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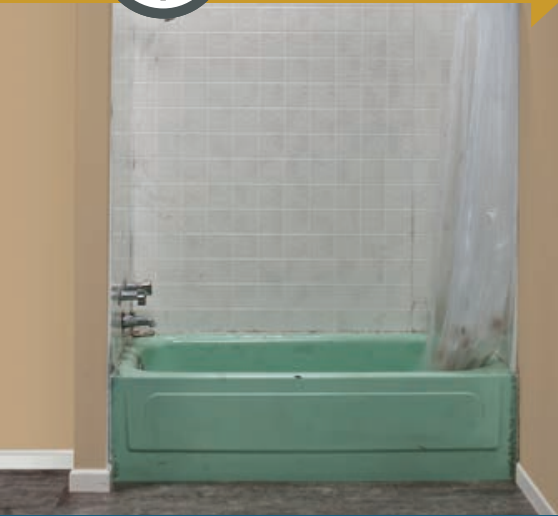
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July 2024



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06 Texas Book Man

Felton Cochran's cluttered bookshelves boast the finest collection of Southwest literature you can buy.

*Story by Carlton Stowers
Photos by Dave Shafer*

Speaking of the Rangers

It wouldn't be a baseball game in Arlington without Chuck Morgan on the call.

By Lori Grossman

ON THE COVER

A stack of Mammaw's Peanut Butter Ice Cream Treats (see Page 27).
Photo by Jason David Page

ABOVE

Chuck Morgan has been the stadium announcer for more than 3,000 Texas Rangers games.
Courtesy Texas Rangers

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Co-op Roots



WITH FLOWERY LANGUAGE, *Texas Co-op Power* announced in its debut issue 80 years ago this month that “there will no longer exist that vacant, uncultivated space within the garden of printed and published facts.”

The magazine itself was unflowery in July 1944—just four plain pages of newsprint. But it had strong roots: messaging that informed and unified members of newly formed electric cooperatives.

Here’s what readers learned in that first issue:

In 1936, less than 3% of Texas farms had electricity, compared to 30% in 1944.

A farm in Dublin, Texas, increased its production 70% with the help of electricity.

And, of course, there was a notice of an annual meeting.

By the August issue, with a circulation of 14,000, the publication had grown to eight pages and ran the first of what has become a beloved string of recipes—for fruit-stuffed spareribs.

Those strong roots today sustain a communications platform that includes nearly 1.9 million slick magazines every month and a website, plus social media access that’s just a click away on any device.

Visit our website to see the inaugural issue of *Texas Co-op Power* from 1944. And watch for our upcoming contest to win a commemorative cast-iron skillet.

FINISH THIS SENTENCE

I’d like to be famous for ...

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

Here are some of the responses to our May prompt: **Summer means ...**

Starlit nights and firefly viewing while listening to the insect night sounds that lull you to sleep.

SANDRA VALDERAZ
PEDERNALES EC
LEANDER

The smell of cut grass, sunscreen and chlorine.

BOBBI FLOWERS
BRYAN TEXAS UTILITIES
BRYAN

Garden-fresh tomatoes.

JAMES SELF
DEAF SMITH EC
HEREFORD

Visit our website to see more responses.

TCP Contests and More

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Cookie Exchange

FOCUS ON TEXAS PHOTOS
Mascots

RECOMMENDED READING

Ten years ago we threw darts at an outline of Texas and headed out to write about the places pinpointed. Read *Darting Around Texas* from July 2014 and see where we ended up.

Seeking Gold in France

Texas will be well-represented among American athletes when the Summer Olympics kick off July 26 in Paris—as it was the last time the French capital hosted the Games, 100 years ago.

Charley Paddock of Gainesville, a track star in 1924, pictured second from right, was the first person labeled as the “fastest man alive.” That was in 1919, a year before he starred in the 1920 Olympics, winning gold in the 100 meters and silver in the 200.

Paddock again won silver in the 200 in 1924. *Chariots of Fire*, the 1981 Oscar-winning film, captured the religious tensions of members of the British track team at those Games. Paddock was portrayed as a brash American in the movie.



MAY 2024 Overpass Easels

“I have seen two of these and wondered how they originated. Your article answered all my questions, and I now am eager to see the others during my travels.”

CAROL STRICKLAND
TRI-COUNTY EC
MILLSAP



COURTESY MICHAEL FORD

Highway Memorials

You have helped to preserve the memory of the jet pilots who trained at Kingsville Naval Air Station [Overpass Easels, May 2024]. Those young men were selfless and courageous. We lived on a cotton farm south of the base and watched as they flew overhead.

My sister married Lt. Ralph Foulks, who went missing after he flew off the USS Oriskany in January 1968 during the Vietnam War. His remains were returned from Vietnam and buried in 1993.

Elizabeth Cumberland
Bluebonnet EC
Martindale

Ranch Hand Legacy

My granddad was a hand for the Four Sixes and Triangles ranches, and the Piper tank is named after my great-granddad Jon Piper [Sixes on the Small Screen, May 2024].

Brendan Hill
Via Facebook



B.J. HINKLE

Perspective on Bowie

It’s easy to judge 19th-century characters and practices by 20th- and 21st-century standards—and Jim Bowie might not have had a sterling reputation [TCP Talk, April 2024]. But it cannot be denied that he (and the other Alamo defenders) did not have to be there, he didn’t have to join the Texian Army in the first place and he didn’t have to be co-commander.

He did those things because of his sense of duty and died for it. He and the others at the Alamo made a down payment on a free Texas with their blood. There certainly is honor in that.

Carl Crisp
Houston County EC
Elkhart

Quilters’ Bond

The timing of *The Fabric of Life* was perfect [May 2024]. A lot of quilters in the state had just finished participating in the two-month All Texas Shop Hop, including shops that spread from Odessa north to Amarillo, east to Texarkana and south to Alamo in the Rio Grande Valley.

Sherry Reid Carroll
Taylor EC
Flower Mound

TCP WRITE TO US
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Austin, TX 78701

