

HE UNEARTHED
ANCIENT TOOLS

SAM RAYBURN TURNED ON
TEXAS' LIGHTS

I'D DO ANYTHING
FOR MOM

Texas Coop Power

FOR CECA MEMBERS

MAY 2026

Trickle Your Fancy

The arid West
is awash, if you know
where to look



community phone

Home Phone That Just Works
No Internet, No Hassle



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2 FREE
Months of
Service

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HOME
PHONE
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Forbes HOME

4.8 ★★★★★

Community Phone Named Best Home Phone Service Provider of 2026 by Forbes

"With high consumer sentiment ratings and a **money-back guarantee**, Community Phone is our top choice."
Forbes, January 2026



"I have my old phone number! And I'm saving almost \$100 each month over my old phone company which relies on copper wires." **Karen, 78**



"We are totally satisfied with the service. We have great reception in our rural area." **Sue, 71**

community phone

How It Works... Easy as 1-2-3

"If you can plug in a toaster, you can set up this phone."
Alford, 84, Navy Veteran



1



Home Phone Base Plug our home phone base into a power outlet.

2



Home Phone Plug a phone into the jack of our home phone base.

3



Local cell towers Automatically connects to local cell towers.

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 **Call: 1-844-490-5925**
or Visit: TryCommunityPhone.org

May 2026



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06 Wet Texas

Beyond and below the tumbleweeds and cactuses, oases beckon out west.

Photo essay by Erich Schlegel

He Kept Digging

Thanks to an archaeologist's persistence, we have 20,000-year-old evidence of Texans.

By Pam LeBlanc

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Mother's Days
By Cayt Calhoun

ON THE COVER

Under a relentless sun, Lake Nueces on the Nueces River nurtures an inviting ecosystem.

Photo by Erich Schlegel

ABOVE

Archaeologist Michael Collins examines Gault artifacts with Angela Davis, center, and Jon Lohse in 1999.

Courtesy Kenneth Garrett

Appreciating Our Moms



TCP Contests and More

\$500 RECIPE CONTEST
Campfire Favorites

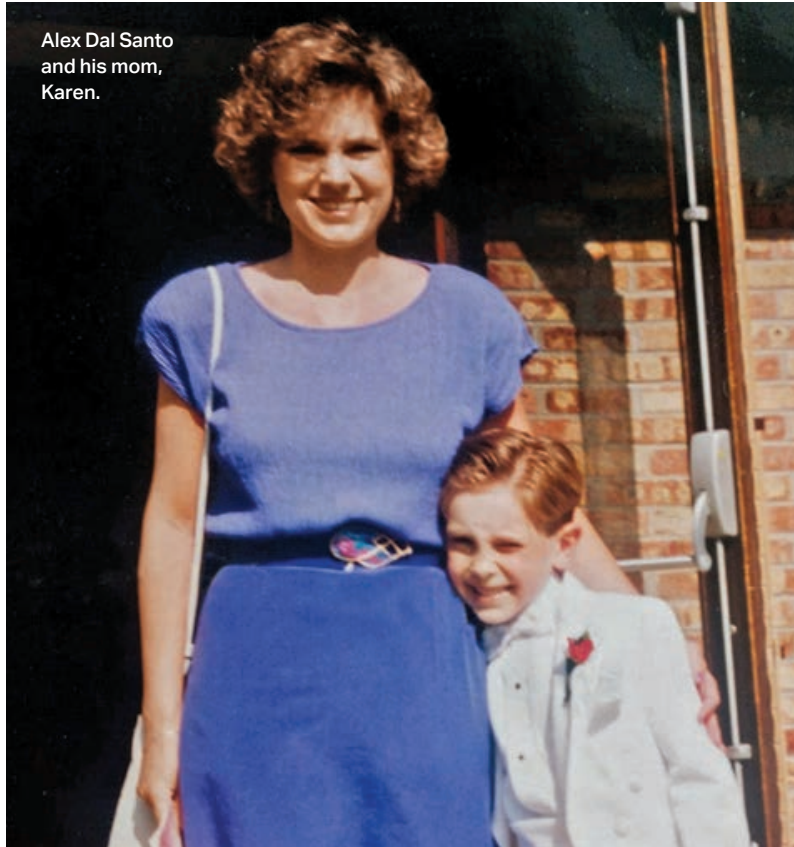
FOCUS ON TEXAS PHOTOS
Rodeo

RECOMMENDED READING

Why We Like Bats, our May 2006 feature story, looked closely at the creatures that still captivate Texans. Download the May 2006 issue at TexasCoopPower.com.



ENTER ONLINE



Alex Dal Santo and his mom, Karen.

FINISH THIS SENTENCE

Moms are ...

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

Here are some of the responses to our March prompt: **My favorite Texas saying is ...**

The sun has risen and the sun has set, but we haven't left Texas yet.

EUGENE NEESE
BOWIE-CASS EC
LINDEN

All hat and no cattle.

SISSY CARTER
HAMILTON COUNTY EC
GATESVILLE

If you don't like the weather, wait a minute.

TANYA STEELE
BLUEBONNET EC
BURTON

The bigger the hair, the closer to God.

DEBRA MILLS
NUECES EC
PORT ISABEL

Bless your heart.

KIT VAUGHN
PEDERNALES EC
LIBERTY HILL

Visit our website to see more responses.

IN CELEBRATION OF MOTHER'S DAY, May 10 this year, we ask readers to finish the sentence "Moms are ..." TCP's writers and editors also share their thoughts.

Lifelong learners—always reading, changing and growing.

—Samantha Bryant, communications specialist

The first person you want to call when something big happens, and you'll miss her when you can't.

—Alex Dal Santo, assistant production manager

Psychic. Mine can sense how I'm feeling even from miles away.

—Erin Sinclair, communications specialist

Frequently undervalued for their enormous contributions. They do so much.

—Claire Stevens, communications specialist

Family historians, capturing (usually unflattering) smartphone pics at family functions.

—Kelly Tran, communications specialist

Eternally selfless.

—Tom Widlowski, associate editor

MARCH 2026 Charted Waters

“Happy to see Pam LeBlanc is still adventurous. And Erich Schlegel’s photos artfully capture her adventure.”

STEVE HARDY
PEDERNALES EC
CEDAR PARK



ERICH SCHLEGEL

Matters of Funding

Overall, a great article, but there is a quote saying that rebuilding the Mason courthouse “didn’t cost taxpayers a dime” [*In All Their Glory*, March 2026]. At least \$9.6 million of funding from the state wasn’t from the tooth fairy.

Larry Strong
CoServ
Lewisville

Shouldering the Load

I loved the story of Tyler Schlickeisen, tow truck driver [*Currents*, March 2026]. It’s great to see stories on unsung heroes like him.

I do have to disagree with his comment, “Nobody likes to see a tow truck driver.” When I have needed them—on Interstate 35—my two tow truck drivers were heroes.

Frank Graham
Navarro County EC
Hill County

A Rash of Trash

Back in the ‘60s, Lady Bird Johnson championed a “Don’t Be a Litterbug” campaign, sending us children home with “litter bags” to hang on the handle of our roll-down car windows [*A Tidy Revolution*, March 2026]. Then in the ‘80s, the “Don’t Mess With Texas” slogan was a fun and effective refresher course.

Now we desperately need a new anti-litter crusade because Texas roadways have grown increasingly trashy.

Cheryl Irish
Bluebonnet EC
Bastrop

Ancestry and ‘TCP’

My hobby is genealogy and family history. Two articles in March gave enough information about people for me to see if I am related to them.

I discovered Tad Lucas [*Currents*] was the wife of my 10th cousin. Jennie Reynolds [*In All Their Glory*] is my 10th cousin. Our common progenitors date from the 1500s and 1600s.

Judith Tavares
Nueces EC
Corpus Christi



RYAN OLBRYSH

TCP WRITE TO US
letters@TexasCoopPower.com

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

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

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Ocotillo reaches out from a bluff overlooking Devils River State Natural Area, north of Del Rio. The river, part of the Rio Grande watershed in Southwest Texas, is one of the most pristine in Texas.

