

HE TAUGHT HOLLYWOOD
STARS TO TALK TEXAN

BESSIE COLEMAN'S REACH
KNEW NO BOUNDS

CHAGRIN OVER
MY FATHER

Texas Coop Power

FOR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE MEMBERS

JUNE 2021

After Nature Strikes

How co-ops join forces
to get the power back on



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June 2021



07

'That's What Co-ops Are For'

Three months of historic weather in 2020 and the February polar vortex unleash the full force of Texas' co-op family.

Stories by Chris Burrows

ON THE COVER

A co-op crew works to restore power near Lake Charles, Louisiana, after Hurricane Delta.
Photo by Chad Simon | Sam Houston EC

ABOVE

Lineworkers across Texas scrambled to restore power during the polar vortex in February.
Photo courtesy Pedernales EC

12 Texas Talk Man

Robert Hinkle had some of Hollywood's biggest stars talkin' and dressin' the part.

By Jessica Ridge

04

Currents

The latest buzz

06

TCP Talk

Readers respond

18

Co-op News

Information plus energy and safety tips from your cooperative

29

Footnotes in Texas History

Queen Bess Soared
By Ainsley Shaw

30

TCP Kitchen

Tomatoes
By Megan Myers

34

Hit the Road

Deep Dip
By Chet Garner

37

Focus on Texas

Photo Contest: Man-Made vs. Nature

38

Observations

Parent Imperfect
By Martha Deeringer



Sunset Cinema

DRIVE-IN THEATERS have enjoyed a resurgence since last spring as the COVID-19 pandemic forced folks to find forms of entertainment that didn't risk their health. Even before that, drive-ins were thriving in Texas, as we wrote about in *Drive in, Chill Out* in June 2019.

June 6 National Drive-In Movie Day

Grab some popcorn and celebrate.

“Noble fathers have noble children.”

—EURIPIDES

Can-Do Perspective

Recycling one aluminum can saves enough energy to run a 14-watt CFL for 20 hours, a computer for three hours or a TV for two hours.



Storm Surge

A record 30 named storms formed in the Atlantic Ocean in 2020. Thirteen of those named storms turned into hurricanes, and three of them—Hanna, Laura and Delta—brought high winds or heavy rain or both to Texas, which mobilized lineworkers across the state. See *'That's What Co-ops Are For'* on Page 8.

As the planet warms, scientists say, hurricanes are lingering longer and staying stronger once they make landfall.

Alas, hurricane season begins again June 1 and runs through November.

Heavy Metal

THE LARGEST PLAYABLE GUITAR in the world is 43½ feet tall, 16½ feet wide and weighs 1 ton, according to Guinness World Records. Built by students from the Conroe Independent School District Academy of Science and Technology, it's modeled on a 1967 Gibson Flying V and was first played in June 2000 with the opening chord of *A Hard Day's Night*.



TCP Contests and More

[ON TEXASCOOPPOWER.COM](https://www.texascooppower.com)

\$500 RECIPE CONTEST

Pies

FOCUS ON TEXAS PHOTOS

Fillin' Stations

RECOMMENDED READING

Gas With Class (January 2013) visited a fillin' station that still offered full service.



A CAREER TAKES OFF

Nothing is cooler for an aspiring writer than to see her work in print for the first time.

Ainsley Shaw gets that thrill this month with the publication of *Queen Bess Soared* on Page 29.

Shaw is a first-year student at Maastricht University in the Netherlands, but she began writing about Bessie Coleman, the Texan who became the first African American woman and first Native American woman to earn a pilot's license, in 2020, when she was a senior at Leander High School.

Shaw, a Pedernales Electric Cooperative member, participated in the Leander school district's Career Opportunities on Location week by shadowing the staff at *Texas Co-op Power*. "Being in a real writing environment has only reinforced my intention to pursue writing as a career," she said of her COOL experience.

FINISH THIS SENTENCE

I ALWAYS LAUGH WHEN MY DAD ...

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. Below are some of the responses to our April prompt: **I thought I was smart until ...**

I realized I was mis-taking knowledge for wisdom.

GAIL DURFEE
MAGIC VALLEY EC
MCALLEN

I left home.
PATTY LONGINO SMITH
VIA FACEBOOK

I began talking less and listening more.

TAMMIE MANCHESTER
JACKSON EC
SARGENT

To see more responses, read Currents online.



DAVE SHAFER

The Seed Flourishes

“Great story on vintner Alphonse Dotson. Michael Hurd could have added that Dotson shows great character by his choice of dog—the blue Lacy pictured on the cover.”

BEN ROBERTS
HAMILTON COUNTY EC
GATESVILLE

Runaway Scrape’s Anguish

Janice Woods Windle wrote about her family’s involvement in the Runaway Scrape in her historical novel *True Women* [*The Runaway Scrape*, April 2021]. One detail I’ll never forget is that a child who died on the way east was later dug up and reinterred near home, after the danger was over.

Mary Pritchard
HILCO EC
Midlothian



Gotas de Oro is the best wine, and I’m not a wine drinker [*The Seed Flourishes*, April 2021]. I could get used to it.

TERESA ATOR
LEIFESTE
VIA FACEBOOK

Botched Attempt

You state that Sarah Fuller was the first female athlete to play in a major college football game and two weeks later was the first woman to score in such a game [*A Big Step*, Currents, April 2021]. Wrong on both counts.

Katie Hnida played for the University of Colorado in 1999 and New Mexico 2002–04. On August 30, 2003, she kicked two extra points against Texas State to become the first woman to score in a Division I game.

Mike Lusk
Medina EC
San Antonio

Real as It Gets

I must say that in today’s world of polemic divisiveness, your homey, well-written and informative magazine is a breath of fresh air. In a world of hypercommercialism at mind-blowing speeds, thanks for being so real.

Douglas Stewart
Pedernales EC
Wimberley



COLLEGIATE IMAGES / GETTY IMAGES

TCP WRITE TO US

letters@TexasCoopPower.com

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Austin, TX 78701

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

Texas Co-op Power

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BY CHRIS BURROWS

WALKING THE LINES

WHEN FEBRUARY'S polar vortex brought to Texas enough snow, ice, cold and wind to strain every bit of infrastructure, Cody Hansen, a Bandera Electric Cooperative lineworker, parked his bucket truck on the side of a Hill Country road. He was hoofing it.

"The roads were super snowed over. Then instead of patches of black ice, we had all black ice," he said. "It's a lot more difficult when you have to walk the lines out and try not to break an ankle."

Bandera EC and many of the state's 65 other distribution cooperatives supplied line crews with foul-weather gear—even if they couldn't supply their homes with power—and the lineworkers in turn restored power to millions between grid-mandated rolling outages. Those workers faced fender benders, exhausting conditions and 12-plus-hour shifts as they knocked ice from poles and hammered at frozen gates and chains to keep power flowing to co-op members.

But for many, the work wasn't done when their lights were back on. Not when others still needed help.

About a dozen co-ops sent workers to other cooperatives after ice broke thousands of poles across Co-op Country and residential heating demand overwhelmed other electrical equipment, stretching thin co-ops and crews.

"When our system was on the ground and members were without power, it was reassuring to know we had support from our co-op family," said Kathi Calvert, general manager at Houston County EC.

Borne out of hardship and guided by the Seven Cooperative Principles, including Cooperation Among Cooperatives, Texas' electric co-ops worked together, helped along by the very members they serve, to do what they've always done.

"Our crews in the field were constantly stuck and having to be pulled around due to the icy conditions," said Bryan Chandler, operations manager at Heart of Texas EC. "Our members came to our aid with food, fuel and tractors to help pull trucks."

It took everyone working cooperatively.

