

TEXAS CO-OP POWER

35
on
35

Brake-worthy
stops on highway
through
co-op country

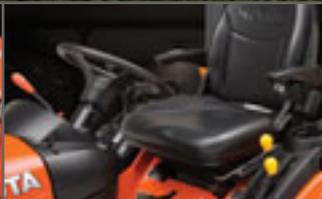




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Marker near the northern end of Interstate 35 in Texas, just south of the Red River

FEATURE

8 **35 on 35** Stops with fascinating food, history and popular culture lure travelers from the interstate as it weaves through Texas from Mexico to Oklahoma

Story and photos by Julia Robinson

ROAD TRIP!
See video and photos at
TexasCoopPower.com



MARKER AND SIGNS: JULIA ROBINSON. DRONE: PROSTO SVET | SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

ON THE COVER Shawneen Pazienza and her dog Chuy have at least 35 good reasons for a Texas road trip. Photo by Julia Robinson

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By E.R. Bills

Observations

Another Roadside Attraction
By Ryann Ford

NEXT MONTH

Drones: An Overview Texas innovators, including electric co-ops, hone drones as tools of today.





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New London Legacy

Another legacy of the New London school explosion is the establishment of the Texas Board of Professional Engineers. It says this on the board's website, engineers.texas.gov: "The Engineering Registration Act [Article 3271a, V.A.T.S.] was enacted as the result of a tragic school explosion at New London, Texas, in 1937. In response to concerns that the public could not identify who was qualified to practice engineering, the 45th Texas Legislature passed the Act as emergency legislation and it became law when signed by the Governor on May 28, 1937."

DON R. GILMAN | BRYAN
BRYAN TEXAS UTILITIES

For further insight, I highly recommend *My Boys and Girls Are in There* [Texas A&M University Press, 2012] by Texas author and educator Ron Rozelle. His book provides a compelling account of this horrible tragedy with personal insights into the affected individuals and families.

KAELYN KOCH | SPEAKS
JACKSON EC

Too Wise for the Grinch

The Grinch that tried to steal Grandmaw and Grandpaw's Christmas was defeated by the angels at Wise Electric Cooperative.

When we returned from our Christmas Eve service, we had no water. After checking everything, I called the Decatur office and asked if anyone could check my electricity. My well is on a separate meter from my house.

A dozen people were coming for Christmas Day, and we



Memories of the School Explosion

I attended that school and was in kindergarten [The New London School Explosion, January 2017]. Luckily, my mother kept me out of school that day to visit my grandparents in Kilgore.

The kindergarten was in a separate building behind the main building.

I was 6, and my main memory is the constant radio coverage. My mother couldn't bear to hear that announcer afterward.

ROSE KING | BANDERA | BANDERA EC

wondered if we would have to cancel our plans.

Wise EC workers came at 12:30 a.m. and fixed the problem. These people were on duty—not with loved ones—on Christmas Eve.

If you ever have a choice between a large corporation and your local co-op, you will be better off financially and have reliable and excellent service with the co-op.

ROBERT L. RAYMON | ALVORD
WISE EC

Healthy Dialogue

I was disappointed in the unhealthy ingredients, which should be minimized for good nutrition [2016 Holiday Recipe Contest, December 2016].

Many of us face being overweight, or having high cholesterol or diabetes that are worsened by butter, sour cream, salt, whipping cream, cream cheese, sugar and bacon.

While these ingredients contribute to pleasing taste and texture in dishes, anyone

attempting to maintain good good health for a lifetime is obligated to enjoy them only in small amounts.

Offering for different tastes and health situations would be much better than the ones featured.

JUDY HOWE | LOCKHART
BLUEBONNET EC

This dish [Smoky Mac and Cheese] was outrageously good.

CHRISTOPHER PERDUE | CEDAR PARK
PEDERNALES EC



I had the privilege of having Stuffed Chicken With Mushroom Pan Jus [above] prepared for me, and I had to find where it came from and who originated

it. This is probably the very best dish I've had in my 73 years!

If you are in doubt about the time or trouble it might take you to make this, I guarantee you that you will NOT be disappointed. It is absolutely exquisite. Worth more than \$3,000, in my opinion.

LINDA MANUEL | LEAKEY
BANDERA EC

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

   **Texas Co-op Power**

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HAPPENINGS

Gluttons for Buttons

SOME PEOPLE COLLECT BUTTONS as a hobby—but not the plain buttons that the rest of us lose off our clothes from time to time. Their quest involves historic, distinctive and rare buttons.

“Buttons hold history, art, materials, workmanship, whimsy, sentiment, social expression and the imagination of the button-maker,” says Marlene Tucker of Axtell, a member of the Brazos Button Club in Waco who owns about 1,000 buttons.

“Hunting for buttons in antique shops across Texas is one of my favorite things to do.”

Did you know?

BUTTONS MADE NEWS 25 YEARS AGO. Felicidad Noriega, wife of former Panamanian dictator Manuel Noriega, was arrested March 20, 1992, in Miami and charged with stealing 27 buttons from expensive clothing. She and another woman allegedly clipped \$305 worth of buttons, causing \$1,321 in damage to clothing.



Find more happenings all across the state at TexasCoopPower.com

The Brazos club this year hosts the **TEXAS STATE BUTTON SOCIETY'S ANNUAL SPRING SHOW**, March 31–April 2 at the Hilton Waco.

“Buttons are made of some of the oddest things. Have you ever heard of a button made of human hair?” says Tucker, a member of Navasota Valley Electric Cooperative. Buttons come in glass, metal, horn, ivory, bamboo, cork, fabric, leather, paper, pearl, rubber, jade, Lucite, vegetable ivory, wood, turquoise and coral, she says. “My personal favorites are the china and bone underwear buttons and the Goodyear rubber buttons.”

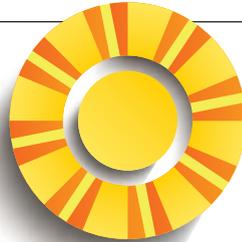
INFO ▶ (254) 993-3022, texasstatebuttonssociety.com

BY THE NUMBERS

12

If the University of Connecticut wins the Women's Final Four—March 31 and April 2 in Dallas—it will extend the Huskies' record to 12 championships in the sport.

They have won the past four women's basketball titles and have been to the past nine Final Fours. UConn also won the past two Women's Final Fours in Texas—2010 and 2002, both in San Antonio.



TECH KNOWLEDGE

Disconnect To Reconnect

THE FIRST FRIDAY IN MARCH is the **NATIONAL DAY OF UNPLUGGING**—a 24-hour period when people unplug, talk, relax and do things not involving electronics and social media. Ironically, disconnecting helps people reconnect with each other and allows time to unwind, relax, reflect and get outdoors. Unplugging helps reduce the electric bill, too!

This year, the holiday from technology begins the evening of March 3 and ends the evening of March 4. Before you shut down your computer, visit nationaldayofunplugging.com.



LIFESTYLE

Here They Come

SPRING BREAK IS THIS MONTH, and two Texas destinations show up on many lists of the most popular get-aways: Austin (music, food, high-tech vibe) and South Padre Island (beaches, swimsuits).



ALMANAC

PORTRAIT VETOED

Famed landscape artist **PETER HURD** was commissioned 50 years ago to paint the official White House portrait of Lyndon B. Johnson, but upon seeing the tempera painting, LBJ rejected it, calling it “the ugliest thing I ever saw.”

Hurd disagreed and decided to show it to the public. The portrait debuted March 12, 1967, at Diamond M Museum in Snyder, attracting the largest crowd the museum had ever seen. Later, Hurd donated it to the Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery, where it still hangs.

LBJ didn't make it easy for artists to capture his likeness. He granted Hurd only two sittings for the portrait, and he nodded off during one of them. The president also posed for Norman Rockwell but tried to rush him through the 20-minute session. “I decided to do the best I could, but he was just sitting there glowering at me,” Rockwell recalled.

WORTH REPEATING

“Electricity is the only thing that's fast enough to carry the messages that make us who we are.”

