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IN THE FIELD

THE HERO OF  
CINCO DE MAYO

READER PHOTOS:  
HISTORIC TEXAS

# Texas Coop Power

FOR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE MEMBERS

MAY 2021

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# May 2021



08

## Serendipity Spinners

Members of a San Angelo cooperative spin wool from their own flock.

*By Brenda Kissko  
Photos by Kristin Tyler*

## 12 Listening to Texas

How folklorists saved the soundtrack of the Lone Star State.

*By Gene Fowler*

### ON THE COVER

Colorful skeins of yarn created by the Serendipity Spinners.

### ABOVE

Peggy Tharp, Ruth Jordan and Sandy Pederson of the spinning club.  
*Photos by Kristin Tyler*

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Universal Appeal  
*By E. Dan Klepper*



# A Preponderance of Orthographers

**YOUNG TEXANS** have proven masterful at spelling words that seemingly come from a jostled Scrabble board. They have pretty much owned the Scripps National Spelling Bee in recent years.

Three of the eight co-champions in 2019 came from Texas. Sohum Sukhatankar of Dallas dazzled with his winning word, *pendeloque*. Abhijay Kodali of Flower Mound spelled *palama*. And Rohan Raja of Dallas aced *odylic*.

They followed in the footsteps of 2018 champion Karthik Nemmani of McKinney, who hoisted the trophy after spelling *koinonia*.

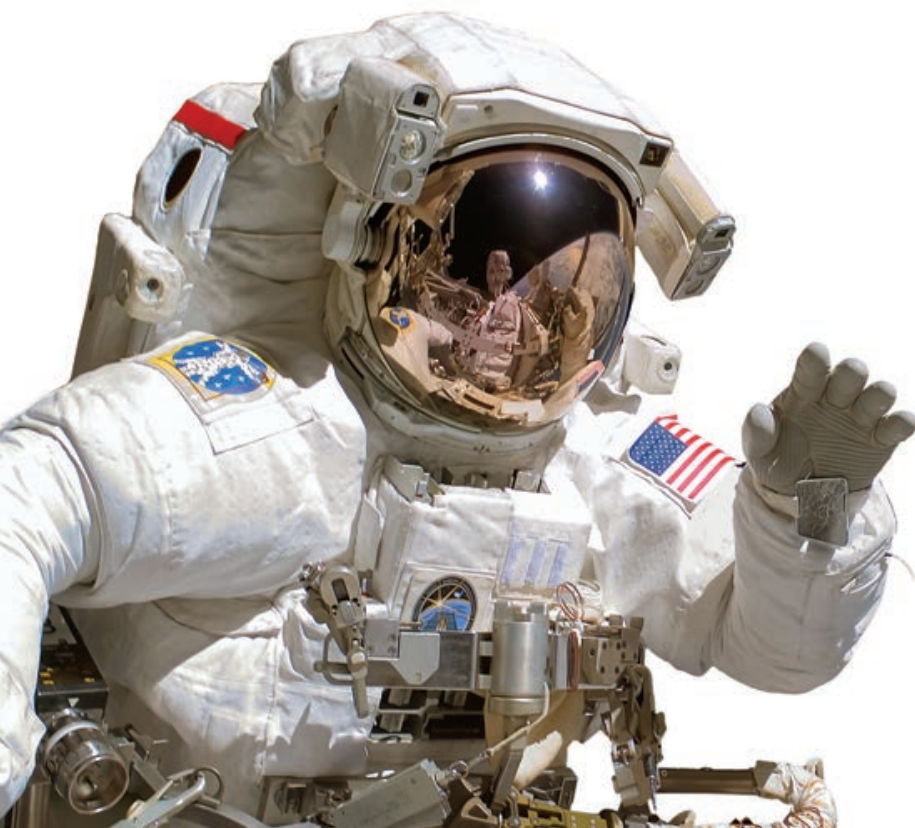
Nihar Janga of Austin shared the title in 2016 after spelling *Gesellschaft*.

The COVID-19 pandemic caused the cancellation of the 2020 bee. The 2021 finals are scheduled for July 8.

May 5

## NATIONAL ASTRONAUT DAY

An etymology dictionary cites 1880 as the earliest use of the word "astronaut." That's when English writer Percy Greg coined it for a fictional spaceship.



## FINISH THIS SENTENCE THIS MEMORIAL DAY, I HONOR ...

**TCP** Tell us how you would finish that sentence. Email your short responses to [letters@TexasCoopPower.com](mailto:letters@TexasCoopPower.com) or comment on our Facebook post. Include your co-op and town. Below are some of the responses to our March prompt: **The song that got me through a year of pandemic is ...**

*If We Make It Through December* by Merle Haggard.

INOCENCIA MARTINEZ  
MAGIC VALLEY EC  
MERCEDÉS

*Texas Sun* by Khruangbin and Leon Bridges.

MELANIE BURRIS  
NUECES EC  
PORTLAND

*Still Not Dead* by Willie Nelson.

FD HERMAN  
HAMILTON COUNTY EC  
BIG VALLEY

*We Shall Overcome* by Pete Seeger.

SANJAY SHAH  
COSERV  
CARROLLTON

*This Little Light of Mine.*

PEGGY HOWARD  
VICTORIA EC  
VICTORIA

*Don't Let Me Down* by the Beatles.

JERRY CHANDLER  
PEDERNALES EC  
CANYON LAKE

To see more responses, read Currents online.



“Motherhood is the greatest thing and the hardest thing.”

—RICKI LAKE



**TCP** *Contests and More*

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**\$500 RECIPE CONTEST**  
Cheese

**FOCUS ON TEXAS PHOTOS**  
Rust and Decay

**RECOMMENDED READING**

*Double Exposure* (July 2018) revisits a couple's pose at Cadillac Ranch.

## LBJ Archives at 50

The LBJ Presidential Library at the University of Texas at Austin turns 50 on May 22. It was the first presidential library to be located on a college campus and the first anywhere in Texas.

### The First Five Presidential Libraries

Opened June 30, 1941

**Franklin D. Roosevelt**

Hyde Park, New York

July 6, 1957

**Harry S. Truman**

Independence, Missouri

May 1, 1962

**Dwight D. Eisenhower**

Abilene, Kansas

August 10, 1962

**Herbert Hoover**

West Branch, Iowa

May 22, 1971

**Lyndon B. Johnson**

Austin, Texas



TWIN SISTERS  
DANCE HALL  
NEAR BLANCO

## Care To Dance?

**TEXAS DANCE HALL PRESERVATION** donated \$262,520 to assist 32 historic dance halls with expenses in 2020.

Dance halls across the state were shut down for most of 2020, unable to hold dances, weddings, festivals and fundraisers because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

More than 1,000 dance halls, built mostly by European immigrants, once dotted parts of Texas. Today, fewer than 400 remain. Read *Hail the Halls* from February 2019 to learn more.



LBJ PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY





## Flower Power

“Your March cover started my day with a happy smile. You all knocked it out of the ballpark with photos of Texas flowers in breathtaking colors.”

AUDNETTE CODY LARGENT  
FAYETTE EC  
EMORY

## Family Roots

Some of the more interesting pass-along plants [*Putting Down Roots*, February 2021] were introduced by Lorenzo de Zavala when he was a minister to France when Texas was a republic. Roses were a gift from France and planted by Adina de Zavala, his granddaughter, in their Lynchburg homestead, eventually shared and spread into surrounding communities. These roses are still found in some of our older cemeteries.

