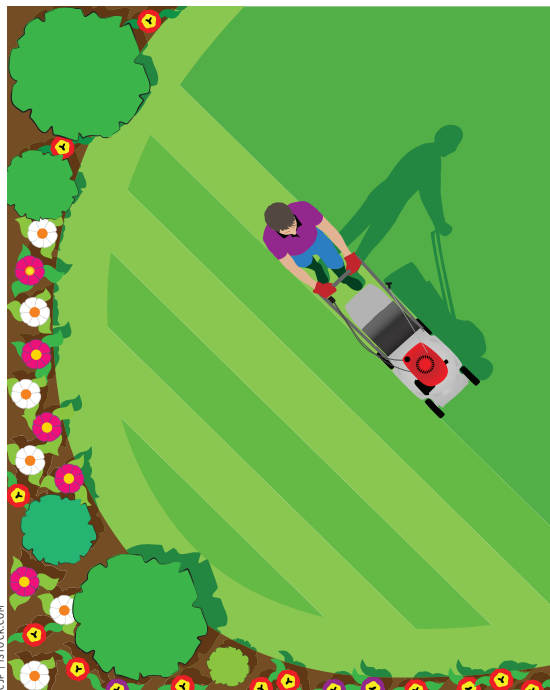


# Beneficial Electrification for the Home

**DO YOU ENJOY WAKING UP TO THE RUMBLE OF YOUR NEIGHBOR'S LAWN MOWER ON A Saturday morning?**

Well, the days of mowers and other devices making a rumbling noise and spewing exhaust into the air may be coming to an end. A concept known as environmentally beneficial electrification is gaining traction among a growing number of groups in the U.S. as a means of reducing greenhouse gases and helping the environment. Beneficial electrification also helps consumers by providing products that are cleaner, quieter and easier to maintain.

As utilities shift to renewable technologies and make existing generation technologies cleaner, electricity uses less fossil fuel per kilowatt-hour of energy produced. Electrical appliances become greener and more efficient due to technological improvements and more stringent government standards.



cordless models are already available, and as batteries continue to improve and costs fall, consumers can expect to see cordless models dominate.

Finally, the car in your driveway may change out its gas tank for a battery. Electric vehicles are widely praised for being safer and easier to maintain (no oil changes!) and for superior road performance with faster acceleration and more torque. Currently more expensive than their gas-fueled counterparts, electric vehicles will fall in price as more companies enter the market and battery technology improves.

Don't expect to see these changes completely integrated in the next year or two, but over the next five to 10 years, you'll likely no longer be awakened by your neighbor's noisy lawn mower at 7 a.m. on Saturdays.

So, what could change around the home and how will it affect you? Four changes you're likely to see pertain to water heaters, stovetops, lawn mowers and vehicles.

First, hybrid heat pump water heaters are far more efficient than standard electric water heaters and still offer the benefits of an electric-only system, such as quiet operation and greater durability.

New induction stoves heat faster than gas ranges and are more efficient than electric resistance stoves.

The third major change will be to small motors around your home, like the one in your lawn mower or leaf blower. Corded and



## It's Annual AC Maintenance Time

**BEFORE THE WEATHER GETS TOO WARM,** call a qualified service technician to inspect and tune up your air conditioning system.

During this annual visit, the tech will be able to tell you if your system will make it through the summer or if it needs repairs. If the unit is old, the tech might recommend that you replace it.

In addition, there are two things you can do on your own to make sure your system stays in good working order:

**1. Clean or replace the air conditioner filter.** If you have a reusable filter, wash it and dry it every month during the summer. If you have a disposable filter, replace it. A dirty filter can get clogged with dust and dirt and restrict airflow. That will make your system work harder to cool your house, wasting energy and driving up your electric bill. Plus, a dirty filter can push dust back into your home, which makes the air less healthy—especially if someone in your family has allergies or asthma.

**2. Keep the area around the outside AC unit clean.** Remove dirt, grass and any debris that has collected around it so those things don't restrict its airflow. Trim shrubs away so they don't touch it.



# Why Electricity Is Dangerous

**HAVE YOU EVER WALKED ACROSS CARPET AND RECEIVED A shock** when you touched a doorknob or another person? What you felt was a buildup of static electricity.

But a real electric shock is a lot more painful and can be deadly. Here's what can happen:

- ▶ Muscles tighten up, making it almost impossible to pull away from the circuit.
- ▶ Lungs constrict, making it hard to breathe.
- ▶ Heartbeat is interrupted and blood vessels narrow.
- ▶ Burns and internal organ damage occur.
- ▶ Death may follow.

It sounds scary—and it is—but if you remember some simple safety rules, you can use electricity without getting hurt.

## Humans Are Good Conductors

The human body is a good conductor of electricity. That means electricity flows easily through our bodies. Why? Because electricity moves quickly through water—and the human body is 70 percent water.