"This was definitely the worst winter storm I have worked in," said Doug Grimm, a 20-year linework veteran for Bluebonnet EC. "We did what we always do: Come together and get the job done." ■

AFTER TEXAS THAWED AND THE LIGHTS CAME BACK ON IN FEBRUARY, CO-OP LINEWORKERS STILL WEREN'T DONE

COURTESY FEDERNALES AND SAM HOUSTON ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES





'THAT'S WHAT CO-OPS ARE FOR'



BY CHRIS BURROWS



THREE MONTHS OF HISTORIC WEATHER IN 2020 UNLEASHED THE FULL FORCE OF TEXAS' CO-OP FAMILY

IT wasn't the 16-hour days or the searing heat. It wasn't the meager accommodations—a 100-man tent—or the fact that he'd had only five days off in seven weeks. Speaking from a mud-caked work truck in southwest Louisiana, James Warden didn't bring up any of those things.

"The hardest part is being away from home," Warden said. He had just missed his youngest son's eighth birthday. "When I'm working at home, I still get to see my kids and wife when I come in late at night. I at least get to kiss 'em good night, but here it's just a phone call."

The construction foreman for Deep East Texas Electric Cooperative was five days into his second trip in about a month to DeRidder, Louisiana, where he was helping an electric co-op severely damaged by hurricanes Laura and Delta. It was mid-October 2020, and Warden's crew, based out of San Augustine in East Texas, was setting poles and hanging lines, some of which they'd already reset and rehung weeks before, following Laura. That hurricane knocked out power to Warden's own home and heavily damaged his own co-op's lines.

But the day after the lights were back on in East Texas, Warden was in Louisiana. He left his own family to help another family—the co-op family.

In his 24 years as a lineworker, Warden has worked the front lines of major recovery efforts, including after hurricanes Katrina and Rita. But he had never experienced anything like this. He'd never had to miss one of his four kids' birthdays.

"When we first got here, there weren't hardly any lines up in the air," he said. "Their whole system was tore up. It was just wiped. When you drove down the highway, just about every pole you would look at was broke."



Co-ops follow the Seven Cooperative Principles, including Cooperation Among Cooperatives, through which they seek aid from and offer assistance to fellow co-ops during times of crisis.

COURTESY BLUEBONNET, HILCO, HOUSTON COUNTY, PEDERNALES, SAM HOUSTON AND SWISHER ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES



'EVERY TIME WE HAVE A STORM AT HOME AND IT GETS REAL BAD, PEOPLE VOLUNTEER TO COME HELP US. BEING A LINEMAN, WHAT YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO DO IS GO HELP PEOPLE.'

Relentlessly dedicated lineworkers like Warden have for more than 80 years ensured that the lights stay on across Co-op Country, where cooperatives rely on one another when disaster strikes. The full force of that network was on brilliant display last fall, when Laura in August, Hurricane Sally in September and Delta in October ripped through the South, including parts of Texas, killing dozens, displacing many more and destroying electrical infrastructure. And then an unprecedented ice storm tore apart co-op grids in West Texas and the Panhandle.

By the end of last October, lineworkers from every part of Texas had helped restore power for more than a quarter-million co-op members in Texas, Louisiana and Alabama—resetting thousands of poles along hundreds of miles.

But lineworkers like Ben Perry don't measure progress in miles or meters. They measure it in relieved faces.

"That's probably what will stick with me the most—the people that were there, the hospitality," said Perry, a foreman for United Cooperative Services, a co-op based south of Fort Worth. Perry, like Warden, was part of a crew dispatched to Louisiana to help Beauregard EC, whose entire electrical system was taken offline by Laura—the strongest recorded hurricane to ever make landfall in Louisiana. The Category 4 storm killed 77 after it made landfall August 27, 2020, packing 150 mph winds.

Laura dealt serious damage to several Texas co-ops but decimated Beauregard EC, prompting a call for help that

drew more than 1,200 lineworkers from across the South and Midwest, including Warden and Perry, for a massive monthslong power restoration effort. "We really couldn't do it without them," said Danielle Tilley, communications specialist at Beauregard EC.

"The devastation from that storm was unreal," said Brad Morrow, another United lineworker. "It seemed like everywhere you drove, there were trees and debris, and any sort of house or building was destroyed."

Twenty Texas co-ops sent help to Jasper-Newton EC, where 90% of that East Texas co-op's 22,900 meters had no power. General Manager Mark Tamplin was grateful. "Assistance from other cooperatives was extremely critical to the restoration effort," he said.

"Every time we have a storm at home and it gets real bad, people volunteer to come help us," Warden said. "Being a lineman, what you're supposed to do is go help people."

Cooperation Among Cooperatives, one of the Seven Cooperative Principles that guide all co-ops, ensures that help is just a phone call away when any co-op anywhere needs it.

"Whenever they call us, we're obligated to go help because there'll be times in the future when I know we'll need help," Perry said. "That's just what you do."

Tate Glasscock knows firsthand.

The foreman at Lighthouse EC, based in the Texas Panhandle, also made the trip east after Laura's onslaught, driving eight hours to spend 10 days helping Jasper-Newton EC.



From August through October, Texas lineworkers faced sweltering and then arctic conditions after hurricanes in the Gulf and an ice storm in West Texas and the Panhandle devastated co-ops' infrastructure.

“That’s what co-ops are for—to help each other,” Glasscock said.

Just a few weeks after returning from East Texas, Glasscock’s own co-op was hit by a devastating ice storm that snapped upward of 3,700 power poles and knocked offline more than 63,000 meters across 15-plus cooperatives in West Texas and the Panhandle. The October storm coated power lines with half-inch-thick ice, which can add 500 pounds to a single span of line, toppling crossarms, lines and poles across sparse stretches of plains.

Help poured in to the co-ops affected by the ice, which a South Plains EC spokesperson called “the most devastating storm we’ve had in 20 years”; Lighthouse EC general manager Albert Daniel said was “the worst storm to ever hit Lighthouse by all recollections”; and Lyntegar EC called “likely the largest single outage event ... in the history of the cooperative.”

Suddenly Glasscock and many fellow first responders were the ones in need of help after they just provided it.

“In my nearly 20-year career, I’ve never seen anything this detrimental to our system,” Glasscock said. “Most of the time it’s in one specific area. This was our whole system.”

United lineworkers Perry and Morrow headed west, just weeks after their tireless work out east, joining a major rebuilding effort in the Panhandle.

“Just seeing those guys roll through the gates, I thought, ‘Man, we’ve got help,’” Glasscock said. “I knew we were in

good shape then.”

Progress was much slower in the Panhandle, where homes can be separated by miles.

“I believe the first day that we went out, there were 13 or 14 poles that were on the ground that fed one house,” Morrow said. “In Louisiana that might have gotten 30, 40, 50 people on, if not more.” But the payoff was no different. “The relief in people’s eyes and the joy that they experience is the same.”

Between the hurricanes and ice storm, Perry spent about three weeks away from his family over the course of about two months. “I don’t know that I’ll ever forget this year,” said Perry, a 16-year line work veteran. “This has been one of the craziest years that I’ve been a part of in this work.”

Those in need kept him going. That was just as true this past February, when co-op members supported crews through an unprecedented polar vortex. Dangerous roads, iced-over lines and poles, and grid-mandated outages made lineworkers’ jobs even more challenging.

“There was the normal fatigue that comes from working so many 12-hour days in a row, but sometimes that was compounded by coming home to a cold house,” said Kendal Fiebrich, a Bluebonnet EC lineworker.

Sympathetic members lent support online and in the field—like a woman in Moss Bluff, Louisiana. She cooked up a meal of gumbo “and any kind of Louisiana fixin’s you could think of,” Morrow said, for linemen from Texas and Missouri who restored her power after weeks of living off a generator.

Strangers united by the co-op family.

“It’s the people who make it worthwhile,” Morrow said. “You’ll never find someone more thankful and willing to help you when you’re there to help them.” ■

Texas Talk MAN

A photograph of an older man with a goatee, wearing a black cowboy hat, a white long-sleeved shirt, and a black leather vest. He is leaning on a thick, mossy tree branch. He has a large silver bolo tie, a gold watch, and a diamond ring. In the background, a brown horse is grazing in a field under trees.

