

THE BIG, BIG BOOK  
ABOUT PLANTS

REAL LIFE MEETS  
'LONESOME DOVE'

SO FAR, SNAKES ARE  
OFF THE HOOK

# Texas Coop Power

FOR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE MEMBERS

AUGUST 2023

## Pathways to Peace

Finding healing in  
labyrinths across Texas







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# August 2023



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## Make Your Shelf Useful

Scooter Cheatham has dedicated his life to voluminous books that document uses for Texas' plants.

*By Sheryl Smith-Rodgers*

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Labyrinths provide 'a profound sense of renewal and peace.'

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ON THE COVER  
Alison Hannah walks the labyrinth at Unity of Wimberley.  
*Photo by Laura Jenkins*

ABOVE  
Mountain pink is a great plant for rock gardens.  
*Photo courtesy Useful Wild Plants*





## FINISH THIS SENTENCE

Back to school means ...

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

Here are some of the responses to our June prompt: **Thanks, Dad, for ...**

Never judging us and always giving us your unconditional love and attention.

ELVIRA PULIDO  
MAGIC VALLEY EC  
MISSION

Making me get back on the horse.

LYNNE SINGHOFF  
DEEP EAST TEXAS EC  
HEMPHILL

Teaching me to use your tools, believing in me and forgiving me when I messed up.

ROSE HOLLY  
PEDERNALES EC  
GEORGETOWN

Teaching me when I was 14 to back a trailer load full of cattle through the gate.

SHIRLEY HAMPTON  
PEDERNALES EC  
HORSESHOE BAY

Visit our website to see more responses.



## Talkin' Texan

Not sure what took them so long, but the folks behind the official Scrabble dictionary finally added a few words to the book that have been heard in these parts for generations: guac, queso and yeehaw.

These potentially high-scoring words are among about 500 new words in the Official Scrabble Players Dictionary, which gets updated every few years.

# Wreck the Record

**CALL 'EM** the first family of Texas Tech.

With 44 alumni in the fold, the Wuensches set a world record for most members of a family to graduate from the same university.

Francis Wuensche, from the small town of Wilson that's about 20 miles south of Lubbock, started the procession with a degree in zoology in 1953. Three generations later, Andrew Simnacher accepted the family's 44th diploma in December 2021.

And the Wuensches, many of whom are members of electric cooperatives around the state, aren't done. Three more members of the extended family enrolled as freshmen last fall.

## **TCP** Contests and More

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## August 3 National Watermelon Day

Texas ranks fourth in the U.S. in watermelon production, growing 11% of the 3.4 billion pounds harvested annually. Together, Florida, Georgia, California and Texas produce three-fourths of the refreshing fruit.





JOHN FAULK

## In a Whole New Light

“My wife and I just visited the Morse Museum in Florida and its large collection of Tiffany works. We can’t wait to visit the Gelman Stained Glass Museum.”

RICHARD SANTAMARIA  
PEDERNALES EC  
DRIPPING SPRINGS

## Tongue-Tied

My maternal grandparents both immigrated to Texas from Germany and Austria in the decades before World War I [*Auf Wiedersehen*, May 2023]. My mother, born in the early 1920s, was their only child, and her first language was German. Neither my sister nor I were ever taught German.

Much later in life, I oft wondered why we were not given the gift of a second language.

John W. Palm Jr.  
Hamilton County EC  
Lampasas

## Just Dew It

I have dewberries growing all around my house [*Crawling With Trouble*, May 2023]. I fought them for years trying to get rid of them, but you can’t. Then after harvesting some, I made a cobbler and just decided to cultivate them instead.

Sherrie Taylor  
Via Facebook



CHANELLE NIBBELINK

## Westward Bound

*Rise Up West* [April 2023] was hauntingly familiar. An ancestor moved to West around the end of the Civil War from an area that became the Czech Republic. An uncle told me they left the old country because it was involved in a civil war of its own. That they left one country due to civil war only to arrive in the U.S. with its own civil war is ironic.

Ken Konvicka  
United Cooperative Services  
Graford

## Mockingbirds Are Mean

I regret that the mockingbird is our state bird [*Roll Out the Red Carpet*, December 2022]. Whoever put the mockingbird up for this prestigious position obviously knew nothing about the mockingbird.

The mockingbird is very aggressive and mean. On several occasions, I have been fortunate enough to intervene and save the lives of bluebirds and cardinals from mockingbirds.

Roberta McLaughlin  
Heart of Texas EC  
Lorena

## 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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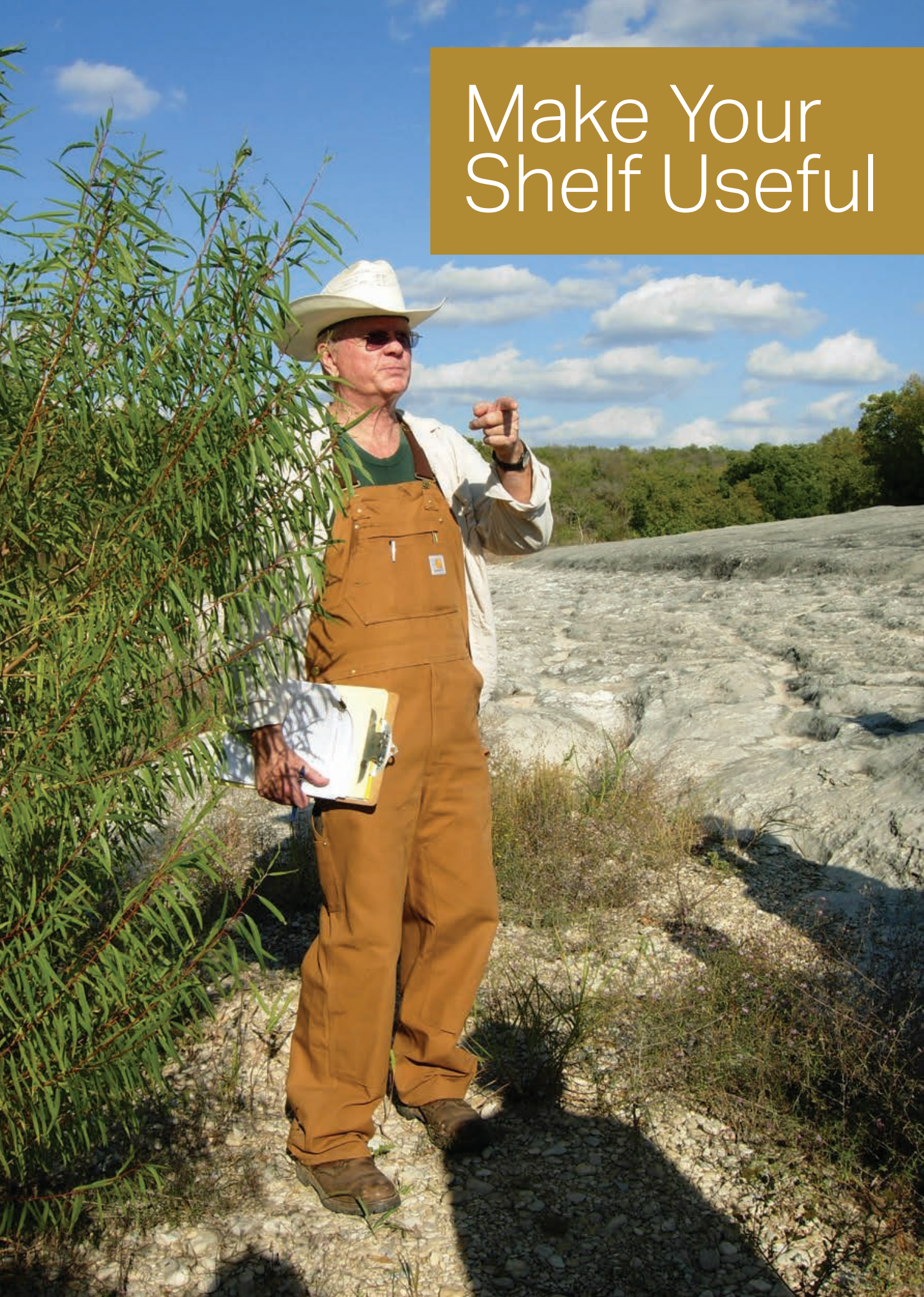
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# Make Your Shelf Useful





BY SHERYL SMITH-RODGERS

## Scooter Cheatham has dedicated his life to voluminous books that document uses for Texas' plants



**Y**EARS AGO Scooter Cheatham asked a classroom of high school sophomores to figure out how plants play a role in everything around them. As an example, he challenged them to connect plants to a pair of scissors. The Austin students, hoping for an easy answer, contacted the manufacturer. “There are no plants in our scissors,” a representative emailed back.