Mike Shoup  
Bluebonnet EC  
Independence



Salsa was great during the snow-pocalypse [*Tacos*, March 2021]. Spicy food and soups for cold days and nights always seem to go good together.

DAVID NORTON  
VIA FACEBOOK

## A Flyer's Fate

Col. Carl Crane, my grandfather, and William Ocker were pioneers in instrumentation flying [*Flying Blind*, January 2021]. Had Crane not pursued this solution, I might not be here.

The story goes that he was flying a congressman's son in bad weather in Ohio when he became disoriented and almost crashed. Neon lights of a hotel that he saw at the last minute allowed Crane to get his bearings and correct his plane's direction, saving their lives.

Lisa Mittel  
Southwest Texas EC  
San Antonio

## Bread and Butter

As a youngster in Boerne in the 1950s, one of my treats was simple well-buttered bread, and the butter was from either Falfurrias or the Comfort Creamery, depending on whether my parents shopped in San Antonio or at our local Boerne grocery [*A Name That Sticks*, February 2021]. Back then the butter was better than the bread.

Dell Hood  
Pedernales EC  
Wimberley



CHIARA VERCESI

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1122 Colorado St., 24th Floor  
Austin, TX 78701

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

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# TEXAS MINT

We are excited to announce the release of the 2021 Texas Silver Round – Revolution Series. This is the second release of a four-year series commemorating the battles of the Texas Revolution. Each Texas Silver Round is one troy ounce .9999 fine silver.

The obverse of the high-quality mint strike features Texas' iconic lone star in the foreground. The smooth engraving of the star is framed by a textured topographical outline of the state of Texas. "TEXAS" arches proudly over the top of the round's obverse in large capital letters, with "Precious Metals" presented inversely along the opposite side. The round's mintage year is engraved in the bottom left of the round, just southwest of what would be the Rio Grande bordering Texas and Mexico.

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



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first in the series ● ● ● ●

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### BATTLE OF THE ALAMO

second in the series ● ● ● ●

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

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

The Texas Silver Round is also available to purchase in a similarly designed and secured mini-monster box, which contains 10 protective tubes of 25 rounds each for a total of 250 silver rounds.



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# Serendipity Spinners

MEMBERS OF A SAN ANGELO  
COOPERATIVE SPIN WOOL  
FROM THEIR OWN FLOCK

BY BRENDA KISSKO • PHOTOS BY KRISTIN TYLER

Yarn created by the  
Serendipity Spinners gets  
woven into a blanket.



Turning materials that nature provides into a handiwork can remind us of a simpler way of life and provide a reward beyond the finished product.

Such has been the experience of the Serendipity Spinners, who for 19 years have been starting from the ground up and spinning wool into yarn, which they then craft into prized possessions.

Although they come from varied backgrounds in and around San Angelo—doctors, businesswomen, retired teachers, certified public accountants—they share a common love for the spinning tradition. And they are members of their own co-op, which owns a flock of sheep, goats and alpacas whose wool, mohair and fiber they spin and blend into rugs, scarves, hats and other craft pieces. The group, which includes several members of Concho Valley Electric Cooperative, meets at Ruth Jordan's property on the South Concho River near San Angelo, where their flock lives on 11 acres.

"Each spinner brings her special knowledge and talent to the group," Jordan says. They share techniques, supplies and equipment, she explains. "Beginning spinners usually start with me as the teacher, with everyone pitching in for help and encouragement."

Even though the members chose the name Serendipity because they liked the sound of the word, its meaning holds relevance for original member Peggy Tharp. She had given up weaving because there was no place to buy materials in West Texas. Serendipity Spinners changed that.

Being involved in the process from the beginning—starting with animals and through the finished product—offers creative satisfaction. "Spinning is fulfilling and elemental," Tharp says. "This group got me to do something I'm not sure I could do otherwise."

The Serendipity Spinners continue a tradition of spinning that dates back more than 10 centuries, to a time when fibers were hand spun on spindles. The spinning wheel was invented in India and introduced to Europe in the Middle Ages. The wheel sped up the yarn-making process, which became mechanized during the 18th century.

Crafters who crochet typically buy yarn from big-box stores and craft shops, which mostly supply acrylic wool. Yarn spun from natural fibers can be harder to come by and costs more. Purists buy raw fibers and spin them into their own yarn. The Serendipity Spinners take it a step further by



ABOVE, FROM TOP Alpacas owned by the Serendipity Spinners near San Angelo are one source of the group's wool; unspun wool; Ruth Jordan spins wool into yarn.



LEFT Jordan feeds one of the Shetland sheep the Serendipity Spinners count on for the breed's desirable wool. BELOW The spinners gather in Jordan's home to enjoy their centuries-old craft.



Each spring, the group hires a local to shear their sheep and goats. The spinners shear the alpacas and do the skirting (the term for sorting and cleaning the wool) of all the fleeces themselves. The wool is then carded—combed—into roving so the fibers are lined up and ready to be spun into yarn.

When group members gather, they enjoy a potluck of food and fellowship. The room is filled with familiar smiles, the scent of fresh-baked treats and the gentle whirring of spinning wheels. The Serendipity Spinners are not in business to make a profit; they're in business to produce affordable fiber for members to use.

The group sells dryer balls made from their castoff scrap fiber at craft fairs and events at the Chicken Farm Art Center in San Angelo. The dryer balls are the one product the group sells collectively, and they use the proceeds to help with the cost of feeding and shearing their flock and processing their wool.

The Serendipity Spinners' flock came about during a spinning session when one of the ladies complained about the high cost of fiber. Jordan suggested the group invest in their own flock, so each member chipped in \$200, and they purchased four sheep.

They sought a variety of sheep breeds to produce a diversity of fibers. Their flock now includes Teeswater, Wensleydale, California variegated mutant, Jacob, merino and Rambouillet. Each breed has unique qualities in its fiber and yarn.

Mohair, produced by Angora goats, is glossy and strong and dyes beautifully. Merino is soft. Jacob is strong and ideal for rugs and handbags. Teeswater is lustrous. CVM offers larger fleece that's easy to spin and is often blended with other fibers. Alpaca fleece comes in a variety of shades and colors. Shetlands produce an especially desirable fiber for hand spinning in many colors.

San Angelo, well-known as one of the largest sheep, wool and mohair markets in the U.S., makes a fitting home for the Serendipity Spinners. The Texas Sheep and Goat

raising their own sheep to produce their own wool.

The group spins the wool into yarn on varied styles of spinning wheels: some Saxony, some Castle, some electric, some antique heirlooms.

"If only these wheels could tell us their stories," says Jordan, who owns several. She purchased one from northern Europe at a secondhand shop in Mason, concluding it probably came to Texas with the German pioneers who settled the Hill Country. Her Schacht Matchless wheel came from an estate sale, and she learned that its former owner, whose initials are painted on the wheel, traveled from New York to Mexico to teach spinning there.

Through her experience with different wheels, Jordan has become the mechanic of the Serendipity Spinners, troubleshooting occasional problems.

Though there are faster ways of acquiring a scarf nowadays, the machine-made one you select from the shelf at the department store won't be imbued with the same love a handmade scarf offers. The Serendipity Spinners take the wool from a sheep they've cared for and work it through every step of the process to become a warm wrap.





The spinners' livestock range on 11 acres along the South Concho River.

Raisers Association and the Mohair Council of America are headquartered in the city.

The Serendipity Spinners observe Roc Day, or St. Distaff's Day, each January 7, the traditional date that the cottage industry spinners in Europe resumed spinning the day after Epiphany. The San Angelo women celebrate with

a weekend spinning retreat at the Jordan Ranch near Menard. On that weekend they exchange handmade items.

