

# TEXAS CO-OP POWER



## KLEB WOODS NATURE PRESERVE

An East Texas eccentric  
leaves a wooded legacy



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Pond at Kleb Woods Nature Preserve.

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POND: LARRY DITTO. DANCER: AZP WORLDWIDE | SHUTTERSTOCK.COM



**ON THE COVER** A recent planting of longleaf pine at Kleb Woods Nature Preserve near Tomball. Photo by Larry Ditto

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## Service to Country

I was touched by *Circle of Life*. My dad served in World War II on a destroyer in three theaters of the war—Atlantic, Pacific and Mediterranean. My two older brothers served in the Army, one in Korea and the other in peacetime Germany. My youngest brother was in the Air Force in peacetime. I had several uncles who also served in various branches during World War II. All served because they loved this country.

JOAN PHILBIN | ALVARADO  
UNITED COOPERATIVE SERVICES

## The Need for Charity

The November issue was waiting for me when I returned from my latest trip to Haiti, where I teach disaster-resistant home construction. One of the letters [*On Matters of Aid*] concerning a \$35,000 donation to Bolivian rural electrification ended: “Charity begins at home.”

Yes, take care of your family, but charity should begin where there is a need. I have regularly worked with people in Haiti who eat one meal every two to three days, but I have never found that level of need in the U.S.

HERB NORDMEYER | CASTROVILLE  
MEDINA EC

## Remembered With Affection

This photo [right] just popped up on my phone, and I gasped [*Abandoned Buildings*, Focus on Texas, November 2018]. To most people, it looks like an old gas station, and to an extent it was, but in truth it was so much more. This used to be a Texaco station and country store. My grandparents’ farmstead was

## Wreaths Across America

Your very moving story about *Wreaths Across America* [*Circle of Life*, November 2018] really touched my heart. I went online to make a donation and couldn’t think of a more worthwhile organization.

JOYCE HISER | CRANDALL | TRINITY VALLEY EC



about 3 miles from it in a town rarely even marked on maps, Olmos, close to Skidmore and Tynan.

It was the local hub where neighbors met up, played dominoes, shared a cold beer and caught up on local gossip. As kids, we played freeze tag in the parking lot that was so full of bottle caps it almost looked to be paved with them.

LAURA CURTIS | HELOTES  
BANDERA EC



## Hitched to a Fable?

Whoa, pardner. Clay Coppedge is galloping us down a false trail. *Bass Reeves, Lawman Extraordinaire* [October 2017]

leads us to think Reeves is the Lone Ranger prototype. But don’t drink that water, cowboy.

The basis for the Lone Ranger is Capt. John Hughes of the Texas Rangers. Author Zane Grey dedicated his novel *Lone Star Ranger* to Hughes and the Rangers.

LAWRENCE E. SMITH | BANDERA  
BANDERA EC

The end of the article stated, “He died in 1910, but, oddly, no one knows where he’s buried.”

A quick search of findagrave.com finds that he is buried in Oklahoma. I think it only fitting that people know where he is buried so that we can honor his memory as a true American hero who helped tame our Wild West.

RUTH MAJORS | PALESTINE  
TRINITY VALLEY EC

I really enjoy the historical articles in your magazine. While reading the one about Bass Reeves, I could imagine only one person on the whole planet to play Reeves in a

Hollywood movie: Denzel Washington. What a great movie that would be.

TONY PRETTENHOFER | AUBREY  
COSERV

## Writer Clay Coppedge responds:

Washington would be a good choice, but Morgan Freeman has held the rights to the Bass Reeves story for some time. Rumor has it that a script is underway, but the project is on hold.

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## HAPPENINGS

# Houston Leads the Way on MLK Day

The Black Heritage Society in **HOUSTON** deems its Martin Luther King Jr. parade the first of its kind in the country. Indeed, the first parade, in 1978, featured King's father as grand marshal.

This year, the annual **ORIGINAL MLK DAY PARADE** is **JANUARY 21**, a state and national holiday, and starts in front of Minute Maid Park.

After the parade, the celebration continues with the MLK Jr. Taste of Houston festival, also at Minute Maid Park.

**INFO** ▶ (713) 236-1700; [blackheritagesociety.org](http://blackheritagesociety.org)

**WEB EXTRAS**  
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## ANNIVERSARIES

# HOPE YOU EAT THIS UP

**Texas Co-op Power** turns 75 in 2019, and we'll commemorate the past 75 years with a themed timeline every month in Currents.

**Our goal** is to highlight events and milestones in history that coincide with the publication of the magazine, which began in July 1944 as a four-page newspaper called *Texas Cooperative Electric Power*.

**These timelines** are by no means comprehensive—75 years of history can't be captured in just a few hundred words. We trust readers will let us know of overlooked moments and people.

**We kick off** with food and drink. Next month we'll feature sports. In the coming months, watch for these themes: politics, music, electricity and energy, science and technology, the economy, rural life, travel, outdoors, society and fashion, and the arts.