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

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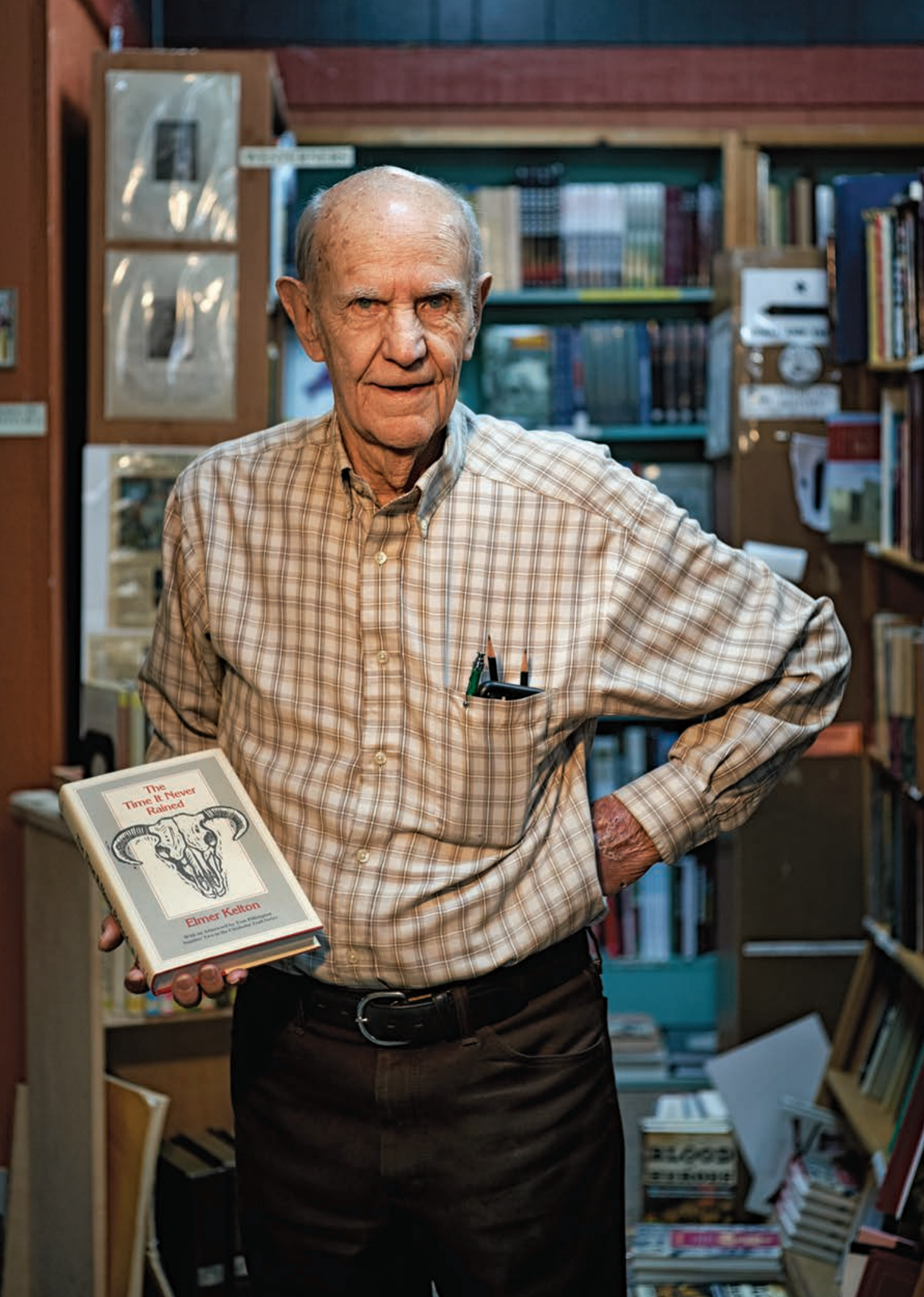
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The Time It Never Rained
Elmer Kelton
With an Afterword by Tompkins
Sensational! True to the Old-Time Frontier

III

Felton Cochran's cluttered bookshelves—
the finest collection of Southwest literature
for sale—endure despite the internet

TEXAS BOOK MAN

BY CARLTON STOWERS • PHOTOS BY DAVE SHAFER

Felton Cochran gave up his rat-race career as a wholesale liquor salesman when, as he recalls, he came to the realization that the rats were winning. Compounding the problem was his concern that he was becoming one of his own best customers.

In the wake of that epiphany, he decided it was time to take leave of such workplaces as Fort Worth, Dallas and Lubbock and return home.

All he took with him on his return to San Angelo was what money he'd saved, his treasured collection of rare books on Texas history and a genuine concern for how to earn a living.

It was 1995, and Cochran's résumé was thin. He'd spent three years as a journalism major at the University of North Texas in the early 1960s before dropping out to sell whiskey. Then there was his self-taught knowledge of Texana and Southwestern literature.

He made the crapshoot decision to see if the latter might somehow pay the bills.

Thus, the little Cactus Book Shop, in the heart of San Angelo, was born of financial necessity and a lifetime fondness for the gentle pace of the community and its people. Here, Cochran likes to say, a traffic jam is a half-dozen pickups waiting for the light to turn green.

Today his store is the go-to destination of researchers, writers, collectors, genealogists and those simply fascinated

by Texas history. Need a hard-to-find, long-out-of-print biography of one of the state's early pioneers, ranchers, oilmen, politicians or infamous scallywags? Want the history of any of the 254 counties in Texas? Autographed first editions of many of the state's legendary novelists? Go see Felton Cochran.

You'll pardon him if it sounds like grade A Texas boasting, but he insists he now oversees the finest collection of Southwestern literature to be found under one roof. Some academics might argue that collections at major universities like the University of Texas, Texas Tech University and the famed Wittliff Collections of 30,000 titles at Texas State University merit strong consideration. But those books aren't for sale.

Steve Davis, curator of the Wittliff's Southwestern Writers Collection, is quick to give Cochran his due, calling the Cactus "a legend among book collectors and a must-stop for any book lover or anyone interested in Texana."

Cochran's East Concho Avenue shop might best be described as clutter comfortable.

Old West memorabilia, like strands of early barbed wire, are on display. Nose around long enough and you see the citation from *True West Magazine*, which in 2020 named the Cactus as the nation's best Western history bookstore, or even the Texas Readers' Club membership certificate that a young Cochran received back in his elementary school days. But it's the musty aroma of old books wafting along the narrow aisles and the wiry, balding man behind the front counter that are the primary lures.

Felton Cochran, owner of the Cactus Book Shop in San Angelo, holds his favorite book, *The Time It Never Rained* by Elmer Kelton, who was a prolific novelist and longtime friend.



III

Now, after 29 years of bookselling, Cochran says it's not unusual to buy a book from someone whose grandfather he originally sold it to.

had an armload of books, which I assumed were for her mother. Not so. The girl, having recently developed an interest in Texas history, had picked the titles. That did my heart good."

An avid reader since those childhood days when his mother would regularly drive him to visit the public library, Cochran is a man who knows the secrets hidden in the pages of the volumes he sells. Pressed to recommend his favorite book on Texas history, he suggests *Lone Star: A History of Texas and the Texans*, fellow Texan T.R. Fehrenbach's lyrical 800-page history lesson. "Without Texas," the late San Antonian author wrote, "there would be no American West." Cochran, who has done his homework, agrees.

Western author Patrick Dearen has been a regular since Cochran's store opened. "Felton and his store have been an invaluable asset to me over the years," says the winner of a Spur Award, which recognizes distinguished writing about the American West. "I've also done a great deal of research at the Midland Nita Stewart Haley Memorial Library, using books their archivist has purchased from Cochran."

All Texas history seems to run through this storefront. "J. Frank Dobie once said that there have been more books written about Texas than any other state in the U.S.," Cochran says. "It is a subject that is so diverse that it offers something for everyone."

The shop owner always has time to talk about books and bygone days.

In an era when many bookstores—independents to nationwide franchises—have lost the battle with the internet and disappeared, the Cactus Book Shop serves a niche that allows it to endure and prosper. Even at 83, Cochran is in touch with today's technology. He maintains a website, and his electronic catalog goes out monthly to customers in 28 states. The phone rings steadily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Mondays through Saturdays with requests from seekers and sellers.

It is, however, the walk-in customers Cochran most enjoys—particularly when they represent a new generation of history lovers.

"Not long ago," he says, "a lady and her 14-year-old home-schooled daughter came in and shopped for quite some time. When they came to the checkout counter, the girl

Cochran's store opened. "Felton and his store have been an invaluable asset to me over the years," says the winner of a Spur Award, which recognizes distinguished writing about the American West. "I've also done a great deal of research at the Midland Nita Stewart Haley Memorial Library, using books their archivist has purchased from Cochran."

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ABOVE Felton's store is clutter comfortable, with a collection that seems as vast as his beloved state. OPPOSITE Proof that Hall of Fame pitcher Nolan Ryan and movie legend Robert Duvall found what they were looking for at the Cactus.

For instance, among his books that customers can't seem to get enough of are those focusing on the Big Bend. "We are a stopping place for those en route to the region," he says.

If a particular book you're seeking is not among the estimated 12,000 volumes crammed along the shop's floor-to-ceiling shelves, Cochran will try to find it. "Today," he says, "the hunt for that rare title is the biggest thrill." For that reason, he remains on high alert for estate sales and is on a first-name basis with numerous rare book collectors who might one day decide the time has come to sell their books.

