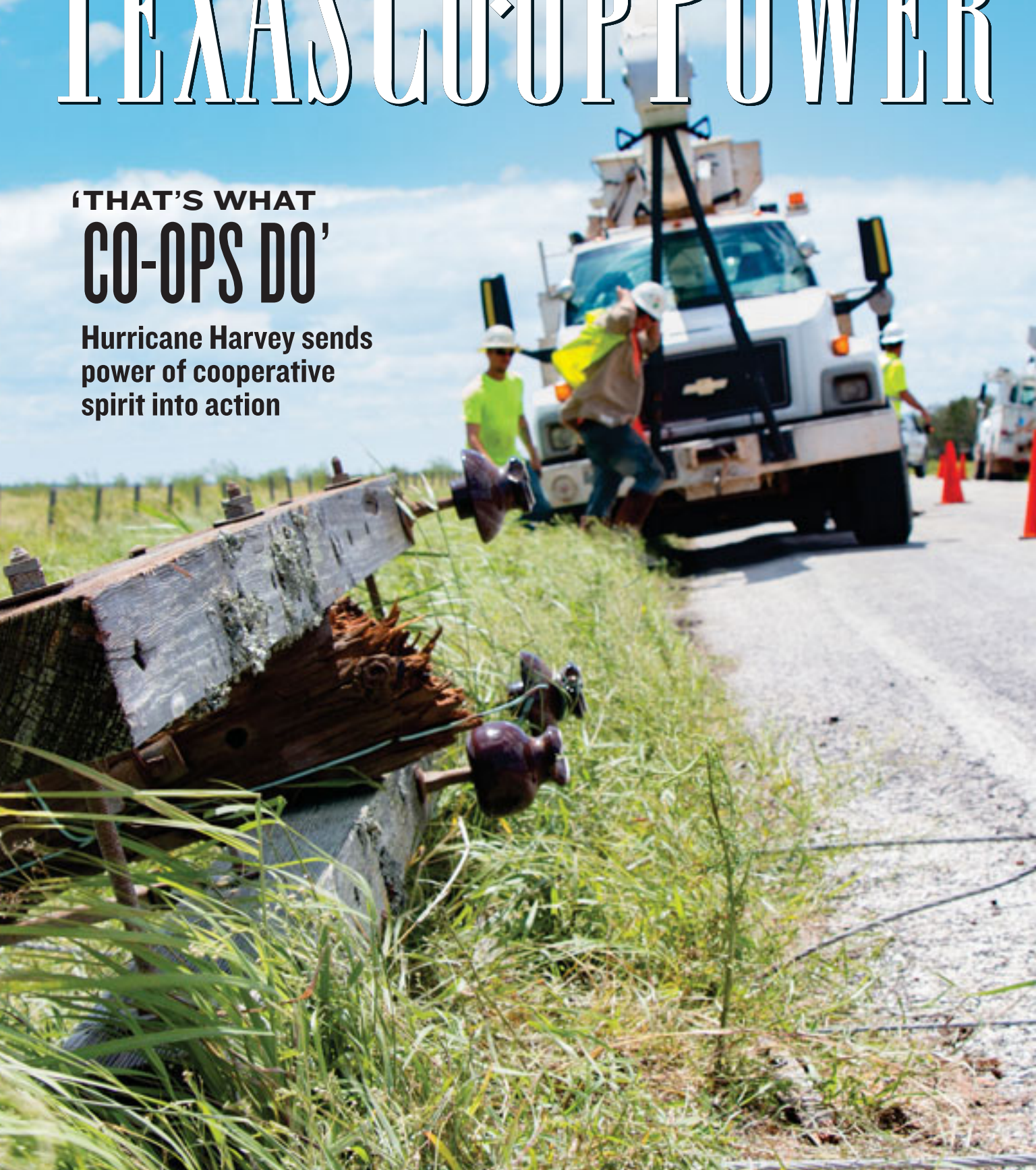


**Gary Sinise Provides Custom Homes for Veterans**

# TEXAS CO-OP POWER

## **'THAT'S WHAT CO-OPS DO'**

**Hurricane Harvey sends  
power of cooperative  
spirit into action**







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South Texas EC crews rebuild lines after Hurricane Harvey.

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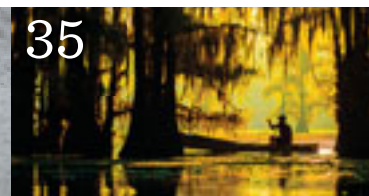
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**ON THE COVER** Crews work to repair Victoria EC power lines east of Victoria after Hurricane Harvey. Photo by Chris Burrows | TEC

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From the publishers of *Texas Co-op Power*

## Special Ranch Hand

The August 2017 issue said that President Lyndon B. Johnson flew to his LBJ Ranch 74 times during his five years in office [Currents, *Smoke-Filled Shindigs*]. My uncle, Marine Corps Maj. Kenneth Evans Sr., was one of Johnson's helicopter pilots. MARCY EVANS-COLE | HEMPSTEAD  
SAN BERNARD EC

## Workshop Remedy

*Tame the Flame* [Recipes, August 2017] recommended wearing rubber gloves when chopping hot peppers. I simply chop them and then go to the garage. I spray my fingers liberally with WD-40 and wipe them down with a paper towel. Then I wash my hands as I normally would. The WD-40 dissolves the oil in the peppers, and soap removes the WD-40. No problem. ROGER WERCHAN | CONROE  
FORMER MID-SOUTH SYNERGY

## Life-Changing Event

I was born in 1943 at home in a rural part of Bowie County near Old Boston. My dad bought a Servel butane fridge in 1945 [below], a remarkable appliance that I still own today—but no comparison to what followed in



## Doting Mother

Enjoyed the article on the Rio Grande Valley at night [What Lurks in the Murk, August 2017]. The picture of the people looking at the wolf spider was good, but you cannot see the spider.



It brought back a memory from last August: watching a female wolf carrying her babies on her back on my driveway. Quite a sight to see with her back covered, and if one got off she would pick it up and place it back on her back.

MICHAEL LANTY | ORIENT | CONCHO VALLEY EC

1946: Dad had our 750-square-foot home wired for electricity.

The family gathered in the living room when the first wall switch was turned on to see the light from a single bulb in a ceramic fixture in the center of the ceiling. A lifetime-changing event.

It is easy to take for granted the advances in technology we all enjoy today through the success of Bowie-Cass Electric Cooperative powering rural East Texas.

KENNETH ELLIOTT | TEXARKANA  
BOWIE-CASS EC

## Memories of Fort Hood

*The Dawn of Fort Hood* [Currents, January 2017] brought back fond memories for my mom. She and my dad married in June 1942 and moved to Killeen, where my dad (Bob Foster) worked at Fort Hood. He was a timekeeper, and

because of the size of the property, he was given a horse to ride to ensure that the men who clocked in to work were still working and did not wander off.

SHARON HORINE | BROWN COUNTY  
COMANCHE EC

## New London Lesson

A very important result of the tragedy [The New London School Explosion, January 2017] was the establishment of the Texas Engineering Practice Act. The act requires those who engineer public projects (roads, bridges, dams, schools, water supply systems, etc.) to be duly licensed by the state as having the education, experience and ability to design such projects in a way that protects the health, safety and welfare of the public.

ERIC RATZMAN | LEANDER  
PEDERNALES EC

## Familiar Face

I loved *Outlaw Healers* [September 2016], about the Milling brothers. My great-grandfather lived in Cisco about that time, and I am sure that they probably met.

The photo of the man is a dead ringer for (a younger) James Keach! ANITA KEMPER VIA FACEBOOK | COLEMAN  
COLEMAN COUNTY EC

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## HAPPENINGS

# Free Time With Santa

### WEB EXTRAS

► Find more happenings online.

**GRANBURY SANTA HOUSE** returns to the Hood County Courthouse, southwest of Fort Worth, this Christmas season, thanks to the efforts of some United Cooperative Services members who wish to remain anonymous, county officials and area businesses. Granbury High School honor roll students help round up elves who assist Santa Claus every weekend

**NOVEMBER 24–DECEMBER 23.**

Mrs. Claus and the elves welcome children—and pets—who want to see Santa. They pass the time in line by playing games and talking about Christmas lists. Then, it's onto Santa's lap.