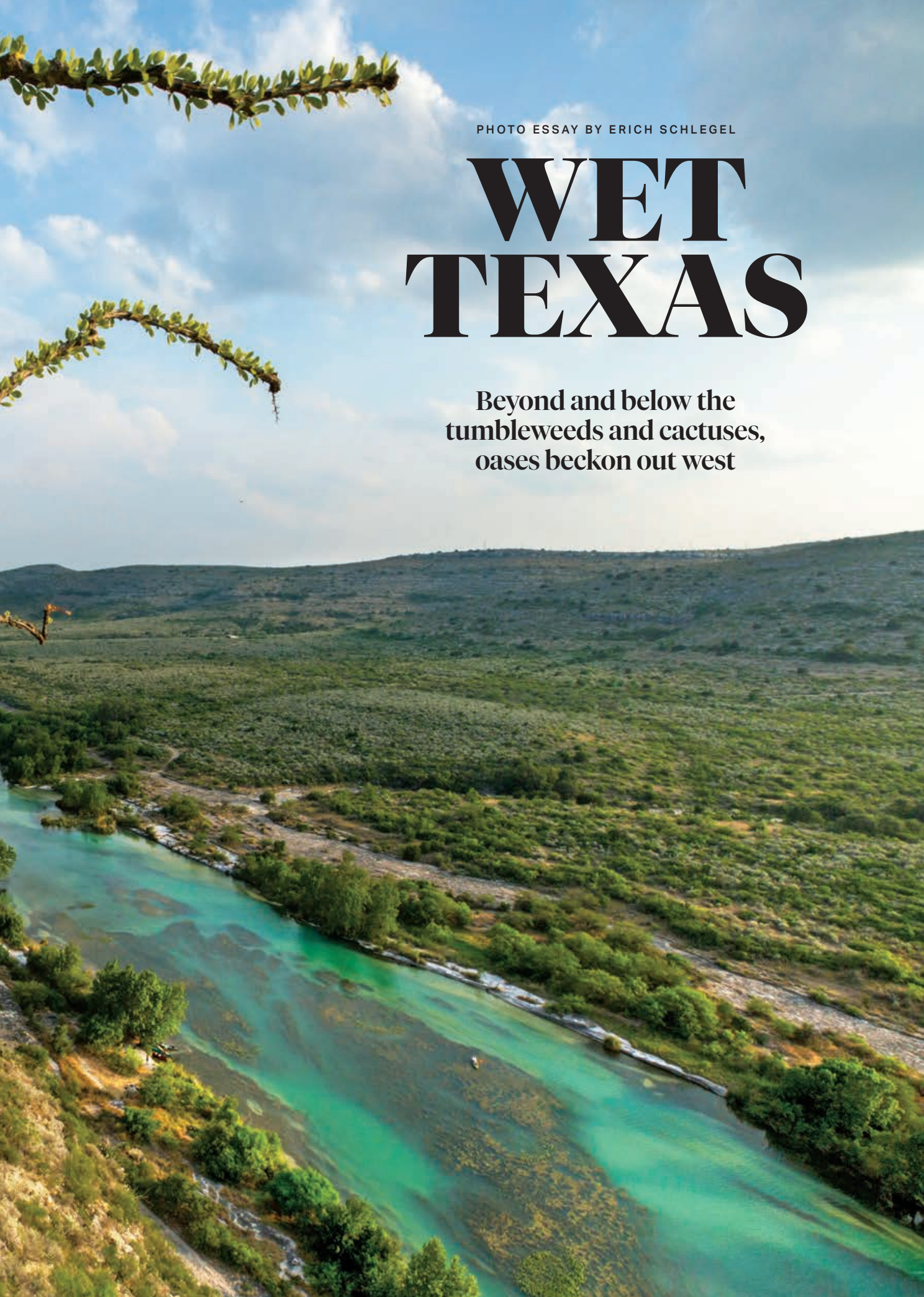
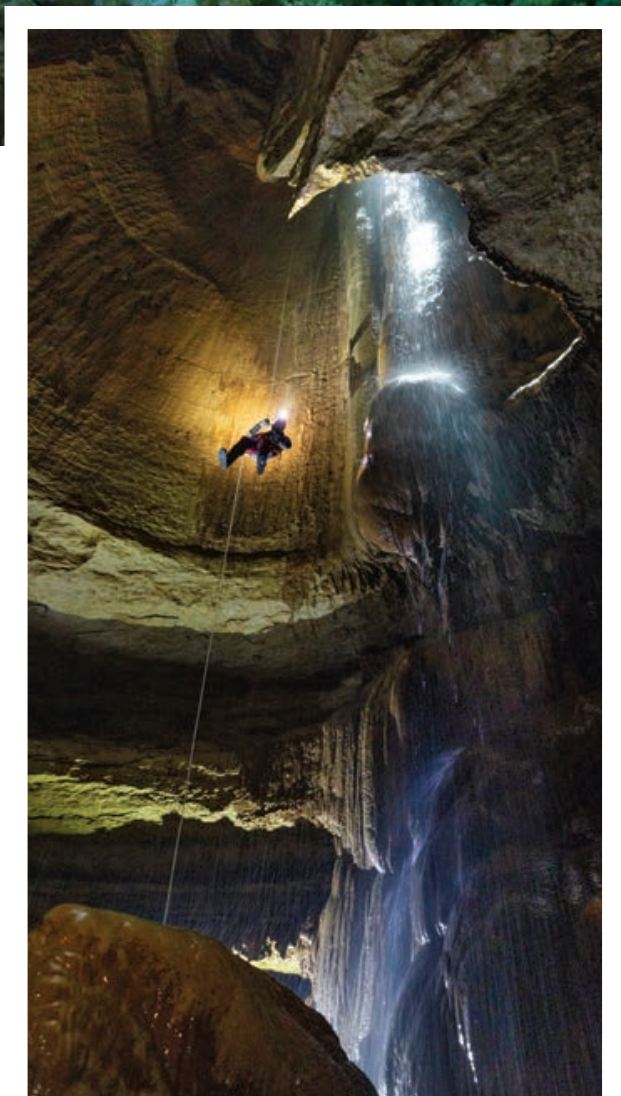
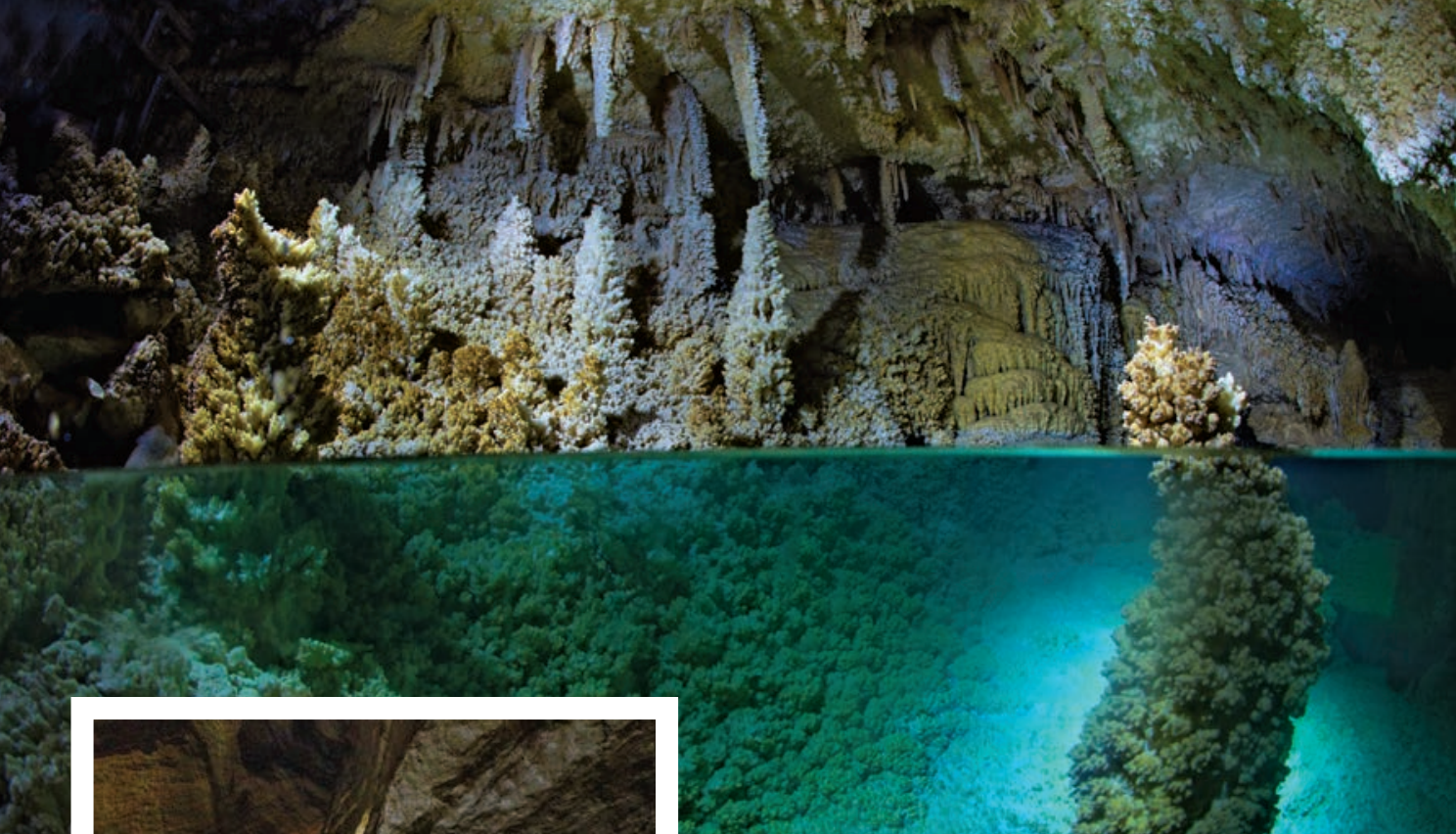
An aerial photograph of a wide river with turquoise water, winding through a lush green landscape. The river is bordered by dense vegetation and trees. In the background, rolling hills are visible under a blue sky with scattered white clouds. A small boat is visible on the river. The overall scene is vibrant and scenic.

