

# TEXAS CO-OP POWER

## TEXAS' MUSICAL POETS

Songwriters'  
association  
honors  
hit-makers

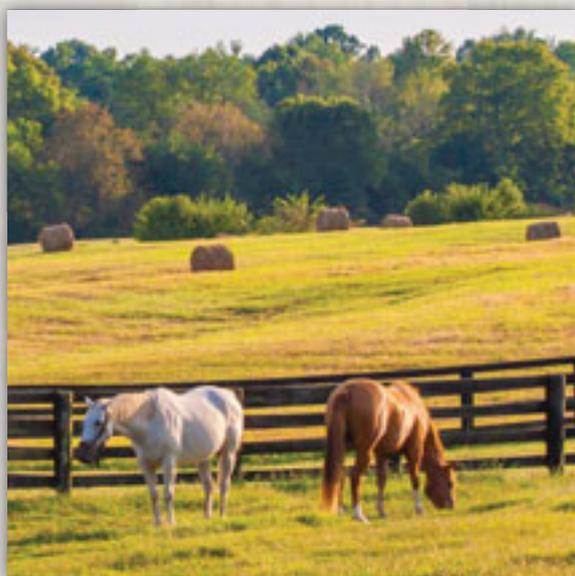
SONGWRITER BRUCE ROBISON



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Joe Ely, 2016 Texas Heritage Songwriters' Association Hall of Fame inductee

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JOE ELY; TED PARKER JR. FOOTBALL PLAYER; COURTESY UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS PRESS

**ON THE COVER** Bruce Robison was inducted into the Texas Heritage Songwriters' Association Hall of Fame in 2007. Photo by Kenny Braun

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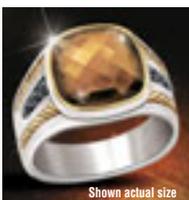
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## Harvey's Superheroes

Our daughter teaches in Woodsboro, southwest of Refugio. Like the other towns in that coastal area, Woodsboro incurred a lot of damage from Hurricane Harvey [*'It's Just What You Do,'* November 2017]. Power poles were snapped off one after another along long stretches of Highway 77, and fallen trees ripped down power lines throughout the town.

Teams of linemen arrived with fleets of bucket trucks, and what a welcome sight they were! I just want these linemen to know how grateful these storm victims are for your dedication and endless hours of work, often far from your own homes, to restore power to the area. You guys are real superheroes.

MARILYN MARSHALL | NEW BRAUNFELS  
GUADALUPE VALLEY EC

I have nothing but heartfelt gratitude and admiration for all the linemen and techs—those from the various co-ops and those who were borrowed or volunteered to come to the Texas coast—who got our power back on.

Yet well before all of Harvey's destruction was taken care of, many of those same linemen had to rush to Florida to assist after Hurricane Irma. Men and women, you are to be praised, thanked, commended and blessed.

JOYCE SCHAEFER | PORT LAVACA  
VICTORIA, PEDERNALES AND KARNES ECS

## Those Who Served

My father and many of my uncles served in World War II. My brother-in-law served in

## Restoring Service

We live in a very rural part of Rockport and have enjoyed San Patricio Electric Cooperative service for over 12 years. Our area was devastated by Harvey, and we would like to thank San Patricio EC employees for their outstanding performance in restoring service.

While all of the larger power providers were struggling to get their customers back in service, San Patricio EC went above and beyond our expectations to get us on the road to recovery.

ROBERT BOSTON | ROCKPORT | SAN PATRICIO EC



Vietnam. Countless friends have served this country so that we have freedom. I love my country and our flag, and I'm forever grateful for those who have served this country. We as a nation owe them [*Welcome Home,* November 2017].

CONNIE THOMAS | BOWIE  
WISE EC



## Checking Up on the Chicks

Well, first you had me hooked, but now I'm just irritated. I have

spent an hour trying to find the answer online for *Here a Chick, There a Chick* [Currents, October 2017]. What is the answer? KATHLEEN PHILLIPS | CAMP WOOD  
PEDERNALES EC

**Editor's note:** The riddle we printed in Currents was supposed to be fun, but more than a dozen readers let us know they couldn't find the answer at TexasCoopPower.com (it is there, we promise). Here is the riddle: 100 chicks sit peacefully in a circle. Suddenly, each chick pecks the chick immediately to its left or right. What is the expected number of unpecked chicks? The answer is 25. For any one chick, there are four possible outcomes: getting pecked only by the chick to its left, pecked only by the chick to its right, pecked by both chicks, or pecked by neither. Each of the four outcomes

is equally probable, so there is a one in four chance of any chick being unpecked. Because there are 100 chicks in the circle, each with a 25 percent chance of not being pecked, 25 is the expected outcome.

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   Texas Co-op Power

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## HAPPENINGS

# Destination: Crockett

A **LARRY GATLIN** show **JANUARY 27** is one of several the Piney Woods Fine Arts Association brings to **CROCKETT** as part of its 2017–18 event series. The goal is to make Crockett a destination for the arts in East Texas, says Glenn Barnhart, executive director of the association.

Upcoming shows at the Crockett Civic Center, a member of Houston County Electric Cooperative, include *The Great Gatsby* and Wynonna Judd. The co-op is a longtime sponsor and supporter of the association.

Piney Woods also features an arts-in-education program, including a Houston County youth talent show. “I’m most proud of the children’s programming,” Barnhart says. “Being able to bring artists from all over the world to share their music, art and talents with the kids is a wonderful experience.”

**INFO** ▶ (936) 544-4276, pwfaa.org



**WEB EXTRAS**  
▶ Find more happenings online.



**515,000!**

## BY THE NUMBERS

**515,000**—The number of milk cows in Texas as of July 2017, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

**Pour yourself a glass and celebrate National Milk Day on January 11.**

## ALMANAC

# BEFORE AIR FORCE ONE

**Franklin D. Roosevelt** became the first American president to travel by airplane 75 years ago. He flew in a Boeing 314 Clipper Flying Boat to a World War II strategy meeting with Winston Churchill at Casablanca in North Africa.

**He and his entourage** left Florida on January 11, 1943. After a stop in the Caribbean, they flew down the coast of South America to Brazil and then flew across the Atlantic to Gambia, then Morocco. They reached Casablanca on January 14.

## Did you know?



**THEODORE ROOSEVELT** flew in a plane in 1910, but it was after he left the presidency. He flew in a Wright Model B biplane.

*“Electricity seems destined to play a most important part in the arts and industries. The question of its economical application to some purposes is still unsettled, but experiment has already proved that it will propel a street car better than a gas jet and give more light than a horse.”*

— **AMBROSE BIERCE**, American Civil War soldier, author and wit



LIFESTYLE

## Hyperloop Highway

**ELON MUSK**, he of Tesla and SpaceX, is behind Hyperloop One, a transportation system that he hopes will propel pods of people through vacuum tubes at more than 700 mph. The pods would float in the tube via magnetic levitation or an air-bearing system (like an air-hockey table) and be propelled by an electric linear motor.

A Texas vision for Hyperloop anticipates endpoints in Dallas-Fort Worth, Austin, Houston and San Antonio, with a leg down to Laredo. People could zoom from Austin to Dallas in 19½ minutes.

The scientific community is energized by Musk’s dream and has been trying to advance the idea since about 2012. Two University of Texas teams participated in August 2017 in a competition, won by a German team, to design and build the best transportation pod. The highest speed reached at a test track near SpaceX headquarters in California was 220 mph.

SPORTS SECTION

## A HOOPS HOME RUN



**Fifty years ago** this month, a college basketball matchup called the Game of the Century took place in Houston. No. 1 UCLA, riding a 47-game winning streak, faced No. 2 Houston.

**Why was it the** Game of the Century? The January 20, 1968, game was in the Astrodome, before a crowd of 52,693—unprecedented at that time. It was televised live to a prime-time audience, which had never happened before. The Houston Cougars won 71-69, ending the UCLA Bruins’ winning streak.

**The court was set up** in the middle of the stadium, more than 100 feet from the spectators. “We played the game at second base in the Astrodome,” said UCLA star Lew Alcindor (who later became Kareem Abdul-Jabbar). “It was weird. It was like playing out on a prairie someplace.”

**Legendary broadcaster** Dick Enberg remembers Houston fans storming the court, racing past the press and officials, who were positioned in 18-inch-deep trenches dug at the court’s edges.

**“When Houston won,** it was like the return to the Alamo,” Enberg said. “People were leaping over us in the fox-holes. It was just this thundering herd.”

# Musical

TEXAS HERITAGE SONGWRITERS' ASSOCIATION SPOTLIGHTS STATE'S LYRICAL POETS

# Frontier



## ‘Most people think GEORGE STRAIT wrote

Joe Ables, board member for the Texas Heritage Songwriters' Association, headquartered in Austin. That's no knock on the pride of Pearsall, where Strait grew up (he was born in Poteet). It takes a special talent to pick good songs and to sing them so artfully that you make them seem indelibly your own. But it underscores the reason Terry Boothe founded the association in 2005.