— **DR. RODOLFO LLINÁS,**
NEUROSCIENTIST

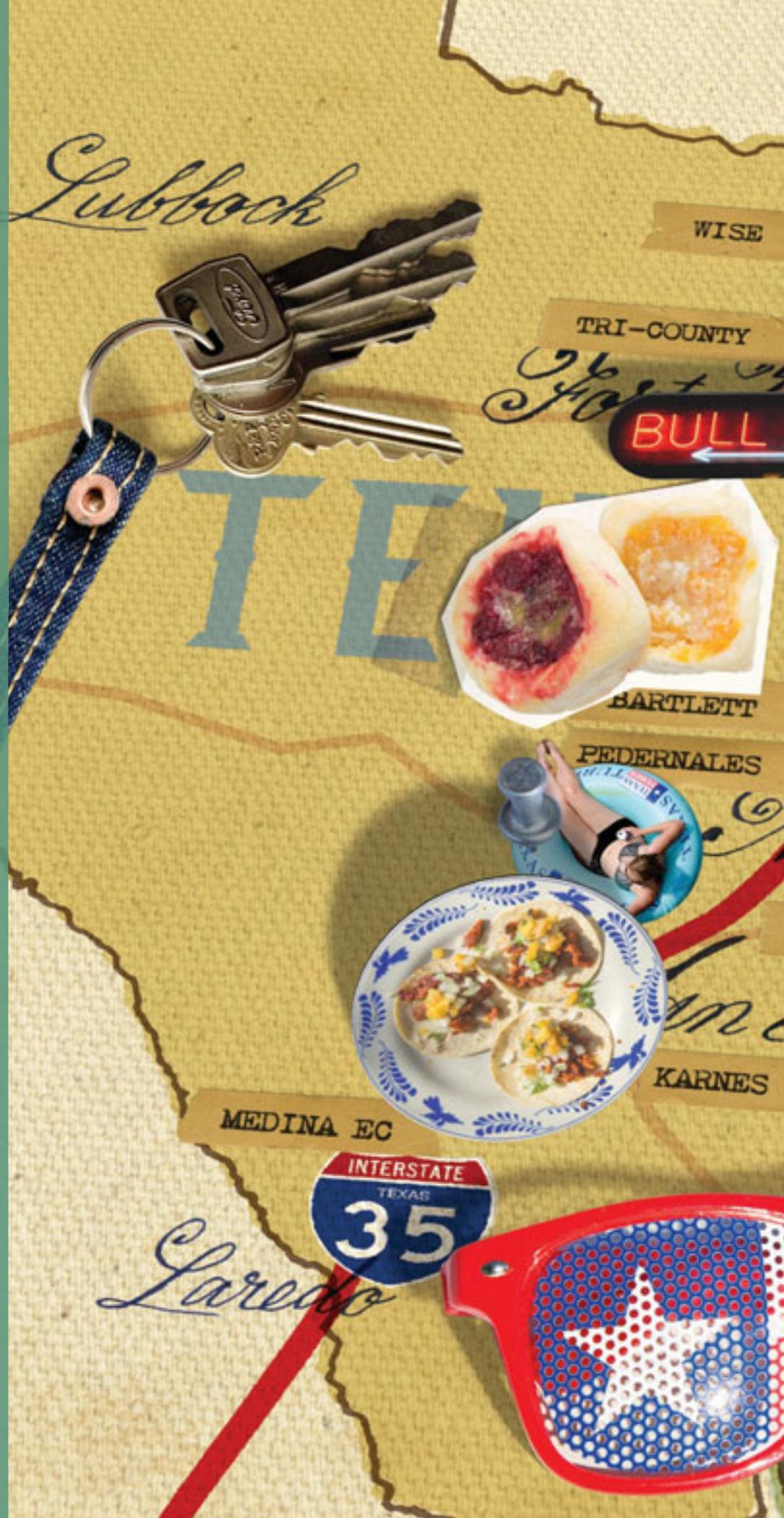
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35 *on* 35

INTERSTATE 35
*in Texas creates a
500-mile corridor
of concrete and
asphalt between
the Rio Grande
and the Red River,
but it embodies
a history much
longer than just
the highway itself.*

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHS
BY *Julia Robinson*

MAP BY *Jack Molloy*



JULIA'S 35 on 35 COUNTDOWN SOUTH to NORTH

- ▶ Republic of the Rio Grande Museum
- ▶ Villa Antigua Border Heritage Museum
- ▶ San Agustín Cathedral
- ▶ Chaparral Wildlife Management Area
- ▶ Texas Hat Museum
- ▶ Watermelon Statue
- ▶ Rosa's Hamburger Stand
- ▶ Mission San Jose
- ▶ The Pearl District
- ▶ La Gloria
- ▶ Giant Armadillo Sculpture at Bussey's Flea Market
- ▶ Snake Farm
- ▶ Comal River
- ▶ Gruene Hall
- ▶ Canyon Lake Gorge
- ▶ Glass-Bottom Boat Tours
- ▶ Fischer Bowling Club
- ▶ LBJ Presidential Library and Museum
- ▶ Inner Space Cavern
- ▶ Mother Neff State Park
- ▶ Health Camp
- ▶ Magnolia Market at the Silos
- ▶ Dr Pepper Museum
- ▶ Texas Sports Hall of Fame
- ▶ Waco Mammoth National Monument
- ▶ Czech Stop
- ▶ Roadside America Museum
- ▶ A Tiskit A Taskit
- ▶ Sixth Floor Museum
- ▶ Coyote Drive-In
- ▶ Billy Bob's Texas
- ▶ Texas Motor Speedway
- ▶ Frosty Drive N
- ▶ Frank Buck Zoo
- ▶ Red River Bridge





DOWNTOWN LAREDO



SAN AGUSTÍN CATHEDRAL
LAREDO



TEXAS HAT MUSEUM
COTULLA

I DECIDE TO UNDERTAKE THAT EPIC DRIVE THROUGH THE STATE—BORDER TO BORDER—AND ALONG

Many stops on Interstate 35 offer worthy diversions. After all, this massive highway is Texas’—and mid-America’s—major north-south artery, essential for international trade and domestic travel. En route, I’ll drive through 20 counties and 10 electric cooperative territories.

I embark from the southern terminus of I-35 in Laredo. South to north is the way this course developed. Crossing the Rio Grande predates the Mayan and Aztec empires, with evidence of native people doing so more than 11,000 years ago. This path was first defined by hunters following game, and, as they settled into villages, the hunting trails became an interconnected system.

Beginning in the 1500s, the Spanish and French improved upon these trail systems as part of their quest for silver, gold and land. Francisco Vázquez de Coronado ventured north into the Texas Panhandle in 1541, looking for the Seven Golden Cities of Cibola. Other conquistadors deviated north from the Camino Real, the road linking the mission near Laredo with missions in East Texas.

North of the Laredo security checkpoint, the highway is free of billboards and other distractions, allowing the mind to wander. A dozen men burst from the scrub along the frontage road and scramble into an SUV that has eased to a rolling stop. The vehicle takes off before the doors are closed, speeding north. I-35 is still a path of migration.

[CO-OP TERRITORY ► MEDINA, PEDERNALES & BLUEBONNET]

A visit today to Laredo’s San Agustín Cathedral and the surrounding neighborhood of brick-paved streets shows remnants of the Spanish colonial past. The Republic of the Rio Grande and Villa Antigua Border Heritage museums explain local history.

► HISTORIC *Detour*

CATTLE TRAILS
Major cattle trails to northern destinations became the 19th-century stage of this corridor. Between 1850 and 1870, herds swarmed to railroad depots in North Texas and on to Kansas. In 1882, the International-Great Northern Railroad achieved the first unified route between the Red River and the Rio Grande.



TUBING ON THE COMAL RIVER
NEW BRAUNFELS



MISSION SAN JOSE
SAN ANTONIO

URBAN
Detour

SAN ANTONIO

I head to Pearl, a half-mile from I-35 in downtown San Antonio, for lunch. The former brewery complex is now a mixed-use development. The farmers market is in full swing, but I duck into La Gloria for a taste of interior Mexico. There are 15 other places to grab a bite or drink and a dozen boutique shops to fill an afternoon.

THE WAY LEARN ABOUT TEXAS POPULAR CULTURE AND THE ROUTE'S HISTORY.

“The foot traffic depends on how the peso is doing. If it’s doing well, we get a lot of people coming across the border to shop,” says Michelle Garza, shopkeeper in the San Agustín neighborhood. “It’s nice to see people walking these old streets with their kids.”

Construction of the highway threatened this neighborhood until it landed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1973. The interstate begins just a few blocks north on its 1,500-mile trek to Lake Superior in Duluth, Minnesota.

These days, Laredo is the most active border crossing for truck traffic in the United States, with more than 2 million entries annually. I follow the surge of big-rig traffic north through the flat brush country of South Texas, where mesquite and prickly pear dominate the chaparral.

My next landmark is 10 miles west of Artesia Wells, where the Chaparral Wildlife Management Area serves as a research site for ecologists and biologists. The WMA opens to the public by appointment for wildlife viewing and birding. Look for painted buntings and perhaps a lucky glimpse of a wildcat family.

Twelve miles north, in Cotulla, I stop by Ben’s Western Wear

for a peek at the Texas Hat Museum. Hundreds of well-worn cowboy hats line the walls, including those of famed Texas Ranger Jack Van Cleve, former Gov. Dolph Briscoe and baseball legend Nolan Ryan, along with the hats of working ranch hands. The only requirement for exhibiting a hat is that it have a story to match its character.

“We have over 400 on the walls and another 250 just waiting to be added,” says Jill Martin, owner of Ben’s Western Wear. “We use shotgun shells to mount them to the walls, but we’re out of space for now at least.”

Rosa’s Hamburger Stand in nearby Dilley is a crowd favorite despite the rough and ramshackle exterior. Morning diners can choose breakfast tacos made with fresh, handmade tortillas.

