

LOCAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE EDITION

NOVEMBER 2015

Witte Museum

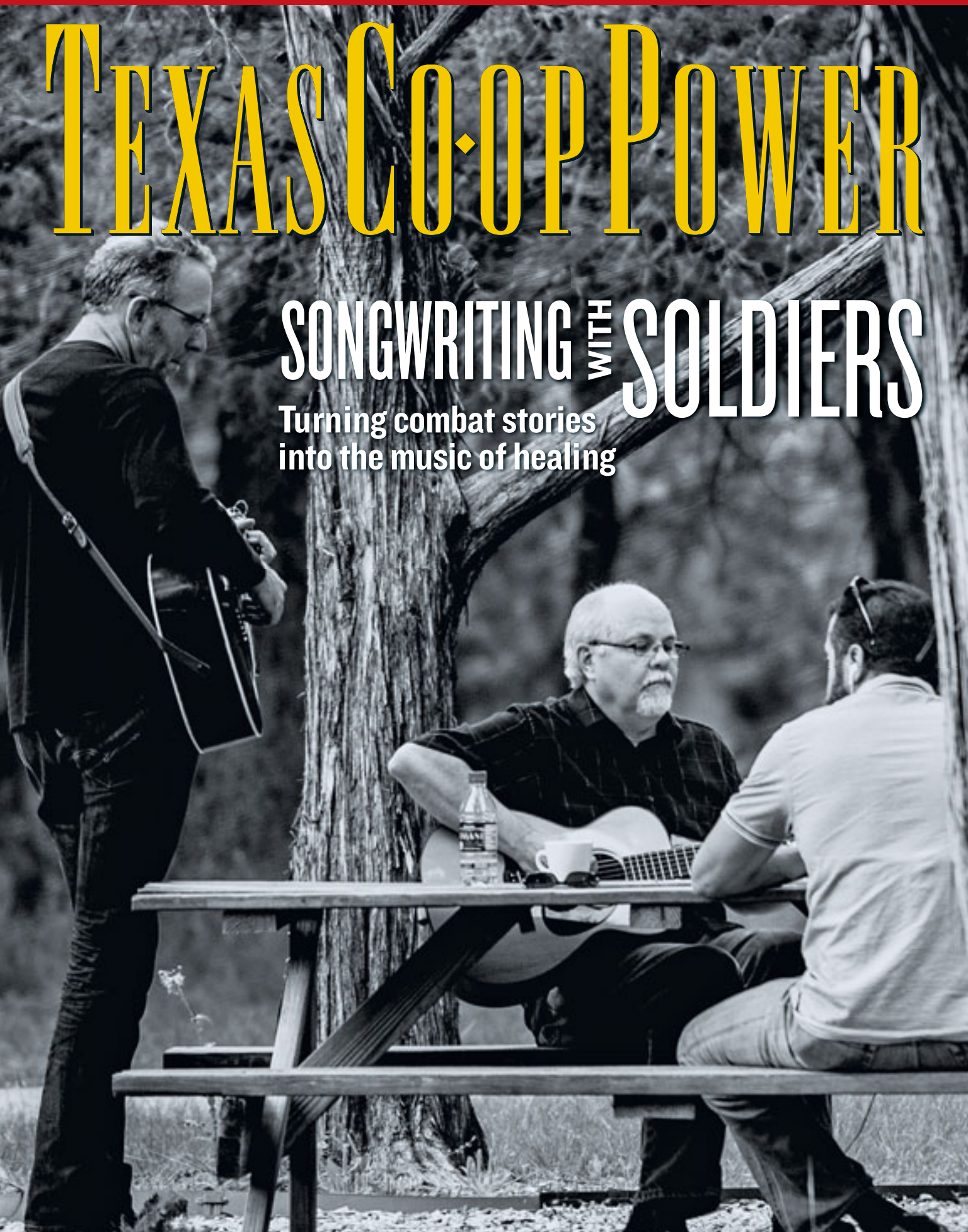
Pitcher-Perfect Recipes

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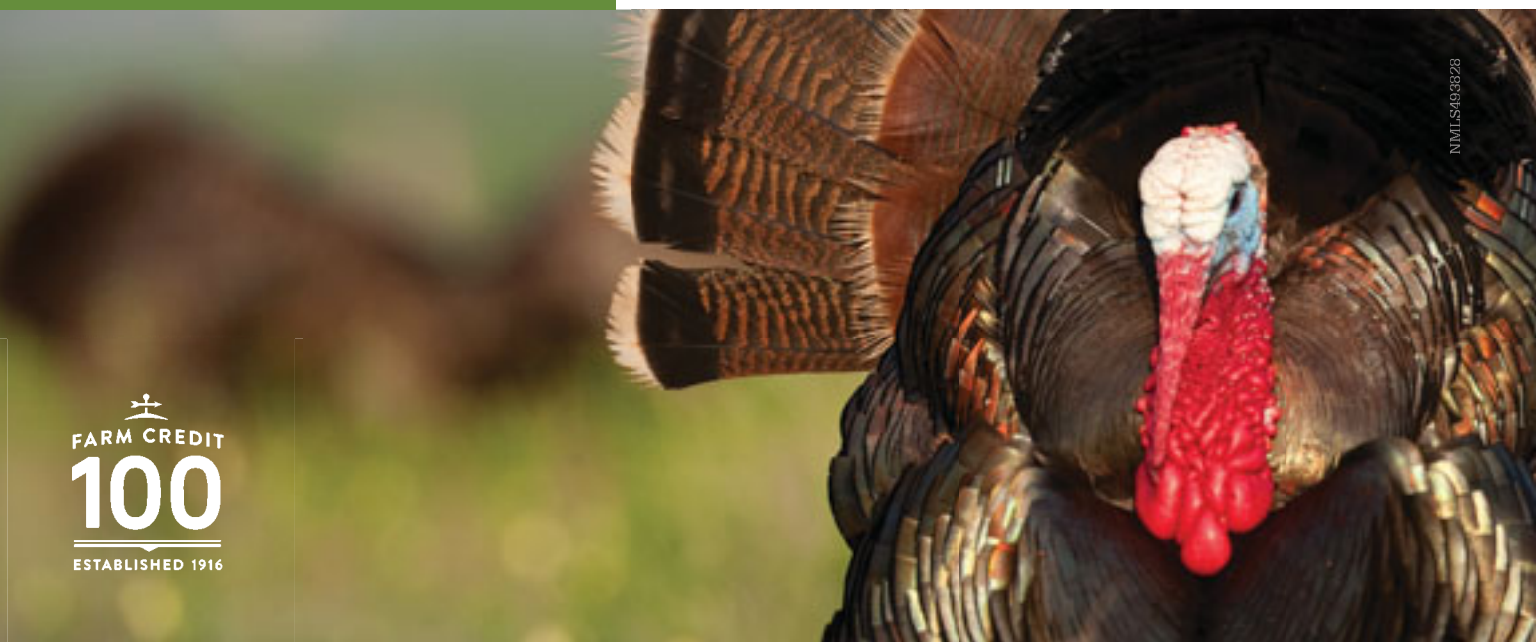


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A.J. Merrifield, left, and Darden Smith embrace at the end of a Songwriting With:Soldiers retreat.

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RETREAT: ANDY DUNAWAY. PIE: UCKYO | DOLLAR PHOTO CLUB



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**ON THE COVER** From left, Darden Smith, Gary Nicholson and retreat participant Palermo Deschamps write a song. Photo by Andy Dunaway

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## Feed Sack Décor

I enjoyed the article and letters about people making clothing out of old feed bags [*Feeding Their Fashion Sense*, February 2015]. My neighbor did something interesting with a bunch of old feed bags that he had. He flattened them out and cut them to fit and used them for wallpaper. The room looks great.

BOB FARRIS | SANGER  
COSERV ELECTRIC

## What Is Right With the World?

I was disturbed by the article *Right With the World* in your August 2015 issue. It seems barbaric to desensitize children by teaching them to kill. This seems like a sure way to encourage mental/emotional issues while introducing them to guns. This can be a bad and even deadly combination. In some cases, tradition can be a trap to keep individuals stuck in an outdated rut.

Why not just go outdoors, camp and take pictures of wildlife that will live to see another day? This seems more like being right with the world.

L.G. DERRICK | HICO  
UNITED COOPERATIVE SERVICES

Mike Leggett must have misplaced some of his baloney from his old hunting lease when he decided to bad-mouth oil and gas activity. I can see a half dozen oil and gas wells from my house in Ochiltree County (an area not known for large wildlife numbers) and, on a daily basis, I see antelope, mule deer, coyotes, turkeys, rabbits (jack and cottontail),



## Giving Weirdness a Shot

For several years I've been preaching that Angelina Eberly [*Prohibited by City Ordinance*, October 2015] did as much as anyone—ever—to “keep Austin weird.”