Another fact to remember is that electricity always tries

to find the easiest path to the ground—so don't get in its way. Maintain safe distances from electric lines at all times. Avoid using ladders, poles or other tools in situations where they may come into contact with overhead lines. Contact your electric cooperative if you need to work near power lines.

## Accidents Happen Quickly

You might think that if you get shocked, you can pull away quickly and not get hurt. Electricity travels at nearly the speed of light, 186,000 miles per second, so the effects of electricity can be felt immediately. A person has almost no chance of avoiding the shock.

If the electricity is strong enough, muscles tighten so much that a person can't let go.

Anyone who touches someone who is being shocked can become part of the circuit, too. That's why you should never grab anyone who's been shocked. If an electrical accident happens, turn off or unplug the circuit if it's safe to do so, call 911 and tell the operator that someone has been involved in an electrical accident, and keep others away until trained help arrives.



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## ELECTRICITY SAFETY RULES

1. **Look up and look out for power lines** before you raise a ladder, climb onto a roof or climb a tree. Stay at least 35 feet away from overhead power lines.
2. **Don't ever play or work on or near** a green transformer box or climb the fence around an electrical substation.
3. **Keep electrical equipment away from water.** Most electrical accidents around the house happen when people use electricity near water.
4. **Don't plug a bunch of devices** into one outlet or extension cord. It could damage the electrical system in your house or even cause a fire.
5. **Make sure all electrical cords** are tucked out of the way to avoid a tripping hazard and to keep pets or small children away from them.
6. **Don't yank an electrical cord** from the wall. Instead, pull from the plug. Pulling on a cord can damage the appliance, the plug or the outlet.
7. **Don't fly drones or kites** near power lines or substations. A kite and its string may conduct electricity—sending it right through you to the ground.
8. **Install tamper-resistant receptacles.** Not only will it help keep kids safe, but covering outlets will also help save energy by stopping cold drafts.
9. **Make sure all electric appliances and tools** are in good repair.
10. **Don't use extension cords** for long-term electrical needs. They are intended for temporary use only.



# Speed Abounds at Woody's Museum

BY SHIRLEY KIDD DUKES

**Riddle of the day: What do cars and baseballs have in common?**

**Answer: Both can go from 0-100 in a matter of seconds!**

*Texas Rangers pitcher Nolan Ryan's legendary 1974 heater registered the fastest pitch speed ever, at a blazing 108.5 miles per hour (corrected for radar gun placement). Ford's 1956 Thunderbird reportedly was able to reach 147 mph. Both can reach triple-digit speeds in a matter of seconds. What else do baseballs and old cars have in common? Patti and Danny Lee "Woody" Wood of Rising Star.*

**AVID BASEBALL FANS WHO LIVED IN DALLAS, WOODY AND** Patti met in the 1980s. They spent many of their dates at Arlington Stadium watching the Rangers. These dates led to the couple collecting baseball memorabilia, mostly that of the Rangers but many other teams as well. The couple also loved 1950s- and '60s-style vehicles, so on their 25th wedding anniversary, Woody surprised Patti with her dream car: a 1956 Ford Thunderbird. Thus began their classic car collection.

"God brought forth the idea for us to share these treasures with others in the form of a museum," Patti said. "So please come and enjoy our unique museum and its collections."

What started out as a simple idea turned into a 22,000-square-foot, two-story showroom that could rival the biggest and best collections of baseball and car memorabilia.

Woody's Museum, in Cross Plains, features classic cars from the early 20th century through the '50s, '60s and '70s, with some newer models dating to 2014. Their baseball mem-

orabilia runs the gamut, from the era of Ty Cobb and Babe Ruth through present day.

Unfortunately, Woody passed away in 2016, leaving Patti to finish the project on her own but with a very strong support system. Her niece, Mindy Johnson, has worked for her in various capacities for the past 10 years and has been deeply involved in the project since day one. "I couldn't do it without her," Patti said. "She's my right hand and my left hand and both legs!"

"I feel truly blessed to just be a part of everything they do," Johnson said. "And this museum is going to be a lot of fun for everybody!"

The Woods were blessed early on when they took on Joel McCready and Scott Yeoman as their car gurus. Originally owners of a car repair shop that Woody utilized on a regular basis, the shop is now a quaint replica of an old filling station that also contains the museum's gift shop. As Woody's collection grew, so did his need for McCready and Yeoman. Eventu-





**This fully restored 1962 Ford, lovingly referred to as the Silver Bullet, was a dream for Woody, who designed and oversaw every aspect of its restoration.**

ally, he offered them the opportunity to work exclusively for him, and the duo accepted. “So we did it and never regretted it,” Patti said. “They are extremely talented.”