PHOTO ESSAY BY ERICH SCHLEGEL

WET TEXAS

Beyond and below the
tumbleweeds and cactuses,
oases beckon out west



TOP The Horseshoe Lake room sits beneath the dry, barren landscape of West Texas in the Caverns of Sonora, where the humidity is always about 98%.

ABOVE Austin cave expert Ethan Perrine descends a rope alongside a 70-foot underground waterfall in a cave below a West Texas cow pasture.

Drive west on Interstate 10 from the Hill Country, through beautiful desert mesas and mountains, and there's no water in sight, right?

Not unless you know where to look. Rivers, springs and even waterfalls are hidden across West Texas.

Most folks know about the Rio Grande, which cuts through the Big Bend, and you may even know of San Solomon Springs, which fills the 1.3-acre pool in Balmorhea State Park.

But you probably don't know about the 70-foot waterfall 143 feet below a cow pasture. It's managed by the Texas Cave Management Association and accessible only by wetsuit-clad expert cavers with advanced vertical rope training.

The Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River, also known as the Lower Canyons, flows down from Big Bend National Park toward Amistad Reservoir near Del Rio—the most remote part of the state. The 83-mile canoe trip takes a week and requires extensive river paddling knowledge and wilderness experience. Help, if needed, can be days away, but only if you carry a satellite phone.

On the other hand, anybody can paddle and swim just west of the Hill Country. Here, the crystal-clear Nueces River is nothing like the muddy flows that empty into the Gulf of Mexico. You'll find swimming pool-clear water in Lake Nueces as well as upstream, in a swimming hole in the town of Camp Wood named for its depth in feet, Quince (15).

It's easy to take water for granted. But seeing and experiencing water in West Texas brings an appreciation of one of our state's most important and sensitive resources. ■



Blue Hole is a spring-fed swimming spot near the headwaters of the Frio River north of Leakey on the private property of the H. E. Butt Foundation Camp. Blue Hole reaches a maximum depth of about 30 feet.



Divers join a school of fish in San Solomon Springs at Balmorhea State Park, home of the world's largest spring-fed swimming pool. The springs have flowed out of the Chihuahuan Desert about 135 miles southwest of Midland for thousands of years.



LEFT The Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River is the most remote part of the state. The heart of this stretch of the Rio Grande is an arduous 83 miles called the Lower Canyons, which offers spectacular scenery but requires extensive wilderness experience.

BELOW A campsite along the Devils River, which begins in northwest Sutton County and flows south for 94 miles, emptying into Amistad Reservoir on the Rio Grande.





Thanks to an archaeologist's persistence, we have 20,000-year-old evidence of Texans

COURTESY KENNETH GARRETT

BY PAM LEBLANC

He Kept Digging



COURTESY KENNETH GARRETT

TOP Michael Collins stands with several chert cores—often called flint—recovered from the Gault site along Buttermilk Creek.

ABOVE Artifacts found at the Gault site by a collector in 1990 include two stones with hatch marks etched onto their surface.

Last summer, Michael Collins gazed over a tree-lined valley near Florence, his eyes scanning the grassy field where he once led excavations that changed our understanding of how and when humans first populated North America.

“I describe it as coming back to an old friend,” Collins said during that visit to the Gault archaeological site, about 50 miles north of Austin.

Collins sat beneath pecan trees for a picnic that day with others who had worked at Gault and filmmaker Olive Talley, whose 2025 documentary, *The Stones Are Speaking*, explores the site’s significance—and Collins’ role in saving it.

In the 1980s and ’90s, the film explains, artifact hunters lugging buckets and shovels flocked to the 30-acre plot of land, where a creek flowed and an abundant supply of flint rippled through a rocky ledge. They paid \$25 a day to search for scrapers, projectile points and knives made by Native Americans and walk away with whatever they found. They left behind empty holes and mounds of dirt.

By taking those stone artifacts, collectors were destroying much of the history that they held. “It’s like looking at a book, tearing a picture out and throwing away the rest of the book,” said Elton Prewitt, a longtime Texas archaeologist.

The Gault story could have ended there—as a pay-to-dig site whose significance disappeared along with the ancient implements once scattered in its soil. But that’s not what happened.

In 1990, collectors digging at Gault found something unusual: two stones with hatch marks etched onto their surface. Word got back to the University of Texas, where the discovery perked the ears of Thomas Hester, then the director of the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory, and Collins, then the lab’s associate director.

The two drove to the site, where more etched stones turned up—along with a Clovis spearpoint, named for a Paleo-Indian archaeological site near Clovis, New Mexico, where scientists had discovered distinctive human-made tools more than 11,000 years old.

Most archaeologists long believed that humans first funneled into North America via a land bridge that formed between Russia and Alaska across what is now the Bering Strait about 13,000 years ago. The so-called Clovis culture was thought to be the oldest in the Americas.

Because Clovis tools had been found at Gault, Collins knew the site was important. But at the time, nobody knew just how significant.

Over the next few years, the land changed hands, and the pay-to-dig operation ended. When the property’s new owners, Howard and Doris Lindsey, stumbled onto some mammoth bones, Collins again got the call. He struck up a friendship with the Lindseys, and in 1998, Collins convinced them to allow a three-year lease so he could conduct an excavation.

That dig turned up more artifacts from the Clovis period, but Collins ran out of time. He filled in the pit and left when the lease ended, convinced the site held even more significance.

Collins stayed in touch with the Lindseys, and in 2007 they agreed to sell him the land. (They still live nearby and keep an eye on the property.) Collins and his wife, Karen, used their own money to buy the site, then immediately donated it to the nonprofit Archaeological Conservancy, where it would be protected in perpetuity.

Collins began a meticulous, long-term excavation project. The people who had come here thousands of years ago made tools, discarded some and lost others, leaving behind a record. The researchers uncovered thousands of artifacts, plus a human-made surface believed to be the floor of a structure at least 15,000 years old.

At first, not everyone believed what the stones were saying. Some pushed back on the idea that humans had been in Central Texas since before the Clovis people. But using a technique called optically stimulated luminescence, which



COURTESY GAULT SCHOOL OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH

Collins with volunteers at the last part of the Gault site to be excavated. Currently there are no open excavation sites on the property and no digs planned.

tells scientists when sediments were last exposed to light, Collins and his team proved that some of the most deeply buried artifacts were indeed older than Clovis.

Today, most archaeologists agree that humans began to move into North America before the land bridge at the Bering Strait opened, using boats to cross the water and spread down the coast.

Evidence discovered through Collins’ excavations show signs that humans have come to the water at this Texas site—what is now nearby Buttermilk Creek—for 20,000 years.

That arguably makes it the oldest demonstrably inhabited site in the Western Hemisphere.

“What’s important about this site is what we’ve learned about ourselves from it,” says Tim Brown, a board member at the nonprofit Gault School of Archaeological Research, which Collins founded. “This site has been so important in the rewriting of the book about the very early story of man in the Americas.”

And it may have more stories to tell.

Collins, now in his 80s, was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s in 2022, and the main excavation pit was covered in 2016. But just 3% of the land here has been excavated. New technologies may help future archaeologists unravel even more of its past.

“Walk across this soil,” Brown says. “If you don’t get a humble, awestruck reaction, there’s something wrong. And without Mike, we’d have no idea.” ■

Dig In

To book a guided tour, visit the GSAR website, gaultschool.org.

TCP Scan the QR code or visit gaultfilm.com to learn more about *The Stones Are Speaking* and for streaming options.



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36	8.77	7.93	10.35	9.44	14	13	22	18	59	30.37	23.51	55.50	38.76	98	67	186	126
37	8.77	8.15	10.52	9.81	15	13	22	20	60	33.49	24.28	60.76	41.71	109	73	206	136
38	8.77	8.16	11.19	10.18	16	14	24	21	61	36.49	25.09	66.43	47.10	122	83	236	154
39	9.13	8.31	11.62	10.55	17	15	25	22	62	39.88	27.91	73.90	51.32	136	92	262	166
40	9.55	8.48	12.04	10.98	18	16	27	24	63	43.69	34.01	81.54	57.25	153	102	287	187
41	10.05	8.72	13.10	11.58	20	17	30	26	64	47.91	38.28	90.20	62.32	170	112	323	200
42	10.48	9.01	14.21	12.30	22	19	33	29	65	52.81	40.88	100.33	68.23	191	125	361	223
43	10.98	9.36	14.72	13.18	23	20	38	31	66	58.71	44.61	114.29	75.40	211	135	392	242
44	11.58	9.73	15.67	14.10	25	22	41	34	67	64.59	49.08	125.27	83.64	234	146	436	261
45	12.17	10.15	16.86	15.16	28	24	45	38	68	72.24	59.65	143.07	105.55	254	173	485	322
46	12.84	10.64	17.85	15.83	30	25	49	40	69	79.34	64.22	158.23	129.28	288	188	547	352
47	13.43	11.16	19.03	16.68	32	27	54	44	70	86.85	68.11	177.24	147.66	318	203	595	375
48	13.48	11.88	20.27	17.37	35	29	58	47	71	102.45	82.60	203.10	159.34	374	235	702	443
49	13.69	12.33	21.73	18.32	37	31	63	52	72	113.68	93.16	232.46	172.23	427	272	807	512
50	14.36	12.98	23.00	19.82	40	33	69	57	73	127.55	106.68	267.15	188.15	493	319	937	596
51	15.37	13.75	25.30	20.65	45	35	78	62	74	142.08	119.36	303.50	204.84	562	367	1074	685
52	16.36	14.87	27.63	22.13	49	38	87	67	75	159.25	140.48	346.45	224.56	644	424	1235	789
53	17.46	15.88	30.95	24.81	54	42	98	73	76	200.03	168.51	418.29	276.67	785	530	1489	982
54	18.68	16.72	33.99	26.20	60	46	110	81	77	249.54	216.74	505.52	339.94	956	658	1797	1215
55	20.70	17.50	37.13	27.85	67	50	121	90	78	310.70	268.40	613.27	418.11	1167	817	2179	1504
56	22.69	19.48	42.01	31.07	74	53	138	96	79	374.78	322.52	726.16	500.00	1389	983	2578	1807
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MESSAGE
FROM
GENERAL
MANAGER