Sometimes, he says, easy-to-sell treasures come from the most unusual places. He recalls a phone call a few years ago from the sister of Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist Larry McMurtry, informing him that she had several valuable books she was interested in selling. Aware that her brother operated a major bookselling business in his hometown, Archer City, Cochran asked why she hadn't offered her books to him. In most colorful language, she explained that she was seriously unhappy with her famous sibling and not inclined to speak to him.

Now, after 29 years of bookselling, Cochran says it's not unusual to buy a book from someone whose grandfather he originally sold it to.

A longtime friendship with another celebrated author has kept Cochran's cash register humming. The late Elmer Kelton, recognized by many as the premier Western fiction writer of all time, also called San Angelo home, and Cochran made sure he stocked the most complete collection of the seven-time Spur Award winner's works.

In-store book signing became a routine event each time a new Kelton Western was published.

"I remember that for the first one we did, I optimistically ordered 100 copies from his publisher," Cochran says. "We sold out in less than an hour and took orders for 200 more."

"Not only was Elmer a wonderful writer, but he was the kindest, most down-to-earth man I've ever known. On several occasions, I would be at his house, having coffee, when a complete stranger would knock on the door, carrying an armload of books he hoped to have autographed. Elmer would invite him in, pour him a cup of coffee and start signing. For all the awards and recognition he received, I don't think he ever fully realized the remarkable impact his writing had on people."

Among Cochran's prized possessions is a first printing of Kelton's 2004 novel, *Texas Vendetta*, which is dedicated to "Felton Cochran, Bookseller Extraordinaire." Of course, it's not for sale.

It wasn't until Kelton's passing in 2009 that his old friend finally put his bygone journalism studies to use. When TCU Press published a book of reflections on the fabled author, it included *My Friend, Elmer Kelton*, a moving essay written by Cochran.

Among the steady stream of ardent collectors of Kelton first editions to visit the Cactus Book Shop have been Baseball Hall of Fame pitcher Nolan Ryan and movie legend Robert Duvall.

They, like so many others before and since, left as satisfied customers. ■



Speaking of the Rangers

It wouldn't be a baseball game in Arlington without



Chuck Morgan on the call

BY LORI GROSSMAN

If he's said it once, he's said it a thousand times: "It's baseball time in Texas."

And as that mellifluous greeting echoes softly around Globe Life Field, Chuck Morgan begins the soundtrack of a Texas Rangers baseball game. Even as players (and stadiums) have come and gone through the decades in Arlington, Morgan has been perched behind a microphone high in the press box as the stadium voice for the team.

It's a job, but he freely admits he's really just passionate about baseball, as he was as a kid in southern Illinois who dreamed about playing in the big leagues. But like most kids with such dreams, he ended up far off the base paths.

Instead, he found himself in Nashville, hosting an all-night radio show for truckers at country radio giant WSM-AM, home of the Grand Ole Opry, in the late 1970s. He welcomed country artists including Roy Acuff, Bill Monroe and Marty Robbins into the studio. On Saturday nights, he co-hosted the Opry and made a handful of appearances in cornfield sketches with George "Goober" Lindsey on the popular TV show *Hee Haw*.

"On my late-night radio show, I would have a *Hee Haw* week in both June and October," Morgan says. "The producer of the show, Sam Lovullo, would come over with a special guest or two. After a couple years of doing this, Sam said, 'Chuck, we have never had you on. Come over tomorrow. We will get you some overalls and put you in the cornfield with Goober.'"

But Morgan also found a baseball field in Nashville, where he spent three seasons as the public-address announcer for the minor league Sounds, 1978–80.

"While working for the Sounds, I met Larry Schmittou," Chuck recalls. "He left to join the Texas Rangers as vice president of marketing. One day, he called and asked if I wanted to work in the big leagues.

"My love for baseball won."

Chuck Morgan, the stadium voice for the Texas Rangers, during the second game of the 2023 season. Little did he know then how glorious last season would turn out for Rangers Nation.



COURTESY TEXAS RANGERS



That was in 1983. Forty-one years later, many Texas Rangers fans have only ever known Morgan’s voice at Arlington’s ballparks (all three). There are no official records for major league baseball’s announcers, but according to the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum, it’s widely believed Morgan lays claim to the longest streak of games among current announcers, including the 2002 season he spent with the Kansas City Royals.

He has announced the starting lineups for more than 3,250 consecutive games, including one of the Rangers’ historic World Series wins last season en route to the franchise’s first championship. And he’ll add the 2024 MLB All-Star Game to that list when Arlington hosts the Midsummer Classic on July 16 for only the second time in history.

One of Morgan’s microphones—the one he used for his 3,000th straight game September 26, 2020—has a home in the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York.

These days, his official job title is executive vice president of game entertainment, promotions and production—a title that barely gets its arms around all that Morgan has brought to Rangers games over more than four decades.

“Basically, everything you see and hear when you come to Globe Life Field, I’m responsible for it,” he says.

Many of his ideas have become a cherished part of the ballpark experience, including his welcome at the beginning of each game.

“I’ve said, ‘It’s baseball time in Texas’ since the late 1990s



to honor former Rangers broadcaster Mark Holtz, who passed away in 1997,” Morgan says of continuing Holtz’s greeting.

Long-time Rangers employees told Morgan about other team traditions, including the playing of the tune *Cotton-Eyed Joe* during the seventh-inning stretch. It’s still played today. His most-often imitated innovation might be the dot mascot races, which happen in the middle of the sixth inning.

“We’d done a simple black-and-white animation in Nashville,” Morgan says. “Later, *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*

COURTESY: TEXAS RANGERS

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT Morgan at what was originally called the Ballpark in Arlington, the Rangers' second stadium in Texas. In his country music radio days in Nashville, Morgan rubbed shoulders with, from left, stars Bill Monroe, Roy Acuff and Barbara Mandrell. Morgan during the Rangers' World Series victory parade.



Morgan has announced the starting lineups for more than 3,250 consecutive games, including one of the Rangers' historic World Series wins last season en route to the franchise's first championship.

sportswriter Jim Reeves saw two lights chasing each other on the scoreboard at an Oklahoma City 89ers game. He suggested that I should do something like that. About a month later, in May of 1987, we had our first dot race in Arlington Stadium.”

Now Morgan's voice is as much a part of a home game as any other Rangers tradition. His long-time colleague, Rangers radio play-by-play broadcaster Eric Nadel, thinks he knows why.

“He communicates tremendous passion without screaming at you the way many PA announcers do these days,” Nadel says. “His warmth as a person comes through loud and clear when you hear him, and his voice quality as a former radio star is second to none.”

That warmth likely soothed fans and players alike during the lean years, when the team wasn't close to making the playoffs. That luck began to change in 1996, when they faced the New York Yankees in the franchise's playoffs debut.

They lost that series in '96, but 14 years later, they won their first American League pennant—beating the Yankees. Reaching the 2010 World Series was vindication—and sweet revenge—for the team, the fans and the front office, including Morgan.

“I had to temper my excitement because I had my job to

Baseball Times in Texas

APRIL 4, 1983 Chuck Morgan calls his first MLB game, the Rangers' home opener against the Chicago White Sox.

AUGUST 22, 1989 Nolan Ryan becomes the first pitcher with 5,000 strikeouts when he fans Oakland's Rickey Henderson.

MAY 1, 1991 Ryan throws his record seventh no-hitter in a 3-0 win over the Toronto Blue Jays.

JULY 28, 1994 Kenny Rogers pitches a perfect game, 4-0 over the California Angels.

2001 Morgan is named best PA announcer by *The Sporting News*, an honor he receives again in 2003.

JULY 30, 2017 Adrián Beltré gets his 3,000th hit.