The response forced the teens to do their research. Ultimately “they learned that the manufacturing of steel to make scissors requires coal,” Cheatham says. “The orange plastic handles are derived from petrochemicals. The students also realized that the company representative was as ‘plant blind’ as everyone else about the importance of plants in our lives.”

They matter so much, in fact, that Cheatham has made them his lifelong mission. Plants support our food, health and industry—even contributing to the formation of coal and petrochemicals. For more than 50 years, he and his collaborators have worked to compile the ultimate reference encyclopedia: *The Useful Wild Plants of Texas*, the Southeastern and Southwestern United States, the Southern Plains, and Northern Mexico.

Since 1995, Cheatham’s nonprofit Useful Wild Plants has published four volumes, each counting 600 or more pages and collectively weighing nearly 20 pounds. When completed, the set will include at least 20 volumes and document the economic uses of more than 4,000 plant species, both native and naturalized.

“There’s nothing else like our volumes in the world,” says Cheatham, seated at UWP’s office in East Austin. “They’re the most comprehensive, interdisciplinary treatment of plant species ever done, going back to their prehistoric uses and forward to the most recent chemistry.

“People ask if this is our passion,” adds the self-educated botanist. “I say it’s our obligation to the planet. We’ve *got* to do this, or we won’t be ready when we run out of oil and gas.

OPPOSITE Scooter Cheatham, 77, has been documenting plants since 1971. THIS PAGE, FROM TOP The sweet, slightly tart berries of an agarita, an evergreen shrub with many medicinal uses, can be made into wine and coffee. A honey-scented agarita in bloom.





The smallest single plant on our planet has more promise for our future than anything we could study in outer space.”

Whenever his time allows, Cheatham, an architect and community and regional planner by profession, returns to Cuero, where he grew up gardening, milking cows and riding horses. As a boy, he explored and hunted on his grandmother’s nearby ranch along the Guadalupe River, a portion of which he owns today. Back then, he didn’t pay much attention to the live oaks, native grasses and other plants.

That was, until 1971, when he and a pal, both students at the University of Texas, embarked on an “experimental” archaeology project. During spring break, they lived off Cheatham’s family land like Indigenous peoples once did, using tools they’d made themselves. The experience profoundly impacted Cheatham.

“For 10 days, all we ate was a possum and an armadillo,” he recalls. “Out there, we were surrounded by plants. But I knew only a few common ones, like pecans and dewberries. That’s when I realized how much we rely on plants.”

The lightbulb moment inspired a yearning to learn more about the value of flora. Back on campus, Cheatham visited botanist Marshall Johnston, who the year before had co-written and published the 1,881-page *Manual of Vascular Plants of Texas*. Cheatham asked the professor if there was a comprehensive resource on the *usefulness* of plants. “No,” Johnston told the younger man. “You should do it.”

So in 1971, at age 26, Cheatham began what would turn into a monumental, decadeslong undertaking.

Alongside the project, Cheatham, an accomplished artist and photographer, taught architecture and watercolor classes at UT for 10 years. He also led classes that taught students how to forage for wild edibles.

## Plants support our food, health and industry—even contributing to the formation of coal and petrochemicals.

In 1977, a recent UT anthropology graduate named Lynn Marshall signed up for the foraging class and agreed to pay for half her course fees by volunteering with UWP. She never left. Like Cheatham, she has dedicated herself to the endeavor.

At the project’s start, compiling just the species list and project parameters took a year and a half. Then Cheatham and Johnston traveled extensively, photographing plants in various stages of life. Filing cabinets in UWP’s office contain their 350,000 slides. More filing cabinets house thousands of manila folders, each labeled by plant genus and packed with notes, printouts and research.

In 1995, Cheatham; Johnston, who has since retired; and Marshall published their first volume. Subsequent volumes followed in 2000, 2009 and 2015. They may be ordered through the UWP website at [usefulwildplants.org](http://usefulwildplants.org).

The tomes are made to last. “We believe people will need them for several hundred years,” Cheatham says. “So we don’t use cheap paper that would turn yellow in 18 months.”

Altogether, the four volumes published so far document 833 species. Organized alphabetically by genus, Volume 1 begins with *Abronia* (sand verbenas) and ends with *Arundo* (giant cane). Volume 4 covers *Cenchrus* (grassburs) through *Convolvulus* (wild morning glories). Still in progress, Volume 5 will begin with *Conyza* (horseweed).

Each genus section includes species descriptions, range maps and color images. Subheadings enable readers to quickly find specific information, such as “Native American food uses,” “chemical components” and “author dye tests.”



OPPOSITE The drought-hardy damianita boasts aromatic blooms in spring and summer. FROM LEFT Prairie paintbrush blossoms attract hummingbirds and bees. A Texas redbud's young seedpods are edible.



Entries run from less than one page to dozens. For example, *Bowlesia* (Bowles parsley) is a scant page, but *Carex* (sedges)—the largest genus in Texas flora—fills 76 pages.

Most people know about grassburs. When stepped on, their spiny seedheads hurt like the blazes to pull out—hence their reputation as a detestable weed. But surprise: “Some members of the genus *Cenchrus* are highly valued as range grasses that increase the lease value of grazing lands,” according to *The Useful Wild Plants of Texas*. “Native Americans of the Southwest and prehistoric people of Texas used *Cenchrus* for food, therapy and utilitarian purposes.”

With more than a dozen volumes and thousands of entries still to publish, Cheatham hopes to recruit and train more staff.

“Lynn and I are spread extremely thin,” he says. “Right now, we’re in a phase to raise consciousness about the importance of plants and publicize what we’re doing so we can raise the funds necessary to build a team that will finish this project. With a full staff, all the volumes could be completed in seven years.”

“People need to know about Useful Wild Plants so they’ll carry it on after we’re gone,” he says. “This project belongs to the world.” ■

## Putting Plants To Use

Gleaned from the pages of  
*The Useful Wild Plants of Texas*:

**Beebrush** A thornless shrub with fragrant flowers. Add its fresh or dried leaves to dishes as a spice that tastes similar to oregano.

**Hackberry** A widespread deciduous tree that grows 50–80 feet tall. Make a toothbrush from a pencil-sized stem. Peel the bark from one end, then chew (or pound with a hammer) to spread out the fibers.

**Inland sea oats** A grass with drooping, oatlike seedheads. Seeds can be toasted and milled into a coarse meal. For best results, use a batter bread recipe that calls for boiling the grains before baking.

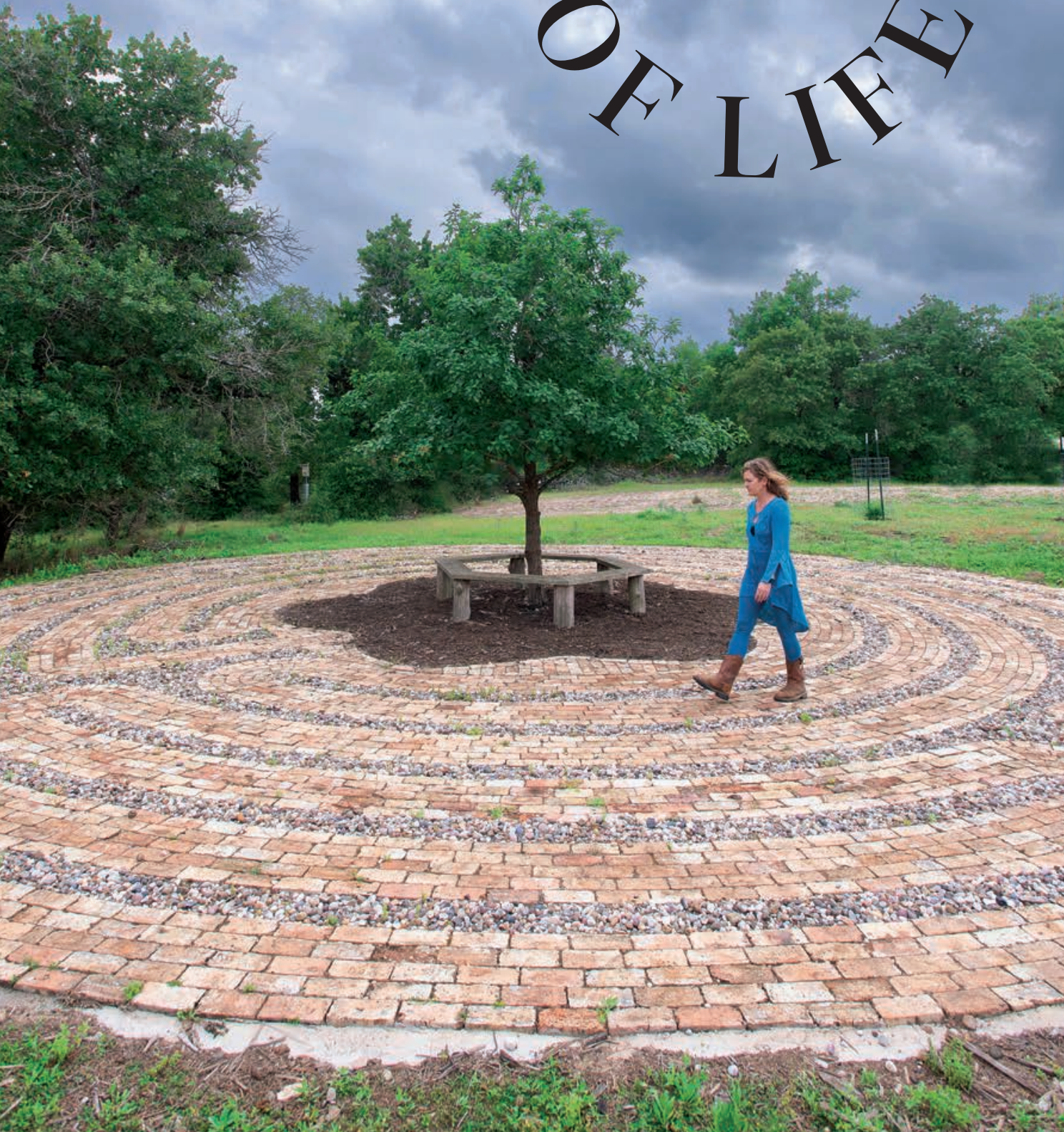
**Ragweed** Flowering plants best known for causing hay fever. A poultice of leaves applied to a poison ivy rash is said to ease the itch.