Parents, grandparents and friends are free to take as many pictures as they like. The entire experience is free. The Granbury Santa House Facebook page has more details.

"The main purpose of Santa House is to provide a place to forget even for one minute the craziness Christmas can bring," Mrs. Claus says.

**INFO ► (817) 964-7220, [facebook.com/granburysanta.house](https://facebook.com/granburysanta.house)**

## SPORTS SECTION

# LAST LAPS

**Dale Earnhardt Jr.** and Texas Motor Speedway have a lot of history. It was at the Fort Worth track that the NASCAR driver earned his first Busch Series and Cup Series wins, and in April he placed fifth, one of his best races of the season.

**But Junior** will take his last Texas laps when the No. 88 Chevrolet returns to the Texas Motor Speedway on November 5 for the AAA Texas 500. The 43-year-old driver announced in April that this would be his final year of driving after concussions haunted him in 2016.



**Texas Motor Speedway** put out the call for fans who attended Earnhardt's 2000 Cup Series win in anticipation of this month's event. If history is any indication, maybe they'll end up seeing his last win, too.

## WORTH REPEATING

*"When I started counting my blessings, my whole life turned around."*

— **WILLIE NELSON**

MARK YOUR  
CALENDAR

## Tear Down That Wall



### SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT NOVEMBER 15, AMERICA RECYCLES DAY:

Americans throw away enough office paper each year to build a 36-foot-high wall from the northwest corner of the Panhandle to the extreme southern tip of Texas below Brownsville, a distance of 801 miles.

If that doesn't blow your mind, consider this: Americans throw away 2.5 million plastic bottles *every hour*.

### HISTORY LESSON

## Filmmaker Portrays Co-op Origins

**DEPRESSION-ERA DAIRY FARMER** John Grimes struggles to make ends meet in Central Texas as World War II looms and cities leave rural areas in the dust of development. When a representative of the Rural Electrification Administration offers federal loans to farmers and ranchers to build electric lines, Grimes rallies his friends and neighbors to support the cause.

That is how the 2015 film *Let There Be Light* portrays the history of Mid-South Synergy, an electric cooperative whose founding is much like other electric co-ops across the country. Andy Conner, former Mid-South multimedia specialist, produced the 25-minute short in honor of the co-op's 75th anniversary.

"One of the Seven Cooperative Principles is Cooperation Among Cooperatives, and that's what we wanted out of this short film," Conner says. "Since co-ops nationwide have a sort of shared history, we wanted to be able to share this to raise awareness to a new generation about what exactly a cooperative is. So, it's a short film with long-term implications."

The film premiered at a Navasota movie theater and played at Mid-South's annual meeting in June 2015. Since then, it has won several awards, including WorldFest-Houston film festival's Platinum Remi Award for Short Subject and Silver Telly Award for directing, plus two Bronze Telly Awards and the Gold Award for Best Total Communication Program from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.



### HONORS

## REST STOPS HONOR NELDA LANEY



**The rest stops** on Interstate 27 in Hale County, north of Lubbock, have been renamed in honor of Nelda Laney, considered the First Lady of West Texas and known as the Capitol Ornament Lady.

**Laney, who died** August 24, 2016, was the wife of Pete Laney, a five-term speaker of the Texas House and 17-term state representative. Among the many accomplishments in her life was creating and selling Capitol Christmas ornaments to raise funds for the preservation of Texas' Capitol, built in 1888. [See *The Capitol Ornament Lady*, November 2016.]

**More than 1 million** ornaments have been sold, raising more than \$8 million since Laney started the program in 1996.

**The Nelda Laney** Safety Rest Areas are about 8 miles south of the Laney homestead near Hale Center.

# Welcome



# Home

## ≡ GARY SINISE FOUNDATION GIVES A NEW START TO INJURED VETS ≡

**I**n May 2013, Lucas Cifka almost lost everything. The 6-foot-1-inch Army sniper from Olympia, Washington, stepped on a pressure-plated IED while on foot patrol in eastern Afghanistan.

"I remember the medic running over, and I was helping to put the tourniquet on, and they immediately put them very high up on my legs, and I knew that wasn't good because you only do that as a last resort," Cifka says. "I realized very quickly that I was bleeding to death, and the first thought that went through my mind was: I've got a 3-month-old baby at home, and I can't die on this hilltop."

The blast took both legs, fractured his pelvis, hands and face, and left him with a traumatic brain injury. Cifka, his wife, Kait, and young son, Wyatt, spent more than two years at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Washington, D.C. He endured more than 30 surgeries to restore his ability to perform everyday tasks and walk with prosthetics.

On a hot July day this year, Cifka, now a retired sergeant, and his family had a special homecoming in Canyon Lake, where they moved into a specially adapted smart home built by the

Gary Sinise Foundation's Restoring Independence Supporting Empowerment program.

The Gary Sinise Foundation launched in 2011, when the Academy Award-nominated actor helped build a home on Staten Island, New York, for Brendan Marrocco, the first surviving quadruple amputee from the war in Iraq. After Marrocco, there was another quadruple amputee in need. Then another.

Sinise builds on a long history of special support for veterans. In the 1980s, he reached out to Vietnam vets, offering a night out at the Steppenwolf Theatre, which he co-founded in his native Chicago. During the 1990s, he started work for the Disabled American Veterans organization. His seminal role as double-amputee Lieutenant Dan in the 1994 film *Forrest Gump* amplified his outreach with USO tours and the creation of the Lt. Dan Band, which performs more than 20 shows every year to raise spirits and money for veterans and first responders.

"We have a whole new generation,

**Lucas Cifka, above, with his family, and Guillermo Tejada live in specially adapted homes in Canyon Lake.**

**STORY AND PHOTOS  
BY JULIA ROBINSON**





GARY ZIMMER  
NATIONAL GUARD  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

FRONT

ALLY





**Left:** Cifka displays sand from Omaha Beach, a letter from his mother and his grandfather's dog tags. His home features a pull-down rack in his kitchen. **Above:** Tejada plays with his youngest son, David, in his home built with wide doorways and hallways for maneuvering his wheelchair. **Opposite:** Travis Green, left, Cifka and Tejada live in Sinise Foundation-built homes in the same neighborhood in Canyon Lake.

because of 9/11, of real-life Lieutenant Dans out there," Sinise says. "My foundation is sort of the umbrella to bring people together. I wanted to create a foundation that would offer the American people this way forward if they wanted to help veterans."

In Cifka's new home, every room is wheelchair-accessible, including the shower. "I can sit right here, take a shower, controls are all right here," he says, gesturing at a panel. "I can turn around and roll through doorways and not hit my hands all the time."

Moving to the kitchen, Cifka demonstrates the oven, stove, microwave and cabinet pull-downs that he can operate from his chair. "The biggest point of contention for me and my wife was not putting dishes away," he says. "Now I don't have any excuse to do that."

He wheels into his son's room and watches him play with the green army men, colored blocks and Hot Wheels cars provided by the foundation's design team. "From day one with this injury, I wanted to be able to take care of my son," Cifka says. "With this house, I can watch him on my own because I can go everywhere and do everything."

Next door, Guillermo Tejada knows the hardships of injury

#### WEB EXTRAS

▶ See a slideshow with this story online.

and the benefits of the smart-home enhancements. In September 2010, while returning from foot patrol in Afghanistan, Tejada, a gunnery sergeant in the Marines, suffered an IED blast that took both his legs above the knee, ruptured an eardrum and inflicted devastating injuries to his left arm and hand as well as his brain.

Before receiving his new smart home, Tejada struggled with the everyday tasks required of a young father. "When I can't do something or I have a limitation because of my disabilities, it takes [me] back to that day that it happened," he says. "After something catastrophic like this happens, it's the small things that act as a constant reminder that your life is not the same anymore. That can play some pretty bad tricks with your mind."

Tejada moved into his smart home with wife, Veronica, and their four children in September 2016. He offers a glimpse of the life Cifka and his family can look forward to. "The best thing is being able to get everywhere with no obstacles. Being able to take care of myself without the worry of injuring myself, that's a big plus. The house has given me back a lot of things





‘The house has given me back a lot of things that were taken away from me. I’m fully independent.’



that were taken away from me. I’m fully independent.”