SEPTEMBER 26, 2020 Morgan's 3,000th straight game behind the mic, a Rangers win against the Houston Astros. The mic he used is now in the Baseball Hall of Fame.

OCTOBER 2020 Morgan works the National League divisional and championship series and the World Series, all played in Arlington after the postseason format was altered because of the pandemic.

JULY 16, 2024 Globe Life Field will host the 94th MLB All-Star Game.

do,” he says. “But like the fans, it was very emotional. And the crowd was so loud. It was a great feeling to know that the Rangers had won the AL championship and were going to their first World Series.”

The Rangers lost to the San Francisco Giants that year. They made it back to the World Series in 2011, only to suffer a gut-wrenching loss to the St. Louis Cardinals. That loss wasn't laid to rest until last year. The Rangers beat the Arizona Diamondbacks—51 years after the franchise moved to Arlington from Washington in 1972—and won their first World Series, four games to one.

“I was in Arizona for Game 5, and it was one of the great experiences of my life,” Morgan says. “It doesn't get any better than that.”

While Morgan and Ranger fans celebrated, the players were singing their favorite song from the amazing 2023 season—Creed's *Higher*—in the beer- and champagne-soaked visiting clubhouse. Morgan might want to include it in his Globe Life Field playlist from time to time.

And how about one more song for the winners of the 2023 World Series?

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TexasCoopPower

Contact Elaine Sproull at (512) 486-6251 or advertising@TexasCoopPower.com

TCP Gift Shop



TCP Shop now
 TexasCoopPower.com/shop

1920s Style for a 1920s Price

It was a warm summer afternoon and my wife and I were mingling with the best of them. The occasion was a 1920s-themed party, and everyone was dressed to the nines. Parked on the manse's circular driveway was a beautiful classic convertible. It was here that I got the idea for our new 1920s Retrograde Watch.

Never ones to miss an opportunity, we carefully steadied our glasses of bubbly and climbed into the car's long front seat. Among the many opulent features on display was a series of dashboard dials that accentuated the car's lavish aura. One of those dials inspired our 1920s Retrograde Watch, a genuinely unique timepiece that marries timeless style with modern technology.

With its remarkable retrograde hour and minute indicators, sunburst guilloché face and precision movement, this design is truly one of a kind. What does retrograde mean? Instead of displaying the hands rotating on an axis like most watches, the hands sweep in a semicircle, then return to their starting point and begin all over again.

Retrograde watches by the big brands can set you back thousands; one recent offering from a big French fashion house is selling for more than \$150,000! But because we've designed the 1920s Retrograde Watch in-house, we can offer it to you for just \$99!

This watch is so wildly popular with our customers that we're actually concerned about running out; we only have 937 729 left for this ad!



JOIN MORE THAN 1 MILLION SMART PEOPLE WHO LOVE STAUER WATCHES

Watch Specifications:

- Precision movement
- Stainless steel case, caseback and crown
- Retrograde hour and minute indicators
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- Brown genuine leather band
- Fits wrists up to 8"

1920s Retrograde Watch

~~\$399~~ \$99* + S&P **Save \$300**

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Your Insider Offer Code: RGW269-01

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— George Thomas, internationally renowned watch expert

"[A] unique and beautiful timepiece."

— Carlos C., Los Banos, CA

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GENERAL
MANAGER
ERIC
HALFMANN

Co-op Power's Golden Years

YOU'RE HOLDING a piece of history in your hands.

Eighty years ago this month—July 1, 1944—the inaugural issue of the publication that would become *Texas Co-op Power* announced in bold type that “The Baby Is Born.”

Issue No. 1 marked “a distinct milestone in the progress to completely electrify rural Texas,” the broadsheet announced. “The more the public knows about [electric] cooperatives, how they function, why they function and what they are accomplishing and the service they are rendering directly to rural people and rural institutions and indirectly to urban people and urban institutions, the more friends and supporters they will have.”

I couldn't have said it better myself.

Texas Co-op Power looks a whole lot different than it did in 1944, but the mission is still the same.

For nearly as long as our cooperative has existed, *TCP* has helped us reach you, our members, with important news and information. The safety and energy efficiency tips that we publish in these pages are a crucial part of our mission to keep our community safe and thriving.

The feature stories about Texas' people, places and food; the history columns; essays; and reader-submitted content aim to entertain, enlighten and maybe even inspire. It's all part of a tradition that started eight decades ago, not long after Karnes Electric Cooperative was founded.

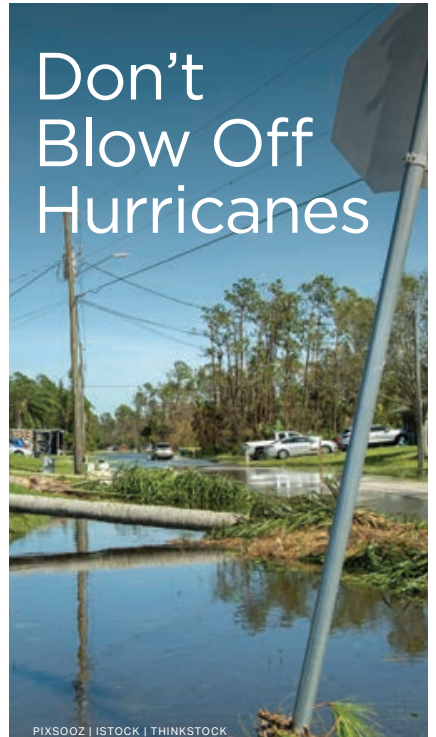
Long before Facebook and Instagram and well before our website, this magazine served as an important communications vehicle for our community, and *Texas Co-op Power* remains a vital tool.

You see, ever since Karnes EC was built by farmers, ranchers and their neighbors back in 1938, we have remained a local business serving local people. We're proud of that distinction.

When you call the office or come by to pay your bill, you'll speak to one of your neighbors. And the money you pay for electricity is invested in your local utility—not lining anyone's pockets. All the folks on the board of directors, they're members too.

You can feel good about investing in us because we're invested in our community. *Texas Co-op Power* helps us keep it that way.

Thanks for reading along with us. ■



PIXSOOZ | ISTOCK | THINKSTOCK

Don't Blow Off Hurricanes

The time for hurricane planning should begin well before a hurricane arrives. Follow these tips:

Develop a plan for installing covers for windows.

Don't waste time taping windows. When a 100 mph wind blows an object at your window, tape won't stop it.

Remove weak and dead trees and tree limbs.

Know whether your home is in a zone that could be flooded.

Have a “grab and run” bag ready with important papers (like your homeowner's insurance policy) and prescription medicines in the event you have to evacuate.

Have a plan for where you will go if you evacuate, the route you will take and how others can contact you.

Have a survival kit ready with nonperishable food, water, a first-aid kit, a battery-powered radio and extra batteries.

Karnes EC encourages you to always practice safety.

Why Is My Electric Bill So High?

IF YOUR ELECTRIC BILL seems higher than it used to be, it's time to investigate.

Check your history. First, verify that the bill truly is higher. Check SmartHub or call Karnes Electric Cooperative to ask for a review of your bills over the past year. You might be surprised to see how much your usage fluctuates depending on the season.

Check the weather. Fluctuations in outdoor temperatures can lead your family to crank up the air conditioning on especially hot days. Most people use more electricity during the hottest summer months than at any other time of the year. Winter chill also increases utility bills.

Check what's plugged in. If you thought your bill would be lower when your family was on vacation, you might be surprised to realize that many appliances still use electricity when the house is empty. Your refrigerator and well pump, for instance, keep running while you're gone unless you unplugged them. In fact, any appliance plugged into the wall uses electricity, whether anybody is home to use them or not.

Check your equipment. As appliances age, they become less efficient. If your AC or a large appliance is more than 15 years old, consider replacing it with a more energy-efficient model.