“Songwriters are the poets of our culture,” Boothe says. “But in many cases, they're also its unsung heroes.” One of the most Texarific individuals who ever trod Lone Star soil, Boothe became an aficionado of the songsmith arts in the 1950s while attending then-rural Del Valle High School south of Austin. He discovered Willie Nelson as a songwriter long before the Red-Headed Stranger was a household name. Hoyt Axton became another early hero. “Hoyt's mother was even a songwriter,” Boothe adds. “She wrote *Heartbreak Hotel* for Elvis.”

Since 2006, the association has annually inducted at least two musical poets into its Texas Heritage Songwriters' Association

Hall of Fame. At its Hall of Fame Show at the Austin City Limits Moody Theater on February 23, the THSA will honor Buddy Holly, Liz Rose, Mickey Newbury and Ray Wylie Hubbard, who once lived in Poetry, Texas.

**BY GENE FOWLER** Commemorating the recognition, inductees each receive a small statue of Nelson. Willie got his own Willie when the Abbott native was inducted in 2009.

While Austin brags about its self-proclaimed status as the Live Music Capital of the World, and the bigger cities of Dallas, Houston and San Antonio each boast a rich musical legacy, many of the Hall of Fame songwriters hail from—and found their inspiration in—small-town and rural Texas. Several had their compositions covered by Strait, the perennial hit-maker.

“I'm from Meadow,” said Sonny Curtis in the short biographical video shown during his induction in 2013. “It's a pretty small town with not much to do, so my uncle used to let us come down



**LYLE LOVETT, STEVE EARLE (ON BEHALF OF TOWNES VAN ZANDT) AND ROBERT EARL KEEN**



**RAUL MALO  
TRIBUTE TO ROY ORBISON**



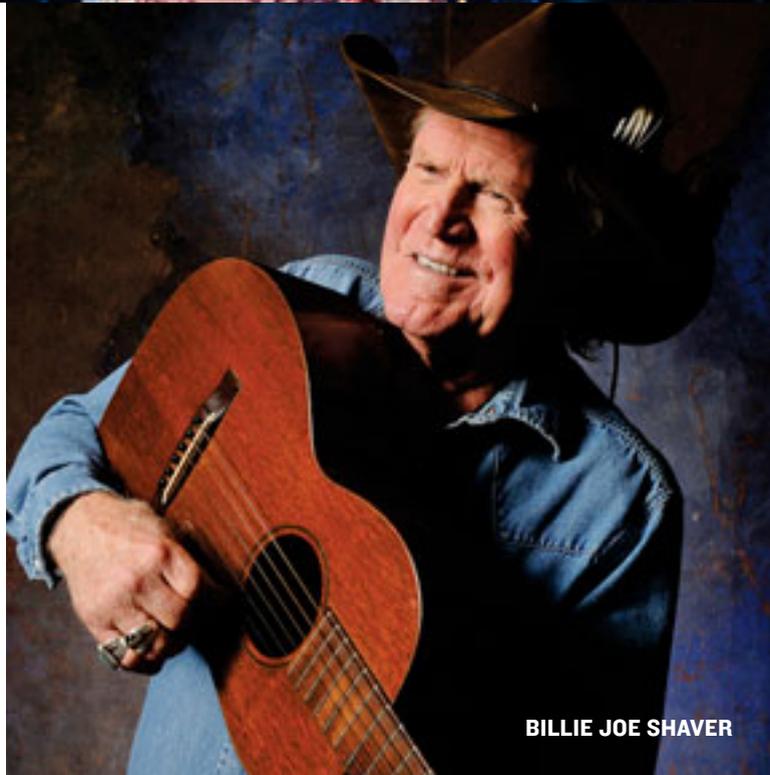
**RITA COOLIDGE  
TRIBUTE TO WILL JENNINGS**

## all those songs,' says

to his dry cleaners and try on other people's clothes." Born in a dugout in 1937, Curtis learned to play guitar at age 6 when his cotton-farmer father bought Curtis and his brothers some inexpensive instruments strung with baling wire. The family and neighbors made their own entertainment with "musical Saturday night" get-togethers.

By 1955, he was playing with Buddy Holly, reportedly becoming the first rocker to record playing a Fender Telecaster guitar. Several of Curtis' songs—including *I Fought the Law*, *Walk Right Back* and *I'm No Stranger to the Rain*—received so many radio plays that BMI inducted him into its Million-Airs Club. Another Curtis composition, *Love Is All Around*, the theme song for *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, proved that a Texas country boy could interpret the 1970s feminist movement.

Another Sonny, Sonny Throckmorton from Wichita Falls, inducted in 2006, penned the 1984 Strait classic, *The Cowboy Rides Away*.



**BILLIE JOE SHAVER**



JOE ELY



MICKEY NEWBURY



BUDDY HOLLY



2018 HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES



RAY WYLIE HUBBARD



LIZ ROSE



## Brownsville native KRIS KRISTOFFERSON, inducted in 2007, yard in 1969 to get a song-demo cassette into the Man in

The 11 songs Strait recorded by Whitney native Sanger D. “Whitey” Shafer include the plaintive *Does Fort Worth Ever Cross Your Mind?* and the infectious novelty singalong, *All My Exes Live in Texas*. Born into a gospel-singing family in 1934, Shafer began performing as a child. In 1950, when he first heard Corsicana native Lefty Frizzell singing *If You’ve Got the Money (I’ve Got the Time)* on a jukebox, it changed his life.

“It cost me quite a few nickels,” Shafer recalled, “but I learned that song right away.” In 1972, Frizzell became Shafer’s collaborator-mentor when Shafer knocked on the door of Frizzell’s Nashville home. For one of their best-known co-writes, *That’s the Way Love Goes*, Shafer sang the first three lines, then Lefty declared, “Well, that’s the way love goes.” The Texans had the classic eight-line verse in minutes.

When Frizzell died at 47 in 1975, Whitey wrote the aching *Lefty’s Gone*, and it, too, later received the tasteful Strait treatment.

Some THSA honorees have been even more proactive in efforts to get their songs heard and recorded by major stars. Brownsville native Kris Kristofferson, inducted in 2007, landed a National Guard helicopter in Johnny Cash’s front yard in 1969 to get a song-demo cassette into the Man in Black’s hands. When Waylon Jennings appeared to renege on a 1972 promise to record an album of songs by Corsicana-born Billy Joe Shaver

(inducted 2008), Shaver tracked him down at a Nashville recording studio and threatened to “whip his ass” if Jennings didn’t honor his word. The resulting landmark album, *Honky Tonk Heroes*, included only one song not written by Shaver.

When Mart native Cindy Walker’s cotton-broker father took the family to Hollywood on a business trip in 1941, the 23-year-old songwriter made him stop when she spotted the Crosby Building so that she could run inside and look for the heartthrob crooner Bing Crosby. She found his brother and publicist Larry Crosby and sang her song *Lone Star Trail* for him. Larry took her to meet Bing at Paramount the next morning.



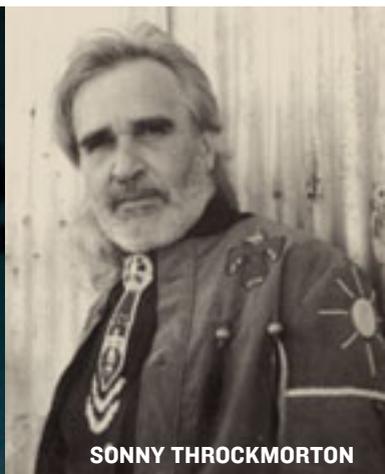
Willie Nelson statuette for inductees

Bing recorded the song, and Walker (inducted 2011) was on her way. The family relocated to Hollywood, and her songs were waxed by everyone from Grandpa Jones to Bette Midler. Bob Wills recorded more than 50 Walker tunes, including *Cherokee Maiden*, *Bubbles in My Beer* and her very first song, *Dusty Skies*, written as a teenager after reading about the Dust Bowl in her grandmother’s scrapbook. Ernest Tubb recorded some two dozen, including *Warm Red Wine* and *Two Glasses, Joe*.

Walker returned with her now-widowed



LEE ROY PARNELL AND KRIS KRISTOFFERSON



SONNY THROCKMORTON



CINDY WALKER

## landed a National Guard helicopter in JOHNNY CASH's front Black's hands.

mother to Texas in 1954, settling in Mexia and spending part of each year demoing new songs in Nashville. In 1955, she wrote one of her most resonant tunes, the melancholic *You Don't Know Me*, a song recorded by Eddy Arnold, Elvis Presley, Patti Page, Van Morrison and Ray Charles. Nelson included it on an all-Walker CD he released shortly before her death in 2006. A pink granite guitar marks her grave in the Mexia City Cemetery.