A third veteran, Travis Green, also a Marines gunnery sergeant, lives down the street with his four daughters. Green enlisted in 1999 and deployed to Kuwait, Iraq and finally Afghanistan. In September 2011, shortly before the completion of his tour, Green came under fire and lost both legs above the knee to an IED.

His home, completed in 2015, made space for his girls and a base of operations for his business, Stump Armour, which makes affordable, durable prosthetic feet for amputees.

All three veterans in the Canyon Lake area are members of Pedernales Electric Cooperative.

Cifka is appreciative of his new neighbors. “Already knowing two people in the neighborhood who are both in similar circumstances, who have kids who are used to seeing combat-wounded people, there’s a lot of camaraderie right there.”

“It’s a million little things that all add up to a brand-new life. The Gary Sinise Foundation is part of our extended family, and we’ll never be able to put into words what this means for our family,” says Cifka.

Working with more than a dozen charitable organizations and corporations, the Gary Sinise Foundation has completed 38 homes, with another 22 under construction across the country by the end of 2017. The families move into their fully furnished homes without a mortgage to pay.

Brad Morris, senior project manager for the RISE program, oversees the construction of many of these homes. Morris is a former Marine and owner of G. Morris Homes, a custom home-builder in Bulverde, just north of San Antonio. “Being a combat veteran myself, I found the opportunity to merge two passions, homebuilding and veterans’ causes, into ... one of the most rewarding experiences of my life,” says Morris.

The list of adaptations is long, explains Morris: wider hallways and doorways, zero-height thresholds, large showers with benches and handheld shower heads, bathrooms with expanded turning areas, grab bars, lighting controls, video-enabled security and intercom systems, along with home-automation features controlled with an iPad or iPhone. Some veterans need motorized lifts to get in and out of bed, special accessible bathtubs, or voice and motion activation.

“These homes are designed and built specifically to meet the needs of the veteran and his family and to restore their independence,” says Morris. “These homes remove all physical barriers that many of us may not realize even exist.”

The foundation has plans for three more homes in Texas this year—in Lakeway, Southlake and McKinney.

“Many years ago, when I began this journey, it became abundantly clear that we can never do enough for those who serve and sacrifice while defending and providing our precious freedom and liberty,” says Sinise, “but I also learned we can always do a little more.”

Learn more about **Julia Robinson** at [juliarobinsonphoto.com](http://juliarobinsonphoto.com).



# 'IT'S JUST WHAT YOU DO'

Hurricane Harvey spotlights hope, heart of statewide co-op family

**A**shley Hadley and her mother, Shelia Dierschke, pulled out a white folding table and chairs because the dining room table didn't have enough space. They set out piles of fried shrimp, hush puppies and all the fixings on Dierschke's Port Lavaca kitchen counter—all the makings of a family Labor Day feast.

Their guests were hundreds of miles from their own homes, a dozen worn, weary and mud-caked linemen at the end of another in a string of 15-plus-hour days of restoring power in the wake of Hurricane Harvey. They are family, all the same.

**STORY AND PHOTOS  
BY Chris Burrows**

"We had them all line up and get food, and we were just kind of serving them," said Hadley, whose husband, Michael, a Victoria Electric Cooperative lineman, invited the men, his co-workers

since the storm hit August 25. Hadley and her parents had for days taken turns providing warm meals in the field for the linemen, who were there from Trinity Valley and Grayson-Collin electric cooperatives, east and north of Dallas, respectively.

"Everybody just kind of pitched in," Hadley said. Other families provided laundry services and meals, on top of the three meals VEC provided daily for the more than 300 linemen who rushed in to help. "We did whatever we could."

After the strongest hurricane to make landfall in Texas in decades wrought destruction along the coastal bend and in East Texas, the co-op family did whatever it could to help restore power to some 179,000 and hope to many more. Stories of hope and heart reveal the awesome power of the cooperative spirit.

"That's what co-ops do," said David Nerada, service foreman for Victoria EC, which lost power to all 22,467 of its meters dur-





**Left: Victoria EC lineman Corey Turner, in the green hat, briefs Magic Valley EC linemen on power restoration strategy days after Harvey hit. Top: Amanda Reyes processes work orders in Victoria EC's operations center. Above: Anthony Landry, left, and Jackson EC lineman Ray Fitzgerald use an airboat along the Lavaca River.**

ing the storm's 130 mph winds. "We're a family. You need help? We drop everything and go help."

**HOPE** | One day before the storm's landfall, Randy Mahannah, general manager for North Plains EC, anticipated the destruction and asked his linemen stationed in Canadian, in the Texas Panhandle, if they were interested in helping with restoration efforts.

They were prepped and ready the next day. "They sat there all weekend, bothering the line superintendent, wondering when they were leaving," Mahannah said of his crew that months earlier battled ice storm and wildfire damage on its own system with the help of other co-ops.

Along the coast, San Patricio, Victoria and Jackson ECs mobi-

lized quickly as the storm approached, strengthened and made landfall as a Category 4 hurricane.

Mike Myers, manager of corporate services at Jackson EC, collected satellite radios and reviewed his co-op's emergency response plan as Harvey moved into the Gulf. "Before we knew it, we were on Page 5," he said.

Many employees spent nights on cots or air mattresses in their own co-op offices, fielding phone calls and Facebook comments from members and waiting for more help to arrive.

As the storm's eye passed through Rockport and Refugio, it entered San Patricio EC's service territory. Operations Manager Albert Gaitan's Beeville home survived, but "it was devastating to see that some people weren't so lucky," he said.

More than 600 outside personnel, from co-ops around the state and private companies, arrived to help the three coastal





**Wind damage from Harvey near Bonnie View in San Patricio EC service territory**

co-ops, as did supplies from still other co-ops and donations of food and water from grateful members. The storm eventually would affect 15 co-ops with wind and flood damage.

On Monday, August 28, North Plains EC's Canadian crew finally got the call it hoped for and made the 10-hour drive to San Patricio EC in two parts—the linemen's chance to pay it forward.

"I can't tell you how many of them [co-ops] have reached out to us: 'What do you need? What can we do? We're sending people. How can we help?'" said Nina Campos, manager of human resources and communications at VEC.

For David McGinnis, general manager at Grayson-Collin EC, who made the trip with his linemen, it was just another in a long line of co-ops helping co-ops.

"It's just what you do," McGinnis said, "and, like I say, it doesn't matter if it's our members here at Grayson ... or whoever it is, they're still members of a co-op, and that's what we do—help each other out."

**HEART** Keith Stapleton always will remember how great and how eerie it sounded when the rain finally stopped.

"With a hurricane, usually six hours or so and it's through—it's gone—but this lasted for six *days*," said Sam Houston EC's chief communications officer.

Harvey made its second and third landfalls in East Texas, dumping unprecedented rainfall measured in feet, not inches. Sam Houston and Jasper-Newton ECs battled hard-to-reach outages that moved with the floodwaters amid wind-weary

trees and rain-soaked ground.

One night, around 2 a.m., 18 hours after a Sam Houston EC crew had won the fight to bring a substation back online: heartbreak.

"Fourteen minutes later, a tree falls near that substation on the transmission line and takes power out again," Stapleton said. "That was what the whole week was like. ... You just drop your head, take a breath and say, 'OK, we'll keep working.'"

Rivers swelled elsewhere, too, taking Jackson EC lineman Jimmie Scott's Bayside home, which his father built on family land decades ago.

"Everything's gone," Scott said. "My roof caved in. Everything was just destroyed."

But Scott never missed a day of work.

"How can you not stand in awe of someone who is so dedicated to their profession that they will, regardless of their personal tragedy, continue to do their job in a professional manner?" said Jim Coleman, Jackson EC general manager.

On September 10, Hurricane Irma struck Florida, knocking out power to 65 percent of the state before hitting Georgia and the Carolinas. With 99 percent of Harvey-affected co-op meters back up, Texas co-ops answered the call, including Jackson EC, whose weary linemen had just finished restoring their own power.

"The biggest thanks I could give some of my best linemen for working so hard here after Harvey was to let them rush off to Florida to answer the call of another cooperative in need," Coleman said. "It's our way."

**Chris Burrows** is a Texas Electric Cooperatives senior communications specialist.

#### WEB EXTRAS

► See video and more photos from Harvey's aftermath, a list of co-ops that sent aid, and how Texans helped with Irma recovery.



