

THE DAZZLING PECAN TREE
NEAR FORT WORTH

THE MIGHTY HONEYBEE
IS BUSY AS EVER

REMEMBER THE
GREAT Y2K SCARE?

Texas Coop Power

FOR KARNES EC MEMBERS

DECEMBER 2024

Cookie Season

Co-op Country kitchens
share their recipes



Get the protection your family needs with physical gold.



Don't let the next financial crisis catch you unprepared.
Call now for your **FREE Gold Information Kit**.

Now is a crucial time to take action.

Amid today's uncertain economic landscape, gold's role in modern portfolios is more critical than ever. More Americans are turning to physical gold not only to protect—but also to *grow*—their hard-earned savings, and as a proven strategy for securing a legacy that will last for generations. **It's time to take control of your financial future. Call U.S. Money Reserve today.**

Inside you'll discover:

- ✓ The key fundamentals of owning physical gold
- ✓ How to help minimize your overall risk exposure
- ✓ Why smart savers choose physical gold
- ✓ Answers to commonly asked questions about gold
- ✓ Two exclusive reports: "2024 Global Gold Forecast" and "Protection in the Risk Zone"
- ✓ Special offers you won't find anywhere else

Protect what matters most. Call now.

1-855-426-7168

Vault Code: TX46



December 2024



10

06 Field of Beams

An old pecan tree's dazzling annual metamorphosis becomes a community tradition.

By Pete Alfano
Photos by R.J. Hinkle

Everybody's Beeswax

Texans help each other help the mighty honeybee help the rest of us.

By Claire Stevens
Photos by Eric W. Pohl

04

Currents
The latest buzz

05

TCP Talk
Readers respond

16

Co-op News
Information plus energy and safety tips from your cooperative

25

Footnotes in Texas History
Black-Eyed Peace
By Chris Burrows

26

TCP Kitchen
Cookie Exchange
By Vianney Rodriguez

30

Hit the Road
A Belle Reborn
By Chet Garner

33

Focus on Texas
Photo Contest: Young Photographers

34

Observations
Emily's Wish
By Fred Afflerbach

ON THE COVER

The best of our Cookie Exchange recipe contest. Get baking on Page 26.
Photo by Jason David Page

ABOVE

Busy bees at Two Hives Honey in Manor.
Photo by Eric W. Pohl

Y2...What?



THE WORLD SEEMINGLY teetered on turmoil 25 years ago this month at the hands of Y2K, a supposed computer glitch that threatened to stymie systems as the calendar turned from 1999 to 2000. It was quite a big deal—though for TCP’s editors and writers, not so much:

Samantha Bryant: *I was at my grandmother’s house in Poolville, listening to the news on TV while my siblings and I did a Y2K-proof activity—a puzzle.*

Chris Burrows: *I was making sure our family computer kept ticking (by playing video games all night).*

Alex Dal Santo: *We were with neighbors, watching Space Jam. None of the adults seemed very concerned.*

Claire Stevens: *That was before my time, but my parents didn’t even see midnight. I’m told they “went to bed hoping the world and digital appliances would live to see the next day.”*

Tom Widlowski: *I was one of the 260,000 revelers packing Congress Avenue in Austin.*

Read *Black-Eyed Peace* on Page 25 to learn more about the experiences of Texans during Y2K.



FINISH THIS SENTENCE

My favorite holiday lights are ...

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

Here are some of the responses to our October prompt: **My favorite hand-me-down is ...**

Old recipes. You get to learn, by trial and error, how much a pinch and a dash actually is.

TABITHA FOUNTAIN
DEEP EAST TEXAS EC
SAN AUGUSTINE

My name. My dad named me after his sister. We both were Yvette Françoise “Sissy” Sherman.

YVETTE COOPER
BANDERA EC
BANDERA

A small screwdriver my dad gave me when I was about 6. I’m 75 and carry it on my key chain every day.

GARY ELLIOTT
VIA FACEBOOK

Visit our website to see more responses.

75 Candles

Three Texans with storied careers in their chosen fields turn 75 this month.

- Hall of Fame golfer **Tom Kite** was born December 9, 1949, in McKinney.
- ZZ Top guitarist **Billy Gibbons** was born December 16 in Houston.
- Academy Award-winning actress **Sissy Spacek** was born December 25 in Quitman.



TCP Contests and More

ENTER CONTESTS AT
TEXASCOOPPOWER.COM



\$500 RECIPE CONTEST
The Whole Enchilada

FOCUS ON TEXAS PHOTOS
Characters

RECOMMENDED READING
Download our issue from December 2004 and enjoy our look at holiday lights. Find it at texascooppower.com/magazine-archives.

OCTOBER 2024 There's No Party Like La Pitada

“I extend my gratitude for including such a small town like ours in your amazing magazine—and also the tradition we hold sacred, celebrating our Dallas Cowboys!”

SANTA GARCIA
MAGIC VALLEY EC
BROWNSVILLE



ERICH SCHLEGEL

Hauling Grass

Hadn't seen lawn mower racing in years—since I left the hills of Kentucky [*Grassroots Movement*, October 2024].

Mark Wright
Via Facebook

Come Together

Thanks for the old Beatles memory [*Invading Dallas*, September 2024]. I saw them the night before in Kansas City. I was a sixth grader in Topeka, Kansas.

Larry Chabira
Pedernales EC
San Leanna

The Cactus Experience

I have looked for a book—*Guns smoke in the Redlands*, about feuds in San Augustine. Felton Cochran said he had the book in his hand, and two days later I had it in my hand [*Texas Book Man*, July 2024].

Buddy Hancock
Deep East Texas EC
Center



JULIA ROBINSON

I ventured into Cactus Book Shop about 22 years ago. Felton Cochran was so pleasant and welcoming, and I picked out several books totaling well over \$100. Back then, he didn't take credit cards.

I asked him to hold my books until I could come back in a few days with a check, as I was a 100-mile round trip from San Angelo. He insisted I take them with me and mail him a check later. He didn't ask for ID, phone number or anything.

Susan Wellborn
Concho Valley EC
Robert Lee

Saltshaker Logic

I especially enjoyed the last two sentences: “Oh well, even the imperfect ones have purpose. I grabbed the saltshaker.” We humans are imperfect and sometimes say or do something that rubs another person the wrong way [*Culling Time*, July 2024].

Instead of getting upset at someone, grab the imaginary saltshaker. Take what the other person said or did with a grain of salt.

Ted Pasche
CoServ
Argyle

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.

Facebook Instagram Twitter YouTube Pinterest Texas Co-op Power

TEXAS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chair Avan Irani, Robstown
Vice Chair Bryan Wood, San Augustine
Secretary-Treasurer Cameron Smallwood, Burleson
Board Members Dale Ancell, Lubbock
Matt Bentke, Bastrop • Kerry Kelton, Navasota • Mark McClain, Roby

PRESIDENT/CEO Mike Williams, Austin

COMMUNICATIONS & MEMBER SERVICES COMMITTEE
Mike Ables, Bellville • Kathi Calvert, Crockett
Marty Haught, Burleson • Tachi Hinojosa, Fredericksburg • Gary Miller, Bryan
Zac Perkins, Hooker, Oklahoma • Bryan Story, Blossom • Buff Whitten, Eldorado

MAGAZINE STAFF

Vice President, Communications & Member Services Martin Bevins
Editor Chris Burrows
Associate Editor Tom Widlowski
Production Manager Karen Nejtsek
Creative Manager Andy Doughty
Advertising Manager Elaine Sproull
Communications Specialist Samantha Bryant
Digital Media Specialist Caytlyn Calhoun
Senior Designer Stacy Coale
Assistant Production Manager Alex Dal Santo
Print Production Specialist Grace Fultz
Food Editor Vianney Rodriguez
Communications Specialist Erin Sinclair
Communications Specialist Claire Stevens
Proofreader Louie Bond

TEXAS CO-OP POWER Volume 81, Number 6 (USPS 540-560). *Texas Co-op Power* is published monthly by Texas Electric Cooperatives. Periodical postage paid at Austin, TX, and at additional offices. TEC is the statewide association representing 76 electric cooperatives. *Texas Co-op Power's* website is TexasCoopPower.com. Call (512) 454-0311 or email editor@TexasCoopPower.com.

SUBSCRIPTIONS Subscription price is \$4.44 per year for individual members of subscribing cooperatives and is paid from equity accruing to the member. If you are not a member of a subscribing cooperative, you can purchase an annual subscription at the nonmember rate of \$7.50.

Co-op members: Please notify your co-op of address changes or other subscription requests.

POSTMASTER Send address changes to *Texas Co-op Power* (USPS 540-560), 1122 Colorado St., 24th Floor, Austin, TX 78701. Please enclose label from this copy of *Texas Co-op Power* showing old address and key numbers.

ADVERTISING Contact Elaine Sproull at (512) 486-6251 or esproull@texas-ec.org for information about purchasing display ad space in *Texas Co-op Power* and/or in our 26 sister publications in other states. Advertisements in *Texas Co-op Power* are paid solicitations. The publisher neither endorses nor guarantees in any manner any product or company included in this publication.

COPYRIGHT All content © 2024 Texas Electric Cooperatives Inc. All rights reserved. Reproduction of this issue or any portion of it is expressly prohibited without written permission. Willie Wire-hand © 2024 National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.



An old pecan tree's dazzling
annual metamorphosis becomes
a community tradition

Field of Beams

BY PETE ALFANO • PHOTOS BY R.J. HINKLE

A family gathering on Thanksgiving culminates in the pasture of a 10-acre ranch where a pair of old geldings, Zephyr and Max, graze during the day. In the middle of this equine playground is a pecan tree, standing like a sentry, having taken root about 30 years after Texas became a state.