## ◀ LOOKING BACK AT FOOD AND DRINK THIS MONTH



**THE INTRODUCTION OF ELECTRICITY** into rural kitchens in the 1930s heralded a revolution in cooking and food that changed life in countless ways.

### 1940s

**1944** The second issue of *Texas Cooperative Electric Power* publishes its first recipe—for Fruit-Stuffed Spareribs.

**1947** David Pace starts bottling something he calls picante sauce in a rented room in the back of a San Antonio liquor store. Also, the electric dishwasher hits stores.

**1949** Pillsbury holds its first bake-off.

### 1950s

**1954** More than 25 million TV dinners are eaten in front of 33 million TV sets in American living rooms.

**1958** Blue Bell Creameries, in business since 1907, ceases production of butter to focus solely on ice cream.



### 1960s

**1960** A Woolworth's store in San Antonio serves lunch to four black people, positioning San Antonio as one of the first major Southern cities to desegregate lunch counters.

**1964** The plastic milk container is introduced commercially.

**1967** Amana introduces Radaranges, household microwave ovens. They sell for \$495 (\$3,800 in today's money).



ENERGY INFO

# Made in the Shade

**UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA** researchers are experimenting with installing solar panels 8 feet off the ground to provide shade for livestock, according to *Farm Journal*. “We’ll monitor the behavior of the cows under the shade, their eating and lying behavior, and also their milk production compared to when they don’t have access to the shaded areas,” researcher Brad Heins said.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

## Don’t Be Left Out

**January 25 is not National Opposite Day. Don’t have fun with that.**



### 1970s

**1970** *Typically Texas Cookbook*, more than 300 pages of recipes submitted by electric co-op members, is published.

**1971** The first frozen margarita is poured at Mariano’s Mexican Cuisine in Dallas from a repurposed soft-serve ice cream machine.



### 1980s

**1980** Whole Foods Market opens its first store in Austin.

**1983** After more than 10 years of research, Texas A&M University creates a supersweet onion called the 1015, named after the ideal date for planting—October 15.

**1985** The electric bread maker makes life easier for those who don’t want to do it by hand.

### 1990s

**1991** Salsa overtakes ketchup in sales to become the nation’s condiment of choice.

**1994** The George Foreman Lean Mean Fat-Reducing Grilling Machine, named after the former heavyweight boxing champion from Houston, debuts. Sales have surpassed 150 million.

**1998** Cute little grape tomatoes show up in groceries.



### 2000s

**2006** Anna Ginsberg of Austin, who later became *Texas Co-op Power* food editor, wins the Pillsbury Bake-Off with her recipe for Baked Chicken and Spinach Stuffing.

**2017** Mexican mineral water Topo Chico gains a cultlike following in Texas. Coca-Cola purchases the brand.



SPORTS SECTION

## Soccer Superstar Heads Home

**Clint Dempsey** became the first American soccer player to score a hat trick in England’s top soccer league in 2012. After that, he became the highest-paid American player in the U.K. and scored more goals than any other American in any top-tier European league. He has appeared in 140 international matches for the U.S. national team and scored 57 international goals, tying the U.S. record. He’s been called the greatest American soccer player of all time.

**He grew up** going to church with his grandmother in Nacogdoches. And after a 15-year career, Dempsey announced his retirement in August.

**What now?** Locals expect to see the international superstar back in East Texas, where his family still lives. “It’s where you’re from, it’s your roots, and that’s why I like to get back to Nacogdoches in the offseason and hang out with my family,” Dempsey told *The Seattle Times* in 2013. “To me, it keeps me grounded and reminds me of how far I’ve come.”

LOOKING BACK AT SPORTS NEXT MONTH ►



# *A HIDDEN MAN'S GEM*



Eccentric hermit *ELMER KLEB* helped transform his family homestead near Houston into a woodland preserve

*ELMER KLEB* didn't like school. The truth is he didn't like people much, either. What he did like were birds, trees and solitude. His preferred companion

was a black buzzard with a broken wing that lived with him in his run-down house on 133 acres. The buzzard apparently didn't mind that the century-old dwelling had no electricity or running water.

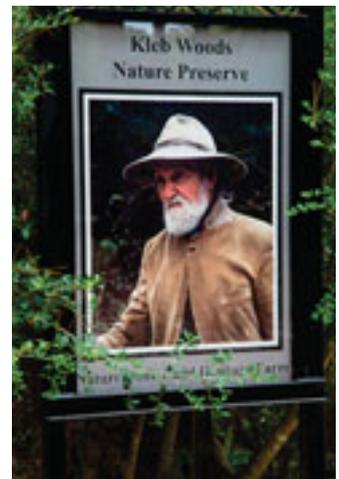
"When I first visited the property, I was immediately enchanted with both the site and the hermit who owned it, Elmer Kleb," says Andrew Sansom, then executive director of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, who visited the home for the first time in the late 1980s.