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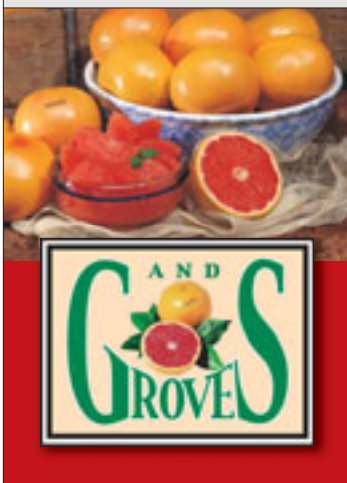
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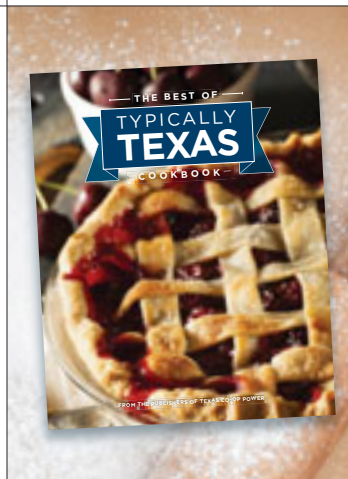
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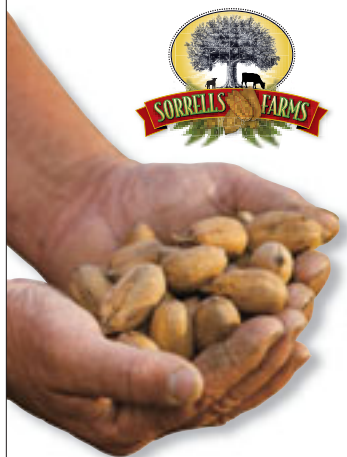
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## CONSERVATION AND SAFETY INFORMATION



## Energy Q&A

**OUR ENERGY ADVISOR ANSWERS FOUR OF THE MOST COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT energy conservation in the home.**

**Q: How important is it to seal air leaks in your home?**

**A:** Air leaks in the walls, ceilings and floors of your home can waste up to 30 percent of the energy consumed by heating and cooling equipment. Sealing air leaks reduces energy loss, helps control environmental contaminants such as dust and moisture, and makes your home more comfortable.

**Q: Why is it so important to keep the return air filter clean on your heating and cooling system?**

**A:** Clean filters keep your heating, ventilation and air conditioning system healthy. They enable it to run more efficiently, keep repair costs to a minimum and reduce monthly energy bills. Clogged filters make the HVAC system work harder as it conditions the air in your home, which raises your energy bill and shortens the life span of the equipment.

**Q: What is the proper temperature to set my thermostat?**

**A:** In the winter, 68 degrees when you are home, and 63–65 degrees when you're gone. In the summer, 78 degrees when you are home, and 81–83 degrees when you're away. For each degree above or below the recommended setting that you set your thermostat, you potentially can save 5–8 percent on your electric bill.

This is where a programmable thermostat really can help lower energy usage, by automatically changing the settings for you. Once you program the desired settings into the thermostat, you no longer have to remember to manually change the settings before you leave your house.

**Q: How much is enough insulation?**

**A:** In our part of the country, the 2012 Energy Code standards call for an insulation value of at least R-38 in the attic and R-17 on exterior walls.

Insulation is what resists the flow of heat into your home during the summer and out of your home in the winter. The higher the R-value of your insulation, the greater the resistance to heat flowing through it.

Most older homes do not have this level of insulation. However, it is relatively easy to add more insulation to most attics to increase the R-value. Walls are another story. Unless you are planning on tearing into your walls as part of a remodeling project, it is difficult and expensive to increase their level of insulation.

## What To Do if the Power Cuts Out

**THE HOUSE GOES DARK, AND EVERY-**thing inside is silent. No fans whirring, microwaves beeping or TVs displaying the news. Your power has just gone out, perhaps because of a raging storm outside.

**What do you do? During a power outage, stick to the following safety procedures:**

- ▶ Use flashlights, not candles, which can start a fire if you drop one in the dark.
- ▶ Keep your refrigerator door closed, and it will keep food cold for four hours. A closed freezer will stay cold for up to two days without electricity.
- ▶ Dress in layers indoors when it's cold outside and your heater has stopped.
- ▶ Never, ever heat your house with the oven or a charcoal grill, which could cause carbon monoxide poisoning. Instead, see if a family member or friend with electricity can take you in temporarily.
- ▶ Unplug appliances and electronics in case of a sudden power surge, which can damage your equipment.
- ▶ Your backup generator belongs outdoors, not in your house or garage. The carbon monoxide in the exhaust could be hazardous.

**Once the power comes back on:**

- ▶ Toss out food that has been exposed to temperatures warmer than 40 degrees for more than two hours and restock any emergency supplies you used.





# Phone Chargers and Water: Bad Call

## OUR CELLPHONES SEEM INDISPENSABLE

these days—especially to the younger generation. It's true: Phones are handy, combining the functions of a telephone, clock, camera, TV, computer and lots of other machines into one small package that's easy to carry everywhere. But sometimes, the habit of taking our phones everywhere can get us into trouble.

This was the case with Madison Coe, 14, of Lubbock, who was electrocuted in July when she attempted to use and charge her phone while taking a bath at her father's home in Lovington, New Mexico.

Coe's family gave Lovington police permission to release her last text message, in which she wrote: "When you use [an] extension cord so you can plug your phone in while you're in the bath." Attached to the message was a photo of a charger plugged into an extension cord resting on a towel.

A police report confirmed that the phone was never immersed. The phone's charger cord was connected to an extension cord, which was plugged into a nongrounded bathroom wall outlet that didn't have a ground-fault circuit interrupter. Coe "took precautions to keep the connection of the cords dry," the report states, but "it is believed she was not aware of a significant area of fraying to the extension cord."

This tragic event highlights several intersecting electrical safety concerns: cellphones and chargers, extension cords, outlets and water. Review these points with your family and you could save a life.

## Water and Electric Appliances

First, the most basic—and important—point: Electricity and water should never mix. Keep all electrical appliances away from water. Never rest anything plugged in on the edge of a sink, tub or toilet, or outside near a pool or hot tub. Make sure hands are dry and you are not standing in or touching water while touching anything electrical.

Parents should remind children that a cellphone is an electrical appliance just as likely as an electric razor or hair dryer to cause a shock with water, and encourage kids to put down their phones before going into bathroom or pool areas.

## Cords and Plugs

Once a charger is connected, the risk of shock increases. Appliances have protective, insulated cords and coverings to prevent contact with the electricity inside, but if the insulation or



Even though some phones are water-resistant, their chargers are electrical devices that are very dangerous near water.

the appliance covering becomes damaged, users are at risk of contacting a bare live wire, which could cause serious shock. Inspect cords and plugs regularly, and throw away any that show fraying or damage to the grounding prong.

## Outlets

Outlets should be equipped with ground-fault circuit interrupters if they are in areas near water, such as bathrooms, kitchens, utility rooms, and outdoors around pools and hot tubs. A GFCI can prevent electrocution by immediately cutting power to a circuit when it detects a fault through contact with water.

Outlets equipped with GFCIs have buttons that read "Test" and "Reset," and should be tested regularly for proper functioning. If you need to install GFCI outlets in your home's water areas, contact a licensed electrician.

An estimated average of 70 electrocution fatalities per year were associated with consumer appliances between 2007 and 2009, according to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, which assisted police in the investigation into Coe's death. The most common product categories associated with these electrocutions were small appliances, large appliances and power tools.

Paying attention to the dangers of electricity around water can help prevent an unthinkable tragedy like the one that befell Madison Coe. Make sure you and your family know how to stay safe.

# Nature Works for Nothing

Windmills dotting the Texas landscape evolve over century and a half

BY E. DAN KLEPPER

“NATURE WORKS FOR NOTHING,” AN 1898 windmill advertisement reads. Windmillers, however, do not. As long as windmills continue to work across the ranchlands of West Texas, so will the windmillers who climb the towers, lubricate the mills, tighten the brakes, repair the sails, pull the pumps and couple the rods.

The windmill and the windmill go hand-in-hand, much the same way that wind and water together make agriculture and ranching possible in arid lands. Perhaps that’s why a windmill is often named for its windmill, typically the same person who drilled its well.