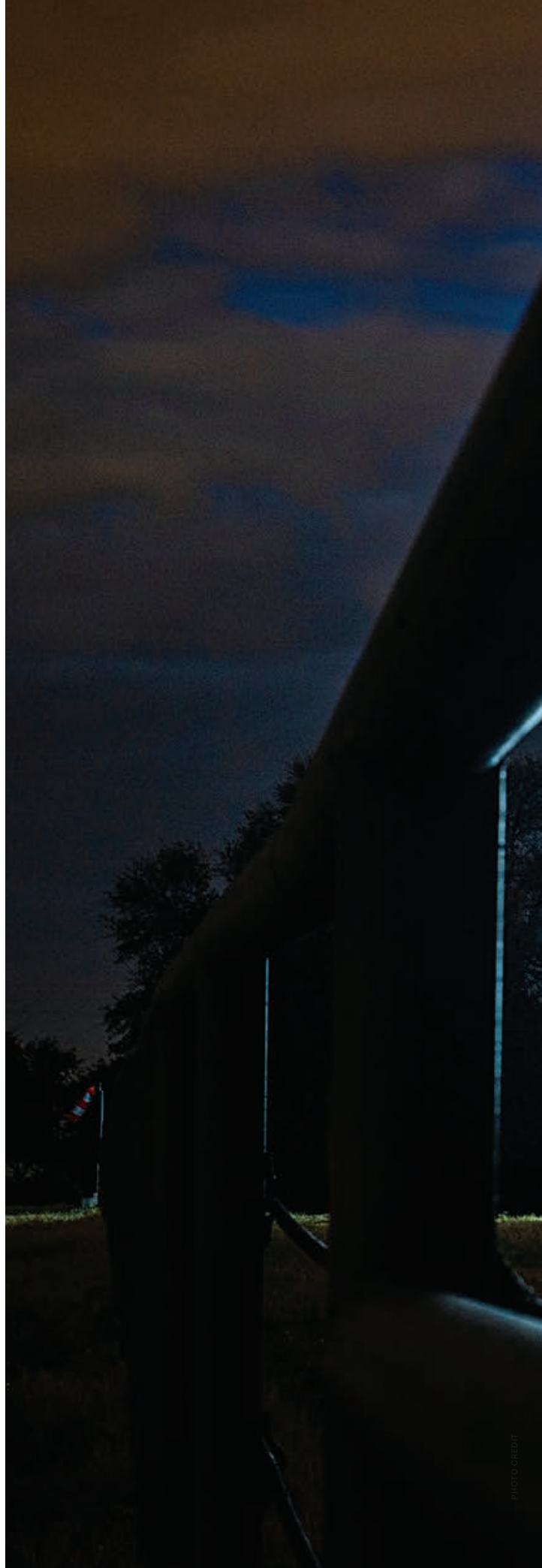
But for the past 17 years, the tree has been more than just a vestige of the past; it is the town of Bartonville's symbolic tribute to the holidays.

Without fanfare Barbara Nunneley first lit the nearly 50-foot-tall tree in 2007, when about 60,000 bright LEDs illuminated the darkness and could be seen from 3 miles away. The bright lights attract visitors who admire and photograph it or quietly take in the glow, reflecting on another year coming to an end.

"It's mesmerizing, almost a spiritual thing," says Jaclyn Carrington, mayor of Bartonville, 30 miles northwest of Fort Worth. "It is so black out because there are no streetlights, so all you see is this gigantic, beautiful bright tree. The first time I saw it, I thought, 'Wow, this is magnificent.'"

This month is the 18th renewal of a tradition Nunneley, a retired lawyer, initiated to honor her father, Earl, a larger-than-life personality, she says, who was battling prostate cancer during the early 2000s. She plays host to siblings and their families on Thanksgiving and wanted her father to be there to witness a tree-lighting ceremony that has become as anticipated in Bartonville as the annual tree-lighting event at Rockefeller Center in New York City.

"It's mesmerizing, almost a spiritual thing," Bartonville Mayor Jaclyn Carrington says of the centuries-old lighted pecan tree on Barbara Nunneley's ranch.





“
No one could have predicted that an old and revered pecan tree would become the centerpiece of the holiday season in Bartonville. It has had a life of its own and now, ‘a light of its own.’
”



Her dad, however, was too ill to make the 70-mile trip from Nocona on Thanksgiving in 2007, but with her family gathered around the tree in the pasture after dinner, Nunneley flipped the switch that brought the pecan tree to life.

“There was dead silence for a couple of minutes,” she says. “Then tears.” Her father died the next day, but Nunneley has faith that he has seen the tree from a far loftier perch.

Bill Rathburn, owner of the Christmas Light Co., first suggested lighting the 150-year-old tree in 2005. His crew was there to string lights across the roofline of Nunneley’s sprawling ranch house when he sized up the gangly mass of limbs and branches after the tree had shed its leaves and

dropped its pecans. He pondered what a different kind of Christmas tree it could be.

But Nunneley and her partner, Jan Deatherage, decided against the challenging and costly job of lighting the tree. With her father’s illness progressing, however, and his love for anything over-the-top, Nunneley gave the go-ahead two years later.

Stringing lights on the tree is labor intensive. Rathburn’s crew uses cherry pickers to reach the top, and the project takes a couple of days each year to set up and then take down in early January. Nunneley says a new circuit board had to be installed to handle the power output and that a timer now turns the lights on at dusk and off at midnight.

The tree has had various light colors over the years, but white appears to have the most dramatic impact. CoServ, an electric cooperative based in Denton, provides the electricity for the property and the tree.

Pecan trees are resilient, and this one has obviously survived numerous winters of freezing temperatures and ice storms as well as tornado seasons and Texas’ broiling summer heat. During severe drought, Nunneley runs garden hoses out to the tree from the house to ensure it stays healthy.

Carrington says the famous tree has had a modest economic impact during the holidays as people from the region make the pilgrimage to Bartonville. They eat dinner in the town of about 1,800 and then park along the side of the road fronting the pasture to admire the tree from behind the low fence.

“They make an evening out of it,” Carrington says. “It’s a huge event every year.”

One evening the week before Christmas last year, local Kim Corser stepped out of her car and walked up to the fence to just marvel at the tree. “I was out running errands and realized I hadn’t come to see the tree yet,” she says. “I usually come with my kids, but we’ll come back.”

Some visitors have tried to scale the fence to get even closer to the tree despite a sign that warns against trespassing. “Some high school boys tried to climb it,” Nunneley says. “People sneak in because they think it is on a vacant lot. Parking can be an issue because we’ve had people pulling into our driveway.”

She says a neighbor who works for the Federal Aviation Administration has informed pilots about the tree, which can be seen from planes as they come and go from nearby Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport.

The pecan tree is not just a tourist attraction but a source of inspiration. Deatherage displayed a coffee-table book about the tree compiled by Flower Mound photographer Meredith Butterfield. “It has entries by different photographers with stories of what the tree means to them,” she says. It’s a limited-edition book: The only copy belongs to Nunneley and Deatherage.

One holiday season early on, Nunneley heard a knock on

the front door and found a sheet of legal paper under the doormat. It was left by a young man who wanted to propose to his girlfriend under the tree because she had admired it the year before. But there was no name, phone number or other contact information.

“Several days later, I was walking in the pasture collecting the horses and saw yet another sheet of yellow legal paper,” Nunneley says. “It was the second page of the original letter. Clearly the wind had come up and separated the letter. It had the young man’s name and the way to contact him.” She followed through and gave her blessing to his request.

It happened again years later when a polite young man, about to graduate college, rang the doorbell and nervously asked whether he could propose to his college sweetheart under the tree. “He thought it was a logical place because it was a place of so much light, hope for the future and promise,” Nunneley says.

The young Romeo kept it a secret from his girlfriend when they came to view the tree. He convinced her that he knew the owners and it would be OK to trespass and take photos under the blinding canopy.

When they went over the fence and walked up to the tree, his family and hers drove from around the corner and watched as the young man dropped to one knee and proposed. “There were celebratory handshakes and hugs and lots and lots of flash camera pictures,” Nunneley says.

No one could have predicted that an old and revered pecan tree would become the centerpiece of the holiday season in Bartonville. It has had a life of its own and now, “a light of its own,” Nunneley says. ■



OPPOSITE Nunneley began the tree-lighting tradition in 2007 to honor her father.

THIS PAGE The 60,000 LEDs have made the tree a famous attraction over the holidays.





Everybody's

BY CLAIRE STEVENS
PHOTOS BY ERIC W. POHL

CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE Michele Jaquier, a tour guide at Two Hives Honey in Manor, shows guests a beehive frame loaded with bees and honey. Jaquier captures a sample of honey. Atlas, owner Tara Chapman's son, helps with the smoker. Honey production in the U.S. was up last year even as bees face a range of threats.

For years now, all eyes have been on the bees. In the mid-2000s entire colonies of worker bees started disappearing suddenly and mysteriously, raising alarm bells around the world. Since then, there has been serious concern for the insects we depend on to pollinate our crops and native flora. Bees are up against a whole host of threats, including habitat destruction and fragmentation, invasive parasites, and extreme weather.

But things might finally be looking up for honeybees. In the U.S., honey production was up 11% in 2023 after three years of decline, according to the Department of Agriculture.

That's due, at least in part, to the many dedicated defenders of these critical pollinators. Across Texas a growing movement



Beeswax

**Texans help each other
help the mighty honeybee
help the rest of us**

of beekeepers, educators and researchers are working to save the bees. One such defender—Juliana Rangel, a professor of apiculture who runs the Texas A&M University honeybee lab—says those efforts are starting to pay off.