He had some
of Hollywood's
biggest stars
talkin' and
dressin'
the part

Robert Hinkle

likes to sit where he can see everyone in the room and who's walking through the door. He leads me to the corner of a long table at the back of a pandemic-emptied Masonic Lodge in Leander and chooses a seat with a clear view of the entrance. He wears an Air Force cap and a sky-blue Mason's shirt embroidered with "N. Hollywood," each emblematic of the twists and turns of his prolific career.

Attention to wardrobe figured into Hinkle's duties as unofficial technical adviser on the West Texas and Panhandle sets of *Giant* and *Hud*, two better-known entries in the catalog of midcentury Texas cinema. When costume design choices went awry—a hat that wasn't creased correctly or was impractical for work, jeans too short for horseback riding—he would issue a concise verdict: "A Texan wouldn't wear that," then figure out a fix.

That was just one duty on two projects over an entertainment career that spanned decades and comprised a raft of roles: stuntman, actor, writer, producer, director and Texas talk man, as *Giant* director George Stevens dubbed him.

Hinkle's preference for an unobstructed view isn't surprising, either. A few years before he coached Hollywood luminaries Rock Hudson, Elizabeth Taylor and Paul Newman on the nuances of a type of Texas dialect—leaving the "g" off words like "walking" and emphasizing r's when they ended a word such as "mother" or "father"—he enjoyed an embarrassment of bird's-eye views.

Born and raised in the South Plains of Texas, Hinkle left high school in 1947 to join the Air Force at 17 after securing a promise from a recruiter that he could continue his education while enlisted. "Nobody in my family ever had a high school diploma," he says. After earning that credential, he spent several months in Europe working on a crew that flew coal from Frankfurt to Berlin.

On one trip, the co-pilot had a heart attack midflight. Hinkle took over co-pilot duties for the rest of the round



Robert Hinkle lassos Elizabeth Taylor on the set of *Giant*.

trip, thanks to the private pilot's license he'd earned at 16.

While stationed overseas, Hinkle's first stop in Vienna was to board the Riesenrad, a 212-foot-tall Ferris wheel. It was a precursor to a ride he'd take a few years later, on a Ferris wheel much closer to home, with his good friend James Dean.

Not bad for a kid from Brownfield who didn't officially exist on paper until his 20s.

The country doctor who attended Hinkle's birth on an unelectrified Terry County ranch in 1930 misrecorded his first name as "Bobbie." It didn't get corrected until some 22 years later, when Hinkle went to the courthouse with his aunt and uncle in tow to vouch for his identity. Today, the nonagenarian takes that misnomer in stride, along with the doctor's weeklong delay in recording his birth on the county rolls. "That old doctor," he says, not unkindly. "At least he got me here."

Hinkle's family followed the crops around for work for a time after his birth. "We were poor," he says. "They were



James Dean shows Hinkle how well he's learned to hogtie.

intense focus on getting the part of Jett Rink, the anti-hero of *Giant*, just right.

"He told me, the day I met him, 'I want you to help me be a Texan 24 hours a day,'" Hinkle says. During filming, the pair grew close as the dialogue coach modeled Texan sensibilities for Dean. They shared meals, pulled pranks and hunted rabbits together. "He was like a brother," Hinkle says, "just like I was raised with him there in Brownfield."

Hinkle says Dean wasn't a big star then, having only one film credit at the time. But his commitment to his craft

and his precision in shaping a character in the likeness of his mentor precipitated a friendship.

"He was so dedicated," says Hinkle, a Pedernales Electric Cooperative member. "He wanted to be with me all the time. Because he wanted to be a Texan. I mean, he watched everything I did and everything I said, watched every person that I met, how I met 'em and things like that, and he just studied it."

That osmosis translated to the screen. Dean received a posthumous Oscar nomination for the role, which came as no surprise to his grieving friend.

"He could have played *Giant* a different way, you know," Hinkle says. "He wanted to play him just as an old down and out cowboy, didn't have anything and didn't figure he'd ever have anything, except a dream."

After filming of *Giant* ended, Dean gave a replica Oscar to Hinkle, inscribed with his name, to thank him for creating the character.

Back at the Masonic Lodge, the afternoon unspools. Just before he tells me about recruiting Buddy Holly to headline a car-selling telethon starring Western character actor Chill Wills, strains of *El Paso* fill the room. It's Hinkle's iPhone ring tone. His eyes crinkle. "That's Marty Robbins," he says. "I managed him for 14 years."

Looking back on his half-century career, spanning roles from cowboy stuntman to mentor to manager and many points in between, I ask if there's anything he'd change.

"No," he says. "I'd just love to do it again. I've had a lot of rough times and things—boy, I'd take them right along with the good ones, if I could just do it one more time." ■

TCP WEB EXTRA Want to see more from Hinkle's Hollywood days? Visit our website.

poor people." After the military and before setting out for Hollywood, Hinkle worked as a weekend rodeo cowboy and in construction, among other jobs. His 12-hour shifts in a West Texas oil field in 1950 and 1951 earned him \$1.76 an hour and, years later, a foothold in a conversation with Howard Hughes, the manufacturing scion and film producer.

An uncredited role in a 1956 film, *The First Traveling Saleslady*, led to a chance meeting of the two Texas transplants in Hollywood. After being instructed by the director to all but pretend not to even see Hughes as he visited the set, Hinkle was wrangled into meeting him anyway when the film's star, Ginger Rogers, walked him over. The inventor didn't offer to shake hands, Hinkle says, but the two quickly found common ground: Much to the magnate's approval, the drill bits the supporting player had used in his oil field days were manufactured by Hughes Tool Company.

During *Giant*'s 1955 production, Hinkle, James Dean and Elizabeth Taylor, along with a handful of other cast and crew members, repaired to Dallas over the Fourth of July weekend, all because the famously violet-eyed star couldn't resist the siren song of Neiman Marcus. Hinkle called the luxury retailer and dropped a few names. Stanley Marcus, the store's owner, not only agreed to allow the group entry to the store on a Sunday, when it would typically be closed, but also sent a plane to Marfa to whisk the group to Love Field.

After being feted by Dallas society in Stanley and Billie Marcus' Highland Park mansion, Hinkle, Taylor and Dean embarked on their shopping excursion, followed by an outing to an offseason Fair Park, home to the state fair, where they rode a rickety wooden roller coaster, sampled carnival fare, played midway games and boarded the soaring Texas Star.

The lighthearted weekend contrasted with Dean's



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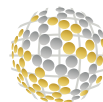
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Centuries ago, Persians, Tibetans and Mayans considered turquoise a gemstone of the heavens, believing the striking blue stones were sacred pieces of sky. Today, the rarest and most valuable turquoise is found in the American Southwest—but the future of the blue beauty is unclear.

On a recent trip to Tucson, we spoke with fourth generation turquoise traders who explained that less than five percent of turquoise mined worldwide can be set into jewelry and only about twenty mines in the Southwest supply gem-quality turquoise. Once a thriving industry, many Southwest mines have run dry and are now closed.

We found a limited supply of turquoise from Arizona and snatched it up for our *Sedona Turquoise Collection*. Inspired by the work of those ancient craftsmen and designed to showcase the exceptional blue stone, each stabilized vibrant cabochon features a unique, one-

of-a-kind matrix surrounded in Bali metalwork. You could drop over \$1,200 on a turquoise pendant, or you could secure 26 carats of genuine Arizona turquoise for just \$99.

Your satisfaction is 100% guaranteed. If you aren't completely happy with your purchase, send it back within 30 days for a complete refund of the item price.

The supply of Arizona turquoise is limited, don't miss your chance to own the Southwest's brilliant blue treasure. Call today!