Check your lifestyle. If your college-age child is home for the summer, your electric bill will be a bit higher than it was while he or she was away. If your grandkids are enjoying their vacation at your house, your bill could go up. If you've added a major appliance—like a pool with a pump, a hot tub or even an oversized TV—that will affect your power bill, too.

Don't check with the neighbors. No two families use electricity the same way, so if you believe your bill is too high because your neighbor's is lower, you're not making an even comparison. The better comparison is between your usage now compared with the same time last year. ■



BEGINNING IN AUGUST, Karnes Electric Cooperative members will be randomly selected to answer an online survey. These answers will help us learn how we can improve service and better communicate with our members.

The online survey should take less than five minutes. The feedback helps staff and management evaluate what practices and processes need improvement. If you do not get an email but would like to share feedback or an idea with the cooperative, contact our office at 1-888-807-3952. ■

Karnes Electric Cooperative

CONTACT US

P.O. Box 7, Karnes City, TX 78118
Toll-Free 1-888-807-3952
Web karnesec.org

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Eric Halfmann

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24/7 Outage Reporting

TOLL-FREE

1-888-807-3952

ONLINE

At 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



Cayla Albers
Falls City ISD



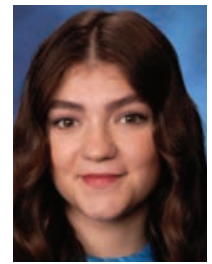
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Pleasanton ISD



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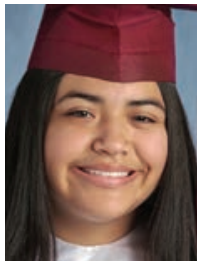
Ariana Coolidge
McMullen County ISD



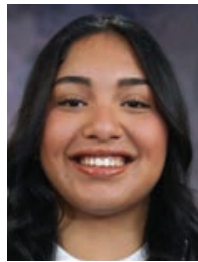
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Poteet ISD



Kaylie Garcia
Kenedy ISD



Rosemary Garcia
Pleasanton ISD



Julia Johnson
Karnes City ISD



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Samantha Saenz
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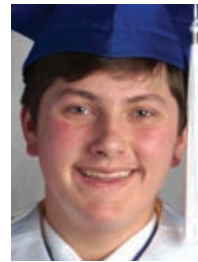
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Three Rivers ISD



Kevin Tam
Kenedy ISD



Ryan Trudeau
McMullen County ISD



Riley Turner
McMullen County ISD



Kiley Wiechring
Pleasanton ISD

Karnes EC Awards 20 Scholarships

KARNES ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE is pleased to announce the recipients of its \$2,500 scholarships for graduating high school seniors from the KEC service area. Recipients must be the children or dependents of an active member receiving electric service from the co-op and have the desire to further their education.

This year, 20 recipients were chosen from a field of highly qualified candidates. Three of the recipients, McKenzie Lutz, Tyler Martinez and Kevin Tam, received two-year or vocational

school scholarships from KEC.

These awards will assist these students in making their dreams, goals and plans a reality. Karnes EC congratulates these students on their accomplishments and for receiving these scholarships.

To each and every senior in the class of 2024: Congratulations and best wishes for your future. ■

Go Fourth Safely

JULY IS A FAVORITE TIME of the year for a lot of folks. And what's not to like? It's the middle of summer, the kids are out of school and, of course, we celebrate our country's independence.

The Fourth of July is a chance to celebrate with burgers, hot dogs, brisket, homemade ice cream, other sweet treats—and fireworks.

This is a time for fellowship with family and friends, but at Karnes Electric Cooperative, we also want to make sure our members focus on safety.

To ensure you have the best Fourth of July possible, we would like to remind you about a few important safety tips.

Fireworks With Forethought

The safest way to enjoy the celebration is to head to a local fireworks show presented by professionals. Let's face it: A curated fireworks show is much more spectacular than most people's backyard renditions. But if you must put on your own amateur display, be sure to follow these safety tips:

- ▶ Always follow the instructions on fireworks' packaging, and never give fireworks to small children.
- ▶ Keep a supply of water such as a hose close by as a precaution.
- ▶ Make sure to wear protective eyewear when lighting fireworks.
- ▶ Light only one firework at a time and never attempt to relight a dud.
- ▶ Store fireworks in a cool, dry place away from kids and pets.
- ▶ Never throw or point a firework toward people, animals, vehicles, structures or flammable materials.
- ▶ Make sure that there are no overhead power lines nearby.

Guarding the Grill

Cookouts are a great way to bring folks together on the holiday. Whether you're grilling in your backyard or at a park, make sure your feast includes a generous portion of safety:

- ▶ Supervise your grill at all times, and keep children well clear.
- ▶ Use the proper tools for cooking on a grill.
- ▶ Never add charcoal starter fluid once the coals have been ignited.
- ▶ Always follow the grill manufacturer's instructions.

Safe Sun Exposure

Fireworks and cookouts wouldn't be complete without a sunny day. Here's hoping we have good weather—and if we do, make sure you practice sun safety:

- ▶ Use a broad-spectrum SPF sunscreen and reapply often, or cover your skin with light, protective layers.
- ▶ Protect your eyes by wearing sunglasses.
- ▶ Drink plenty of water.
- ▶ Be on the lookout for signs of heat stroke (hot, red skin; changes in consciousness; rapid, weak pulse; rapid, shallow breathing). If you observe someone with symptoms of heat stroke, call 911.

However you choose to celebrate, Karnes EC wishes you a safe and happy Fourth of July! ■





Outage Detectives

EVER WONDER WHAT goes into restoring your power after an outage? The ordeal of losing electricity can be frustrating, but electric cooperatives always look for ways to get the power back on as soon and safely as possible.

Whether it's severe weather, like a hurricane or high winds, or a fallen tree, as soon as an outage is detected, your electric co-op is working to correct the problem. And thanks to more advanced technologies, we can restore power outages faster than ever.

Powering up after an outage starts on a larger level and ends up in local areas. First, high-voltage transmission lines are examined, then distribution stations, then main distribution lines. If the outage can't be pinpointed in these areas, tap lines and individual homes are inspected.

This process allows your electric co-op to efficiently help the most members in the shortest amount of time, and co-ops are working to make this process move even faster.

One of the best technologies that co-ops are using is advanced metering infrastructure. These smart meters allow for two-way communication and work by sending information back to the co-op's operations center.

This helps to distinguish between events that affect a single home or multiple outages, which is important because solving either issue is a very different process. The two-way communication also provides a way to verify that power has been restored after an outage.

Another technology is our outage management system, which can predict the location of the issue and how many members are impacted. Especially when used with the AMI system, the OMS can be extremely effective in resolving an outage.

As the AMI collects and sends data, the OMS then analyzes the data using mathematical functions and models the distribution network to assess the impact of the outage.

Interactive voice response is another technology used to manage power outages. Members can easily and quickly report an outage by entering their phone number or location, which is recorded onto an electronic map used by dispatchers. After service has been restored, the system can also make follow-up calls to members to confirm that the power is back on.

One of the major benefits of these technologies, especially for outages caused by extreme weather, is understanding where the outages are, which helps to reduce risk for crews out on the road during weather events.

Power outages are inevitable, but as technology continues to improve, disruptions are becoming shorter and easier to resolve. ■

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Independence Day

Thursday, July 4
Our offices will be closed for the holiday.