Imagine Austin without the Texas Legislature and, most likely, “the university” in all its glory. Perhaps there still would have been a beautiful town where the Colorado River emerges from the Hill County, but no way would it have been even half as weird!

KALAN W. FORD | BASTROP | BLUEBONNET EC

porcupines, badgers, various snakes, lizards, frogs, toads, ducks, geese, cranes and herons. By the way, does he *walk* the 12 miles to his lease?

JOHN BOZEMAN | PERRYTON  
NORTH PLAINS EC

Reading the deer camp article brings back good memories of camping trips with my dad in the 1950s and '60s with one important exception: We had great times and enjoyed hiking and camping without feeling the need to kill the beautiful animals that inhabited the places we visited.

PAUL DARKO | KAUFMAN  
TRINITY VALLEY EC

## Native Americans

As a member of the Comanche Nation, I've never been bothered by the term “Indian” [*The Old Indian Doctor*, March 2015, and letters in May 2015 and August 2015].

The history of America was influenced by Native American tribes in the Southwest and other parts of the country. Native Americans played important roles in our wars when our enemies could not decipher “Indian” languages, including Navajo, used as code by U.S. forces.

Absolute political correctness is a double-edged sword. The fact remains that Native Americans were mistreated in many situations, so let us be honest and refer to history as it was, not as we cover it in literary mascara.

PHIL HOWRY | AUSTIN  
BLUEBONNET EC, PEDERNALES EC  
AND CENTRAL TEXAS EC

## The Goodnight Legacy

I am a contracting electronic engineer working for our soldiers in Afghanistan. My wife, Grace, knows how much I enjoy reading your magazine. She gathers three or four issues before sending them to me.

I was very pleased to read the

article about Charles Goodnight [*The Goodnight-Loving Trail*, March 2015] because my sister, Nancy, is married to Goodnight's great-great-grandson, Ronald Gene Goodnight of Salado. They have been happily married for more than 34 years.

It is remarkable how much Ronnie resembles the late Charles Goodnight. One big difference is that Charles had a quick temper, but Ronnie is a gentle giant.

LOUIS ASHWORTH | SALADO  
BARTLETT EC

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Please include your town and electric co-op.  
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## HAPPENINGS

## Make the Trek to Schmeckenfest

Been to Schmeckenfest lately? What the heck is Schmeckenfest, you ask? It's one of the ways La Grange kicks off the Christmas season, and it occurs December 3 this year.

*Schmecken* means "to taste" in German, and a main feature of Schmeckenfest is sampling 20 or more types of wassail—hot cider—provided by businesses and community leaders for visitors to the town square.

Schmeckenfest begins with a parade and lighting of the Christmas tree on the courthouse lawn. The festival includes music, food, children's activities and a visit from Santa.

La Grange is headquarters for Fayette Electric Cooperative and the seat of Fayette County.

**INFO:** [visitlagrangetx.com](http://visitlagrangetx.com), (979) 968-3017

Find more happenings all across the state at [TexasCoopPower.com](http://TexasCoopPower.com)

## CO-OP PEOPLE

## Hello, Mr. Mayor



When Trinity Valley EC members call their cooperative, they might talk to the mayor of Kaufman.

Jeff Jordan, TVEC's communications coordinator, took the mayoral oath May 18. During his two-year term, he will help the seven-member city council oversee operations of Kaufman, a city 30 miles southeast of Dallas with about 7,000 people.

"I wanted to be part of the solution rather than just complain about problems I saw," Jordan says.

The Kaufman native is a friend of service. Before running for mayor, Jordan served on the council and the economic development board. Plus, his work for TVEC involves serving co-op members by communicating with electricity consumers, government officials and staff, and the media.

Community involvement is also a trait of cooperatives, which are locally run.

"It goes hand in hand with that cooperative principle to serve and bring your skills to the table to make this a better place to live," he says.



**VETERANS DAY IS NOVEMBER 11**, and Texas is home to 1.68 million military veterans, based on September 2014 statistics from the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs. Of those, 1.31 million are wartime vets. In *The Next Song* on Page 8, musician Darden Smith tells about the healing process of helping veterans put their feelings into words through songwriting.

## Good Taste in Gifts



The holiday season is right around the corner and with it the strains of coming up with gift ideas and then shopping. It can be the pits.

The pits, though, might be your solution. Consider sending a package straight from the pits or grills of some of Texas' legendary purveyors of brisket, ribs, sausage and steak. Many make gift giving as easy as a phone call or an online visit.

Perini Ranch in Buffalo Gap ships its mesquite-smoked, peppered beef tenderloin—"many thousands every year," says co-owner Lisa Perini—all over the country, and 85 percent of its mail-order business happens between Thanksgiving and Christmas.

"It really is a thrill when we get a call, and it's somebody in Iowa, and they've tasted our beef," Perini says. "They'll tell us, 'My kids won't come for Christmas if we don't have one of your tenderloins.'"

County Line's Air Ribs business peaks this time of year, too. "The real crunch is the last week before Christmas," says Scott Ziskovsky, marketing director and a member of Pedernales Electric Cooperative. "It's crazy."



## Reaugh's Texas Landscapes

The works of Frank Reaugh, one of the Southwest's most distinguished artists who documented and interpreted the region before the turn of the 20th century, enthrall admirers at museums and online. *Frank Reaugh: Landscapes of Texas and the American West*, an exhibition exploring his life and work, continues through November 29 at the Harry Ransom Center in Austin. The book *Windows on the West: The Art of Frank Reaugh* (University of Texas Press and Harry Ransom Center, 2015) accompanies the exhibit.

"As a witness to the cattle drives of the 1880s and the trail drivers' way of life, Reaugh gave his artworks an authoritative quality that will undoubtedly sustain his well-deserved reputation as the painter of the Texas longhorn for many years to come," says Peter F. Mears, curator of art at the Ransom Center. Online visitors can explore the Ransom Center's digital collection of 217 Reaugh pieces. More than 700 pieces are rotated on display at the Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum in Canyon. The National Ranching Heritage Center in Lubbock holds 200 pieces and periodically exhibits them.



### LEGISLATION

## Daylight Saving Time Law Intercepted

Daylight saving time ends November 1, much to the chagrin of some members of the Texas House who sought to exclude the state from the twice-yearly practice of adjusting clocks one hour. Football is partly to blame for us "falling back" this month. Lawmakers in May defeated a bill sponsored by Rep. Dan Flynn of Van, who called adjusting the clocks every spring and fall "simply a hassle that we don't need anymore," The Associated Press reported.

Support for the bill, which would have become law in September, waned amid realizations that being out of step with most of the rest of the country could create a scheduling conflict between the times of church services in Texas and NFL games elsewhere. As Dallas Rep. Rafael Anchia declared: "I don't want to miss church, and I don't want to miss the Cowboys game."





# THE NEXT SONG





## HOW I LEARNED TO PUT MY CREATIVE ENERGY TO WORK FOR VETERANS

BY DARDEN SMITH | PHOTOS BY ANDY DUNAWAY

**I**VE BEEN CHASING SONGS since I was a 10-year-old kid in Brenham. Sitting in my room, day after day, rewriting songs by people like Willie Nelson, Neil Young and Leon Russell, I first discovered that songs carry secrets. Something happens when you tell a story, make it rhyme and put it to melody. A song is an envelope to hold the truth.

Once I realized it was possible to make a living writing songs, I wanted to be a rock star. But you never know where songs will lead you. I've recorded 14 albums and toured across the United States, through Canada and around Europe. Today, I use songs in ways I never thought possible.

This came to me after 40 years of searching for the next song.

Three years ago, I founded SongwritingWith:Soldiers. In this program, we pair professional songwriters with active-duty and veteran members of the military to write songs based on their stories of combat and their return home. Songwriters use their craft in the service of these stories. The collaborative process is all about listening, looking for the deep emotional truth that, when captured in lyrics and melody, will resonate not only with that soldier but also with anyone who might hear it.

There's nothing like a song to tell the truth.

SongwritingWith:Soldiers grew out of my own search. Around the time I turned 40, after almost 20 years as a professional musician, I was growing restless with what I was able to do with my music.