"Fiber friends are the finest," Jordan says, smiling as she reflects upon her time with her fellow spinners. ■



3-12-51

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Retrieve Farm

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Howard Byater - (knew Iron Head)  
Freddy Long  
Dorothy Dickerson + 3 others (Alvin Johnson, Andrew P. Crane)



11



if no more.  
turning down

Been gone looking.  
nd  
rs

with The Son of God.

aa Big Day in Dallas  
nna, David McFalls  
Jacob, Winton, Bartlett  
(M.C.)

by  
Perry Wilson

John Avery Lomax records Richard Amerson at a home in Alabama. Ruby Terrill Lomax, at top, accompanied Lomax on many trips through the South and kept meticulous notes of the field recordings.



# Listening To Texas

**T**he late Blanche Inez “Aunt Tootsie” Bell Simmons of Pflugerville had never heard the fiddle music of her great-uncle, Peter Tumlinson Bell of Carrizo Springs, until she was nearly a century old.

In 2008, Austinite Dan Foster, who researches old-time fiddlers and fiddle music, brought Tootsie copies of a compact disc, *P.T. Bell—Master Texas Fiddler*.

The fiddle tunes on the CD were captured on an ancient Vibromaster recording machine by folklorist William A. Owens in Carrizo Springs in 1941, when the musician Bell was 74. The Vibromaster recorded directly to aluminum discs. Verner Lee Bell said that among his first memories was sitting on the floor while his grandfather fiddled into the recorder as little curls of aluminum twisted away and fell under the table as the recording was made. Owens wrote that the audio on the aluminum discs was played back with a cactus needle.

Owens was following a tradition begun by John Avery Lomax, among the best known of all field recorders. Originally funded by Harvard University, Lomax traveled through Texas with his son Alan and wife, Ruby Terrill Lomax, recording authentic, undocumented folk songs until his death in 1948.

One man Lomax recorded, whose name was only given as Blue, at the Smither Farm in Walker County concluded his singing by addressing President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and urging him to come to Texas and do something for the poor folks on tenant farms. Alan Lomax later wrote that his experience at the farm changed his life and the mission for his work. From that point forward, he believed he needed to record the views of the unheard people in rural America.

A similar drive to preserve rural cultural traditions motivated other field recorders. Though some recordings were made in urban settings, these traditions were largely rural, and they continue to influence Texas music and lifeways in the 21st century.

Others who took on this mission include Américo Paredes and Tary Owens (no relation to William Owens). Field

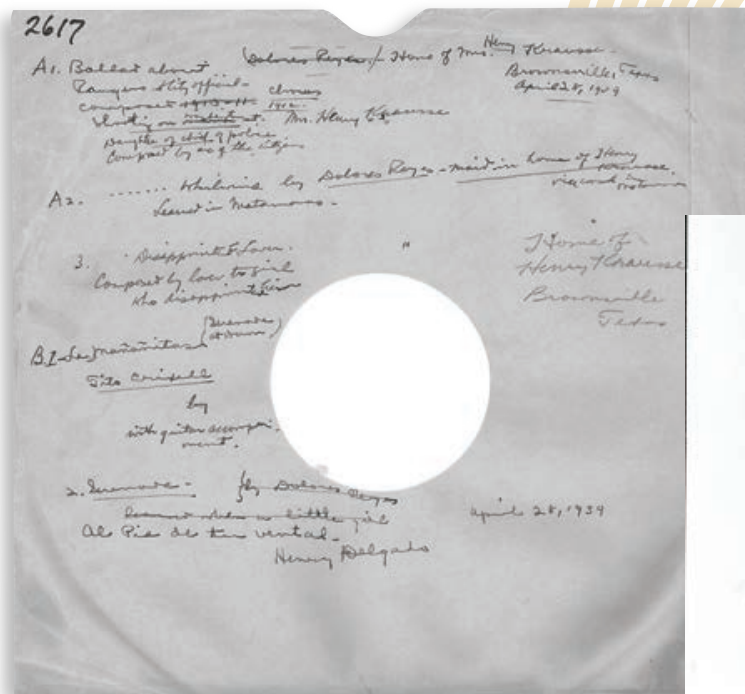


Jack Thorp was a pioneer in collecting and preserving homespun ballads.

recorders preserved cowboy songs, Old World ballads, Appalachian reels, Black spirituals, *corridos* and *canciones* that had been handed down through families from pioneer days. If not for the work of the field recorders—those truly listening to Texas—these musical traditions might well have disappeared.

Some of these recorded traditions became part of American culture. Cowboy Jack Thorp collected sagebrush songs in Texas in 1889 and produced a booklet titled *Songs of the Cowboys* in 1908. Based on that publication and John Lomax’s 1910 publication, *Cowboy Songs and Other Frontier Ballads*, the oral history of Western music seeped into mainstream American culture. As a direct result, the 1920s saw the creation of an archetype, the singing cowboy, on radio and records. And with the advent of “talkies,” motion pictures with sound, in the 1930s, the crooning caballero was firmly established as an American icon.

William A. Owens spent much of the 1930s and early ’40s trekking the state in search of songs. Born in Lamar County



Américo Paredes studied the stories, humor and border ballads—*corridos*—of the Rio Grande Valley for decades after becoming the first Mexican American to receive a doctorate in English from the University of Texas.



*Corrido de Kiansis*, about the famed trail drives from South Texas. “Many of the trail drivers were Mexicans,” he writes, “some taking their own herds, others working with Anglo outfits.”

Other border songs collected by Paredes include the stories of Texas journalist Catarino Garza, who led a revolt against Mexican dictator

Porfirio Díaz, and Goliad native Ignacio Zaragoza, who led a Mexican force that defeated the French at the Battle of Puebla on May 5, 1862—a victory celebrated today as Cinco de Mayo. The song *A. Zaragoza* was sung at 1867 Cinco de Mayo festivities in San Ygnacio by a local *guitarrero* named Onofre Cárdenas and remained in the borderlands’ oral tradition until Paredes learned it from the Zapata County singer Mercurio Martinez in 1950.

Tary Owens became one of Paredes’ students at the University of Texas in the 1960s and earned a Lomax Foundation grant to record such artists as country bluesmen Mance Lipscomb and Bill Neely as well as piano legends Robert Shaw and Roosevelt Williams, also known as Grey Ghost. As Ruth K. Sullivan wrote in the *Journal of Texas Music History*, Owens documented a wide range of styles in Texas and “helped provide ... a much more complete understanding of the unique and complex musical heritage of the Lone Star State.”

Some of Owens’ 1965 tapes were recently released on CD as *Teodar Jackson With T. J. Jackson: African-American Fiddling From Texas*. Foster explains that this music is “something rare and old as yet unheard in the familiar sound of old-time fiddling today. Teodar’s recordings have much to teach us about the sound of African American music in its own right.”

Thanks to Owens’ field recordings and the discovery of Teodar Jackson by young audiences, the fiddler was slated to play the Newport Folk Festival in 1966, where an even greater audience awaited his music—but he died before that happened. Listen to Jackson’s fiddle, and you’re truly listening to Texas. ■

**TCP WEB EXTRA** Experience John Avery Lomax’s East Texas Tour virtually.

in 1905, he returned home to Pin Hook to record singers in the early days of rural electrification. “A mystery, at times a superstition about electricity penetrated folk minds,” he wrote in his 1983 book, *Tell Me a Story, Sing Me a Song*.