McCready and Yeoman have skills that extend far beyond reviving old cars. They have been an integral part of the construction of the museum’s interior, crafting rails for little cars, vanities in the restrooms, bar stools in the diner and benches in the museum area, to name a few of their contributions. Perhaps their most impressive feat, though, is the mannequins, which originally stood just straight and stiff with little movement. Yeoman took them apart and rearranged them in a style to suit each individual display. “He was a true plastic surgeon,” Johnson said. Once completed, McCready chromed them to complete their unique look.

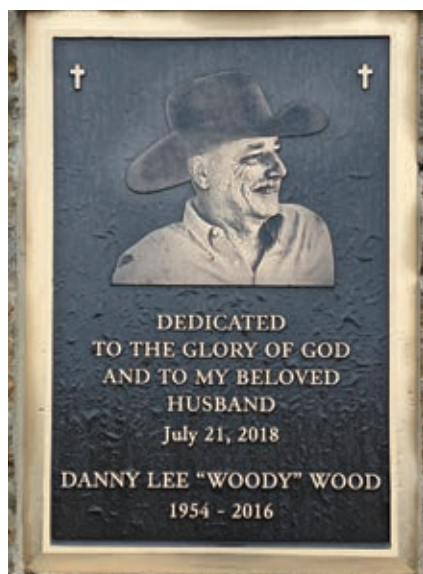
Woody’s pride and joy was the old pickup he and Patti lovingly named the Silver Bullet. When Patti first saw the truck, it was beneath a tree in the yard of McCready’s shop. It had no floor or dashboard and was rusted out. Patti thought the truck belonged in the junkyard, but Woody asked her to trust his vision. McCready and Yeoman rebuilt the truck to match Woody’s vision, and it turned out to be a remarkable find.

Patti has nothing but wonderful things to say about her beloved Woody. Not only was he an avid collector, he played the drums—even getting to play with Brooks and Dunn—and rode cutting horses. First and foremost though, he was a cowboy. “He just loved life,” Patti said. He loved to have fun and enjoyed driving his cars.

Patti’s love for Woody and the life they built together gave her the momentum she needed not only to complete their project but to create something so extraordinary that it will be talked about for years to come.

The museum does not charge admission. The only charge is for items purchased at the gift shop, and those dollars are donated to the charity of your choice, making the museum 100 percent nonprofit.

The museum is located at 500 SW Fifth St., Highway 36 W., in Cross Plains and is open to the public on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays. Admission at other times is by appointment only. You can reach the museum at (254) 725-4042, [info@woodysmuseum.com](mailto:info@woodysmuseum.com) or by visiting its website, [woodysmuseum.com](http://woodysmuseum.com). Better yet, stop by and see them. You won’t be disappointed!



**The Woody’s Museum gift shop includes a vast selection of Christian books, free to guests of the museum. The books are courtesy of the 1687 Foundation’s book ministry. It provides a variety of Christian books and devotional resources at no cost to recipients.**



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Featuring **23 TO 25 HORSEPOWER** (17.2 to 18.6 kW) engines and a heavy-duty frame, the Z700 Series mowers provide homeowners with the power, performance and durability that is needed when maintaining Texas-sized properties. Additionally, a large fuel tank maximizes your mowing day.

The integrated park brake allows the operator to audibly hear the brake click into place. The brake automatically engages when steering levers are moved outwards, and disengages when the levers are pulled together, allowing the operator to quickly start and stop work in a natural motion.

The Z700 Series machines are equipped with a **HIGH-CAPACITY PRO MOWER DECK** in one of three sizes: 48-, 54- and 60-inch. The mower deck is stamped from a single sheet of nine-gauge steel with commercial grade reinforcements for added strength and durability. The cutting height adjustment system with transport lock allows operators to adjust the cutting height with the turn of a dial, and then quickly return to the desired cutting height after lifting the deck for transport.

Operator comfort is also at the forefront of the Z700 design, which includes an adjustable, three-position foot platform and high-back seat. The three-position foot platform is designed so operators can move it forward and back for a comfortable position, regardless of their height.

Additionally, the Z730M and Z735M models are equipped with the ComfortGlide system, an industry-first. The ComfortGlide™ suspension actually moves with you, travelling 3-inches fore and aft to absorb bumps for enhanced ride quality.

## ► Z740R - ZTrak™ Zero Turn Mower

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JOHN DEERE

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# Baylor, the Man

Judge and minister is an unlikely namesake for the Baptist university in Waco

BY MARTHA DEERING

EVEN THOUGH THE NAME BAYLOR HAS been prominent in Texas higher education for 174 years, Judge R.E.B. Baylor's name was attached to the university only as the result of a quirky legislative process. Legislation to charter a Baptist university bore two other names before Baylor's was substituted.