Seventy miles north, San Antonio tells more of Texas’ early story and explains the next step in the evolution of the I-35 corridor. The city’s frontier Spanish missions were declared a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2015, and the complex makes a wonderful stopping point to stretch the legs and imagination.

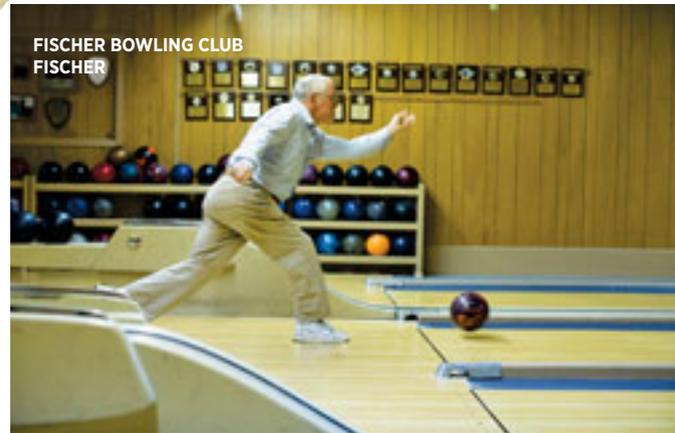
All the sites except the Alamo are active places of formal wor-



ROADSIDE AMERICA MUSEUM
HILLSBORO



CZECH STOP AND KOLACHE
WEST



FISCHER BOWLING CLUB
FISCHER

HISTORIC
Detour

TEXAS' FIRST AUTOMOBILE
Texas' first automobile was an 1899 St. Louis Phaeton runabout sold to Col. E.H.R. Green. It had two cylinders and a buggy top. The car arrived by train in Terrell, where its new owner embarked on a journey to Dallas, 35 miles away. On that first Texas road trip, Green was run off the road by a farm wagon. A blacksmith in Forney then implemented the first car repair. The trip took more than five hours.

ship, so I planned my trip for a Sunday, when some missions offer a mariachi Mass. Walking into Mission San Jose, considered the "Queen of the Missions," I follow the repeating archways to the sanctuary, where a mariachi band and full choir accompany the service, filling the vaulted space with sound and energy. "The mariachis made the Mass a completely unique and unforgettable experience," says Kim Mitchell, visiting from Canada.

Afterward in the courtyard, the mariachis continue their celebration, and several couples dance to a few tunes.

After the Spanish colonial period, the stretch of trail north of San Antonio became a supply train and commercial thruway for the new Texas republic. The same supply line holds today, with malls and office parks lining both sides of the highway.

In New Braunfels, I watch inner-tubers float the Comal River, then I catch some live music at the historic Gruene Hall. The German settlements of Central Texas date to the mid-1800s, when the people made agriculture big business.

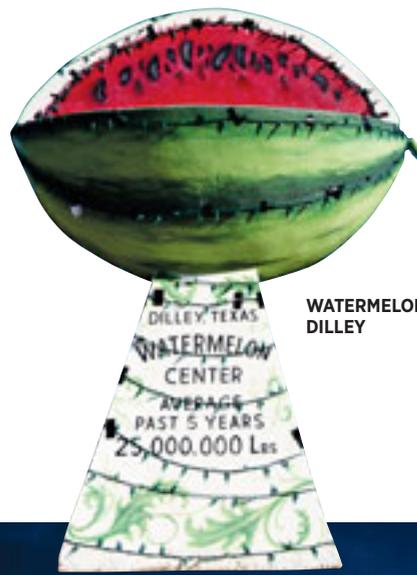
By 1856, roads still hadn't improved much. Frederick Law Olmsted, the architect of New York City's Central Park, traveled through Texas that year and described the roads as "a mere collection of straggling wagon ruts, extending for more than a quarter of a mile in width ... it being desirable in this part of the country, rather to avoid the road than follow it."

The Meridian Highway, pieced together in 1911 and billed as "the Main Street of North America," dominated travel options in that area of North Central Texas. The route was renamed State Highway 2 and then U.S. 81, as it became the main north-south artery in the state, connecting Laredo, San Antonio, San Marcos, Austin, Waco and Fort Worth.

Austin is my next stop along I-35. I get a dose of the city's "Keep Austin Weird" motto with a trip to the Cathedral of Junk, an ever-evolving structure that includes car parts, hubcaps, TVs



DELL DIAMOND
ROUND ROCK



WATERMELON STATUE
DILLEY

**URBAN
Detour**

AUSTIN

For the civic-minded, the LBJ Presidential Library offers tours and lectures just west of the freeway. Farther north, a slight diversion east will have you cheering for the Round Rock Express, a minor-league baseball team, at the Dell Diamond.



FROSTY DRIVE IN
DENTON



A TISKIT A TASKIT
HILLSBORO

sculpture at Bussey's Flea Market in Schertz, the Snake Farm in New Braunfels and the Roadside America Museum in Hillsboro are just a few of the oddities that hearken to a bygone age of automobile travel.

Just south of Georgetown, visitors can take a mile-long journey underground at Inner Space Cavern. One of seven show caves in Texas, Inner Space was discovered by a Texas Highway Department drilling crew in 1963.

and anything else.

The Cathedral of Junk is one of several Americana roadside attractions that dot the I-35 experience. The statue of a half-eaten watermelon in Dilley, a giant armadillo

[CO-OP TERRITORY ► BARTLETT & HEART OF TEXAS]

I stop at Health Camp in Waco for a milkshake, a mainstay in my family's travels on I-35. Through the painted plate glass window, I watch drivers navigate the large roundabout, a challenging endeavor that has led to the sale of T-shirts reading: I Survived the Circle. If you want to make a longer stop in Waco, consider the Dr Pepper Museum, Texas Sports Hall of Fame or the Magnolia Market at the Silos, made famous on the *Fixer Upper* TV show.

[CO-OP TERRITORY ► HILCO & UNITED]

Continuing north, I join the drivers pulling off the freeway for kolache at the Czech Stop in West. The 24-hour bakery is a popular stop for travelers around the clock.

"Hillsboro is the best-kept secret in north Texas," says Carroll Estes, owner of the Roadside America Museum. One of the town's stops is A Tiskit A Taskit's soda fountain. "All the kids line up at the counter because they know if it's not busy, I'm just going to feed them ice cream," says owner Ronnie Earp. "People are

URBAN
Detour

DALLAS

North of Hillsboro, drivers make a choice between the east and west branches of I-35. To the east, I stop at the Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza for research into the assassination of President John F. Kennedy in November 1963. The museum occupies the sixth floor of the Texas Book Depository building, where a rifle and shells led police to Lee Harvey Oswald.



WACO MAMMOTH NATIONAL MONUMENT



SIXTH FLOOR MUSEUM
DALLAS

always in a good mood when ice cream is involved.”

Kendra Markwardt, director of marketing for HILCO Electric Cooperative and a resident of Itasca, agrees. “I take my daughter there just about every Saturday,” she says.

[CO-OP TERRITORY ► TRI-COUNTY, COSERV & COOKE COUNTY]

Another milkshake mecca, farther north, the Frosty Drive N in Denton—or, as the locals call it, Mr. Frosty—has been family-owned since 1954, and the menu is virtually unchanged. Broiler burgers, homemade root beer and chocolate malts are staples.

The 1950s were a pivotal time for the nation’s highways. A young Dwight D. Eisenhower was part of the first cross-country military convoy from Washington, D.C., to San Francisco in 1919. He experienced firsthand the deplorable conditions of the country’s roads.

As Allied commander in World War II, Eisenhower noted the strategic importance of the German autobahn in moving troops and supplies. Years later, Eisenhower stated, “After seeing the autobahns of modern Germany, I decided, as president, to put an emphasis on this kind of road building.”

Just as railroads bypassed some communities in the late 1800s, the routes of the highway were a complicated issue for local businesses and quality of life. Each mile of freeway gob-

bled up 24 acres of land, and each interchange took 80.

I-35 was finally considered complete in 1981, but because of the constant construction, there is no final date of completion on record. The full length of I-35 from Laredo to Duluth was declared 99.7 percent complete in 1992.

URBAN
Detour

FORT WORTH

On the west branch of I-35 at the Fort Worth Stockyards, Billy Bob’s Texas bills itself as the world’s largest honky-tonk. Up to 6,000 people can enjoy the 3-acre establishment that has more than 30 bars, two of which are longer than 100 feet. On Friday and Saturday nights, you can catch professional bull riding at the in-house arena or head over to the Texas Motor Speedway for NASCAR or IndyCar Racing.

The Red River bridge, about 40 miles north of Denton and 7 miles north of Gainesville, marks the end of I-35 in Texas.

Today, urban sprawl and traffic snarls are par for the course on I-35, but there are remnants of the past, oases in the asphalt desert, and fun diversions all along the drive.

Julia Robinson is an Austin photo-journalist.

WEB EXTRAS at TexasCoopPower.com

At this exit, you’ll find a video and more photos and learn more about the Highway Act of 1956.