The biggest threat facing the bees, Rangel says, is the varroa mite, a tiny parasite that feeds on bees and spreads viruses among colonies worldwide. Despite measuring just over a millimeter, the pests have devastated U.S. honeybee populations as they've spread since the late 1980s. Some insecticides are effective against varroa but can also have negative effects on bees.

Making matters worse, increasing urbanization has left wild and managed bees with less forage.

Bees also must contend with extreme weather amid a changing climate. The February 2021 winter storm in Texas impacted bee populations unequipped for the cold and delayed the spring blooms they rely on for food. In addition, increasingly hot summers and droughts have left many bees starving. Beekeepers can keep them alive, but they'll struggle in the heat, with poor nutrition leading to no honey yields.

Against these threats, it's impressive that bees can survive in the wild. While beekeepers keep honeybees almost exclusively, native wild bees often live secluded, in nests, making them much harder to study. But they face many of the same challenges as their managed counterparts.

“I love feral colonies because they are kind of like a beacon of not just diversity but also resilience against all of these issues,” Rangel says. “If they’re alive, it’s because they’ve been able to survive on their own.”

Luckily, not all bees have to do it on their own. Beekeepers across the state dedicate themselves to the pollinators.

Suzanne Truhlicka, a Lyntegar Electric Cooperative member who lives in Tahoka, just south of Lubbock, was hooked after a neighbor took her along for a hive removal in 2019. “I just became addicted to bees,” Truhlicka says. “The bees are like therapy to me. They’re a challenge, every day.”

She now maintains 12 hives and sells honey and beeswax products online and at local shops through her business, Flying Fancy Bees. She’s one of many Texans who have picked up the trade in recent years. In fact, the number of farms with bees in Texas more than quadrupled from 2012 to 2022, according to the USDA’s Census of Agriculture. Texas had 8,939 farms with bees—more than twice as many as the next highest state, Ohio.

One leading contributor to Texas’ honeybee craze is a 2012 state law that allows folks with 5–20 acres of land to get a property tax break under an agricultural exemption if they keep bees.

That tax break was what originally prompted Susan Allen to put hives on her North Texas property, deciding that tending bees was going to be a whole lot easier than maintaining



RIGHT Chapman has become focused on beekeeping education.

BELOW A collection of hives in September at Two Hives Honey. The smoke keeps the bees calm while keepers perform hive inspections.



Save the Bees

If you want to do your part to help bees, here are a few steps you can take:

- **Grow native plants.** While a perfectly manicured lawn might be your homeowners association's preference, having a "wild" portion of your lawn where native plants and wildflowers can grow is much preferred by bees.
- **Plant large patches of the same flower.** Bees have site fidelity, meaning they prefer to return to the same patch of flowers again and again. Having a large patch of one species, rather than just a few of each kind of flower, makes it easier for them to do so.

- **If you're ready to begin caring for your own hives,**

now is the ideal time to learn and order a nucleus colony, often just called a nuc, to get started.

Nucs are typically delivered in late spring but often must be ordered in advance.

- **Support local beekeepers.** Find a map of Texas honey retailers on the Texas Beekeepers Association's website, texasbeekeepers.org.



the hay the land had been used for. But what started as a smart financial move quickly grew into a passion as Allen, a Grayson-Collin Electric Cooperative member, became more and more involved in beekeeping, connecting with other local beekeepers through the Grayson County Beekeepers Association.

The more Allen learned about bees, the more she was invested. "They're just so stinking smart," Allen says. "They're fascinating. That's what keeps me going. It's just learning more and more about them."

Beekeeping clubs exist all over Texas, gathering in churches, community centers, restaurants and homes to educate, discuss challenges and collaborate.

Best friends Rosie Lund and Meredith Pace started their honey and beekeeping supply business, Apis Supply, in 2023 and quickly realized they needed a bee club in their neck of West Texas, where high winds and dry weather make keeping bees particularly tricky. The duo helped organize curious beekeepers into the Permian Basin Beekeeping Association, which now meets monthly in Seminole.

"It's a family, really," says Pace, a Lyntegar EC member. "We all just kind of support each other. It's like, 'Oh, hey, I have an extra frame,' or 'I have an extra box,' until you can get stuff in the mail because everything takes a week to get here."

Much like the community inside a hive, the community of beekeepers depends on each other. And they depend especially on people like Tara Chapman, whose beekeeping venture goes well beyond honey production, aiming to get more people informed and excited about bees.

Chapman took a beekeeping class in 2013 while looking for a new career after 10 years at the CIA. She became fascinated with bees and decided to trade war zones for worker bees, starting with just two hives maintained by her and a friend. Her operation has grown to more than 300 hives at Two Hives Honey in Manor, just east of Austin.

Chapman doesn't get to spend as much time "in bees" as she used to but now focuses on beekeeping education. In addition to tours of the honey ranch, honey tastings and

beekeeping classes, Two Hives offers a six-month hands-on "beek" apprenticeship program. Last month Chapman published *For the Bees: A Handbook for Happy Beekeeping*.

"Beekeeping is the most nuanced form of ag there is," she says. "I will argue to my death that that is true, and it's not totally intuitive to everybody."

Chapman set out to teach people about the "bananas" world of bees, making sure they understand basic bee biology first. Inside each hive is an entire society, she explains, with a queen at the center. But the queen, while important, isn't really in charge. Honeybees make decisions democratically, communicating through pheromones and "waggle dances."

"It just so defies logic of how humans live and exist," she says. Understanding the foreign world of bees is one of the things that can make keeping them so challenging.

"I've made every mistake, and I think it's why my greatest asset is my ability to teach beekeeping," Chapman says. Those mistakes have included an incident in which an improperly secured box resulted in roughly 50 pounds of spilled honey in the back of Chapman's truck.

Luckily, she says, bees will quickly come to take care of any honey that's just sitting there for the taking, but "while they're taking care of it, it's going to be a terrifying sight for the layman that happens to be walking by your driveway."

Chapman's and others' efforts haven't been in vain. Rangel says the increased awareness and interest have been important and that honeybees are doing better now than when the public first learned about collapsing colonies—though it's too soon to say they're in the clear. Honeybee numbers can fluctuate year-to-year as environmental factors change, but Rangel says there's been a trend of about a 1% increase in the U.S. managed population each year.

"In the last 15 years, the number of studies on honeybees and honeybee health have grown exponentially, which increases our understanding of all the issues that they face," she says.

"Increased awareness by the public and the farming community, I think, is what's mostly helping." ■

★ STILL THE TRACTOR PACKAGE LEADER ★



Pkg. includes 4' Box Blade and Cutter

MT-122 & MT-125 Subcompact Tractor Packages

22 & 25 HP Diesels, 4x4, Hydro Trans, ROPS, R4 Industrial Tires, Quick Attach Loaders and Buckets, 4' Rotary Cutter and 4' Box Blades

AS LOW AS \$239 per month

0 down @ 3.9% interest for up to 84 months WAC



Pkg. includes 6' Box Blade and Cutter

MT-355 H Full Size 55 HP Tractor Package

55 HP diesel, 4x4, Hydro Trans, R4 Tires, ROPS, Quick Attach Front Loader & Bucket, 6' Rotary Cutter and 6' Box Blade included

AS LOW AS \$449 per month

0 Down @ 3.9% Interest for up to 84 months WAC



Pkg. includes 5' Box Blade and Cutter

MT-225 H 25 HP Compact Tractor

4x4, Hydro Trans, Quick Attach Front Loader, and Skid Steer Bucket, R4 Tires, ROPS, 5' Rotary Cutter and 5' Box Blade included

AS LOW AS \$315 per month

0 Down @ 3.9% Interest for up to 84 months WAC



Pkg. includes 6' Box Blade and Cutter

MT-458 CPS 58 HP Cab Tractor Package

Power Shuttle Trans, 4x4, R4 Tires, 2 Sets of Rear Hydraulic Remotes, AC & Heat, Stereo Ready, Quick Attach Loader and Bucket, 6' Rotary Cutter and 6' Box Blade, Fully Loaded With All Options!

AS LOW AS \$625 per month

0 Down @ 3.9% Interest for up to 84 months WAC

DELIVERY AVAILABLE



FOSTER'S WORK & PLAY

936-967-0011 • Text 713-899-7976 After Hours • fostersworknplay.com

3601 US Hwy 190 W • Livingston, Texas 77351 • sales@fostersworknplay.com

All horsepower ratings are approximate engine horsepower ratings from manufacturer. Prices and payments approximate with approved credit by AGCO Finance. 0% Interest Rates may be blended slightly because of implements other than MF Brand. All prices and payments may not include freight, set up, insurance or delivery if applicable



CHRISTMAS SALE \$189 PER MONTH



YOUR CHOICE OF A WALK-IN SHOWER OR WALK-IN TUB

- Lifetime Warranty
- Custom Sizes Available
- 100% Financing Available
- A+ BBB Rating
- Good Contractors List



BEST BUY WALK-IN TUBS
FEATURING "SEALTITE" TECHNOLOGY

- Trusted by Texans for 20 Years
- Tubs and Showers Made in America
- Visit Our Texas Showroom

Call for More Info
682-205-3532 • 888-825-2362
bestbuywalkintubs.com



WE BUY MINERALS



We pay cash for producing or non-producing mineral interests.

CALL US TODAY! 1-888-735-5337



SKID STEER MOUNTED SHEAR
• 1/2" to 6" diameter trees and brush.
• Perfect for cedar, shin oak, persimmon, mesquite.