Asked about her writing process, Walker once said, "I always write from the title. The title tells the story, and the words and music just come together. The songs just sing themselves to me. They kind of write themselves."

Amarillo-born and Lubbock-bred Joe Ely, inducted in 2016, expresses similar views. "When you start a song and start to like it," he expounds, "the easiest thing to do is overwork it. Just get out of the way and let it make its own course." And though Ely has been based in Central Texas since the 1970s, the Panhandle still fuels his muse. "I find myself going up there every time I start a new record. There's just something magical about it to me. I guess it comes down to the emptiness of everything and the desire to fill it up. It's flat.

### WEB EXTRAS

► Read this story online to see a list of the inductees into the Texas Heritage Songwriters' Association Hall of Fame and winners of the Darrell K. Royal Texas Music Legend Award.

There's sky forever. And the only way you can fill it up is with a good song."

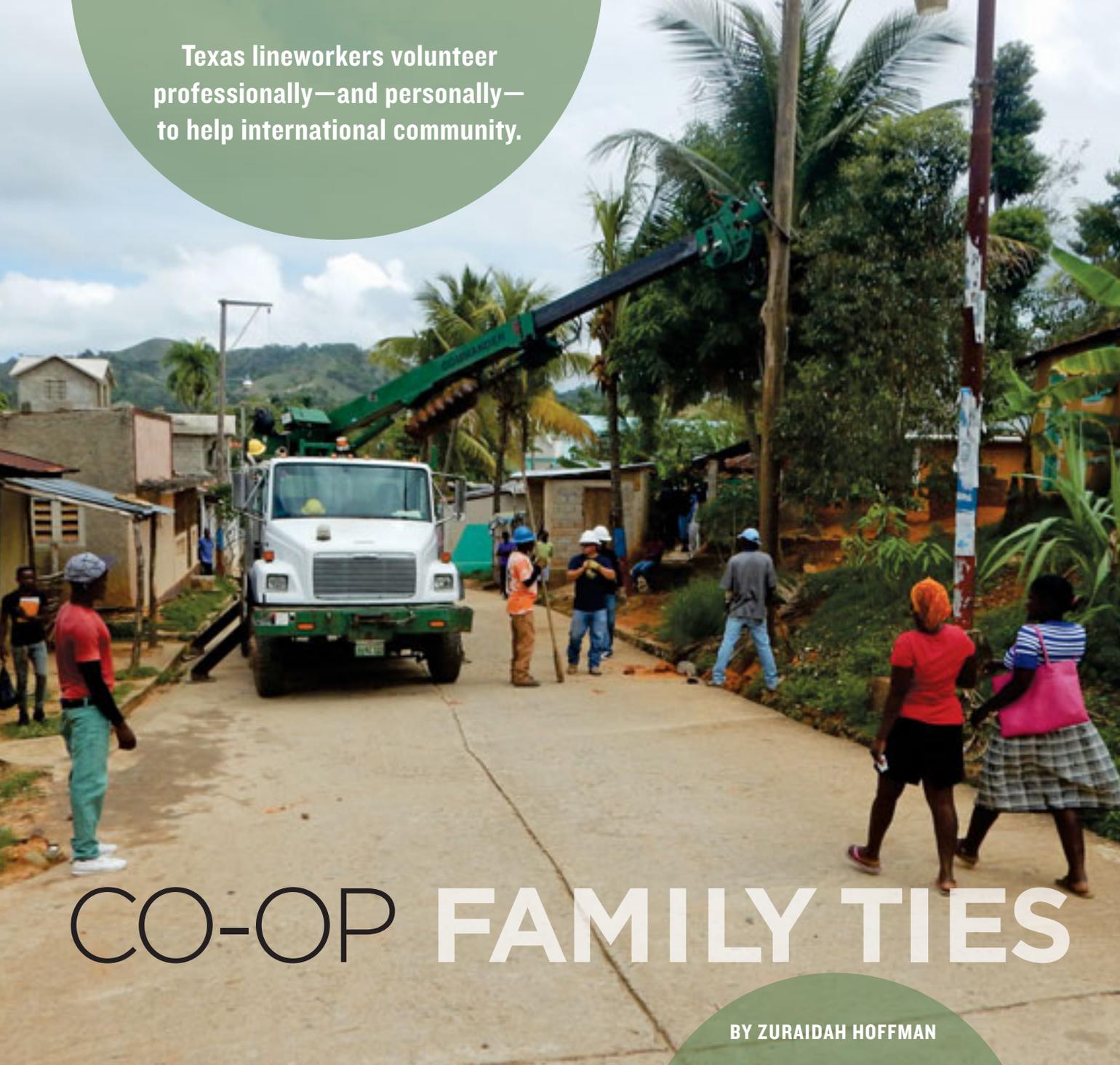
Bandera native Bruce Robison, inducted in 2007, filled the Hill Country with music while growing up in the "Cowboy Capital of the World." Relocated to Austin, his songs found their way onto records by Lee Ann Womack, Faith Hill and Tim McGraw—and, yes, Strait. While wooing his future wife, songwriter Kelly Willis, he took her to see his Medina River roots. "Part of the way he won me over was taking me to Bandera," says Kelly. "I fell in love with that—his personality being from that place."

Robison has reclaimed that small-town vibe, opening a recording studio, Bruce's Country Bunkhouse, in Lockhart. "The music that comes out of Texas is amazing," he says. "It seems like we're on a frontier, and I'm really excited to be a part of figuring out where it's headed."

"I have no idea why Texas has so much music," adds Lubbock native Delbert McClinton, inducted in 2011. "I used to have this book by John and Alan Lomax, called *Folk Songs of North America*. I just loved that book. In the front there was a map of the United States, and it shows where the different musical influences entered the country and then spread. The largest part of them came together all across Texas. The map was color-coded, and Texas had the most colors coming together."

Gene Fowler is a fan of these artists, and he also likes the songs George Strait has been writing in recent years with his son Bubba Strait and Dean Dillon.

Texas lineworkers volunteer professionally—and personally—to help international community.



# CO-OP FAMILY TIES

BY ZURAI DAH HOFFMAN

Texas electric cooperatives have a long history of collaborating with NRECA International, formed by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association to bring electricity to communities in need. Over the past five years, 20 Texas co-op lineworkers have traveled to northern and southwestern Haiti with the organization.

In the southwestern town of Côteaux, Texas volunteers worked with an NRECA International team to help establish Haiti's first electric co-op. This area was devastated in October 2016 by Hurricane Matthew, which severely damaged the power system that had gone live just 13 months earlier. Efforts are underway to re-establish the system and help the community rebuild.

Since 1962, NRECA International has provided safe and reliable electricity access to more than 126 million people in 43 countries across Latin America, Southeast Asia and sub-

Saharan Africa. This work is supported by more than 300 American electric co-ops through donations and volunteer aid from hundreds of co-op directors, linemen, engineers, managers and other employees who provide communities with training and first-time access to electricity.

In Caracol, a town in northern Haiti, the Texas volunteers worked alongside NRECA International staff on the Pilot Project for Sustainable Electricity Distribution, funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development. Every day, the lineworkers set out to extend power lines from the PPSELD generation station. This is the only utility in Haiti that provides reliable electricity 24 hours a day. With the help of American volunteers, NRECA International eventually will connect 10,000 consumers in the area—about a third of the region's population—with electricity.

VILLAGE & CREW. COURTESY NRECA INTERNATIONAL

Most recently, ahead of Hurricane Irma striking Haiti in September 2017, NRECA International staff in Caracol shut down the PPSELD power plant, boarded up the offices, moved vehicles and materials to the utility's warehouse and sheltered in place. The hurricane skirted the northern edge of the island, and damage was limited to a fallen tree that took down a line.

Volunteers who travel to Haiti through NRECA International work side by side with Haitian lineworkers, who gain knowledge, expertise and skills from the Americans. As with all co-op lineworkers, the family bonds know no borders.

## TEXAS CO-OP TEAMS

When Mike Grisham from HILCO Electric Cooperative agreed to volunteer his skills and expertise in Haiti, he expected culture shock and difficult working conditions in addition to missing his family. But he did not expect to make deep connections with the local lineworkers, nor the way their families and communities would become a part of his own family and community, creating a bond that would last long after he returned to Texas.

In February 2016, Grisham got on a plane with Clayton Thompson, also from HILCO, and Brannon Nichols from Homer Electric Association in Alaska. Once in Haiti, it didn't take long for them to understand that the local lineworkers faced many challenges to live what Americans would consider normal lives.

"They lacked basic needs like clothing, food and a decent place to live with their families," Grisham said. "But despite it all, their positive outlook on life was amazing."