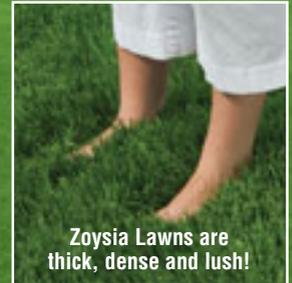


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FORT WORTH

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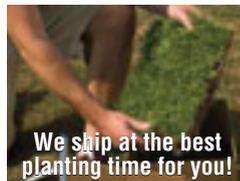
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Tips for Tool Time

Practice power tool safety

EVERY YEAR, THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE in the United States are critically injured or electrocuted as a result of electrical fires or accidents in their own homes. Faced with declining home values and aging properties, more homeowners are tackling do-it-yourself projects than ever before.

However, many do not have the training or experience needed to safely perform home electrical work. This increases the risk of immediate injuries and electrocutions, and potentially introduces new dangers into the home.

If you decide to undertake a home-improvement project yourself, your electric cooperative strongly recommends that you do not attempt work beyond your skill level. Knowing when to call a professional can help prevent electrical fires, injuries and fatalities.

If you do engage in a DIY project, make sure you plan the project first and understand the electrical system, equipment and materials required. Make sure you use adequate personal protective equipment and follow manufacturer's instructions for all tools used.

Power Tools

Many do-it-yourself projects involve the use of power tools. Working with power tools requires skilled instruction and training. They can be deadly if not properly used or maintained.

A common scenario for power tool-related electrocutions is when the equipment comes in contact with live electrical wires while it is being used.

Facts and Statistics

Nearly 400 electrocutions occur in the United States every year, according to the Consumer Product Safety Commission.

Electrical accidents with power drills, saws, sanders, hedge trimmers and other electric power tools account for 8 percent of consumer product-related electrocutions annually. An additional 9 percent are caused by accidents involving the use of lawn equipment, garden tools and ladders, which can come into contact with overhead power lines.

Personal Protective Equipment

Safeguards on outdoor electric tools are there for a reason. Make sure that they are always in place before operating.



Keep DIY projects safe—use the right tools and wear protective gear.

Invest in safety goggles, hearing protection, dust masks, gloves and other safety gear recommended for each tool. A few dollars now are well worth the lifetime of functional use that they are protecting.

Wear the appropriate clothes for the job—boots, gloves, long pants and a long-sleeved shirt. Wearing sandals while mowing the lawn is just asking for trouble. Tie back long hair as well as hoodie strings, scarves and other items that could get caught.

Tips for Tool Safety

Use ground-fault circuit interrupters with every power tool to protect against electric shocks.

Do not use power tools with an extension cord that exceeds 100 feet in length.

Never use power tools near live electrical wires or water pipes.

Use extreme caution when cutting or drilling into walls where electrical wires or water pipes could be accidentally touched or penetrated.

If a power tool trips an electrical safety device while in use, stop using it. Take the tool to a manufacturer-authorized repair center for service.

When working with electricity, use tools with insulated grips.

Do not use power tools without the proper guards.

When using a wet-dry vacuum cleaner or a pressure washer, be sure to follow the manufacturer's instructions to avoid electric shock.



DENIS ROSKINOV | ISTOCK.COM

Going on vacation? Adjust your thermostat to give your electric bill a break.

Give Your Electric Bill a Vacation, Too

TAKING SOME MUCH-NEEDED TIME AWAY during spring break can be expensive. A great way to save money is to give your electric bill a vacation, too. There are several steps you can take to trim your electricity usage while you're away:

Unplug some of your household appliances. Your house has many items that always use electricity when they're plugged in, even when turned off. Unplugging these items not only saves energy but also can prevent fires during your absence. Some of the more common items are: TVs, DVD players, cable TV boxes, microwave ovens, toasters and other small kitchen appliances.

Adjust the refrigerator control to a warmer setting. The fridge can be set as high as 40 degrees without spoiling food; the freezer can be set at 5 degrees. On these settings, you can conserve up to 40 percent of the refrigerator's electric usage.

If you are going on an extended trip, consider emptying the fridge and turning it off entirely. Remember to leave the door open to prevent mildew.

Set the thermostat higher (or lower) than the typical comfort level. In warmer weather, you can shut off the air conditioner during your absence, or at least consider setting it to a higher-than-normal temperature, 80 degrees or above.

If it's still cold out, you should consider lowering your thermostat but to no lower than 55 degrees. Typically, you can save 10–30 percent on heating costs by doing this. A programmable thermostat can make these adjustments automatically.

Turn down the water heater. A large percentage of the cost of running a water heater comes from just keeping the water at the selected temperature. If you are going on a lengthy trip, turn down the temperature to the lowest setting. This can save you up to \$10 a month.

Consider using timers to turn lights on and off every night. Timers can save energy and also give an appearance that someone is home. For the lights that will be on the longest—inside and outside—use CFL or LED bulbs. These use at least 75 percent less power than traditional bulbs and last longer.

Follow these tips while you're away for spring break and put your mind at ease about your electric bill. Then you can enjoy that vacation even more!

Don't Be Shocked: Counterfeiters Are on the Rise

THE CHEAPEST PRODUCT isn't always the best deal. Sometimes, it's counterfeit. That means one company has packaged a product to look like it was made by a reputable company. You buy it and take it home, and it might not operate as it should. Worse, it might be unsafe.

That's often the case with counterfeit electrical products, which can shock you or start a fire. Over the past decade, these products have become more common in the U.S.

Here's how to keep counterfeit electrical products from shocking you:

- ▶ Be suspicious of electrical cords, circuit breakers and appliances from discount stores that are way less expensive than similar products.
- ▶ Never buy electrical products over the internet from unfamiliar vendors.
- ▶ Learn how to recognize certification marks from Underwriters Laboratories and other safety testing labs. Carefully inspect the electrical products you buy for authentication marks.
- ▶ Shy away from products in shoddy packaging. The product inside won't be much better.
- ▶ Read the labels carefully. Counterfeiters often change a letter in a brand name: Nike knock-offs, for example, might show up with a label that says "Mike."



BRITTAKONOR | ISTOCK.COM

Odessa Meteor Crater

From discovery to scientific study, immense West Texas site suggests a mystery to unravel

BY E.R. BILLS

THE STORY BEHIND THE DISCOVERY OF the Odessa Meteor Crater begins more like a *Lonesome Dove* epilogue than like a scientific endeavor.

A 12-year-old boy gets credit for first reporting this disruption in the undulating Chihuahuan Desert terrain southwest of Odessa. In 1892, Julius D. Henderson, son of Ector County rancher John J. Henderson, rode his horse out in search of a lost calf. He located the wandering bovine grazing in an odd, oblong-shaped drop-off in the landscape, and after returning home, he told others about the strange hollow.

In 1920, Elisha Virgil Graham—whose family had settled in the area only because their wagon oxen had accidentally been killed by a freight train on the Texas and Pacific railroad tracks between Monahans and Odessa—discovered a peculiar, lava-like rock near the center of the sunken area. Graham gave the rock to his friend, Samuel R. McKinney, the first mayor of Odessa. McKinney fancied the strange rock and used it as a paperweight in his office.

Finally, in 1922, a scientist took notice, but this was also rather by accident. A.C. Bibbins, a Baltimore geologist visiting the mayor's office on business, noticed the peculiar rock and examined it more closely. Bibbins declared that the paperweight was actually a meteorite, and McKinney permitted him to dislodge a shard and send it to George P. Merrill, the head curator of the Department of Geology at the United States National Museum (now the National Museum of Natural History at the Smithsonian Institution), for analy-

sis. Merrill confirmed Bibbins' conclusion: The paperweight was a meteorite composed of extremely hard nickel-iron.

Scientists immediately began flocking to Odessa to examine the crater and the land surrounding it because the site was a fertile meteorite hunting ground. They initially theorized that the Odessa meteorite was little brother to the Barringer meteorite, which created a much larger crater in Arizona 50,000 years ago. There were some similarities between the craters, and scientists suggested that the Odessa meteorite had broken away from the Barringer before impact. The Barringer Meteorite Crater was the first officially designated meteorite crater on Earth; the Odessa Crater became the second.

Over the next few decades, researchers would repeatedly drill into the big crater in Texas, attempting to locate the main meteorite mass. On October 24, 1965, the Odessa Meteor Crater was designated a National Natural Landmark, and in the spring of 2002, a museum was completed at the site, providing information on meteorites and actually selling pieces of the Odessa meteorite.

In May 2003, Vance Holliday of the University of Arizona drilled into the crater again, this time for core samples to determine the crater's age and the effects of the meteorite impact. From the core samples, Holliday dated the crater at about 63,500 years old, demonstrating that the Odessa and Barringer events were unrelated. The results also suggested that the main meteorite impact initiated catastrophic damage farther than a mile in every direction from



the event's epicenter, producing 621-mph winds and a thermal pulse. This means that any woolly mammoths, giant ground sloths or saber-toothed tigers wandering through the impact pulse radius at the time might as well have been subjected to a nuclear detonation.