**Trumpet creeper** A woody vine with reddish-orange flowers. Collect roots to make ropes up to 30 feet long. Peel off the outer layer and boil for two to three hours in lye water, then pound with a wooden mallet to soften. Twist the strands into a half-inch-wide rope.



# CIRCLES OF LIFE

*Labyrinths are providing Texans with 'a profound sense of renewal and peace'*





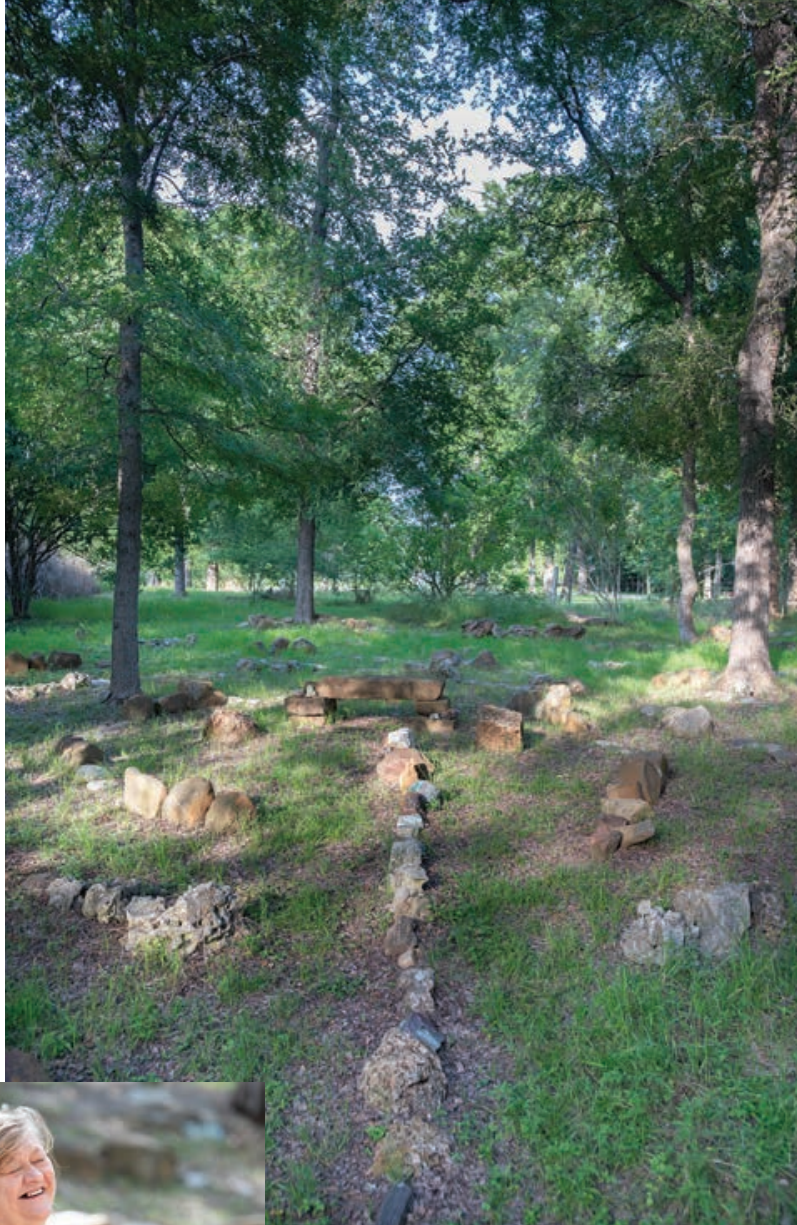
**A**BOUT 20 MINUTES northwest of Bastrop State Park, a labyrinth lies beneath a grove of towering cedar elms. Seven circles of sandstone, Colorado River rock and honeycomb limestone—all native to the area—comprise what’s known as a Cretan, or classical, design at Bastrop Botanical Gardens. A shepherd’s hook, the name of the long, perpendicular row that leads straight to the center of the labyrinth, is lined with an eclectic array of rocks and stones, gifts that Deena Spellman received for her birthday in 2012.

Each stone has a story. They celebrate friendships, symbolize memories and mark devastating losses. It was loss, in fact, that inspired Spellman to begin constructing the labyrinth she’d been dreaming of building for more than a decade.

“After the Bastrop County Complex Fire destroyed so many of our neighbors’ and customers’ homes in 2011, I wanted to create a space where people could find some peace and maybe a little hope,” says Spellman, the owner of Bastrop Botanical Gardens, a boutique nursery. “Since then, many people who needed a quiet place to heal have walked the labyrinth. The Cretan part gives you time to contemplate what’s on your mind while you’re walking to the center, or source. The shepherd’s hook gives you direct access. Sometimes you just need to get to source.”

Simply put, a labyrinth is a meandering path leading to a center, a geometric framework for walking, meditation and reflection. Many use it as a tool for personal and spiritual transformation. There are more than 4,500 documented labyrinths in the U.S., according to the World-Wide Labyrinth Locator.

OPPOSITE Karen Knight, a certified labyrinth facilitator, walks the labyrinth at her Ardor Wood Farm in Red Rock. ABOVE Deena Spellman created the labyrinth at Bastrop Botanical Gardens so visitors can “find some peace and maybe a little hope.”



At last count, 240 were listed in Texas—most open to the public, though a handful are private.

Many Texas labyrinths are situated at houses of worship or spiritual retreat centers, but they’re not just for religious folks. There’s a labyrinth in the meditation garden at the National Vietnam War Museum in Weatherford. The UTHealth Houston nursing school installed one

for students as a means of reducing stress. You can find labyrinths at parks, schools and retirement centers.

They’re by no means new. The oldest documented labyrinth dates to 1200 B.C. It was found in Pylos, Greece.

Many conflate labyrinths and mazes, but there’s one major difference between the two. Mazes may offer numerous possible routes to the center, some of which are dead ends. But labyrinths feature only one nonbranching route to the center. One way in, and one way out. They’re ancient archetypes—multicultural symbols that have been found on every continent except Antarctica.



CLOCKWISE FROM RIGHT The Rev. Mike Marsh and Brenda Faulkner, director of programs at Children's Bereavement Center of South Texas. The St. Philip's Episcopal Church labyrinth in Uvalde. Labyrinth guru Robert Ferré.



*“Before we begin, I encourage people to start in a place of gratitude and to keep the three Rs in mind: releasing, receiving and returning,” Karen Knight says.*

Robert Ferré, a retired labyrinth builder and author of the book *The Labyrinth Revival: A Personal Account*, says labyrinths went from being archetypal symbols to walkable structures sometime in the Middle Ages.