Get Out of the Doghouse Day

Monday, July 15

Ice Cream Day

Sunday, July 21

Korean War Veterans Armistice Day

Saturday, July 27

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](https://www.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 (WEAs).
- ▶ **Prepare an emergency supply kit.** Learn how to build an emergency kit at [ready.gov/build-a-kit](https://www.ready.gov/build-a-kit).
- ▶ **Review your home insurance policy.**
- ▶ **Register with the State of Texas Emergency Assistance Registry (STEAR)** at 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
Texas Department of State Health Services: texasready.gov
American Red Cross: redcross.org
U.S. Department of Homeland Security: ready.gov
Office of Texas Gov. Greg Abbott: 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](https://www.drivetexas.org) o marcando 1-800-452-9292. Llame al 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 (WEAs).
- ▶ **Prepare un kit de emergencia.** Aprenda como construir un kit de emergencia en [ready.gov/build-a-kit](https://www.ready.gov/build-a-kit).
- ▶ **Revise su póliza de seguro de hogar.**
- ▶ **Regístrese con el Registro de Asistencia de Emergencia del Estado de Texas (STEAR)** en 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
Departamento de Servicios de Salud del Estado: texasready.gov
Cruz Roja Americana: redcross.org
Departamento de Seguridad Nacional de los Estados Unidos: ready.gov
Oficina del Gobernador de Texas Greg Abbott: gov.texas.gov


DEEPBLUE4YOU | ISTOCK.COM

Mike's Smoked Brisket

- 2 cups dark brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon chili powder
- ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 cup seasoned salt
- 1 beef brisket (10 to 16 pounds)

1. Mix sugar and spices. Rub on brisket and wrap with plastic wrap. Put in refrigerator for at least 24 hours.
2. Remove from plastic and wrap in heavy foil. Place in 225-degree smoker (low to medium fire) with fat side down for 3 hours.
3. Place brisket in an empty 40-quart cooler for 12 hours (and don't open the lid).
4. Put back on smoker for 6 hours at 225 degrees.
5. Let set for 30 minutes before slicing.

SERVES 24-40

 Find this and more delicious recipes online at TexasCoopPower.com.

REBECCAFONDREN | ISTOCK.COM



Pure Intentions

A tiny nonprofit brings clean water to thousands living in poverty

BY LAURA JENKINS

AS IS OFTEN THE CASE in India, traffic was moving slowly. While his car stood still, Jim Mynaugh noticed some boys bathing on the side of the road.

“They had shorts on and were laughing as they passed a bar of soap back and forth,” says Mynaugh, who was there on business in 2011. “I saw a pipe sticking out of a rock above their heads. There was one kid standing out of the water, watching them. Suddenly he yelled something and they all scattered. I rolled the window down and that’s when the smell hit me.

“These guys were bathing in sewage.”

Mynaugh, who lived in Pennsylvania at the time, was shocked. He’d been teaching a class to raise awareness of global crises like child trafficking, world hunger and the lack of access to clean water, a basic staple that we take for granted but that about 2 billion people lack.

Witnessing it firsthand propelled Mynaugh into action.

“At some point in your life, you’ve got to stop talking about stuff and start doing things,” says the retired chemical engineer. “I know we can’t fix it all, but we can fix a little bit, right?”

Once he got home, Mynaugh founded Divine Water and applied for 501(c)(3) status. He wasn’t exactly sure where that would lead or how his nonprofit would effect change, but he started raising money and looking for opportunities to partner with organizations that were already implementing clean-water initiatives across the globe.

Mynaugh, 65, continued that work when he moved to Lipan in Hood County in 2013, becoming a member of Tri-County Electric Cooperative. Over the next several years, Divine Water mainly operated as a fundraising enterprise, sponsoring wells through humanitarian nonprofits like Healing Hands International, Kibo Group and Water Underground. They underwrote projects in five countries: Costa Rica, Haiti, Mozambique, Papua New Guinea and Uganda.

Typically, one hand-pumped well will provide clean water for 800–1,200 people. Sometimes this means very long lines at the well head each morning, Mynaugh says.

In 2020, Mynaugh’s church, South Main Church of Christ in Weatherford, established a school in Zambia. When students dispersed after graduation,

they reported that some villages had no access to clean water.

That’s when Divine Water started funding and implementing its own projects in a sixth country: Zambia, a landlocked nation in southern Africa where more than half the population lives in poverty.

Mynaugh has compiled a list of more than 20 Zambian villages that need wells. But even though Divine Water is now funding and implementing its own projects—providing clean water access to 10,000 people in 2023—it continues to partner with other organizations doing similar work.

“Most of our revenue comes from individual donors, people who know us and believe in what we do,” Mynaugh says. “Sometimes it’s neighbors, sometimes it’s family, sometimes it’s church members or friends.”

Fundraising also contributes to Divine Water’s clean-water wells. Regardless of the source, all donations have provided benefits that go far beyond what Mynaugh initially imagined. A 2019 visit to a Ugandan village with a newly drilled well made that very clear to him.

“Through an interpreter, the village chairman was thanking us for the well,” Mynaugh says. “And then he said, ‘Because of the water, our women and children are no longer being raped and molested.’

“I told him we hadn’t done anything to prevent that. And that’s when he explained that before we dug the well, the women and children had been walking nearly 2 miles to get water.”

Commutes in poverty-stricken areas can be extremely dangerous for vulnerable people.

“What’s going to break your heart if that doesn’t do it?” Mynaugh asks. “I’m not doing anything that you couldn’t do. I’m not that special. I’m just a regular guy who decided to see if I could make a small difference.” ■

Villagers in Uganda on the day in January that Divine Water commissioned a solar-powered water well, which serves about 4,000 people.



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No, rather the effect came from tiny flecks of silver glinting in the sun.

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Vegan Panhandlers

And other demonyms across Texas bend and break the rules of language

BY W.F. STRONG • ILLUSTRATION BY SHAW NIELSEN

LATELY I'VE BEEN on a deep dive into “demonymology.” Sounds ominous, but it’s simply the study of what people from certain places call themselves. There are general rules for demonyms, but there’s nothing that can’t be broken for phonetic aesthetics or preference—or even whimsy.

For instance, adding “-ites” to a place name is a biblical tradition for identifying the people there: Canaanites, Levites, etc. So folks in Dallas are Dallasites, people in Dumas are Dumasites and residents of Paris, Texas, would be known as Parisites—except they’ve adopted the French custom and call themselves Parisians.

We have many unusual, rather unpredictable demonyms in Texas. Ivanhoe

could be Ivanhoers, but if you say it too fast it sounds indelicate. So Ivanhoans is preferred. Carthage? Carthaginians. Leander? Leanderthals. That one is the result of an important archaeological find near there.

What do you call people in Cactus? Cacti? Could be Cactusians, but that sounds like a cough. What about Cut and Shoot? They are Cut and Shooters. Rough crowd. Commerce is also a challenge. Are they Commercials? Commericians? No, probably Commercites. The demonym for Waco isn’t Wackos but Wacoans.

Comfort is interesting. Are they Comforters? Actually, yes. Dime Box has Dime Boxers. Alice has a truly sophisticated demonym. They’re Alicians.

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



Corpus Christi is made up of Corpus Christians. No holier demonym than that, I’d suppose.

For places ending in “-o,” just add “-an.” Laredoans, San Angeloans, El Pasoans. Amarillo? Depends on whether you say Amarillo or Amarilla; George Strait sings *Amarillo by Morning*. So I go with him. The demonym, therefore, is Amarilloans.

San Antonio cannot follow this rule. “San Antonioans” is phonetically awkward. So we throw out the rule and just go with what sounds better: San Antonians.

If you have an “-on” ending, then by custom, add “-ian” to create the demonym. Houston becomes Houstonian. Sinton becomes Sintonian. Denton is Dentonian.

People in Austin seem to prefer Austin-ites. Austonian, though, cannot be the demonym. It’s the adjective for style. You can say, “I love the Austonian vibe,” for instance.

For places ending in “-burg,” you just add “-er.” Fredericksburgers, Rosenburgers. Seems like we should have a town named Whataburg. Those residents would then be Whataburgers. I might move there just to be one.