Holliday's contributions were followed by impact simulation studies by David Littlefield, formerly of the University of Texas and now a mechanical engineering professor at the University of Alabama-Birmingham. Entering earlier geologic data and impact analyses into databases at the Texas Advanced Computing Center in Austin, Littlefield created a 3-D virtual recreation of the Odessa impact. The simulation calculations indicated the Odessa meteorite was much larger than previously thought and wound up intersecting with the Earth more like a glancing blow than a direct hit.

"It's rare for a meteor to strike the earth

at such a shallow angle," Littlefield says. "Most meteor strikes tend to produce crater diameters that are roughly equivalent to the crater depths. The depth-to-diameter ratio of the Odessa meteor crater was off. It's got a much larger diameter relative to the depth."

The advanced computer simulations explained why.

The meteorite that hit near Odessa was oblong and struck the earth at a low trajectory with its flat side, traveling at a speed of 57,600 miles per hour. "Most of the meteor vaporized on impact," Littlefield says, "but if it had been larger, it might have ricocheted back into space."

A failed celestial skipping stone in West Texas! Does Larry McMurtry write sci-fi?

E.R. Bills is a writer from Aledo.

WEB EXTRAS at TexasCoopPower.com

Learn more about the Odessa Meteor Crater and how meteors and meteorites differ.

Another Roadside Attraction

The author introduces her book, *The Last Stop*, that preserves memories of roadside parks

EXCERPT BY RYANN FORD

I MADE THE MOVE FROM SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA to Texas in summer 2007. Not long after I got settled, photography assignments started taking me all over the state. On the way to shoots, I usually took the interstates, but on the way home, after the stress retreated, I drove the back roads for a change of scenery.

Soon I started noticing rest stops. I wish I could remember the exact one that did it for me, but I think it happened subconsciously after seeing a few of them. I glimpsed one and thought, “That would be a great photo.” I was drawn to the minimalist scene—a modest structure set on a beautiful landscape—and the mid-century architecture.

I remember getting home from an assignment one day, sitting down at my computer to start retouching, and being distracted by the thought of photographing the vintage rest stops I had just seen.

Procrastinating on my retouching work, I Googled to see whether anyone already had photographed rest stops and also to see what other stops looked like. Instead, I was met with news article after news article detailing the demise of rest stops all over the country. That was during the worst of the recession, and states were cutting expenses wherever they could. Highway rest stops were high on the list of budget cuts. Some were just closed temporarily, but others were demolished. I scrolled to an article about Texas, clicked the link and saw a photo of a rest stop whose roofline took the shape of long-horns. A huge Texas flag was painted down the walls of the structure. It was an amaz-

ing example of Americana. To my horror, the article detailed how the rest stop was “a breeding ground for crime” and was slated for demolition. I was in disbelief.

That next weekend I jumped in the car and made the four-hour drive to Flower Mound, near Fort Worth. The rest stop was even more kitschy in person. I got a great shot and headed home. A few weeks later I was back in the area on assignment and, sure enough, it was gone. A big orange barricade blocked the entrance ramp, the concrete structures had been knocked down and hauled away, and the ground where they stood was smoothed over as if they had never existed. I immediately felt an urgency to shoot as many rest stops as I could before they all were gone forever.

It’s pretty tough to find a friend willing to take a week off work to drive around looking for rest stops, and my mom was worried about me going alone. So I asked her if she would tag along, and she agreed. I spent a few days mapping out a rough itinerary for us, the first trip taking us through West Texas.

In the beginning we used a paper map, looked for the picnic table icons and navigated to the spots. But sometimes, after driving hours and hundreds of miles to an icon, we arrived at the location to find nothing there. Probably it was demolished. After a few of those, we wised up and used Google Earth to scout locations from above.



RYANN FORD



Those of you who have spent time on the road know it can be a magical place. There is something about road trips that makes them ripe for spontaneous events and adventures. We were faced with surprises—a herd of wild javelinas running through a shot—and inevitabilities, like sheltering from a sudden summer thunderstorm and nearly running out of gas. My favorite rest stops were the abandoned ones, and I had to beg my mom to jump the fences with me. She was terrified the entire time that we would be arrested.

A couple of years into the project and 50 rest stops or so later, things really began to take shape. By then I had realized that

rest stops were more than just toilets and tables, and that this was more than just a photo series. I had been holding the images close to my heart and became excited to start getting them out there. I posted about 20 of my favorites on my website. Within months, I started getting inquiries. In May 2013, I got an email from *The New York Times Magazine*, which wanted to run a feature on the rest stops. I was ecstatic.

I began getting emails from people all over the country who wanted to share their stories and memories of their times at rest stops. I never imagined that these funny little rest stops I was drawn to would evoke so much interest from the American

A rest stop along FM 170, also called River Road, near Lajitas

public. I am forever grateful that this project came into my life and for the opportunities that have come from it. My hope is that my work cultivates an interest in the often-overlooked beauty and significance of rest stops in the American travel experience and maybe even encourages preservation of those that remain.

Photographer **Ryann Ford** (ryannford.com) specializes in architecture, interiors and travel.

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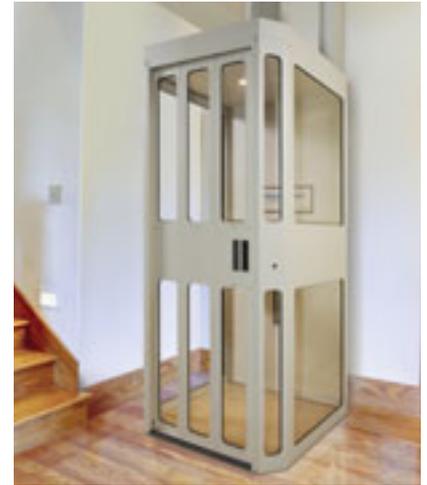
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Customer Rating **★★★★★**

ITEM 61256/61889
60813 shown

SAVE \$453

SUPER COUPON \$2999
comp at \$752.99

~~\$379.99~~

11056132

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PITTSBURGH **SUPER COUPON**

300 lb. capacity HIGH LIFT RIDING LAWN MOWER / ATV LIFT
ITEM 61523 shown
60395/62325/62493

SAVE \$100

SUPER COUPON \$1999
comp at \$179.99

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

~~\$99.99~~

10972580

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PITTSBURGH **SUPER COUPON**

RAPID PUMP® 3 TON HEAVY DUTY STEEL FLOOR JACK
ITEM 69227/62116
62564/68048 shown

SAVE \$66

SUPER COUPON \$7499
comp at \$141.88

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

~~\$84.99~~

11032617

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PITTSBURGH **SUPER COUPON**

40 PIECE 1/4" AND 3/8" DRIVE SOCKET SET
ITEM 63015/61328/62843
Metric

SAVE 60%

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

ITEM 63015/61328/62843
47902 shown

SUPER COUPON \$399
comp at \$9.99

~~\$4.99~~

11028948

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SUPER COUPON

LED WORKLIGHTS

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

SAVE 71%

A. 27 LED
ITEM 69567/60566
62532/67227 shown

B. 39 LED
ITEM 62417/62574
62158 shown

Batteries included.

YOUR CHOICE \$299
comp at \$10.64

~~\$3.89~~

11041697

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CENTRAL PNEUMATIC **SUPER COUPON**

RETRACTABLE AIR HOSE REEL WITH 3/8" x 50 FT. HOSE
ITEM 93897 shown
69265/62344

SAVE \$138

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

SUPER COUPON \$599
comp at \$198.45

~~\$79.99~~

11043573

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HaulMaster **SUPER COUPON**

72" x 80" MOVING BLANKET
ITEM 69505/62418/66537 shown

SAVE 66%

SUPER COUPON \$599
comp at \$17.97

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

~~\$8.99~~

11061063

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SUPER COUPON

FOLDABLE ALUMINUM SPORTS CHAIR
ITEM 62314/63066
66383 shown

250 lb. capacity

SUPER COUPON \$1999
comp at \$39.99

~~\$27.99~~

10975885

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SUPER COUPON

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

TWO TIER COLLAPSIBLE EASY-STORE STEP LADDER

SAVE 50%

SUPER COUPON \$1999
comp at \$39.99

~~\$29.99~~

225 lb. capacity
ITEM 67514

11019740

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drillmaster **SUPER COUPON**

ITEM 69651
62868/62873
68239 shown

18 VOLT CORDLESS 3/8" DRILL/DRIVER WITH KEYLESS CHUCK

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

SUPER COUPON \$1699
comp at \$49

~~\$19.99~~

includes one 18V NiCd battery and charger.

10989631

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CENTECH **SUPER COUPON**

ITEM 69594
69955
42292 shown

AUTOMATIC BATTERY FLOAT CHARGER

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

SUPER COUPON \$499
comp at \$34.99

~~\$8.99~~

11014087

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Chen's **SUPER COUPON**

MECHANIC'S CHOICE SHOP TOWELS - PACK OF 50

SAVE 44%

SUPER COUPON \$999
comp at \$17.98

~~\$12.99~~

ITEM 63365/63360 shown

10936166

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CENTRAL PNEUMATIC SUPER COUPON

3 GALLON, 100 PSI OILLESS AIR COMPRESSORS

A. HOT DOG
ITEM 69269/97080 shown

B. PANCAKE
ITEM 95275 shown
60637/61615

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

SAVE 59%

YOUR CHOICE \$39.99

~~\$59.99~~ comp at \$98.62

11086766

LIMIT 4 - Good at our stores or HarborFreight.com or by calling 800-423-2567. Cannot be used with other discount or coupon or prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase with original receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 7/7/17. Limit one coupon per customer per day.