ALAN
LESLEY

REA Day: Built by Neighbors, Powered by Community

EVERY YEAR ON May 11, we celebrate Rural Electrification Administration Day, a milestone that shaped rural America and made communities like ours possible.

On May 11, 1935, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 7037, establishing the REA. The order was part of the broader New Deal effort to rebuild the American economy and modernize infrastructure during the Great Depression. The following year, on May 20, Congress passed the Rural Electrification Act of 1936, which established a permanent federal program to help bring electricity to rural America.

At that time, nearly 90% of urban homes had electricity, while most rural families relied on kerosene lamps and hard manual labor to power daily life. Investor-owned utilities did not see rural America as

opportunities as anyone else.

Today, that vision continues. CECA serves more than 8,800 member-owners across more than 5,000 miles of line, powering over 18,000 meters throughout our service territory. What began as a bold idea has grown into a strong and reliable electric cooperative that remains grounded in the same principles it was founded on.

What makes CECA different from an investor-owned utility comes down to ownership and community.

CECA is owned by the people it serves. We are governed by a seven-member board of directors elected by members across our seven districts. Our directors live here. Our employees live here. We attend the same churches, shop at the same stores and cheer at the same ballgames. Decisions are made locally, with the long-term well-being of our communities in mind.

There is also a financial difference. In an investor-owned model, profits are distributed to distant shareholders. In a cooperative, any margins left over after covering operating expenses may be returned to members in the form of capital credits, when the board determines it's financially responsible to do so. Your dollars stay here, strengthening the cooperative and the communities we serve.

That local impact is also seen through CECA's Operation Round-Up. Through this program, participating members round up their electric bill to the nearest dollar, and those small amounts add up to make a big difference. Operation Round-Up funds stay local and support food banks, school projects, scholarships, volunteer fire departments and other community needs. It's neighbors helping neighbors, just like it was in 1938.

REA Day reminds us that progress doesn't just happen. It's built by people willing to work together for something greater than themselves. Electricity transformed rural America, and the cooperative model continues to power opportunity, growth and community pride.

We're proud of our history. We're grateful for our members. And we remain committed to serving you every day, in snow, rain or sunshine.

Thank you for being part of CECA. It is truly an honor to serve you. ■



Powering the Frontier: Linemen install an electric pole in Texas in the olden days.

profitable enough to serve. The distances were long. The terrain was rugged. The return on investment was uncertain.

So rural Americans did what they have always done. They invested in themselves and built their own solution.

In 1938, local farmers and community leaders formed CECA with a simple but powerful goal: bring electricity to their homes, farms and communities. They set poles by hand, stretched miles of wire across open country and built infrastructure where none existed before. It took grit, cooperation and a shared belief that rural families deserved the same



DOLLYWOOD FOUNDATION

Dolly Parton, founder of the Imagination Library, with young readers, highlighting the program's mission to provide free, high-quality books to children from birth to age 5 and foster a lifelong love of reading.

Inspire a Love for Reading, One Book at a Time

CECA'S OPERATION ROUND-UP is bringing the magic of reading to your doorstep with Dolly Parton's Imagination Library. CECA Operation Round-Up sponsors free books for children age 5 and under.

Each month, participating families receive a high-quality, age appropriate book delivered right to their doorstep. Each book is personalized with the child's name and meant to spark a love of reading from the very beginning.

The books are carefully chosen by a panel of childhood literacy experts and include tips on the inside cover for enhancing engagement and interaction between the child and their caregiver. Twice a year, children also receive bilingual Spanish and English titles to support early language development.

CECA Operation Round-Up's support ensures that the program is available at no cost to families within our service area. It's one way we live out the Seventh Cooperative Principle of Concern for Community and help children grow and learn before they ever step into a classroom.

Books have a way of creating quiet moments, big dreams and lifelong habits. With every book that arrives in the mail, children gain something far more valuable than a story. They gain confidence, curiosity and connection.

To sign up, visit ceca.coop/imagination-library or scan the QR code above. ■



Comanche Electric Cooperative Association

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

CONTACT US

349 Industrial Blvd.
Comanche, TX 76442
Toll-Free 1-800-915-2533
Web ceca.coop

General Manager

Alan Lesley

Board of Directors

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

24/7

**Outage
Hotline
Number**

CECA crews are available 24/7 in the event of a power quality issue.

TOLL-FREE
1-800-915-2533

ABOUT CECA

CECA operates in Brown, Callahan, Comanche, Eastland, Mills, Shackelford and Stephens counties.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Esta institución es un proveedor de servicios con igualdad de oportunidades.

OFFICE LOCATIONS

Headquarters

349 Industrial Blvd., Comanche, TX 76442
Monday–Friday, 7:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

Early

1801 CR 338, Early, TX 76801
Monday, Wednesday and Friday, 7:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m. Closed from 1–2 p.m.

Eastland

1311 W. Main St., Eastland, TX 76448
Tuesday and Thursday, 8 a.m.–4 p.m.

VISIT US ONLINE

ceca.coop



Check us out at
TexasCoopPower.com/comanche



The Hands That Built Our Cooperative

BY TRISTON MCGEHEE

TODAY, IT'S HARD to imagine life in rural America without electricity. Lights turn on with a switch, appliances run around the clock and power crews can respond to outages within minutes.

But less than a century ago, most rural homes across the country had no electricity at all.

That began to change in 1935 when President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 7037, creating the Rural Electrification Administration. The order was part of the broader New Deal effort to strengthen the nation's economy and infrastructure during the Great Depression. The following year, Congress passed the Rural Electrification Act of 1936, which established a permanent federal program to help bring electricity to rural communities across the country.

With that support, rural communities stepped forward and built something of their own.

In 1938, local farmers and community leaders organized to form the Comanche County Electric Cooperative Association (now known as CECA) with one clear goal: bring electricity to their homes, barns and businesses.

Poles were set by hand. Wire was strung across open pastureland. Infrastructure was built from the ground up. Many times, a neighbor who could afford the \$5 membership fee paid for another who couldn't.

It was not easy work. But it was necessary work.

Today, CECA serves over 8,800 member-owners across more than 5,000 miles of line, powering over 18,000 meters throughout our service territory. Almost 88 years later, we remain member-owned and locally governed. Our directors live here. Our employees live here. The dollars you pay stay here.

That cooperative difference matters.

But the real story of CECA isn't found only in statistics. It's found in the people who built it—people like Ardell Elliott.

Elliott began working for CECA on September 2, 1945, and remained with the cooperative until around 1950. He and his brother William Elliott were both born and raised in Comanche. In the years following World War II, they were part of the

generation helping expand electricity across rural Comanche County and beyond.

During that time, a photograph was taken of CECA employees, and Ardell purchased a copy for \$1. While not everyone in the photo has been identified, the Elliott family confirmed that the fifth man on the bottom row is Ardell, and beside him to the left is his brother William.

Around 1951, Ardell left Comanche in pursuit of opportunity, first attempting to make a living operating a small dairy in Comanche County for about a year. He, along with his wife, Frances Jones Elliott, and their 2-year-old son, Gary, moved to San Angelo, where Ardell worked for San Angelo Electric Service Company for about a year. He was eventually transferred to McCamey, where electricians were needed in the oil fields.

Ardell eventually opened Elliott Electric Service in McCamey and worked in the oilfield industry until retiring at age 70. After retirement, he purchased a small farm southeast of Comanche and moved home. He remained there for about 10 years before health challenges required him to return to McCamey. Ardell died in 2012, but the work he contributed to CECA remains in service today.

Another voice from that era is Ray Murphree, a lineworker who worked when much of the cooperative's territory was still being built out.

Murphree said that the Albany area was considered no-man's land for years until the cooperative extended service into that region. He estimated that crews built between 100 and 150 miles of line there.