In 1844, the Texas Baptist Educational Society directed Baylor, the Rev. William M. Tryon and J.G. Thomas to petition the Congress of the Republic of Texas to charter a Baptist university. The society first named the institution San Jacinto University, then Milam University, eventually deciding the university should bear the name of a prominent Baptist. Baylor's name was chosen because he had authored the legislation.

Robert Emmett Bledsoe Baylor was born in Lincoln County, Kentucky, in 1793. His father served as a captain in the Continental Army during the American Revolution. Although he attended schools around Paris, Kentucky, the younger Baylor was largely self-taught. He followed in his father's footsteps as a 19-year-old and joined the state militia during the War of 1812, taking up arms again in the Second Creek War in Alabama in 1836. As late as 1840, he rode into battle near San Antonio following the Council House Fight, after peace negotiations between Anglos and Comanches broke down.

In *History Along the Way*, Dan K. Utey wrote, "Baylor studied law in the Lexington office of his distinguished uncle, Jesse Bledsoe—who saw service in both the U.S. Senate and the Kentucky House of Representatives—passed the bar exam and opened his own office while in his early twenties."

Baylor served one year as a Kentucky state representative in 1819 before resigning



**Pompeo Coppini's statue of Judge R.E.B. Baylor after its unveiling at the Founders Day dedication at Baylor University in 1939.**

the position and moving to Alabama. Period accounts suggest the sudden move was motivated by grief after the death of his fiancée in a riding accident.

As a lawyer in Tuscaloosa, Baylor returned to politics and won election to the U.S. House of Representatives. He moved to Selma and then Mobile and in the summer of 1839, attended a revival at the Baptist church in Talladega led by his cousin, the Rev. Thomas Chilton. Baylor decided he needed to be saved. "Also a lawyer and former politician," according to Utey, "Chilton was a close colleague of David Crockett and enjoyed additional success as a minister. Baylor, viewed by various historians as a deist, Unitarian, atheist, infidel or agnostic, converted to Christianity while attending the revival." Not long afterward, the Talladega Baptist Church ordained him as a minister.

In 1839, Baylor moved to La Grange, where at the urging of preacher Z.N. Morrell, he became a crusading frontier clergyman. Serving as a justice of the Third Judicial Court of the Republic of Texas,

Baylor, with gun at hand, held court proceedings during the day, and in the evening, he preached and organized churches. He saw no conflict in this arrangement, although once during a sermon, he became overexcited and referred to his parishioners as "gentlemen of the jury." Baylor's charismatic sermons and keen intellect often moved his audiences to laughter or tears.

Baylor served as a trustee of Baylor University at its first location in Independence and taught law classes. He retired from the bench in the 1860s and lived out the remainder of his life in the nearby Gay Hill community. He died in 1873 and was buried on university grounds.

By the 1880s, Baylor University had outgrown its Independence site and merged with the all-male Waco University, and a women's school was established in Belton as Baylor Female College—now the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor.

Judge Baylor's remains were moved to Belton, but a fire in the administration building near his second grave forced another move. His third grave, covered by a simple marble slab, lies near the chapel at Mary Hardin-Baylor.

**Martha Deering**, a member of Heart of Texas EC, lives near McGregor.

# Government Melts Over 270 Million Silver Dollars

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Most Americans living today have never held a hefty, gleaming U.S. silver dollar in their hands.

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These vanished coins were not just any silver dollar—they were America's largest circulated coin, the beloved Morgan Silver Dollar. Each Morgan Dollar is struck from nearly an ounce of 90% fine silver and measures a massive 38.1mm in diameter. Morgan Silver Dollars were the engine of the American dream for decades. Created by famed American coin designer, George T. Morgan, they feature Lady Liberty's radiant profile and a majestic eagle, symbols of American strength and prosperity. Since their inception in 1878, they jingled in the pockets of famous and infamous Americans like John D. Rockefeller and Teddy Roosevelt, and desperados Jesse James and Al Capone. Today, Morgan Silver Dollars are the most collected coin in America.

## Lady Liberty takes a Final Bow

Just three years after the massive meltdown, the government gave the Morgan Silver Dollar a final chance to shine. In 1921, facing a serious shortage, the mint struck Morgan Silver Dollars for one more brief, historic year. Today, the last-ever 1921 Morgan Silver Dollar belongs in the hands of collectors, history buffs, or anyone who values the artistry and legacy of this American classic.

## A Private Vault Gives Up its Secrets

Millions *more* silver dollars were melted over the past ninety years and today, private hoards account for virtually all the surviving Morgan Silver Dollars. We should know—we hunt for them every week. In fact, on one buying trip into America's heartland, as we were guided into a wealthy owner's massive private vault, we were thrilled to discover a hoard of nearly two thousand 1921 Morgan Silver Dollars, all having actually circulated in American commerce nearly 100 years ago! We wasted no time in securing the entire treasure trove of silver dollars into our own vault.