SUPER COUPON FREE

PITTSBURGH 1" x 25 FT. TAPE MEASURE

\$6.99 VALUE

ITEM 69031/69030 shown

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11085129

HaulMaster SUPER COUPON

3/8" x 14 FT. GRADE 43 TOWING CHAIN

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

Not for overhead lifting. ITEM 60658/97711 shown

SAVE 67%

\$19.99

~~\$39.99~~ comp at \$60.95

11111007

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WINDPROOF solar SUPER COUPON

45 WATT SOLAR PANEL 10 PIECE KIT

ITEM 62443
68751 shown

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

SAVE \$83

\$119.99

~~\$203.73~~ comp at \$73

11077205

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PREDATOR GENERATORS SUPER COUPON

4000 PEAK/3200 RUNNING WATTS 6.5 HP (212 CC) GAS GENERATORS

ITEM 69676/69729/63080/63079 shown

ITEM 69675/69728/63090/63089 CALIFORNIA ONLY

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

70 dB noise level

SAVE \$149

\$289.99

~~\$339.99~~ comp at \$439

11068821

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CHICAGO ELECTRIC POWER TOOLS SUPER COUPON

12" SLIDING COMPOUND DOUBLE-BEVEL MITER SAW WITH LASER GUIDE

Blade sold separately

ITEM 61969/61970/69684 shown

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

SAVE \$204

\$134.99

~~\$199.99~~ comp at \$339

11063099

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US GENERAL SUPER COUPON

26", 4 DRAWER TOOL CART

ITEM 95659 shown
61634/61952

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

580 lb. capacity

SAVE \$269

\$99.99

~~\$149.99~~ comp at \$369.32

11071322

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HaulMaster SUPER COUPON

1000 LB. MOVER'S DOLLY

ITEM 60497/63888 shown
61899/62399/63095/63096/63098/63097

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

SAVE 59%

\$7.99

~~\$9.99~~ comp at \$19.97

11082104

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PORTLAND SUPER COUPON

1.5 HP ELECTRIC POLE SAW

Extends from 6 ft. to 8 ft. 10"

ITEM 68862/63190
62898 shown

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

SAVE 29%

\$64.99

~~\$84.99~~ comp at \$92.84

11082777

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one stop gardens SUPER COUPON

SOLAR ROPE LIGHT

16 ft. lit. 22 ft. long

ITEM 62533/68353 shown

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

SAVE 66%

\$9.99

~~\$13.99~~ comp at \$29.97

11083170

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WARRIOR SUPER COUPON

29 PIECE TITANIUM NITRIDE COATED HIGH SPEED STEEL DRILL BIT SET

ITEM 62281
61637 shown

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

SAVE 83%

\$9.99

~~\$19.99~~ comp at \$59.98

11073140

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drillmaster SUPER COUPON

1500 WATT DUAL TEMPERATURE HEAT GUN (572°/1112°)

ITEM 62340
62546
63104
96289 shown

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

SAVE 68%

\$8.99

~~\$14.89~~ comp at \$28.83

11098810

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HARDY SUPER COUPON

SPLIT LEATHER WORK GLOVES WITH COTTON BACK 5 PAIR

ITEM 66287/62716
60450/62371/62714 shown

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

SAVE 39%

\$5.99

~~\$7.99~~ comp at \$9.90

11110380

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SUPER COUPON

8" HUNTING KNIFE WITH SURVIVAL KIT

ITEM 61733
90714 shown

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

SAVE 73%

\$7.99

~~\$9.99~~ comp at \$29.99

11096132

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COVERPRO SUPER COUPON

10 FT. x 20 FT. PORTABLE CAR CANOPY

ITEM 63054/60728
69034/62858 shown

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

SAVE \$106

\$99.99

~~\$149.99~~ comp at \$205.99

11110390

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KRAUSE & BECKER SUPER COUPON

AIRLESS PAINT SPRAYER KIT

ITEM 62915/60600 shown

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

SAVE \$129

\$169.99

~~\$299.99~~ comp at \$299

11062683

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Blizzard of 1957

Howling winds drive deep drifts across Panhandle

BY DAWN STEPHENS

EVERY YEAR AS WINTER SETS IN, PANHANDLE residents consider the weather forecast and wonder about predictions for winter storms. Because I grew up in the Panhandle of Oklahoma, I have always listened intently when old-timers told stories about the blizzard of 1957. Seeking to confirm the tales I'd heard over the years, I visited the XIT Museum in Dalhart to find out about this momentous storm that is much discussed on its 60th anniversary.

With the help of Nick Olson, the museum's director, I searched through newspaper articles and viewed archived news photographs from the blizzard. I found several accounts of survival and destruction. The 1957 storm is considered among the most destructive weather events in Texas Panhandle history.

According to accounts in *The Dalhart Texan*, the storm arrived in the area during the evening of Friday, March 22. First, rain pelted the area. Then the rain turned to snow, and the storm persisted through the night, pounding the region relentlessly for two days. The storm drove snow across the landscape at speeds up to 60 mph, leaving an accumulation of 10–15 inches. Drifts rose up to 30 feet, according to reports around the Texas Panhandle, with 15-foot drifts recorded across the state line in western Oklahoma. Eleven lives were lost, livestock perished and \$6 million in damages were sustained.

The bold banner headline in the *Chicago Sunday Tribune* on March 24 read: BLIZZARD HITS NINE STATES. Dalhart was one of several Texas towns identified on a locator map on the front page.

Hundreds of cattle, hogs and horses were lost. Arty Watkins, a local farmer and cattleman, told *The Dalhart Texan* that he thought he had lost a lot of hogs in the blizzard when he couldn't find them. While hunting for them, he saw



Drifts from the March 1957 blizzard reached rooflines.

steam coming from a big snowdrift. Just to find out whether he was imagining the steam, he dug into the drift, and out walked 20 of his hogs.

Chuck Bennet, a current member of Rita Blanca Electric Cooperative and a resident of the Dumas area, told the story of a rancher south of Dumas who lost more than 10 prized Palomino horses. The rancher had moved the horses into a barn for protection from the blizzard, but it was not enough. As the wind battered the barn, it also drove snow through the cracks in the barn's walls. Eventually the snow reached the rafters of the barn, and the horses perished.

A delivery driver in Dalhart became a casualty of the storm when he lost his way on the return to his home from the Railway Express Agency. According to *The Dalhart Texan*, the driver became disoriented in the blinding, blowing blizzard. After he made a wrong turn, his truck got stuck in the deep snow. His vehicle was covered completely by the snow, and he was unable to escape.

The snowfall accumulated into drifts that covered houses up to the rooflines, trapping residents inside. In some houses, blowing snow filled up attics, requiring

occupants to scoop out the snow so ceilings would not collapse.

The blizzard of 1957 ranks third among the top 10 weather events of the 20th century in the Texas and Oklahoma Panhandle, a list prepared by the Amarillo staff of the National Weather Service. The nearly decade-long Dust Bowl of the 1930s ranks No. 1, and the April 9, 1947, tornado that killed more than 180 people as it rampaged across Texas, Oklahoma and Kansas ranks second.

I walked away from the research at the XIT Museum with a renewed respect for those who braved this storm and are able to retell the tales 60 years later. So as I watch the weather forecast and prepare for upcoming storms, I will forever remember the blizzard of 1957 and pray that another of this magnitude never befalls my beloved Texas Panhandle.

Dawn Stephens is the member services and communications representative for Rita Blanca Electric Cooperative in Dalhart.

WEB EXTRAS at TexasCoopPower.com

Read more about the top 10 weather events of the 20th century in the Texas and Oklahoma Panhandle.

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TY WOLOSIN

Spring Vegetable Salads

IT'S TIME TO PULL OUT YOUR SALAD BOWL and savor what's in season! This month's featured recipe comes from Windy Hill Farm, a family-owned operation in Boerne, with membership in Bandera and Comanche electric cooperatives. "We love this salad," says farmer Ty Wolosin. "A mix of spicy greens like baby mustard and arugula get the blood warmed up after the chill of winter." The recipe also captures a delicious moment in their growing season: "We have goat's milk for cheese again. The young kids are up and running, and their moms have rich milk from the spring pasture grass."

PAULA DISBROWE, FOOD EDITOR

Windy Hill North Spring Salad

Plan on a handful of greens per person, and add other ingredients as desired. A sprinkling of flaky sea salt on top makes the vegetables' flavor pop.