“Originally labyrinths were small drawings and illustrations in manuscripts,” says Ferré, who lives in San Antonio and has designed more than 1,100 labyrinths worldwide. “At some point somebody decided to build one large enough that they could walk around in. It became a symbol you could embody.

“I think labyrinths reflect a spiritual need in a society that has wandered into living too shallowly, or on the surface of things,” he says. “They signal our need to go deeper.”

Using a labyrinth as a means of self-reflection is something Karen Knight knows a lot about. She’s a certified labyrinth facilitator and co-owner of Ardor Wood Farm in Red Rock. She became interested in labyrinths in 2011 after visiting Chartres Cathedral in France. Her husband, Graham

Pierce, built a labyrinth in the cathedral’s style at their farm for Knight’s 50th birthday, a gift that their camping and retreat guests often utilize.

Knight also offers “labyrinth magic” experiences, wherein she guides people through the labyrinth using the Veriditas method, which she learned from one of the world’s foremost labyrinth authorities, the Rev. Dr. Lauren Artress.

“Before we begin, I encourage people to start in a place of gratitude and to keep the three Rs in mind: releasing, receiving and returning,” Knight says. “You’re releasing on the way in during your walk. Perhaps there’s a specific thing you’re letting go of, or maybe you’re just releasing the busy chatter in your head. You’re receiving and staying open while you’re in the middle, and as you return you’re taking your experience home.

“I feel like it’s a moving meditation,” she says. “People need a pause. We’re often busy, depleted or distressed, and labyrinths can bring a profound sense of renewal and peace.”





A suspended sculpture by Lewis deSoto creates a labyrinth in shadow on the University of Texas at San Antonio's downtown campus.

to cope with trauma and grief. They've committed to a presence of at least five years in the small town. Brenda Faulkner, the director of programs, moved to Uvalde to take the job—not only because her son, daughter-in-law and two grandsons live there but also because she wanted to help the community heal.

She had used labyrinths as a therapeutic tool for years, so using the one at St. Philip's with some of the children came naturally to her.

"I've found that walking the sacred path, which is what Mike calls their labyrinth, serves a couple of purposes," Faulkner says. "One is that it gets us outdoors. We have a lot of beautiful days in Uvalde. At the beginning of the path I say, 'I'm old, so you're going to have to go slower for me so I can keep up with you.' And as we walk, we talk. It's also great

because it's a very physical thing. As they're moving and we're talking, they're often not even aware that the therapeutic process is going on.

"What's interesting about walking a labyrinth," she says, "is that just about the time you think you're done, you're only a quarter done, which kind of correlates with the grief process."

Marsh has observed the same thing.

"There's a metaphor in the walking," he says. "If you follow the path, you're not going to get lost. You may get disoriented because it looks like you're getting almost to the center and then you're way out on the periphery again. But the discipline is to follow the path. Don't overthink it." ■

**T**HE REV. MIKE MARSH was sold on the benefits of labyrinths long before he became the rector of St. Philip's Episcopal Church in Uvalde in 2005. Nine years later, he and Ferré designed and built one for the church. It was a gift to the community, and now it's a place of respite in the aftermath of the 2022 Robb Elementary School shooting.

"I've seen many individuals and families linger there over the years," Marsh says.

San Antonio-based Children's Bereavement Center of South Texas uses a church building that is adjacent to the labyrinth to serve children in the community struggling



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## Co-ops Keep It Local

**I LOVE THE FEELING** of being able to walk into my favorite locally owned shop, restaurant or store knowing that its profit, product and staff make positive impacts on my community. The spirit of Main Street is embodied in these businesses, just as it is in Karnes Electric Cooperative.

Electric cooperatives are as local and community-centered as they come. Founded as a way to bring electricity to communities that didn't interest investor-owned utilities, electric co-ops have been a cornerstone of community and economic development in rural Texas and beyond for decades.

That feeling I get when I visit small businesses in our community is the same feeling I get when I walk into work at the co-op every day. It's a feeling of pride. I'm proud to be part of an organization that serves my community instead of a group of shareholders who may never have set foot in our service territory.

Living on co-op lines is more than just knowing there are people out there working to bring you safe, reliable and affordable electric service. Living on co-op lines is an investment in our community and its members.

You see, Karnes EC is a not-for-profit business. When we make more money than we need to keep the lights on safely, affordably and reliably, we return it to our members (that's you!) in the form of capital credits. This means that after all co-op expenses are paid, any additional money we earn goes back into our community, instead of into a shareholder's pocket, which is pretty great!

And because we're owned by you, our members, we have a vested interest in making sure our community prospers. We do this by investing in economic development and community service projects and programs.

I hope that you view Karnes EC not just as your electric utility provider but as a local business that brings pride and prosperity to our part of Texas. We love being a part of this community, and we hope you feel the same way. ■



RICK PATRICK

### Grapefruit and Mango Pico de Gallo

**½ cup fresh grapefruit juice**  
**2–3 green onions, finely chopped**  
**1 tablespoon olive oil**  
**1 mango, peeled, seeded and cut into ½-inch cubes**  
**2 fresh jalapeño peppers, cut into thin strips**  
**¼ red onion, thinly sliced**  
**1 grapefruit, sectioned and chopped**  
**Dash dried oregano (optional)**  
**Salt, to taste**

1. Combine juice, green onions, olive oil, mango, jalapeños and red onion in a nonreactive container (glass, ceramic or stainless steel).
2. Marinate overnight in refrigerator.
3. Bring to room temperature just before serving and add grapefruit and oregano, if desired. Mix well.
4. Taste and add salt, if desired.

**SERVES 8**

**TCP** Find this and more delicious recipes online at [TexasCoopPower.com](http://TexasCoopPower.com).



## TEXAS DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

# Hurricane Preparedness Guidelines

Hurricane season is June 1–November 30

### Preparedness Checklist

- ▶ **Make an evacuation plan.** Find activated evacuation routes at [drivetexas.org](http://drivetexas.org) or by dialing 1-800-452-9292. Call 211 to find out if you live in an evacuation zone.
- ▶ **Sign up for emergency alerts.** Make sure your mobile device is enabled to receive wireless emergency alerts.
- ▶ **Prepare an emergency supply kit.** Learn how to build an emergency kit at [ready.gov/build-a-kit](http://ready.gov/build-a-kit).
- ▶ **Review your home insurance policy.**
- ▶ **Register with the State of Texas Emergency Assistance Registry** at [stear.tdem.texas.gov](http://stear.tdem.texas.gov) or by dialing 211 if you live in an evacuation zone and:
  - Have a disability or medical needs and do not have a car or other vehicle to use in an evacuation.
  - Have a disability or medical needs and do not have friends or family to help in an evacuation.

*Information collected for STEAR is confidential.*

### Hurricane Preparedness Online Resources

Texas Division of Emergency Management: [tdem.texas.gov](http://tdem.texas.gov)  
Texas Department of State Health Services: [texasready.gov](http://texasready.gov)  
American Red Cross: [redcross.org](http://redcross.org)  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security: [ready.gov](http://ready.gov)  
Office of Texas Gov. Greg Abbott: [gov.texas.gov](http://gov.texas.gov)

## DIVISIÓN DE ADMINISTRACIÓN DE EMERGENCIAS DE TEXAS

# Preparación para huracanes

La temporada de huracanes es del 1 de junio al 30 de noviembre

### Lista de verificación de preparación:

- ▶ **Haga un plan de evacuación.** Encuentre rutas de evacuación activadas en [drivetexas.org](http://drivetexas.org) o marcando 1-800-452-9292. Llame 211 para averiguar si usted vive en una zona de evacuación.
- ▶ **Regístrese para recibir alertas de emergencia.** Asegúrese de que su dispositivo móvil esté habilitado para recibir alertas de emergencia inalámbricas.
- ▶ **Prepare un kit de emergencia.** Aprenda como construir un kit de emergencia en [ready.gov/build-a-kit](http://ready.gov/build-a-kit).
- ▶ **Revise su póliza de seguro de hogar.**
- ▶ **Regístrese con el Registro de Asistencia de Emergencia del Estado de Texas** en [stear.tdem.texas.gov](http://stear.tdem.texas.gov) o marcando el 211 si vive en una zona de evacuación y:
  - Tiene una discapacidad o necesidades médicas y no tiene un auto u otro vehículo para usar en una evacuación.
  - Tiene una discapacidad o necesidades médicas y no tiene amigos o familiares para ayudar en una evacuación.