Owens’ quest took him from the streets of Dallas’ Deep Ellum to the King Ranch to the woods of Texas’ deepest east. In East Texas he was often guided by Irvin “Cocky” Thompson of Silsbee, who, Owens wrote, “knew the paved roads ... the wagon roads, the trails that led to lonely cabins or became lost in the rootings of hogs hunting for mast.”

In the unincorporated Houston County community of Austonio, Lemuel Jeffus—who could reportedly “make people grin like possums with his crazy old songs”—gathered locals and families from Bug Hill to record sacred harp singing for Owens. Marveling at the aluminum disc on the folklorist’s machine, they testified quietly, “I ain’t never heered my own voice.”

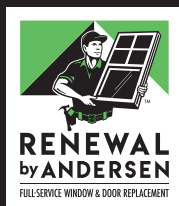
**I**n Brownsville and Matamoros, Owens recorded a young Paredes and his then-wife, the future Queen of the Bolero, Chelo Silva. One performance seems especially emblematic of listening to Texas. “Chelo sang a version of the traditional Spanish *Cielito Lindo*,” Owens wrote, “that progressed from the original, through a *guapango* [huapango], a Negro blues, and ended as a cowboy yodel. To them, such a mixture seemed natural on the border.”

Though authorities did not allow Owens to take his Vibromaster into Mexico, a Matamoros cantina singer taught Paredes the words and melody to another song, the story of Gregorio Cortez, a ranch hand who fled Texas after a tragic struggle with the sheriff of Karnes County. Paredes’ dissertation on the story and its corrido, published as the 1958 book, *With His Pistol in His Hand*, has become a bed-rock text in Mexican American studies.

Paredes rounded up a lifetime of border music in his 1976 book, *A Texas Mexican Cancionero*.

He included the oldest complete Tex-Mex corrido, *El*





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“White Buffalo Stone is stunning with its striking black & white contrast, and to our knowledge, this is the only unique vein in the world.”

— Tony Otteson, 2019

To show exquisite details, jewelry shown is not exact size.

## A RARE MEETING OF THE MINES

The American Southwest is steeped in legend. From untamed deserts to Wild West towns, its stories are as rich and mysterious as its beautiful expansive vistas. So we made the trek to two remote mines in this captivating region to join two of the Southwest's most legendary stones into one epic collection.

First we went to the only source of the illusive White Buffalo stone in the world—the Otteson Mine located in Tonopah, Nevada. White Buffalo has a bold, captivating presence with a distinctive white background and black matrix and is named after the white buffalo—a symbol of sacred life and abundance to Native Americans.

Then we went to one of the few places on earth that produce rare, natural turquoise—the Kingman Turquoise Mine nestled in the Acerbate Mountains of Arizona. Kingman is one of the oldest and largest turquoise mines in the world. It was mined by prehistoric Native American tribes dating back over a thousand years. The beautiful, high-quality stones from this mine feature an array of green and blue shades with exquisite veining and marbled patterns.

The *Two Legends Collection* celebrates the unique and rare beauty of these legendary stones with generous cabochons of White Buffalo accented with rounds of the coveted Kingman turquoise. The antiqued silver-finished settings showcase these rare desert gems beautifully.

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Be sure to follow safety precautions for all the electric appliances in today's kitchens.

## Remember Electrical Safety This Month

**MAY'S DESIGNATION AS** National Electrical Safety Month makes it a good time to review electrical hazards and think about how to keep common household dangers at bay.

Each year, electrical malfunctions account for 35,000 home fires causing more than 1,130 injuries, 500 deaths and \$1.4 billion in property damage, according to Electrical Safety Foundation International. Because the average American home was built in 1977, many can't keep up with the demands of today's electrical appliances and devices.

To help prevent adding to the sobering statistics about electrical dangers, watch for the warning signs of an overloaded electrical system, which include:

- ▶ Frequent circuit breaker trips or blown fuses.
- ▶ Lights dimming when other devices are turned on.
- ▶ Buzzing sounds from switches or outlets.

- ▶ Discolored outlets.
  - ▶ Appliances that seem underpowered.
- To maintain an electrically safe home, be sure that the following safety devices are installed according to updated codes:

- ▶ Arc-fault circuit interrupters protect against electrical fires caused by malfunctions.
- ▶ Surge protective devices safeguard against surges that can damage or reduce the life spans of electrical systems and devices.
- ▶ Ground-fault circuit interrupters protect against electric shock.
- ▶ Tamper-resistant receptacles have an internal shutter system to prevent foreign objects from being inserted into an outlet.

About 3,300 home fires are started by extension cords every year, so it's important to follow these safety tips:

- ▶ Don't substitute extension cords for permanent wiring.

- ▶ Don't run cords through walls, doorways, ceilings or floors. If a cord is covered, heat cannot escape, which is a fire hazard.
- ▶ Don't use an extension cord for more than one appliance.
- ▶ Make sure the extension cord or temporary power strip you use is rated for the products it powers and is marked for either indoor or outdoor use.
- ▶ Don't use a cord that has a lower rating than the appliance or tool you are plugging in.
- ▶ Never use a cord that feels hot or is damaged in any way.
- ▶ Never use three-prong plugs with outlets that only have two slots.
- ▶ Ensure your extension cord has a polarized or three-prong plug. ■



## 8 Tips for Summer Savings

**JUST AS YOU CAN CUT** back on driving to save fuel, you also can limit the amount of electricity you use at home by cutting excess. Here are eight ways to reduce your energy consumption this summer.

**1.** Replace your old manual thermostat with a programmable model. New thermostats have automatic settings that can change indoor temperatures at strategic times of the day. If you come and go on a regular basis, you can program your thermostat to raise the temperature when you're not home and lower the temperature again just before you return.

**2.** Schedule a tuneup for your air conditioning system. A licensed technician will check the refrigerant level and determine whether any parts are wearing out or running inefficiently. A well-maintained system will operate more efficiently.

**3.** Close the blinds when direct sunlight hits your windows. The less sun that shines into your home, the cooler it will remain, saving your air conditioning system from working harder.

**4.** Run your dishwasher, washing machine and clothes dryer after dark. Most people run these appliances during the day, so demand for electricity soars. Doing chores, particularly ones that produce heat, at night helps lower your electric cooperative's overall peak use, which helps keep costs low for everyone.

**5.** Better yet, air-dry your laundry. Hang clothes outside on a clothesline when the weather is nice.

**6.** Turn off lights and unplug computers, TVs and phone chargers when not in use. Don't waste electricity by allowing your appliances to use power when they shouldn't.

**7.** Replace incandescent lightbulbs with LEDs, which use less energy, last longer and emit less heat.

**8.** Shop smart. If you're replacing any of your home's appliances this summer, choose Energy Star-rated models. They're guaranteed to be more energy efficient than appliances that don't qualify for the label. ■



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## Save With the Energy Star Sales Tax Holiday

**EVERY YEAR AROUND** Memorial Day in Texas, certain Energy Star-certified products are tax-free to encourage consumers to save more energy at home.

This year's Energy Star sales tax holiday runs May 29–31. In addition to shopping in stores, you can buy qualifying Energy Star products online or by phone, mail or any other means tax-free. Items must be both delivered to and paid for by the customer during the exemption period or at least ordered and paid for during that period for immediate shipment, even if delivery is made after the period ends.