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• Arizona turquoise • Silver-finished settings

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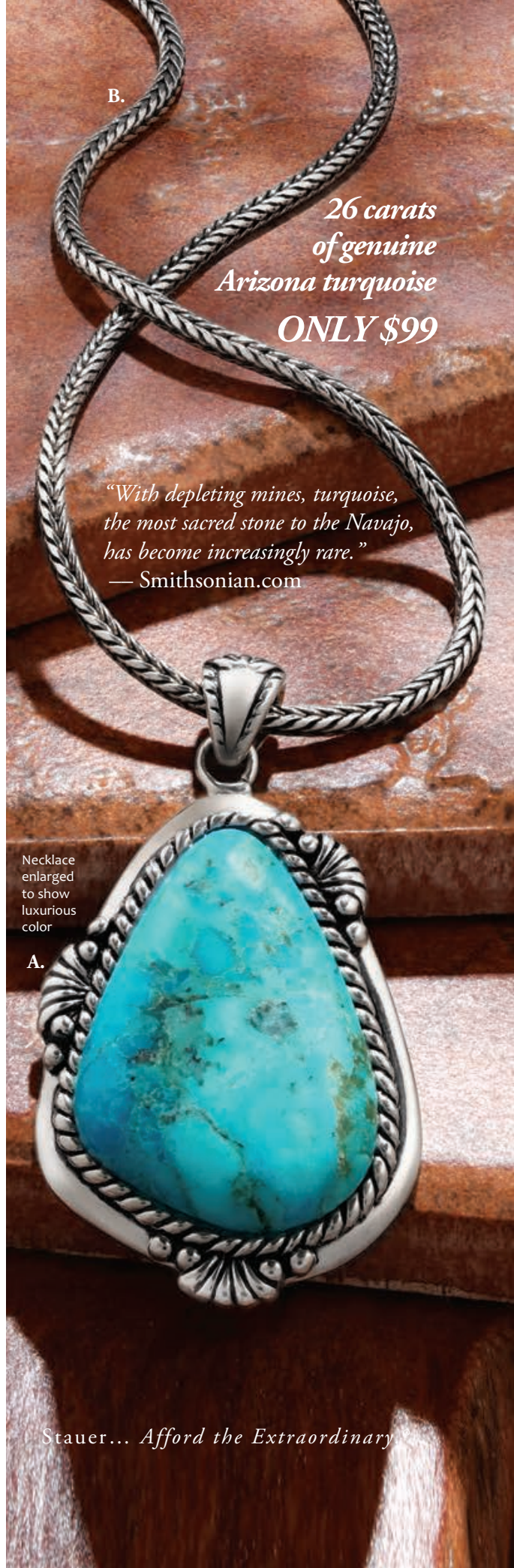
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— Smithsonian.com

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A.

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MESSAGE FROM GENERAL MANAGER

KATHI CALVERT

Tree Trimming Improves Service for All Members

ONE OF THE THINGS I love most about our community is the natural beauty that surrounds us. We are fortunate to have so many trees that offer beauty, shade and habitat for all sorts of birds and other wildlife. We know that you appreciate our community for many of the same reasons.

That's why Houston County Electric Cooperative strives to balance maintaining beautiful surroundings with ensuring a reliable power supply by keeping power lines clear in rights-of-way.

While we recognize and appreciate the beauty of trees, there are three main benefits to trimming trees in ROW areas. But before I touch on those reasons, let me first explain what a right-of-way is and how it may impact you.

All the land that we use to construct, maintain, replace and repair underground and overhead power lines makes up our rights-of-way. These pro-



tected areas enable the co-op to provide clearance from trees and other obstructions that could hinder power line installation, maintenance or operation. Houston County EC must be able to maintain the power lines above and below the ROW.

The goal of our vegetation management program is to provide reliable power to our members while maintaining the beauty of our community. Proactive vegetation management benefits co-op members in three tangible ways.

Safety

First and foremost, we care about our members and put their safety and that of our lineworkers above all else. Trees that are touching power lines in our members' yards can pose a grave threat. If children access those trees, they can potentially climb into a danger zone. Electricity can arc, or jump, from a power line to a nearby conductor such as a tree.

A proactive approach also diminishes the chances of branches or trees falling during severe weather events, which make it more complicated and dangerous for linemen to restore power.

Reliability

Of course, one of the biggest benefits of a smart vegetation management program is reliability. Strategic tree trimming reduces the frequency of downed lines that cause power outages. Generally speaking,

healthy trees don't fall on power lines, and clear lines don't cause problems. Proactive trimming and pruning keep lines clear to promote reliability.

Affordability

As you know, Houston County EC is a not-for-profit cooperative, and that means we strive to keep our costs in check to keep our rates affordable. This extends to our approach to vegetation management. If trees grow too close to power lines, the potential for expensive repairs also increases. Effective tree trimming and other vegetation management efforts keep costs down for everyone.

Our community is an important place. We appreciate the beauty trees provide, but we also know you depend on us to provide reliable energy. Through vegetation management, we can keep power lines clear, prepare for weather events and secure the reliability of the grid. ■

Plant the Right Tree in the Right Place

For more tips on smart tree planting in your community, contact your Houston County electric cooperative or visit www.ArborDay.org.

Trees beautify our neighborhoods, and when planted in the right spot, can even help lower energy bills. But the wrong tree in the wrong place can be a hazard... especially to power lines.

LARGE TREES

Height/spread of more than 40 feet, such as:

- Maple
- Oak
- Spruce
- Pine
- Birch
- Sweetgum

MEDIUM TREES

Height/spread of 25 to 40 feet, such as:

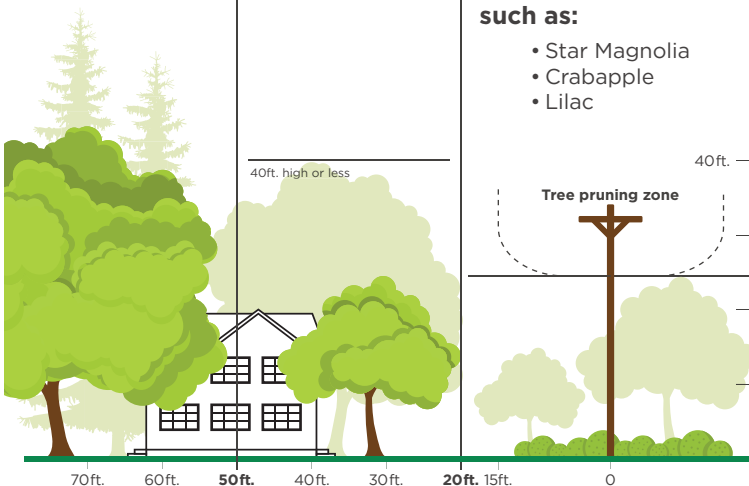
- Washington Hawthorn
- Black Tupelo
- Eastern Redbud
- Lacebark Elm
- Dogwoods

SMALL TREES

Avoid planting within 20 feet of power lines. When planting within 20 feet is unavoidable, use only shrubs and small trees.

Height/spread of no more than 25 feet such as:

- Star Magnolia
- Crabapple
- Lilac



Be safe! Always call 811 before you dig to locate any buried utility lines.

Source: The Arbor Day Foundation and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association

Houston County Electric Cooperative

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ABOUT HOUSTON COUNTY EC

HCEC owns and maintains more than 5,100 miles of line to provide electric service to more than 15,000 members in Anderson, Angelina, Cherokee, Freestone, Houston, Leon, Madison, Trinity and Walker counties.

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To speak to a member services representative regarding your account, press 4.
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The Artistry

OF ARBORISTS



RIGHT-OF-WAY PROFESSIONALS WEEK, JUNE 7 - 11

There's more than meets the eye to a freshly cut right-of-way. What once was disorderly vegetation magically turns into a sleek, crisp right-of-way, but the question is: what's behind the magic? As masters of their craft, the Houston County EC ROW crew strategically discards troubled vegetation that could interrupt electric service to the members we serve.

Maintaining right-of-ways is not only physically demanding, but it requires knowledge in physics. There's an art to cutting a 100 foot-tall tree with a power line 15 feet away and our crews are Van Goghs of the trade. Each Arborist crew member must exhibit an appropriate knowledge base in safety and skills to advance.