*La información recolectada para STEAR es confidencial.*

### Recursos en línea para la preparación para huracanes

División de Administración de Emergencias de Texas: [tdem.texas.gov](http://tdem.texas.gov)  
Departamento de Servicios de Salud del Estado: [texasready.gov](http://texasready.gov)  
Cruz Roja Americana: [redcross.org](http://redcross.org)  
Departamento de Seguridad Nacional de los Estados Unidos: [ready.gov](http://ready.gov)  
Oficina del Gobernador de Texas Greg Abbott: [gov.texas.gov](http://gov.texas.gov)

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## Karnes Electric Cooperative

### CONTACT US

P.O. Box 7, Karnes City, TX 78118  
**Toll-Free** 1-888-807-3952  
**Web** [karnesec.org](http://karnesec.org)

**General Manager**  
Brad Bierstedt

### Board of Directors

Paul T. Brysch Jr., President, District 5  
Clif Royal, Vice President, District 6  
Larry R. Schendel, Secretary-Treasurer, District 1  
Frank A. Geyer Jr., Assistant Secretary-Treasurer, District 3  
L. Scott McClaugherty IV, District 4  
Shirley Hofmann, District 2  
David Ross Nieschwitz, District 7

## 24/7 Outage Reporting

### TOLL-FREE

1-888-807-3952

### ONLINE

At [karnesec.org](http://karnesec.org) using your SmartHub account, or use the SmartHub app on your mobile device.

Please be prepared to provide your account number and meter number.

### PAYMENT OPTIONS

- Online or via the SmartHub app
- 24-hour pay-by-phone
- Auto bill pay
- Mail
- In person
- Night drop
- Kiosk

### OFFICE LOCATIONS

Open Monday–Friday, 8 a.m.–5 p.m.

#### Karnes City Headquarters

1800 N. U.S. Highway 181, Karnes City

#### Pleasanton Member Service Center

1824 W. Goodwin St., Pleasanton

### MISSION STATEMENT

Providing quality service to empower communities and improve lives.



Check us out at  
[TexasCoopPower.com/karnes](http://TexasCoopPower.com/karnes)





# KEC Celebrates 85 Years

ON A MUGGY and hot Tuesday evening in June, members of Karnes Electric Cooperative braved the weather to venture to the co-op's 85th annual meeting. Hugs and handshakes were exchanged inside the cool, air-conditioned comfort of the Karnes City Independent School District Performing Arts Center as members and KEC staff greeted one another like the old friends and neighbors they are.

At this and other electric cooperatives around the state, employees and members of the board of directors live in the same community they serve, including Brad Bierstedt, who emotionally announced his retirement after eight years as KEC's general manager.

"It's been an honor and a privilege to serve this cooperative," Bierstedt said. "As GM over the last few years, it's been a lot of work—but I've really enjoyed it." His retirement will begin at year's end, and though he'll miss everyone at the cooperative, he's excited to spend time with his wife and travel.

"We've got a travel trailer, and we're just gonna hit the road,"

Bierstedt said. "Visit some Texas towns. I'm looking forward to enjoying a thunderstorm without worrying about our guys out in the field and member outages."

## Down to Business

This year's meeting was held in the same way as last year's—members registered, entered for the chance to win a door prize and received a gift before heading to the auditorium. There they could opt to watch prerecorded videos detailing cooperative news and leave or stay for the in-person meeting, which began at 7 p.m.

One hundred and ninety-two members were present, enough for a quorum. Melissa Sykes, attorney at McGinnis Lochridge, announced that Frank A. Geyer Jr., District 3, and David R. Nieschwitz, District 7, were each reelected to the board.

Larry Schendel, board secretary-treasurer, provided an overview of the co-op's finances via prerecorded video, stating





that “the cooperative continues to remain financially strong and well-positioned to meet the needs of the members.” Operating revenues in 2022 were \$127,229,670, compared to \$98.4 million in 2021. KEC sold over 1.3 billion kilowatt-hours last year, an increase of 15.3% over 2021.

Expenses were \$122,121,343 in 2022, an increase of 25% over 2021 due mainly to an increase in purchased power costs. This means the cooperative realized operating margins of \$5,108,327 for 2022 compared to \$801,846 in 2021. In October 2022, KEC returned \$1,454,099 in capital credits to members.

Bierstedt’s video mentioned various challenges KEC faces and initiatives the cooperative is taking to improve member service. KEC is taking measures to combat the effects of inflation and supply chain issues, including sourcing pressure-treated mineral oil poles rather than traditional creosote poles because they have a shorter lead time; repairing old transformers; and using new, larger warehouses that store more inventory.

The future of Karnes EC is bright, with Bierstedt highlighting upcoming work plan projects like new service line extensions, distribution line installations, voltage conversions, service capacity increases, and pole and wire replacements. And gen-

erational and transmission co-op South Texas Electric Cooperative has begun construction on a new substation to serve the growing demand in northeast Atascosa County.

Bierstedt hopes his legacy is in the safety of the co-op’s employees. “A continuous improvement of our safety program. I think we made some significant strides in training and safety improvements,” he said.

KEC has heaps to be proud of, Bierstedt said, with recent recognitions like an award for four years of no lost-time accidents presented at a statewide lineworker safety conference in March, a Rural Electric Safety Achievement Program certification last year and the participation of the co-op’s lineworkers in this spring’s Coastal Bend Lineman Rodeo.

### Concern for Community

Cooperatives have a legacy of giving, and KEC is no different. In 2022, KEC awarded \$2,500 to three organizations—Children’s Alliance of South Texas, Kenedy ISD Education Foundation and the McMullen County ISD Partners for the Accelerated Learning of Students—with CoBank matching the funds for a total of \$15,000 in donations.

KEC also provides \$1,500 scholarships to 10 graduating high





school seniors each year and a sponsorship for one to attend the Government-in-Action Youth Tour, a 10-day trip to Washington, D.C.

This year's scholarship recipients were Sydney Blair, Emery Gillespie, Brynn Harris, Cali Hindes, Riley Huser, Cecilia Korze-kwa, Ricardo Marquez, Kirby McNeill, Zane Raabe and Jace Ruiz. Shelby Dambeck, from Pleasanton ISD, was selected to represent KEC on this year's Youth Tour with more than 150 other Texas teens sponsored by electric cooperatives across the state.

### Safety and Service

Several employees were recognized for reaching milestones in their service to KEC: Jacob Asebedo, Stephanie Ortiz and Susanne Ruple for five years; Cory Ebrom for 20 years; Clint Royal for 25 years; Adolfo De La Garza for 30 years; Ernest Pacheco for 35 years; and Peter Dragon for 45 years.

The last item on the agenda was to draw names for door

prizes, which featured bill credits, gift cards, RTIC coolers and the grand prize Pit Boss grill.

The sun was setting, but the temperatures weren't cooling, as Karnes EC members filed out from celebrating 85 years of the cooperative. Bierstedt was around for the most recent 12, and he knows what he'll miss most when he retires.

"The people," he said. "The employees—I really enjoyed working with them. The past eight years had quite a few changes and we've almost doubled our size, so it's been a lot, but it's been great."

Bierstedt leaves a legacy of safety and has set up the cooperative for continued success. His years at the helm have helped Karnes Electric Cooperative prosper, and if the standing ovation he received after his announcement is any indication, it certainly has been great. ■



# Keep Your Cool: How To Stay Safe in the Texas Heat

**THE DOG DAYS** of summer bring the warmest, muggiest temperatures of the year to Texas. Even if you're a summertime enthusiast, it's important to stay cool during extreme heat.

Factors like obesity, age and alcohol intake can affect how a person reacts to the heat. High humidity also contributes to heat-related illness because we don't sweat as quickly—meaning our bodies can't release heat as fast.

Take extra steps to cool off, keep hydrated and stay informed. **Here are some tips for staying cool during extremely warm weather:**

Stay in an air-conditioned home or building as much as possible. Limit outdoor activity, especially midday, when sunlight is the most direct.

If you must be outdoors, wear loose, light-colored clothing and apply sunscreen often.

Drink more water than usual. Don't wait until you're thirsty to drink more.

Take cold showers or baths to cool down.

Avoid using the oven or stove to cook. These appliances add heat to your home. Try using a microwave or slow cooker instead.

Remember to look after those who may need extra help. People 65 or older are at greater risk of heat-related illness, so check on your neighbors and friends. Children younger than 2 and pets are also more susceptible to heatstroke. Never leave a child or pet in a vehicle, even if only for a minute.

If you work outdoors, use a buddy system to monitor your co-workers—and have someone do the same for you.

Heat-induced illness can happen to anyone, including those who are perfectly healthy. If you're outdoors during extremely warm weather, monitor your body, stay hydrated and keep an eye on those around you. ■



STEVEN HEAP | ISTOCK.COM

## A Simple Way To Save on AC

**AUGUST IS PEAK** air conditioning season for a lot of us, and that means your energy bills might be higher now than during any other month.