Examine a topographic map of the West Texas grasslands from Sanderson to Van Horn, and you’ll see the names of mountain humps and hilly bumps like Santiago, Elephant and Cathedral, along with railroad watering stations like Tesnus (sunset spelled backward). In between, you’ll find poetry in windmill names—the Starr, Beakeley, Syl and Wagner—tiny markers in a vast sea of grass, testimonies to lives long passed.

“Windmill” might seem like an odd job title to city dwellers, but landowners continue to employ water well drillers and windmillers. In fact, windmillers have their own quarterly newsletter, *Windmillers’ Gazette*, in print for more than 35 years.

Today’s self-governing windmill is the invention of New England mechanic Daniel Halladay. Wind power was the rage in the 1850s, inspiring more than 50 patents for windmills and windmill improvements. But it was Halladay who designed the first windmill that ran without human in-

tervention, turning automatically to face the wind and governing its own speed to avoid self-destruction by centrifugal force.

Constructed primarily of wood with iron wheel arms, the Halladay Standard windmill faced the wind with the aid of a rigid vane, much like a weathervane, turning the blades to face the wind at the optimal angle for maximum power. If the wind made the wheel turn too fast, a centrifugal governor altered the wheel’s position, exposing less blade surface to the wind. The wheel also could be positioned parallel to the wind, ensuring that the wheel wouldn’t turn at all in high winds.

In another Halladay design, called a sectional-wheel windmill, the wheel was composed of blade sections that pivoted, modifying the amount of surface exposed to the wind, opening and closing with the wind speed like an umbrella. These vane-

## WEB EXTRAS

► Read *Drawing Power From Thin Air* [June 2015] and learn about the American Wind Power Center in Lubbock.





less mills used a counterweight system to keep the wheel facing the wind. The weights were whimsically shaped as well as functional: cast metal in the shapes of roosters, draft horses, squirrels, cows, bulls, footballs and even battleships.

The Rev. Leonard H. Wheeler improved Halladay's design with the Eclipse windmill. The Eclipse introduced the vane-and-wheel combination windmill we see today. A rigid wheel modified its wind angle using a hinged vane that moved rather than a fixed vane like the Halladay Standard.

Between 1854 and 1920, more than 700 companies manufactured thousands of windmills in the U.S.; of those, only Aermotor Windmill Company is left. Aermotors are the most recognizable today. Their water-lifting power and smooth pumping action made them the favored windmill of pioneers as they moved west and of the railroads, in need of water for their boilers as they crisscrossed the country.

In 1915, Aermotor introduced the auto-oiled windmill, a dramatic change in both the windmill design and the priorities of

the windmill's schedule. With the innovation, the windmill motor required a once-a-year oil change rather than weekly maintenance. The improvement was simple. Aermotor enclosed all the working parts in a gearbox, where gears could bathe constantly in a lightweight lubricating oil.

A significant increase in steel manufacturing throughout the first half of the 20th century along with the rise of mass production enabled Aermotor to convert its wooden windmill inventory to steel. Then, in 1933, the company introduced the Aermotor 702. The 702 enabled the windmill to replace worn-out bearings, key parts in a self-governing device. Since then, Aermotor has dominated the American windmill market.

Aermotor's journey started in Chicago in 1888 with LaVerne Noyes, an inventor familiar with the rudiments of manufacturing. The company grew so rapidly that, by 1904, the factory covered several acres. With mass production in place, Aermotor could drop windmill prices to about one-sixth of the original cost, selling 8-foot windmills

**Chad Peterson, owner of Concho Windmill & Pump Service, atop a windmill in San Angelo**

for around \$25. An 8-footer will typically pump 180 gallons of water an hour in 15–20 mph winds, raising the water approximately 175 feet from an underground well, the average water table depth in Texas.

Today, the Aermotor Windmill Company, owned by Texans, operates out of San Angelo and continues to sell a lot of windmills. The Aermotor remains perhaps the most efficient and economically viable way to bring water to the surface, particularly because the wind is free.

Ironically, wind is also often the source of a windmill's demise. Strong wind currents and storms collapse towers, shear blades and wrap tailbones around gearboxes. But even a twisted windmill is a thing of beauty. Form transcends function, illustrating the poetic truth for both wind and windmill found in another ad from the 1800s that reads, "Her forces are never exhausted."

**E. Dan Klepper** is a photographer, author and artist who lives in Marathon.

# A Mesquite Treat

Beans from the ubiquitous Texas trees surprise with flavor and nutrition

BY EILEEN MATTEI

A TANTALIZING AROMA FLOATS THROUGH Victoria Cappadona's kitchen, where mesquite bean pods are simmering. She offers me a taste of the warm Cappadona Ranch mesquite jelly she creates from an infusion of mesquite pods mixed with lemon, sugar and pectin. The silky, amber jelly melts on my tongue and makes me want to eat it by the spoonful. Imagine honey collected from hives in a sun-drenched grove of flowering mesquites.

When city girl Victoria Barrera from McAllen married into a Hidalgo County ranching family (members of Magic Valley Electric Cooperative), she asked her father-in-law about uses for all the mesquite beans. Fred Cappadona told her that cattle and wildlife eat them. Years ago, he explained, he heard stories about Native Americans and early settlers making flour from the pods and medicinal remedies from the tree's leaves, sap and bark.

In 2012, while researching traditional uses of mesquite, Victoria Cappadona found that mesquite concoctions, lotions and teas had long been used for fevers, burns, wounds, headaches, eye inflammations and digestive problems. The potential use of mesquite beans in recipes captured her attention.

"Who would have thought mesquite would be so amazing a food? The shell is what has the natural sugar and flavor of the mesquite," she explains. "The natural fructose means it doesn't initially require insulin to break it down. And since it takes hours to metab-

olize, you don't get sugar spikes." Nutritional studies have revealed that mesquite beans have a low glycemic index and are high in fiber, calcium and iron.

Victoria Cappadona perfected a mesquite bean jelly recipe and made jars for family and friends. As demand soared, she developed another mesquite jelly with chile pequin that balances sweet and hot. She designed the Cappadona Ranch Mesquite Bean Jelly logo and began selling both varieties at livestock shows, festivals and online.

"Many older people say, 'Oh, my gosh, that jelly reminds me of when I was a kid chewing on a mesquite bean,' " said Cappadona's husband, Justin. And her father, a retired physician, recalled eating mesquite pods as candy. That's no surprise, since the pods' sugar content can reach 30 percent.

During June and July, the Cappadonas and their three sons—Cayetano, 15; Federico, 13; and Vicente, 10—harvest mesquite beans on the 2,500-acre ranch. "A good mesquite looks like a Christmas tree covered in golden pods," she said. Justin Cappadona drives the front-end loader fitted with a railed platform where the boys stand and harvest the beans. In 2016, they

picked enough to fill sixteen 55-gallon drums. That supplies enough for all the flour, tea, coffee and jelly they produce in a year. About 2 pounds of beans can be simmered into enough jelly for more than 100 eight-ounce jars.

"The kids are learning re-



VICTORIA CAPPADONA





#### WEB EXTRAS

► See more photos and a recipe for Cappadona Ranch Mesquite Ribs.

sponsibility and the value of a dollar,” Victoria Cappadona said. “We have a limited window for picking, so when there is work to be done, they need to help out. When they are involved, they appreciate the results more.”

Victoria Cappadona sun-dries the pods and stores them to make jelly year-round. “Heaven knows we have enough mesquite trees to do that.” Previously, even after doubling production every year, she ran out of jelly before Christmas. She has moved the operation to a commercial kitchen in McAllen to accommodate growth.

The website, [cappadonaranch.com](http://cappadonaranch.com), offers Victoria’s video recipes, including mesquite flour pancakes. “The nut-flavored flour, ground from the whole bean, is great for baking and gluten-free,” she said. “You

replace one cup of wheat flour with one-quarter to one-half cup of mesquite flour. The pancakes taste so nutty and sweet, they don’t need syrup.”