### Qualifying products:

- ▶ Air conditioners (with a sales price of \$6,000 or less)
- ▶ Refrigerators (with a sales price of \$2,000 or less)
- ▶ Ceiling fans
- ▶ Lightbulbs
- ▶ Clothes washers
- ▶ Dishwashers
- ▶ Dehumidifiers
- ▶ Some programmable thermostats

### Nonqualifying products:

- ▶ Water heaters
- ▶ Clothes dryers
- ▶ Freezers
- ▶ Stoves
- ▶ Attic fans
- ▶ Heat pumps
- ▶ Wine refrigerators
- ▶ Keg refrigerators
- ▶ Beverage chillers ■

13<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL

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Texas Co-op Power presents an illustrated *Seashells of Texas* poster by artist Aletha St. Romain, 20x16 inches, suitable for framing.

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From the publishers of **TexasCoopPower**



# Severe Weather: Are You Ready?



**Lightning strikes kill more Americans than tornadoes or hurricanes. Don't take chances with this deadly force of nature.**

**Go inside** a building and stay away from windows and doors.

**Avoid** electric appliances and metal plumbing and stay off the phone.

**Do not seek** shelter under a tree—they are easy targets.

**Move** to low ground and avoid open fields.

**Whether** at the beach or in a swimming pool, get out of the water immediately.

**Do not touch** metal objects, such as golf clubs or bicycles.

**Inside a car** is relatively safe, but do not touch interior metal.

**If your hair** stands on end, you may be a target. Crouch low on the balls of your feet and keep your knees and hands off the ground.

**Your electric cooperative encourages you to always practice safety.**



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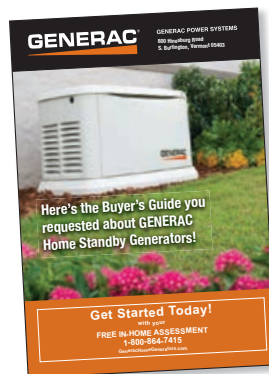
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# Drink a Beer, Make Some Art

Sunlight can create an otherworldly image through a pinhole in a can

STORY AND SOLARGRAPH BY BILL WITTLIFF

**THE FIRST SOLARGRAPH** I ever saw was a six-month exposure through a pinhole in a beer can by a teacher named Justin Quinnell, and it took my breath away for its beauty and its otherworldliness. I'd never seen anything like it, and of course, I wanted to try my hand at making one myself. But I had no idea how until I Googled Quinnell and landed on his website, where, in just a few minutes, he very cheerfully taught me everything I needed to know to make solargraphs of my own.

I made six pinhole cameras out of my Lone Star beer cans so I'd have a six-pack, then took them out to Plum Creek, our little ranch on the San Marcos River northeast of San Antonio. By now I'd been all over the internet to see what other solargraphers had done before me. I was looking for inspiration and instruction and found an abundance of both, so I had a pretty good idea of where I might aim my cans to get the most interesting compositions of sun striations over the landscape out at Plum Creek.

I then got a roll of ol' Brother Duck and taped two cans to a fence post, three others to trees and the last one to a big mesquite stump out there on Indian Ridge where 10 or so years ago, I found several paleo points that date back to the end of the last ice age.

Remember to take the tape off your pinhole before you leave. It's a real disappointment to go three or four months and then find you never exposed your paper to the sun at all.

I thought I'd give Mother Sun two or three months to work her magic in my cans, but after just a few days, I got itchy to see how it was going and hurried out there to cover the pinholes with tape and pull the cans off their perches.

Alas, a cow had chomped one of my cans into a wad of aluminum, but I hoped at least one of the other five would be a success.

I pulled the photographic paper out of the other cans, thrilled to see rather faint, rust-colored images. At that time, my assistant, Kate Bowie, knew how to work a scanner. So she scanned the paper "negatives" only to get a heartbreaking series of streaks across the images.

Bowie guessed she had scanned the exposures at too high a resolution, but to get another opinion, we emailed Diego Lopez Calvin to ask his advice. Calvin, Slawomir Decyk and Pawel Kula were the three pioneers who came up with the idea of scanning the negatives rather than trying to develop them using chemicals.

Calvin responded, saying that yes, we had indeed scanned our negatives at too high of a dots-per-inch setting and recommended a lower number.

That did the trick. So I bought another six-pack of Lone Star beer, and away I did go back to Plum Creek to try again with fresh cameras.

Three months later, I harvested my second batch of cans to generally good results, though again a cow had chomped one of my cans—but this time to a wonderful result. I called it *15 Days and a Cow Chomp*. I thought it was wonderfully mystical, with its bright arcs over spires and stars and a totally unexpected gathering storm on the right side of the composition. I was hooked big-time now and put cans up all over Plum Creek. At one time I had more than 300 cans working out there, and the cows were in heaven chomping on them.

Sometimes the armadillos rooted my cans out of the ground and played train wreck with them. And sometimes the feral hogs bit right through them.

I duct-taped cans to rocks and bricks and cinder blocks so I could scoot them around under the trees or cactuses with a stick without getting pricked by the thorns.

Placing cans strategically near the river or Plum Creek or the duck pond gave wonderful and sometimes surprising reflections.

Sometimes people who have never seen a solargraph before ask me, "How'd you do that?"

"Oh," I say, "I just drink a beer and make some art." ■

## TCP WEB EXTRA

Win Wittliff's book of solargraphs and learn how to make a pinhole camera.





## IN THE NEWS:

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— Today Show on NBC



A.

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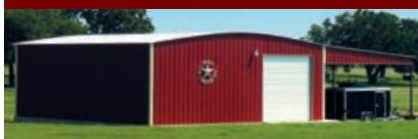
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In the blockbuster film, when a strapping Australian crocodile hunter and a lovely American journalist were getting robbed at knife point by a couple of young thugs in New York, the tough Aussie pulls out his dagger and says "That's not a knife, THIS is a knife!" Of course, the thugs scattered and he continued on to win the reporter's heart.

Our Aussie friend would approve of our rendition of his "knife." Forged of high grade 420 surgical stainless steel, this knife is an impressive 16" from pommel to point. And, the blade is full tang, meaning it runs the entirety of the knife, even though part of it is under wraps in the natural bone and wood handle.

Secured in a tooled leather sheath, this is one impressive knife, with an equally impressive price.

This fusion of substance and style can garner a high price tag out in the marketplace. In fact, we found full tang, stainless steel blades with bone handles in excess of \$2,000. Well, that won't cut it around here. We have mastered the hunt for the best deal, and in turn pass the spoils on to our customers.

**But we don't stop there.** While supplies last, we'll include a pair of \$99, 8x21 power compact binoculars, *and* a genuine leather sheath **FREE** when you purchase the *Down Under Bowie Knife*.

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**Limited Reserves.** A deal like this won't last long. We have only 1120 *Down Under Bowie Knives* for this ad only. Don't let this beauty slip through your fingers at a price that won't drag you under. Call today!

**Down Under Bowie Knife** ~~\$249~~\*

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**TCP WEB EXTRA**

Listen to W.F. Strong read this story.



# The Hero of Cinco de Mayo

A Texan named Zaragoza led the battle against the French in Mexico

BY W.F. STRONG • ILLUSTRATION BY RAUL ALLEN

**I HAVE LONG KNOWN** that 19th-century Mexican general Ignacio Zaragoza Seguín was a Texan, but I didn't know how deep his Texas roots went until I did some digging—pun intended. I learned that he was born in Goliad in 1829, when Texas was still part of Mexico. My research told me that his mother, María de Jesús Seguín, was from San Antonio and a cousin of Tejano hero Juan Seguín, who fought Gen. Antonio López de Santa Anna in the Texas Revolution and for whom the city of Seguin is named.