In 2003, I started the Be An Artist program, visiting schools in the United States and Europe to speak with students about seeing themselves as artists, no matter their interests. At the end of each session, I would write a song with the group. I fell in love with writing songs with people who don't write songs. The collaborative nature of the work, as well as the way people sat up straighter when their part of the song came around, fascinated me.

As I continued to write, record and tour, I followed my curiosity into projects such as working with homeless teenagers in Newark, New Jersey, at a center called Covenant House; writing songs about the damage of HIV and AIDS with locals in Johannesburg, South Africa, and rural Botswana; conflict resolution with young adults from Israel and the West Bank; a three-year artist-in-residence position at Oklahoma State University's School of Entrepreneurship; and working with corporate clients. In every setting, the key to opening up pathways to another person's truth was helping put their story into rhyme and melody.

In 2008, I was asked to perform at the United States military hospital in Landstuhl, Germany. During my show—which the audience didn't seem to enjoy much—

I was thinking that I had absolutely nothing in common with the soldiers. I felt that we were from different sides of a divide that I wasn't really much interested in crossing. All I saw were uniforms. I didn't see the individuals in the uniforms.

**From far left, participant Dustin Wright works with songwriters Darden Smith and Gary Nicholson and a guest observer at a retreat.**



**I WAS GRIPPED BY THE SENSE OF CALLING AND SACRIFICE  
AMONG THESE MEN AND WOMEN.  
AND I WAS GRIPPED BY THEIR WILLINGNESS  
TO GIVE WHEN OTHERS DO NOT.**



A Marine named Fred Cale completely changed my perspective. He came up after my show, and as we stood talking about songs, guitars, Iraq and military life, we realized that I knew his brother-in-law. Then we discovered that the best man at his wedding had operated a club in Monroe, Louisiana, where I played back in the early 1980s.

When I let myself see it, we had a great deal in common.

Standing there talking with Cale, I thought, “Wouldn’t it be great to write songs with this man?” Maybe I could go to Iraq and write with soldiers. It wouldn’t be too different from the songwriting I did with homeless kids.

Cale and I emailed back and forth for about six months before we realized that it was just too complicated to get me into a war zone. He suggested I meet with some contacts he had in the Texas Army National Guard. Maybe I could find someone to write with. I knew there was a song that needed to be written, but I couldn’t find it. I wanted that next song.

As a step in this quest, I had lunch with Maj. Gen. John Furlow, head of the Texas Army National Guard, and five of his assistants at Threadgill’s restaurant in downtown Austin. During lunch, just as I began thinking again that we didn’t have much in common, we discovered that my high school friend, Bo Kenyon, flew the helicopter for Furlow.

Now, that was too much.

It was clear to me that there was a connection among us, but I couldn’t find the song. So I started visiting Austin’s Camp Mabry once a month to sit around a table and have conversations. I listened to stories, to explanations on the meaning of service and duty, on what it means to wear a uniform. I’d never really thought about these things in this way. I was gripped by the sense of calling and sacrifice among these men and women. And I was gripped by their willingness to give when others do not.

At the third meeting, I heard the phrase “angel flight.” I straightened in my seat and said, “What a great song title.” Pause. “Ummm, what’s an angel flight?”

They told me that when a soldier dies and they fly his or her body home, that’s an angel flight. I had my song. Or rather, their song. The Air Guard arranged for me to speak with one of their members, a pilot who flies for Southwest Airlines for his regular job but on weekends flies fallen soldiers home. This pilot’s words formed the basis for the entire first verse of the song. Like the words of Cale and other military men and women, these words changed the course of my life and work.

Based on those conversations, my friend Radney Foster and I wrote “Angel Flight” in Nashville, commissioned by the Texas Guard. Radney recorded the song on his record and made a video





**From far left, musician Jay Clementi and participant Todd Hanna write a song. Emotions become defined in a notebook. A final circle concludes each retreat.**

that went viral, and pretty soon we were getting emails from all over the globe from people who were moved by the words. Words that I couldn't have written before I met Cale. Words that were possible because a

few human beings—some wearing uniforms, some not—found their connecting thread through the truth conveyed in a story and a song.

One of the emails I got was from a man in Colorado Springs who ran an organization called LifeQuest Transitions that helped soldiers move from military to civilian life. At his invitation, I went to write with some of the veterans in the program. From that experience, from witnessing the transformative power of collaborative songwriting, came the idea for SongwritingWith:Soldiers.

Over the past three years, with guidance from Executive Director Mary Judd, the organization has worked with more than 130 individuals in the military across the United States to write more than 150 songs.

All musicians want to move people with their work by striking an emotional nerve and taking the listener on a journey, but this is especially true of songwriters. At one of our first retreats, a veteran named Scott McRae told us that the retreat

“restored my faith in humanity. I didn't think anybody cared.” After a recent retreat, veteran Sandi Primous reported that she'd finally found the confidence to make a literal journey, joining a Harley-Davidson group ride across Texas. That to me is the highest use of my craft, of song: bringing about a change in someone, a shift of perspective. It can happen through the collaboration or simply when you find your truth reflected in someone else's song. That's the magic.

In many ways, I'm no different today from that 10-year-old kid who was in love with a story and trying to figure out how to put it into a song. I didn't see my life turning out this way. I wanted to be a successful songwriter and for years, I thought that meant following my own songs, getting on the radio, serving myself. Through SongwritingWith:Soldiers, I have learned how to direct my craft and creativity out into the world. My world has grown bigger, full of new stories. With every group of veterans, there's always a next song, a song that needs to be written, a song that will change lives.

It's not where I thought I would be. It's better.

Singer-songwriter **Darden Smith** makes his home in Austin.

**WEB EXTRAS at [TexasCoopPower.com](http://TexasCoopPower.com)** Watch Darden Smith collaborate with co-op leaders to write *Shine a Light*.





*The Tejano Freighter* exhibit in the Robert J. and Helen C. Kleberg South Texas Heritage Center. Opposite: Spur made in Spain, circa 1600.



# South Texas Treasures



## WITTE MUSEUM IN SAN ANTONIO NURTURES REGION'S HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

BY E. DAN KLEPPER

**D**uring the Great Depression of the 1930s, San Antonians encountered the unusual sight of live alligators and rattlesnakes lounging in a makeshift corral near the San Antonio River. This offbeat roundup appeared courtesy of the San Antonio's Witte Museum. The guest herpetologist who collected the reptiles and amphibians for the garden charged visitors a dime each to raise funds for the cash-strapped museum. The plan succeeded when more than 800 visitors arrived on opening day to view the unusual combination of wildlife. A subsequent fish-fry fundraiser—with rattlesnake meat serving as a substitute for catfish—generated even more donations, inspiring the museum to make it an annual event for 16 consecutive years.

Today, a visit to the Witte features another unusual sight, but one of the 21st century. In Ewing Halsell Hall, gateway to the Witte's South Texas Heritage Center, visitors encounter the animated Tejano freighter, a life-size sculpted figure that symbolizes 19th-century South Texas. The freighter tells his story of travels across the southern frontier using a film of a live actor projected on the face of the sculpted freighter. The voice and movement blend naturally with the figure. The result is known as a "ciné-robot," and its facial features are lively and lifelike.

The Witte (pronounced "witty"), San Antonio's premier collection of cultural and natural history, maintains its reputation for innovation combined with judicious resource management. Both characteristics were embedded in the museum's DNA by founding director, Ellen S. Quillin, an area high school teacher who joined forces with Mayor John Tobin and Ethel Tunstall Drought, president of the San Antonio Art League, to open the Witte in 1926. Businessman Alfred Witte bequeathed \$65,000 to the city to build a museum of art, science and natural history in honor of his parents. Witte died in 1925 and did not see the result of his bequest, but Texas—and South Texas in particular—continues to benefit from his gift.

The fledgling museum eschewed the mundane for the eclectic. Alongside artworks by European masters, visitors could admire

Native American artifacts, historical costumes and furniture, a natural history collection composed of birds, mammals and other creatures preserved by taxidermy, as well as mounted butterflies and other insect and mineral specimens. Hanging overhead was a Curtiss JN-4D (known as the Jenny Flyer), the World War I trainer that became plane-of-choice for barnstorming pilots throughout the 1920s. The museum's art collection included paintings and sculpture by European, American and Texas artists, as well as by members of the San Antonio Art League.

Just as San Antonio serves as a capital for South Texas, the Witte Museum has made South Texas a primary focus for its collecting and programs. One of the first major steps in this direction took place after World War II when the Witte helped fund an expedition to southwestern Texas. This expedition significantly increased the state's natural and cultural history collections and helped attract funds to construct and expand its existing galleries.