An accident led to another tasty product. “The boys were squabbling, a delivery man was at the door and beans were drying in the oven. When I got back to the beans, they were roasted,” Victoria Cappadona said. Recalling a story that Civil War soldiers made camp coffee from roasted mesquite beans, she decided to grind the pods in a coffee grinder and brew them. The result was a savory, high-protein coffee substitute. She also ground roasted mesquite seeds for tea. “With their natural sugar, the tea and coffee provide an energy rush without caffeine.

“We suspected mesquite’s nutritional value was remarkable, but we wanted

**Cayetano, Federico and Vicente Cappadona collect mesquite bean pods that their mother will make into mesquite jelly, coffee and flour.**

proof—and got it,” she said, thanks to a McAllen Chamber of Commerce Innovation Grant. It enabled Cappadona Ranch to order nutritional studies that cost \$1,000 per product. A USDA Value-Added Producer Grant helped buy ingredients and packaging. The brand participates in the Texas Department of Agriculture’s Go Texan program, which promotes the state’s products.

While cattlemen might have a love-hate relationship with the mesquite tree itself, Cappadona Ranch has transformed the tree’s beans into delectable native Texan foods.

**Eileen Mattei**, a member of Nueces and Magic Valley ECs, lives in Harlingen.



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# Steel of Approval

*At \$49, this blade of Damascus steel is a real steal*

Damascus steel is legendary. Tales of its unmatched strength, sharpness and durability ring through the ages. There are stories of gun rifles being sliced in two by Damascus steel swords and individual strands of hair being sliced in half, even if they gently floated down on to the edge of the blade.

**Now, you can be a part of the legend.** The *Legend Knife* boasts nearly 4" of famed Damascus steel with its signature, wavy pattern. Damascus steel blade knives can cost thousands. So, at **\$49**, the price itself is almost legendary.

Cast Damascus steel, known as wootz, was popular in the East and it's an exacting process that's part metalwork, part chemistry. It's produced by melting pieces of iron and steel with charcoal in a low oxygen environment. During the process, the metals absorb carbon from the charcoal and the resulting alloy is cooled at a very slow rate. The outcome is a beautiful one-of-a-kind pattern of banding and mottling reminiscent of flowing water.

Once a lost art, we sought out a knifemaker who has resurrected the craftsmanship of Damascus steel to create the *Legend Knife*. The genuine Damascus steel blade folds into a tri-colored pakkawood handle that's prepared to resist the ravages of the great outdoors. When not in use or on display, The *Legend Knife* stays protected in the included genuine leather sheath.

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— knifeart.com

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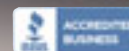


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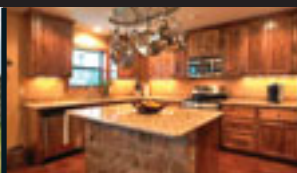
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# Buffalo Bilked

Delivering American bison to the king of Spain proved nearly impossible

BY MARTHA DEERING

WHEN KING CARLOS III TOOK THE SPANISH throne in 1759, he vowed to increase Spain's influence in the European scientific community and diversify the Spanish economy. With these ideas in mind, Carlos ordered officials to ship him foreign creatures from all over the world so he could display them in his personal zoos. According to Bradley Folsom's article *An Interesting and Odd Present in Southwestern Historical Quarterly* [July 2016], Carlos acquired alligators, monkeys, anteaters, leopard cubs, iguanas and a hermaphroditic horse. But he longed to possess a herd of American bison, which he planned to domesticate for their wool and "tasty meat" and for use as draft animals.

The bison had other ideas.

Texas, then a part of New Spain, seemed the most likely place to capture the animals, and the king sent word to acquire and transport as many American bison as possible. The order landed on the desk of Texas Gov. Domingo Cabello y Robles, who sent an experienced hunter, Carlos Rioja, to capture the animals alive, drive them hundreds of miles to Veracruz and launch them on a voyage to Spain. Had he consulted Native Americans, he would have known that a herd of cantankerous bison, when threatened, scatters in every direction.

Europe has bison, but they are smaller and lack the pronounced hump, low-hanging head, short horns and wooly coats of American bison, which had been described by Spanish explorers as "large hump-backed animals with very long beards like goats, tails they carry erect like a scorpion when running and hair rough as a lion's mane but wooly like a sheep."

In May 1779, Rioja gathered some assistants from the San Antonio area along with "substantial provisions" provided by the governor and set out on a bison roundup. They were successful in locating and cap-



turing bison; the difficulty came when they tried to drive the animals across the plains. Rioja discovered that the bison were inclined to "kill themselves in anger" when restrained, or succumbed to heat stroke along the way. The herders arrived at their destination with only a single female.

Rioja's second expedition did slightly better, rounding up 20 animals. But the searing June heat winnowed them out on the trail, and only two 6-month-old calves reached San Antonio. This dismal record prompted a decision to wait for winter to launch a third expedition. In the interim, ranchers in La Bahia sent word that they had captured four bison.

"It is impossible to explain to Your Lordship," the governor wrote on January 10, 1780, "the pains I am taking to ensure success, sparing no expense or other requirement, for it is my hope to pursue the delight of serving and pleasing Your Lordship."

Cabello assigned an officer and well-known hunter to escort the six remaining animals to the ship. Four of the six died, leaving a single male and a female for the king. Recognizing the stakes, the officer suspended the animals in leather har-

nesses in the hold of the ship to keep them from harming themselves, fed them corn and soaked them with water every day to avoid overheating. In spite of these extreme measures, the male bison died upon arrival in the Spanish port of Cádiz.

Carlos developed a great fondness for the remaining animal, moving it to the royal family's spring residence, where it joined camels, ostriches, an elephant and other exotic animals. A sculpture of the buffalo graced the estate's entrance. The military officer who escorted the buffalo to Spain remained until the animal died in 1784, whereupon he was promoted to the rank of lieutenant and given a reward of 10,000 *reales* and return passage to Texas.

"It has always been customary for monarchs to display their greatness by keeping the rarest and most unusual species of animals, plants and fruits from other countries in their palaces and royal houses," says Carlos Gómez-Centurión in his article *Treasures Fit for a King*, but European courts were hard-pressed to secure America's largest land mammal for their collections.

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

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*"It is made just the way I like Christmas cakes to be, rich and moist, and totally packed with fruit and nuts - I am almost ashamed to say that I consumed one whole one myself - in the space of a week I hasten to add."*



# Thanksgiving Side Dishes

WHEN IT COMES TO THANKSGIVING, often you're either in it for the main event—a gorgeous roasted turkey—or for the side dishes. I dream about giblet gravy, stuffing and mashed potatoes that round out the table. The other essential item on our menu is cranberry relish: I love how the burst of color and tart-sweet flavor brightens a meal that tends to be mostly beige. Best of all, this recipe can be made ahead and refrigerated up to a week in advance, meaning one less thing on the turkey-day to-do list. We wish you a happy and healthy Thanksgiving!

PAULA DISBROWE, FOOD EDITOR

## Paula's Cranberry Relish

- 1 pound fresh or thawed frozen cranberries
- 1½ cups dried sour cherries or dried cranberries
- 1½ cups sugar
- ½ cup red wine (or pure, unsweetened cranberry juice)
- 2 pods star anise
- 1 cinnamon stick
- ½ cup freshly squeezed Satsuma tangerine juice (or orange juice)
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt

1. In a heavy medium saucepan, combine all the ingredients and bring to a simmer over medium heat. Cook the sauce about 10–15 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the cranberries burst and the texture becomes thick and jam-like.
2. Use a spatula to transfer the sauce into a heatproof bowl and let cool completely. Season with salt to taste and refrigerate until chilled.
3. Serve the sauce cold or at room temperature. Remove cinnamon stick and star anise just before serving.

**COOK'S TIP** The sauce will thicken upon standing. Stir in a few tablespoons of water, if desired, for a thinner consistency.

JODY HORTON

# Recipes

## Thanksgiving Side Dishes



### THIS MONTH'S RECIPE CONTEST WINNER

BETSY KUEBLER | FARMERS EC

"This ultrarich, incredibly delicious side has all the smooth consistency of silk," says Kuebler. *Texas Co-op Power* staff loved the versatility: The custard-like pie could be flavored with sliced scallions and fresh cilantro, cubed ham or crumbled bacon, roasted red peppers or countless other options.