Folks in Marfa are Marfans, but if they were Marfalites, it would be good marketing.

People in Paradise are Paradisians. Vega, in the Panhandle, has Vegans. Happy has Happians. Wink has Winkers. And Victoria has Victorians.

No matter what we are by demonym, we’re all collectively Texans. And that, to me, is about the best thing in the world a person can be. ■

Frozen Treats

Hello, July! Hello, Texas heat! Hello, relief.

BY VIANNEY RODRIGUEZ, FOOD EDITOR

Nothing hits the spot after a hot day better than an icy *paleta* (popsicle). My coconut horchata paletas will keep you cool all summer long. Made from a base of horchata, a popular Mexican drink made by soaking rice in water, my paletas are light and refreshing with a hint of vanilla.

Coconut Horchata Paletas

1 cup unsweetened shredded coconut, divided use
½ cup uncooked white rice
2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
4 cups hot water
4 cups room temperature water
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
¼ cup sugar

1. Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Place ¼ cup coconut on a baking sheet. Bake, stirring occasionally, until coconut is lightly toasted, about 5 minutes. Set aside.
2. To a blender add rice, the remaining ¾ cup coconut, cinnamon and hot water. Cover and allow to steep for 15 minutes. Blend until smooth. Strain into a pitcher.
3. Stir in room temperature water, vanilla and sugar. Taste for sweetness, and add more sugar if desired.
4. Pour the coconut horchata into a popsicle mold. Freeze overnight. Serve, sprinkled with the toasted coconut.

SERVES 6

TCP Follow Vianney Rodriguez as she cooks in *Cocina Gris* at sweetlifebake.com, where she features a recipe for Coconut Orange Frozen Bars.





Frozen Raspberry Squares

CLAUDIA PALACIOS SELLERS
MIDSOUTH EC

This no-fuss dessert Palacios Sellers has been whipping up since 1998 is always a hit at her home. Berries and chocolate are the ultimate combo. With store-bought cookies and just a few additional ingredients, you can make a delicious berry delight at home.

- 1 cup finely crushed Oreos, about 14 cookies**
- 2 tablespoons (¼ stick) butter, melted**
- ½ cup sugar**
- 1 cup half-and-half**
- 1 cup sour cream**
- 12 ounces frozen raspberries**
- Chocolate syrup for serving**

1. Coat an 8-by-8-inch baking dish with cooking spray. In a medium bowl, combine crushed Oreos with butter. Press mixture into the bottom of the baking dish.
2. In another bowl, stir together sugar, half-and-half, and sour cream. Fold in frozen raspberries and spread mixture evenly over cookie crust.
3. Cover and freeze 3–4 hours. Remove from freezer 10 minutes before serving. Slice into squares and serve drizzled with chocolate syrup.

SERVES 9

MORE RECIPES >



\$500 WINNER

Mammaw's Peanut Butter Ice Cream Treats

KIM NEW
BIG COUNTRY EC



A sweet mashup of two childhood favorites, this recipe from New's mother-in-law, Betty Sargent, is truly spectacular. From birthday parties to summer potlucks or movie nights, I'll be enjoying these peanut butter treats all year-round.

SERVES 9

- 1 cup peanut butter**
- 1 cup light corn syrup**
- 6 cups crisp rice cereal**
- 1 quart vanilla ice cream**

COOK'S TIP Leftover squares can be individually placed in plastic wrap and stored in the freezer for later.

1. Line two 8-by-8-inch metal pans with parchment paper.
2. In a large bowl, stir together peanut butter and corn syrup. Add cereal 1 or 2 cups at a time, stirring to coat with the peanut butter and corn syrup mixture.
3. Divide mixture evenly between the two pans. With damp hands, press mixture evenly into pans. Freeze 1 hour.
4. Scoop and spread ice cream evenly over cereal mixture in one pan. Run knife around edges of frozen cereal mixture in the other pan to release it onto top of ice cream. Press gently and return to freezer for 30 minutes. Slice into squares and serve.

TCP \$500 Recipe Contest

COOKIE EXCHANGE DUE JULY 10

Want to trade your best cookies for \$500? Send us the recipe your friends always rave about and that could be your prize money. Enter by July 10 for a chance to win \$500.





Pistachio Freeze

RUBY COWAN
HOUSTON COUNTY EC

If you're craving a deliciously salty and sweet dessert, Cowan has got you covered. I simply love the lightly salty cracker crust that pairs so well with the pistachio pudding. Bonus: This sweet and salty treat comes together in a snap!

55 butter crackers, divided use
¾ cup (1½ sticks) butter, melted
2 cups milk
2 packages pistachio pudding mix
(3.4 ounces each)
1 quart vanilla ice cream, softened
2 cups frozen whipped topping

1. In a large resealable plastic bag, crush 50 crackers with a rolling pin. Combine with butter and press into a 9-by-13-inch baking pan.
2. In a bowl, stir together milk and pudding. Add ice cream and whipped topping, stir to combine. Pour mixture over the crust. Crush remaining crackers with your hands and sprinkle over mixture.
3. Cover and freeze at least 1 hour. Slice and serve.

SERVES 10

TCP Find the August 2014 issue in our online archive and discover the best Co-op Country recipes in that month's Just Chill contest.

No-Guilt Goodies

BY VIANNEY RODRIGUEZ

How frozen fruit can become a delightful snack:

Spread yogurt on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper and top with diced fresh fruit and nuts. Freeze, slice and serve.

Blend a frozen, peeled banana in a food processor with coconut milk for a delicious ice cream.

Drizzle melted chocolate over diced fruit spread on a parchment paper-lined baking sheet, freeze and enjoy.

Slice watermelon wedges, insert a popsicle stick into the rind and freeze for a guilt-free popsicle.

Wash and fully dry fresh grapes. Place in a zip-close bag and freeze overnight for a refreshing snack.

Not just another Hunger Game.



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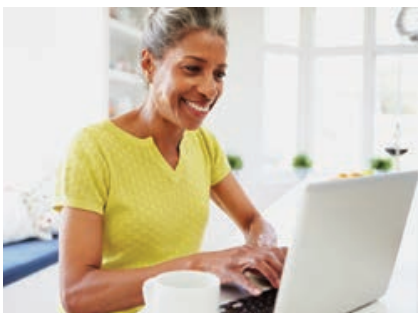
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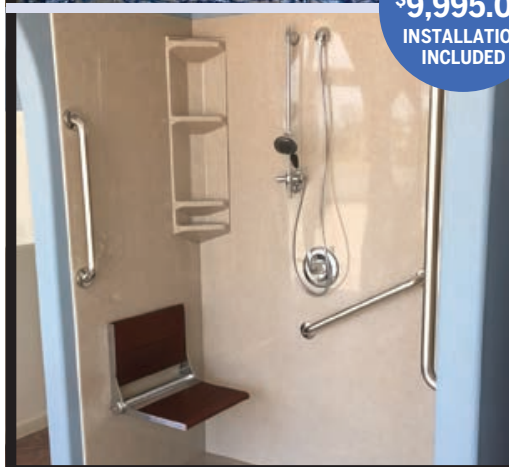
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COURTESY CHET GARNER

Face to Face With History

Look into the mystery of the Malakoff Man at the Pearce Museum

BY CHET GARNER

A GROUP OF WORKERS near the East Texas town of Malakoff made an unusual discovery near the Trinity River in 1929. They were digging out a gravel pit when they unearthed a round stone about the size of a basketball lying 20 feet below ground level.

As they looked at its smooth surface, the stone seemed to be looking back at them through two carved eyes. Was this a prehistoric sculpture? And how did it get buried in dirt that at the time was believed to be 100,000 years old—when humans didn't get to Texas until some 20,000 years ago? I had the same questions and set off for the Pearce Museum in Corsicana, southeast of Dallas, to get answers.