By 1951, the Witte's 25th anniversary, the museum occupied new offices dedicated to the natural history collection and began constructing a new auditorium. By the 1960s, the museum featured a gallery addition that increased its square footage by 60 percent.

As the 20th century progressed, the Witte strengthened its identity as a regional museum of natural and cultural history. To help sharpen the focus on South Texas, the Witte ultimately transferred much of its fine art collection to its sister institution, the San Antonio Museum of Art, established in 1981. This gave the Witte an opportunity to further emphasize its mission to become the city's premier institution for the preservation and presentation of history, science and culture.

"There are dozens of artifacts related to San Antonio and South Texas," says Bruce Shackelford, South Texas Heritage's curator. "From Sam Houston's sash to the cowboy artifacts, the King Ranch wagon and the pickup and the salesman's sample windmill, they all have a direct relationship to San Antonio and South Texas."

An essential part of the Witte's success in accomplishing the goal of showcasing the rich cultural history of South Texas came about through funding from the estate of one of the region's most influential businessmen—Robert J. Kleberg Jr. The grandson of Richard King, who created the King Ranch empire, Kleberg led



his grandfather's considerable operation for more than 40 years. Kleberg and his wife, Helen, committed to supporting and improving the quality of life in South Texas communities. In 2012, the Robert J. Kleberg Jr. and Helen C. Kleberg Foundation provided the leading financial gift to create the South Texas Heritage Center, home for the Witte's collection of South Texas history.

The South Texas Heritage Center incorporates artifacts with state-of-the-art museum technology to trace the history of 19th- and early 20th-century South Texas and its people. Narratives of Tejano freighters, merchants, Native Americans, Spanish settlers, vaqueros, oilmen, pioneer women, cowboys and ranchers share a spotlight with the museum's extensive collection of saddlery, period clothes, ranching artifacts, collectibles from the oil and gas industry, archival photographs and documents.

The 20,000-square-foot center features a grand entry hall, exhibits, the museum's early Texas art collection and classrooms. Across the grounds, some of San Antonio's most historic homes and log cabins have been preserved for presentations, exhibits and museum offices. The collection includes the Ruiz House, home to the city's first schoolmaster; the limestone-block Navarro House

built in 1835; and the 1840s home of pioneer merchant John Twohig. The center also serves as an archive for scholarly research, providing access to a considerable collection of artifacts such as Texas furniture, firearms, tex-

tiles, the Alamo Fiesta coronation gowns and memorabilia from the Hertzberg Circus Collection, considered one of the most impressive collections of circus art and artifacts in the world.

"The South Texas Heritage Center exhibits important artifacts relating to the history of all eras of Texas," says Shackelford. "One aspect that makes the Witte STHC different is that we place our artifacts into a context reflecting how they existed during their time of use. Many of the artifacts in the

South Texas Heritage Center are treasures of the State of Texas."

The Witte may serve as archivist to the past, but it moves confidently into the future. A considerable expansion of galleries and exhibits is slated for completion in 2017. The "new" Witte will enhance indoor spaces with outdoor features and will include a park-like slice of the city sandwiched between Broadway Street and the San Antonio River. The reimagined Paleontology Gallery will feature the museum's impressive collection of fossilized and reconstructed dinosaurs. The artifacts of the ancient Pecos region, epicenter for Texas rock art, also will find a new home in the People of the Pecos Gallery.

Best yet, when visitors enter the museum, they will encounter the Quetzalcoatlus, the museum's fossilized "Texas Pterosaur," and the ancient world's version of the barnstormer—and largest flying animal of all time—will hang from the rafters.

Photographer, author and artist E. Dan Klepper lives in Marathon.

**WEB EXTRAS at [TexasCoopPower.com](http://TexasCoopPower.com)** See the more of the collection online.

**Clockwise from top left:**  
**San Antonio Military Plaza, 1920s; Mission San José by Seth Eastman; San Antonio Main Plaza, 1870s; On the Trail by Theodore Gentilz**



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solar radiation light. This superior lens technology was first discovered when NASA scientists looked to nature for a means to superior eye protection—specifically, by studying the eyes of eagles, known for their extreme visual acuity. This discovery resulted in what is now known as Eagle Eyes®.

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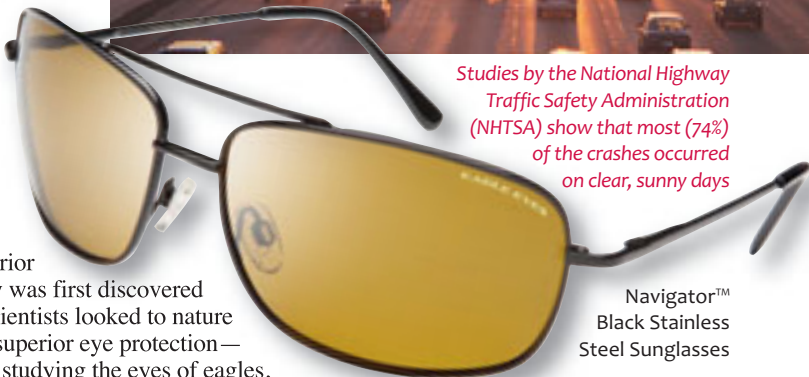
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## CONSERVATION AND SAFETY INFORMATION



# Holiday Entertaining Safety

**AS THANKSGIVING** and Christmas approach, use these tips to ensure that your home is ready for all of the festive activities of the holiday season.

### Fire Safety

Test your smoke alarms monthly and make sure that your house is protected by an adequate number of working alarms.

Smoke alarms should be installed in each bedroom, outside each sleeping area and on every level of your home.

Share your fire escape plan, including the location of your outside meeting place, with your overnight guests.

Keep halls, stairs and doorways properly illuminated and free of clutter and other objects that could hinder an escape during a fire emergency.

### Decorating Safety

Avoid overloading electrical outlets, which can overheat and cause a fire.

Do not place extension cords where they could be tripping hazards.

Do not run extension cords under rugs or furniture.

Keep all decorations 3 feet away from heat sources, including space heaters and fireplaces.

Keep young visitors in mind: Place cords, breakables, candles and other potentially dangerous items out of children's reach.

Turn off and unplug all decorations before leaving home or going to sleep.

Use only weatherproof electrical devices for outside activities. Protect outdoor electrical devices from moisture.

### Heating Equipment Safety

Have your heating system inspected annually by a licensed professional.

Use space heaters properly and safely. Keep them out of high-traffic areas and at least 3 feet from anything that can burn.

Do not leave a space heater running unattended. Turn off space heaters and unplug them when you leave the room or go to sleep.

Never leave an open flame, including a fireplace, unattended.

### Child Safety

When hosting small children, be sure to put items out of reach that might present a choking hazard—coins, jewelry and especially small batteries, which carry an added risk if ingested.

Move all cleaning products and other dangerous items out of reach of children and store them in a locked area.

Set your water heater temperature to 120 degrees to reduce the risk of scalding.

Install tamper-resistant receptacles to prevent electrical shocks and burns, and use safety covers on unused outlets.

Never allow children to play with electrical decorations or cords.

### Electrical Safety

Outdoor outlets should be protected with GFCI technology to reduce the risk of electric shock.

Avoid overloading electrical outlets, which can overheat and cause a fire.

Check outlets regularly for problems, including overheating, loose connections, reversed polarity or corrosion.

### Cooking Safety

Stay in the kitchen when frying, grilling or broiling.

Keep young children at least 3 feet away from cooking appliances.

Keep towels, potholders and curtains away from hot surfaces.

Wear short or close-fitting sleeves. Loose clothing can catch fire.



# How's the Air in There?

**SOME DAYS, THE AIR** inside your house can be just about as polluted as the air outdoors.

You can change that—and you should. After all, most of us spend 90 percent of our time indoors.

Clear up the air inside your home, especially if household members have headaches or suffer from allergies. Here's how to start:

If your house is pretty new, it's likely that your builder made it airtight so your air-conditioning and heating systems would work more efficiently. If that's the case, the house needs proper ventilation to keep the air circulating, which will help prevent indoor air pollution. If your indoor air smells "stale" or if you or your family suddenly feels uncomfortable because of it, have your ventilation system checked.

Furnaces and stoves should be directly vented to remove moisture and combustion byproducts from your home. Bathrooms should have exhaust fans to pull moisture outside. Clothes dryers should be vented to the outdoors.

Seal cracks and insulate walls in the basement to prevent pollutants from soil—such as radon—from entering the house. Use cement grout or caulk to seal visible cracks in foundation walls or floors.