Trinity Valley Electric Cooperative joined the project, and

# RUN DEEP

Josh Lathem, Adam Wolking and Zach Pollett put their knowledge and expertise to work in Haiti. The Haitian linemen did not have much hands-on experience because PPSELD was only four years old.

"Their most senior guy has four years of experience," Lathem said. "We have a little more than 30 years of experience between us, so there was just a lot that we were able to do and to show them."

The transfer of knowledge is critical for this young utility in Haiti to be sustainable and successful. The HILCO and Trinity Valley linemen shared countless tips and techniques on the job site and spent several hours of their last day teaching an impromptu class in basic electricity for a group of the local workers.

"Linemen over there are like rock stars," Lathem said. "They're the ones who turn the lights on. It was amazing to watch them unload off a truck, getting high-fives from the adults and kids."

Challenging work conditions are the norm in Haiti, and the availability of supplies is unpredictable. Despite language barriers, both the HILCO and Trinity Valley volunteer crews managed to fit right in with the local team, and all worked well together.

## ARM-WRESTLING DIPLOMACY

Grisham and his fellow linemen were celebrated at special community gatherings, where food and drink were offered as a form of gratitude and fellowship. It was at the first gathering after the first week of work that Haitian lineworker Luco challenged Grisham to a friendly arm-wrestling competition. Before a raucous, cheering crowd, Grisham won, and a friendship between the two men was born.

"I realized then that I want to help Luco and the other linemen live better lives," Grisham explained. "Many co-ops are already supporting the work NRECA International does to help communities get electricity, but I want to help the people who do the work, like Luco."

When Grisham returned to Texas in late February 2016, he started a GoFundMe page to help Luco at [gofundme.com/lightuphaiti](http://gofundme.com/lightuphaiti). His goal is to raise \$5,000 to help the Haitian linemen and their families buy food and clothing. Now that these commu-



Opposite: Haitian and Texas linemen work together to bring electricity to Caracol. Above: HILCO EC's Mike Grisham, blue shirt, and Clayton Thompson, in the bucket, teamed with Brannon Nichols from Homer Electric Association in Alaska to build lines in Haiti.

With the help of American volunteers, NRECA International eventually will connect 10,000 consumers in the area—about a third of the region’s population—with electricity.



**Mike Grisham hands treats to a girl who came out to watch his crew bring electricity to her home.**

regularly via the smartphone messaging app WhatsApp.

Trinity Valley EC’s contribution didn’t end with power lines. Along with their skills and hard work, the linemen also brought with them three large bags of personal hygiene items for the families of the Haitian linemen. All were donated by students at Trinity Valley Community College in Terrell through the Phi Theta Kappa honor society. While items like toothpaste, deodorant and soap are available, they’re often too expensive for many Haitians to buy; they make about \$5 a day.

“Deodorant can cost up to \$20,” Lathem said. “When I opened one of the bags to show the head lineman,

he sat down and nearly cried. We let him distribute one bag to his guys, and it was a really big thing for them.”



**Haitian lineworkers join the crew from Trinity Valley EC: Josh Lathem, second from left; Zach Pollett, fourth from left; and Adam Wolking, far right.**

nities have electricity, some of the linemen also have bigger dreams—to break out of the poverty cycle.

“Luco told me he wants to build a house for his wife and baby to live in, and that it’s going to cost

him U.S. \$1,800,” Grisham said. “He’s already saved about half of what he needs, and he asked for help. By our standards, that’s not much at all to build a house, but it’s a luxury to them.”

Today, Luco’s house is under construction and on track for completion early this year. As money comes in through the GoFundMe page, Grisham transfers the funds to his Haitian friends. Using Google Translate to overcome language barriers, they communicate

## ON TO BOLIVIA

Texas co-ops have mobilized again—this time to Bolivia, under the leadership of Mid-South Synergy CEO Kerry Kelton, a long-time supporter of NRECA International. A Texas team of volunteer linemen from Mid-South, United Cooperative Services, CoServ, and Pedernales, Bartlett and Bluebonnet electric cooperatives traveled to the northern part of the country in November to bring electricity to a few hundred people who live without it.

“Nothing illustrates Cooperation Among Cooperatives better than six Texas cooperatives partnering with Texas material suppliers to bring power to the people of Bolivia,” Kelton said.

It’s common to hear stories of how underserved communities benefit from reliable electricity made possible by NRECA International and its volunteers. With the growth of interest and support from American electric co-ops to help NRECA’s international work, more volunteers are given the opportunity to provide the help that is sorely needed in these communities.

But the results are clear: Cultural bridges that extend beyond the construction of power lines can connect worlds and fill communities with hope and friendship.

**Zuraidah Hoffman** is communications manager for NRECA International.

### WEB EXTRAS

▶ Read this story online to learn more about NRECA International and how you can help Mike Grisham improve lives in Haiti.



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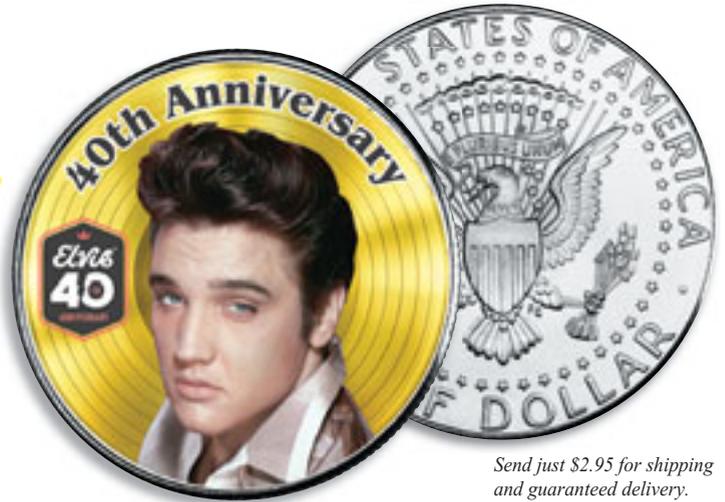
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# Sources of the Dreaded ‘Vampire Loads’



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This is especially true for those devices with a DVR function that records your favorite TV shows.

The instant-on television is another culprit. The intention of the instant-on feature is instant gratification for the viewer, meaning there’s no waiting for the TV to turn on and warm up. Unfortunately, for that convenience, the TV must remain on standby at nearly full power, which can be a real energy drain.

A typical gaming console can use as much energy as a refrigerator, even when it’s not being used. Make sure to check the console settings and disable automatic updates, which are where the main energy drain comes from. Games on the console are frequently updated, and each update requires a lot of electricity.

So how does the average family combat these dreaded vampire loads? Garlands of garlic? Silver bullets?

Fortunately, none of the remedies of fable are necessary. You just need to change how you handle energy-sucking electronics. **Here are a few suggestions:**

- ▶ Unplug chargers when not in use.
- ▶ Invest in smart power strips. These look like normal power strips but have a twist: One of the outlets is the “master”

that receives power all the time. The others are off. When the device connected to the master outlet turns on, the rest of the outlets receive power, too. Ingenious and perfect for entertainment setups. Plug the television into the master outlet, and when you turn it on, the cable or satellite box, speakers, streaming devices, etc., will turn on, too. These are also ideal for PCs and their peripherals.

▶ Disable the instant-on function on your TV. Turn off cable and satellite boxes that do not contain DVR functionality, or use a smart power strip.

▶ Disable automatic updates in gaming consoles and turn the consoles completely off when you finish using them.

▶ When replacing any device or appliance, look for an Energy Star-rated product. These energy-efficient items save you money in operating costs.

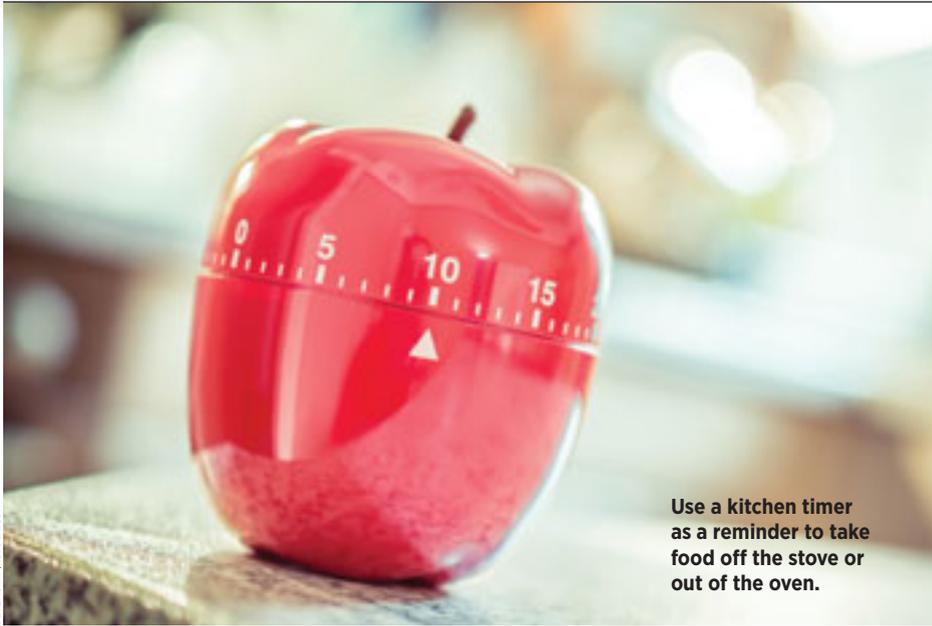
Vampire loads are a real problem that will only continue to grow as the digital age advances. But you can fight the vampires with vigilance and application of the recommendations above. Check with your co-op for additional suggestions and energy-saving advice.