If you do only one thing to try to lower your energy use during the hot months, clean or replace your air filters.

This might just be the easiest and most important thing you can do to keep your air conditioning bills low.

Dirty filters can hinder the air that flows through them, which makes your system work harder than it needs to. Replacing the filter regularly can also reduce wear and tear on your AC system, extending its life. As air filters become older and deteriorate, they can release fibers and debris directly into the moving parts of your system, which can lead to mechanical breakdowns. A clean filter also screens out pollutants, particulates and dust to improve the quality of indoor air.

Replacing a dirty filter with a clean one could lower the amount of energy your AC uses by up to 15%. ■



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# Charming the Alamo

179 years after the battle, help finally arrives—with four legs, fur and friendliness

BY LORI GROSSMAN • ILLUSTRATION BY STEPHANIE DALTON COWAN

**HER FULL NAME** is Miss Isabella Francisca Vera-mendi de Valero, but visitors to the Alamo just call her Bella. She's the Texas shrine's official meeter/greeter and is quite the local celebrity with her own Twitter and Instagram accounts, plus her own Fiesta San Antonio medal.

Want to meet her? Go to the Alamo and look for a large calico cat. *That's* Bella.

The Alamo feline's story begins in Goliad on the grounds of Presidio La Bahía, the Spanish fort about 90 miles southeast of San Antonio. Josephine McMahon, the young daughter of Presidio director Scott McMahon, found a kitten there in early 2015.

"Bella was found in the middle room of the museum," recalls Josephine's mom, Monica McMahon. "I posted on Facebook asking if anyone wanted to adopt her. Sherri Driscoll from the [Daughters of the Republic of Texas] library contacted me. She said they were interested because their previous cat had recently passed away."

The previous Alamo cat was Clara Carmack—aka Miss C.C. She was named in honor of Alamo preservationist Clara Driscoll and Alamo committee Chair Mary Carmack, and Miss C.C. reigned (roamed?) from 1996 to 2014. Her predecessor, Ruby LeGato, was the first official Alamo cat in the 1980s. She was immortalized in a children's book, *The Alamo Cat*, by San Antonio author Rita Kerr.

Ruby and Miss C.C. had captured the hearts of Alamo staff and visitors. Bella had big paw prints to fill. But the McMahons had brought her to the Alamo on an auspicious day.

"March 6, 2015—that day was the 179th anniversary of the fall of the Alamo," says Ernesto Rodriguez, the Alamo's senior curator and historian (and Bella's caretaker). "It was one of those interesting coincidences because she was the only 'aid' to come to the Alamo—but many, many years later."

The Texas General Land Office is the Alamo's custodian. It gave permission for Bella to stay if Alamo staff would provide for her. She succeeded Miss C.C. as the Alamo cat and moved—with her food bowl, water dish and litter box—into Rodriguez's office.

Bella quickly adapted to her new home. "She's been around crowds since she was 6 weeks old," Rodriguez says. "At first, she was part indoors and part outdoors. We'd bring her in for the night.

Right now, she's indoors because of ongoing construction here."

Rodriguez laughingly calls Bella a "cat-dog" because she's so good with young children and because she occasionally goes for walks on a harness. Yes—a harness. "When we first got her, we took her out on a harness so she could get accustomed to the property," he says. "She's used to wearing it because she has since she was a kitten."

With construction temporarily curtailing her movements, what's a typical day like for the Alamo cat? She eats. She checks on other Alamo staffers. She takes a nap. She plays with her toys then takes another nap. Rodriguez reports that she likes to sit in on meetings, too. "She likes to be involved with meetings and phone calls," he says. "When I'm in a meeting, she'll sit and stare at me. Sometimes, she'll climb up on the table and stay until she gets bored."

Bella loves people, and they love her. Like Ruby and Miss C.C., she has become well-known in San Antonio, so her fan base worried when she had a health scare in 2021.

"She was overheated and either jumped or fell into a dumpster one day," Rodriguez says. "Her vet suggested that we take her to the emergency vet. They kept her for several days. She was mostly dehydrated and had to take antibiotics."

Her Alamo friends set up a GoFundMe campaign to pay her vet bills. Her adoring public came through and paid her bills in full, raising more than \$3,500.

It's no surprise that Bella merchandise is popular. And every April during the Alamo City's 10-day Fiesta celebration, when collecting and trading medals is part of the fun, Bella's medal sells out. The proceeds go toward her medical care and other expenses.

The Alamo kitty probably misses greeting visitors as much as they miss seeing her. But she's around, caring for the caretakers of this state treasure when she's not posting on social media. ■







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**2023 Canada Maple Leaf:** A highly sought-after bullion coin since 1988, this 2023 issue includes the **FIRST** and likely only use of a transitional portrait, of the late Queen Elizabeth II. These are also expected to be the **LAST** Maple Leafs to bear Her Majesty's effigy. Struck in high-purity 99.99% fine silver at the Royal Canadian Mint.

**2023 South African Krugerrand:** The Krugerrand continues to be the best-known, most respected numismatic coin brand in the world. 2023 is the Silver Krugerrand's 6th year of issue. Struck in 99.9% fine silver at the South African Mint.

**2023 China Silver Panda:** 2023 is the 40th anniversary of the first silver Panda coin, issued in 1983. China Pandas are noted for their heart-warming one-year-only designs. Struck in 99.9% fine silver at the China Mint.



**2023 British Silver Britannia:** One of the Royal Mint's flagship coins, this 2023 issue is the **FIRST** in the Silver Britannia series to carry the portrait of King Charles III, following the passing of Queen Elizabeth II. Struck in 99.9% fine silver.



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**TCP** Listen as W.F. Strong narrates this story on our website.



# A Page of the Past

Traces of real-life Texans ride through McMurtry's 'Lonesome Dove'

BY W.F. STRONG

**MILLIONS OF COPIES** of Larry McMurtry's *Lonesome Dove* have sold since the novel was published in 1985. The miniseries that followed in 1989 was likewise immensely popular. McMurtry himself called it the *Gone With the Wind* of the West, but he never loved the book as much as his fans. "You know most writers come to dislike their most popular books," he once told journalist John Spong. "Henry James hated *Daisy Miller*, which is what he is known by. He's probably written 35 other books. I feel a little that way about *Lonesome Dove*."

McMurtry said he never saw the miniseries. Maybe if he had, he would have better understood how endearingly Robert Duvall, Tommy Lee Jones and

Diane Lane brought their characters to life. I can't help but wonder if those characters were modeled after real-life Texans.

But McMurtry said that that wasn't his aim. Though Woodrow Call has some attributes of Charles Goodnight, and Gus McCrae has some attributes of Oliver Loving, the novel's main characters were not modeled after actual historical figures. McMurtry said the book is not meant to be a faithful history of the era but rather one that has echoes of those times.

In fact, he sought to authentically demythologize the life of the cowboy and show how brutally difficult their lives were. "The whole book is permeated with criticism of the Old West from start to finish," he said.

Nonetheless, McMurtry acknowledged that somehow Call and McCrae became celebrated heroes. He said a lot of people "were nostalgic for the culture of the Old West, though it was a terrible culture."

Bits of history did however make it into the book.

One event in the actual lives of Goodnight and Loving that's enlarged within the book is Loving's death. Goodnight returned his body from Fort Sumner, New Mexico, to Weatherford. In the novel, Call takes McCrae's body all the way from Montana to Texas, a much longer journey with far more drama.

Antagonist Blue Duck was a real Native American chief, but McMurtry said that was coincidental. He chose the name without realizing that, and that's where the similarity stops. But the character's death is without question similar to that of the Kiowa Chief Satanta, who killed himself while imprisoned.

The character Joshua Deets was inspired by Bose Ickard, a longtime friend of Goodnight. When Ickard died, Goodnight carved a fervent epitaph for him. McMurtry used quite similar words—and some of the exact ones—when Call carves an epitaph for Deets.

As we read on, we do encounter genuine historical figures, though their biographies are massaged—people like Judge Roy Bean, John Wesley Hardin and the ubiquitous Goodnight, who's never very chatty and always on the move.

Near the end of the book, a reporter exclaims to Call that people are saying he's a man of vision. He responds, "Yes, a hell of a vision." The real Goodnight actually said this line in a similar circumstance, referring to all the tough times and horror he had seen as a Texas Ranger and frontier rancher. ■



# Sheet Pan Meals

All-in-one dishes make serving and cleanup a snap

BY VIANNEY RODRIGUEZ, FOOD EDITOR

If you're looking for the perfect less-mess sheet pan meal, try this flavorful and balanced steak dinner. This recipe, adapted from our friends at Beef Loving Texans, is so easy you'll want to make it all summer.