Our ability to provide reliable services is influenced by the maintenance of vegetation around power lines. We understand that trees are important. While we love living in the Pineywoods of East Texas, we also love providing uninterrupted electric service to our membership. That is why we must continue to maintain right-of-ways near power lines.



PHOTO CREDIT: JARAFF.COM

While a jaraff tree trimmer isn't in HCEC's fleet, you may see contract crews using them to trim problem vegetation near power lines.



HCEC Crews use a skid steer with grapple attachment to easily pile debris.



ROW Crews also utilize a bucket truck equipped with a hydraulic chain saw. The saws have a fiberglass pole to protect crews working near energized lines.

The HCEC Right-Of-Way Crew:



Jasper Barnett
Arborist I



Efrain Fajardo
Arborist I



Elliott Marshall
Arborist I



Larry Wickersham
Right-Of-Way Foreman

TOOLS OF THE TRADE:

Chainsaws, earplugs, rope, and pruning pole saws are equipment that our ROW crew uses on a daily basis.



Safety First. Always.



1. Personal Protective Equipment (Head & Face): ROW workers wear hardhats and eyeglasses to protect themselves from debris.
2. Chainsaw Protective Chaps are worn when using a chainsaw, the material is reinforced to restrict a chainsaw from cutting through into their body.

3 Electrifying Appliances That Save Time and Energy

WHETHER YOUR OVEN and stovetop are powered by gas or electricity, it's no secret that they consume more energy than smaller countertop appliances, such as slow cookers and toaster ovens. In addition to efficiency, smaller kitchen appliances can provide faster cooking times and less cleanup hassle.

If you're looking for convenient cooking methods with the bonus of energy efficiency, here are three electrifying appliances for your kitchen:

1. Air fryers are becoming increasingly popular, and consumers have a lot of good things to say about these handy little machines. Air fryers use convection

to circulate hot air and cook food, which means little to no oil is required, resulting in healthier meals than those from traditional fryers. With everything cooked in the fryer, cleanup is a breeze. Air fryers are available in a variety of sizes, and prices range from \$40 to \$200-plus.

2. Electric griddles have certainly been around for a while, and they offer several benefits for any home chef. Griddles are convenient because you can cook everything at once—like a one-pan meal—and the possibilities are endless. From fajitas to sandwiches to French toast, griddles can help satisfy any taste buds. They consume small amounts of

energy and provide quick cooking times, so your energy bill will thank you. Prices and sizes for griddles vary, but you can typically find one for about \$30.

3. Pizza brings people together, so why not consider a pizza maker for your kitchen? These compact countertop machines are an inexpensive alternative to a costly brick oven, and they use less energy than a traditional oven. Plus, most pizza makers are multifunctional and can be used to cook flatbreads, frittatas, quesadillas and more. You can purchase a pizza maker for \$30–\$150. ■



lightly with coconut oil and lightly flour.

2. Combine butter, sugar, eggs, sweet potatoes, banana, grated orange peel and vanilla in a bowl and beat together.

3. Mix together flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt, allspice, pecans and sunflower seeds. Stir the dry ingredients into the wet ingredients and mix.

4. Spoon dough into the prepared loaf pan and bake 55–90 minutes, or until an inserted toothpick comes out clean.

5. TOPPING Warm cream cheese over low heat until softened. Stir in sweetened condensed milk and add the chopped dates. Stir until smooth. Add powdered sugar until desired thickness is reached. Drizzle topping over a piece of the cooled cake.

COOK'S TIP Extra topping can be stored in the freezer or refrigerator.

Want your recipes to be featured? Send them to us!

Email recipes to kkoehler@houstoncountylec.com or mail them to:

Houston County EC

Attn: Texas Co-op Power recipes
P.O. Box 52, Crockett, TX 75835

Sweet Potato Cake

Submitted by HCEC member
Gloria J. of Crockett

CAKE

½ cup (1 stick) butter, softened

1 cup dark brown sugar

2 eggs

1 cup puréed sweet potatoes

1 cup very ripe mashed banana

¼ cup grated orange peel

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1½ cups whole wheat flour

¼ teaspoon baking powder

1 teaspoon baking soda

¾ teaspoon salt

¼ teaspoon ground allspice

¼ cup diced pecans

¼ cup sunflower seeds

TOPPING

1 block (16 ounces) Philadelphia cream cheese (not fat-free)

1 can (14 ounces) sweetened condensed milk (not fat-free)

½ cup chopped dates

¼ cup powdered sugar

1. CAKE Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease an 8½-by-4½-inch loaf pan

COOPERATIVE HIGHLIGHT

PRINCIPLE NO. 6: Cooperation among cooperatives

“There is power in numbers and there is power in unity.”

—DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

This sense of service to surrounding communities is what the sixth principle is all about. Houston County EC and cooperatives worldwide work together to meet and exceed member expectations.

THE SIXTH PRINCIPLE OF Houston County Electric Cooperative is Cooperation Among Cooperatives. The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association defines this principle as “Cooperatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the cooperative movement by working together through local, national, regional and international structures.”

For Houston County EC, this means working together with cooperatives in East Texas and beyond. Our 2021 winter weather events were a prime example of putting principle number 6 into action as we asked other cooperatives for assistance with service restoration. We have reciprocated by answering the call when other cooperatives needed our assistance.

Cooperative principle 6 goes beyond crews assisting each other in the field; we rely on each other for service innovation. We learn from other cooperative experiences and leverage shared information to support our members.



PRINCIPLE # 6 IN ACTION: HCEC Crews + Mutual Aid crews from 10 Texas cooperatives & contract crews during Hurricane Ike in 2008.



9 East Texas Electric Cooperatives joined forces in 1989 and created ETRAYS, a summer leadership camp for high school students.



PRINCIPLE # 6 IN ACTION: HCEC Crews assist southeast Texas cooperatives during Hurricane Harvey in 2017.

Members control their business by deciding how it's run and who leads it.

DEMOCRATIC MEMBER CONTROL

2

THE SEVEN COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLES

1

VOLUNTARY & OPEN MEMBERSHIP

Anyone can join a co-op—they don't discriminate based on gender, social, racial, political or religious factors.

3

MEMBERS' ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION

All co-op members invest in their cooperative. This means people, not shareholders, benefit from a co-op's profits.



XAVIER ARNAU | ISTOCK.COM

Crank Up Summer Fun, Not Cooling Bills

SUMMER IN TEXAS: It's hot, and you and the kids don't want to go outside. But you also don't want to stay inside and crank up the air conditioner, which can get pricey. Instead try these activities to stay cool and enjoy long summer days without running up your power bill.

Water Fight Challenge your children to a battle with water balloons, squirt guns, sprinklers and hoses. Evaporation will help keep you cool! Just be sure to pick up all the balloon pieces when you're done so the little bits don't become litter or choking hazards.

Giant Ice Cube Melt Make giant ice blocks in your deep freeze or freezer by filling buckets, dishpans or other big con-

tainers with water then freezing them. Then have a race to see who can melt their ice cube fastest using only their body.

Ice Age Excavation Take waterproof children's toys and freeze them in blocks of ice. Use kid-friendly tools to chip and melt away the ice to expose the toys.

'Bob' for Ice Cubes Fill a kiddie pool with water and ice cubes. Have your kids try to kick out as many ice cubes as they can. Whoever kicks out the most ice wins.

Make Popsicles Freeze fruit juice or fruit purée poured into popsicle molds or ice cube trays to make cool treats.

Jump Rope Water Challenge Dare your kids to jump rope 10 times while holding a paper cup of water. Whoever

has the most water in their cup after 10 hops wins!

Set up a Slip 'N Slide Whether rented, purchased or improvised with a tarp and hose, a Slip 'N Slide can provide hours of wet and wild entertainment for the whole family.

Water Table A water table puts water and toys at toddler height for outdoor play.

Make Ice Cream Nothing says summer like a homemade creamy and sweet treat. Using a nonelectric ice cream maker is one way to enjoy this summer favorite without cranking up the AC. ■

When making business deals or raising money, co-ops never compromise their autonomy or democratic member control.

