

# TEXAS CO-OP POWER

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and their  
members  
partner in  
community  
service





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Co-ops empower local schools through charitable programs and grants.

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By Charles Lohrmann

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**ON THE COVER** Mary Aceves of Magic Valley EC, left, with student Marely Quintanilla at a McAllen Target store. Photo by John Faulk

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## Is That Right?

I read that August 13 is International Left-Handers Day [*Don't Be Left Out*, Currents, August 2018]. I also read elsewhere that a left-handed person is smarter than the average right-handed person because left-handers have more copper and zinc in their bodies.

CHARLES CHANDLER | KEMP  
TRINITY VALLEY EC

## Growing and Mowing

The highway between lakes Toledo Bend and Sam Rayburn once had a wide variety of beautiful wildflowers and was called a scenic drive but was repeatedly mowed at the height of the bloom, a full month before it should have been mowed [*Habitat Destruction*, Letters, July 2018]. Now all the beautiful flowers are gone and so are the butterflies that accompanied them.

JOE ANNE DAIGRE | BURKEVILLE



## Cadillac Ranch Rubbish

As it had been a number of years since I last visited the Cadillac Ranch, *Rendezvous on*

## A Leading Lady

We really enjoyed *All the State's a Stage* [August 2018]. We have been tuned in to all things Shakespeare since our daughter, Sarah Enloe, left for Staunton, Virginia, to work with the American Shakespeare Center. She has been head of education for ASC for a few years now and is in contact with several of the groups mentioned in the story.

SAM AND CAROL ENLOE | BRYAN | BRYAN TEXAS UTILITIES



*Route 66* [July 2018] inspired me to make another visit. Sadly, I was appalled at the poor condition of the area, with excessive amounts of litter scattered around the cars and all the way back out to the service road. Discarded spray cans, and even more plastic caps, were left everywhere.

The place definitely does not leave one with a good impression of old Route 66 nor of our state.

CRAIG SCHELLBACH | BURLESON  
UNITED COOPERATIVE SERVICES

**Editor's note:** Eric W. Miller, director of communications for the Amarillo Convention & Visitor Council, offers this response: "We are aware of this issue and we hope to work with the landowner to find a solution to the trash. The landowner provides a couple of dumpsters, at his expense, along the access road that

are for the public to use. I have seen the disposal service go by and empty the dumpsters."

## FDR and the Hump

According to the U.S. State Department, President Franklin D. Roosevelt never traveled to Burma or China or anywhere in the Pacific theater of World War II [*Flying Roosevelt Over the Hump*, Letters, July 2018]. The farthest east that he traveled was Tehran, Iran, in November and December 1943.

PAUL R. SHAW | MINEOLA  
WOOD COUNTY EC

## Kudos

Your writing selections are stellar. Thank you for your creativity and soulful devotion.

ROBIN RATHER | VIA FACEBOOK

## Poles Aren't Billboards

I've seen signs posted on utility poles in Gillespie, Kerr, Blanco and Hays counties, among

others. Battling trash on the highways is difficult enough, and now people are using utility poles to trash our beautiful Hill Country.

CHERYL BISSON | HARPER  
CENTRAL TEXAS EC

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# Monarchs Rule the Day

**JASPER** has hosted a fall festival for more than 40 years, but recently the event has morphed into a celebration of the annual monarch butterfly migration through East Texas. The alliance between butterflies and the community was cemented in 2015 when Gov. Greg Abbott signed a resolution designating Jasper the Butterfly Capital of Texas.

Though millions of monarchs will fly through East Texas en route to their winter grounds in Central Mexico, their numbers have dropped from a billion in their heyday to about 33 million in 2014—or more than 80 percent since the mid-1990s, according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. All the more reason to pay attention to these beautiful insects.

So on **OCTOBER 20**, people and butterflies are welcomed on the Jasper County Courthouse square for the **FALL BUTTERFLY FESTIVAL**. In addition to arts and crafts, food vendors and live entertainment, monarch education will be the order of the day.

**INFO ▶** (409) 384-2762, [jaspercoc.org](http://jaspercoc.org)

## WEB EXTRAS

▶ Find more happenings online.



## ANTICIPATING POWER LINE PROBLEMS

**Bluebonnet** Electric Cooperative's control center recently dispatched a crew to replace a faulty clamp on a section of electric line along a remote road. No one reported a power outage, but the co-op knew about the clamp thanks to a new monitoring technology called distribution fault anticipation.

**Falling limbs** and switch arcing cause measurable changes in line current and voltage. DFA detects and reports such changes, allowing co-ops to find and fix these situations before they cause problems, including wildfires. Power line events caused more than 4,000 wildfires in Texas in one three-year period alone, according to the Texas A&M Forest Service.

**Texas A&M** engineers developed DFA, and Bluebonnet and Pedernales ECs and Mid-South Syn-ergy participated in a multiyear demonstration of the technology. Bluebonnet now has DFA devices on 24 feeder lines.

**"This technology** helps us increase safety and reliability," says Will Holford, Bluebonnet EC manager of public affairs. "If we had not known about that clamp that needed to be replaced, the consequences could have been significant. We're always looking for ways to improve the health of our feeders and mitigate the threat of wildfires."





## HONORS

### Don't Mess With Texas Chicks



Two chicks from Texas were among 10 finalists earlier this year in Purina Animal Nutrition's national contest to name the Strongest Chick in America. Jennifer Lampkin from Big Sandy and Laura Vaile Gariner from Hockley entered photos of their chicks, and voting on Facebook earned them a spot among the finalists. A chick from Michigan named Rosaleen won the contest.



## HISTORY LESSON

### Plow Know-How

**THIS MONTH** marks the 175th anniversary of the birth of Ole Ringness in Norway. Ringness, a mail carrier after his family settled in Bosque County, invented the disc plow and disc harrow after noticing how a warped wheel on his wagon moved large amounts of mud.

**HE MADE MODELS** of a disc plow in his father's blacksmith shop but never had his invention patented. In July 1872, as he journeyed to Washington, D.C., to present his case for a patent, he died under mysterious circumstances. Ringness apparently had reached the patent office because it later contacted his family to say his patent had been approved and would be granted upon payment of a fee. The family declined the offer, so Ringness never received credit for the invention. Similar farm equipment was later patented by a plow company.

#### *Did you know?*



**AS COTTON HARVEST** continues in Texas, it's a good time to note that Eli Whitney applied for a patent on the cotton gin 225 years ago—October 28, 1793. He was granted the patent in March 1794. Texas, which leads the nation in cotton farming, produced \$1.62 billion in cotton and cottonseed in 2017.

## WORTH REPEATING

“The people love their co-ops, and they stay close to it just like a community.”

—**STATE SEN. ROBERT NICHOLS**

of Jacksonville, during a Senate Committee on Business and Commerce hearing in May about the electric utility industry; October is National Cooperative Month.



## SPORTS SECTION

### UP FOR DISCUSSION

**Raise your hand** if you know the significance of the Astros' last game of the season 41 years ago. Hopefully somebody will come along and high-five you.

**The celebratory gesture** is said to have started in Los Angeles at that game, October 2, 1977, when Dusty Baker of the Dodgers homered off Houston pitcher J.R. Richard. Teammate Glenn Burke raised his hand to greet Baker as he touched home plate, and Baker reached up and slapped Burke's hand. That is believed to be the first high-five.



# MORE THAN ELECTRICITY





THROUGH PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS, CO-OPS PROVE

# ‘THEY ARE THE FABRIC OF THE COMMUNITY’

BY CHARLES LOHRMANN

**J**ohn Wied, a member of Fayette Electric Cooperative in La Grange since 1981, serves on the board of Hospice Brazos Valley, and he looks to the co-op to support the specialty health care provider. “We have our fundraiser in Round Top in August,” he says, “and I can always count on Fayette EC for a donation.”