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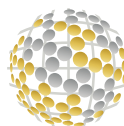
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## Layer Cakes

THE 1970S USHERED IN SLOW COOKERS, microwave cooking, fondue parties and a spotlight on wholesome foods like granola, whole grains and sunflower seeds. Cakes made with carrots, pineapple and other fruits also amassed a fan base. Coated in butter rum frosting, the following three-tiered Cider 'n' Spice Cake appeared in *Texas Co-op Power* in October 1977. Apple cider gives the cake a moist texture, while homey spices will remind you of autumn baking. For richer flavor, substitute dark rum for rum extract, or light molasses for the dark corn syrup.

PAULA DISBROWE, FOOD EDITOR

### Cider 'n' Spice Cake

#### CAKE

- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup (1½ sticks) butter, softened
- 1½ cups firmly packed light brown sugar
- 3 eggs
- 3 cups flour
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 2 teaspoons baking soda
- 1½ teaspoons salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon ground allspice
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon ground nutmeg
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 cup apple cider
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup milk

#### FROSTING

- 1 cup (2 sticks) butter, softened
- 4 cups powdered sugar (approximately)
- $\frac{1}{3}$  cup dark corn syrup
- 2 teaspoons rum extract
- Walnut halves (optional)

**1. CAKE:** Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease three 8-inch round cake pans and line the bottoms with waxed paper or parchment.

**2.** Cream the butter and sugar. Beat in eggs, one at a time. Sift together dry ingredients, and combine the cider and milk. Alternating with the cider mixture, blend dry ingredients

CONTINUED ON PAGE 32

# Retro Recipes

## Layer Cakes



### THIS MONTH'S RECIPE CONTEST WINNER

ROSE M. DAILEY | HOUSTON COUNTY EC

"My family fondly refers to things I make as 'MeMa's throw-togethers,'" Dailey says. "I rarely ever go by a recipe, and if I do, it's usually three or four recipes that I have broken apart and put back together my way."

For this cake, she wanted bold chocolate flavor and rich chocolate frosting. The decadent result is a staple for Dailey family birthdays. "We are a family of chocoholics," she confesses.

## Triple Chocolate Cake With Chocolate Fudge Buttercream Frosting

### CAKE

- 2 ounces Baker's German's sweet chocolate
- 2 ounces Baker's semisweet chocolate
- ½ cup strong black coffee
- 2 cups flour
- ⅓ cup baking cocoa
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 cup (2 sticks) butter, softened
- 2 cups sugar
- 4 eggs, separated
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 cup buttermilk

### FROSTING

- ½ cup (1 stick) butter, softened
- 2 ounces Baker's semisweet chocolate
- ½ cup shortening
- ⅓ cup baking cocoa
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 pounds powdered sugar
- 1 cup milk, or more as needed



## \$100 Recipe Contest

October's recipe contest topic is **Company Dinner**. Company is coming, and this is your moment to shine. What will you serve? The deadline is **May 10**. Readers whose recipes are featured will receive a special *Texas Co-op Power* apron.

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.

**1. CAKE:** Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease three 9-inch round cake pans and line the bottoms with waxed paper or parchment. Microwave chocolate and coffee in large microwave-safe bowl on high 1½–2 minutes or until chocolate is almost melted, stirring after 1 minute. Stir until chocolate is completely melted.

**2.** In a medium bowl, whisk together the flour, cocoa, baking soda and salt; set aside. Beat the butter and sugar in a large bowl with an electric mixer on medium speed until light and fluffy. Add the egg yolks, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Blend in the melted chocolate and vanilla. Add flour mixture alternately with the buttermilk, beating well after each addition. In a separate bowl, beat the egg whites on high speed until stiff peaks form, then gently fold the whites into the batter.

**3.** Divide the batter evenly between the prepared pans and bake 30 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in the center of the cakes comes out clean. Immediately run a small metal spatula around the edges of cake layers in pans. Cool in pans on wire racks 15 minutes, then invert layers from pans. Cool cake layers completely.

**4. FROSTING:** Melt the butter and chocolate in microwave. Add the shortening, cocoa and vanilla. Stir until shortening is also melted. Add the powdered sugar a little at a time, alternating with the milk (about ¼ cup at a time of milk). Whisk well until you have a smooth, spreadable consistency. You might need a little more milk (if so, add a tablespoon at a time). The frosting should be firm and hold its form. ▶ Serves 8–10.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 31

into the creamed mixture, beginning and ending with flour mixture.

**3.** Divide the batter between the three prepared cake pans. Bake 25–30 minutes, or until a tester inserted in the middle of the cake comes out clean. Cool 10 minutes on wire racks before inverting the pans to remove the cakes. Cool completely before frosting.

**4. FROSTING:** Cream the butter. Alternately add the sugar and syrup, beating well after each addition. Beat in rum extract. Add more sugar as necessary for desired consistency.