**PERHAPS YOU ARE FAMILIAR WITH AN UNDESIRABLE ASPECT OF** the electronic and internet-of-things revolution: vampire loads. Vampire loads come from devices that use electricity even when they appear to be off. The primary culprits are chargers, cable and satellite TV boxes, instant-on TVs and gaming systems. There are others, but these four represent the major offenders.

Let’s look at how vampire loads occur and why they are approaching 10 percent of average household electricity use, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Chargers take 120 volts of power at the outlet and reduce it to the voltage required by the connected device, usually 5–12 volts. Obviously, when your device is charging, the charger is using electricity—but you might be surprised to learn that chargers still use small amounts of energy even when they’re not connected to anything.

Cable and satellite TV boxes also consume energy when they appear to be inactive. Anytime the box’s lights are on, it is using power. Like chargers, they use more when the television is on, but they are always working—even when the TV is off.



Use a kitchen timer as a reminder to take food off the stove or out of the oven.

# Cold Weather Safety

**IN COLDER WEATHER, A RISE IN ELECTRICAL APPLIANCE USE INCREASES THE OCCURRENCE** of electrical fires, electrocutions, carbon monoxide poisoning and other winter weather-related injuries. Keep in mind the following tips to stay safe.

## Heating the House

Space heaters are a common way to keep warm, but they require caution and close attention for safe use. Read manufacturer's instructions and warning labels carefully. Inspect the cord for cracked plugs or loose connections. Don't let pets or children play close to the unit, and turn it off when you're leaving the room or going to sleep.

Keep heaters on level, flat surfaces at least 3 feet away from anything flammable, including papers, clothing, bedding and rugs. Place heaters out of high-traffic areas and doorways where they could trip passersby. Plug a heater directly into a wall outlet with no other electrical devices, and always unplug and safely store it after use.

## In the Bedroom

Electric blankets and heating pads often are used for supplemental heat. Look for charred or frayed spots on their surfaces, or cracks or frays in the electric cords. Never fold or tuck in an electric blanket and do not allow anything to rest on top of it—including other blankets or pets—when in use.

## In the Kitchen

Cooking fires and electric shock also are common during winter months. Never cook if you're sleepy or have been drinking alcohol. Use a timer to remind you to check on food on the stove or in the oven. Double-check that oven burners and appliances are off once you are done cooking. Use outlets protected by ground-fault circuit interrupters for countertop appliances, especially near water.

## In Case of Outage

Portable generators are used often after winter storm-related power outages. Be sure to locate your generator outside, away from windows and doors. Install carbon monoxide alarms on every level of your home and outside each sleeping area; test the alarms monthly; and replace batteries at least annually.

## The Time Is Right

**DID YOU KNOW THAT DEMAND FOR** electricity fluctuates according to season and even time of day?

Seasonal factors such as extreme heat in the summer and frigid temperatures in the winter can increase consumer demand for electricity to power heaters, fans and air-conditioning units.

A home's greatest daily demand for electric power happens during the morning hours while its inhabitants prepare to leave for work or school, and for several hours in the afternoon and evening after they return home. From use of video games to washing machines, this is a home's peak demand time—when most of our power gets used.

You can help reduce strain to the electric grid and lower your electric co-op's overall costs (and yours) simply by changing when you perform routine tasks.

- ▶ Set your dishwasher to begin late at night, rather than just after dinner.
- ▶ Charge your cellphone and other rechargeable devices overnight.
- ▶ Postpone ironing chores to late evening or early morning hours.
- ▶ Vacuum floors in the morning.
- ▶ Turn off your computer when it's not in use.
- ▶ Use a power strip to turn off peripheral computer components, such as printers and scanners, when they are not in use.



# Saving the Globe

Lifelong friends bring Bertram's downtown theater back to life

BY LADAWN FLETCHER

THE RED NEON "GLOBE"—A COLORFUL splash that enlivens Bertram's downtown—illuminates the street below. The imposing sign appears as if it was plucked from the heyday of single-screen theaters. In fact, every aspect of this theater represents a bygone era, and its evolution from dilapidated relic to small-town gem is a testament to perseverance and friendship.

The Globe Theatre stood forlorn and empty for decades, but Bertram residents Zach Hamilton, 39, and Lance Regier, 41, its current owners, visualized its potential. Even though they had never known the structure as anything but an empty shell, the lifelong friends shared dreams of musical glory. Their music initially piqued their interest in the Globe.

"We would pass the theater all the time," Hamilton says, "and thought it would be cool to fix it up and play there."

In 1998, they approached owner Tommy Knight about buying the Globe, but family ties kept him from selling. The theater had been a part of his life since he was 8. He'd often accompanied his older brother to work the projector at the then-vibrant Globe. Eventually, he also worked there, and in the 1960s he bought it. Knight kept the theater open as long as he could, but in the early '80s, dwindling revenues forced him to close for good.

So it sat. Decaying.

In 2009, as the city took the first step toward demolishing the building, Hamilton and Regier approached Knight again.

They shared with him how they wanted to show movies and bring in cool bands to rock the joint. Knight was pleased they

wanted to keep it as a theater.

"Can I work there sometime?" he asked.

When they said, "Yes," so did he.

So the Globe joined the list of Texas single-screen theaters experiencing a renaissance. The LanTex Theater in Llano, the Pines in Lufkin and the Odeon in Mason all have been refurbished and put back into commission for movies and live performances.

Terry "Tex" Toler, Main Street program manager and historic preservation officer for the city of Llano, is happy to see the old theaters return. "When the theaters are restored, they bring a vitality back to a downtown area that really triggers a lot of economic activity around it," he says.

With the help of Main Street and other programs, buying an old theater and fixing it up is not unusual: Local governments, partnering with cultural and economic-development organizations, frequently take up such projects. What is unusual about the Globe project is that two individuals took on the renovation.

Hamilton and Regier, both members of Pedernales Electric Cooperative, spent more than \$60,000 just refurbishing the building, a modest sum made realistic only because they did much of the work themselves. They each worked a regular job, saved money for the next phase of construction, then worked on the Globe each weekend. The next week, they turned around and did the same thing again.

They never dreamed it would take so long.

"We thought it would take maybe a year or two to complete the project," Regier



says. “We bought it in 2009, and we finished in 2015.”

The 1935 art deco theater stands reincarnated. Regier and Hamilton scoured auctions across the country, in person and online, to find authentic architectural elements. As office buildings, schools and other theaters from the same era met their demise, the two swooped in to secure light fixtures, seats and embellishments that now lend visual intrigue and authenticity to the Globe. When originals couldn’t be found, they used convincing reproductions. From the copper ceiling tiles above to the mosaic tiles on the floor below, the theater speaks of another time.

As beautiful as the Globe is to see, its live performances set the stage for visitors to experience the magic. For music lovers and performers, famous and not yet

famous, the Globe holds a special allure. The original red granite walls enhance the sound, and the space, which holds about 300, is gaining a cult following among artists who play there.

“The acoustics there are absolutely exceptional,” says Anton Raby of Big Anton & the Alley Cats, a rockabilly band that has played larger venues. “I think my band sounds better playing there than any other venue.”

Regier says artists typically respond to the Globe in this way. “They want to keep returning to the theater after playing the first time,” he says.

Live music brings new guests into the city, but locals love the movies. The Globe features classics, including westerns and other features from back when. “Every show, we get someone who remembers

**The Globe, built in 1935 and refurbished in 2015, features live music and classic films.**

seeing movies there when they were younger,” Regier says.

New memories are being created, too. Trudy Collier moved to Bertram three years ago with her husband, who grew up there.

“They play the old movies, and that is a blast,” Collier says. “I took my son to see *The Wizard of Oz*, and it was great sitting with my neighbors, enjoying a night out that you didn’t have to drive far to go to.”

People like Collier see the Globe as a gift to the community, but it is also a monument to the friendship and doggedness of two men who made a youthful dream come true.