Although operations were based out of Comanche, crews would leave early Monday mornings and drive north to work in Albany. They stayed in motels during the week, worked long days and returned home Sundays. Construction crews typically consisted of 10–12 men who traveled throughout the service area wherever lines needed to be built.

Murphree also said that during World War II, construction on CECA lines largely stopped due to the war effort. Materials were



1. A CECA employee group photo from the late 1940s.
2. CECA employees in the late 1940s, from left: OT and Hab Cotrell, Fred Hick, Ray Murphree, Jim Hardy and Travis Everett.
3. CECA employees in the late 1940s from left: Fred Hick, Hab and O.T. Cotrell on the back of a lineman truck stringing wire.

scarce. The workforce was limited. He said construction slowed around 1942 and did not fully resume until 1946 or 1947.

When work resumed, it was demanding.

Murphree said he specifically remembered the drought of 1955 in the Albany area: the hottest, driest country he had ever seen. There was little shade and a whole lot of rock in that country. Setting poles in that terrain was not easy.

Each man on the crew had a job. Some set poles. Others installed wire. Some operated the digger truck when one was available. Many times, holes were dug entirely by hand. In certain areas, crews even used dynamite to clear land so electric lines could be installed.

Murphree did nearly every job over the years, though he spent much of his time installing wire. He later ran the wire crew for many years and eventually served as construction and maintenance foreman, directing outside crews throughout the service area.

In those early days, when something went wrong, restoration did not happen in minutes. It could take days, weeks or even months before lines were repaired in remote areas. Crews had limited equipment, limited materials and long stretches of rural territory to cover.

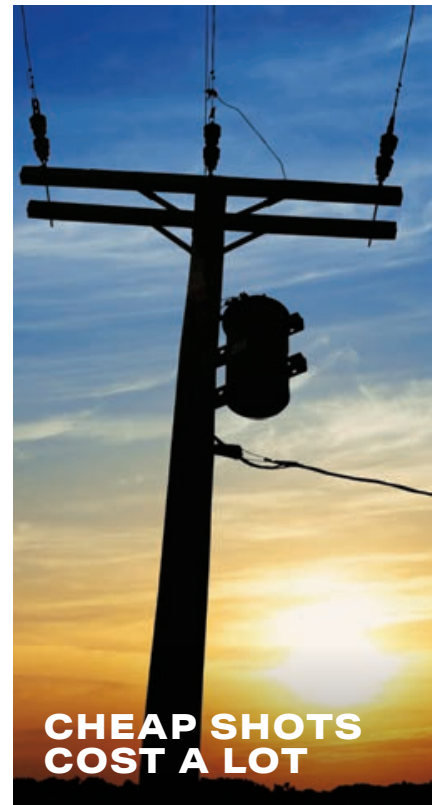
Today, technology allows us to quickly identify impacted areas and dispatch crews within minutes. We have advanced equipment, communication systems and trained personnel ready to respond around the clock. The system has evolved, but the commitment has not eroded.

When asked about his time at CECA, Murphree described it simply. It was a good place to work. But it was a lot of hard work.

Electricity did not arrive in our communities by chance. It came because men like Ardell and William Elliott and Ray Murphree showed up week after week, in heat, drought and rock-filled ground and built it one pole at a time.

As we celebrate REA Day on May 11, we honor more than a signature placed on a federal order in 1935. We honor the dedicated, local hands that carried that vision forward. We honor the families who believed rural communities were worth investing in. And we recommit ourselves to serving our members with that same dedication, using every tool available to provide reliable service today and into the future.

We're proud of where we came from. We're grateful for those who built this cooperative. And it remains an honor to serve you. ■



CHEAP SHOTS COST A LOT

It doesn't take a crack shot to hit an electric insulator or transformer. Careless shooters can cause major problems for your electric cooperative—and their neighbors.

Shooting electrical infrastructure is a serious crime with serious consequences.

It could even be a matter of life and death to someone on a life-support system or who is hit by a stray shot.

Damage to electrical equipment is very expensive to repair. Lines may be cut or weakened from a shot, and they may sag or break, becoming a serious hazard for anyone who comes into contact with the line.

Broken insulators can cause power outages that are hard—and expensive—for co-op employees to locate.

Enjoy your sport, but be a responsible hunter.

CECA encourages you to always practice safety.

PHOTO: GENO ESPONDA

Community Calendar

Cisco

Cisco Writers Club Writing Contest,

June 1–July 31. Welcoming writers of all ages from anywhere in the world. All entries must be original, unpublished and not AI-generated. Visit ciscowritersclub.org/annual-writing-contest, call (254) 631-3611 or email ciscowritersclub@cs.com for more information.

Chamber of Commerce Golf Scramble, June 6, 8 a.m., Rolling Oaks Golf Club in Rising Star. Event, date and time are subject to change. Call (254) 442-2537 or email ciscochamberofcommerce@gmail.com for more information.

For more information, contact the Cisco Chamber of Commerce at (254) 442-2537 or ciscochamberofcommerce@gmail.com.

Comanche

Mother's Day Lunch, May 10, 11 a.m.–2 p.m., Comanche County Museum, 402 Moorman Road. Donations are appreciated, and guests can enjoy ham, meatballs and delicious desserts. For more information, call (325) 356-5115 or email comanchecountymuseum@gmail.com.

For more information, contact Comanche Chamber of Commerce and Agriculture at comanchetxchamber@gmail.com or (325) 356-3233.

Early

Courts and Controllers, May 2, 10 a.m., McDonald Park, 101 Park Drive. Howard Payne University's basketball and volleyball departments will run the sports

tournaments, while Mobile GameDrop's gaming trailer, alongside HPU's esports program, will host the gaming competition. Also enjoy extra games, fun activities and delicious concession-style food. The time is subject to change due to the brackets. Contact aconstancia@earlytx.net for more information.

Kid's Fishing Tournament, June 6, Early Town Center, 109 Kelcy Way. Join the Kiwanis Club of Brownwood for a fun-filled morning of fishing. This in-person event is perfect for kids 16 and under who love the outdoors and want to learn how to fish. The first 150 to register will get a free rod, reel and bait. The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department will provide a limited loaner tackle. Additionally, there will be educational programs from TPWD Inland Fisheries, state parks, law enforcement and Heart of Texas Nature Center. Bring your fishing gear or borrow some of ours—either way, get ready to catch some fish! Email dhudson-brian@earlytx.net for more information.

Eastland

Splish Splash 5K Dash, May 30, Eastland swimming pool, 274 Park Hill Road. Registered runners will earn the honor of making the first splash at the pool for the 2026 season. This family-friendly event is open to all ages and paces. Registration is available online at runsignup.com/race/tx/eastland/splishsplash5kbash or in person at city hall.

Lake Brownwood

Reptiles With a Ranger; May 2, 16 and 30 and June 13 and 27; 2:30–3:45 p.m.; Lake Brownwood State Park; 200 State

Highway Park Road 15. Observe and touch a few harmless reptiles and participate in discussions of biology and ecology. Bring a sense of curiosity to the Group Dining Hall. In addition to the live animals, there will be pictures, snake sheds, turtle shells and other materials guests can touch and interact with. Free with park entrance. For more information, contact George Dudich at (325) 784-5223 or george.dudich@tpwd.texas.gov.

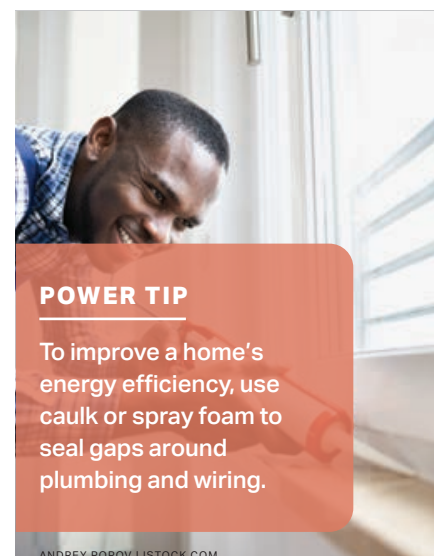
Wilderness Survival Hike, Fridays in May and June, 1:30–2:45 p.m., Texas Oak Trailhead at Lake Brownwood State Park. Learn about plants, fungi and other resources used by Native Americans and early settlers. Bring sturdy walking shoes and a sense of curiosity. Free with park entrance, weather dependent. For more information, contact George Dudich at (325) 784-5223 or george.dudich@tpwd.texas.gov.

Zephyr

Fish Fry, May 16, 6 p.m., Democrat Community Center, 907 W. FM 218 S. Please join us for freshly fried catfish, fries and hush puppies, beans, coleslaw, and all the fixin's! Donations are accepted to help fund the future needs of the building. Desserts welcome. Come earlier to socialize with neighbors and friends. Organized by the DCC board members. For more information, please contact Rachel Shelton at (512) 771-5713 or email democratcommunity@gmail.com.