**5.** To assemble the cake, place the bottom layer on a serving platter and spread an even layer of frosting over the top. Repeat with the remaining layers, and finish by frosting the top of the cake (or cover the entire cake with frosting, if you prefer). Garnish with walnuts, as desired. ▶ Serves 6–8.

## Cream Cheese Berry Cake

ARLEEN ACTON | PEDERNALES EC

Featuring a rich cream cheese and mascarpone frosting, this cake is a great way to showcase fresh, Texas-grown strawberries and blueberries.

### CAKE

- 2½ cups flour
- 2 cups sugar
- 3 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup whole milk
- ½ cup vegetable oil
- 2 tablespoons vanilla extract
- 2 eggs
- 1 cup water

### FILLING

- 2 cups berries (strawberries, blueberries and raspberries), divided use
- 3 tablespoons water
- ½ cup sugar
- 3 tablespoons cornstarch

### FROSTING

- 2½ cups heavy whipping cream
- 1¾ cups powdered sugar
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 8 ounces cream cheese, softened
- 8 ounces mascarpone cheese, softened

**1. CAKE:** Preheat oven to 350 degrees and apply cooking spray to three 8-inch round



baking pans. Line the bottom of each pan with waxed paper or parchment.

**2.** In a large bowl, whisk together flour, sugar, baking powder and salt. In a mixing bowl, combine the milk, oil, vanilla and eggs, then using an electric mixer, beat on low speed while adding the dry ingredients until mixed thoroughly. Then slowly add water until just combined.

**3.** Divide the batter into three pans and bake 25 minutes or until a toothpick comes out with a few moist crumbs. Remove from oven and cool cakes in pans about 5 minutes. Invert cakes from pans and cool completely on wire racks.

**4. FILLING:** Add  $1\frac{1}{2}$  cups of mixed berries and 3 tablespoons of water to a food processor and purée until smooth. Combine the sugar and cornstarch in a saucepan. Stir in the berry purée and cook over medium heat until the mixture thickens. Remove from heat and cool briefly, then transfer to a bowl and refrigerate until completely cool. Can be made up to two days in advance.

**5. FROSTING:** Combine whipping cream, powdered sugar and vanilla in a large bowl, and whip on high speed until soft peaks form. Add the softened cheeses and whip until stiff peaks form again.

**6.** To assemble the cake, pipe a dam of frosting around the outer edge of the first layer and top with an even layer of half of the berry filling. Gently spread a layer of frosting over the top of the berries. Add another cake layer and repeat. Top with the third cake layer and frost the entire cake with the remaining icing. Top with  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of fresh berries and refrigerate until ready to serve.

► Serves 6–8.

**COOK'S TIP** If you can't find mascarpone cheese, use 16 ounces of cream cheese instead.

## Jennie's Blackout Icebox Cake

MELISSA TURLEY | BANDERA EC

Turley says the cake is moist and dense, which makes for easy slicing and a beautiful presentation.

### CAKE

- 2 cups sugar
- $1\frac{3}{4}$  cups flour
- 1 teaspoon salt

- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup baking cocoa
- 1 cup milk
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup vegetable oil
- 3 eggs
- $2\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoons vanilla
- 1 cup plus 2 tablespoons boiling water

### FROSTING

- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup ( $1\frac{1}{2}$  sticks) butter, softened
- 1 cup baking cocoa
- 2 cups powdered sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup evaporated milk
- 1 tablespoon vanilla
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup sweetened condensed milk

**1. CAKE:** Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Lightly grease and flour two 9-inch round cake pans.

**2.** Whisk together the dry ingredients in a large bowl. Whisk together the wet ingredients (minus boiling water) in a container with a pour spout. Whisk wet ingredients into dry, combining well. Slowly whisk in the boiling water until

the mixture is combined.

**3.** Divide the batter among the prepared pans. Bake 25–30 minutes or until toothpick inserted in the center of the cake comes out clean. Cool cakes completely in pans on wire rack.

**4. FROSTING:** Beat the softened butter and cocoa together until smooth and creamy. Slowly add the powdered sugar and evaporated milk, alternating small amounts of each until the mixture is combined and smooth. Stir in the vanilla and sweetened condensed milk.

**5.** Invert layers from pans. Place the first layer on a serving plate and frost with one-third of the frosting. Top with second layer and frost the top and sides of cake with remaining frosting. Refrigerate the cake at least 1 hour (or up to a day in advance) before serving. ► Serves 8.

**COOK'S TIP** If you're not up to a layer cake, feel free to divide the batter between two greased 9-by-5-inch loaf pans for a chocolate "snack" cake, freezing the other loaf for another time.