AUTONOMY & INDEPENDENCE

4

Co-ops believe working together is the best strategy to empower their members and build a stronger co-op economy.

COOPERATION AMONG COOPERATIVES

6

EDUCATION, TRAINING & INFORMATION

Co-ops provide education, training and information so their members can contribute effectively to the success of their co-op.

5

CONCERN FOR COMMUNITY

Co-ops are community-minded. They contribute to the sustainable development of their communities by sourcing and investing locally.

7

Do Words Bug You?

A master naturalist spins a web around the tangled language of the natural world

BY SHERYL SMITH-RODGERS • ILLUSTRATION BY GORDON STUDER

A PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN six years ago captured me pointing to a warning sign posted on a Galveston beach. The sign read: CAUTION—POISONOUS SNAKES IN DUNES. The choice of adjective still irks me. But I understand. I, too, made the same mistake before I learned my first naturalist lesson. Since then, I've learned many more.

Poisonous or venomous? The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines poison as “a substance that through its chemical action usually kills, injures or impairs an organism.” Venom is “a toxic substance produced by some animals ... that is injected ... chiefly by biting or stinging and has an injurious or lethal effect.” Poison must be consumed whereas venom must be injected.

Bite or sting? A venomous bite happens when a creature sinks its fangs into a victim and injects venom through special structures in its mouth. Stings occur when a creature jabs venom into a victim through its stinger. Spiders and snakes bite; bees and wasps sting.

Bee or wasp? To tell the difference, look at the body. Honeybees, carpenter bees and bumblebees have plump, fuzzy bodies with thick legs. Honeybee colonies generally build their honeycomb nests inside tree cavities or human-made boxes. They sting once, then die. Carpenter bees and bumblebees, which respectively nest in wood and underground burrows, can sting but rarely do. The majority of native bees in Texas are solitary, meaning they nest alone.

Wasps have slender, smooth bodies with narrow waists, skinny legs and bright markings. They usually build papery nests and can sting repeatedly. Examples include yellow jackets and paper wasps. As for hornets, they're larger than wasps. Texas has only one kind—the bald-faced hornet, which is actually a yellow jacket. Aren't common names confusing?

Bug or insect? First, all bugs are insects. But not all insects are bugs. Bugs are classified as insects because they all have six legs, segmented bodies and exoskeletons. But not all insects have a mouth part called a proboscis. Only true bugs do. Examples include stink bugs, leafhoppers, cicadas, aphids and bedbugs. True bugs also hatch from eggs as tiny versions of their adult selves. Insects, such as butterflies, ants, flies and beetles, go through the stages of egg, larva and pupa.

Butterfly or moth? Most butterflies fly during the day. They're usually brightly colored and have slender, smooth bodies with club-tipped antennae. At rest, they hold their wings up. In contrast, most moths fly at night. They're usually drab in color and have fuzzy, thick bodies with feathered or tapered antennae. At rest, most fold their wings back.

Chrysalis or cocoon? Butterflies and moths pupate. That is, both metamorphose from caterpillars (larvae) into pupae, which then transform into adults. Most moth caterpillars spin a silk case called a cocoon around themselves. Inside, they pupate and emerge as adults. Butterfly caterpillars attach themselves to a safe place. Then they wiggle out of their caterpillar skin, leaving behind a smooth chrysalis that hardens and protects the pupa inside. Later, an adult butterfly breaks out of the chrysalis.

Spider or daddy longlegs? Another taxonomy lesson first. Spiders and daddy longlegs both have eight legs and exoskeletons. That makes them arachnids. The two differ in that spiders have two body parts and spin silk; daddy longlegs (also called harvestmen) have one body part and spin no silk. Unlike spiders, they have no fangs or venom.

Turtle or tortoise? All tortoises are turtles. But not all turtles are tortoises. Both are classified in a group of hard-shelled animals known as turtles. True turtles live in or near water and most have webbed feet and a smooth shell. Not so for tortoises, which have stumpy feet and live exclusively on land. Tortoises eat only plants; turtles eat plants and animals.

Frog or toad? Look at the skin. Generally, toads have bumpy, dry skin and don't need to live near water. Frogs have smooth, moist skin and require a watery habitat. Both live in my yard. Gulf Coast toads, warty and blackish gray, show up in my flower beds sometimes. They're harmless. Not so for the resident Rio Grande leopard frogs. To my dismay, they hang out in my stock tank and trample the aquatic plants, but they can't hurt a human.

What's a gardener to do? That's a lesson I haven't learned yet. ■

TCP WEB EXTRA

Go online, where the author corrects William Shakespeare.

COCOON



Chrysalis

Moths



Sting



HORNET

Caterpillars



Spiders

BITE

POISONOUS

SNAKES

VENOMOUS

Frogs

Turtles



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Rating of A+

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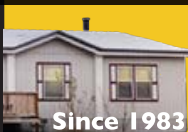
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The reverse of the 2021 release displays a scene from the famous Battle of the Alamo. It depicts two Texian soldiers including the American icon, Davy Crockett, attempting to fend off Mexican soldiers attempting to breach the walls of the Alamo.



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BATTLE OF THE ALAMO

second in the series ● ● ● ●

The events of this famous battle took place on the days of February 23rd - March 6th, 1836. At the end of a 13-day siege, President General Antonio López de Santa Anna and his Mexican troops reclaimed the Alamo Mission, killing the Texian and immigrant occupiers.

The Texas Silver Round can be purchased in a monster box produced exclusively for the Texas Mint. Packaged in 20 protective tubes of 25 rounds each, the monster box holds 500 1-ounce Texas Silver Rounds. Built from durable cold-rolled steel and finished with a matte black powder coat, the monster box lid features an orange cutout of the state of Texas. Each sealed monster box is secured with a unique serial number and a holographic seal to ensure maximum product protection.

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TCP WEB EXTRA

See Gigi Coleman's performance as Bessie Coleman.

Back in the U.S. a year later, she became the first Black woman to perform in an air show. She toured the country making speeches, executing tricks, stunting like a daredevil and working as an activist against discrimination. Coleman, nicknamed Queen Bess, had a reputation for refusing to perform for segregated audiences. Using money she earned from barnstorming, she purchased her own plane, a Curtiss JN-4.

Tragedy struck during a test flight April 30, 1926, over Florida, when a loose wrench jammed the control gears and flipped the plane upside down. She wasn't wearing her seat belt, and the plane had no canopy. Coleman, 34, fell to her death.

Black newspapers gave her death front-page coverage, but the mainstream press barely noted it. In 2019, *The New York Times*, as part of an effort to recognize the lives of remarkable people whose deaths went unreported at the time, ran a complete obituary. "Coleman saw aviation as a way to empower Black people in America and dreamed of opening a flight school," it wrote. "Future pilots said they had been inspired by her, and flight clubs have been named in her honor."

The Challenger Air Pilots Association of Chicago began an annual tradition of flying over Coleman's grave there in 1931. The U.S. Postal Service issued a stamp in her honor in 1995 after Marion Coleman, Bessie's niece, persistently petitioned for it. Texas historical markers stand in Atlanta and Waxahachie, Bessie's former hometowns.

A great-niece, Gigi Coleman, portrays Bessie Coleman in a one-woman show that she performs around the country.

"When I do my performance, people cry," Gigi Coleman says. "I'm very proud to be a relative of hers. She was a trailblazer, and she didn't take no for an answer." ■

Queen Bess Soared

Bessie Coleman slipped from the grips of gravity and Jim Crow to become the first African American female pilot and first Native American female pilot

BY AINSLEY SHAW

JIM CROW SEGREGATION laws seemed to have a grasp like gravity on Bessie Coleman—as they did for most African Americans in the early 20th century—keeping her from rising very high in life.

Coleman, born in 1892 in Atlanta, Texas, to an African American maid and a Native American sharecropper, spent her youth picking cotton. She likely never dreamed she would go on to become the first African American woman and first Native American woman to earn a pilot's license—two years before Amelia Earhart earned hers—100 years ago.