Zaragoza's father owned 11 leagues, or just under 50,000 acres, along the Red River in Northeast Texas, according to the Texas General Land Office. He

bought it for 100 pesos a league in 1830. That's mind-blowing. You couldn't even buy a square foot of that land today for 100 pesos. All this proves Gen. Zaragoza's Texas bona fides.

When Zaragoza was in his early 20s, he joined the revolutionary army of Benito Juárez and eventually led an army of volunteers in defeating Santa Anna. Yes, that same Santa Anna. Zaragoza's victory effectively removed Santa Anna as dictator of Mexico. That's another reason we should recognize Zaragoza. Like all good Texans, he despised the dictator and wanted him dead so democracy could live.

It is astonishing that Santa Anna was once again in power 20 years after his

humiliating loss to Sam Houston's army at San Jacinto. But Santa Anna had more political lives than a cat and was president of Mexico 11 times. No one ever failed so often and so badly and still managed to claw his way back into power.

In 1862 the French, under Napoleon III, wanted to make Mexico their own colony. They sent an impressive force of 8,000 crack troops to take the country by storm. Juárez directed Zaragoza to Puebla to defend Mexico from the French invasion. This was Mexico's San Jacinto moment because Zaragoza commanded half as many men as the French and was definitely the underdog in the battle to defend Puebla.

The French army's commander, Gen. Charles Latrille de Lorencez, held the same haughty attitude toward his Mexican opponents that Santa Anna had about the Texans in 1836. Latrille wrote that the Mexicans he faced "were of a lower race, poorly organized, poorly disciplined, of low morals," and in a uniquely French insult of a military force, said that they "lacked good taste."

Despite their poor taste, Zaragoza and his army achieved a stunning victory May 5, 1862, over those French troops. The French lost 500 men, while the Mexicans lost only 100 and sent the French back to the coast, licking their wounds. The French hadn't lost a battle in 50 years, so this was a demoralizing defeat, and the contribution of the victory to Mexico's national pride cannot be overstated. Sadly, Zaragoza died four months later of typhoid fever. He was just 33.

So we raise our glasses on Cinco de Mayo to salute native Texan Ignacio Zaragoza Seguín for his San Jacinto-like victory at Puebla and for helping to remove Santa Anna from power. Again. ■



# Potluck Dishes

It's all about sharing, including these family favorites

BY MEGAN MYERS, FOOD EDITOR

Though they're on hold for now, potlucks have historically been a large part of gatherings, especially across the South. Author and journalist Toni Tipton-Martin brings this to light beautifully with her award-winning cookbook *Jubilee*. Here's her recipe for baked beans, which is sure to become your new go-to.



TONI  
TIPTON-  
MARTIN



## Baked (Barbecued) Beans

**6 slices bacon, divided use**  
**1 cup minced onion**  
**½ cup minced green bell pepper**  
**2 cloves garlic, minced**  
**1 cup packed dark brown sugar**  
**½ cup molasses**  
**½ cup ketchup or tomato sauce**  
**2 tablespoons mustard**  
**2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar**  
**1 tablespoon liquid hickory smoke (optional)**  
**½ teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes**  
**¼ teaspoon pepper**  
**2 teaspoons salt, or to taste**  
**1 pound cooked navy beans, plus 3 cups cooking liquid; or 3 cans (15.5 ounces each), undrained**

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Cut 3 slices of the bacon into 1-inch strips. In a skillet, cook the cut bacon until browned and crisp. Use a slotted spoon to remove to paper towels to drain.
3. In the same pan, sauté the onion, bell pepper and garlic over medium heat until tender and the onion is translucent, about 5 minutes. Stir in the brown sugar, molasses, ketchup, mustard, vinegar, liquid smoke (if using), red pepper flakes, pepper and salt. Mix well. Cook over medium-low heat until the sugar is dissolved, about 1½ minutes.
4. In a large bowl, combine the beans, their liquid, the sauce and the cooked bacon. Pour into a 9-by-13-inch baking dish or a 3-quart casserole dish. Place the remaining 3 slices of bacon on top of the beans. Cover and bake 45 minutes. Uncover, increase the oven temperature to 425 degrees, and bake 15 minutes more to brown the bacon slices.

**SERVES 6-8**

Reprinted with permission from *Jubilee: Recipes From Two Centuries of African American Cooking* by Toni Tipton-Martin (Clarkson Potter, 2019).

**TCP WEB EXTRA** Follow along with Megan Myers and her adventures in the kitchen at [stetted.com](http://stetted.com), where she features a recipe for Tortellini Pasta Salad.



## Hawaiian Pineapple Upside-Down Cake

DEBORAH ANDERSON  
COSERV

Coconut and pecans make this cake even more special. Anderson shares her grandmother's secret recipe, which is a crowd-pleaser.

- ¼ cup (½ stick) butter**
- 1 can (20 ounces) sliced pineapple**
- Maraschino cherries**
- 1 cup unpacked brown sugar**
- 1 cup pecan halves**
- 1 cup shredded, sweetened coconut**
- 3 cups Bisquick**
- 1 cup sugar**
- 2 eggs**
- 1 cup milk**
- 4 tablespoons shortening**
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract**

**COOK'S TIP** In place of Bisquick, you can substitute 3 cups flour, 1½ tablespoons baking powder and 1½ teaspoons salt, and increase the shortening to 6 tablespoons.

- 1.** Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Melt butter in a 10- or 12-inch cast-iron skillet on a stovetop. Remove from heat. Add pineapple in a circular design and insert a cherry into the center of each pineapple ring. Sprinkle brown sugar, pecans and coconut on top and in between the pineapple rings.
- 2.** In a large bowl, beat Bisquick, sugar, eggs, milk, shortening and vanilla using an electric mixer, scraping the bowl as needed, until batter is smooth. Pour on top of the fruit and nuts in the skillet, making sure to cover completely.
- 3.** Bake 40–50 minutes or until toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean and the cake's surface is golden brown. To prevent sticking, immediately flip cake

CONTINUED >



\$500 WINNER

## Arroz con Pollo Estilo Panameño

SUZANNE FULTON  
BLUEBONNET EC



A hit at family meals, this recipe was passed down to Fulton from her mother, who learned it while living in Panama. Don't skimp on the olive juice, which adds a unique briny flavor to the dish.

SERVES 8

- Olive oil or vegetable oil**
- Salt and pepper**
- 8 chicken thighs**
- 2 onions, diced**
- 4 cloves garlic, minced**
- 3 tablespoons paprika**
- 2 large carrots, sliced thinly**
- 1 can (28 ounces) crushed tomatoes**
- 7 cups water**
- 3 cups basmati rice, uncooked**
- 1 bag (10 ounces) frozen petite green peas, thawed**
- 1 bunch fresh parsley, chopped**
- 1 jar (5.75 ounces) sliced salad olives, juice reserved**

- 1.** Heat the olive oil in a large, heavy-bottomed stock pot. Salt and pepper the chicken, and brown on all sides, working in batches so as not to crowd the pot. Set chicken aside.
- 2.** Using the same pot, sauté onions and garlic with paprika, scraping the bottom as you stir. Add carrots and cook 2 minutes, stirring often. Add tomatoes and water and bring to a boil. Add chicken and cook 5 minutes.
- 3.** Stir in rice and cook over low heat, covered, until rice has absorbed most of the liquid, about 15 minutes.
- 4.** Remove lid and add peas, then continue cooking until rice begins to stick to the bottom and chicken is falling apart, about 10 minutes more. Stir in parsley and olives. Add olive juice to taste. Adjust salt if needed.