Comanche Electric Cooperative Association welcomes your local event

submissions. If you have any events you would like listed in the Community Calendar, please contact Triston McGehee. Event information must be submitted two months in advance for the magazine. The calendar is published monthly and includes events scheduled for the month of publication and the following month. CECA reserves the right to edit or exclude events based on space availability and other considerations. We do not certify the accuracy or reliability of any information posted in the Community Calendar. To confirm event details, please contact the event organizers directly. Email tmcgehee@ceca.coop; write to CECA at P.O. Box 729, Comanche, TX 76442; or call 1-800-915-2533.



Little Changes Add Up

YOU DON'T ALWAYS have to make sweeping changes like upgrading appliances or replacing windows to save energy. Sometimes all it takes is the cumulation of small lifestyle changes to add up to savings.

When you use your printer—at home or at work—print on both sides of the paper.

Invest in a single power strip to tuck behind your entertainment center. Plug your TV, speakers and other electronics into it. Then, switch the power strip off every night before bedtime so none of those devices draw electricity when not in use.

Wait until your dishwasher is full before running it. Stop washing dishes by hand—it uses up to twice as much water and energy as the dishwasher.

Wash your clothes in cold water instead of hot. This could save you up to \$40 a year.

Lower your water heater's temperature by just 2 degrees. You won't notice the difference when you shower, but you will notice it on your energy bill.

Keep your freezer full. It takes more energy to cool an empty space than a full one.

Hang an outdoor clothesline. Pull nearly dry clothes out of the washer and hang them; they don't need to go into the dryer. That will cut the number of dryer cycles you use.

Slide your refrigerator a couple of inches away from the wall. Pressing it up against a wall limits air circulation behind it and makes the appliance work harder, which uses more energy.

Skip the hair dryer. You'll save energy by air-drying rather than blow-drying—and your hair will be protected from heat damage, too.

Turn things off when you're not using them: lights, ceiling fans, space heaters, the TV, your computer—anything that's electric. ■



MARIA ARGUTINSKAYA | ISTOCK.COM



RUDISILL | ISTOCK.COM

Puff Oven Pancake

4 eggs
1 cup milk
1 cup flour
2 teaspoons sugar
1 teaspoon salt
¼ cup (½ stick) butter
Fresh fruit or berries
Powdered sugar

1. Preheat oven to 450 degrees.
2. In a large bowl, briefly beat eggs. Whisk in milk, flour, sugar and salt until fairly smooth (do not overmix). Cover batter and let stand 30 minutes.
3. Place butter in a 12-inch cast-iron skillet, or similarly sized baking dish, and heat in oven until melted. Swirl skillet to coat the bottom and sides with melted butter.
4. Pour batter into skillet and bake 15–20 minutes or until it rises very high and is billowy on the edges and golden brown.
5. Remove from heat and let cool 5 minutes. Place fruit in the center crevice of pancake and dust with powdered sugar.

SERVES 4–6

TCP Find this and more delicious recipes online at [TexasCoopPower.com](https://www.texascooppower.com).

Garden Variety Show

Pull up a chair and look real close: There could be a menagerie hiding in your yard

BY SHERYL SMITH-RODGERS • ILLUSTRATION BY PETER DONNELLY

CAROLINA SNAILSEED often pops up in our native gardens. I let a few vines clamber up our chain-link fence. The rest I yank. That's what I was doing a few Aprils ago in a front-yard bed. Bent over, pulling on a stubborn root, I glanced at a nearby tree stump.

Could it be? I squinted and looked again, this time closer.

It was a long-legged gray spider, a kind I'd never seen before in our yard, and so well camouflaged that I inched up for an even closer look. Sensing my presence, the spider sidled on the stump.

I laughed. "I see you," I said, snapping some photos with my phone. The spider sidled back the other way. "Sorry, I still see you!" Later I learned that I'd actually met a white-banded fishing spider, a species—as its name implies—that mostly hangs out near water. How she found her way to our gardens will always mystify me.

To this day, my encounter with that spider ranks among my favorite garden adventures, the list of which continues to grow. That's what happens when you tend native plants: Mother Nature shows up.

To keep track of what I find, I use iNaturalist, an online network of users who record and identify organisms around the world through a mobile app and website. Within the 1-acre property that my husband and I own in a neighborhood in the Hill Country town of Blanco, I've documented more than 1,520 species of flora and fauna, including some surprises.

For instance, one June our velvet-leaf mallow hosted a huddle of violet-hued caterpillars with red heads. Or so I thought. They turned out to be the larvae (not butterfly caterpillars) of sawflies, which are named for the female's egg-laying appendage that saws into plants. Adult sawflies are seen less often than their chubby larvae.

Not so for a large fly that's commonly called an elephant mosquito (yes, mosquitoes are flies). Somehow I resisted the urge to swat the first one I ever saw, resting on a salvia leaf. Imagine my surprise when I learned that these iridescent mosquitoes feed on flower nectar, not blood. Plus, their aquatic larvae eat watery insects, including other mosquito larvae.

My first jagged ambush bug, lurking on a coreopsis flower, stumped me. Viewed from the side, these pea-sized predators have a silhouette that resembles a humpbacked dinosaur. Concealed on a bloom, they

wait for a small butterfly, moth or bee to land. Then they grab the victim with their hooked forelegs, similar to a praying mantis', and stab their sucking mouthpart (called a proboscis) into the body.

One evening, a green dragonfly called an eastern pondhawk sideswiped my left ear at top speed. Then she landed near my feet on a rock. After taking some photos, I stuck out my hand. To my delight, she flitted onto me! So have longhorn cactus flies, red admiral butterflies, robber flies, a picture-winged fly and a scaly cricket, along with assorted bugs, beetles and spiders.

Sometimes critters have fooled me, too. Like a hefty ant perched on an esperanza bloom. Wrong—it was a juvenile Texas bow-legged bug. Another time I spotted a firefly (which are beetles) on a plateau goldeneye leaf. Nope—it was a firefly-mimicking longhorn beetle.

Other pranksters in our gardens include ant-mimicking jumping spiders, velvet ants (wingless female wasps) and Beelzebub bee-eaters, a fuzzy robber fly that looks like a bumblebee. All use mimicry to either ward off predators or trick their prey (and me).

We've seen Texas spiny lizard mothers excavate burrows in flower beds. One time I happened by an autumn sage just in time to see a checkered garter snake gulp down an earthworm. In the summer, Rio Grande leopard frogs honeymoon in our 100-gallon stock-tank pond.

Bird adventures? You bet. One June a wild turkey hung out in our backyard. That same month, a juvenile green heron practiced his fishing skills in a shallow birdbath. We still laugh at videos taken of a black-crested titmouse mom pulling fur off our annoyed cat. Yes, the titmouse survived!

Fate wasn't so kind when a red paper wasp landed on the street at my feet. I'd been en route to check our milkweed crop of antelope-horns. I crouched down, then grimaced.

The wasp mother was sawing the legs off an orb-weaver spider that she'd paralyzed with a sting. A few minutes later, she finished her gruesome task and lifted into the air, clutching her victim. Soon the legless spider would feed hungry wasp larvae.

Yes, Mother Nature can be cruel. But she can be fascinating and surprising, too. Take my advice and look closer. Soon you'll be on your own garden adventure. ■



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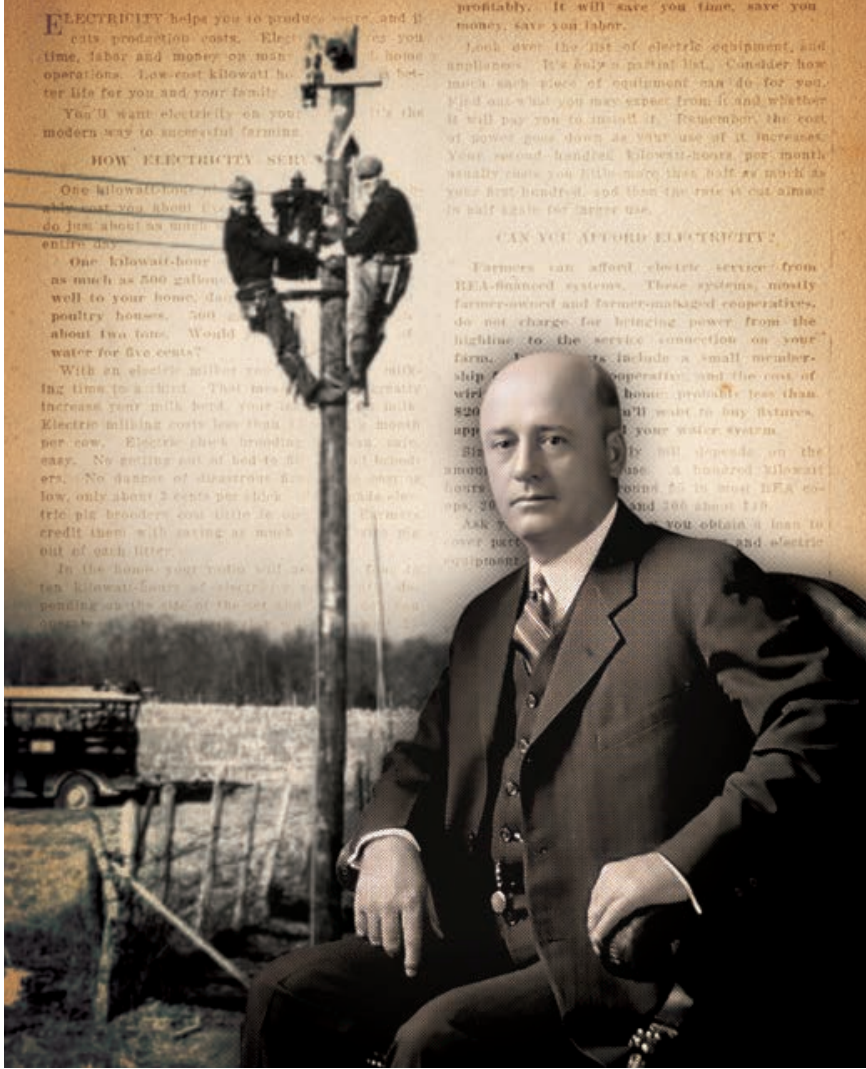
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Power and Light