Check and clean your furnace every year to prevent damaged heat exchangers or blocked flues from spewing pollutants into indoor air.

Change furnace filters frequently. The filters not only protect furnace equipment, but high-quality filters can also trap pollutants from the air.

Install a carbon monoxide detector in your home. Unlike some other pollutants, carbon monoxide is colorless and odorless, so you won't know when it's in the air until it's too late.

Paints, solvents, household cleaners and air fresheners can contain pollutants. Use them with windows open and exhaust fans on.

If you need to remove lead paint from your home's walls and ceilings, call a professional. The removal process can cause serious health risks if not done properly.



**Just like a smoke detector, a carbon monoxide alarm is important for your family's safety.**



## Program for Comfort and Savings

**A PROGRAMMABLE THERMOSTAT** is ideal for individuals and families who are away from home during set periods of time throughout the week, such as during work or school. Through proper use of preprogrammed settings, the average American household can save about \$180 every year in energy costs.

The same efficiencies can be achieved at night by lowering the temperature when everyone is snuggled up under blankets and then having the thermostat warm the house up a bit when morning comes.

It is a common misconception that it takes more energy to heat up a cold house than it does to keep a house warm all the time. Turning down the heater will always save energy (as will turning up the air conditioner temperature in summer).

Heat moves from hot to cold, and the rate of heat transfer increases with greater temperature differences between inside and out. Smaller temperature differences between your house and outside generally means you'll lose less heat (or air conditioning) from inside the house to the outside. Therefore, you will save energy by only heating or cooling as much as necessary for the occupants and time of day.

A programmable thermostat can begin to heat or cool your home 30–60 minutes before you get home, so the temperature is just right when you arrive.

# Superstars of Childhood

A vivid imagination creates backyard heroes

BY CLAY COPPEDGE

THE KID NEXT DOOR WAS MAKING ME MAD.

I had just settled in with a good book when my young neighbor began his assault on my concentration. He was screeching at the top of his 8-year-old lungs, alternating between what sounded like complete gibberish and something like a banshee screaming.

No one had, at that point a number of years ago, accused me of being a grumpy old man, but maybe this was the beginning of early onset. Or maybe I'd had too much coffee. I stomped toward the window that looked out on my neighbors' backyard and yanked back the curtain, preparing to give that boy a good glaring.

What I saw turned his screaming into sweet soul music.

What that boy was doing was winning himself a major golf tournament. He was decked out in his Sunday best, particularly appropriate because it was Sunday, and teeing off with a plastic golf club and plastic ball. He looked like a real golfer as he stood over the ball and waggled his club a few times. Then he hauled off and hit his drive about 20 feet, from one end of his backyard to the other. His pet beagle seemed to serve as caddy, or perhaps as the gallery.

"A mighty blast!" the kid shrieked, imitating, I knew now, a TV sports announcer. "Look at the ball go! Holy cow!"

The gallery, whose sound effects my neighbor also handled, broke into a wild fit of cheering and whistling. The beagle bounded toward the ball and wagged its tail, awaiting the next shot, which ended about 2 feet away from the outdoor faucet.

"Holy cow! Did you see that! Why, that ball must have traveled 200 feet! And it went right in the hole! Wow! That was the greatest shot ever made in the history of the world! Don't you agree, Dick?"

"Yes, I do. That was the greatest shot anybody ever made. No doubt about it."

Then the plot thickened.

"OK, folks. It's going to take a hole-in-one from Tiger Woods on this difficult par-5 to force a playoff because Billy just hit the greatest shot ever in the history of the world. People are going to be talking about that one for a long time."

Tiger Woods teed off and hit the ball all the way to the backyard gate. "Good gosh o'mighty! Did you see how Tiger skipped that ball to where it just kept going? Wow! It's in the hole! Holy cow! It's a hole-in-one! We have a playoff!"

The kid beat Tiger with a hole-in-one on the first playoff hole, a shot so mighty, so awesome, that Tiger Woods gave up and conceded the match on the spot.

"Woo-hoo! Billy wins! Woo-woo! Yay!" He picked up the beagle's supper dish and hoisted it high above his head, transforming it into a trophy that signified our Billy was "the new golf champion of the world!" The beagle took a special interest in the trophy and began barking at Billy. The champ patted the dog on the head and gave the dog his autograph but not the supper dish because he wanted to hold it while the TV announcer interviewed him.

"Yes, Dick, I think I played a great round. A great tournament, actually. Everything I hit went into the hole. I think I've got my game about where I want it, you know?"





The back door opened and reality intruded. “Billy,” his mother said, “quit teasing that dog. Give him back his bowl.”

“Aw, Mom, it doesn’t even have any food in it.”

With the tournament over and the trophy relinquished, I went back to reading—but didn’t get very far.

“Here’s the wind-up and the pitch ... it’s a home run! Holy cow, sports fans, did you see that? I did! That was a grand slam home run! To win the game! In the bottom of the ninth! Yeah! In game seven of the World Series! Listen to that crowd! Yaaaaaay! Billy wins it! Again! Yaaaaaay!”

By that time I realized that my little neighbor had taken my place as the greatest athlete who ever lived. Growing up in Lub-

bock, I had constant access to a vacant lot where I hit any number of game-winning home runs, pitched a few dozen no-hitters and scored hundreds of touchdowns for various teams, usually in the context of a state, national or world championship.

Man, I was something.

As for my young neighbor, I hope he went on to win a lot of real-world golf tournaments and hit a lot of genuine home runs. Whether he did or not, I hope he has a chance someday to look out his window and spy on the next generation’s superstar of childhood.

And I hope it makes him as happy as his Sunday afternoon heroics made me.

**Clay Coppedge**, a member of Bartlett EC, lives near Walburg.

# Uncle Charlie's Gifts

A holiday Scrooge learns a lesson about Christmas spirit from a wartime letter

BY SHERYL SMITH-RODGERS

*BAH, HUMBUG. HERE COME THE HOLIDAYS. Again.*

Grudgingly, I hang another pink globe on our vintage aluminum tree. Then I toss on some stringy silver icicles and sigh.

*Just hurry up and be done!*

OK, I confess. Christmas is not my favorite time of the year. I know I'm not alone. Like many people, I have relatives who've cut me out of their lives with no chance of reconciliation. I've lost precious loved ones and watched divorces wound family bonds. The memories make me ache.

With bittersweet nostalgia, I recall tucking tiny gifts in Christmas stockings for my two children and snapping photos of them by the tree. Now adults, they must choose where to celebrate. Mom's house? Dad's? Or maybe neither because that's easier.

Then I remember my Uncle Charlie, who had no way out of the horrors he faced as an Army Air Corps captain during World War II. Charles G. Smith, stationed thousands of miles away from family and friends, awoke Christmas day, 1944, alone on a rickety cot inside a muggy canvas tent. Memories of past Christmases washed over him. Dreamily, he visualized his family's tree, shining with tinsel, stars and bells, and surrounded by festively wrapped packages. Rich aromas of roasted turkey, cornbread dressing and spice-laden fruitcake wafted from his mother's kitchen.

Oh, to be home again!

"I try not to feel too sorry for myself, but covering this march through Burma seems unending," Charles wrote to his parents December 25, 1944. "I'm alone in a

fighter plane every day, carrying a 500-pound bomb in each wing. Yesterday I discovered an enemy ammunition dump, dropped a bomb, and made a direct hit. You don't linger even a second. A pilot could be a victim of his own bomb."

Restless, Charles turned over on his cot just as someone outside rapped softly on one of the tent's wooden beams. "Shine, captain?" Jylah, an Indian man he'd hired as a bearer, peeked through the tent's flap. Charles grunted, stood up and reached for his mud-caked boots. Silently, he handed them to Jylah, who stood ready with a cutter and brush. Clean boots meant that Charles could run faster to his plane whenever a red alert blasted to warn of a possible enemy attack.

For both work and loyalty, Charles paid Jylah, who had a wife and four small children. Several times Charles had seen the post's cook angrily chase Jylah's kids when he found them rifling through garbage cans for food. "Sergeant, have you ever been really hungry?" Charles asked the cook once. But the man just turned and walked away.

Charles stretched and then opened the tent flap. For several long moments, he simply stood and stared, mesmerized by what he saw in the distance.

"The sun had just begun to peep over the highest peak of the snow-capped Himalaya Mountains. To me, she looked like the queen of the world, wearing a golden crown. As I watched the changing colors, a miracle of God's handiwork, I felt infinitesimally small in a boundless universe. I wanted to give thanks for not only





all this beauty, but even more for God's gift to all mankind."