## TCP \$500 Recipe Contest

**CHEESE** DUE MAY 10

Ooey gooey, savory and even sweet, cheese enhances a wide range of recipes. What's your favorite? Enter at [TexasCoopPower.com/contests](https://TexasCoopPower.com/contests) by May 10.



## RECIPES CONTINUED

onto a serving dish, holding plate firmly to the cake while flipping.

**SERVES 8-10**



### Kickin' Chicken Spaghetti

JAMIE MUNIZ  
GRAYSON-COLLIN EC

There are probably as many chicken spaghetti variations as there are Texan families—and for good reason. This creamy, cheesy dish is a favorite for Sunday dinners.

- 1 pound spaghetti**
- 3 cups shredded chicken**
- 1 can (10.5 ounces) cream of chicken soup**
- 1 can (10.5 ounces) cream of mushroom soup**
- 2 cups shredded cheddar cheese**
- 1 orange bell pepper, diced**
- 1 jar (4 ounces) diced pimiento peppers**
- 2 cans (4 ounces each) diced green chiles**
- 1 teaspoon seasoned salt**
- ½ teaspoon cayenne pepper**
- 1 cup shredded pepper jack cheese**

**1.** Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Boil spaghetti until it's al dente. Drain noodles and pour into a large bowl.

**2.** Mix in shredded chicken, soups, cheddar cheese, bell pepper, pimientos, green chiles, seasoned salt and cayenne pepper.

**3.** Pour into a lightly greased 9-by-13-inch casserole dish. Sprinkle on pepper jack cheese. Bake 45 minutes, until bubbly.

**SERVES 8**

## Potluck Safety Tips

BY MEGAN MYERS

- ▶ Don't reuse marinades from raw meats. If you need to baste while cooking, set aside some marinade ahead of time.
- ▶ Use a meat thermometer to ensure dishes are fully cooked.
- ▶ Set cold foods over a bowl or shallow baking dish filled with ice. For hot foods, use a chafing dish or serve in a slow cooker.
- ▶ Cream cheese- or whipped cream-based desserts will melt in warm temperatures. Keep them in the fridge or cooler until serving time.
- ▶ Discard food that has been out of the refrigerator or off the grill for more than two hours. If it's above 90 degrees where the food is, discard after one hour.

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COURTESY CHET GARNER

## Used Cars

Visit Amarillo's Cadillac Ranch to leave your mark on an art shrine

BY CHET GARNER

**IF YOU USED** a can of spray paint in an art museum, you'd be escorted out immediately. If you visit Amarillo's most iconic art installation without paint, you will be left out, with no way to leave your mark on the ever-changing sculpture known as the Cadillac Ranch.

Fueled by steak and eggs from the stockyard cafe inside the Amarillo Livestock Auction, I set out in search of cattle—cattle-acks. That is, the 10 Cadillac sedans half-buried nose down in the Texas prairie in 1974 by the art collective known as the Ant Farm. This automotive Stonehenge has become a must-stop destination for travelers on historic Route 66.

The Cadillac Ranch is unmissable. The distinctive tail fins are the only thing taller than a fence post on the southern horizon just west of town. A dozen vehicles parked nearby confirm that this is my stop. Since painting the Cadillacs is encouraged, I grab my spray paint and head into the field to see this High Plains anomaly firsthand.

Vibrant coats of fresh paint cover every inch of the classic Caddies. The cars are so beat up that the layers of paint might be the only thing holding them together. I felt like I was exploring a junkyard and a holy shrine, a sensation possibly caused by the fact that the cars are buried at the same angle as the sides of the Great Pyramid of Giza.

After a few minutes of contemplation, I pondered what timeless contribution I could add to the sculpture. Knowing that anything I sprayed would soon be covered by another pilgrim's paint, I wrote my name and reveled in the knowledge that once it does get covered, it will be forever entombed in one of Texas' most famous sculptures. That alone was worth the trip. ■

ABOVE Chet tagged Cadillac Ranch, as many visitors do.

**TCP WEB EXTRA** See Chet's video from Cadillac Ranch and check out his Texplorations on *The Daytripper* on PBS.

## Know Before You Go

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

# MAY

## 01

**Denton [1–8] Materials:**  
**Hard and Soft,**  
(940) 382-2787,  
dentonarts.com

**Corpus Christi [1–9] Bucca-**  
**neer Days,** (361) 882-3242,  
buccadays.com

**Brenham [1–2, 6–9, 13–16]**  
**Ben Butler,** (979) 830-8358,  
unitybrenham.org

## 06

**Mesquite [6–Aug. 5] Court-**  
**yard Concert Series,**  
(972) 216-8132,  
mesquiteartscenter.org

## 07

**New Braunfels John Conlee,**  
(830) 627-0808, brauntex.org

**Palestine Texas State Rail-**  
**road: Wines in the Pines,**  
1-855-632-7729,  
texasstaterailroad.net

**Weimar [7–8] Gedenke!,**  
(979) 725-9511,  
weimartexas.net

**Fredericksburg [7–9]**  
**175th Anniversary Opening**  
**Weekend Ceremonies,**  
(830) 998-4738, 175th.org

**Ingram [7–8, 14–15]**  
**I Ought To Be in Pictures,**  
(830) 367-5121, hcaf.com

## 08

**Fredericksburg Texas Flower**  
**Country Women's 5K/10K**  
**Run,** info@runintexas.com,  
runintexas.com/flower

**Huntsville Wine Down**  
**Shop Small Street Fair,**  
(469) 853-0425,  
huntsvilledba.com

**Irving** Las Colinas  
Symphony Orchestra:  
Daniela Liebman, (972) 252-  
4800,  
lascolinassymphony.org

**Lufkin** *Winter Dance Party*,  
(936) 633-5454,  
angelinaarts.org

**Bulverde** [8, 15, 22, 29]  
**Saturday Night Rodeo**,  
(830) 980-2226,  
tejasrodeo.com

**Waxahachie** [8-9, 15-16,  
22-23, 29-31] Scarborough  
Renaissance Festival,  
(972) 938-3247,  
srfestival.com

14

**Columbus** [14-15] Magnolia  
Days Festival, (979) 732-8385,  
magnoliadays.org

15

**Jefferson** [15-16] Historic  
Jefferson Train Show,  
(903) 665-3733, historic  
jeffersontrainshow.com

**New Braunfels** [15-16]  
**Old Gruene Market Days**,  
(830) 832-1721,  
gruenemarketdays.com

20

**New Braunfels** Come and  
Taste It: Virtual Wine  
Tasting, (830) 629-5077,  
grapevineingruene.com

21

**Georgetown** Cory Morrow  
Live at Reunion Ranch,  
(512) 868-9544,  
faithinactiongt.org/events

**Del Rio** [21-22] George  
Paul Memorial Xtreme Bull  
Riding, (830) 775-9595,  
georgepaulmemorial  
bullriding.com

MORE EVENTS >

## TCP Submit Your Event

We pick events for the magazine directly from TexasCoopPower.com. Submit your event online for July by May 10, and it just might be featured in this calendar.