(512) 263-6830 • www.brushshark.com



TCP Gift Shop

TCP Shop now

TexasCoopPower.com/shop



- MAKES A -
GREAT GIFT

PERFECTLY AGED, TENDER STEAKS

ACHIEVE GIFTING GREATNESS

Eliminate guesswork by sending a mouthwatering assortment of gourmet Omaha Steaks to everyone on your gift list. The best part: every bite is guaranteed perfect!



THE BEST STEAKS
OF YOUR LIFE OR
YOUR MONEY BACK



The Ideal Gift

- 2 Bacon-Wrapped Filet Mignons (5 oz.)
- 2 Butcher's Cut Top Sirloins (5 oz.)
- 4 Air-Chilled Chicken Breasts (4 oz.)
- 4 Gourmet Jumbo Franks (3 oz.)
- 4 Individual Scalloped Potatoes (3.8 oz.)
- 4 Caramel Apple Tartlets (4 oz.)

8 FREE Omaha Steaks Burgers (4 oz.)

77205WNX separately \$201.95

SPECIAL INTRODUCTORY PRICE

\$89.99

Limited Time
8 FREE BURGERS



\$23 VALUE!

ORDER NOW!

OmahaSteaks.com/IdealGift7330 | 1.888.652.9385

Ask for your FREE burgers with offer 77205WNX



Savings shown over aggregated single item base price. 8 free 4 oz. burgers will be sent to each shipping address that includes SKU 77205. Limit 2 on select items at these exclusive prices. While supplies last. Items may be substituted due to inventory limitations. Standard shipping rates will be applied and are subject to change. Minimum purchase and other restrictions may apply. Some products may not be available for sale in your area. Sales are subject to OmahaSteaks.com/terms-of-useOSI. Expires 02/28/25. | SRC0715

Scan Now



OmahaSteaks.com/IdealGift7330



GENERAL
MANAGER

ERIC
HALFMANN

May Your Holidays Be Merry and Bright

IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE the holiday season is already here, and we'll soon be gathering with family and friends to celebrate. This festive time of year brings joy and warmth, but as the weather gets cooler and we spend more time indoors, the holidays can also bring increased energy use and a higher risk of electrical and fire hazards.

Your team at Karnes Electric Cooperative cares about your well-being, so this month I'd like to share a few practical tips to help you stay safe and efficient during the holiday season.

Safety First

My family really enjoys decorating our home for the holidays. But before we deck the halls, I always check electrical cords and light strands to make sure they aren't frayed or damaged. This gives us

the first of each month, so it's easy to remember. Testing smoke alarms only takes a few seconds and could save lives, so make it a habit.

Season for Savings

Spending more time indoors with more guests in the home can really impact energy use. By taking a few small steps to save energy during the holiday season, you can minimize the effect on your power bill.

I like to remind my family members to mind the thermostat. Since heating and cooling makes up the majority of home energy consumption, the thermostat is one of the best places for savings.

On those chilly days, lower it a few degrees, especially when you have family or friends stopping by. Good company brings additional warmth to your home—and so do the oven and stove.

There's no denying one of the best parts of the holiday season is the food—not just the meals but the time we spend together in the kitchen. There are many ways to save in the heart of your home, but one of the best approaches is to cook with smaller countertop appliances, such as air fryers, slow cookers and toaster ovens.

These handy appliances consume a fraction of the energy used to heat the oven, creating the perfect recipe for mealtime and energy savings. If you do use the oven, plan to cook several dishes at the same time.

Your family can also save energy by decorating with LED holiday lights. LEDs are the most energy-efficient lighting option available, and they last much longer than traditional bulbs.

I hope you'll implement some of these energy-saving and safety tips into your holiday plans. For additional advice, visit our website, karnesec.org. We're here to help you with safety and savings year-round.

Your friends at Karnes EC hope your holiday season is merry and bright. ■



STEFANIKOLIC | ISTOCK.COM

peace of mind, knowing our holiday lights are ready to safely brighten our home. I also double-check the lights we use outside to make sure they're rated for outdoor use.

Like many households, we also enjoy holiday-scented candles. While festive, candles can be fire hazards and should never be left unattended.

One of the best and easiest ways to safeguard your home is to test smoke alarms often. I test mine on



STRAIGHT SHOOTING ON SAFETY

Be sure to follow the "10 commandments" of shooting safety:

Always point the muzzle of your gun in a safe direction.

Treat every firearm or bow with the same respect you would show a loaded gun or nocked arrow.

Be sure of your target.

Unload firearms and unstring conventional bows when not in use.

Know your safe zone-of-fire and stick to it.

Handle firearms, arrows and ammunition with care.

Control your emotions when using weapons.

Wear hearing and eye protection.

Don't consume alcohol or drugs before or while handling firearms or bows.

Never use electrical insulators or transformers as targets.

Karnes EC encourages you to always practice safety.

PHOTO: JMICHL | ISTOCK.COM

Karnes Electric Cooperative

CONTACT US

P.O. Box 7, Karnes City, TX 78118

Toll-Free 1-888-807-3952

Web karnesec.org

General Manager

Eric Halfmann

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

David Ross Nieschwitz, District 7

Boyd Vaughan, District 2

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



DENISTANGNEVJR | ISTOCK.COM

How Winter Weather Impacts Reliability

WHEN OUTDOOR TEMPERATURES DROP, our electricity use increases. That's because we're doing more activities inside, and our heating systems are running longer and more often to keep us warm. Factor in that we all tend to use electricity at the same times—in the morning and early evenings—and that equals a lot of strain on our electric grid.

At Karnes Electric Cooperative, we work closely with our local generation and transmission cooperative in resource and infrastructure planning to ensure you have the power you need whenever you flip a switch, but the electric grid is much larger than your local electric co-op and our G&T.

In winter months, when even more electricity is being used simultaneously across the country, it's possible for electricity demand to exceed supply, especially if an unexpected event like a sudden snow or ice storm or equipment malfunction occurs.

If this happens, though it's rare, the grid operator for our region may call for rolling power outages to relieve pressure on the grid, and Karnes EC will inform you about the situation.

Karnes EC and our G&T take proactive steps to keep our portion of the grid as resilient as possible to ensure electric reliabil-

ity during extreme weather, regular system maintenance, grid modernization efforts and disaster response planning—but it takes everyone to keep the grid reliable.

To help us keep the heat on for you, your family and neighbors, **here are a few things you can do (and save some money along the way):**

Select the lowest comfortable thermostat setting, and turn it still lower whenever possible—such as at night or when you're away from home.

Seal air leaks around windows and exterior doors with caulk and weatherstripping. Air leaks and drafts force your heating system to work harder.

Stagger your use of major appliances such as dishwashers, ovens and dryers. Nighttime is the best time.

Use smaller countertop appliances, like slow cookers and air fryers, to save energy.

Ensure that your heating system is optimized for efficiency with regular maintenance and proper insulation.

Make sure your furnace filter isn't clogged and dirty. Replace it regularly.

When possible, use cold water instead of hot for washing clothes. Your laundry won't mind.

Setting your water heater thermostat to 120 degrees can help you save energy and reduce mineral buildup and corrosion in your water heater and pipes.

Unplug devices when not in use to eliminate unnecessary energy use. Even when turned off, electronics in standby mode consume energy.

Plug devices into a power strip so you can turn them off all at once.

Understanding winter weather's impact on energy demand is crucial for maintaining a reliable power supply. By adopting energy conservation practices during periods of extreme cold, you can not only save money on your electric bills, you can also contribute to the resilience of the grid.

That helps keep our community warm and connected. ■



Karnes City To Celebrate Founders Day

KARNES CITY'S BIGGEST event of the year just got even bigger. Join the community December 14 for an incredible day of family fun and entertainment at Karnes City Park.

The festivities kick off at 8 a.m. with a color run, and the park opens at 11 a.m. for a day filled with excitement. Enjoy live performances by Ricky Naranjo y Los Gamblers and Southall, along with various vendors, food trucks, carnival rides, dummy roping, snow and much more.

Don't miss the chance to take a picture with Santa at 2 p.m. and watch the illuminated night parade at 6 p.m., followed by a firework display at 7 p.m. and live music to end the night. We encourage everyone in the surrounding area to come out and celebrate this free community event! ■

Kids Can Help With Holiday Meal Prep

EVEN IF YOU LIKE to prepare Christmas dinner by yourself so it's just right, consider letting your children—or grandchildren—in on the fun and the work this season.

Of course, you'll have to keep your youngsters away from the hot stove and sharp knives. **Still, there are lots of fun, safe ways to get everyone involved:**

Very young children can take the crusts off bread for the stuffing. They can also snap the ends off of green beans.

Children aged 3–5 can help pour in ingredients, and they can help stir or whisk. Have them stand at the kitchen sink to wash vegetables or let them use a hand-masher to make the mashed potatoes.

Older children can follow directions for a recipe and use cooking utensils with supervision. Let them cut, chop and peel veggies. These older kids also are strong enough to knead dough, so let them shape and divide the rolls or biscuits.

Cooking can be a great way to get kids interested in science, math and physics, as well as the history of the holiday. Talk about the food you're making, the measurements of the ingredients and the steps involved in getting food from the farm to the table.

The experience also can lead to conversations about energy conservation. Have kids turn down the heater while cooking or while company is over then explain how the extra heat of preparing a feast reduces the need to run the furnace.

The holiday might be a time to indulge, but sensible actions like using countertop kitchen appliances rather than the oven or keeping lids on pans can help ensure the feast is served without wasting electricity. ■

POWER TIP

If you're heading out of town this holiday, remember to lower your home and water heater thermostats a few degrees to reduce energy consumption.