But the true significance of the co-op’s role in the community goes much deeper than any of its individual contributions to service organizations, Wied says. “They are the fabric of the community,” he explains. “If you tried to pull it up and go away, a lot of people would go with it. They don’t just support the community—they are the community.”

Community involvement—along with local management—is what makes today’s electric cooperatives special in the eyes of their members. Recent research conducted on behalf of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association reports that one of the essential reasons members value co-ops is that they are local. “Community is the core co-op advantage that connects with consumers,” NRECA reports.

Since their creation in the 1930s, Texas’ 67 electric distribution co-ops have served rural and suburban areas. In those early years, investor-owned utilities were not willing to extend electric service beyond cities and towns because it was not profitable. Then came the Rural Electrification Administration, a federal program that helped cooperatives finance their own electric systems.

As Wied said of Fayette EC, they don’t just serve the community—they are the community. Kevin Houchin, a member of Heart of Texas Electric Cooperative in McGregor, echoes the sentiment, “Co-op employees are the little league coaches; they are the Sunday school teachers.”

**In local communities and in foreign countries, improving lives is the co-op way.**

COOPERATIVE PHOTOS



**Magic Valley Electric Cooperative supports United Way of South Texas' back-to-school program. Volunteer Evelyn López helps Marely Quintanilla of Edinburg shop at a McAllen Target store.**

In the Rio Grande Valley, Magic Valley Electric Cooperative in Mercedes assists a range of nonprofit organizations. Thelma Garza, president of United Way of South Texas, which serves Hidalgo and Starr counties, explains that Magic Valley EC “is a very strong supporter of our United Way, not just in payroll deductions for employee contributions but also in volunteer work.”

“They help with training other volunteers,” she says, “and they support the calendar we mail out to 45,000 people. People see the Magic Valley logo, and they know the co-op is engaged with people.

“We need as many as 200 volunteers for our back-to-school program, when we give 120 eighth-graders and freshmen a \$150 Target gift card to buy school supplies,” Garza explains. “Even though the school gives them a shopping list, the volunteers help the students make better choices. Some of those students have never had the opportunity to shop for themselves.

“We also have a program called Loaned Executive, in which someone in mid management becomes an extension of the United Way staff for 12 weeks during our campaign,” Garza says. “These people meet with major employers and make what we call the





“THEY DON’T JUST  
SUPPORT THE  
COMMUNITY—  
THEY ARE THE  
COMMUNITY.”

midnight presentations at hospital shift changes—or even at 3 a.m., when UPS has a shift change.”

Abraham Quiroga, business and employee development division manager at Magic Valley EC, has taken part in the Loaned Executive program twice. “The biggest benefit of the program,” Quiroga says, “is learning about the organizations that United Way supports. Many people rely on those social services, and they meet real human needs.”

In Central Texas, Houchin retired from the McGregor Independent School District after 31 years, including 17 as superintendent. “Heart of Texas Electric Cooperative provided the energy for most of our schools,” he says, “and they were a great community partner.

“They were always available to help,” Houchin says, “even with something as simple as coming to dig the hole when someone donated a tree to honor a loved one. Or they would put up the decorations downtown.”

Heart of Texas EC is one of the many co-ops around the state that participate in Operation Round Up, a program in which members can round up their monthly bills to the next whole dollar to support their co-op’s charitable work. “Through their Round Up

program,” Houchin explains, “Heart of Texas is able to provide grants to all kinds of nonprofits. Money is tight, and a \$2,500 grant for a volunteer fire department makes a big difference.”

Houchin also lauds the co-op in its basic role as energy provider. “They were always competitive pricewise,” he says, “and they kept us up to date with what was happening. If something needed to be fixed, they fixed it. They were a great community partner.”

In Denton County, Janet Shelton has been impressed by the community involvement of CoServ, an electric co-op based in Corinth, and the CoServ Foundation. “I’ve been involved with the Denton Public School Foundation,” she says, “and CoServ has been very generous with their grants to support innovative classroom activity.” Shelton’s praise does not stop there.

“I was on the board of an organization called Hearts for Homes that provided home repairs for elderly residents who could not afford to make the repairs themselves. CoServ not only gave us money but sent volunteer crews to help complete the repairs.”

One more thing: “I was involved with the Denton Community Theater,” she adds, “and CoServ gave us a grant to purchase headphones for the hearing-impaired. So, you could say that CoServ supports schools, social services and the arts.”



YOUTH TOUR  
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VOLUNTEERS

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## “CO-OP EMPLOYEES ARE THE LITTLE LEAGUE COACHES; THEY ARE THE SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS.”

**E**ven though electric co-ops are known for community involvement, their primary business always will be fulfilling the basic need for reliable electricity. Every co-op is part of the complex infrastructure of the state's electric grid. In some cases, even the co-op's power generation component has a community function. As renewable energy technologies are incorporated into community generation projects, co-ops are making renewable resources accessible to members—to help the planet. In March, United Cooperative Services in Cleburne activated an installation of 44,340 solar panels in Bosque County that can generate up to 9.9 megawatts. The co-op's members can subscribe to the power with no upfront costs and no contract.

Concern for Community, one of the Seven Cooperative Principles, extends to management, too. As one member put it, “When our power goes out, their power goes out, too.” As Wied says, “They're not in New York, looking out from the 75th floor.”

Often, the most visible co-op personnel are lineworkers, who are on the job at all hours of the day and night, working to keep the lights on. In the aftermath of ice storms, thunderstorms, tornadoes, wildfires, floods and other disasters, lineworkers are among the first responders and sometimes don't get to go home for days at a time.

The framework by which co-ops support one another is called a mutual-aid agreement. After Hurricane Harvey's 130 mph winds tore out electric service for more than 175,000 meters in 15 co-op service territories, co-ops from across the state, including as far away as the Panhandle, sent line crews to restore power. Jimmie Scott, a lineworker for Jackson Electric Cooperative, did not miss a day of work restoring power to Jackson EC members, even though the roof caved in on the house he inherited from his father.

Inspired by the stories of service and sacrifice, members of Mecklenburg Electric Cooperative, based in Chase City, Virginia,

### WEB EXTRAS

► Read this story online to see more examples of how co-ops support their communities.

**Members know they can count on co-ops to serve young people, stay on top of trends in the industry and help get them through disasters.**

figuratively joined hands to support Texas co-ops. Employees, along with local schools and community groups, filled a semi-trailer with cleaning and restoration supplies, water, and handwritten messages of support. The truck and driver, provided by a co-op member, made the 1,300-mile trip to Victoria Electric Cooperative, which distributed supplies along the coast.

People along the coast still are recovering from the damage of Harvey, even a year after it blasted Texas. This spring, the Sinton Little League asked San Patricio Electric Cooperative for help in replacing seven light poles that were damaged during the storm. Even though the ballpark does not receive electric service from San Patricio EC, the co-op covered the cost of the new poles. A group of 21 co-op employees, led by Alex Torres and Joe Cruz, repainted the ballpark's concession stand, replaced an unsafe staircase, fixed up its roof and added more power outlets.

Lineworkers take seriously the responsibility of serving their communities, even when they are not on the job. Four lineworkers from Tri-County Electric Cooperative encountered a fiery, multivehicle collision on Interstate 35 on their way to lunch one day in May 2017. They took action immediately, removing victims from their vehicles and providing first aid, including spinal immobilization, until medics arrived. Their lifesaving efforts took on even more immediacy as a fire caused by the initial collision spread to a cargo trailer filled with paint cans, causing explosions that accelerated the blaze.

Every community in Co-op Country tells similar stories of generosity and support. Many who collaborate with the co-ops share the sentiment of CoServ member Shelton, who says, “I'm just impressed.”

Charles Lohrmann is the *Texas Co-op Power* editor.