**LaDawn Fletcher** is a Houston-area writer who enjoys writing about Texas.

# Grounds That Appeal

Book excerpt: County courthouses from golden age reflect grandeur of thriving state

BY LONN TAYLOR

PROBABLY BECAUSE I GREW UP IN FORT Worth, county courthouses always have fascinated me. I will drive miles out of the way to see a really good courthouse.

Fort Worth does not have just a good courthouse; it has a superb one, a vast red granite pile topped by a 200-foot clock tower, which, when I was in high school, was topped in turn by a metal and neon American flag. The Tarrant County Courthouse sits on a bluff above the Trinity River at the head of Main Street, and it dominates that street even from the railroad station, 14 blocks away. It was built in 1895 and is a fine example of what courthouse aficionados call the “golden age” of Texas courthouse architecture: ornate, richly embellished and expensive. It cost \$420,000, a small fortune in 1895.

The first Texas courthouses were often log cabins, which had certain flaws. Texas courthouse artist Bill Morgan likes to tell about the first Cooke County Courthouse in Gainesville, which was built of logs in 1850 and only lasted three years. It was destroyed when a bull belonging to a local, Jim Dickson, broke out of his nearby pen and charged through the open front door, slamming into the opposite wall and bringing the whole structure down around him like so many toothpicks. According to Morgan, the minutes of the next county commissioners’ court meeting stipulated that a new courthouse “shall be built so strong that Jim Dickson’s bull or no other damn bull can butt it down.”

The next generation of Texas courthouses, those built in the 1850s and ’60s, were generally bullproof frame or brick

buildings in the Greek Revival style with white columns out front, modeled on courthouses farther east. But as Texas counties grew rich on cotton and cattle in the 1880s and ’90s, these courthouses suddenly seemed shabby and old-fashioned, and they were replaced with the golden age courthouses. These featured Romanesque and Renaissance Revival wedding cakes with towers and cupolas and mansard roofs and rusticated arches and all the exuberant paraphernalia of late Victorian architecture.

The Presidio County Courthouse in Marfa is a perfect example of this style. When it was built in 1886, Presidio County was the largest county in the United States, with 12,000 square miles (but fewer than 3,000 people), and the county commissioners wanted a courthouse that would reflect that grandeur. Although the architect of record was James H. Britton, the courthouse probably was designed by San Antonian Alfred Giles, who designed eight other Texas courthouses built during that period, as well as banks and public buildings all over Texas and northern Mexico. Giles produced a courthouse that could be seen for miles across the prairie.

Giles was one of several Texas architects who specialized in courthouses in those years. Another was Wesley Clark Dodson of Waco, whose cluster of Second Empire courthouses in Weatherford, Denton, Granbury and Hillsboro were the destinations of my earliest courthouse expeditions from Fort Worth in the late 1950s. The most prolific courthouse architect was Dodson protégé James Riely Gordon, who built 18—



**WEB EXTRAS**

► Visit our [Pinterest page](#) to see images of Texas' grand courthouses.

a dozen of which are still standing. The best-known include his pink granite and red sandstone confection built in 1896 in Waxahachie, the slightly smaller near-duplicate built the next year in Decatur, and the 1891 Fayette County courthouse in La Grange, which features a palm court with a cast-iron fountain.

Gordon was somewhat manipulative in his dealings with county commissioners. When the Fayette County Commissioners Court met in March 1890 to declare the old courthouse unsafe and unanimously voted to build a new one, Gordon stepped forward to sketch out a rough plan for the new one. The commissioners awarded him the contract without competitive bidding. When it came time to demolish the old court-

house, which had been built 34 years earlier by a German stonemason, it took dynamite to get the “unsafe” structure down. The old courthouse cost \$14,500—the new one, \$100,000.

In 1898, the Comal County commissioners retained Gordon to help them draw up the rules for a competition to design a new courthouse in New Braunfels. Gordon suggested that instead of having a competition, they go and look at other courthouses and then hire the architect who designed the one they liked best. They got on the train and went down to San Antonio, where they saw Gordon’s Bexar County Courthouse; then over to La Grange, where they saw his Fayette County Courthouse; then up to Giddings, where they saw his Lee County Court-

**Bill Morgan’s painting of the Denton County courthouse, built in 1896**

house; and then came back to New Braunfels and hired Gordon. He didn’t even have to draw up a new set of plans. He gave them a duplicate of the Lee County courthouse, but in limestone instead of brick.

Texas has 254 courthouses, so there is at least one to suit every architectural taste. There are dignified neoclassical courthouses and restrained *art moderne* courthouses and even glass boxes from the 1960s. But give me the excessive enthusiasm of the golden age courthouses. They exemplify the unbridled spirit of Texas.

**Lonn Taylor** is a writer and historian who lives in Fort Davis. Excerpted from *Texas People, Texas Places: More Musings of the Rambling Boy*, TCU Press [Original column: March 28, 2007].

# Steel Yourself

*At \$59, this blade of legendary Damascus steel is a real steal*

Damascus steel is the stuff of legend. Using a technique first mastered in the ancient city, swords made from Damascus steel were known to slice gun barrels in half and separate single strands of hair in two, even if the hair simply floated down onto the blade.

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# Clogged, Backed—up Septic System... Can anything Restore It?

**DEAR DARRYL:** My home is about 10 years old, and so is my septic system. I have always taken pride in keeping my home and property in top shape. In fact, my neighbors and I are always kidding each other about who keeps their home and yard nicest. Lately, however, I have had a horrible smell in my yard, and also in one of my bathrooms, coming from the shower drain. My grass is muddy and all the drains in my home are very slow.



Dear  
Darryl

My wife is on my back to make the bathroom stop smelling and as you can imagine, my neighbors are having a field day, kidding me about the mud pit and sewage stench in my yard. It's humiliating. I called a plumber buddy of mine, who recommended pumping (and maybe even replacing) my septic system. But at the potential cost of thousands of dollars, I hate to explore that option.

I tried the store bought, so called, Septic treatments out there, and they did Nothing to clear up my problem. Is there anything on the market I can pour or flush into my system that will restore it to normal, and keep it maintained?

*Clogged and Smelly – Corpus Christi, TX*

**DEAR CLOGGED AND SMELLY:** As a reader of my column, I am sure you are aware that I have a great deal of experience in this particular field. You will be glad to know that there IS a septic solution that will solve your back-up and effectively restore your entire system from interior piping throughout the septic system and even unplug the drain field as well. **SeptiCleanse® Shock and Maintenance Programs** deliver your system the fast active bacteria and enzymes needed to liquefy solid waste and free the clogs causing your back-up.

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# The Astonishing Ride of the Abernathy Boys

Young sons of legendary U.S. marshal ride horseback from Oklahoma to New York

BY MARTHA DEERINGER

LOUIS “BUD” ABERNATHY, 10, AND HIS brother, Temple, 6, inherited their father’s spirit of adventure and set out in 1910 to ride their horses more than 2,000 miles from Frederick, Oklahoma, to New York City.

Sensational accomplishments ran in the Abernathy family. The boys’ father, Texan Jack “Catch ‘em Alive” Abernathy, a United States marshal with a leaning toward picturesque behavior, was born in Bosque County in 1876 and grew up punching cows on his father’s ranch. As an adult, he astonished President Theodore Roosevelt by running down a prairie wolf on his horse, leaping from the horse onto the wolf and capturing it alive with his gloved hands. “This beats anything I’ve ever seen, and I’ve seen a great deal,” Roosevelt commented.

The boys’ father agreed to their cross-country ride and helped them plan the route. Abernathy postulated a few rules before they set out: They could not travel more than 50 miles in one day; they could not cross water without an adult present unless they could see the bottom; they could not carry more than \$5 with them at one time; and they could not travel on Sundays. The boys’ arrival in New York was planned to coincide with the return of Roosevelt from an African hunting expedition. Abernathy, a longtime friend of Roosevelt, planned to meet them there.

On the trip to New York, Bud rode Sam Bass, his father’s wolf-chasing horse, and Temple rode Geronimo, a half-Shetland pony. Temple was so small he had to mount from a porch or tree stump, and Bud had to saddle his horse for him every morning. They left home in April, carrying a few clothes, two bedrolls, oats for the horses, and some bacon and bread. At night, Bud laid his lariat around their bedrolls, an old



cowboy trick he learned from his father to keep snakes and scorpions at bay.

“We prepared for the trip,” Temple explained in the book *Bud and Me*, written by Temple’s wife, Alta Abernathy, many years later, “estimating how far to ride each day and pinpointing the best places to spend the nights.”

Crossing Indian Territory, the boys stopped to visit their father’s friend, Quannah Parker, the last chief of the Comanche. News of the Abernathy boys’ odyssey spread, and families living along the route frequently invited them to stop and share a meal. They carried a note from their father stating that they were not runaways, and Bud had a checkbook with a \$100 emergency fund set aside in case it was needed.