SVETIKD | ISTOCK.COM



Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

from Karnes Electric Cooperative

May you have the gift of faith, the blessing of hope and the peace of His love at Christmas and always.

Our offices will be closed Tuesday–Wednesday, December 24–25, and Wednesday, January 1, in observance of the holidays.

Spicy Mixed Nuts

- 1 egg white**
- 1 tablespoon water**
- ½ cup sugar**
- 2 teaspoons kosher salt**
- 1 tablespoon ground cumin**
- 1¼ teaspoons cayenne pepper**
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon**
- 1 cup pecan halves**
- 1 cup salted cashews**
- 1 cup roasted almonds**

1. Preheat oven to 250 degrees.
2. Whisk together the egg white, water, sugar, salt and spices in a large bowl. Add nuts and use a rubber spatula to mix well.
3. Pour the mixture onto a rimmed baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Bake 40 minutes, stirring occasionally with a metal spatula. Reduce heat to 200 degrees and bake another 30 minutes.
4. Remove nuts from oven, use a fork to loosen them from baking sheet and cool completely. Store in a metal container with a tight-fitting lid; the nuts will last up to 2 months.

MAKES ABOUT 3 CUPS

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

KITCHENM | ISTOCK.COM





ALEXSANDR POTASHEV / ISTOCK.COM

Use Portable Home Generators Safely

IF YOU'VE LOST POWER, a portable generator can provide electricity to keep your home warm and power appliances. However, if used improperly, a generator may present serious hazards to you and the crews trying to get the electricity back on.

Before using a generator, read the specifications and instructions and follow them closely. The generator should have more capacity than the combined wattage of the electronics you will plug into it.

Never connect a portable generator directly to home wiring, which can result in potentially deadly backfeeding. When electricity gets fed back through the electrical system and meter into power lines, it can create a deadly hazard for lineworkers.

Never use a portable generator indoors because it produces carbon monoxide. Opening a window or door or turning on a fan will not produce enough fresh air to reduce the deadly gas. Operate the generator outside in an open but protected space from which fumes can dissipate harmlessly.

Before using a generator, install at least one CO detector in your home, and be on the lookout for the signs of carbon monoxide poisoning. Symptoms include dizziness, nausea, headaches and lethargy. If you or someone else is showing these symptoms, move into fresh air and seek medical attention right away.

Make sure nothing is plugged into the generator when turning it on.

To avoid electrocution, keep the generator dry and do not use it in rainy or wet conditions. Operate it on a dry surface under an open, canopy-like structure. Do not touch the generator with wet hands.

Be sure to turn the generator off and let it cool down before refueling.

Remember, even a properly connected portable generator can become overloaded, resulting in overheating or generator failure. If necessary, stagger the operating times for various equipment to prevent overloads.

Run your generator for 10 minutes once a month to ensure that it works properly. ■

THE TRIP OF A LIFETIME

GOVERNMENT-IN-ACTION YOUTH TOUR

JUNE 15-22, 2025



Are you a Texas high school student? Would you like to travel to Washington, D.C., and visit historic landmarks—all without spending a dime of your own money?

Perhaps you'd like to meet elected officials, or maybe you're looking for an inspirational experience in the company of other Texas teens. If that sounds like you, then the Government-in-Action Youth Tour is your tour. Apply now!

For more information, visit karnesecc.org.

Start your adventure at
TexasYouthTour.com.



Dear Santa

Small-town Texas children had meager requests in 100-year-old letters to St. Nick

BY BARBARA FINLAY • ILLUSTRATION BY CHRIS WORMELL

IN THE HUSTLE and bustle of the holiday season, we often hear nostalgic wishes for the simplicity of Christmases past. It sometimes seems the season has always been a time of stress, hectic shopping, expensive decoration and frantic preparation.

The old folks who grew up in rural Texas know better.

I happened on some powerful reminders of their experiences as I was looking through old newspapers in search of information on my hometown, Fife, 85 miles south of Abilene.

Now almost deserted, Fife in 1910 had more than 500 residents, two general stores, a working gin, post office, two schools and assorted churches.

The spirit of a Texas Christmas in the early 20th century is well captured by letters that Fife children of that era wrote to Santa, letters that were published in pre-Christmas editions of *The Brady Standard*. As is still true today in many small towns, children would write their local paper

with their Christmas wishes.

Their letters are revealing for not only what they say but also for what they don't say. Unlike today's letters to Santa, there were no references to brand-name items—the media-driven advertising age had not yet hit. The children's wishes then were much simpler—often they asked for only one or two items.

The generosity of the children is striking, as they often expressed modest wishes for themselves but also asked Santa to remember children who were less well off.

As I read through the letters, sometimes recognizing names of people I knew only as adults, I feel a wonderful sense of their childhood holiday spirit come to me.

I share a few of these letters, written by Fife children in the 1920s and early 1930s, in the hope that readers might recapture some of the same spirit of generosity, simplicity and fellowship in this holiday season. ■

Dear Santa:

As Christmas is near at hand we thought we would write and let you know the things which we would like most as presents. W.D. wants a school dinner bucket, a big rubber ball; Nellie Fay wants a doll, sand bucket and ball; Gladys wants a doll and we also want some nuts, apples and oranges.

Your little friends,

W.D., Nellie Fay and Gladys Bradley (1920)

Please bring me a pop gun, a sack of marbles and some candy and nuts.

Your little friend,

Cyril Farmer (1920)

After reading your letter in *The Brady Standard* I thought it was about time to write to you. I hardly know what to ask you for as you have been so good to me every Xmas. The only thing I select is a pair of bedroom slippers.

Your friend,

Voncile Duderstadt (1920)

I would like to have some chocolate candy and bananas and oranges and apples and peaches.

Your friend,

Lillian Roberts (1921)

Will you please bring my little brother and I a knife and a pair of nice leather gloves. And Santa, if you will, please bring me a nice fountain pen and my little brother a car. I have a little sister 3 years old. Bring her a doll that will say mamma and a little doll bed and lots of nuts and candy.

Love to Santa,

Charles and Floyd Tedder (1923)

Will you please bring me a scooter-scoot, a horn, a football, a blackboard and a box of handkerchiefs for Christmas and if you have anything else for me send it to some other little boy who has no parents. I try to be a good boy.

Your loving friend,

A. M. Finlay, Jr. (1924)

We have tried to be good little children. Please bring me a velocipede, a tinker toy set, some fire crackers, a ball and some caps for my gun you brought me last Christmas. Please bring Little Sister a kiddie car, a doll that says "Mamma," and a doll bed. Please bring us lots of fruit, nuts and candy. Bye-bye, Santa.

From

John Gordon and Elizabeth Maurine Tedder (1924)

I will tell you what I want. I want an embroidery set, set of dishes and a doll. I won't ask for too much, as I'm afraid you can't get around to all the children.

Your friend,

Una Ranne (1925)

I will write you a little letter and tell you of a few things I would like to have. I would like to have a new doll, as my old one has lost a leg, and I want a doll bed. I want a doll that can walk and talk, and I would like to have some little dresses, also.

Dear Santa, don't forget my little brothers, J.D. and Sid, they want a coaster wagon.

Lovingly,

Charlotte Painter (1925)

I thought I would write while I have time. I want a watch and a pistol. I want a toy flute and a toy truck and a pencil sharpener. Thank you.

From your friend,

Tom Bradley, Jr. (1927)

I've been the very best little boy lately, and if you don't hurry and come, I don't know if I can stay good much longer. I just want a few things this year, as Daddy says Santa is as poor as he is. I'd like a tractor, a car, a ball, a bat, gloves, and a lot of fruit and candy and nuts.

From

Leeman Roberts (1930)

I sent a letter to *The Brady Standard*. I want you to know I am going to write to *The Brady Standard* every Christmas. I want you to bring me a cap and a sweater for my doll and a big ball. There are many other little boys and girls that want Christmas presents. So I will go now.

Yours truly,

Golda Eileen Utsey (1930)

I have been a good little boy. Will you please bring me a velocipede, a flashlight, some apples and candy. Bring Grandpa a pair of socks and I'll put some corn at the gate for your reindeer.

Your friend,

Robert Pearce (1930)

State of Texas

MONTHLY AVERAGE¹

\$53

for Geothermal Heating & Cooling



Symphony Insight

With WaterFurnace, the average Texan pays \$53/mo. to provide heating, cooling and hot water for their home.

WaterFurnace homeowners across the country are reaping the benefits of geothermal heat pumps by utilizing the unlimited reservoir of stored solar energy underground. A WaterFurnace geothermal system taps into this free and renewable resource to provide savings of up to 70% on heating, cooling, and hot water—with a comfort you have to experience to believe. Right now you can save thousands on installation thanks to a 30% federal tax credit². Contact our WaterFurnace Concierges Team to learn more today!



visit waterfurnace.com/TexasPower



Black-Eyed Peace

Y2K upended New Year's traditions for Texans ready for anything

BY CHRIS BURROWS • ILLUSTRATION BY TARA JACOBY

AS KATIE WILLIAMS shopped in the run-up to Christmas 1999, the holiday wasn't on her list. The Kaufman resident had loaded up her cart with flashlights and batteries, toilet paper, water, and crates of food.

"I really think something's going to happen," Williams told *The Dallas Morning News*. "We have a pond in case we run out of water for the toilet. We can boil it if we have to drink it."

Michelle Quintiliani and her family were planning to hit the road after Christmas, leaving behind their home near the Comanche Peak nuclear plant southwest of Fort Worth.