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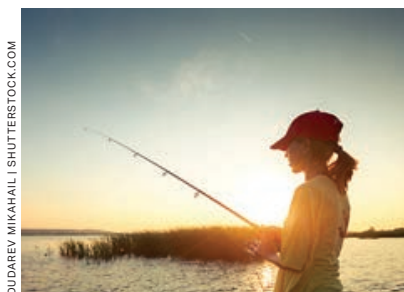


## Hit the Road Event Calendar

Fairs, festivals, food and family fun! Pick your region. Pick your month. Pick your event.

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## Pick of the Month

### Babes on the Bay

Fulton, May 14–15  
(361) 205-0182  
[babesonthebay.com](http://babesonthebay.com)

This fishing tournament describes itself as the largest women's angling event in the country. The Coastal Conservation Association created the tournament in 2000 to make the sport more inclusive and teach conservation-minded approaches to saltwater fishing. The event includes live music, vendors and educational outreach by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and other conservation organizations.

29

**Belton ASCO Spartacus Dash**, (254) 340-4577, [ascospartacusdash.com](http://ascospartacusdash.com)

**Hunt Jack Nelson**, (830) 238-4441, [cridersrandd.com](http://cridersrandd.com)

**Kerrville Family Free Day**, (830) 896-2553, [museumofwesternart.com](http://museumofwesternart.com)

**Seguin Lone Star Book Festival**, (512) 554-9560, [lonestar.bookfestival.network](http://lonestar.bookfestival.network)

**Abilene [29–30] Kristen Hertenberg and Her All-Star Band**, (325) 677-6710, [abilenephilharmonic.org](http://abilenephilharmonic.org)

JUNE  
03

**Stephenville [3–5] Moo-La Fest**, (254) 552-1222, [visitstephenville.com](http://visitstephenville.com)

04

**New Braunfels Aaron Watson**, (830) 964-3800, [whitewaterrocks.com](http://whitewaterrocks.com)

**Amarillo [4–5] Coors Cowboy Club Ranch Rodeo**, (806) 376-7767, [coorsranchrodeo.com](http://coorsranchrodeo.com)

**Hearne [4–5] Crossroads Home Town Festival**, (979) 402-1337

05

**Jacksonville All Smiles Tomato Fest 5K Run and 1 Mile Fun Run**, (903) 586-0741, [jacksonvilletexas.com](http://jacksonvilletexas.com)

**Leander Old Town Street Festival**, (512) 259-1907, [oldtownstreetfestival.com](http://oldtownstreetfestival.com)

**Sherman [5–7, 11–14, 18–21, 25–28], Mamma Mia**, (903) 893-8525, [scptheater.com](http://scptheater.com)

06

**New Braunfels Travis Tritt**, (830) 964-3800, [whitewaterrocks.com](http://whitewaterrocks.com)

## MAY EVENTS CONTINUED

22

**New Braunfels Jon Wolfe**, (830) 964-3800, [whitewaterrocks.com](http://whitewaterrocks.com)

27

**Kerrville [27–July 2] Southwest Gourd Fine Art Show**, (830) 895-2911, [kerrvilletexascvb.com](http://kerrvilletexascvb.com)

28

**Brenham Bob Wills' Texas Playboys Starring Jason Roberts**, (979) 337-7240, [thebarnhillcenter.com/events](http://thebarnhillcenter.com/events)

**Groesbeck [28–30] Heritage Festival**, (254) 729-6123, [groesbeckchamber.com](http://groesbeckchamber.com)

**Kerrville [28–30] Texas Masters of Fine Art and Craft Invitational Exhibition**, (469) 223-4162, [texasmasters.com](http://texasmasters.com)

**Jacksonville [28–31] Memorial Day Mudbug Ride**, (903) 724-4100, [riverrunpark.com](http://riverrunpark.com)

# Historic Texas

From the somber to the spectacular, we Texans have a lot of history under our boots. Photographs give us a look into the lives of our forebears like no other medium, and what a story they continue to tell today!

GRACE FULTZ



CLOCKWISE FROM FAR LEFT

DAVID WHITTLE  
DEEP EAST TEXAS EC  
San Felipe United Methodist Church in San Felipe.

CHRISTENA STEPHENS  
LYNTEGAR EC  
The chapel at the World War II prisoner-of-war camp near Hereford.

CYNTHIA BANDA  
MAGIC VALLEY EC  
San Antonio Missions National Historical Park.

SHERRI JEFFERY  
GRAYSON-COLLIN EC  
"Before huge signs and banners, companies painted their logos on their buildings."



## Upcoming Contests

- DUE MAY 10 Rust and Decay
- DUE JUN 10 Fillin' Stations
- DUE JUL 10 Funny Signs

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







## TCP WEB EXTRA

Find places in Texas with official Dark Sky status.

## Universal Appeal

The night skies of far West Texas bring celestial wonders to light

STORY AND PHOTO  
BY E. DAN KLEPPER

I AM OFTEN SURPRISED by the way the night skies of far West Texas remind me of scenes in science fiction movies. Above the silhouette of a mountain horizon, nighttime skies are at their most dramatic, offering unobstructed views of comets, satellites, meteors and galaxies, all unraveling in a dreamlike firmament.

Long past sunset, in the late hours after midnight, the sky seems particularly otherworldly. Perhaps it's because in these later hours the sky's recognizable touchstones—Orion, Sirius, the dipper—are hanging askew rather than in their accustomed places or, in concert with the Earth's rotation, have disappeared altogether. Or maybe it's the mischievous temperament of the sky itself, aware that the few who glance up into deep night are bleary and disoriented

and easier to lure away from reason. These darkest moments provide the wily universe with a chance to perform atmospheric wonders unlike those that ever inhabit our waking hours.

As a lifelong astronomy enthusiast with only a basic understanding of how the universe actually works, my lack of knowledge about the science of stars and planets means I am astonished every time I look through a telescope—a sort of blessing disguised as ignorant bliss. The first time I peered at the spiraling Andromeda galaxy through professional optics, in Fort Davis at one of the McDonald Observatory's star parties, it made my head spin. I couldn't look away, irritating the other visitors in line behind me who were waiting for a turn at the eyepiece. But each time I would begin to draw back, I was pulled in again, as if the galaxy's spiraling movement—eons in the turning—could be felt as well as seen.

When I was a kid growing up in South Texas, I had my own telescope—an inexpensive junior scientist scope my parents gave me for Christmas one year. By today's standards, it was a toy. But the optics were good enough to extend my visible reach skyward, much farther than I had ever experienced, and I spent hours outside, just staring into the craters of the moon. Fifty years later my enthusiasm for the universe survives in the Big Bend, beneath one of the darkest skies in Texas. Waking from a deep sleep to pull on a pair of boots and lumber outside to witness meteor showers, comets and lunar eclipses never disappoints. Many of these astronomical events occur overhead for just a moment each year, or once in a lifetime, and sometimes only once in a millennium, but they are fleeting proof of the mythic fires in the sky, highlighting a short list of events that have yet to feel the compromise of a human-made world. ■



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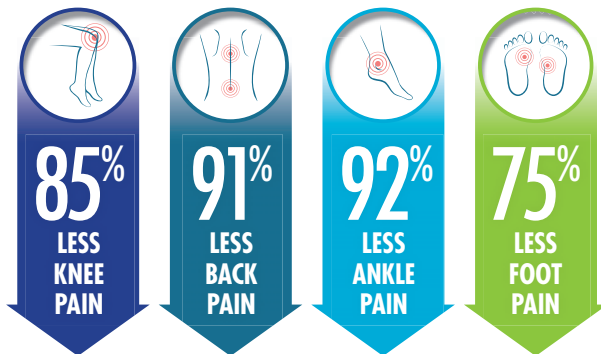


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