# THE SEVEN COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLES

Cooperative business entities around the world adhere to the Seven Cooperative Principles originally formulated in the 1840s in England. The principles have endured to this day and are a testament to the sustainability of the cooperative business model.

1

## VOLUNTARY AND OPEN MEMBERSHIP

Cooperatives are voluntary organizations open to all persons able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial, political or religious discrimination.

2

## DEMOCRATIC MEMBER CONTROL

Cooperatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting policies and making decisions. The elected representatives are accountable to the membership. In primary cooperatives, members have equal voting rights (one member, one vote), and cooperatives at other levels are organized in a democratic manner.

3

## MEMBERS' ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION

Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their cooperative. At least part of that capital is usually the common property of the cooperative. Members usually receive limited compensation, if any, on capital subscribed as a condition of membership. Members allocate surpluses for any or all of the following purposes: developing the cooperative, possibly by setting up reserves, part of which at least would be indivisible; benefiting members in proportion to their transactions with the cooperative; and supporting other activities approved by the membership.

4

## AUTONOMY AND INDEPENDENCE

Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members. If they enter into agreements with other organizations, including governments, or raise capital from external sources, they do so on terms that ensure democratic control by their members and maintain their cooperative autonomy.

5

## EDUCATION, TRAINING AND INFORMATION

Cooperatives provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers and employees so that they can contribute effectively to the development of their cooperatives. They inform the general public, particularly young people and opinion leaders, about the nature and benefits of cooperation.

6

## COOPERATION AMONG COOPERATIVES

Cooperatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the cooperative movement by working together through local, national, regional and international structures.

7

## CONCERN FOR COMMUNITY

While focusing on member needs, cooperatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies accepted by their members.



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**"There are so many people in the co-ops of Texas who do extraordinary things for other people."**

—NANCY JOHNSON, whose Little Hats, Big Hearts program builds awareness of congenital heart defects.  
*Texas Co-op Power*, February 2017

## POWER OF OUR PEOPLE

**Let us know about your local hero! Nominate a co-op member in your area who improves the community's quality of life.**

Email your nomination to [people@texascoopower.com](mailto:people@texascoopower.com).

Include name, co-op affiliation and a short description of their work in the community.

We'll highlight select nominees in a future issue of *Texas Co-op Power*.

**TEXAS CO-OP POWER**

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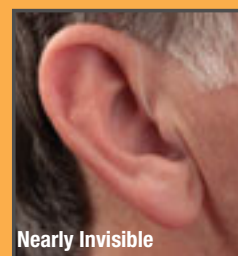
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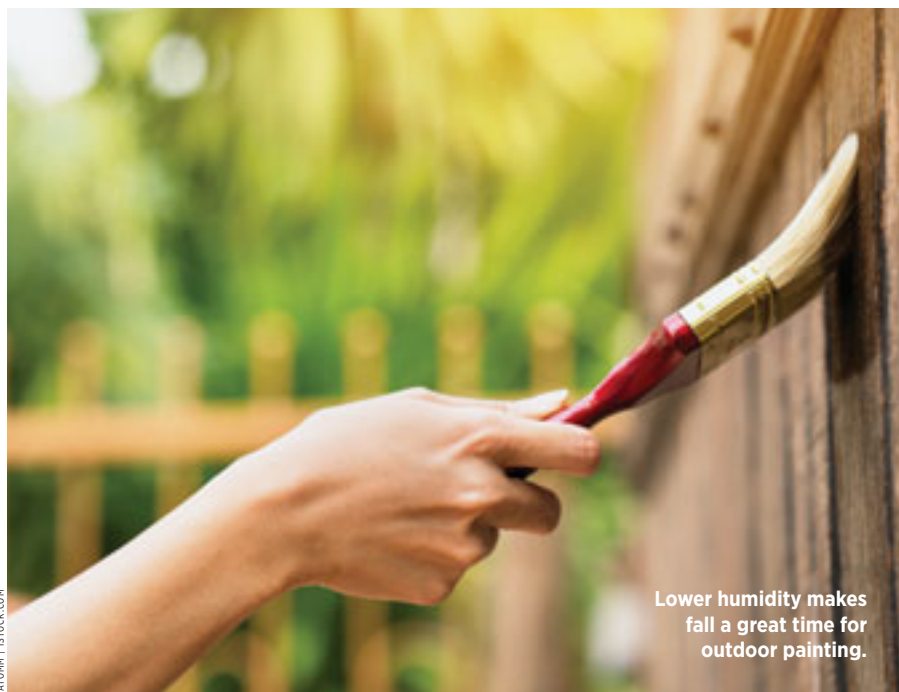
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# Fall Home Maintenance and Prep



Lower humidity makes fall a great time for outdoor painting.

**FINALLY, TEMPERATURES ARE AT LEAST HINTING AT COOLING**, foliage is edging closer to its glorious reveal, and football is on TV. That means leaves are falling or will be soon. Here are some practical steps you can take to get your home in tiptop shape for autumn.

## Outdoors

**Clear gutters and downspouts** of leaves and debris. Also, consider installing gutter guards to help minimize the job next time.

**Trim dead limbs and branches** from trees to prevent them from falling and causing damage to your house or car during winter storms that may come.

**Lower humidity during fall makes for prime painting time.** If you've been putting off an exterior house painting job, this could be an opportune time to get around to it.

**Take a close look at your roof.** Check for signs of wear and tear, including any misshapen, cracked or missing shingles. Damaged shingles should be replaced, and if there is significant damage to the roof overall, it may be time to consider replacing the whole thing.

**Check flashing around skylights, chimneys and pipes**, and seal any leaks or gaps with roofing cement.

**If doing any of the above necessitates a ladder, observe the following practices:**

- ▶ Place the ladder's base on a firm, dry surface.
- ▶ Wear slip-resistant shoes.

▶ Always keep three points of contact with the ladder: two hands and one foot or two feet and one hand.

▶ Don't stand higher than the third rung from the top.

▶ Don't lean or overreach—reposition the ladder instead.

▶ Be sure to check for and avoid any overhead power lines before climbing a ladder.

Once back on solid ground, rake or blow leaves from your lawn to avoid insects and prevent suffocating the grass below. The raked leaves make an excellent nutrient-rich mulch, or you can compost them.

One last task outdoors in anticipation of colder, potentially freezing winter temperatures: Wrap exposed water pipes with heating tape. The benefits of this are twofold—it will save energy and keep your pipes from freezing.

## Indoors

**Clean or replace filters** in your heating, ventilation and air conditioning system.

**Check your attic** for proper insulation and make sure there's enough. The insulation's vapor barrier should face down toward your home's interior. If more insulation is needed, install it on the attic's floor between joists, taking care not to step off the joists.

**If there isn't one already, consider installing a screen behind any gable vents** that lead into your home's attic to discourage pests from taking up residence there.

**Weatherstrip doors and windows** with vinyl, felt, foam tape or rubber to seal any drafty areas. Finish the job with a metal sweep along the bottom of the door. For an easier alternative to the door sweep, go with a removable draft guard. It's also wise to repair caulking around window and door frames. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, sealing an old or especially drafty house can save more than 20 percent on heating and cooling bills, so this is a worthwhile practice to maintain year-round.

**Have wood-burning fireplaces inspected and cleaned** to prevent chimney fires and carbon monoxide poisoning.

**Test smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors** and replace batteries as needed. If you don't own a CO detector, get one. Relatively inexpensive models can save lives.

Put these tips into action to make your home a safe and comfortable sanctuary for you and your family.





## Keep Halloween More Treat Than Trick

**EVERYONE LOVES A GOOD SCARE ON HALLOWEEN BUT NOT WHEN IT COMES TO SAFETY.** The harsh reality is that, on average, children are more than twice as likely to be hit by a car on Halloween than on any other day of the year, so make sure you take every safety precaution this October 31.