Then he remembered again—it was Christmas! Suddenly, he had an idea. A glorious idea!

"Jylah, does your wife have a pretty sari?" Startled, the man paused from scrubbing a boot. Then he shook his head. Charles knew Jylah wasn't lying. He'd seen Indian women on the streets, draped from head to toe in the traditional flowing gowns. Most, though, were dirty and torn.

"Let's go to the village and buy one for her!" Charles said.

In a flash, Jylah set his work aside and raced out of the tent. Charles pulled on his trousers, shirt and boots, grabbed his billfold and ran after him.

In the quiet market, Charles found Jylah browsing through saris. Finally, the

Indian bearer presented his boss with the sari he'd chosen. It seemed flimsy and drab compared to the others.

"No, not this one!" Charles tossed the gown aside. "We will find the most beautiful one here." Charles examined the saris until he came across a richly colored one, fashioned from real silk and delicately embroidered with flowers. Satisfied, he handed the sari to the surprised merchant and paid his asking price, 20 American dollars. The merchant wrapped the sari in brown paper and tied the package with twine.

Jylah bowed as Charles handed him the gift. He tried to speak, but no words came. Instead, his lips quivered, and his eyes grew moist. With the package under one arm, Jylah bowed once more and then took off running.

"As I watched him disappear, I thought to myself that I would never see the look of joy and happiness on his wife's face when she saw the sari and wrapped it around her body. Boy, do I feel good!"

Feeling good doesn't quite describe my mood, which has gone from bah humbug to complete guilt after recalling Uncle Charlie's story. Even though I don't have war zones in my neighborhood, I've hit some tough bumps in my life. But, I quickly realize, my outlook's up to me. I can be miserable during the holidays. Or, like Uncle Charlie, I can spread love and happiness to those around me.

Picking up another pink globe, I smile and hang it on our beautiful Christmas tree.

**Sheryl Smith-Rodgers**, a member of Peder-nales EC, lives in Blanco.



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# Bernardo Plantation

This East Texas landmark witnessed important events during the state's war for independence

BY MARTHA DEERING

HISTORY SEEPS FROM THE SOIL AT THE site of historic Bernardo Plantation, where archaeologists have uncovered artifacts that tell a story from the years before Texas won independence from Mexico. In this prairie pasture near Hempstead, a stately house once stood on a hill overlooking the Brazos River. This building served as homestead of Jared E. Groce II, a wealthy planter from Virginia who arrived in Texas in 1822 to join Stephen F. Austin as one of the Old Three Hundred. Bernardo was the first and largest plantation in the Republic of Texas, growing and ginning cotton until the Civil War.

Austin's first settlers arrived in 1821 to colonize this area of East Texas. When Groce learned of plans for the new Texas colony, he and son Leonard organized his family and 90 slaves for the trip. They loaded 50 wagons with farm implements, tools, seeds, sugar, coffee, tea and salt, along with bolts of cotton and wool cloth. This wagon train also included a herd of cattle, horses and mules and carried portable pontoon bridges to facilitate river crossings.

Groce's assets qualified him to receive 10 leagues of land (44,280 acres) from Mexico. On the east bank of the river, he staked a claim where the Coushatta Trace crossed the Brazos and set his slaves to work building cabins. Skilled craftsmen constructed a 30-by-30-foot cabin of cottonwood logs for the landowner's first residence, and by the end of 1822, they had completed a more elaborate house in a nearby grove of walnut trees.

Groce named his plantation "Bernardo," presumably in honor of former Spanish governor Bernardo de Gálvez. Groce's first cotton crop failed, but a subsequent crop proved successful and was the precursor of a boom in cotton farming, which contributed mightily to the Texas economy



**Jared E. Groce's house at Bernardo Plantation as it might have looked in 1822—painted by Mary Groce Mackey, his great-granddaughter**

for decades. A dairy and a small house for the resident doctor were built, and the original cabin was furnished with six beds to accommodate visitors. Bernardo quickly became a welcome stopping place for travelers.

Although he initially opposed the Texas Revolution, by 1836 Groce had changed his mind. He developed a close relationship with Sam Houston, as did sons Leonard and Jared III. Records show that Jared Groce II and his son Jared III were at Bernardo in April 1836. During that period, Bernardo's main house and outbuildings were filled with Texans, mostly women and children, fleeing the Mexican Army during the Runaway Scrape.

Sam Houston set up a training camp for his army across the Brazos from Bernardo. On April 11, the Twin Sisters, two 6-pound cannons that were a gift to Texas from the people of Cincinnati,

arrived at Bernardo. The Texian Army crossed the Brazos aboard the steamboat Yellow Stone and marched toward San Jacinto, where they would help set a new course for history on April 21, 1836. That same year, Jared Groce II died and was buried at Bernardo, but his son Leonard continued to operate the plantation until the end of the Civil War.

In 2009, archaeologists unearthed brick and sandstone fireplaces, nails, glass, ceramic shards, bullets, buttons and coins. The artifacts are on display at the Sam Houston Memorial Museum in Huntsville.

In his book *Bernardo: Crossroads, Social Center and Agricultural Showcase of Early Texas*, historian James V. Woodrick writes, "Three generations of Groces and their slaves lived on the plantation, and many remained in the area into the twentieth century. Literally hundreds of people living today have ancestors who were part of life at this fascinating and unique corner of Texas called Bernardo."

**Martha Deering**, a member of Heart of Texas EC, lives near McGregor.

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# Pitcher Perfect

I CAN'T THINK OF A BETTER WAY TO KICK off the holidays than with a festive beverage. My friend Johnny Hernandez ([chefjohnnyhernandez.com](http://chefjohnnyhernandez.com)) is the chef-owner of several great restaurants in San Antonio, including The Fruteria. The Fruteria is inspired by Mexico's beautiful and colorful fruit stands, so the emphasis is on freshness. Here, Johnny shares a favorite recipe for *horchata*, the creamy, comforting Mexican drink made by steeping rice in water. It's simple to make, incredibly refreshing to drink, and the fragrant cinnamon and orange flavors make it perfect for the holidays. Cheers to a great season!

PAULA DISBROWE, FOOD EDITOR

## Cinnamon Orange Horchata

- 1 cup sugar
- 8 cups water
- 2 cups long-grain white rice, uncooked
- 1 Mexican cinnamon stick (approx. 3 inches long)
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
- Finely grated zest and juice of 1 orange, plus additional orange for garnish
- Ground cinnamon, for garnish

1. Combine sugar and water in a large, sealable container or pitcher and stir until the sugar has dissolved. Add the rice and cinnamon stick and refrigerate overnight.
2. The following day, remove the container from the refrigerator and stir in the vanilla and orange zest and juice.
3. Transfer the liquid mixture to a blender and process to a fine purée. (You may need to do this in batches, depending on the size of your blender.) Strain the purée through a fine sieve.
4. Serve the *horchata* over ice in glasses garnished with orange wheels or slices and a sprinkle of ground cinnamon.

**COOK'S TIP** Use a Mexican cinnamon stick because it grinds up more easily in the blender.

Servings: 9. Serving size: 8 ounces. Per serving: 93 calories, 0.11 g protein, 0.01 g fat, 23.91 g carbohydrates, 0.11 g dietary fiber, 8 mg sodium, 23.37 g sugars, 0 mg cholesterol

MELISSA SKORPIL

# Recipes

## Pitcher Perfect



### THIS MONTH'S RECIPE CONTEST WINNER

DEBBIE SUGAREK | BLUEBONNET EC

Whether you're hosting a family dinner or a holiday party (cookie decorating, anyone?), 'tis the season for serving festive beverages. This month, our readers shared their favorite ways to welcome friends and share a cup of cheer.

## Almond Punch

- 2½ cups sugar
- 3 quarts water
- 46 ounces pineapple juice
- Juice of 3 lemons (approximately ¾ cup)
- 3 teaspoons almond extract
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract

1. Combine sugar and water in a large pitcher and stir until sugar is completely dissolved.
2. Add pineapple juice, lemon juice and almond and vanilla extracts. Stir to blend.
3. Refrigerate 24 hours. Serve cold.

**COOK'S TIP** For easier blending, use a superfine sugar. For a festive party beverage, substitute amaretto liqueur for the almond extract.