Sam Rayburn helped pull rural Texans out of the dark

BY JESSICA RIDGE

BEFORE THE PASSAGE OF THE Rural Electrification Act nearly a century ago, in the depths of the Great Depression, most U.S. farmsteads made do in the dark while their neighbors in cities a few miles away experienced a higher standard of living. Investor-owned utilities didn't deem it profitable to run miles of power lines across the countryside.

Without electric lights and appliances, farm families cooked over smoky woodstoves, read and studied under kerosene lamps, and performed laborious agricultural chores by hand.

By the mid-1930s, change was afoot, thanks in large part to a dedicated and diplomatic Texan intent on the empowerment of rural communities. The REA,

enacted 90 years ago this month—May 20, 1936—made available low-cost federal loans to rural landowners who had banded together in hopes of threading the countryside with electric lines.

Electric cooperatives were born, starting with the first, Bartlett Electric Cooperative in Central Texas.

Before the REA, only around 10% of U.S. farms had electricity. By 1950, the federal financing the legislation shook loose had helped electrify nearly 80% of farms. Today, more than 900 co-ops power rural and suburban residents.

A 1960 Department of Agriculture video describes electricity as “magic from nowhere and everywhere” and details “the drab, colorless days” before

its rural availability. The video colorizes a black-and-white sequence, demonstrating the life-changing force of electricity coursing through the home of the fictional family it depicts.

Similar transformations, effected many times across prewar rural landscapes nationwide, were largely enabled by the efforts and advocacy of U.S. Rep. Samuel Taliaferro Rayburn, who cosponsored the REA legislation with Nebraska Sen. George Norris.

Rayburn, born in Tennessee, moved with his family to an unelectrified Fannin County farm, in North Texas, when he was 5, in 1887.

He attended grade school through law school in Texas and served in the Legislature before catapulting to Congress in 1913, where he set records as the longest-serving speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives—17 years over 10 sessions spanning the 1930s to 1960s, accrued piecemeal during his near-half-century tenure.

Rayburn didn't forget his former neighbors. In his papers, housed at the Briscoe Center for American History at the University of Texas, a March 1938 thank-you on Fannin County Electric Cooperative letterhead notes the co-op's progress in installing its first 110 miles of line, thanks to a \$100,000 REA requisition.

In July 1940, Farmers Electric Cooperative sent its own note to Rayburn, chiefly attributing to him the REA's “birth and success.” Included was a precursor to this magazine, a monthly newsletter called the *REA Co-op Message*, which included a run-down of the co-op's recent annual meeting, a list of new members and updates about members' appliance purchases.

Readers learned that member W.C. McKay had installed an electric range at home. “Naturally,” the newsletter reads, “Mrs. McKay is very happy.”

She wasn't alone. Thanks to Rayburn, life in Co-op Country was changed forever. ■

SAM RAYBURN: TEXAS STATE HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION. LINEMEN: FROM THE BOOK THE NEXT GREATEST THING

Mom's Favorites

Recipes perfected and passed down through the years

BY VIANNEY RODRIGUEZ, FOOD EDITOR

This salad smells like home. Growing up, my mami had a beautiful garden where she harvested the juiciest cucumbers and tomatoes. Sliced, tossed with panela and drizzled with her homemade dressing, I could eat this salad every day. I'm thrilled to share a dish my mami and I still enjoy together.

Tomato Cucumber Panela Salad

2 cups halved cherry tomatoes
2 medium cucumbers, diced
1 package panela cheese (16 ounces), cubed
½ cup olive oil
2 tablespoons white vinegar
2 tablespoons lime juice
1 teaspoon salt
2 teaspoons ground black pepper
1 bunch cilantro, finely minced

1. Place tomatoes, cucumbers and panela in a bowl.
2. In another bowl, whisk together oil, vinegar, lime juice, salt and pepper until well blended. Stir in cilantro.
3. Pour dressing over salad, stir to combine and store in fridge until ready to serve.

SERVES 4

TCP Follow Vianney Rodriguez as she cooks in Cocina Gris at sweetlifebake.com, where she features a recipe for Frida Kahlo's Ensalada de Calabacin.





Lasagna

DANI DECESARO
TRINITY VALLEY EC

DeCesaro's Norwegian mom married an Italian man and perfected this recipe alongside her sister. It has become a wonderful memory for the entire family.

- 3 quarts plus 1/3 cup water, divided use**
- 1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon salt, divided use**
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil**
- 9 lasagna noodles**
- 4 tablespoons (1/2 stick) butter**
- 1 pound ground beef**
- 1/4 cup minced onion**
- 1/4 cup dried parsley flakes**
- 1/8 teaspoon garlic salt**
- 2 tablespoons flour**
- 1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper**
- 1/2 teaspoon oregano**
- 1 can evaporated milk (12 ounces)**
- 1 can tomato paste (12 ounces)**
- 1 pound mozzarella cheese, sliced into 18 pieces**

- 1.** Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Coat a 9-by-13-inch baking dish with cooking spray.
- 2.** Bring 3 quarts water to a boil. Add 1 tablespoon salt and oil. Cook noodles according to package directions. Drain and place noodles on paper towels.
- 3.** Heat butter in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add ground beef, onion, parsley and garlic salt. Cook, breaking up ground beef with spoon.
- 4.** When fully cooked, reduce heat to simmer, and stir in remaining 1 teaspoon salt, flour, pepper and oregano until well combined.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28 >



\$500 WINNER

Mom's Fresh Apple Bars

DIANE KORUS
KARNES EC



Korus' mom enjoyed these bars in the afternoon with a cup of coffee, and I have to agree that these babies are the ultimate afternoon snack. Packed with fresh apples and a sinfully sweet streusel topping, these bars are a crowd pleaser.

STREUSEL

- 1/2 cup flour**
- 1/2 cup sugar**
- 4 tablespoons (1/2 stick) unsalted butter, softened**

BARS

- 2/3 cup shortening**
- 2 cups light brown sugar**

- 2 eggs, room temperature, lightly beaten**
- 1/4 teaspoon salt**
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract**
- 2 cups flour**
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon**
- 2 teaspoons baking powder**
- 1 1/2 cups peeled and chopped Granny Smith apple (about 1 large or 2 medium apples)**
- 1/2 cup chopped pecans**

- 1. STREUSEL** In a bowl, combine flour, sugar and butter. Mix until mixture resembles coarse crumbs.
- 2. BARS** Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Coat a 9-by-13-inch pan with cooking spray.
- 3.** In a large bowl, beat shortening and brown sugar on medium speed until smooth. Add eggs, salt and vanilla and mix until combined, scraping down sides as needed.
- 4.** With a spatula, stir in flour, cinnamon and baking powder until well combined. Gently fold in apples and pecans.
- 5.** Spread batter into prepared pan and sprinkle with streusel. Bake 35–40 minutes or until the top is golden brown and a toothpick inserted comes out clean.

SERVES 12

TCP \$500 Recipe Contest

CAMPFIRE FAVORITES DUE MAY 10

For our October issue, we're eager to pass around treats and meals to munch on while gathered around the flames. Fire off your best recipe for a chance at winning \$500.

UPCOMING: CRANBERRY HARVEST DUE JUN 10



RECIPES CONTINUED

5. Add evaporated milk and remaining 1/3 cup water. Cover and simmer 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Stir in tomato paste until well combined.
6. Layer three noodles on bottom of prepared pan. Spread 1/2 meat sauce over noodles, then layer on 3 more noodles and top with 1/2 of cheese. Add remaining 3 noodles. Top with remaining meat sauce and remaining cheese.
7. Bake about 30 minutes, until cheese is melted and begins to brown.

SERVES 8

Yankee Cake

CHUCK BURGESS
HEART OF TEXAS EC

Burgess' mom was from Texas, his dad from New York. His dad's family shared this cake recipe with Mom. It's now a family favorite and sure to be your new



favorite too. This Yankee Cake is a cinnamonony sweet surprise sprinkled with sugar and nuts.