### Cornsilk Pudding Pie

- 3 eggs
- 1 cup heavy cream
- ¼ cup (½ stick) butter, melted
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon each black pepper and cayenne pepper, or less, as desired for heat
- 1 pound frozen corn kernels, thawed
- 2 cups shredded sharp cheddar cheese
- 1 cup grated Parmesan cheese

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Lightly mist interior of a 9-inch pie dish with nonstick cooking spray (or lightly coat with olive oil or butter).
2. In a large mixing bowl, beat together the eggs, cream, butter and seasonings. Stir in corn.
3. Pour half of corn mixture into prepared pie dish. Sprinkle cheddar cheese over corn mixture. Pour remaining corn mixture over cheddar layer. Sprinkle with Parmesan.
4. Bake 50 minutes, or until set. Makes one 9-inch pie.

## Sweet Potato Casserole

JULIE REAMES | COSERV

Staffers judged this sweet potato casserole (fragrant with spices and finished with a crunchy pecan topping) to be the best they'd tasted. No wonder it has a permanent place on Reames' holiday table. "It wouldn't be Thanksgiving without this dish," she says.

### SWEET POTATOES

2-3 medium sweet potatoes  
(2½-3 pounds)

- 1 cup evaporated milk
- 1 cup sugar
- 6 tablespoons (¾ stick) butter, melted
- 2 eggs, lightly beaten
- ½ teaspoon nutmeg
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon vanilla
- Pinch salt, or more as desired

### TOPPING

- 1 cup crushed cornflakes
- ½ cup light brown sugar
- ½ cup chopped pecans
- 6 tablespoons (¾ stick) butter, melted

1. Preheat oven to 425 degrees.
2. **SWEET POTATOES:** Bring a large saucepan of water to a boil. While the water heats, peel the sweet potatoes and slice them into 1½-inch cubes. Add the sweet potatoes and 1 teaspoon salt to the boiling water, reduce heat to a lively simmer and cook until the sweet potatoes are tender when pierced with a knife, about 7-9 minutes. Drain and mash potatoes.
3. Combine the mashed sweet potatoes, evaporated milk, sugar, butter, eggs, nutmeg, cinnamon, vanilla and salt; mix well. Use a spatula to transfer the mixture to a 9-by-12-inch baking dish. Bake about 15 minutes.
4. **TOPPING:** While the potatoes are baking, combine the cornflakes, brown sugar, pecans and butter in a small bowl and mix well.
5. Remove sweet potatoes from oven, lower the heat to 400 degrees and add the topping. Bake about 15 minutes more, until the topping is golden brown. Serves 8-10.

**COOK'S TIP** To balance the sweet flavors in this casserole, generously season the sweet potatoes with kosher salt when you mash them.



IF YOUR RECIPE IS FEATURED,  
YOU'LL WIN A TCP APRON!

### \$100 Recipe Contest

April's recipe contest topic is **Breakfast Pastries**. Muffins, biscuits, scones—is there a tastier way to start the day? Send us your best recipes. The deadline is **November 10**.

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.



## Thanksgiving Countdown

The secret to making turkey day fun and worry-free? Start early!

### 3 WEEKS AHEAD

**Plan your pretty holiday table** (name cards? flowers? candles?).

**Choose strategic side dishes** that free up the oven and finalize menu.

### 2 WEEKS AHEAD

**Prepare frozen foods** such as pie dough and chicken stock in advance.

**Stock beverages**, including cocktails or wine as well as drinks for the kids.

### 1 WEEK AHEAD

**Purge and clean your fridge** to make room for holiday cooking.

**Thaw turkey.** (This can take a couple of days.)

**Match serving dishes** to recipes.

**Shop for fresh ingredients** to avoid the crowds.

### 2-3 DAYS BEFORE

**Soups, appetizers** (dips) and cranberry sauces all improve if made in advance.

**If you're doing a liquid brine**, now's the time.

**Go over recipes one last time** to make sure you have everything you need. Consider organizing them on sheet pans.

### DAY BEFORE

**Bake pies**, make salad dressings, prepare crudités and refrigerate in zip-close bags.

**Cube and dry bread** or cornbread for stuffing.

### GAME DAY

**You've got this.** Happy Thanksgiving!

—PD

## Zucchini Gratin Casserole

KATHI BURTON | PEDERNALES EC

The ingredients in Burton's casserole come together in a particularly rich, creamy base. Buttery crackers and Gruyere create a delicious, crunchy topping. (Or you can use Parmesan or sharp cheddar.) Mix up the vegetables with yellow crookneck squash or a few sweet red peppers.

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup chopped onion
- 3 large zucchini, stemmed and cut into 1-inch cubes
- 1 teaspoon salt

- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon ground black pepper
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon nutmeg
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon hot or smoked paprika (optional)
- 1 tablespoon flour
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup milk, heated
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup mayonnaise
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup crushed butter crackers
- $\frac{1}{3}$  cup grated Gruyere cheese

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

2. Heat olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat; add onion and sauté until light brown. Add the zucchini and

seasonings. Cook until squash is browned and barely tender, about 6–8 minutes.

3. Sprinkle in flour and cook about 2 minutes, stirring constantly, until the vegetables are coated. Pour in the milk and continue stirring until mixture thickens. Remove from heat and stir in mayonnaise. Pour the mixture into a  $1\frac{1}{2}$ -quart baking dish.

4. In a separate bowl, combine the crushed crackers and Gruyere. Sprinkle evenly over casserole. Bake until brown and bubbly, about 25 minutes. Serves 6–8.

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# Into the Woods

OVER THE RIVER AND THROUGH THE WOODS, our readers love the thrill of adventure—and, boy, do they have an eye for nature! They rooted around and dug up more good stuff than you can shake a stick at. **GRACE ARSIAGA**

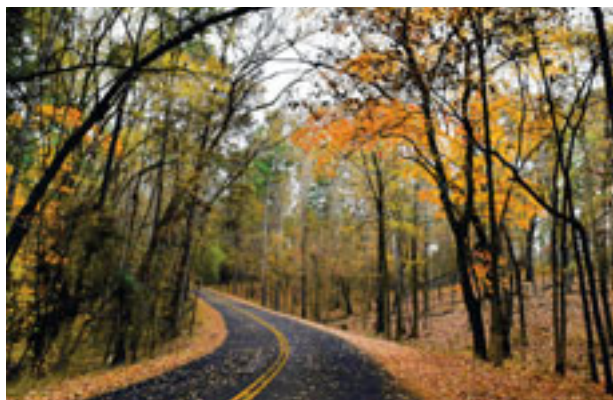
**WEB EXTRAS** ► See more photos online.



▲ **JACK MILCHANOWSKI**, Wise EC: A cougar stalks prey in the woods.

► **SARAH ELKINS**, Wood County EC: “Sunday afternoon at Tyler State Park”

▼ **STEVE STEGER**, Karnes EC: “A lone fisherman out at sunrise in a cypress forest at Caddo Lake”



## UPCOMING CONTESTS

MARCH DOWNTOWN	DUE NOVEMBER 10
APRIL WESTERN WEAR	DUE DECEMBER 10
MAY PROM NIGHT	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.



▲ **LINDA BRANNEN**, Pedernales EC: “Seaside to Indian Beach, Oregon, is a portion of the Lewis and Clark trail.”

◀ **BOBBY NORRIS**, Pedernales EC: “Small wooden footbridge leading into the woods at Rocky Mountain National Park”



## Pick of the Month

### Scottish Gathering & Highland Games

**Salado** November 10-12

(254) 947-5232, [saladoscottishfestival.com](http://saladoscottishfestival.com)

The gathering, which began in 1961 and is said to be the oldest Scottish festival in Texas, includes the skirl of the bagpipes, the wearing of the tartan, tossing the caber, highland dancing and Celtic entertainers. A main feature is the Clan Village, where Scottish clan members speak about history and genealogy.