"We're going to open our presents and then we're gone," Quintiliani told the *Waco Tribune-Herald*. "It's probably

stupid, but I don't want to chance it."

By December 30, shoppers in Victoria were hitting H-E-B hard.

"Today is busier than expected," a store manager told the *Victoria Advocate*. "This is the kind of day we expected tomorrow."

Twenty-five years ago this month, in the weeks before a new millennium, hardy Texans joined the rest of the world in making anxious last-minute preparations.

Computer experts had spent months warning that the Y2K bug might take down computer systems—and a society that was increasingly reliant on them—at the stroke of midnight. Breathless coverage took stock of the preparations as global industries—banks, utilities,

airlines—assured folks that the lights would stay on if everybody did their part to gird against glitches caused by computer systems not built with the foresight to handle the "00" in "2000."

For its part, the state of Texas spent a quarter-billion dollars on upgrades; the U.S. more than \$100 billion; and across the world, \$300 billion.

Texans weren't overly concerned though. The results of a statewide poll in October 1999 found 55% weren't worried about serious problems. One in 3 expected the lights to go out.

But they didn't.

On New Year's Eve, celebrations in Austin, Dallas, Fort Worth and Houston tallied more than 320,000 total revelers.

Headline writers were ready. In the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*: "Y2K? Why Worry?"

San Angelo Standard-Times: "Y(awn)2K-Feared bug doesn't bite."

Wichita Falls' Times Record News: "It wasn't the night the lights went out in Texas after all."

The bug may have been a bust, but Leon Kappelmann, a University of North Texas professor who worked on several technical committees in preparation for Y2K, says the world learned a lot.

"In terms of IT management, many of us learned what a mess we had just about everywhere and realized it was past time to professionalize and improve our practices," he said. "IT had proliferated so quickly and completely over the 40 years prior to 1995, our ability to effectively and efficiently manage it had simply not kept up."

And besides, some Texans hadn't wasted any worries on Y2K.

C.M. Dehtam told the *Tribune-Herald* that he planned to be selling fruit out of his pickup on New Year's Eve.

"If it's going to happen, it's going to happen," he said. "It's not something I have any control over. I got other things to worry about, like what I'm going to eat tonight." ■

Cookie Exchange

Be the star of the swap with these family gems

BY VIANNEY RODRIGUEZ, FOOD EDITOR

One of my favorite cake flavors transforms into cookies for a delicious addition to your cookie exchange. With a vibrant Christmas red hue; soft, chewy texture; and a crunchy topping, they're decadent enough to feel indulgent and light enough to enjoy more than one on Christmas morning.

Red Velvet Cookies

1½ cups flour
2 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder
¾ teaspoon baking powder
½ teaspoon salt
½ cup (1 stick) butter, softened
1 cup sugar
1 egg
1 tablespoon buttermilk
1 tablespoon red food color
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
½ cup white chocolate chips
½ cup semisweet chocolate chunks
White sanding sugar

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper.
2. In a bowl, whisk together flour, cocoa powder, baking powder and salt.
3. In another bowl, cream butter and sugar with a hand mixer on medium speed until light and fluffy. Reduce mixer speed to low and add egg, buttermilk, food color and vanilla.
4. Add flour mixture in two batches, scraping down the sides and bottom of the bowl and mixing until well combined. Fold in the white chocolate chips and semisweet chocolate chunks. Cover and chill the dough in the refrigerator at least 1 hour.
5. Place 2-tablespoon scoops of dough 2 inches apart on baking sheets. Use the bottom of a glass to gently press cookies to about ½ inch thick. Sprinkle with sanding sugar.
6. Bake 10–12 minutes, until cookies are slightly puffy and set on the edges. Allow cookies to cool and sprinkle with additional sanding sugar if desired.

MAKES 2 DOZEN COOKIES

TCP Follow Vianney Rodriguez as she cooks in *Cocina Gris* at sweetlifebake.com, where she features a recipe for Mexican Christmas Eve Salad.



Grandma Melton's Sand Tarts

LAURA MCNABB
PEDERNALES EC

These are considered the official cookies of Texas, at least according to McNabb's family. A crescent-shaped cookie that melts in your mouth, leaving a hint of sweetness and buttery goodness, they have a tender, crumbly texture that pairs perfectly with their light, nutty flavor. The delicate powdered sugar coating gives them a festive, snow-dusted appearance, making them a perfect addition to your holiday cookie platter.

- 1 cup (2 sticks) butter, softened**
- 1 cup powdered sugar, plus more for dusting**
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract**
- 2 cups flour**
- ½ teaspoon salt**
- 1 cup finely chopped pecans**

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper.
2. Using an electric mixer on medium speed, beat butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Add vanilla and mix well. Reduce mixer speed to low. Add flour and salt, mixing until almost combined.
3. Gently fold in pecans with hands, being careful not to overmix. Chill dough 30 minutes.
4. With floured hands, shape 1 tablespoon of dough at a time into a crescent. Place crescents 1 inch apart on baking sheets.
5. Bake 12–14 minutes or until the edges are lightly browned. Allow cookies to cool about 5 minutes on baking sheets then transfer to cooling racks. While the cookies are still warm, dust with powdered sugar.

MAKES 3 DOZEN COOKIES

CONTINUED ON PAGE 29 >



\$500 WINNER

Flonnie's Orange Slice Cookies

JENNIFER KEITH
WOOD COUNTY EC



Keith found her grandmother Flonnie's recipe for these cookies in her mama's recipe box, and they have become a holiday staple in her house. These cookies are a delightful and nostalgic treat. The candies melt slightly during baking, creating pockets of gooey, fruity goodness throughout. A soft, chewy cookie with bursts of citrusy flavor in each bite is the merriest sweet for gifting this holiday season.

MAKES 5 DOZEN COOKIES

- 2 cups (4 sticks) butter, softened**
- 1 cup sugar**
- 2¼ cups brown sugar**
- 3 eggs**
- 2 teaspoons baking soda**
- 3 tablespoons warm water**
- 6 cups flour**
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon**
- 2 cups sweetened coconut flakes**
- 2 cups chopped walnuts**
- 1 package orange slices candy (10 ounces), diced**

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees.
2. In a large bowl, cream butter, sugar and brown sugar until light and fluffy. Add eggs one at a time, scraping down sides of bowl after each addition.
3. In a small bowl, dissolve baking soda in warm water.
4. To the large bowl, add baking soda mixture, flour and cinnamon and mix until incorporated. Fold in coconut, walnuts and candy slices.
5. Use a medium cookie scoop to place dough onto a baking sheet, leaving 1 inch between each cookie.
6. Bake 11–14 minutes, until lightly golden brown.

TCP \$500 Recipe Contest

THE WHOLE ENCHILADA DUE DECEMBER 10
There are endless ways to fill an enchilada. Share your favorite filling to roll up in a tortilla and you could win \$500. Enter by December 10.

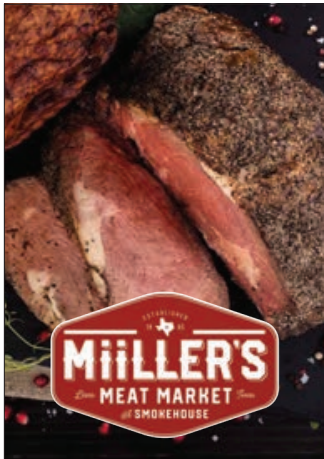
UPCOMING: SUMMER PASTAS DUE JANUARY 10





HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE

In the magazine and on TexasCoopPower.com, we make it easy to shop for friends and family.



“Meat” You at Miller’s

Find friendly faces, local fresh and smoked meats and more. Miller’s uses time-honored techniques and stands by doing right by our customers. Let us take stress off your plate with meats and groceries, meal delivery, gifts and more.

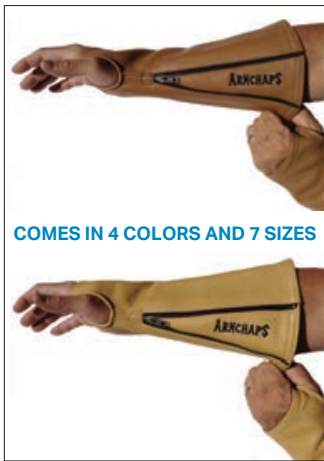
325-247-4450
millers.com



Texas Bluebonnet Calendar

Large 20-by-15-inch calendar with 12 watercolor scenes. Enjoy nature’s beauty year-round with this 2025 calendar by Texas State Artist George Boutwell. \$17.50 plus tax and \$4.50 shipping. See website for quantity pricing.

1-800-243-4316
gboutwell.com



COMES IN 4 COLORS AND 7 SIZES

Ideal Arm Protection for Any Activity

Helps Prevent Bruising and Protects Those With Thin Skin! Soft leather protective sleeves help protect you from 100’s of injury-prone chores you do at work, home, farm, or ranch. Even has adjustable airflow!

(651) 492-4830
armchaps.com



Fudge and Divinity for the Holidays

The Best Fudge in Texas. The Best Divinity in the World. Bring back those childhood memories of Christmas with the sweet gift of fudge and divinity from Holiday Farms.

holidayfarmscandy.com
divinitybydave.etsy.com



Emporium Brand Chili Kit

For a Texas Good Time. Enjoy this gluten-free, convenient and easy to prepare Emporium Chili. Purchase our signature Chili Mix individually or by the case. With shipping options you can gift our Tasty Texas Chili.

254-774-9098
emporiumspice.com



Homegrown Texas Pecans and Pecan Treats

Berdoll’s has been family-owned for 45 years. We make delicious pecan pies, chocolate pecans, honey-glazed pecans and more. Shop our retail store or let us ship the perfect gift for you!