SALAD

- Mixed spicy greens (colored mustard, mesclun, arugula or red-leaf lettuce)
- Radishes, thinly sliced
- Green onions, thinly sliced
- Young asparagus, trimmed
- Crumbled goat cheese
- Fresh chopped dill
- Hard-boiled eggs, sliced
- Sea salt and fresh cracked pepper, to taste

DRESSING

- 4 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoons white wine or apple cider vinegar
- 1 teaspoon spicy mustard (such as Dijon or Creole)
- 1 teaspoon honey
- ½ teaspoon ground turmeric

1. Combine the salad ingredients in a bowl.
2. In a separate bowl, whisk together dressing ingredients (or combine them in a jar and shake).
3. Drizzle the dressing over the salad and toss to combine. Taste for seasonings, adding more salt or pepper as desired, and serve immediately. Serves 4.

SALAD: MARY PAT WALDRON; WOLOSIN: DAVE SHAFER



Spring Vegetable Salads



THIS MONTH'S RECIPE CONTEST WINNER

HELENA WALLACE | BRYAN TEXAS UTILITIES

This tumble of vibrant green vegetables captures spring's bounty. A simple, garlicky vinaigrette and creamy avocado add richness and pull the tastes together while allowing the flavor and texture of the vegetables to shine.

Chopped Spring Salad

- 1½ pounds asparagus
- 1½ pounds French green beans
- ¾ cup fresh or frozen peas
- 3 green onions, thinly sliced (white and light green parts)
- 1 pint cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1 small bunch radishes, thinly sliced
- Juice of 2 lemons
- 4 tablespoons olive oil
- ¾ teaspoon kosher salt
- ¾ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed and roughly chopped
- 2 ripe avocados, diced

1. Trim the tough ends from the asparagus, then cut stalks on the diagonal into one-inch pieces. Cut the green beans the same way.
2. Bring a pot of salted water to a boil. Add the asparagus and green beans and blanch 90 seconds. Remove vegetables from boiling water and place in a colander. Run cold water over them to stop cooking. Add peas to boiling water in the pot. If you are using fresh peas, cook them no longer than 30 seconds; cook frozen peas only 10. Drain peas and rinse with cold water.
3. Combine the drained asparagus, beans and peas in a bowl. Add the green onions, cherry tomatoes and radishes. Gently stir the vegetables.
4. In a small bowl, make the dressing by mixing well the lemon juice, oil, salt, pepper and garlic.
5. Add the diced avocados to the vegetables and toss with dressing just before serving. Finish with salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste. Serves 4–6.

COOK'S TIP The vegetables can be blanched in advance and refrigerated until serving time. To avoid a soggy salad, allow the blanched and drained vegetables to dry on clean kitchen towels before tossing them with the vinaigrette.

\$100 Recipe Contest

August's recipe contest topic is **Some Like It Hot**. Have you never met a pepper you didn't like? Share your favorite fiery dishes with us. The deadline is **March 10**.

ENTER ONLINE at 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.

Spring Medley in Sour Cream Dressing

NANCY PUMPHREY | BIG COUNTRY EC

There's something old-school and irresistible about cold, fresh vegetables coated in a rich, tangy sour cream dressing. This simple salad shines when served atop crisp, pretty leaves such as hearts of romaine or butter lettuce.

- 1 cup sour cream
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon dry mustard
- 1 cup sliced green onions (whites and green tops)
- 1 cup sliced radishes
- 2 cups chopped cucumbers
- Lettuce leaves

1. Combine the sour cream, lemon juice, salt and mustard in a large mixing bowl.
2. Add the onions, radishes and cucumbers, and stir to combine.
3. Chill mixture until cold, about 2 hours.
4. Serve on lettuce leaves. Serves 4–6.

Sweet and Savory Sprouts

LISA WILLIAMS | CENTRAL TEXAS EC

For many of us, certain vegetables are steeped in memories—not all of them good. “My grandmother had these red and white vinyl chairs with tubular chrome leg supports in her kitchen,” Williams writes. “It was in those tubes where I used to hide my Brussels sprouts to get out of eating them.” These days, she can't get enough of them and frequently enjoys these “candied sprouts” as a main dish.

- 1 cup finely diced pancetta
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 package (10 ounces) shredded Brussels sprouts
- ⅓ cup dried cranberries
- ⅓ cup slivered almonds
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon maple syrup
- 2 tablespoons water
- Salt and pepper, to taste

1. Cook the pancetta in a medium, non-stick skillet over medium-high heat until it's almost crisp, then transfer to a plate. Discard all but 1 teaspoon of the drippings.

2. Add the butter, Brussels sprouts, cranberries and almonds, and cook, stirring, until heated through.
3. Add the pancetta, brown sugar, maple syrup and water, and toss until well-coated. Adjust seasonings to taste, and serve warm. Serves 4.

COOK'S TIP Pancetta is an Italian-style bacon with a peppery flavor. Feel free to substitute your favorite peppered or regular bacon in this recipe.

Spinach and Strawberry Salad With Fried Cheddar

BETSY KUEBLER | FARMERS EC

- 2 rounds cheddar cheese (1 pound each), each sliced into 6 wedges
- 2 eggs, beaten
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup fine, seasoned breadcrumbs
- 4 cups fresh, young spinach leaves
- 1 pint fresh-picked strawberries, washed, stemmed and quartered
- 1 cup coarsely chopped pecans
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup balsamic vinaigrette

- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup ($\frac{1}{2}$ stick) butter
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup olive oil

1. Dip the cheese wedges in beaten egg and dredge in breadcrumbs, coating thoroughly. Place the coated wedges on a plate and refrigerate.
2. Combine the spinach, berries and pecans in a large bowl. Drizzle with balsamic vinaigrette and toss.
3. When you're ready to serve, melt the butter with the olive oil in a skillet over medium-high heat. When the oil is hot, place the chilled cheese wedges in the skillet, being careful that they don't touch. Fry the cheese 1–2 minutes on each side, or until the crumb coating is lightly browned. (Cook the cheese in separate batches, if necessary, to avoid overcrowding the skillet.)
4. Place warm cheese wedges on top of the salad and serve. Serves 4–6.

WEB EXTRAS at TexasCoopPower.com

Read more about Ty Wolosin in *A New Crop of Texas Farmers* [May 2016].

Fresh Tips for Salads

- DO**
- Add crunch.** Toasted nuts and seeds (pumpkin, sesame, sunflower) also add nutrients.
 - Add color.** Savor the shades of shaved watermelon radishes, red or golden beets, carrots and sweet peppers.
 - Go homemade.** Make vinaigrette with a squeeze of fresh lemon, Dijon mustard, and a 3-to-1 ratio of olive oil and wine vinegar. Cube bread for homemade croutons (toss with olive oil and an herb blend, then bake at 350 degrees until golden).
- DON'T**
- Go limp.** Make sure lettuces and other ingredients are completely dry before adding them.
 - Overpower.** With balsamic and other aged vinegars, a little goes a long way. To make shallots and chopped onions less sharp, soak them in a splash of vinegar for a few minutes before adding.
 - Underestimate.** Never undervalue the appeal of crumbled feta, goat cheese or shaved Parmesan. —PD

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In Motion

IN THE HUSTLE AND BUSTLE of modern life, these Texans aren't just going through the motions. Let's shake a leg and take a look at who really knows how to bust a move.

GRACE ARSIAGA

WEB EXTRAS at TexasCoopPower.com Have a second? Go online to see more poetry in motion.



▲ **CHRISTY STUART**, Jackson EC: Sampson loves to play during bath time.

▼ **CAROL HOLBERT**, Concho Valley EC: "I loved the dirt in the air and the fact that this bull rider walked away!"



▲ **PAT ROGERS**, Medina EC: "While taking photos of the dolphin from the ferry, a speedboat passed by at the same time."

▼ **SALLY GRANT**, Pedernales EC: Coming in for a landing in Grant's garden



▲ **CHERI BARR**, Pedernales EC: One of the competitors at a flying competition in Llano

UPCOMING CONTESTS

JULY PLAY BALL!	DUE MARCH 10
AUGUST SURF'S UP	DUE APRIL 10
SEPTEMBER AT THE RODEO	DUE MAY 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. **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

Texas Independence Celebration

San Benito March 11

(956) 739-0401, happybirthdaytexas.com

The Texas Heritage and Independence Celebration Association honors the bravery of the Texians and Tejanos (Texas-born citizens of Mexican and Spanish ancestry) who fought and died for independence from Mexico. The main attractions are re-enactments of the battles of Gonzales, the Alamo and San Jacinto, with the roar of cannons and smoking fire from muskets.