## Cumin-Dusted Steak Sheet Pan Dinner

**1¼ teaspoons ground cumin, divided use**  
**1¼ teaspoons salt, divided use**  
**¼ teaspoon ground black pepper**  
**1¼ pounds well-trimmed boneless top sirloin or flat iron steak (cut 1-inch thick)**  
**1 pound unpeeled sweet potatoes, cut into 1-inch cubes or wedges (about 3 cups)**  
**2 tablespoons olive oil, divided use**  
**¼ teaspoon chili powder**  
**1 bag trimmed fresh green beans (12 ounces)**  
**1 teaspoon garlic powder**

1. Preheat oven to 450 degrees.
2. Combine 1 teaspoon cumin,  $\frac{3}{4}$  teaspoon salt and pepper in a small bowl. Apply the spice rub to both sides of the steak. Set aside.
3. In a large bowl, toss sweet potato cubes with  $\frac{1}{2}$  tablespoons olive oil, remaining  $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon cumin,  $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon salt and chili powder. Spread potatoes across a baking sheet lined with foil or parchment. Bake 15 minutes. Turn potatoes and move them to one side of the baking sheet.
4. Increase oven temperature to high broiler setting. Toss green beans with remaining  $\frac{1}{2}$  tablespoon olive oil, remaining  $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon salt and garlic powder. Place green beans next to potatoes on the baking sheet. Place steak on an uncoated wire rack on top of the sheet pan, positioning the steak so that it's over the green beans.
5. Broil steak on lower rack of oven for about 7 minutes. Turn steak and broil an additional 4–5 minutes for medium-rare to medium doneness (145–160 degrees). Remove steak from wire rack and let it sit for about 3 minutes before slicing and serving. Toss green beans with pan juices.

**SERVES 5**

Reprinted with permission from Beef Loving Texans.

**TCP** Follow along with Vianney Rodriguez while she cooks in Cocina Gris at [sweetlifebake.com](http://sweetlifebake.com), where she features a recipe for Spicy Sheet Pan Hash Browns.







## No-Mess Shrimp Boil

HELENA WALLACE  
BRYAN TEXAS UTILITIES

If you've been craving a shrimp boil without all the hassle, we've got you covered with this delicious no-mess preparation.

- 2 pounds whole, unpeeled small Yukon potatoes**
- 6 ears fresh corn, cut into 2–3 sections**
- 1 large onion, peeled and quartered**
- 2 pounds shrimp, peeled and deveined**
- 2 packages smoked andouille sausage (12 ounces each), sliced**
- ½ cup (1 stick) unsalted butter**
- 2 cloves garlic, minced**
- 2 tablespoons Old Bay seasoning**
- 4 tablespoons Italian seasoning**
- 2 lemons, cut into wedges**

1. Preheat oven 400 degrees. Lightly oil 2 baking sheets.
2. Add potatoes to a large pot of boiling, salted water and cook 10 minutes or until tender. Add corn and onion in the last 5 minutes of the potatoes boiling. Drain.
3. Spread potatoes, corn and onion onto baking sheets. Add the shrimp and sliced sausage.
4. In a small saucepan over low heat, combine the butter, garlic and Old Bay seasoning and heat until melted. Remove from heat and stir in Italian seasoning.
5. Pour butter mixture over prepared baking sheets, turning to coat all ingredients.
6. Bake 12–15 minutes or until shrimp is fully cooked. Serve with lemon wedges.

**SERVES 6–8**

[MORE RECIPES >](#)



**\$500 WINNER**

## Aunt Glo's Brandied Peach Chicken

BARBARA LOYD  
UNITED COOPERATIVE  
SERVICES



A tasty tribute to Loyd's Aunt Glo, this dish takes baked chicken to the next level.

**SERVES 8**

- ½ cup peach nectar**
- ½ cup brandy**
- ¼ cup olive oil**
- 2 medium shallots, minced**
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar**
- 1 teaspoon salt**
- ¼ teaspoon ground black pepper**
- 4 pounds chicken breasts, skin on**
- 1 jar peach preserves (12 ounces)**
- 4 plums, sliced**
- 1 cup halved seedless green grapes**

1. In a large bowl, combine nectar, brandy, olive oil, shallots, brown sugar, salt and pepper.
2. Place chicken in mixture and turn to coat. Cover and refrigerate for several hours or overnight. Reserve marinade.
3. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Place chicken in a roasting pan, skin side down. Bake 15 minutes.
4. Turn chicken, baste with reserved marinade and bake 30–40 minutes more or until chicken is cooked through.
5. While the chicken bakes, heat the preserves in a saucepan and bring to a boil. Add sliced plums and grapes and simmer until softened. Serve warm chicken topped with the fruit sauce.

## TCP \$500 Recipe Contest

**TEXAS CITRUS** DUE AUGUST 10

How do you incorporate our state's wonderful grapefruit, oranges, lemons and limes in your recipes? Submit your best online by August 10 for a chance to win \$500.







## Apple Sheet Pan Pancakes

CAROLYN BESSELMAN  
PEDERNALES EC

If you're looking to feed a crowd at brunch, these sheet pan pancakes are the ultimate treat. Apples, pecans, applesauce and brown sugar create a sinfully sweet topping.

2 apples, cored and diced  
1 cup chopped pecans  
½ cup dark brown sugar  
¼ cup applesauce  
1 tablespoon ground cinnamon  
2 eggs  
2½ cups buttermilk  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
2½ cups flour  
1 tablespoon baking powder  
1 tablespoon sugar  
1 teaspoon baking soda  
1 tablespoon melted unsalted butter

1. Preheat oven to 425 degrees.
2. In a bowl, combine apples, pecans, brown sugar, applesauce and cinnamon and stir to mix. Set aside.
3. In another bowl, whisk together eggs, buttermilk and vanilla. In a large third bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder, sugar and baking soda.
4. Pour the egg mixture into the dry ingredients and stir gently until just combined. Do not overmix.

5. Brush the bottom and sides of a 13-by-18-inch rimmed baking sheet with butter.
6. Add the batter to the baking sheet, smoothing it evenly with the back of a spoon.
7. Dollop apple mixture by spoonfuls evenly over the batter. With a spoon, gently swirl the mixture into batter.
8. Bake 20–22 minutes, until golden brown and the top springs back when touched.
9. Remove from oven and serve with butter and syrup.

SERVES 10–14

**TCP** We have more than 1,000 recipes in our online archive. Check out our website to find other options for entrées, breakfasts and desserts.

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COURTESY CHET GARNER

## Extracurricular Activities

A small-town schoolhouse is now a community-focused brewhouse

BY CHET GARNER

**FOR MOST PEOPLE**—including me—the idea of going back to school sends shivers down their spine. But what if the curriculum consisted of craft beer, live music and scratch-made food? That sort of school would have a wait-list the length of the Rio Grande. Lucky for all of us, this sort of continuing education actually exists near San Angelo at Farm Ale Brewing Co., inside an old schoolhouse in Eola. Class is in session!

Eola is a rural community surrounded by cotton fields as far as the eye can see. Its downtown consists of a few blocks, three churches and a single school building that for decades housed every grade in the public system—kindergarten through 12th. The school closed in the 1980s and sat vacant until 2006, when a group of thirsty Texans decided to turn it into a craft brewery. After all, turning grains into beer is a very scientific process.

I stepped inside and was immediately hit with a wave of nostalgia that was even stronger than the smell of fermenting grains. The bones of the old school are still intact. The classrooms are now dining rooms with chalkboards and flags. The wood-floored gymnasium is now full of family-friendly games, and the auditorium houses the entire production process, from brewing to canning. Farm Ale Brewing Co. brews its beer with as many local ingredients as possible and even gives a percentage of profits back to local farmers.

The biggest upgrade came to the school cafeteria, which now serves up incredible pizza, smash burgers and rotating specials such as meat-loaf. Just like in my school days, I polished off my plate in record time and then headed to the schoolyard for recess—with the added bonus of live music. ■

ABOVE Chet does his homework at Farm Ale Brewing Co. in Eola, outside San Angelo.

**TCP** Raise your hand if you want to see a video of Chet's visit to Farm Ale on our website. And see all his Texplorations on *The Daytripper* on PBS.