Early in the ride, the boys awoke one morning in Hominy, Oklahoma, to discover that Geronimo, Temple’s pony, was down and could not get up. He had foundered, a crippling disease that often renders horses permanently lame. Bud was forced to pull out the checkbook and buy a new horse. Temple chose a red-and-white paint that he named Wylie Haynes after the sheriff of Hominy.

**The Abernathy Boys rode to adventure on a variety of steeds.**

The first part of the journey was the most difficult. Long stretches of open land, snowstorms and a treacherous river crossing slowed their progress. As they rode east, newspaper reporters gathered to meet them.

“Special entertainment is to be provided for the young sons of United States Marshal John R. Abernathy,” the newspaper in Columbus, Ohio, reported. “They are in Columbus en route to greet ex-president Roosevelt when he arrives from Europe. The father of the boys was one of Roosevelt’s Rough Riders.”

The Abernathy boys’ first glimpse of the New York skyline came two months after they started their amazing ride. Abernathy was waiting. He rode with Bud and Temple down Fifth Avenue with the Rough Riders in the parade to welcome Roosevelt home. More than 1 million people lined the streets of Manhattan that day, but no one enjoyed the day more than the two resourceful boys.

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

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## Nourishing Soups



### THIS MONTH'S RECIPE CONTEST WINNER

JILEEN PLATT | BOWIE-CASS EC

Green chiles were a staple in Platt's childhood home in southern Arizona. "Making this soup reminds me of my heritage," she says. Served over steamed rice and topped with lime juice, cilantro and Monterey Jack, this hearty stew is a comforting meal you'll be eager to make again.

### Sonoran Pork Stew

- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 3 pounds lean, boneless pork butt or shoulder roast, cut into 1½-inch cubes
- 2 tablespoons onion powder
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon cumin
- ¾ teaspoon dried oregano
- 3 fresh tomatillos, husked, rinsed and chopped
- 1 can (4 ounces) chopped green chiles
- 2 Roma tomatoes, coarsely chopped
- ¼ cup chopped fresh cilantro
- 1 can (14 ounces) chicken broth
- 2 teaspoons fresh lime juice, plus more as desired

Hot, steamed rice, shredded Monterey Jack cheese and chopped fresh cilantro for serving

1. Heat the vegetable oil in a wide, deep skillet or Dutch oven over medium-high heat. When the oil is hot and shimmering, add the pork in a single layer. (You might need to do this in batches to avoid overcrowding.) Turn pork occasionally until all sides are nicely browned.
2. Transfer the pork to a slow cooker. Add all remaining ingredients except lime juice, rice and garnishes. Cook on low 5–6 hours until the pork is very tender.
3. Just before serving, stir in the lime juice. Serve pork stew over rice and top with shredded Monterey Jack cheese and additional chopped cilantro, if desired. ▶ Serves 6–8.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 31

1. **TOMATOES:** Preheat oven to 200 degrees. Halve the tomatoes and squeeze each lengthwise to open the seed pockets. Place tomatoes, seed pockets facing up, on a rimmed baking sheet or in a baking dish. Drizzle with olive oil, then sprinkle with salt and the dried herbs of your choice. Rub the seasonings evenly over the tomatoes. Roast about 8 hours, until they are shriveled but not blackened.
2. **SOUP:** Heat olive oil in a large pot or Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Add leek, onion, carrot, celery and a pinch of salt. Cook, stirring, until softened, about 5 minutes. Vegetables should not brown. Add garlic, bay leaves, thyme and red pepper flakes, and cook 2–3 minutes, until fragrant.
3. Scrape up any vegetables sticking to the bottom of the pot, then add wine. Simmer until volume is reduced by half, then add stock or water, and stir. Add canned tomatoes with their juice, breaking them apart with your fingers or a wooden spoon. Add the dried chile and bring soup to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer 10 minutes, stirring occasionally.
4. Add the roasted tomatoes—including any rich, red tomato oil that has accumulated—and continue to simmer, partially covered, 30–40 minutes.
5. Remove the chile and bay leaves, and cool the soup briefly. Transfer soup to a blender, in batches if necessary, and purée until smooth.
6. Return soup to the pot and season to taste with additional salt and freshly ground pepper. If the soup seems too thick, thin it with a little water or stock. Garnish with Mexican crema or crème fraîche and fresh, chopped herbs, if desired, and serve. ▶ Serves 6–8.

**COOK'S TIP** Roasted tomatoes should be meaty and moist, not completely dry. They can be slow-roasted up to two days in advance and stored in the refrigerator until you're ready to make the soup. When using fresh bay leaves, tear them in a few places to better release their flavor.



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

### \$100 Recipe Contest

June's recipe contest topic is **Your Best Grilled Cheese**. This yummy, easy sandwich is beloved by most everyone from preschoolers to grandparents. What makes yours special? The deadline is **January 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.



## Celery Borscht With Rye Croutons, Radish and Sour Cream

HELEN FIELDS | WISE EC

Brightly colored and full of flavor, this sophisticated soup will impress guests at your next cold-weather dinner party. Fields developed the recipe when she was a contestant in the World Food Championships, in which 10 finalists were charged with creating a dish that featured celery.

### BORSCHT

- ½ tablespoon olive oil
- 12 ounces rib-eye steak, trimmed and cut into thin strips
- ½ cup finely chopped yellow onion
- ½ large carrot, peeled and grated
- 5 ounces applewood smoked bacon
- 1 medium potato, peeled and diced
- 1 pound fresh, large red beets, peeled and shredded
- 5 cups thinly sliced celery
- 1 medium tomato, peeled, seeded and finely chopped
- 2 quarts water or more as needed
- 2½ teaspoons kosher salt, or more to taste

- ½ teaspoon ground black pepper
  - 3 tablespoons chopped fresh oregano
  - 3 cloves garlic, minced
  - ¼ cup chopped fresh dill
- Juice of 2 lemons
- 1 small black radish, peeled and shredded (or substitute another type of radish)
  - 1 cup sour cream
  - 3 tablespoons finely chopped fresh dill

### CROUTONS

- 1 loaf dark rye bread, uncut (preferably day-old)
  - 4 tablespoons olive oil
- Salt and pepper to taste

1. **BORSCHT:** Pour olive oil into a large stockpot, then add steak, onion and carrot, and cook 10 minutes over medium-low heat, stirring frequently.
2. Trim most of the fat from bacon and reserve for another use. Finely chop the lean bacon and add with potato to stockpot. Cook another 5–6 minutes, or until bacon begins to brown. Stir frequently and adjust heat if necessary to keep

ingredients from sticking.

3. Add beets, celery, tomato, water, salt and pepper to stockpot. Cover and simmer soup 1–1¼ hours.

4. Add oregano, garlic, dill and lemon juice to stockpot. Cover and simmer an additional 5 minutes, then remove from heat. Add salt and pepper to taste.

5. **CROUTONS:** Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Slice rye bread into ½-inch cubes and drizzle with olive oil. Season cubes with salt and pepper. Use your hands or a rubber spatula to toss cubes until evenly coated.

6. Spread cubes in a single layer over a large, rimmed baking sheet. Bake 10–20 minutes, stirring every 5 minutes, until crisp and lightly browned. Remove from oven and set aside.

7. Top each serving with a portion of croutons, shredded radish, sour cream and chopped dill. ▶ Serves 8–10.

**WEB EXTRAS ▶** Read this story online to see a recipe for Mexican-Style Greek Red Lentil Soup.



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# Snow Day

*There's a patch of old snow in a corner / That I should have guessed  
Was a blow-away paper the rain / Had brought to rest.*

*It is speckled with grime as if / Small print overspread it,  
The news of a day I've forgotten— / If I ever read it. —Robert Frost*

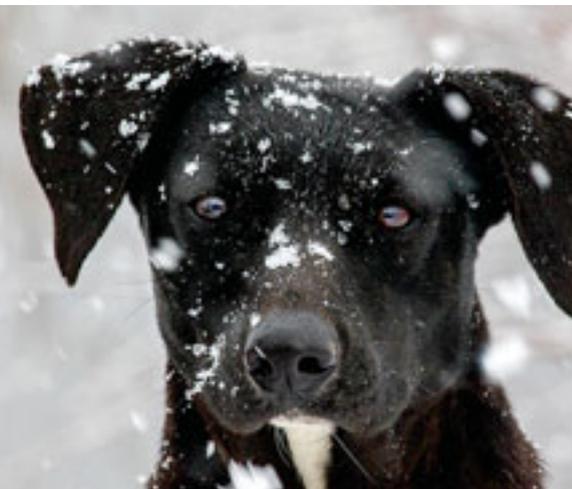
**GRACE ARSIAGA**

**WEB EXTRAS** ▶ See Focus on Texas online for more photos from readers.



▲ **VIRGINIA GLOVER**, Farmers EC: The front entry to Glover's driveway in Wylie

▼ **DANNY PICKENS**, Cherokee County EC: "This little dog caught my attention as he was chasing and catching snowflakes."