### Trick-or-Treating

Outfit your trick-or-treater with a glow stick or flashlight with fresh batteries, but make clear to never shine its beam into the eyes of drivers. Instruct children to stay on sidewalks wherever possible and to look both ways before crossing streets.

Make sure that little revelers (and you) cross streets only at corners and never from between parked vehicles. Lastly, keep youngsters from indulging until after a trusted adult has inspected their trove of treats carefully.

### Haunting the House

Never use electrical products outdoors that are marked for indoor use. You could get shocked—or worse.

Dried flowers, cornstalks, hay and crepe paper are highly flammable. Keep them away from open flames and other heat sources, including lightbulbs and heaters. Always inspect each decoration before use and discard any with cracked, frayed or bare wires. Always turn off electrical decorations and extinguish any open flames before leaving home or going to bed. Use a flashlight or battery-operated candles in jack-o'-lanterns.

### While Driving

Slow down in residential neighborhoods to at least 5 mph below the posted speed limit to give yourself extra time to react to children who may dart into the street.

Watch for children walking on roadways, medians and curbs. Look for children crossing the street; they may not be paying attention to traffic and cross the street midblock or between parked cars. Turn on your headlights to make yourself more visible—even before the sun has set.

## Is Your Neighbor Stealing From You?

**EVERY YEAR, YOUR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE** copes with thieves—folks who deliberately tamper with their electric meters to steal power. Not only is this practice extremely dangerous, it's a serious crime that can result in hefty fines and jail time.

According to the Cooperative Research Network, power surging through a compromised meter can cause an electrical catastrophe.

A short circuit could produce an arc flash bright enough to cause blindness and powerful enough to launch fragments of shrapnellike, red-hot debris. Serious injury or death from electrocution, explosion or fire often results from meter tampering. Only trained co-op personnel wearing protective clothing should work on meters.

### Electricity theft has several victims.

The co-op loses revenue and expends resources to investigate tampering.

Co-op members pay more for the power they use to cover the cost of the stolen electricity.

And, most importantly, co-op personnel, members and the thief can be seriously injured when the meter's safety features are compromised.

Anyone witnessing or aware of someone tampering with an electric meter should contact their electric co-op immediately.



# Preying at a House of Worship

When killer bees take over a historic church, all hell breaks loose

BY MARTHA DEERING

AS PRESIDENT OF THE ASSOCIATION THAT cares for Historic Eagle Springs Baptist Church, the last remaining building in the almost-vanished town of Eagle Springs in Coryell County, I shuddered when I got the news.

Richard Newman, the young man who mows our spiky weeds (not even the most optimistic among us would call it a lawn), had encountered a hive of angry bees living in the church attic and been stung 20 or 30 times and was on his way to the emergency room.

We learned the hard way that bees and internal combustion engines are mortal enemies, and the bees' wrath extends to the humans that operate the hated machines. Richard's gas-powered weed trimmer triggered the venomous attack, and although he hightailed it for home about a half-mile away, the unforgiving bees chased him right to the front door.

After we confirmed Richard's recovery, I called an emergency meeting of the association—but not at the church, which was still off-limits because of the bee uprising. Our annual homecoming celebration, the fundraiser that enables us to pay the electric bills and keep up with the constant repairs required for the 140-year-old building, was a mere two weeks away.

We decided to hire a local company that relocates unwanted swarms by vacuuming them out of the wall along with their honey. This simple plan had a fatal flaw created by a rare rainy spell: The vacuum (or maybe the employees) didn't work in the rain.

On to plan B: David Scott, our vice pres-

ident, located a beekeeper in nearby Gatesville. "Yes," he said. "I'll relocate the bees and the honey." If the honey remained inside the wall, he explained, wild bees would move in and we'd be right back where we started. He explained that he would need to cut a hole in the ceiling to gain access to the hive.

On the designated day, the phone rang. "The beehive in the attic of the church is huge, the biggest I've ever seen, and this job is taking longer than I thought," the beekeeper said. "I'm diabetic, and my blood sugar is getting too low. Could you bring me a Coke?" I exceeded the speed limit covering the 2 miles from my house to the church, haunted by visions of an unconscious beekeeper lying on the ground. When I arrived, the beekeeper, dressed in his protective suit, was barely visible inside a vortex of angry bees. I lowered the window just enough to hand him the Coke.

"These are Africanized bees," he said through my closed window. "I'm not going to try to relocate them." He showed me an astonishing photo on his honey-encrusted phone of what looked like large snakes hanging down from the peak of the roof, pointing out the tiny octagonal cells of the honeycomb.

Africanized honeybees, which look just like their better-behaved cousins, European honeybees, have colonized Texas since their arrival from Brazil in 1990. Their impulse to sting is 10 times greater, and attacks last longer. Once disturbed, they remain aggressive for as long as 24 hours. A swarm of Africanized honeybees attacked and killed a 62-year-old man one





county over in 2013, so the beekeeper's decision to eradicate them met no resistance from us.

Our carpenter repaired the ceiling a few days later and patched the bee-sized cracks in cypress siding that had been hauled by ox wagon from Galveston in 1878. David and I swept up a snowdrift of dead bees inside the church and wiped up honey that had dripped from the ceiling onto the floor below.

When homecoming arrived, we had the church to ourselves again, but no one rejoiced at the outcome. Bee populations in Texas are in a steep decline, and rural Texans recognize the importance of bees to agriculture. "USDA researchers are hard at work to determine the cause of a problem called colony collapse disorder, which is wreaking havoc with the beekeeping industry," says Blake Shook of Blue Ridge, a Fannin County Electric Cooperative member who is on the executive

board of the American Beekeeping Federation. "The disorder appears to be a combination of several factors: stress, pesticides, lack of good forage and new diseases. When European bees die out, it's possible for Africanized bees to get a foothold, at least in the parts of Texas where Africanized bees thrive. They don't do well in North Texas, where winters are cold."

I've often thought that if the walls of the Historic Eagle Springs Baptist Church could talk, they'd have some astounding tales to tell. Historic accounts relate that in early days, the men of the congregation attended services with rifles across their knees for security. Horse thieves chased one early pastor into the brush for preaching against such unlawful activities. Our great bee invasion adds another chapter to the old building's rich history.

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

# The Ballad Hunter

John Avery Lomax collected thousands of early American cowboy, folk and spiritual songs

BY GENE FOWLER

CLASSIC COWBOY SONGS ARE SO INGRAINED in American popular culture and history that it might seem as though plaintive strains of *Home on the Range* could be heard when the first settlers felt the West Texas wind over the plains, and *Red River Valley* seems as ancient as the stream itself.

However, those songs, and many more like them, were first collected by Texas folklorist John Avery Lomax, who not only collected such songs from oral tradition and preserved them for popular culture but also made them a subject for scholarly study. In fact, Harvard professors first recognized the value of such study before Lomax's University of Texas teachers did.

In 1869, the Lomax family left Mississippi and headed for Texas by covered wagon with 2-year-old John in tow. The Lomaxes settled on a farm in the Bosque River Valley near Meridian. "I couldn't have been more than 4 years old when I first heard a cowboy sing and yodel to his cattle," Lomax wrote in his 1948 book, *Adventures of a Ballad Hunter*. "I was sleeping in my father's two-room house in Texas beside a branch of the old Chisholm Trail." Young John wrote down the words of the trail hands' songs on scratchpads and on pieces of cardboard.

Lomax's higher education began in 1887 with a year at Granbury College. He then taught school for several years in Clifton and Weatherford, and from 1895 to 1897, he studied at the University of Texas at Austin. There, he showed his collection of cowboy songs, "a roll of dingy manuscript written out in lead pencil and tied together with a cotton string," to pro-

fessors of Shakespeare and philosophy, who found them completely devoid of cultural significance. "So that night in the dark," wrote Lomax, "out behind Brackenridge Hall, I made a small bonfire of every scrap of my cowboy songs."