## Know Before You Go

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

## AUGUST

11

**Alpine [11–12] Big Bend Ranch Rodeo,** (432) 837-2326, bigbendranchrodeo.com

**Junction [11–12] Rodeo & Dance,** (254) 212-9160, junctiontexas.com

12

**Chappell Hill Wine and Cheese Stroll,** (979) 337-9910, chappellhilltx.com

**Denton North Texas Book Festival,** ntbfb.org

**Grand Prairie Hatch Chile Fest,** (972) 237-8084, grandfungp.com

**Vanderpool Maples and Meteors Night Sky Fest,** (830) 966-3413, tpwd.texas.gov

16

**Brady [16–19] Heart of Texas Honky Tonk Fest,** (325) 597-1895, heartoftexascountry.com

17

**Corsicana Jimmy Fortune: God and Country,** (903) 874-7792, corsicanapalace.com

**Johnson City [17–19] Blanco County Fair and Rodeo,** bcfra.org

18

**Palestine Wine in the Pines,** 1-855-632-7729, texasstaterailroad.net

**Bastrop [18–20, 25–26, Sept. 1–3] Steel Magnolias,** (512) 200-3826, bastropoperahouse.org



19

**Bowie Outdoor Expo,**  
(940) 872-6246,  
959theranch.com

**Chappell Hill Farmers  
Market,** (832) 720-5685,  
chappellhillrv.com

**Castroville [19-20]  
St. Louis Day Celebration,**  
(830) 931-2826,  
saintlouisdaily.com

24

**Fredericksburg [24-27]  
Gillespie County Fair,**  
(830) 997-2359,  
gillespiefair.com

26

**Crosby Kids Kicking  
Cancer,** (281) 785-4098,  
addisfaithfoundation.org

**Kerrville River Roadster  
Show,** (830) 257-7300,  
kerrvillex.gov

**Lakeway [26-27] Cool  
Arts Show and Studio Tour,**  
(512) 261-1010,  
lakewayartsdistrict.com

27

**Stonewall LBJ's 115th  
Birthday,** (830) 644-2252,  
tpwd.texas.gov

## SEPTEMBER

01

**Bandera [1-3] Western  
Heritage Music Festival,**  
(830) 796-4849,  
banderacowboycapital.com

02

**Brenham Seth James,**  
(979) 337-7240,  
thebarnhillcenter.com

**Kerrville Kerr County Market  
Days and Hill Country Swap  
Meet,** (830) 459-6198,  
kerrmarketdays.org

### TCP Submit Your Event

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



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# Hoof and Horn

What a barnburner! This month readers answered the cattle call, and these prizewinning beasts moo-ved into first place. Now that the dust has settled, don't be baa-shful. Let's see who's best in show and who's just horsing around.

CURATED BY GRACE FULTZ

**1** JEFFREY BENSON  
PEDERNALES EC

"The big boy from Study Butte down by Big Bend."

**2** NICK GROSSMAN  
PEDERNALES EC

"Two wranglers heel and toe a calf in the arena."

**3** CRYSTAL VALDEZ  
LYNTEGAR EC

"Muffin was born smaller than her two brothers, but she held on to fight against all odds."

**4** MARIA CASTILLO  
COSERV

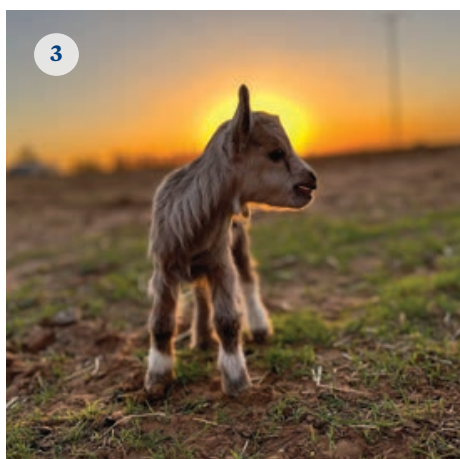
"This beauty was captured roaming the fields at my daughter's wedding venue in Terrell."



1



2



3



4

## Upcoming Contests

- DUE AUG 10** Mailboxes
- DUE SEP 10** Local Landmarks
- DUE OCT 10** Vibrant Color



Enter online at [TexasCoopPower.com/contests](https://TexasCoopPower.com/contests).

**TCP** See Focus on Texas on our website for more Hoof and Horn photos from readers.





## Off the Hook?

The perfect tool, unused but ready, awaits the arrival of snakes

BY PATTY MOYNAHAN  
ILLUSTRATION BY  
TAYLOR CALLERY

MANY A NATIVE TEXAN, beholding an expanse of ranchland, will sooner or later think: snakes. A few years ago, my husband and I bought a house in southwest Austin. Our backyard abuts a cattle ranch, and the two properties are demarcated by a wrought iron fence. The fence is by no means a shield. Its spires—a hand's width apart—offer space enough for critters to wriggle or slither through.

Before moving into the house, we'd heard about sightings in the area: rat snakes, ribbon snakes and garter snakes. Also rattlers, coral snakes and copperheads. I wasn't entirely sanguine about these reports. But I wasn't terrified either. When I was growing up in Bryan, my family often visited friends on a nearby ranch, where I'd learned to identify and avoid venomous snakes.

Soon after settling into our new house, a tall, narrow box arrived on our doorstep, a birthday present from my husband. As I unwrapped the gift, I saw a rubber grip and metal shaft and thought, ungratefully, that my husband had bought me a golf club. But it proved to be a tool far more useful to me than a 2-iron: a snake hook—a 43-inch stainless steel beauty, elegant in its simplicity.

The term "snake hook" can be misleading. No flesh is pierced. You ease the U-shaped hook under a snake and lift it. The snake dangles at the shaft's end, out of striking distance, while you figure out what to do next.

For a sublime moment, as I regarded the gift, I was as excited as *A Christmas Story's* Ralphie with his BB gun. I imagined myself deftly hoisting a 2-pound rattler and ... and what? Flinging it over the fence? Passing it between the spires and dropping it onto the ranchland? The affronted snake could be back in my yard before I was in the house. The phrase "fool's errand" came to mind.

Alas, in four years, we've seen only one snake: a baby rattler, mortally wounded, perhaps dropped from a hawk's talons.

The snakes are out there, I am certain, but they've not been in evidence—so far.

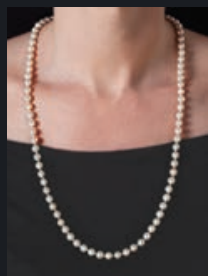
My snake hook stands at the ready, on the back porch. I feel both relief and disappointment that I've not had to employ it for snake removal.

But we've discovered its myriad other uses. Before trimming bottom branches of lantana plants, I wave the hook under the plants to flush out any creatures. My husband uses the hook's pointy tip to pulverize abandoned mud dauber nests. And a snake hook is the perfect tool for retrieving a grandchild's stray crayons, puzzle pieces and grapes from beneath the living room sofa. ■



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**VIA SATELLITE:** Pricing: \$64.99/mo. for two years. After 2 years, then month to month at then-current prevailing prices unless cancelled. Price excludes Advanced Receiver Service Fee of \$15/mo. (which is extra and applies to all packages) and Regional Sports Fee of up to \$13.99/mo. (which is extra & applies to CHOICE pkg or higher) and certain other add'l fees & charges. Additional Fees & Taxes: \$7/mo. for each additional TV connection on your account. Wireless upgrade with HD DVR \$99.00. Applicable use tax expense surcharge on retail value of installation, custom installation charges, equipment upgrades/add-ons, and certain other add'l fees & chrgs. See [directv.com/directv-fees/](https://directv.com/directv-fees/) for additional information. \$10/mo. Autopay and Paperless Bill Discount: Must enroll in autopay & paperless bill within 30 days of TV activation to receive bill credit starting in 1-3 bill cycles (pay \$10 more/mo. until discount begins). Must maintain autopay/paperless bill and valid email address to continue credits. DIRECTV Svc Terms: Subject to Equipment Lease & Customer Agreements. Taxes, surcharges, add-on programming (including premium channels), protection plan, transactional fees, and Federal Cost Recovery Fee are not included in two-year price guarantee. Visit [directv.com/legal/](https://directv.com/legal/) or call for details. Equipment Non-Return-Fees: If you cancel your service, you must return your leased equipment. Failure to return any equipment will result in fees of \$45 for each standard DIRECTV Receiver, each HD DIRECTV Receiver, each Genie Mini and each Gemini receiver and \$135 for each DVR, HD DVR, Genie® HD DVR and/or Genie 2 DIRECTV Receiver. GEMINI DEVICE: To use the Device, you will need an Internet connection, your use of which is subject to the fees, restrictions, terms, and limitations imposed by your Internet service provider. Gemini Device(s) will deactivate after 90 consecutive days without internet connection. If that happens, you will not be able to receive service through that Device until you (re)connect to the internet.

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