TEXAS INDEPENDENCE: COURTESY THICA. HERBS: DUSAN ZIDAR | SHUTTERSTOCK.COM. BLUEBIRD: LARRY KELLER | DREAMSTIME.COM

March

8

Lubbock [8-12] Cirque du Soleil's *Ovo*, (806) 742-7362, unitedsupermarketsarena.com

9

Irving [9-12] Texas Steel Guitar Jamboree, (817) 558-3481, texassteelguitar.org

10

San Angelo [10-12] Frontier Ladies Living History Conference, (325) 234-0316, fortconcho.com

11

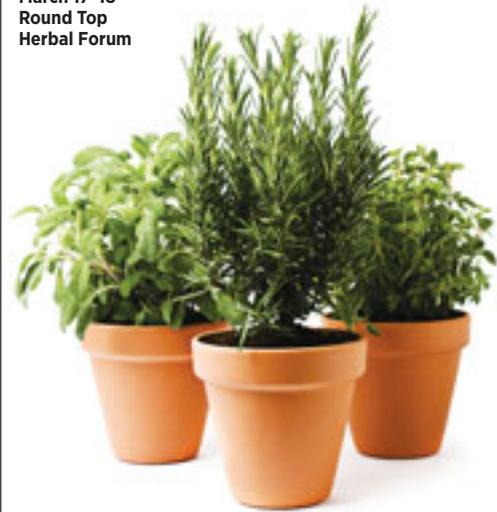
Bellville Austin County Cruisers Classic Car Stampede, (979) 865-3187, austincountycruisers.com

Burton Texas Ranger Day, (979) 353-0050, burtonheritagesociety.org

Crockett John Anderson, (936) 544-4276, pwfaa.org

Luling Rajun' Cajun Throwdown Gumbo Cook-Off, (830) 875-3214, discoverluling.com

March 17-18
Round Top
Herbal Forum



14

Marshall Taste of East Texas & Irish Festival, (903) 935-4484, marshallartscouncil.org

Nederland [14-19] Heritage Festival, (409) 724-2269, nederlandhf.org

17

Round Top [17-18] Herbal Forum, (979) 249-3129, festivalhill.org

La Grange [17-19] Uncorked, (979) 968-3017, lagrangeuncorked.com

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18

Anna Big Top Circus, (972) 924-8533

Bandera Wild Hog Explosion, (830) 796-4447, wildhogexplosion.com

Jasper Azalea Festival, (409) 384-2762, jaspercoc.org

Lakehills United Methodist Church Fish Fry, (830) 751-2404, lakehillsumc.org

West [18-19] West, Central Texas Ceramic Expo, (254) 716-5227, westceramicshow.com

24

Boerne Live at the Library: Viennese Tort, (210) 421-6132, visitboerne.org

Ingram [24-April 8] Godspell, (830) 367-5121, hcaf.com

25

Huntsville Herb Festival at the Wynne Home, (936) 891-5024, texasthymeunit.org

Waco Bluebird Season Kickoff, (512) 268-5678, texasbluebirdsociety.org

31

Fredericksburg [31-April 1] American Chuck Wagon Association's Championship Cook-Off, (830) 990-1192, trhc.org

Georgetown [31-April 1] Quilt and Stitchery Show, (512) 658-6973, handcraftsunlimited.com

Victoria [31-April 1] Quilt Fest, (361) 482-9580, quiltguildvictoria.org

Grapevine [31-April 2, 7-9] Day Out With Thomas, 1-800-457-6338, grapevintexasusa.com

March 25
Waco
Bluebird Season Kickoff



April

1

Hamilton Spring Fling, (254) 372-3120

Stonewall LBJ 100 Bicycle Tour, (830) 868-7128, lbj100.bike

Woodville Tyler County Dogwood Festival, (409) 283-2632, tylercountydogwoodfestival.org

Hallettsville [1-Nov. 30, 2018] The Lone Star State and World War I, (361) 798-3243, hallettsvillelibrary.org

5

Kilgore [5-8] Kilgore College Rangerette Revels, (903) 983-8187, rangerette.com

6

Kerrville Semi-Toned, (830) 896-9393, caillouxtheater.com

Submit Your Event!

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

Spring Comes Alive in Huntsville!

- Red Oliver Memorial Sheep Dog Trail
March 1-4
- Texas Independence Day Celebration - Be Baptist a Texas
March 2
- Great Muddy Escape Endurance Run
March 4
- Rusty, Chippy Vintage - Repurpose Show
March 11 & 12
- Walker County Fair & Rodeo
March 30 - April 8
- Biennial Airing of the Quilts
1st Saturday in May
- Cinco de Mayo Celebration
1st Saturday in May
- Sam Houston Park Festival
May 12-13

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Texas on a Grand Stage

Palo Duro Canyon State Park features natural majesty and theatric pageantry

BY SHERYL SMITH-RODGERS

EVERY TEXAN SHOULD VISIT PALO DURO Canyon State Park and attend *Texas*, the outdoor musical that's been performed there every summer since 1966. I've seen the performance several times and returned last summer so my husband, James, could scratch "the Grand Canyon of Texas" off his bucket list.

Palo Duro Canyon, second in size to Arizona's Grand Canyon, cuts a crooked swath through the Panhandle High Plains as it meanders for 120 miles and plunges 800 feet deep.

For most of the day, we explore the state park, the state's second largest at nearly 28,000 acres. Along the half-mile Pioneer Nature Trail, we hike down to the rippling Prairie Dog Town Fork of the Red River that winds through the canyon. At a nearby nature blind, we spy harvest mice feeding on spilled birdseed. Later, we relax in rocking chairs at the Mack Dick Group Pavilion and absorb the spectacular scenery.

Midafternoon, we freshen up at our hotel in Canyon, 12 miles west of the park. Then we return for the 6 p.m. activities at the 1,600-seat Pioneer Amphitheatre. The outdoor complex was built in the early 1960s by residents who sought to honor early pioneers and promote Palo Duro Canyon as a tourist destination.

Our evening begins with a backstage tour led by guide Rey Montoya, a student at West Texas A&M University. Behind the amphitheater, he points out a cinder-block warehouse where 67 cast members change costumes and repair scenery. We peer inside a wooden horse-drawn wagon, which catches fire during the show with the help of concealed propane burners. A steam locomotive sits on the chassis of a pickup, and a concrete tunnel allows actors to switch sides of the stage.

"The stage is padded like a running track so dancers won't get hurt if they fall,"



Montoya explains as we stand at the back edge, facing the audience. "See those two big, clear globes up there in the control rooms over the seats? Those are intelligent lights that project images onto the surrounding canyon walls. You'll see those later during the show."

As a treat, we bought dinner tickets. Inside a metal shed called the Chow Cart, caterers with Feldman's Wrong Way Diner in Canyon dish up smoked ham, sausage and brisket.

After 8 p.m., we settle into our seats. Overhead, the evening's first stars twinkle in the darkening sky, and swallows swoop for moths. At 8:30, fireworks explode, signaling the show's start. Soon, a lone wrangler on horseback, carrying a Texas flag fluttering on a pole, stands high atop a canyon wall. As the sparks fall away, the silhouette races along the ridge's edge.

On cue, more than five dozen boot-scooting cowboys and their partners in swishy skirts burst onto the stage, singing and high-stepping in time with hoedown songs like *Turkey in the Straw*. Soon we see character Brandon Dawson, a progressive homesteader who touts fences and

railroads, and Col. Henry McLean, a cattle rancher not ready to relinquish the open prairies in the late 1880s. Tension mounts as the two ideologies clash. Several tangled romances thicken the plot.

Mother Nature creates havoc, too, which leads to some thrilling scenes: A simulated lightning bolt strikes a dead tree, and later, real flames light up the canyon as a roaring "prairie fire" threatens homes.

Two hours later, *Texas* ends with a patriotic grand finale. More fireworks choreographed with an illuminated water show pay tribute to military veterans, fallen heroes and first responders. "Wow, wow, wow!" is all we can say as bursts of rockets, water jets and laser lights accompany a slideshow.

"I want to see that again!" James exclaims as we head for our car. I definitely see more of *Texas* in our future.

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

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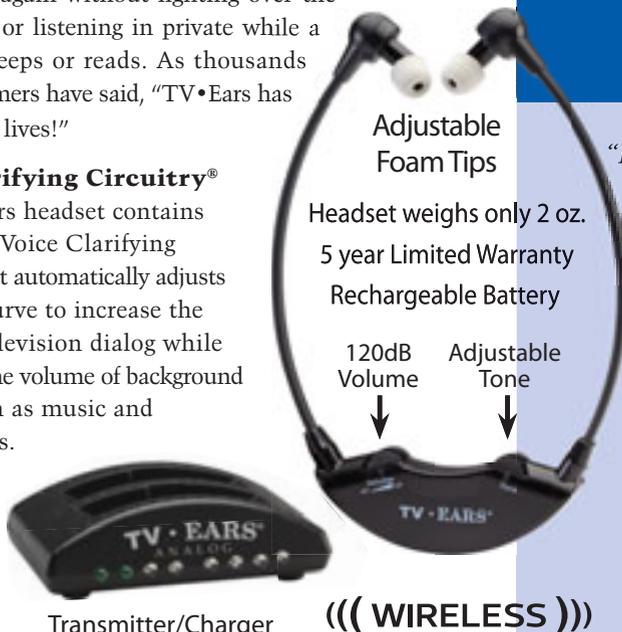
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— Pat Boone, Singer/Songwriter

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— Robert Forbes, M.D., California

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