800-518-3870
berdoll.com

Grandma's Italian Chocolate Spice Cookies

MARY BOLSINGER
GRAYSON-COLLIN EC

These cookies have a firm, slightly crunchy exterior that gives way to a soft, cakelike interior. The harmonious blend of cocoa, cinnamon, cloves and vanilla creates a warm, spiced flavor that's perfect for the season. Chocolate is complemented by the subtle warmth of coffee, making each bite a cozy experience.

COOKIES

- 2 cups flour
- ½ cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 2½ teaspoons baking powder
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon ground cloves
- 2 eggs
- ½ cup sugar
- ½ cup olive oil



- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 4 tablespoons brewed black coffee, at room temperature
- ½ cup chopped walnuts

ICING

- 2¼ cups powdered sugar
- 3–4 tablespoons milk
- Sprinkles (optional)

1. **COOKIES:** Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper.
2. In a bowl, sift together flour, cocoa, baking powder, salt, cinnamon and cloves.
3. In another bowl, whisk together eggs and sugar until sugar is dissolved. Stir in olive oil, vanilla and coffee.
4. Add the flour mixture and stir until smooth. Stir in the walnuts.
5. Scoop the dough with a medium cookie scoop. Roll into balls with floured hands. Place on baking sheets about 2 inches apart.
6. Bake 10–12 minutes.
7. **ICING:** Whisk together powdered sugar and milk until smooth.
8. Dip the tops of cookies into the icing mixture and top with sprinkles.

MAKES 4 DOZEN COOKIES



Texas Red Grapefruit and Avocados

Always a gift in good taste. Orchard-fresh grapefruit and other Texas products are all hand-selected, carefully packed and shipped to be delivered just in time for the holidays.

1-800-580-1900
crockettfarms.com



Made in Texas, Y'all

Cast-iron cookware with a smooth cooking surface. Our durable, heirloom-quality cast-iron cookware made in Fredericksburg, Texas, is a great gift that can be shared with family and friends for generations.

fbgcastiron.com
instagram.com/fbg_castiron



The Best of Typically Texas Cookbook

Favorite recipes from Texas Co-op Power. Look back at these best-loved recipes from two of our most popular cookbooks. Contact your local co-op today, or place your order online.

texascooppower.com/shop



Shop for Texas Made Foods and Gifts

Take \$5 off any order with coupon code TXCP. Our Texas gift baskets will bring back memories and create new ones. Build your own gift or let us customize one for you.



800-360-0508
texasfood.com



COURTESY CHET GARNER

A Belle Reborn

Experience Tres Palacios Bay like a French explorer—without the sinking

BY CHET GARNER

THERE I STOOD in the middle of Tres Palacios Bay, part of Matagorda Bay, aboard a sailing vessel named La Petite Belle. The crew and I had set out from Palacios into the same gulf waters that French explorer René-Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle, had sailed 338 years before.

Hopefully, our seafaring adventure wouldn't meet the same fate as the French explorer's crew.

Our expedition started in the town's historic district at the City by the Sea Museum, where every era of Palacios' colorful past is brought to life through exhibits and artifacts. Most interesting (and tragic) is the story of La Salle's doomed voyage to Texas. La Belle, one of his four ships, wrecked on a sandbar and sank into the bay's muddy bottom in 1686. Luckily the Frenchman was already on land, exploring Texas.

In the 1990s, archaeologists found the ship and resurrected its hull along with 1.6 million French artifacts. The preserved remains are on display at the Bullock Texas State History Museum in Austin.

La Petite Belle, a half-sized, 30-foot-long re-creation of the original, now sails the high seas of Texas, giving tourists a taste of maritime history and adventure. The jolly crew of museum volunteers seemed seaworthy as they called out commands across the deck and navigated our ship using 17th-century techniques.

I simply walked around, rattling ropes and trying not to expose my greenhorn lack of sailing knowledge. While this isn't a pirate ship, I jumped with excitement when the crew announced it was time to fire the cannons. We loaded them up with pyrotechnics and yelled "fire in the hole" as we shot at imaginary ships.

The ship is small, but the adventure is surely Texas-sized. ■

ABOVE Chet, aboard La Petite Belle, ponders a 17th-century existence.

TCP Watch the video on our website and see all his 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.

DECEMBER

7

Castroville **Castroville Conservation Society Candlelight Home Tour**, (830) 708-5680, castrovilleconservationsociety.org

Fredericksburg **Pearl Harbor Commemoration**, (830) 997-8600, pacificwarmuseum.org

Kerrville **Christmas Concert**, (830) 321-0303, hillcountrychorale.org

La Grange **Beat Root Revival**, (979) 968-9944, thebugleboy.org

Marble Falls **Christmas Home Tour**, (830) 798-2157, fallsmuseum.org

Palestine **Christmas on Main**, (903) 723-3014, visitpalestine.com

Sealy **Fantasy of Lights Parade**, (979) 885-3222, sealychamber.com

Woodville **Christmas Twilight Tour**, (409) 283-2272, heritage-village.org

Richardson **[7, 14] Hot Cocoa Crawl**, citylinedfw.com

8

George West **Church to Church Christmas Story Stroll**, (361) 449-5396, facebook.com/firstbaptistgeorgewest

12

New Braunfels **New Braunfels Conservation Society Christmas Market**, (830) 629-2943, newbraunfelsconservation.org

13

Seguin **[13-14] Country Christmas**, (830) 379-0933, texagedu.org

Shiner [13-14] Christmas Village, (361) 594-3830, shinerfumc.org

Kyle [13-15] A Night in Bethlehem, (512) 268-7044, f-pc.org

Montalba [13-15] Walk Through Bethlehem, (903) 549-2319, montalbabaptistchurch.com

Palestine [13-15] A Seussified Christmas Carol and Variety Show, (903) 394-2173, thetexas theater.com

14

Brenham The 3 Redneck Tenors Christmas, (979) 337-7240, thebarnhillcenter.com

Coldspring Christmas on the Square, (936) 653-2184, coldspringtexas.org

Frankston Frankston Garden Club Christmas Tour of Homes, (817) 913-1982, frankstongardenclubtx.com

Jasper Country Lights, (409) 384-5231, tpwd.texas.gov

15

Stonewall Tree Lighting, (830) 644-2252, tpwd.texas.gov

19

Corsicana Santa's Sip & Stroll, (903) 654-4851, facebook.com/corsicana mainstreet

Richardson [19-22] Christmas With C.S. Lewis, (972) 744-4650, eisemanncenter.com

31

Fredericksburg Countdown to 2025: New Year's Eve, (830) 990-2044, fbgtx.org

TCP Submit Your Event

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

Share the Joy

The GRAPEVINE Christmas Capital of Texas

- Peace Plaza Ice Rink
- Shop & Dine at Grapevine Mills & Historic Main Street
- ICE! at Gaylord Texan Resort
- Enormous Christmas displays & decorations
- Christmas concerts & movies

Visit ChristmasCapitalofTexas.com for all the details and to plan your **Christmas Getaway** in Grapevine.

Steel Mobile Home Roofing

Leaks? High energy bill? Roof rumble?

PERMA-ROOF
from Southern Builders

800.633.8969 • roofover.com

Bank C.D.'s Due? CALL US NOW

1-800-359-4940 TEXAS TOLL-FREE
www.mattsonfinancialservices.com

BLAKE MATTSON, CFP™
Signal Securities, Inc., 5400 Bosque, 4th Floor, Waco, TX 76710
Serving Customers All Over Texas

All C.D.'s are insured to \$250,000 per institution by the F.D.I.C. All C.D.'s are subject to availability. Securities offered thru Signal Securities, Inc., Member FINRA/SIPC 700 Throckmorton, Ft. Worth, TX 76102. (817) 877-4256.

SACRED STONE OF THE SOUTHWEST IS ON THE BRINK OF EXTINCTION

We found a limited supply of turquoise from Arizona and snatched it up for our *Sedona Turquoise Collection*. Inspired by the work of ancient craftsmen and designed to showcase the exceptional blue stone, each stabilized vibrant cabochon features a unique, one-of-a-kind matrix surrounded in Bali metalwork. You could drop over \$1,200 on a turquoise pendant, or you could secure 26 carats of genuine Arizona turquoise for **just \$99**.

Jewelry Specifications:

• *Arizona turquoise* • *Silver-finished settings*

Sedona Turquoise Collection

- A. Pendant (26 cts) ~~\$299*~~ \$99 +s&p **Save \$200**
- B. 18" Bali Naga woven sterling silver chain \$149 +s&p
- C. 1 1/2" Earrings (10 ctw) ~~\$299*~~ 99 +s&p **Save \$200**
- Complete Set**** ~~\$747*~~ **\$249** +s&p **Save \$498**

**Complete set includes pendant, chain and earrings.

Call now and mention the offer code to receive your collection.

1-800-333-2045



Offer Code **STC924-09**

Rating of **A+**

You must use the offer code to get our special price.

*Special price only for customers using the offer code versus the price on Stauer.com without your offer code.