In 1906, Lomax found encouragement as a postgraduate student at Harvard University. When his American literature professor learned that Lomax was interested in writing a dissertation on cowboy songs, he introduced Lomax to professor George L. Kittredge, a pioneer in American folklore studies. "That moment was the real beginning of my connection with the Archive of American Folk Song, established many years later in the Library of Congress," Lomax wrote in *Adventures of a Ballad Hunter*.

Back in Texas in 1908, married and with a family to support, Lomax received the first of several fellowships from Harvard that allowed him to devote time and travel to collecting cowboy songs. Hauling one of Thomas Edison's phonograph cylinders into saloons, rodeos and cattle camps, Lomax found that cowboys were reluctant to sing into the machine's large horn, a sort of primitive microphone.

The ballad hunter persisted. In Fort Worth, he collected lyrics to *The Old Chisholm Trail*, of which one cowboy claimed to know 89 verses. At a campground on the west fork of the Trinity River, a Roma songstress sang Lomax "the first blues that I ever heard, moving me almost to tears."

In Abilene, the professor learned *The Buffalo Skinners* from an old hunter who had lived the song. "It happened in





#### WEB EXTRAS

► Read this story on our website to listen to songs Lomax collected.

**John Avery Lomax records Aunt Harriett McClintock at a crossroads near Sumterville, Alabama.**

hired some hands to hunt bison in the Panhandle and stiffed them on their pay. They killed Crego “and left his damn ol’ bones to bleach.”

Lomax collected *Home on the Range* in a San Antonio saloon from an African-American bartender who had learned the song as trail-drive cook. He included the classic in his 1910 book, *Cowboy Songs and*

*Jacksboro* in the spring of ’73,” the story began. A man named Crego

*Other Frontier Ballads.*

By the time the ballad hunter wrote his 1948 autobiography, he had traveled hundreds of thousands of miles on his quest. In the 1930s, sons Alan and John Jr. accompanied him on treks to collect African-American folk songs, often from prison inmates. He toured northern cities with the singer Lead Belly. Alan Lomax went on to a distinguished musicology career, and the younger John Lomax released a CD of his late father singing *The Buffalo Skinners* and other folk songs a cappella.

Lomax’s archive is today preserved in

the university’s Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, and the University of Texas Press recently published a reprint of the classic *Adventures of a Ballad Hunter*.

“John Lomax rescued *Home on the Range*, *Midnight Special* and 10,000 other songs from obscurity and made them part of a new American canon of traditional music,” said John Wheat, music archivist at the Briscoe Center. “He helped launch a process of discovery of our cultural roots that continues long after his passing.”

**Gene Fowler** is an Austin writer who specializes in history.

# Leading Acid Reflux Pill Becomes an Anti-Aging Phenomenon

*Clinical studies show breakthrough acid reflux treatment also helps maintain vital health and helps protect users from the serious conditions that accompany aging such as fatigue and poor cardiovascular health*

by David Waxman  
Seattle Washington:

A clinical study on a leading acid reflux pill shows that its key ingredient relieves digestive symptoms while suppressing the inflammation that contributes to premature aging in men and women.

And, if consumer sales are any indication of a product's effectiveness, this 'acid reflux pill turned anti-aging phenomenon' is nothing short of a miracle.

Sold under the brand name AloeCure, it was already backed by clinical data documenting its ability to provide all day and night relief from heartburn, acid reflux, constipation, irritable bowel, gas, bloating, and more.

But soon doctors started reporting some incredible results...

"With AloeCure, my patients started reporting less joint pain, more energy, better sleep, stronger immune systems... even less stress and better skin, hair, and nails" explains Dr. Liza Leal; a leading integrative health specialist and company spokesperson.

AloeCure contains an active ingredient that helps improve digestion by acting as a natural acid-buffer that improves the pH balance of your stomach.

Scientists now believe that this acid imbalance is what contributes to painful inflammation throughout the rest of the body.

The daily allowance of AloeCure has shown to calm this inflammation which is why AloeCure is so effective.

Relieving other stressful symptoms related to GI health like pain, bloating, fatigue, cramping, constipation, diarrhea, heartburn, and nausea.

Now, backed with new clinical studies, AloeCure is being recommended by doctors everywhere to help improve digestion, calm painful inflammation, soothe joint pain, and even reduce the appearance of wrinkles – helping patients to look and feel decades younger.

## FIX YOUR GUT & FIGHT INFLAMMATION

Since hitting the market, sales for AloeCure have taken off and there are some very good reasons why.

To start, the clinical studies have been impressive. Participants taking the active ingredient in AloeCure saw a stunning 100% improvement in digestive symptoms, which includes fast and lasting relief from reflux.

Users also experienced higher energy levels and endurance, relief from chronic discomfort and

better sleep. Some even reported healthier looking skin, hair, and nails.

A healthy gut is the key to a reducing swelling and inflammation that can wreak havoc on the human body. Doctors say this is why AloeCure works on so many aspects of your health.

AloeCure's active ingredient is made from the healing compound found in Aloe vera. It is both safe and healthy. There are also no known side effects.

Scientists believe that it helps improve digestive and immune health by acting as a natural acid-buffer that improves the pH balance of your stomach.

Research has shown that this acid imbalance contributes to painful inflammation throughout your entire body and is why AloeCure seems to be so effective.

## EXCITING RESULTS FROM PATIENTS

To date over 5 million bottles of AloeCure have been sold, and the community seeking non-pharmaceutical therapy for their GI health continues to grow.

According to Dr. Leal, her patients are absolutely thrilled with their results and are often shocked by how fast it works.

"For the first time in years, they are free from concerns about their digestion and almost every other aspect of their health," says Dr. Leal, "and I recommend it to everyone who wants to improve GI health without resorting to drugs, surgery, or OTC medications."

"I was always in 'indigestion hell.' Doctors put me on all sorts of antacid remedies. Nothing worked. Dr. Leal recommended I try AloeCure. And something remarkable happened... Not only were all the issues I had with my stomach gone - completely gone - but I felt less joint pain and I was able to actually sleep through the night."

With so much positive feedback, it's easy to see why the community of believers is growing and sales for the new pill are soaring.

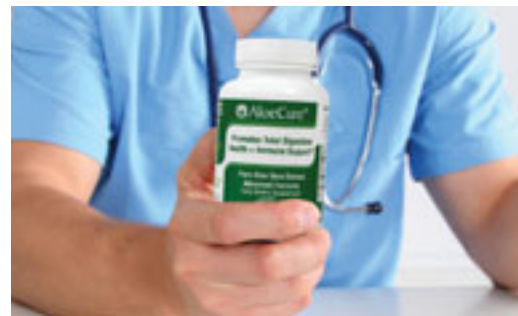
## THE SCIENCE BEHIND ALOECURE

AloeCure is a pill that's taken just once daily. The pill is small. Easy to swallow. There are no harmful side effects and it does not require a prescription.

The active ingredient is a rare Aloe Vera component known as acemannan.

Made from 100% organic Aloe Vera, AloeCure uses a proprietary process that results in the highest quality, most bio-available levels of acemannan known to exist.

According to Dr. Leal and several of her colleagues, improving the pH balance of your stomach



and restoring gut health is the key to revitalizing your entire body.

When your digestive system isn't healthy, it causes unwanted stress on your immune system, which results in inflammation in the rest of the body.

The recommended daily allowance of acemannan in AloeCure has been proven to support digestive health, and calm painful inflammation without side effects or drugs.

This would explain why so many users are experiencing impressive results so quickly.

## REVITALIZE YOUR ENTIRE BODY

With daily use, AloeCure helps users look and feel decades younger and defend against some of the painful inflammation that accompanies aging and can make life hard.

By buffering stomach acid and restoring gut health, AloeCure calms painful inflammation and will help improve digestion... soothe aching joints... reduce the appearance of wrinkles and help restore hair and nails... manage cholesterol and oxidative stress... and improve sleep and brain function... without side effects or expense.