I was stunned by the wealth of artifacts inside this little-known museum on the campus of Navarro College. I could have spent hours exploring the immense Civil War collection, but I was on a mission for the mysterious. In a back room, I found three carved heads surrounded by Native American projectile points and an impressive hunter-gatherer display.

It turns out that following the original discovery in the Malakoff quarry, archaeologists found two more heads in the same vicinity. As far as explanations go, it seems science is as stumped as I am.

These unusual heads have as many supporters as they do critics, with some scientists attempting to discredit their integrity. Some believe them to be all-out fakes while others argue that they're authentic, dating them to when Paleo-Indians were known to have been in the Americas, roughly 9,000–15,000 years ago.

Unfortunately the dig site was flooded, halting any further investigations (insert conspiracy theories here). Regardless, it was fun staring down a mystery that can stare right back. ■

ABOVE Malakoff Man confounds Chet, as the stone heads have done for many over the past century.

TCP See these Malakoff heads for yourself in the video on our website. And see all Chet's Explorations on *The Daytripper* on PBS.



Know Before You Go

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

JULY

6

Fredericksburg [6–7, 20–21] Pari-Mutuel Horse Racing, (830) 997-2359, gillespiefair.com

8

Lampasas [8–14] Spring Ho, (512) 556-5301, springho.com

11

Levelland [11–13] Junior Rodeo Cowboys Association Finals, (806) 290-2848, jrcarodeo.com

Mason [11–13] Round Up Weekend, (325) 347-5758, masontx.org

12

Midland [12–14] Celebration of the Arts, (432) 687-1149, acmidland.org

Ingram [12–Aug. 9] Summer ArtMart, (830) 367-5121, hcaf.com

13

Weatherford Parker County Peach Festival, (817) 596-3801, parkercountypeachfestival.com

New Braunfels [13–14] Petfest, (830) 488-7814, hillcountryconferences.com

17

Kilgore [17–20, 25–27] Tinker Bell, (903) 983-8601, texasshakespeare.com

19

Brenham Puppy Pals, (979) 337-7240, thebarnhillcenter.com

20

Friona Cheeseburger Festival & Cook-Off, (806) 250-3491, friona-chamber.com

25

Clute [25-27] The Great Texas Mosquito Festival, 1-800-371-2971, mosquitofestival.com

26

Levelland [26-27] Fearless Champions Summer Showcase, (806) 894-4161, facebook.com/fearlesschampionsfallshowcase

Fredericksburg [26-28] Hill Country Swap Meet, (254) 751-7958, earhartproductions.com

27

Buffalo Gap Tour de Gap, (325) 829-0617, tourdegap.com

Giddings Sip & Shop Christmas in July, (979) 542-3455, giddingstx.com

McKinney Magical Moth Night, (972) 562-5566, heardmuseum.org

Bandera [27-28] National Day of the American Cowboy, (210) 632-4535, banderabusiness.com

28

San Angelo Buffalo Soldier Anniversary Day, (325) 657-4444, fortconcho.com

AUGUST

3

New Braunfels Already Gone: A Tribute to The Eagles, (830) 627-0808, brauntex.org

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Shells and Scales

Slithering and silently sneaking their way to the top this month are creatures that use their shells and scales as disguises, protection and even homes. Let's appreciate their photos, even if they might give us pause in real life.

CURATED BY GRACE FULTZ

1 TRACY COSTELLO
PEDERNALES EC

"I found this small garter snake in the oregano plant in the backyard. I had to wait patiently for this little one to trust me enough to make an appearance."

2 CYRIL FERNANDES
PEDERNALES EC

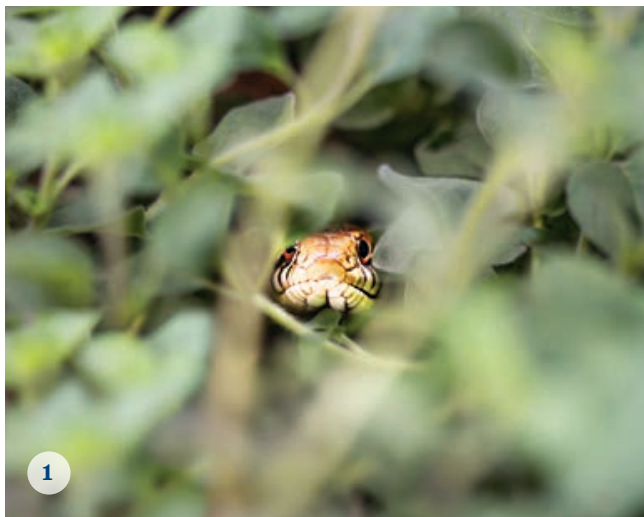
"The green anole is found throughout the eastern third of Texas, and it can change color from brown to green. Males have a pink throat fan called a dewlap that can be puffed up."

3 RICK KIEFFER
BLUEBONNET EC

"Spotted this little guy while camping at Cedar Breaks Park on Lake Georgetown."

4 TERESA MOULDS
BIG COUNTRY EC

"While this eastern hognose poses, a gorgone checkerspot alights on its head. The snake was in display mode, stretching the skin around head and neck in an effort to scare away large predators, me in this case."



Upcoming Contests

- DUE JUL 10 Mascots**
- DUE AUG 10 Young Photographers**
- DUE SEP 10 Parks**



Enter online at TexasCoopPower.com/contests.

TCP See Focus on Texas on our website for many more Shells and Scales photos from readers.



Culling Time

When tomato farming in Jacksonville meant selling the best and savoring the rest

BY CYNTHIA L. MATLOCK
ILLUSTRATION BY
SARAH FERONE

THE OTHER DAY, while picking tomatoes from my garden, I remembered how, growing up in the 1970s, we gathered under the large oak tree in my parents' yard and made tough decisions. Which produce would go to town?

Of all the crops we grew, tomatoes were my favorite because someone always brought a saltshaker to the fields. A misshapen or overripe tomato was a prime fruit for eating. Right there in the field, I would stop and enjoy the juicy snack.

After picking the ripe ones—and a few yellow and large green ones, too—we headed home around midmorning, sweaty and tired. The important part was next: culling time.

The prettiest, most perfectly shaped red tomatoes went into one basket,

while the blemished, funny-shaped or otherwise flawed ones filled another basket. Under the shade tree, a breeze kept us cool while we'd chat and separate the produce.

About 55 years prior, around 1917, the farms surrounding Jacksonville, in Cherokee County, south of Tyler, produced 90% of the tomatoes shipped from Texas. The area's sandy soil still grows some of the best tomatoes in the state. And my family learned to take part in that business.

We took our best tomatoes to town. However, have no fear—there were plenty of uses for the culled ones that we kept for ourselves: soup, cobbler, picante sauce and, of course, lots for canning.

Texas' tomato industry once employed thousands of people on the farms, in packing sheds and in the factories that made boxes and baskets. Over time Jacksonville became known as the tomato capital of the world.

Some of the old packing sheds with wide dock doors still stand next to the train tracks. That was where farmers sold their vegetables to be shipped all over. One of the six basket factories in the county still operates in town too. Many of my relatives worked at basket factories, or as we called them, box factories.

Competition and marketing problems caused a collapse in the tomato business in the 1950s. During the '70s we took our tomatoes and other vegetables to the local farmers market. Bulk buyers bought from us and drove to the larger Dallas or Houston farmers markets. There they could make double the profit.

Our father would stubbornly say, "I see no reason to drive that far' to sell a tomato."

Yesterday, examining my ripe tomatoes, I found one with yellow spots and a distorted shape. Oh well, even the imperfect ones have purpose. I grabbed the saltshaker. ■

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