Stauer® 14091 Southcross Drive W., Dept. STC924-09
Burnsville, Minnesota 55337 www.stauer.com



*26 carats
of genuine
Arizona
turquoise
ONLY \$99*

FINALLY ... LIFE INSURANCE YOU CAN AFFORD

TOTAL OFFER

BUY \$100,000 LIFE INSURANCE

GLOBE LIFE AND ACCIDENT INSURANCE COMPANY

FREE INFORMATION



PAY THE
AMOUNT OF

One Hundred Thousand Dollars

\$100,000.00

Non-Negotiable

MONTHLY RATES AS LOW AS:

ADULTS: \$3.49

CHILDREN AND

GRANDCHILDREN: \$2.17

EASY TO BUY

NO MEDICAL EXAM - SIMPLE APPLICATION

NO WAITING PERIOD

BUY DIRECT



SCAN TO
VISIT US
ONLINE

For Immediate Service Call

1-855-766-4181

Or Visit ForGlobeLife.com

PERSONAL OFFER CODE:

ICCX1ZJ7

\$100,000 Adult Life Insurance

Monthly Rates As Low As \$3.49

- Rate schedule is based on your current age and is guaranteed for the life of the policy.
- Coverage is also available for your spouse and other family members.
- Benefits will NEVER be canceled or reduced for the life of the policy if premiums are paid on time.

Policy Form #SRTC/SRTC/R13 or R17, or #SRTC/V90MA in MA
CA Residents, for your consumer rights, please visit forglobelife.com/privacy.

\$30,000 Children's Life Insurance

Monthly Rates As Low As \$2.17

- Rates are based on your children's or grandchildren's present age and never increase for any reason.
- Benefits will NEVER be reduced or canceled if premiums are paid on time.
- Give your children a financial head start right now. Your policy builds CASH VALUE for your family's needs.

Policy Form #GWL2001 or GWLA001

CHOOSE \$5,000, \$10,000, \$20,000, \$30,000 OR UP TO \$100,000 COVERAGE

(Offer may vary, \$100,000 coverage not available in all states.)

Young Photographers

Slow down a moment and take in the world through the lens of a child. These young photographers are honing their skills and having a great time doing it. One thing's clear: The future of Texas photography is in good hands.

CURATED BY GRACE FULTZ



1 CRYSTAL CANTU
VICTORIA EC

"I heard a frog and went on an adventure to find him," says Magi Jo, 15.

2 CARLY LATHAM
HEART OF TEXAS EC

"The fasciated bluebonnets are so exciting to find. My sister and I always try to see who can find the most variations," says Byron Ace Latham, 10.

3 MARK GARTON
BRYAN TEXAS UTILITIES

My son, 9, learns to take pictures of Texas bluebonnets at Fort Parker State Park.

4 LAURA DAVIS
BANDERA EC

Blakely Barton, 2, has an impromptu photo session with her papa, Brad Davis.



Upcoming Contests

- DUE DEC 10** Characters
- DUE JAN 10** Patterns
- DUE FEB 10** Family Vacation



Enter online at TexasCoopPower.com/contests.

TCP See Focus on Texas on our website for many more Young Photographers photos from readers.



Emily's Wish

Christmas feels bleak when a family's hearts are in two places

BY FRED AFFLERBACH
ILLUSTRATION BY
THE BRAVE UNION

ON CHRISTMAS EVE 2022, it was my honor to tuck into bed my 6-year-old granddaughter, Emily. We said nighttime prayers, then she asked Santa for a bigger bike, stick-on earrings and an art set. I thought she was finished, but after a pause, she continued.

"I wish Mommy would be home from the hospital so that the whole family can be together for Christmas."

I closed Emily's door behind me. But I left pieces of my heart scattered on her bedroom floor.

Emily's mother, my daughter-in-law, Kim Afflerbach, delivered healthy twin boys five days before at St. David's Women's Center of Texas in Austin. Shortly after delivery, she experienced cardiac arrest. The cesarean section surgery apparently opened a Pandora's

box of stagnant blood clots that gushed throughout her body.

Her heart stopped beating after one nefarious clot lodged in her main artery. Fast-acting nurses and doctors performed CPR and rushed her to the intensive care unit, where she remained Christmas Eve.

Christmas morning, Emily held little sister Avery's hand as they walked downstairs together. Her shiny new bike awaited. Avery rushed to a Peppa Pig playhouse, dropped to her knees and squealed in delight.

The tree glowed in the early-morning light, and their nana removed golden-brown pigs in a blanket from the oven. I sipped hot coffee laced with Irish cream.

It looked like Christmas. It smelled like Christmas. It even tasted like Christmas. But it didn't feel like Christmas. There was something missing—Mommy.

Christmas Day at a hospital is a rather solemn occasion. Folks carry on the best they can. A skeleton crew in the cafeteria dishes out turkey and dressing and gravy. Doctors and nurses and families of patients smile while passing in corridors and sharing elevators.

Kim remained sedated. She had received multiple transfusions by then and would need more. Yet doctors remained optimistic. They eschewed invasive surgery. And we waited.

Finally, Kim moved out of the ICU on New Year's Eve and into a private room.

Come January 5, Emily's father, Eric, pushed Kim's wheelchair down hospital hallways toward the valet parking. Nurses, doctors and staff lined their exit route, clapping and waving, holding out flowers and balloons, and offering heartfelt goodbyes.

It's often said that a request delayed is a request denied. But that's not always so! Emily's entire family celebrated Christmas 2023 at home together. Emily and Avery, twin brothers Bryson and Jackson, Daddy—and especially Mommy.

Although a year late, Emily's Christmas wish came true. ■



This is not your grandpa's hearing aid

The Nation's 1 Rated Hearing Aid



Say hello to **Horizon IX** by **hear.com**.

This tiny, German-engineered hearing aid is taking the U.S. by storm this year. Why?

Partly because it's tiny. Like James Bond tiny. And partly because it boasts one of the world's first-ever dual processing systems.

That means double the power and double the clarity in conversation.



In non-science-y talk... it just means you get **maximum speech clarity with minimal background noise**. And you get it from a device so small, it hides completely behind your ear.

But that's not all. Horizon IX hearing aids are packed with features that make conversation effortless and everyday life easier:

- ✔ **Amazing Speech Clarity™**
- ✔ **Virtually invisible design**
- ✔ **Bluetooth connectivity**
- ✔ **Rechargeable batteries**
- ✔ **Easy, comfortable fit**
- ✔ **Free smartphone app**

Plus, it's never been easier to try Horizon IX. With convenient in-person and at-home options, and 2-day delivery to anywhere in the U.S., hear.com brings cutting-edge hearing care right to you.

“ This is my first experience with hearing aids... with hear.com it has been a breeze! ”

Jeanne D., US | Verified Buyer



Ready to join over **400,000+** people hearing better than ever?

Check if you qualify for a **45-day no-risk trial today**, and have a brand new pair of Horizon IX hearing aids on your doorstep in as little as 48 hours.

Free consultation and 45-day no-risk trial



Scan the QR code or visit the link below

hear.com/texas

FOR A LIMITED TIME, GET

TAKE AN EXTRA

20% OFF

AND

\$100

All Windows and Doors!¹

OFF Your Entire Purchase¹

Minimum purchase of 4

Minimum purchase of 4

AND

NO Money Down | NO Monthly Payments | NO Interest for 12 months¹

Minimum purchase of 4 – interest accrues from the date of purchase, but is waived if paid in full within 12 months

TESTED, TRUSTED, AND TOTALLY PROVEN.³

“My overall experience was great. I love the window, and from sales to scheduling, the experience was very good. The installers are highly skilled professionals and I would recommend Renewal by Andersen to all my contacts.”

LYNN F. | RENEWAL BY ANDERSEN CUSTOMER

More 5 Star Reviews



Than Other Leading Full-Service Window Replacement Companies²



Nation's Best Warranty†



KEEP THE HEAT IN AND THE COLD AIR OUT!

Solving your window problems and having a comfortable home is easy and enjoyable when you choose Renewal by Andersen. Take advantage of this great offer to save money on your window project – and help save on high energy bills for years to come!



Keep the heat in and the cold out.



RENEWAL by ANDERSEN
FULL-SERVICE WINDOW & DOOR REPLACEMENT

Offer Ends January 31

Call for your **FREE** consultation.



844-449-2564

FINDYOURWINDOW.COM

¹DETAILS OF OFFER: Offer expires 1/31/2025. Not valid with other offers or prior purchases. Get 20% off your entire purchase and 12 months no money down, no monthly payments, no interest when you purchase four (4) or more windows or entry/patio doors between 12/1/2024 and 1/31/2025. Additional \$100 off your purchase, minimum purchase of four (4), taken after initial discount(s), when you purchase by 1/31/2025. Subject to credit approval. 12-month Promo Period: while no payments are due, interest accrues but is waived if the loan is paid in full before the Promo Period expires. Any unpaid balance owed after the Promo Period, plus accrued interest, will be paid in installments based on the terms disclosed in the customer's loan agreement. Financing provided by various equal opportunity lenders. Savings comparison based on purchase of a single unit at list price. Available at participating locations and offer applies throughout the service area. See your local Renewal by Andersen location for details. License numbers available at renewalbyandersen.com/license. Some Renewal by Andersen locations are independently owned and operated. ²Values are based on comparison of Renewal by Andersen® double-hung window U-Factor to the U-Factor for clear dual-pane glass nonmetal frame default values from the 2006, 2009, 2012, 2015, and 2018 International Energy Conservation Code "Glazed Fenestration" Default Tables. ³Based on testing of 10 double-hung units per ASTM E2068 20 years after installation. †It is the only warranty among top selling window companies that meets all of the following requirements: easy to understand terms, unrestricted transferability, installation coverage, labor coverage, geographically unrestricted, coverage for exterior color, insect screens and hardware, and no maintenance requirement. Visit renewalbyandersen.com/nationsbest for details. †Review aggregator survey of 5-star reviews among leading full service window replacement companies. December 2022 Reputation. "Renewal by Andersen" and all other marks where denoted are trademarks of their respective owners. © 2025 Andersen Corporation. All rights reserved. *Using U.S. and imported parts.