When she was 23, Coleman moved in with two of her brothers and found work as a manicurist in Chicago. Her brother John, who served in Europe during

World War I, drunkenly teased her one day about the wider range of opportunities for women in France. He told her, "Women ain't never goin' to fly, not like those women I saw in France," according to *Queen Bess: Daredevil Aviator*, a biography by Doris L. Rich.

Coleman took that as a challenge and responded, "That's it! You just called it for me." She decided to head to France, where she would face fewer obstacles for being Black and a woman.

After spending her nights learning French and days managing a chili restaurant, Coleman sailed to France and found a pilot to train her. Seven months later, she earned her pilot's license from the Fédération Aéronautique Internationale, on June 15, 1921.

Tomatoes

Sliced is nice, but you can also bake them into saucy desserts

BY MEGAN MYERS, FOOD EDITOR

For years I avoided eating tomatoes in anything but pasta sauce or pizza. Thankfully those days are behind me, and now I look forward to when my garden starts producing piles of cherry tomatoes and sandwich-ready slicers. This cake helps use up any extra tomatoes you might have on hand—and gets kids to eat them. This recipe was one of the first to appear on soup cans, and this iteration's use of fresh tomatoes only improves it. Filled with spices and wonderfully moist, it will become a summer staple.



Tomato Cake

CAKE

- 1 pound tomatoes, or more as needed to yield 2 cups plus 2 tablespoons purée, divided use**
- 2 cups flour**
- 2 teaspoons baking powder**
- 1 teaspoon baking soda**
- 1 teaspoon salt**
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon**
- 1 teaspoon ground cardamom**
- ½ teaspoon ground ginger**
- ½ cup packed brown sugar**
- ½ cup sugar**
- ¾ cup (1½ sticks) butter, softened**
- 2 eggs**

GLAZE

- 1½ cups powdered sugar**
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract**
- Reserved tomato purée**

- 1. CAKE** Preheat oven to 350 degrees and coat a 10-cup Bundt pan with cooking spray.
- 2.** Core and quarter tomatoes. Purée in a blender or food processor until completely smooth. Measure out 2 cups and set aside, reserving remainder.
- 3.** In a large bowl, sift together flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt, cinnamon, cardamom and ginger.
- 4.** In another bowl, beat sugars and butter until the batter is creamed and fluffy. Beat in eggs one at a time.
- 5.** Alternate adding flour mixture and tomato purée to the batter, starting and ending with the flour. Incorporate fully before each addition.
- 6.** Pour batter into the prepared pan and bake 40 minutes, or until a toothpick comes out clean.
- 7.** Let cake cool in pan 10 minutes, then invert onto a rack to cool completely.
- 8. GLAZE** Mix powdered sugar, vanilla and 2 tablespoons tomato purée until completely smooth. Add more sugar or liquid as necessary. Drizzle over cooled cake.

SERVES 10

TCP WEB EXTRA Follow along with Megan Myers and her adventures in the kitchen at stetted.com, where she features a recipe for Roasted Corn and Tomato Salad.



Broiled Stuffed Tomatoes

JOYCELYN SKIDMORE
LAMAR ELECTRIC

The ideal starter for any summer dinner, these stuffed tomatoes are ready in a flash. If you have one handy, a melon baller makes easy work of removing tomato seeds.

- 4–6 tomatoes**
- ½ cup breadcrumbs**
- ¼ cup chopped fresh basil or parsley**
- 3 tablespoons minced green onion**
- 1–2 cloves garlic, minced**
- ¼ teaspoon salt, plus more for sprinkling**
- ¼ teaspoon pepper, plus more for sprinkling**
- ⅛ teaspoon dried thyme**
- ¼ cup olive oil, plus more for drizzling**

- 1.** Core tomatoes. Using a spoon, scoop out seeds and juice, taking care not to break the sides of the tomatoes. Set tomatoes upside down in a colander to drain.
- 2.** In a small bowl, combine breadcrumbs, basil or parsley, green onion, garlic, salt, pepper, and thyme. Stir in olive oil until mixture is well combined and looks like wet sand.
- 3.** Sprinkle salt and pepper into each tomato. Fill tomatoes with breadcrumb mixture and set on a rimmed baking sheet. Drizzle with additional olive oil. Broil at 400 degrees 5–10 minutes, keeping an eye on the breadcrumbs so they don't burn.

SERVES 4–6

[MORE RECIPES >](#)



\$500 WINNER

Tangy Tomato Slices

DALA BURK
WISE EC



This simple yet flavorful dish brings back summer memories for Burk, who has been enjoying this recipe for 40 years. Enjoy the slices on their own or tucked into a warm biscuit for a best-ever tomato sandwich.

SERVES 6

- 6 tomatoes, thinly sliced**
- 1 onion, thinly sliced**
- 1 cup olive oil**
- ⅓ cup vinegar**
- ¼ cup chopped fresh parsley**
- 3 tablespoons chopped fresh basil**
- 1 tablespoon sugar**
- 1 teaspoon salt**
- ½ teaspoon pepper**
- ½ teaspoon dry mustard**
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder**

- 1.** Layer tomato and onion slices in a 9-by-13-inch baking dish and set aside.
- 2.** In a small bowl, whisk together remaining ingredients. Pour over tomatoes and onion, using a spatula to spread herbs evenly. Cover and chill 4–5 hours before serving.

TCP \$500 Recipe Contest

PIES DUE JUNE 10

OK, time to show off. We know readers all over the state serve up prize pies. Could yours be the \$500 winner? Enter at TexasCoopPower.com/contests by June 10.



Savory Tomato Bread Pudding

VALERIE KRUSE
TRI-COUNTY EC

This dish is ideal for using up day-old bread. Since the tomatoes cook down, feel free to use not-so-perfect ones.

- 8 tablespoons olive oil, divided use
- 1 large baguette, cut into 1-inch cubes
- 3 cloves garlic, chopped
- 3 pounds tomatoes, cored and cut into chunks
- 2 teaspoons sugar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon pepper
- 1 cup grated Parmesan, Asiago

or Romano cheese
2 tablespoons chopped fresh basil (optional)

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Lightly coat a large casserole dish with cooking spray and set aside. Heat 6 tablespoons olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the bread cubes and stir to coat. Sauté about 5 minutes or until bread is lightly browned and toasted, working in batches if needed. Transfer to a large bowl.
2. Add remaining olive oil to the skillet and cook the garlic 30 seconds. Add tomatoes, sugar, salt and pepper and stir well. Cook until tomatoes have released their juices and are submerged, about 10 minutes.
3. Add tomato mixture to bread cubes. Stir well to combine. Pour mixture into casserole dish and top with cheese.
4. Bake 40–45 minutes, loosening the edges with a spatula after 30 minutes to allow juices to distribute. Remove from oven and let rest 15 minutes, then sprinkle with chopped basil and serve.

SERVES 6–8

Tasty Tomato Types

BY MEGAN MYERS

While there are more than 10,000 varieties of tomatoes, most of us return to our tried-and-true favorites when cooking.

Globe

Alongside beefsteak tomatoes, this round, firm and juicy variety is what you'll most likely find at the super-market. They're delicious raw and cooked, and their shape makes them suitable for stuffing.

Roma

Roma and plum tomatoes are oblong and most commonly used for sauces thanks to their lower water content.

Cherry and Grape

These bite-size tomatoes are perfect raw for salads but also are delicious sautéed or roasted with herbs. Sweet varieties are a hit with kids, making them a great healthy snack.

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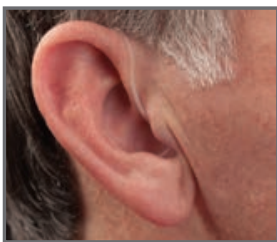


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COURTESY CHET GARNER

Deep Dip

Wimberley's seemingly bottomless Jacob's Well invites a plunge

BY CHET GARNER

STANDING ON A limestone ledge and staring into Texas' strangest swimming hole, I remembered my mother's warning, "Don't jump unless you know what's underneath you." I wasn't completely sure what was beneath the surface, but with a crowd of cheering onlookers, chickening out was not an option. I held my breath and braced for the unknown.