Servings: 24. Serving size: 6 ounces. Per serving: 94 calories, 0.20 g protein, 0.03 g fat, 23.70 g carbohydrates, 0.11 g dietary fiber, 5 mg sodium, 22.10 g sugars, 0 mg cholesterol

## Hot Mulled Cinnamon-Cranberry Punch

CHARLIE AND MARY COPELAND | BLUEBONNET EC

- 32 ounces pineapple juice
- 32 ounces cranberry juice
- ½ can orange juice concentrate (6 ounces total) plus 6 ounces water
- ½ cup cinnamon Red Hots candies, or 12-15 cinnamon candies, unwrapped
- 3 cinnamon sticks
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

1. Combine all ingredients in a slow cooker and cook 3-5 hours below boiling point (adjust heat setting according to your slow cooker), stirring occasionally.
2. When the candy has dissolved and the flavors have melded, remove the cinnamon sticks and serve warm.

**COOK'S TIP** This recipe calls for a substantial amount of cinnamon. For a subtler flavor, use 2 cinnamon sticks and omit the ground cinnamon.

Servings: 12. Serving size: 5 ounces. Per serving: 103 calories, 0.61 g protein, 0.13 g fat, 25.36 g carbohydrates, 0.26 g dietary fiber, 3 mg sodium, 21.81 g sugars, 0 mg cholesterol

## Slow Cooker Apple Cider

BRANDEE HALEY | SOUTHWEST TEXAS EC

*Haley has enjoyed this warming, cinnamon-scented cider since childhood, when her mother first got the recipe from a friend. "I serve it every Christmas when we have friends over," she says. "It makes the house smell amazing."*

- 2 quarts apple juice
- 1 cup cranberry juice
- 2⅔ cups unsweetened pineapple juice
- 1 liter ginger ale
- ½ cup sugar
- 1 cinnamon stick

1. Combine all ingredients in a slow cooker and cook on low setting 2-4 hours, stirring occasionally. If you need to serve it sooner, cook on high setting 1½-2 hours. The longer this mixture cooks, the deeper the flavor of the drink.

Servings: 24. Serving size: 5 ounces. Per serving: 80 calories, 0.17 g protein, 0.08 g fat, 20 g carbohydrates, 0.22 g dietary fiber, 5 mg sodium, 17.68 g sugars, 0 mg cholesterol

## Dessert Coffee

NANCY FILER | COSERV ELECTRIC

*This easy-to-prepare drink doubles as a dessert in a cup and is nice to serve with a tray of cookies, especially varieties that are good for dunking.*

- 1 scoop chocolate ice cream
- ⅔ cup strong brewed coffee
- Whipped cream to taste
- Toasted Texas pecans, chopped, to taste
- Chocolate sprinkles, to taste

1. For each serving, place a scoop of chocolate ice cream in a cup, and then pour in the hot coffee.
2. Top with whipped cream, toasted pecans and sprinkles, as desired.

**COOK'S TIP** Rich, robust coffee is essential for balancing the sweetness of the other ingredients.

Servings: 1. Serving size: 10 ounces. Per serving: 304 calories, 5.03 g protein, 16.73 g fat, 35.93 g carbohydrates, 1.81 g dietary fiber, 92 mg sodium, 31.15 g sugars, 39 mg cholesterol

## Orange KB

CHUCK BURGESS | HEART OF TEXAS EC

*Burgess and his wife, Kathy, loved the drinks at Orange Julius so much that he created his own version (in 1976) and named it after her.*

- 2 cups orange juice
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1½ cups crushed or chipped ice
- 4 large scoops vanilla ice cream

1. Combine all ingredients in a blender and process until smooth and creamy. Serve immediately.

**COOK'S TIP** For the best flavor, use freshly squeezed orange juice.

## \$100 Recipe Contest

April's recipe contest is **Perfect Pies**. Whether you fill them with fruit, nuts or creamy confections, pies are a timeless dessert and frequently a family favorite. Send us your favorite recipes for pies. The deadline is **November 10**.



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There are three ways to enter: **ONLINE** at [TexasCoopPower.com/contests](http://TexasCoopPower.com/contests); **MAIL** to 1122 Colorado St., 24th Floor, Austin, TX 78701; **FAX** to (512) 763-3401. Include your name, address and phone number, plus your co-op and the name of the contest you are entering.



Servings: 4. Serving size: 8 ounces. Per serving: 296 calories, 4.84 g protein, 11.70 g fat, 39.92 g carbohydrates, 1.04 g dietary fiber, 93 mg sodium, 34.74 g sugars, 49 mg cholesterol

## Banana Punch

LINDY SWETNAM | SOUTH PLAINS EC

- 2 cups sugar
- 3 cups water
- 23 ounces pineapple juice
- 1 can frozen orange juice concentrate (12 ounces)
- ½ can frozen lemonade concentrate (6 ounces total)
- 3 mashed bananas
- 3 bottles ginger ale (2 liters each)

1. Combine sugar and water in a 2-quart saucepan over medium heat and cook, stirring, until the mixture boils for 3 minutes. Cool the syrup completely. (This can be made in advance and refrigerated until needed.)

2. To prepare the juice base, stir together syrup, pineapple juice, orange juice concentrate, lemonade concentrate and

mashed bananas. Freeze the mixture until needed.

3. To serve, transfer juice base to a punch bowl. (If it is frozen solid, you'll need a metal spoon to break it into pieces.) Pour ginger ale over the mixture, and then stir until the punch reaches a slushy consistency. Serve immediately.

**COOK'S TIP** Plan on serving soon after you stir

## WELCOME PAULA DISBROWE TO OUR KITCHEN

I first became a fan of Texas Co-op Power when I spent four years cooking on a ranch in the Texas Hill Country (this after a decade of living in New York City—I'm a sucker for adventures). The publication provided a delicious window into home cooking around the state, and I loved learning about the various ways Texans put dinner on the table. The ranch experience led to my first cookbook, *Cowgirl Cuisine: Rustic Recipes and Cowgirl Adventures From a Texas Ranch*. As the new food editor for the magazine, I look forward to sharing my favorite recipes with you and getting to know you through the recipes and anecdotes that share the story of your dinner table. —PD



in the ginger ale, when the drink has an appealing slushy texture.

Servings: 20. Serving size: 8 ounces. Per serving: 203 calories, 0.74 g protein, 0.08 g fat, 51.81 g carbohydrates, 0.69 g dietary fiber, 13 mg sodium, 48.25 g sugars, 0 mg cholesterol

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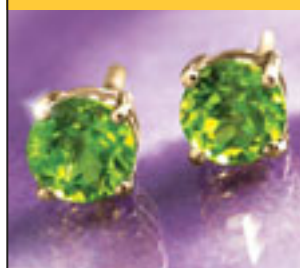
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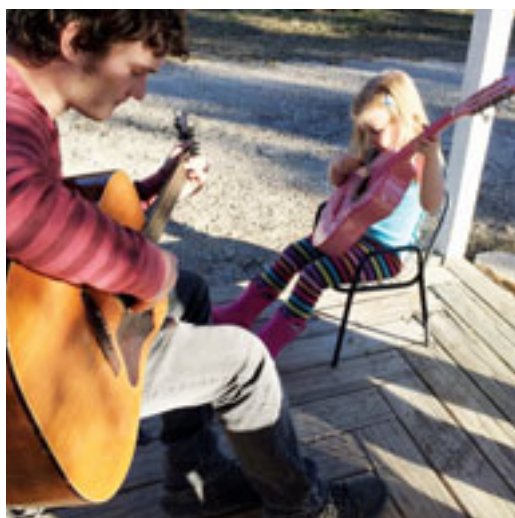
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Stauer Client



► **DEANNA MCCABE**, Bandera EC: Mayci Rose, 4, plays some tunes with Uncle J.T. out on the back porch.

▼ **LYNNE OGLETREE**, Deep East Texas EC: Real Texas music outside the Luckenbach post office



## Music

PICKIN' WHICH PHOTOS to publish this month was tough, but they had us grinnin'—and it sure made for a toe-tapping good time.

GRACE ARSIAGA

**WEB EXTRAS** at [TexasCoopPower.com](http://TexasCoopPower.com) Don't fret—we have more online.



▲ **KATHY THALMAN**, Guadalupe Valley EC: Granddaughter Malia performs her first violin recital.



◀ **KELLIE NEAL SALAZAR**, San Patricio EC: Inspired by San Antonio mariachis, Salazar's son, 2, found his own guitar at Market Square.

◀ **MICHAEL AND YVETTE FOSTER**, Pedernales EC: Michael's parents were DJs at a Corsicana radio station, and this photo of an unnamed trio was in their collection.

### UPCOMING CONTESTS

MARCH	BOATS	DUE NOVEMBER 10
APRIL	SWINGS	DUE DECEMBER 10
MAY	HOME SWEET HOME	DUE JANUARY 10

All entries must include name, address, daytime phone and co-op affiliation, plus the contest topic and a brief description of your photo.