▲ **MIKE PRESTIGIACOMO**, Bartlett EC: Tranquility on a snowy day



▲ **LAUREN MCCLAIN**, Cooke County EC: "Abigail, 6, delights in unexpected snow in North Texas."



▲ **CHARLOTTE SANDERS**, Cherokee County EC: "The gals, Sadie and Nadine, our late 1940s 8N Fords, and Oscar, the orange Kubota"

## UPCOMING CONTESTS

MAY PROM NIGHT	DUE JANUARY 10
JUNE TRACTORS	DUE FEBRUARY 10
JULY OPPOSITES	DUE MARCH 10

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

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



## Pick of the Month Spring Blossoms Quilt Show

**Brenham February 2-3**  
(979) 830-1950, [friendshipquiltguild.weebly.com](http://friendshipquiltguild.weebly.com)  
This show is judged and features contemporary and traditional quilts, as well as quilts for sale, a boutique and vendors. Attendees have a chance to win a door prize or participate in a raffle.

## January

7

**Galveston Symphony Orchestra**,  
1-800-821-1894, [thegrand.com](http://thegrand.com)

12

**Comfort [12-13] Kendall County Junior Livestock Show and Sale**, (830) 249-9343, [visitboerne.org](http://visitboerne.org)

**San Angelo [12-13] Tom Green County Fair and Junior Livestock Show**, (325) 659-6522, [sanangelorodeo.com](http://sanangelorodeo.com)

13

**Beaumont 117th Anniversary of the Lucas Gusher**, (409) 880-1750, [spindletop.org](http://spindletop.org)

**College Station Boots and Barbecue**, (979) 696-2787, [acbv.org](http://acbv.org)

**Round Top Thomas Burritt and James Dick in concert**, (979) 249-3129, [festivalhill.org](http://festivalhill.org)

18

**Tyler Rodgers and Hammerstein's Cinderella**, (903) 566-7424, [cowancenter.org](http://cowancenter.org)

20

**Lake Jackson Dee Dee Bridgewater in concert**, (979) 230-3156, [clarion.brazosport.edu](http://clarion.brazosport.edu)

**Luckenbach 11th Annual Blues Festival**, (830) 997-3224, [luckenbachtexas.com](http://luckenbachtexas.com)



January 13  
College Station  
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**Surfside Beach Dunes Day**, (979) 864-1541, [brazoriacountyparks.org](http://brazoriacountyparks.org)

**21**

**McAllen Marathon**, (956) 681-3333, [mcallenmarathon.com](http://mcallenmarathon.com)

**Waco With This Ring Bridal Extravaganza**, (254) 772-8890, [withthisringbridalshow.com](http://withthisringbridalshow.com)

**25**

**Lufkin The Lettermen in concert**, (936) 633-0349, [thepines.visitlufkin.com](http://thepines.visitlufkin.com)

**Orange A Night With Janis Joplin**, (409) 886-5535, [lutcher.org](http://lutcher.org)

**Wimberley [25-28] Art and Soul**, (512) 847-2201, [facebook.com/wimberleyartandsoul](http://facebook.com/wimberleyartandsoul)

**26**

**Fredericksburg Women's Ranch Seminar**, (325) 622-4625, [hccwseminar.com](http://hccwseminar.com)

**27**

**Fredericksburg Hill Country Indian Artifact Show**, (830) 626-5561, [hillcountryindianartifacts.com](http://hillcountryindianartifacts.com)

**Nocona Mardi Gras Ball**, (940) 825-3526, [nocona.org](http://nocona.org)

February 7-10  
Laredo  
Birding Festival



**Bulverde [27-28] Chamber Rodeo**, (830) 438-4285, [bsbchamberrodeo.com](http://bsbchamberrodeo.com)

**31**

**Pine Springs Sunset Hike to the Salt Basin Dunes**, (915) 828-3251, [nps.gov/gumo](http://nps.gov/gumo)

**February**

**1**

**South Padre Island [1-3] SPI Kite Fest**, (956) 761-1248, [spikitefest.com](http://spikitefest.com)

**2**

**Clute [2-4, 9-11] Cabaret**, (979) 265-7661, [bcfas.org](http://bcfas.org)

**3**

**Corpus Christi Chamber Music Society: Jeremy Denk and Stefan Jackiw**, (361) 877-8393, [corpuschristichambermusic.org](http://corpuschristichambermusic.org)

**6**

**Bandera Cowboy Capital Opry**, (830) 796-4969, [silversagecorral.org](http://silversagecorral.org)

**7**

**Laredo [7-10] Birding Festival**, (956) 718-1063, [laredobirdingfestival.org](http://laredobirdingfestival.org)

### Submit Your Event!

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

Saturday April 14  
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Saturday May 19 *Note New Date*  
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# Weekend in The Woodlands

Natural experiences weave in well with downtown development

BY MELISSA GASKILL

THE WOODLANDS TOWN CENTER, THE heart of the master-planned community north of Houston, feels like a small town, with hotels, restaurants and shops. But it has a natural side, too. The combination makes for a perfect getaway.

The Woodlands Waterway Marriott gave me easy access to the Waterway, a walkable, 1.4-mile water feature that connects parts of **Town Center**. At Grimaldi's Pizzeria, in a two-story brick building with a patio overlooking Waterway Square, I dug into a classic pizza Margherita cooked in a coal-fired brick oven, serenaded by a cascading water wall that puts on a light-and-music show every evening.

After lunch, I strolled along the water and into a lush landscape surrounding a 60,000-gallon koi pond populated by more than 30 fish in a bright palette—every combination of orange, white, black and yellow. The scene brought to mind an ice cream truck that spilled a load of Dream-sicles, Eskimo Pies and lemon sherbet. The peaceful spot invites lingering, but I had an appointment with a kayak at the **Riva Row Boat House**, another short walk away.

The boathouse faces a pleasant lagoon, but the more adventurous can paddle about 20 minutes to 200-acre **Lake Woodlands**. Circle **Mitchell Island** to see bird and plant life, including great blue herons, and paddle another 30 minutes to a park at the south end of the lake, or 20 minutes north to Hughes Landing. Hop ashore and walk to one of a half-dozen restaurants (if you didn't order a picnic from Riva Row).

Those who bring gear can try their hand at catch-and-release fishing for bream, bass and catfish on the lake. In addition to kayaks, the boathouse rents



The Woodlands Waterway

standup paddleboards, and staffers provide tips and techniques.

After a quick stop back at the hotel, I took advantage of a free trolley ride to the **Market Street** area. Evoking a small-town main square, Market Street contains more than 70 shops and restaurants around a central green area punctuated with playful bronze sculptures. These include *Two Plus Two Equal One*, a pair of bicyclists by Harry Marinsky; *Primrose*, a life-sized donkey by Dawn Weimer; and *Spammy*, an adorable pig in a wheelbarrow by Joffa Kerr. In fact, at least 54 sculptures grace The Woodlands proper, ranging from a lifelike herd of whitetail deer to a cluster of geometric boulders.

On Market Street, **1252 Tapas Bar** serves Spanish tapas and entrées, an international wine list, craft beers, house-made sangria and craft cocktails beneath a swirling, life-sized representation of a flamenco dancer. My ceviche had just the right tang, and succulent shrimp topped shrimp aioli tapas.

The next morning, I enjoyed a hearty breakfast of Texas-cut challah French toast with eggs, sausage and potatoes at **Black Walnut Café** to fuel up for a morning of hiking at **George Mitchell Nature Preserve**.

The 1,700-acre preserve occupies the flood plain of Spring Creek, and the mix of wetlands, bottomland and forest took me back in time to this area's wild days. From the Flintridge Drive trailhead, I walked a 2-mile loop through thick stands of pine, oak and sweetgum trees along with yaupon holly, American beautyberry and wax myrtle. A side trail leads to **Bedias Lake**, where bald eagles, osprey and herons appear in season. A longer bike trail twists inside the hiking loop for 3 miles. According to Fred LeBlanc, environmental manager for The Woodlands, plans call for a 12,000-acre linear park system stretching nearly 40 miles along Spring Creek from Tomball to the San Jacinto River.

Some 200 miles of wooded hike and bike paths weave between The Woodlands' parks, lakes, ponds, and shopping and entertainment venues. I look forward to exploring on two wheels during my next trip and, if I time it right, enjoying a concert at the outdoor **Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion** amphitheater.

Read more of **Melissa Gaskill's** writing at [melissagaskill.blogspot.com](http://melissagaskill.blogspot.com).

 **WEB EXTRAS** ▶ Read this story online to see a slideshow from The Woodlands.

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