You can now reclaim your energy, vitality, and youth regardless of age or current level of health.

## One AloeCure Capsule Daily

- Helps End Digestion Nightmares
- Helps Calm Painful Inflammation
- Soothes Stiff & Aching Joints
- Reduces Appearance of Wrinkles & Increases Elasticity
- Manages Cholesterol & Oxidative Stress
- Supports Healthy Immune System
- Improves Sleep & Brain Function

## HOW TO GET ALOECURE

This is the official nationwide release of the new AloeCure pill in the United States. And so, the company is offering you up to 3 FREE bottles with your order.

All you have to do is call **TOLL-FREE 1-800-808-5114** and provide the operator with the Free Bottle Approval Code: AC100. The company will do the rest.

Important: Due to AloeCure's recent media exposure, phone lines are often busy. If you call and do not immediately get through, please be patient and call back.





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**Time is running out.** Originally priced at \$395, the **Blue Stone Chronograph** was already generating buzz among watch connoisseurs, but with the price slashed to **\$69**, we can't guarantee this limited-edition timepiece will last. So, call today!

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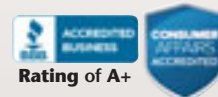
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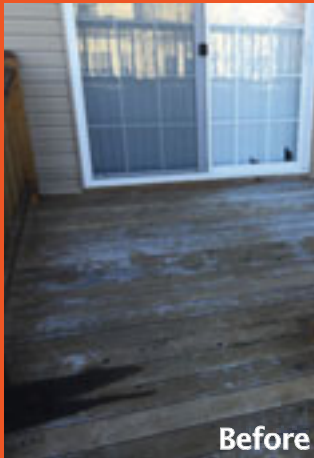
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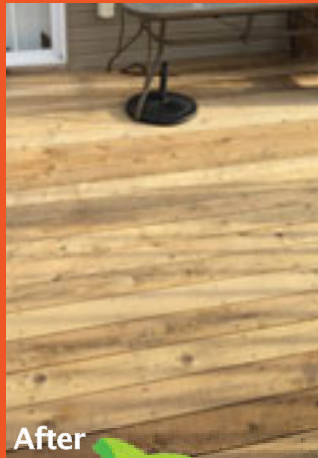
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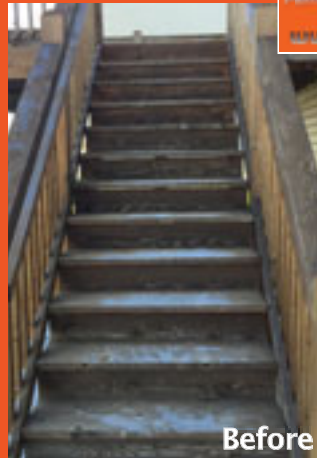
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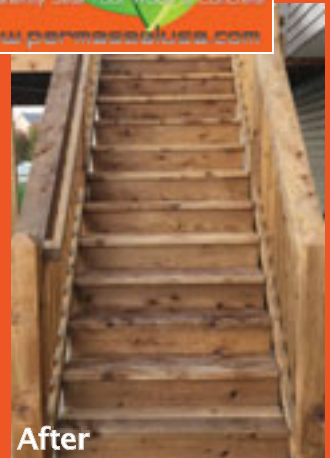
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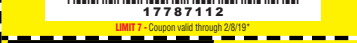
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# Bass Reeves, Lawman Extraordinaire

Could the West's first African-American deputy marshal have inspired the Lone Ranger?

BY CLAY COPPEDGE

BASS REEVES CAME TO TEXAS FROM Arkansas as an enslaved 8-year-old with the William Reeves family in 1846. He would go on to become the first African-American U.S. deputy marshal west of the Mississippi and among the most relentless lawmen of his or any day.

When William's son, George, went to fight for the Confederacy during the Civil War, Bass was sent along with him. At some point, Bass lit out for Indian Territory (present-day Oklahoma) and never encountered the Reeves family again.

Bass Reeves found refuge in Indian Territory with the Seminole, Creek and other tribes and later bought land near Van Buren, Arkansas. He married Nellie Jennings, a Texas girl, in 1864 and grew crops, raised livestock and reared five boys and five girls.

In 1875, President Ulysses S. Grant ordered Judge Isaac C. Parker to bring law and order to Indian Territory. Parker authorized the hiring of 200 deputy marshals, and Reeves, an occasional scout and guide for deputy marshals, was one of them. Reeves was big (6 feet, 2 inches) and already a legendary marksman, and he knew the country.

Reeves also turned out to be dedicated and fearless. He worked for 32 years as a U.S. deputy marshal and reportedly brought to justice 3,000 felons, all but 14 of them alive.

Art T. Burton, author of the 2006 biography *Black Gun, Silver Star: The Life and Legend of Frontier Marshal Bass Reeves*, isn't sure about that 3,000 number, even though it came from Reeves himself in a 1902 interview. Even so, Burton found



many newspaper accounts of Reeves bringing in a dozen or more desperados at a time.

Burton's lifelong fascination with Reeves began when he was 11. He saw a movie about Wyatt Earp and asked his grandfather if there were any black marshals in the Old West. "There was one," his grandfather told him. "His name was Bass Reeves." Burton sought out family members and others who were around during the marshal's heyday and listened to often-fantastic and nearly always unverifiable stories about Reeves. But once retired as a history professor, he got to wondering if some of the stories might be true, which led him to write the biography.

"He was the baddest of the bad," Burton says. "He was an expert with a rifle and a pistol. And if you were hiding, he would find you."

Reeves operated, Burton says, without fear or favor, arresting the minister who baptized him for selling illegal liquor and even his own son, Bennie, for killing his wife. It's hard to compare him to anybody, except maybe the Lone Ranger. And Burton does make that comparison.

Burton notes that U.S. marshals work-

ing in the region at that time, including Reeves, routinely hired Native Americans to work with them, and he found instances of Reeves repaying strangers for their kindness and hospitality with silver dollars. Perhaps that compares to how the Lone Ranger handed out silver bullets to verify his identity.

The original Lone Ranger wore a black mask, and Burton found several accounts of Reeves using disguises to capture bad guys. Many of the desperados Reeves arrested were sentenced to prison in Detroit, where *The Lone Ranger* radio show originated.

While Burton readily admits there is no conclusive evidence to support the notion that Reeves was the prototype for the Lone Ranger, he believes that Reeves "is the closest real person to resemble the fictional Lone Ranger that we have."

Of course, there's also the possibility that the creators of the radio show just made up the character. But Reeves was the real deal. He died in 1910, but, oddly, no one knows where he's buried.

Burton believes he's still in disguise.

Writer Clay Coppedge is the author of *Forgotten Tales of Texas* (The History Press, 2011).



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# The Great Pumpkin

'TIS THE SEASON WHEN ALL THINGS pumpkin flavor our lattes, cookies, quick breads and more. No complaints here—the subtly sweet richness of pumpkin gives everything from soups to muffins a luscious texture and comforting, even nostalgic appeal. When I heard Ruth Reichl, the former editor of *Gourmet* magazine, describe the following recipe, I knew I had to give it a try. A small whole pumpkin (sometimes called a sugar or pie pumpkin) is layered with toasted bread and cheese; filled with cream, chicken stock and a few aromatics; and baked until the filling melds with the tender pumpkin flesh. Delight friends and family by serving the whole baked pumpkin at the table, then carve it into quarters.