- 2 cups flour
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 cup plus 1 tablespoon sugar, divided use
- 7 tablespoons (7/8 stick) butter, softened, divided use
- 1 egg
- 1/2 cup heavy cream

- 1/2 cup milk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 1/2 cup chopped walnuts or pecans

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Coat a 9-by-13-inch pan with cooking spray.
2. In a medium bowl, mix together flour, salt and baking powder.
3. In a large bowl, beat 1 cup sugar and 5 tablespoons butter at medium speed until light and fluffy. Reduce speed to low and add egg, heavy cream, milk and vanilla. Mix until combined, scraping down sides.
4. Add flour mixture and mix until combined.
5. Spread batter evenly into prepared pan. Sprinkle with remaining 1 tablespoon sugar plus cinnamon and nuts. Dot with remaining 2 tablespoons butter.
6. Bake 25–30 minutes, until edges are lightly golden and a toothpick inserted comes out clean.

SERVES 12

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COURTESY CHET GARNER

South Poles

Panna Maria museum shows off Polish heritage in a big way

BY CHET GARNER

LOTS OF FOLKS know Texas for its Mexican flavors, its German beer halls and its Czech kolache. But mention our Polish history, and most won't know where to start, even though Texas is home to the oldest permanent Polish settlement in America.

I'll admit, before visiting the small community of Panna Maria, I didn't grasp how deep our Polish roots run. But fortunately, I found the Polish Heritage Center ready to educate me and the rest of Texas.

Panna Maria (population about 40) sits quietly on the rolling plains of Karnes County about an hour southeast of San Antonio.

The entire community revolves around two blocks. On one sits the picturesque Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary Catholic Church, which dates to 1855. And on the next is the stately Polish Heritage Center, which dates to 2021. I have visited more than my fair share of small-town museums, but nothing could prepare me for what I found inside this state-of-the-art facility.

After signing my name in the guest book next to visitors from the Polish capital of Warsaw and beyond, I stepped into an immersive experience that transported me to 1854, when a group of Polish immigrants held Mass under the oak trees just outside the church and decided to call Panna Maria home. The museum went on to tell the story of the culture, faith and struggles of this community, including its influence on modern life in Texas.

The history unfolds through hand-embroidered clothing, family photos, tools and letters carried across the Atlantic. It's so well done that it would impress visitors in any big city, making it all the more amazing in tiny Panna Maria.

Texas is a patchwork of cultures, accents and traditions. Thanks to the Polish Heritage Center, one of our more overlooked threads is finally getting the spotlight it deserves. ■

ABOVE Chet stops at a painting in the Polish Heritage Center in Panna Maria showing the first Catholic Mass after immigrants reached the site on Christmas Eve in 1854.

TCP Watch the video on our website and see all of Chet's Explorations on *The Daytripper* on PBS.



Know Before You Go

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

MAY

8

Brenham [8-9] Maifest, (979) 451-0621, brenhammaifest.com

Round Top [8-10] Fine Art Festival at the Compound, (281) 236-3821, bit.ly/fafatthecompound

9

Nacogdoches Scottish Highland Games and Festival, (936) 371-3072, nacscottishgames.com

Palestine Mother's Day Lunch Train, 1-855-632-7729, texasstaterailroad.net

Stonewall Williams Creek (Albert) School Open House, (830) 685-3321, historicschools.org

14

Giddings [14-16] Lee County Fair, info@leecountyfairtx.com, leecountyfairtx.com

15

Columbus [15-16] Magnolia Days Festival, (979) 732-8385, magnoliadays.org

Grapevine [15-17] Main Street Fest, (817) 410-3185, grapevinetexasusa.com

16

Fredericksburg Classic Truck Show, (830) 990-4433, pecangrovestore.com

Greenville Knights of Columbus Mayfest, (903) 455-9062, donvinson75402@gmail.com

17

Fredericksburg Thomas Pandolfi, fredericksburgmusicclub.com

21

Grapeland [21-23] Salmon Lake Park Gospel Bluegrass Festival, (936) 687-2594, slpbluegrass.com

Kerrville [21-June 7] Folk Festival, (830) 257-3600, kerrvillefolkfestival.org

22

Granbury [22-24] Memorial Day Weekend Festival, (682) 936-4550, granburysquare.com

Kerrville [22-24] Texas Masters of Fine Art & Craft Show, (469) 223-4162, texasmasters.com

23

Chappell Hill Artwalk on Main Street, (979) 337-9910, chappellhilltx.com

Hondo Heritage Hike, (830) 660-6908, bit.ly/hondohike

Levelland [23-25] Panhandle Cutting Horse Association Show, (325) 518-1424, panhandlecha.com

29

Corsicana Big Bad Voodoo Daddy, (903) 874-7792, corsicanapalace.com

JUNE

5

Fort Worth [5-7] Hadestown, (817) 212-4280, basshall.com

Yoakum [5-7] Tom Tom Festival, (361) 293-2309, yoakumareachamber.com

San Antonio [5-August 1] Fiesta Noche del Rio, (210) 226-4651, fiestanochesa.com

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

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Upper Antelope Canyon, fine art giclée print, 2025, 12" x 19", Bobby Greeson



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Caught Napping

If you find yourself catching a catnap, needing 40 winks on the fly or sawing logs around your siblings, you're in good company. Usually, if you snooze you lose. But these readers won't be losing sleep anytime soon.

CURATED BY GRACE FULTZ

1 PAUL LAUDER
FARMERS EC

"After a hard morning competing in the livestock show at the State Fair of Texas, a young competitor and her pet take a well-earned rest."

2 REAGAN FERGUSON
CENTRAL TEXAS EC

"A number of neighbors went to the CF Ranch in Clarksville to help with their cattle drive. Following the drive, this young lady laid claim to a few bales of hay."

3 SHAWN DEAN
DEEP EAST TEXAS EC

"My granddaughter took this of her horse's new colt."

4 GABRIELLE ETHINGTON
PENTEX ENERGY

"Some friends raise kunekune pigs on a small farm outside of Nocona. I photographed this cutie napping in the front pasture area. It looks so happy."



Upcoming Contests

- RODEO** DUE MAY 10
- TAILGATING** DUE JUN 10
- RIDE THE RAILS** DUE JUL 10



ENTER ONLINE

TCP See Focus on Texas on our website for many more Caught Napping photos from readers.



Mother's Days

They give a lot to their kids, but sometimes moms need a little bit back

BY CAYT CALHOUN

ILLUSTRATION BY ANNA GODEASSI

A PANG OF FEAR HIT as the gurney wheeled me away from my family. Months of testing brought me here, and within the hour, I would become my mom's kidney donor.

Until that point, it struck me as odd when people asked if I was afraid. Why? I love her. That's enough. And it was enough to bat away intrusive thoughts as the anesthesia took hold.

Those fleeting moments of anxiety paled in comparison to years of uncertainty.

I understood the crushing weight of losing a parent—my dad died before I turned 2. Between his death and the deterioration of my mom's health, I tumbled through my adolescence fearing I'd lose *both* my parents before adulthood.

My mom received the IgA nephropathy

diagnosis when I was 10. At the time, I didn't understand how to pronounce it, let alone grasp the complexities of an inflammatory kidney disease that has no cure and can be fatal.

But chronic illness doesn't give you time to understand. It creeps in and presents itself with a slew of medications, revolving appointments and the enormously draining toll of it all. Despite everything, she expended energy she didn't have on my behalf. It seemed effortless at the time. I know better now.

Back then it was easier to accept things at a blithe glance—because being anything other than willfully ignorant meant facing a hard reality. I convinced myself that her active role in my life meant all was well.

But I couldn't pretend anymore. For a decade, I watched the quality of my mother's life ebb and flow until her kidney function dwindled to a measly 19%. She had two options: dialysis or surgery. With no known viable donor, she was forced to choose the former.

It had been us against the world for as long as I could remember. What if she lost the ability to do the things she loved? What if I lost her? The scenarios I conjured in my mind felt suffocating.

Watching how nightly dialysis altered her life was heartbreaking. At that point, I didn't have a choice. The voice in my head said the least I could do was try to give back to the person who gave me everything. So when co-workers, professors, peers and doctors asked if I was comfortable with donating a kidney at 20, I said yes emphatically. I don't believe it was selfless. I selfishly wanted more time with my mom.

Luckily, we got it.

We're now approaching the 10th anniversary of the donation, and I'm beyond grateful for the opportunity to have been her donor. There may be a world out there in which I wasn't qualified. There isn't a world where I wouldn't do anything for my mom. ■



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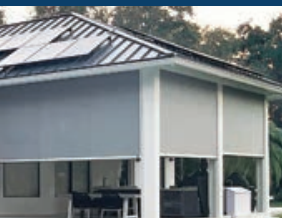
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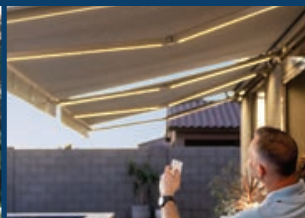
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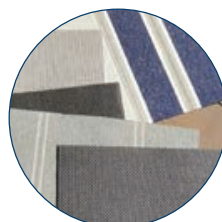
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