**ONLINE:** Submit highest-resolution digital images at [TexasCoopPower.com/contests](http://TexasCoopPower.com/contests). **MAIL:** Focus on Texas, 1122 Colorado St., 24th Floor, Austin, TX 78701. A stamped, self-addressed envelope must be included if you want your entry returned (approximately six weeks). Please do not submit irreplaceable photographs—send a copy or duplicate. We do not accept entries via email. We regret that Texas Co-op Power cannot be responsible for photos that are lost in the mail or not received by the deadline.

## Pick of the Month Weddings 4 Warriors

**Fayetteville** [November 8]  
(979) 378-1108, LasBrisasFarm.com

Kathy and Eldon Aydelotte's venue periodically offers weddings free of charge to members of the military, she says, as part of "a grassroots effort to support and say 'Thank you' in a small way to our heroes." The Aydelottes are members of Fayette Electric Cooperative, and Kathy says they welcome volunteers to help with these special days.



COUPLE: BEZNIKA | DOLLAR PHOTO CLUB. SHOES: SIRAPHOL | DOLLAR PHOTO CLUB. COOKIES: ROMANTSUBIN | DOLLAR PHOTO CLUB

## November

7

**College Station** BCS Push for Purple,  
(979) 776-8771, facebook.com/bcspushforpurple

13

**Bastrop** [13-14] Veteran's Weekend Car Show, (512) 636-0727, bastropareacruisers.com

14

**Caldwell** Pecan Harvest Festival at Royalty Pecan Farms, (979) 272-3904, royaltypecan.com

**Hamilton** Holiday Market, (254) 372-3120

**Kingsbury** Fall Harvest Festival, (917) 613-6016, kingsburytexas.wix.com/kingsbury

**Livingston** The Cleverlys, (936) 933-5852, visitlivingstontexas.com

**Canyon Lake** [14-15] Holiday Haus Bazaar, (830) 964-3497, stthomasatcanyonlake.org

**Manchaca** [14-15] MUMC Craft Group 40th Anniversary Craft Show, (512) 282-7274, manchacaumc.org



November 7  
**College Station**  
BCS Push for Purple

19

**Longview** [19-22] *The Wizard of Oz*, ArtsView Children's Theatre, (903) 236-7535, artsviewchildrenstheatre.com

20

**Jasper** [20-22] Lakes Area Cruisers Rod Run, (409) 383-4617, lakesareacruisers.com

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Texas. For a complete listing, please visit [TexasCoopPower.com/events](http://TexasCoopPower.com/events).

**New Braunfels** [20-22] Weihnachtsmarkt (Christmas Market), (830) 629-1572, [sophienburg.com](http://sophienburg.com)

**Ingram** [20-December 5] *Chaps! A Jingle Jangle Christmas*, (830) 367-5121, [hcaf.com](http://hcaf.com)

21

**Crockett** Christmas in Crockett, (936) 544-2359, [visithoustoncountytexas.com](http://visithoustoncountytexas.com)

**La Grange** Annual Christmas Craft Show, (979) 968-8323

27

**Fredericksburg** Lighting of the German Christmas Pyramid & Community Christmas Tree, (830) 997-6523, [visitfredericksburgtx.com](http://visitfredericksburgtx.com)

**Granbury** Night of Lights Parade, 1-800-950-2212, [visitgranbury.com](http://visitgranbury.com)

28

**Mason** Light Up the Town Celebration, (325) 347-5758, [masontxcoc.com](http://masontxcoc.com)

**Stonewall** Holiday Cookie Decorating and German Traditions, (830) 644-2252, [tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/lyndon-b-johnson](http://tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/lyndon-b-johnson)

## December

4

**Waxahachie** [4-5] Christmas Market and Preview Shopping Party, (214) 868-3623, [waxahachiejls.org](http://waxahachiejls.org)

November 28  
Stonewall  
Holiday Cookie Decorating  
and German Traditions



**Huntsville** [4-6] Huntsville for the Holidays, (936) 291-5920, [huntsvillemainstreet.com](http://huntsvillemainstreet.com)

**San Angelo** [4-6] Christmas at Old Fort Concho, (325) 655-4136, [visitsanangelo.org](http://visitsanangelo.org)

5

**Bandera** Cowboy Capital Camp Fire Christmas, (830) 796-3045, [banderacowboycapital.com](http://banderacowboycapital.com)

**Port O'Connor** Annual Lighted Boat Parade, (361) 983-2898, [portoconnorchamber.com](http://portoconnorchamber.com)

**Rockport** Tropical Christmas, (361) 727-2158, [cityofrockport.com](http://cityofrockport.com)

6

**Garrison** Christmas on the Square, (936) 347-2316

### Submit Your Event!

We pick events for the magazine directly from [TexasCoopPower.com](http://TexasCoopPower.com). Submit your event for January by November 10, and it just might be featured in this calendar!



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# Inn at Dos Brisas: Farm to Tableau

The pastoral resort offers five-star dining and 42 acres of organic ingredients near Brenham

BY MELISSA GASKILL

NOT LONG AFTER TURNING OFF U.S. 290 east of Brenham, I followed a narrow gravel road around a low hill, across a shaded creek and onto the 313-acre Inn at Dos Brisas property. I skirted a pond and resisted the temptation offered by inviting clusters of chairs on its shore. Just beyond, a couple of handsome horses watched me pass.

I could have gone home refreshed by the pastoral setting right then. But I didn't want to miss dinner at the only Forbes-rated five-star restaurant in Texas.

First, the inn's head farmer, Lisa Roese, treated me to a tour of the 42-acre organic farming operation that includes a berry patch, orchards and a 7,000-square-foot greenhouse. We zipped via golf cart from garden to greenhouse as she explained that the farm specializes in heirloom varieties of fruits and vegetables and was certified organic in 2004. Owners Doug and Jennifer Bosch made organic fine dining a focus for the inn's restaurant, and Chef Cory Untch meets with farm staff regularly to discuss current crops and then designs his menus around them. Overnight guests can take tours of the gardens, with tasting and picking encouraged year-round.

I began to understand why this is such a popular place to celebrate special occasions, and the restaurant staff knows how to handle them. I was enchanted by a description of a wintry scene made to romanticize a marriage proposal. The staff created "snow" on the patio to complete the effect. And I had to admit a sense of envy when told that farm staff once planted vegetables six weeks before Thanksgiving so a family spending the holiday at the inn could see their requested vegetables growing in the field and then enjoy watching them harvested and prepared for their meals.

I had no special requests and was pleased with the tasting menu for lunch, which included crab, bass, chicken and



The Dos Brisas menu features offerings from the organic garden, including sweet pickling peppers.

duck entrées accompanied by asparagus, carrots, mushrooms, field onions, English peas and edible flowers. Nightly dinner features an eight-course tasting menu with or without wine pairings, including a vegetarian option, and Sunday serves up a special brunch menu.

Signature cocktails served at the restaurant's mahogany bar incorporate herbs and other field-fresh items, part of a larger "garden-to-glass" movement that mixologists say creates unique tastes. At the inn, the Brisas Garden Savory is a gin cocktail featuring muddled purple bell pepper and cilantro, and a martini is made with a truffle-infused vodka. Wine by the glass and a carefully chosen list of beers are available at the bar or with meals in addition to the extensive list of wines by the bottle.

The restaurant earned its five-star rating in February. Anonymous inspectors who visit each facility determine Forbes Travel Guide star ratings. A five-star restaurant offers a "unique and distinctive dining experience" and "consistently provides exceptional food, superlative service and elegant décor," with an emphasis on

originality and personalized, attentive and discreet service, according to Forbes.

This property previously served as a cattle ranch and cotton farm, and briefly housed Union soldiers held prisoner during the Civil War. Doug Bosch purchased it in 2000 as a family retreat, but shortly after, he and Jennifer began transforming it into a resort.

Today, nine spacious, Spanish-style haciendas and casitas are scattered around the property; each comes with the use of a golf cart and meals, either in-room or at the restaurant. The grounds feature pools and tennis courts, and guests have privileges at nearby golf courses. Activities include horseback riding, carriage rides, fishing in the ponds, clay shooting, picnicking and bicycling, as well as cooking, wine tasting, gardening classes and tours of the farm—picking encouraged.

Melissa Gaskill is an Austin writer who specializes in nature topics.

**WEB EXTRAS at [TexasCoopPower.com](http://TexasCoopPower.com)**



Learn more about the Inn at Dos Brisas online.



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