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## On the Ranch

*"I should've been a cowboy. I should've learned to rope and ride  
Wearin' my six-shooter, ridin' my pony on a cattle drive.  
Stealin' the young girls' hearts, just like Gene and Roy  
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—Should've Been a Cowboy by Toby Keith*

GRACE ARSIAGA

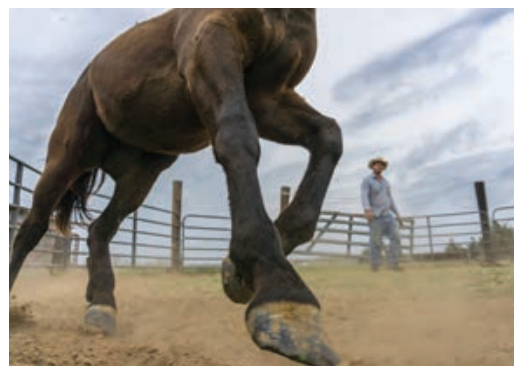
▲ **NANCY WEBSTER**, Bluebonnet EC: "I tried to get a photo of a cow's silhouette against the rising sun, but the cow got curious when I squatted down."

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



▲ **RYAN BRANCH**, Big Country EC: "Cattle drive on the Branch JS Ranches."

▼ **JERALYN NOVAK**, Karnes EC: For over 100 years, the Huebner Brothers Cattle Company has been driving cattle from their winter pastures on the 30-mile Matagorda peninsula to their summer pastures south of Bay City.



▲ **JENNIFER TUGGLE**, PenTex Energy: "My husband, Sam, was starting the 2-year-olds in the round pen."

▼ **BOBBY NORRIS**, Pedernales EC: "Big hat and rope with this black-and-white silhouette of a cowboy at work."



### UPCOMING CONTESTS

SEPTEMBER	TEXAS VACATION	DUE MAY 10
OCTOBER	GIVING BACK	DUE JUNE 10
NOVEMBER	UP THE CREEK	DUE JULY 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.



## Pick of the Month Whimsy & Wonder

### Liberty Hill May 18

(512) 417-8448, libertyhillfun.com

Downtown businesses transform into art galleries hosting works from local artists as well as live art demonstrations and live music. Main Street features performers, stilt walkers and local artisans. Check out sidewalk chalk artists and Austin's Scott Wade, the dirty car artist.



CHALK ART: PHILOPHOTO | STOCK.ADOBE.COM. RABBIT: M DOROTTYA | STOCK.ADOBE.COM. ATV: NORBERT JUDLOIAK | STOCK.ADOBE.COM

## May 7

**Austin Great Futures Spring Luncheon,**  
(512) 444-7199, bgcaustin.org

## 9

**San Antonio Motherhood Luncheon,**  
(210) 607-9720, texanscan.org

## 10

**Coolidge [10-11] Mesquite Tree Festival,**  
(254) 747-1348

**Georgetown [10-11] Austin Square and  
Round Dance Association Mid-Tex Festival,**  
(830) 672-7384, asrda.org

**Levelland [10-11] Llano Estacado Rabbit  
Breeders Association Show,** (806) 786-2297,  
lberba.bravehost.com

**Paris [10-11] Eiffel in Love With Quilts,**  
(903) 784-2501, parisquiltshow.com

## 11

**Bonham Red River Art, Wine & Music Fest,**  
(903) 640-2196, creativeartscenterbonham.com



### May 10-11

**Levelland  
Llano Estacado Rabbit  
Breeders Association Show**

**Mineola Metric 100 Bicycle Ride,**  
(903) 569-2801, mineolametric100.org

**Wimberley Garden Tour,** (512) 636-0974,  
wimberleygardenclub.org

## 17

**Columbus [17-18] Magnolia Days Festival,**  
(979) 732-8385, magnoliadays.org

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**AROUND TEXAS**

EVENT CALENDAR

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**Mesquite** [17-18] Mesquite Meander, (972) 216-6468, [historicismesquite.org](http://historicismesquite.org)  
**Star** [17-19] Cowpokes for Kids Trail Ride, (325) 437-1852, [cowpokesforkids.com](http://cowpokesforkids.com)

## 18

**Concan** Tipsy Crawdad Golf Tournament, (830) 232-4471, [visituvaldecountry.com](http://visituvaldecountry.com)  
**Fredericksburg** Hill Country Antique Tractor & Engine Club Tractor Show, (830) 889-0070, [rustyiron.org](http://rustyiron.org)

**Lorena M. Denton** Stanford Masonic Lodge 594 Car Show, (254) 855-3722

**Tyler** Smith County Master Gardeners Home Garden Tour, (903) 590-2980, [txmg.org/smith](http://txmg.org/smith)

## 24

**Palestine** [24-26] Celebration of Steam at Texas State Railroad, 1-855-632-7729, [texasstaterailroad.net](http://texasstaterailroad.net)