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## November

7

**Tyler** First Tuesday in the Garden/Master Gardeners, (903) 590-2980, [txmg.org/smith](http://txmg.org/smith)

8

**Harlingen** [8-12] Rio Grande Valley Birding Festival, (956) 423-5565, [rgvbf.org](http://rgvbf.org)

9

**Neches** [9-12] Mudaholic Convention, (903) 724-4100, [riverrunpark.com](http://riverrunpark.com)

10

**Bastrop** [10-11] Heroes & Hotrods Car Show, (512) 303-0558, [bastropdowntown.com](http://bastropdowntown.com)

**Winnsboro** [10-11] Art and Wine Festival, (903) 850-1772, [facebook.com/winnsborartwine](http://facebook.com/winnsborartwine)

11

**Lucas** Ribs n' Raptors, (469) 964-9696, [bpraptorcenter.org](http://bpraptorcenter.org)



November 18

Jasper

Lakes Area Cruisers Car Show

**Schulenburg** Freyburg UMC Country Christmas Bazaar, (979) 217-1151, [freyburgumc.org/country-christmas-bazaar](http://freyburgumc.org/country-christmas-bazaar)

**Bulverde** [11-12] The Enjoyment of Model Railroading, (830) 438-4864, [santrak.org](http://santrak.org)

16

**Bedias** Country Market and Baked Potato Supper, (936) 577-0536

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**Longview** [16-19] *My Son Pinocchio Jr.*, (903) 236-7535, [artsviewchildrenstheatre.com](http://artsviewchildrenstheatre.com)

**17**

**Bryan** Lights On!, (979) 822-4920, [downtownbryan.com](http://downtownbryan.com)

**Milam** [17-18] Settlers Day Weekend, (409) 625-4876, [milamsettlersday.org](http://milamsettlersday.org)

**18**

**Jasper** [18-19] Lakes Area Cruisers Car Show, (409) 384-2762, [jaspercoc.org](http://jaspercoc.org)

**20**

**Cleburne** Whistle Stop Christmas Lighting Ceremony, (817) 645-2455, [visitcleburne.com](http://visitcleburne.com)

**23**

**Boerne** [23-Dec. 31] Christmas Light Fest, (210) 434-2340, [christmaslightfest.com](http://christmaslightfest.com)

**24**

**Galveston** Holiday Lighting Celebration, (409) 765-7721, [hotelgalvez.com](http://hotelgalvez.com)

**25**

**Coldspring** Town Lighting, (936) 653-2332

**Granbury** Rio Brazos Star Party, (817) 326-6005, [actontx.com/events](http://actontx.com/events)

## December

**1**

**Fredericksburg** Light the Night Christmas Parade & Afterglow, (830) 997-5000, [lightthenightchristmasparade.com](http://lightthenightchristmasparade.com)

**2**

**Elgin** Holiday by the Tracks, (512) 285-4515, [elgintx.com](http://elgintx.com)

**Farmersville** Farmers & Fleas Market, (972) 784-6846, [farmersvilletx.com](http://farmersvilletx.com)



December 2  
Lampasas  
Carol of Lights

**La Grange** Texas Czech Heritage and Cultural Center Christmas Open House and Gala, 1-888-785-4500, [czechtexas.org](http://czechtexas.org)

**Lampasas** Carol of Lights, (512) 556-2224, [lampasaschamber.org](http://lampasaschamber.org)

**Smithville** Festival of Lights, (512) 237-2313, [explorebastropcounty.com](http://explorebastropcounty.com)

**Wylie** Arts Festival Parade and Tree Lighting, (972) 516-6000, [wylitexas.gov/artsfestival](http://wylitexas.gov/artsfestival)

**Denison** [Dec. 9, 16] Home Front Christmas Saturdays, (903) 465-8908, [visiteisenhowerbirthplace.com](http://visiteisenhowerbirthplace.com)

**5**

**Nederland** Lighted Christmas Parade, (409) 722-0279, [nederlandtx.com](http://nederlandtx.com)

**7**

**Columbus** Ladies Night Out, (979) 732-8385, [columbusutexas.org](http://columbusutexas.org)

**Jacksonville** Christmas Parade, (903) 586-2217

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

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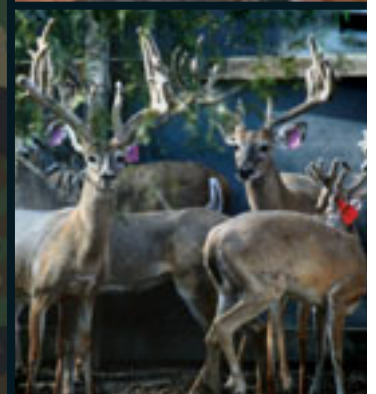
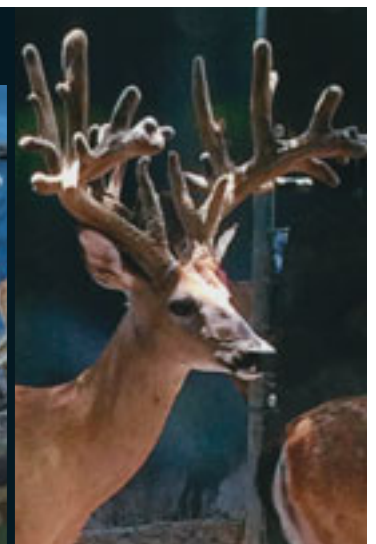
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# Saving Face in Malakoff

Mystique of the Malakoff Man started with discovery of carved head 90 years ago

BY MARILYN JONES

MANY TEXANS HAVE LONG BEEN CURIOUS about the large carved heads found near Malakoff, population 2,300, on Texas Highway 31 in Henderson County.

Most visitors drive through Malakoff on their way to Athens or Corsicana. The town dates to the early 1800s and thrived with the arrival of a railroad and the discovery of lignite (brown coal) in 1912. In 1904, Malakoff had nine general stores, three hotels, two grocery stores, three drugstores, a furniture store, two lumberyards, three theaters, a brick company, a butcher shop, six doctors, two barbers, an undertaker and nine builders.

To understand the area's greatest natural mystery, I check in with Pat Isaacson, director of the **Malakoff Historical Society and Museum**. The museum occupies a grand house on East Main Street and contains exact casts of the three heads designated as "the Malakoff Man."

Isaacson explains that in 1929, Thomas Bartlett, owner of Malakoff Pressed Brick Company (now Acme Brick Company), sent a crew to the Trinity River for a load of gravel. The workers knew when they found a 98-pound, 16-inch-long sculpture of a head that "they had something valuable. They brought it back to Mr. Bartlett," Isaacson says.

Bartlett displayed the head in his store until mining engineer V.C. Doctorman contacted the Texas Memorial Museum in Austin.

According to the Texas State Historical Association, Elias Howard Sellards, geologist and paleontologist, inspected the head and proclaimed it authentic. When a second head was discovered, in 1935, Glen Evans of the University of Texas at Austin decided further excavation was



The original Malakoff Man, discovered in 1929

justified. From 1929 to 1939, "they found three heads and the remains of mastodons, camels and sloths as big as steers," Isaacson says.

To view the original heads, I drive to Corsicana and visit the **Pearce Museum** at Navarro College. Ann Zembala, museum director, explains that one of the heads was donated to the museum several years ago by Mary Love Sanders, who had inherited the head from her great uncle, who owned the quarry where it was found.

With the help of state Rep. Byron Cook, the other two heads were moved to Corsicana from the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory at the University of Texas.

"They were discovered on the same piece of land within a 10-year time frame, but until now they have never been housed or displayed together," Zembala says. "Our new *Hunter Gatherers of the Blackland Prairie* exhibit is the perfect place for the three heads to be on permanent display."

The exhibit also features 44,000 prehistoric Native American tools and relics, many used for hunting mammoths, buffalo and other animals.

According to the TSHA, Sellards believed the first head came from an Eocene geological formation dating 50,000–

100,000 years ago and predates the first-known occupation of the continent by Paleo-Indians. More recent studies, however, show the deposit is Late Pleistocene and dates the heads to the era of the Paleo-Indians. As noted in the *Handbook of Texas*, other experts place the finds in the Archaic period, 3,000–4,000 years ago, based on a vague similarity to the colossal heads found along the Gulf and made by craftsmen of the Olmec civilization.

Some authorities ignore the validity of the Malakoff Man, while skeptics believe modern metal tools were used to carve the first head.

Another question arises because no other relics were unearthed with the heads. The excavation stopped in 1939 after discovery of the third head. The excavation site was inundated by Cedar Creek Reservoir, a recreational site north of Malakoff. Because no further excavation or research can take place, there always will be speculation surrounding the Malakoff Man. The mystery will remain.

Marilyn Jones lives in Henderson and writes about travel.



**WEB EXTRAS** ▶ Read about previous visits to Henderson County.



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