This is the thrill of Jacob's Well, a spring-fed swimming hole near Wimberley that's been attracting visitors for centuries. The hole itself measures less than 20 feet across but looks like it plummets to the center of the Earth. In reality, it descends into a series of caverns that extend a mile back into the Earth. Every minute of every day, the Edwards Aquifer pushes a river of fresh water out of the cave and feeds Cypress Creek.

As I completed the plunge, my only thought was, "Wow! That's cold." The spring water holds at a chilly 68 degrees year-round. Once I regained my composure, I could appreciate the fact that I was floating above what seemed like a bottomless pit of water. I had to see what was down there.

I grabbed my goggles, pointed my head toward the bottom and started kicking. I could feel the mass of water pushing against me with its invisible current, and the water was so clear that I could see every detail of the algae-covered walls and the ledge 25 feet down. With every bit of strength and air that I had, I propelled myself to the stone shelf and from there could see the small opening to the deeper and darker caves.

That was enough to freak me out, so I quickly turned and swam to the sunshine and safety of the surface. It was time for another jump. ■

ABOVE Chet leaps into Jacob's Well.

TCP WEB EXTRA See Chet's video from Jacob's Well and check out his Explorations on *The Daytripper* on PBS.

Know Before You Go

Some events may have been affected by COVID-19. Call or check an event's website for scheduling details.

JUNE

04

Bandera [4, 11, 18, 25; July 2, 9, 16, 23, 30; Aug. 6] **Riding on Faith Rodeo**, (830) 777-7129, facebook.com/ridingonfaithrodeoseries

Denton [4–Sept. 4] **Soul Art Renewal: General Art Exhibition**, (940) 382-2787, dentonarts.com

05

Bulverde [5–July 31] **Saturday Night Rodeo**, (830) 980-2226, tejasrodeo.com

Hunt [5, 12, 19, 26, July 3, 10, 17, 24, 31] **Crider's Rodeo and Dancehall**, (830) 238-4441, cridersrandd.com

07

Mesquite [7, 21] **Jazz Breaks**, (972) 216-8132, mesquiteartscenter.org

Jacksonville [7–12] **Tomato Fest Week**, (903) 586-2217, jacksonvilletexas.com/tomato-fest

08

Victoria [8–12] **Bach Festival**, (361) 570-5788, victoriabachfestival.org

11

Luckenbach [11–12] **Thomas Michael Riley Music Festival**, (830) 997-3224, thomasmichaelriley.com

San Antonio [11–Aug. 7] **Fiesta Noche del Río**, (210) 226-4651, fiestanochesa.com

12

East Bernard Czech Kolache-Klobase Festival, (979) 335-7907, kkfest.com

New Braunfels Granger Smith, (830) 964-3800, whitewaterrocks.com

Terrell [12-13] Antique Tractor and Engine Show and Pull, (214) 837-8861, north-texas-antique-tractor-and-engine-club.org

14

Mesquite [14, 28] Music in the Park, (972) 216-8132, mesquiteartscenter.org

17

Big Spring [17-19] Cowboy Reunion and Rodeo, (432) 267-5053, facebook.com/bigspringrodeo

Stonewall [17-19] Peach JAMBoree, (830) 644-2735, stonewalltexas.com/peach-jamboree

18

Kerrville Urban Cowboy Reunion, (830) 896-9393, caillouxperformingarts.com

Lufkin [18-19] Pineywood Heifer Futurity, (979) 277-2656, arklatexlonghorns.com

McKinney [18-20] Third Monday Trade Days, (972) 562-5466, thirdmondaytradedays.com

19

Palestine Dogwood Jamboree: Country Music at Its Best, (903) 724-2556, dogwoodjamboree.com

New Braunfels [19-20] Old Gruene Market Days, (830) 832-1721, gruenemarketdays.com

24

Elgin [24-26] Western Days, (512) 285-4515, elgintxchamber.com

MORE EVENTS >

TCP *Submit Your Event*

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Pick of the Month
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mainstreetuvalde.com/honey-festival

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JUNE EVENTS CONTINUED

26 **Bandera RiverFest**,
(830) 796-3045,
banderariverfest.com

Belton [26-July 4] 4th of July Celebration,
(254) 939-3551,
beltonchamber.com

JULY

02 **Llano [2-4] Rock'n River-fest**, (325) 247-5354,
llanorocknriverfest.com

El Paso [2-3, 9-10, 16-17, 23-24, 30-31, Aug. 6-7]
Vival El Paso, (915) 534-0600,
vivaelpaso.org

03 **Stephenville 4th of July Concert and Fireworks**,
(254) 918-1295,
stephenvilletx.gov

04 **Fredericksburg 4th of July Parade & Fireworks**,
(830) 997-6523,
visitfredericksburgtx.com



Hit the Road
Event Calendar

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Man-made vs. Nature

Beauty can be found where the natural and the human-made collide. Over time some things once shiny and new return to the elements, often forming a new beauty all their own and leaving us to wonder at nature's awesome power.

GRACE FULTZ



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP

KIM LEATHERWOOD
UNITED COOPERATIVE SERVICES

Nature reclaims this old service station in Glen Rose.

DEBRA CZERNY
BLUEBONNET EC

Cactus flowers growing out of asphalt.

JACK ROBERTSON
CECA

A rainbow scarab impaled on barbed wire.

STEVEN LACKIE
PENTEX ENERGY

The Continental Avenue Bridge over the Trinity River near downtown Dallas.



Upcoming Contests

DUE JUN 10 Fillin' Stations

DUE JUL 10 Funny Signs

DUE AUG 10 Bridges

Enter online at TexasCoopPower.com/contests.

TCP WEB EXTRA See Focus on Texas on our website for more photos from readers.



Parent Imperfect

Love outdistances cool
in appreciation of a good father

BY MARTHA DEERING
ILLUSTRATION BY KEVIN FALES

WHAT AWFUL AFFLICTION is it that makes preteens view their parents' idiosyncrasies through a monstrous magnifying glass?

I cringe to admit this, but in middle school I was embarrassed by my father. Born with cataracts after his mother contracted German measles, he wore Coke-bottle glasses and walked with an exaggerated high-stepping gait to avoid tripping over things. Worse, he couldn't drive like other dads. Surgery improved his vision slightly, but he was still considered legally blind.

Perhaps that was why music was so important to him; being deprived of one of his senses had sharpened another.

When my friends came over, I engineered excuses to avoid my father. He told the awfulest jokes: "What did the

mayonnaise say to the icebox? Close the door, I'm dressing." In my adolescent imagination, my friends were laughing *at* him, not *with* him.

"Your father is playing with the orchestra tomorrow night at Baylor before freshman orientation," my mother explained one night. "It's the same night as my writing class. Could you walk over there with him?"

As we crossed a busy street in the dark, my father tripped over the curb and fell forward onto his chest. His battered violin case landed with a clatter on the sidewalk along with his glasses, which suffered a spiderweb of cracks across one lens. Horrified by my inattention, I helped him up and brushed off the front of his suit coat.

"Are you all right?" I asked. "Do you want to go home? You won't be able to see the music with your glasses smashed."

"No, I can't go home," he said, checking his 200-year-old violin for damage. "They can't play the violin parts without me. I can't see the music unless I'm up close anyway, so I always memorize my parts. If you'll help me get set up on the stage, I'll be OK. Why am I so clumsy?"

Years later in high school, I began to recognize the courage it took for this gentle, loving man with a disability (he hated the designation "handicapped") to get a doctorate and then a job just after the Depression; to play Mozart, Bach and Beethoven in front of large crowds; to teach psychology to classes of graduate students; to lead brain exercise groups at local nursing homes; and to raise three children, willingly wearing out the knees of his suit pants to play the part of the horse to our cowboys and Indians.

I'm sure that my father recognized and forgave my adolescent foolishness. He was that kind of guy. ■



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