**PAULA DISBROWE**, FOOD EDITOR

## Stuffed Pumpkin

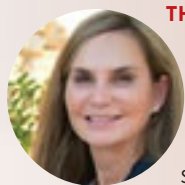
- 1 small pumpkin (about 4 pounds)
- 1 loaf French bread (such as baguette), cubed (about 6 cups)
- 12 ounces grated cheese (such as Gruyère, Swiss, Emmenthal or sharp white cheddar)
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh thyme or sage
- 1 cup chicken stock
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- Pinch grated nutmeg
- Pinch cayenne
- Vegetable oil, for brushing

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Slice off the top of the pumpkin (as though you were making a jack-o'-lantern) and use a metal spoon to scrape out the seeds and strings. (Spread the seeds out to dry and eat later.)
3. Place the bread cubes on a rimmed baking sheet and bake until lightly toasted, about 9 minutes.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 32

# Recipes

## The Great Pumpkin



### THIS MONTH'S RECIPE CONTEST WINNER

MARI HALEY | CENTRAL TEXAS EC

Haley's swoonworthy riff on flan has a subtle, appealing pumpkin flavor that melds perfectly with its caramelized syrup. With a silky texture that's slightly more substantial than traditional versions, the flan makes for a pie stand-in on Thanksgiving. Haley says it's also a "great dessert for a Mexican-themed dinner" and "really complements a Cajun-spiced turkey."

## Family Style Pumpkin Flan

### CARAMEL

- 1 cup sugar

### CUSTARD

- 5 eggs, at room temperature  
1 cup sweetened condensed milk  
1 can (15 ounces) pumpkin purée (not pumpkin pie filling)  
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon  
¼ teaspoon ground ginger  
¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
¾ cup whole milk

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees with the rack in the middle of the oven.
2. **CARAMEL:** Pour the sugar into a small, heavy-bottomed saucepan and place over low heat, stirring constantly until the sugar melts into a golden liquid. Carefully pour the hot, caramelized sugar into an 8-inch metal (not glass) cake pan and allow to cool completely.
3. **CUSTARD:** Beat the eggs with an electric mixer at low speed until combined (do not whip the eggs into foam). Add the sweetened condensed milk, pumpkin, cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg and vanilla and mix at low speed just until evenly combined. Add the milk and beat at low speed

until well-blended (do not overbeat).

4. Place the cake pan in a larger pan (like a lasagna pan), then pour the egg mixture into the cake pan over the cooled caramelized sugar. Carefully pour hot water into the lasagna pan until it reaches about ⅔ up the side of the cake pan to create a water bath, then place combined pans in oven.
5. Bake 50 minutes or until the flan is firm to the touch but not solid. (To double-check for doneness, insert a knife into the center and about halfway down into the flan—the knife should come out clean.) Remove the pans from the oven and carefully remove the cake pan from the water bath. Allow the cake pan to cool on counter, then cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate at least one day or up to two days.
6. When you're ready to serve, run a table knife around the side of the cake pan to release the flan. Place a deep serving plate on top of the cake pan and, while holding the plate and pan tightly together, invert. The caramel will run down the sides of the flan. Serve in wedges or large spoonfuls, topped with a sprinkle of cinnamon if desired. ▶ Serves 6–8.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 31

Remove from oven and cool slightly.

4. Layer the bread and cheese inside the pumpkin, leaving about ½ inch at the top (the filling will expand a bit during baking).
5. In a medium bowl, whisk together the fresh herbs, chicken stock, cream, salt, black pepper, nutmeg and cayenne. Pour the mixture into the pumpkin, using as much as you need to cover the top layer of filling. Place the top back on the pumpkin, brush the outside with oil, then bake on a rimmed baking sheet 2 hours, until the pumpkin is very tender.
6. Allow the pumpkin to cool 10–15 minutes, then slice it into quarters. Make sure you scoop up the pumpkin flesh with the bread and cheese mixture. ▶ Serves 4.

## Pumpkin Chocolate Chip Muffins

KELLY LASTER | PEDERNALES EC

You can use regular or mini chocolate chips in these easy-to-love muffins (they're perfect for school parties or potlucks). "Our children used to ask to bring these to school on their birthdays to share with their classmates instead of cupcakes," Laster says. "It's been a family favorite recipe for the last 20 years."

- 4 eggs  
2 cups sugar  
1 can (15 ounces) pumpkin purée  
1½ cups vegetable oil  
3 cups flour  
2 teaspoons baking soda  
2 teaspoons baking powder  
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon  
1 teaspoon salt  
2 cups semisweet chocolate chips

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees and apply nonstick spray to 2 muffin pans (or line them with paper cups).
2. In a large mixing bowl, beat the eggs, sugar, pumpkin and oil until smooth. In a separate bowl, whisk together the flour, baking soda, baking powder, cinnamon and salt. Stir the dry ingredients into the pumpkin mixture until just combined, then fold in chocolate chips.
3. Fill the muffin indents about ¾ full, then bake 16–20 minutes or until golden and a toothpick inserted in the center of a muffin comes out clean. Remove from

## \$100 Recipe Contest

March's theme is **Winner, Winner, Chicken Dinner**. Roasted? Stewed? Fried until crisp? What's the word on your best bird? The deadline to submit a recipe is **October 10**.

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heat and cool the muffins in pans 10 minutes before transferring them to a wire rack to cool completely. ▶ Makes 24 muffins.

## Curried Pumpkin Soup With Cilantro Chutney

JANET ROSE | SAN BERNARD EC

We love the creative, exotic spin on this silky soup. Curry, bright orange juice and a cilantro chutney pair beautifully with the sweetness of pumpkin. "This soup can be served hot or cold," Rose writes, "and can be made with any winter squash in place of the pumpkin. You can also use canned pumpkin purée."

### SOUP

- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 cup chopped onion
- ½ cup chopped shallots
- 1 clove garlic, chopped
- 6 cups cubed fresh pumpkin (about a 4-pound pumpkin)
- 1 tart apple (preferably Granny Smith), peeled, cored and chopped
- 4 cups chicken broth
- 1 cup orange juice (preferably fresh)

- 2 tablespoons curry powder
  - 1 teaspoon minced fresh dill
  - 1 teaspoon grated orange zest
  - 1 cup heavy cream
- Salt and pepper to taste

### CILANTRO CHUTNEY

- 2 cups fresh cilantro (leaves and tender stems)
- ½ yellow pepper, diced
- 1 hot chile (preferably red), seeded and chopped
- ¼ cup roasted sunflower seeds
- ½ teaspoon roasted cumin seeds
- 1 teaspoon orange juice

**1. SOUP:** Melt the butter in a large saucepan (or Dutch oven) over medium heat. When the butter has melted, add the onion, shallots and garlic and cook, stirring, until the vegetables are softened (but not brown), about 5–7 minutes. Add the pumpkin, apple, chicken broth, orange juice, curry powder, dill and orange zest. Bring the mixture to a boil, then lower heat and simmer about 40

minutes, until the pumpkin is very soft.

**2.** Remove the soup from heat and allow to cool briefly, then purée the mixture in a blender or food processor (in batches if necessary). Return the purée to the pot, stir in the heavy cream, season to taste with salt and pepper and rewarm, if necessary, but do not allow the soup to boil.

**3. CHUTNEY:** Combine all the ingredients in a food processor or blender and process into a coarse purée. Add additional sunflower seeds if the chutney is too thin. Serve immediately, or cover with plastic wrap and store in the refrigerator up to one day in advance.

**4.** To serve the soup, ladle it into bowls and garnish with a spoonful of the cilantro chutney. ▶ Serves 6–8.

**COOK'S TIP** For a thicker texture, drain the pumpkin before puréeing, reserving the liquid, then add enough broth to create the consistency desired. This soup has a bright citrus flavor—to tone it down, use ½ cup orange juice and an additional ½ cup chicken broth.

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# Clocks

JUST FOR OLD TIMES' SAKE, we're taking a close look at clocks. Some might have a face only a mother could love, but all of them have the correct time at least twice a day. **GRACE ARSIAGA**

**WEB EXTRAS ►** See Focus on Texas on our website for more photos from readers.

▲ **REAGAN FERGUSON**, Central Texas EC: "The clock was given to my great-grandparents as a wedding gift in November 1885 in Medina."