**Jacksonville** [24-27] Memorial Mudbug, (903) 724-4100, [riverrunpark.com](http://riverrunpark.com)

## 25

**Columbus** Country Market, (979) 732-8385, [columbusfmtx.org](http://columbusfmtx.org)

**Hunt** Crider's Rodeo and Dancehall Opening Night, (830) 238-4441, [cridersrandd.com](http://cridersrandd.com)

**New Braunfels** Antique Barn Sale and Market, (830) 832-9699, [newbraunfelsconservation.org](http://newbraunfelsconservation.org)

**Kerrville** [25-26] Festival of the Arts, (830) 895-7962, [kvartfest.com](http://kvartfest.com)

**Port Arthur** [25-26] Memorial Classic Fishing Tournament, (409) 626-2501, [saltclub.net](http://saltclub.net)



May 24-27  
 Jacksonville  
 Memorial Mudbug

## 31

**Stephenville** [31-June 1] Moo-La Fest, (254) 552-1222, [visitstephenville.com](http://visitstephenville.com)

## June

### 1

**Grand Prairie** Crawfish Boil, (972) 237-8100, [grandfungp.com](http://grandfungp.com)

**Waxahachie** Pancake Breakfast Fly-In, (469) 309-4045, [waxahachiecvb.com](http://waxahachiecvb.com)

### 6

**Columbus** Coastal Conservation Association Live Oak Chapter Banquet, (979) 732-1352, [ccatexas.org/find-your-chapter/live-oak](http://ccatexas.org/find-your-chapter/live-oak)

### 7

**Amarillo** [7-8] Coors Cowboy Club Ranch Rodeo, (806) 376-7767, [coorsranchrodeo.com](http://coorsranchrodeo.com)

## Submit Your Event!

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

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## Higher Education

An inspiring desk perched on Hancock Hill overlooks Sul Ross State University in Alpine

EVEN THOUGH LOTS OF Texas universities have grandiose lecture halls, only one can boast a classroom with a 20-mile view. And this learning experience gives new meaning to the phrase higher education.

You'll find Sul Ross State University in Alpine.

Founded in 1917, the school of 2,000 students was named for Lawrence Sullivan "Sul" Ross, the 19th Texas governor. Alpine is a charming burg an hour north of Big Bend National Park, and its average summer temperature sits comfortably in the mid-80s.

Sul Ross' 93-acre campus boasts beautiful buildings and the incredible Museum of the Big Bend. The classroom that achieves new heights is Hancock Hill, and hiking up to it is a student tradition going back to 1981, when some industrial tech students, led by Jim Kitchen, decided they needed a better place to study than their drab dorm room. So they grabbed a full-sized teacher's desk, threw it onto their strapping young backs and began hiking up the hill behind their dormitory. After about a mile, they found the perfect spot and planted the desk. It wasn't long before they were spending most, if not all, of their study time on top of Hancock Hill.

One day, Kitchen left a notebook in the desk, and the next time he returned, he discovered that another student had written deep thoughts and life ponderings on

its pages. He added his own and left the notebook. Slowly, the tradition and lore of the desk began to grow.

While I am not a Sul Ross Lobo, even I was tempted with the idea of climbing Hancock Hill and seeing what education it might bring. So early one morning, I set out for an adventure. After a good bit of searching, I found the unmarked trailhead at the back of the Industrial Technology Building parking lot. And so the journey began.

It wasn't long before the views became truly exceptional as I looked down upon the campus and Alpine below. As the trail climbed higher, the wide-open Texas skies helped my mind to open, too. I didn't have any fellow students that day, save for a jack rabbit and a race runner lizard.

I wasn't sure how long my outdoor study time would be. I'd heard that the hike takes anywhere from 20 minutes to an hour. After about 45 minutes hiking at a good pace, I didn't feel any closer to the desk than when I had begun, and I debated turning back. Suddenly, a dead tree full of rusted bikes caught my attention. A sign of

**Chet Garner studies the scenery from atop Hancock Hill.**

student life? Sure enough, over the next hill was the desk, complete with

the incredible view. Not only was I happy for a place to sit down, but the seemingly endless view immediately inspired my thoughts. "Wow, Texas is beautiful. I wonder what it looks like atop those other peaks. Why didn't I go to Sul Ross?"

I opened the desk drawers and sure enough found a journal full of student scribbles. I also found a book titled *Course in Mathematical Analysis Vol. 1*. The title made my brain hurt, so I immediately put it back inside. I did, however, take out my pen and leave my own musings in the journal. What did I write? You'll have to hike up the hill to find out. I even saved you some room right below mine. Just make sure you take a pen.

**Chet Garner** shares his Texplorations as the host of *The Daytripper* on PBS.

**WEB EXTRAS** ▶ Read this story on our website to see Chet's video showing sweeping views of the Alpine area.









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