▲ **BETH WEST**, Wood County EC: "This is the face of the grandfather clock that my father-in-law purchased in Italy many years ago."

## UPCOMING CONTESTS

FEBRUARY	TWO OF A KIND	DUE OCTOBER 10
MARCH	TREES	DUE NOVEMBER 10
APRIL	MILES AND MILES OF TEXAS	DUE DECEMBER 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). We do not accept entries via email. **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 regret that *Texas Co-op Power* cannot be responsible for photos that are lost in the mail or not received by the deadline.



▲ **PAUL GARCIA**, Medina EC: Old windup clock that still works.

◀ **CHERI HANSON**, Tri-County EC: The Wise County Courthouse in Decatur.

▼ **SHARON BLACK-GREENE**, Pedernales EC: The University of Texas Tower clock.



## Pick of the Month

### Inaugural Celina Oktoberfest

**Celina** October 13  
(972) 382-3300, celinaoktoberfest.com

Oktoberfest promises live music from festive bands, a tempting assortment of traditional German foods and a bountiful beer garden. Wear traditional German lederhosen or a dirndl to the festival and get in free. Don't worry about missing college football: Games will be shown on a massive LED screen.



# October 7

**Arlington** Cirque Zuma Zuma,  
(817) 543-4308, [levittpavilionarlington.org](http://levittpavilionarlington.org)

**Burnet** Our Mother of Sorrows Catholic Church Fall Festival, (512) 756-4410, [omoscc.com](http://omoscc.com)

**Caldwell Holy Rosary Annual Home-**  
**coming Bazaar & Picnic, (979) 567-3667,**  
**holyrosaryfrenstat.com**

## 11

**Tyler [11-14] Fall Fun Horse Show,**  
(903) 882-8696, [southboundshows.com/fall-fun](http://southboundshows.com/fall-fun)

## 12

**Lake Worth [12-13] Bullfrog Westfest Rodeo.** (817) 237-9755. [nwtlions.org/rodeo](http://nwtlions.org/rodeo)

## 13

**Beaumont Dogtober Fest**, (409) 838-2202,  
dogtoberfestbeaumont.com

**Bluff Dale** Fall Into Bluff Dale,  
(817) 575-9487

**October 11**  
**Tyler**  
**Fall Fun Horse Show**



**Emory Oktoberfest**, (903) 473-2465,  
emorytx.com

**Stonewall VFD Fall Fish Fry**, (830) 644-5571,  
visitfredericksburgtx.com/events

## 14

**College Station Aggieland Humane Society's Wiener Fest, (979) 775-5755, [aggielandhumane.org/wienerfest](http://aggielandhumane.org/wienerfest)**

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**Corpus Christi** Padre Island Art Walk, (361) 949-7114

19

**Jefferson** Cruise Night, (903) 665-3733, visitjeffersonstexas.com

**Woodville** [19-20] Harvest Festival, (409) 283-2272, heritage-village.org

20

**Liberty Hill** Harvest Festival, (512) 965-3260, crosstrackschurchumc.org

**Mineral Wells** Crazy Kicker 100 Bike Ride, (940) 745-0807, crazykicker100.com

**Richmond** Texian Market Days, (281) 343-0218, georgeranch.org

**Roxton** Saturday Night Festival, (903) 346-2939

21

**Georgetown** Down Syndrome Association of Central Texas Buddy Walk, (512) 323-0808, dsact.org

26

**Wimberley** HerbFest, (832) 287-9366, hillcountryherbs.org

**Kerrville** [26-28] Kerr County Fair & Midway, (830) 257-6833, kerrcountyfair.com

27

**Frisco** Gary Burns Fun Run and 5K, (469) 633-6860, friscoisd.org

**Marble Falls** Autumn Flight Disc Golf Tournament, (512) 267-6310, flatcreekestate.com



October 26  
Wimberley  
HerbFest

**Milam** Gaines-Oliphint House's 200th Birthday, (409) 383-3880

**San Marcos** Farmer Fred's Harvest Fall Carnival, (512) 393-8400

28

**Schertz** Bexar County Czech-Slovak Festival, (210) 492-7128, bexarcountyczechheritagesociety.com

**Zuehl** Redeemer United Church of Christ Harvest Festival, (830) 914-2168

## November

3

**Mineola** Pedal for Paws Bike Ride, (903) 638-6902, mineolapedalforpaws.com

**Stephenville** Woofstock, (254) 413-4664, pawsofstephenville.net

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# Go With the Flow

A visit to the Laredo Water Museum is an immersion in the wonders of the Rio Grande

BY EILEEN MATTEI

BATHED IN BLUE LIGHT, A TOILET ON A pedestal offers the first clue that the Laredo Water Museum takes a humorous approach to a serious topic.

"The Water Museum is about appreciating the importance of water and keeping the water supply safe," says Wes Barbarena, plant operations supervisor of Laredo's Jefferson Water Treatment Plant.

Why does the museum display a toilet on a pedestal? Because one-third of water used in homes goes down the toilet. With exhibits such as that one, the city of Laredo's Water Treatment Division hopes visitors will grasp the connection between water demand and the environment.

Visitors like me soak up information in arcadelike interactive exhibits, complete with blinking lights and joysticks. A hands-on immersion in water, so to speak, makes a difference, says Maria Romo, museum project specialist. "Teachers tell me they like that the kids learn while looking and playing. It helps them remember and make connections to lessons in class. Kids tell me they will come back with their brothers and sisters to have fun here and learn about water."

At the museum entrance, a wall of bubbles shows water use facts such as the number of gallons of water needed to produce a vehicle, a pair of jeans or a cup of coffee. A terrazzo map invites me to walk along a scale model of the 1,900-mile-long Rio Grande, allowing me a bird's-eye view to explore its watersheds and tributaries.

Inside the 30-foot-long Water Treatment Tunnel (a simulated 72-inch diameter water pipe where dim blue lights create the illusion of a watery atmosphere), I travel with water on its journey from the muddy Rio Grande to clear potability. Motion-activated, action-packed



**One of the interactive displays at the Laredo Water Museum.**

videos on each side of me explain the six-stage process (disinfecting, clumping, agitating, purifying, filtering and underground storage). This process treats as many as 48 million gallons daily.

In the main exhibit hall, the Water World pool illustrates how currents move plastics and trash around the ocean. At Water and You, I step on a scale, and flashing lights show how many gallons of water I tote around daily. Humans are, after all, 60–75 percent water. One station challenges you to guess how much water you use at home for bathing and washing clothes and dishes. Other kiosks focus on agriculture, drought and wastewater.

And that blue toilet? The display recommends using low-flow or dual-use toilets along with a blue dye test kit to find if your toilet leaks. Conservation suggestions include low-controlled aerosol faucets that reduce water use up to 50 percent along with xeriscaping and rainwater harvesting.

At a station labeled What You Can't See in Water, a giant, simulated petri dish

reveals squiggles, clumps and bubbles moving in water. I navigate the microscope-joystick through magnified parasites, bacteria and water contaminants.

Romo says students like to pump water by hand into a 5-gallon container, feeling the energy it takes. They can learn more about the almost 800 million people worldwide who do not have access to clean water and sometimes risk waterborne illnesses like cholera, typhoid and amoebic dysentery. "Kids see the impact of polluting on the river, the environment, and want to stop it," she adds.

Outside, a nature trail edged with Turk's cap, cenizo, yucca, skeleton-leaf goldeneye and tropical sage slopes down to the Rio Grande. The lush and colorful native plants require minimal water and attract green jays, scissortail flycatchers and countless butterflies.

The multisensory message is easy to absorb: Take good care of our water.

Eileen Mattei, a Nueces EC member, is a Texas master naturalist in Harlingen.

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