Despite his eccentric and reclusive lifestyle, Kleb left something priceless for the people of Texas. "I learned that Mr. Kleb had inherited the land when it was a cultivated field," Sansom says, "and he spent his life finding native trees and other vegetation and replanting them on his land so that when I got there, it was a lovely mature woodland."

Today, Kleb Woods Nature Preserve, 8 miles west of Tomball and 40 miles northwest of Houston, offers a rare commodity: silence. Silence, lightly seasoned with birdsong. The preserve attracts bird-watchers, hikers and nature enthusiasts from around the world. The story of why this secluded hideaway exists at all is as eccentric as its former owner.

Kleb's great-grandfather, Conrad Kleb, emigrated to northwest Harris County from Germany in 1846. He purchased 107 acres and established a family farm. Andreas, one of Conrad's 14 children, bought a separate farm in 1871 for about \$250 near Muschke Road, close to the German immigrant community of Rose Hill. Edward, Andreas' son, and wife Minnie inherited the farm from Andreas in 1903, grew vegetables and cotton, raised cattle and sheep, and built a simple wood-frame house on the property. They had two children, Elmer and Myrtle.

**Left:** A massive live oak at Kleb Woods Nature Preserve. **Right:** A sign shows Elmer Kleb, former owner of the property that became the nature preserve.





His property was worth  
an estimated \$750,000,  
yet Kleb was penniless.

**ELMER**, born in 1907, and Myrtle, in 1913, attended Rose Hill School, but Elmer didn't get along with other boys and became the target of bullies who taunted him with the name "Lumpy." He quit school sometime between the fourth and seventh grades (family stories are not precise) to help his parents on the farm. He rarely left the property thereafter.

"Elmer had a condition that was eventually recognized as a form of autism," says Fred Collins, director of the Kleb Woods Nature Preserve. Collins has invested years researching the Kleb family and restoring the site's dilapidated buildings. "When asked to do something," Collins says, "Elmer would insist on an expla-

nation of why the job had to be done. Without that explanation, he wouldn't tackle the task."

Kleb inherited the farm after his parents and sister died. With no one left to explain what jobs needed to be done, he stopped maintaining the property. Grapevines and trees, most of them planted by Kleb and his father, grew uncontrolled.

"Elmer no longer maintained the fences," Collins says, "and allowed his livestock to wander freely, getting into neighbors' crops and gardens. Eventually the county sheriff rounded them up and sold them."

A small man with tangled gray hair and a long beard, Kleb was

**Opposite: A barn and flower garden on Kleb's former farm.**

considered “peculiar” by neighbors, as his mother had been. His sister, Myrtle, endured periodic bouts with mental illness and died in her early 20s.

Kleb never married and had no children. With no source of income, he had to rely on relatives and friends for food and money, occasionally making forays into his neighbors’ gardens uninvited. Collins explains that although Kleb did drive as late as the 1970s, in later years, he walked wherever he went. When yaupon and pine trees grew up around the windmill and prevented the blades from turning and pumping water, even the single cold-water faucet stopped working.

As Kleb withdrew from the surrounding community, North Houston’s suburban population exploded. Property values and taxes soared. Kleb didn’t understand why he needed to pay taxes, so he didn’t.

When tax collectors came to the property, Kleb vanished into the thick woods until they left. Even though he didn’t open the tax statements—after his death, a collection of unopened tax bills was found in a trunk—Kleb knew something had to be done. In 1986, he wrote a letter to the Houston chapter of the Audubon Society asking for help. Members of the Audubon Society tried to raise the money to pay the tax lien that, in 1988, was \$170,000—but the effort failed.

His property was worth an estimated \$750,000, yet Kleb was penniless. Over the years, relatives tried to persuade him to sell a small part of his acreage to save the rest. He refused. After the Audubon Society failed to raise the funds to pay the past-due taxes, a county judge declared Kleb incompetent and ordered the property to be sold.

Steve Radack, a Harris County commissioner, intervened to prevent the immediate sale. That’s when Terry O’Rourke, Harris County assistant district attorney, contacted Sansom at TPWD.

“We managed to arrange a grant to Harris County, which paid the taxes, provided Mr. Kleb with the means to live out the rest of his life out of poverty and establish a wonderful park in his name,” says Sansom, now the executive director of the Meadows Center for Water and the Environment at Texas State University.

The grant from TPWD amounted to \$737,500. With that money, Harris County purchased the land in 1991, paid off the tax bill and set up a trust

to take care of Kleb. As Sansom notes, Harris County commissioners allowed Kleb to remain in the house for the rest of his life. Although plans to transform the Kleb woods into a nature preserve got underway during his later years, the acreage surrounding the house remained untouched until Kleb’s death in 1999 at the age of 91.

“Texas Parks and Wildlife contacted me at the beginning of this saga and asked me if I could try to meet with Elmer,” says Ted Eubanks, then president of the Houston chapter of the National Audubon Society. “I went out to the property and found him, and within a short time struck an unlikely friendship with him. He would call me at home—he would walk to the nearby store to use their phone—and talk endlessly about wanting to save his property as a preserve.”

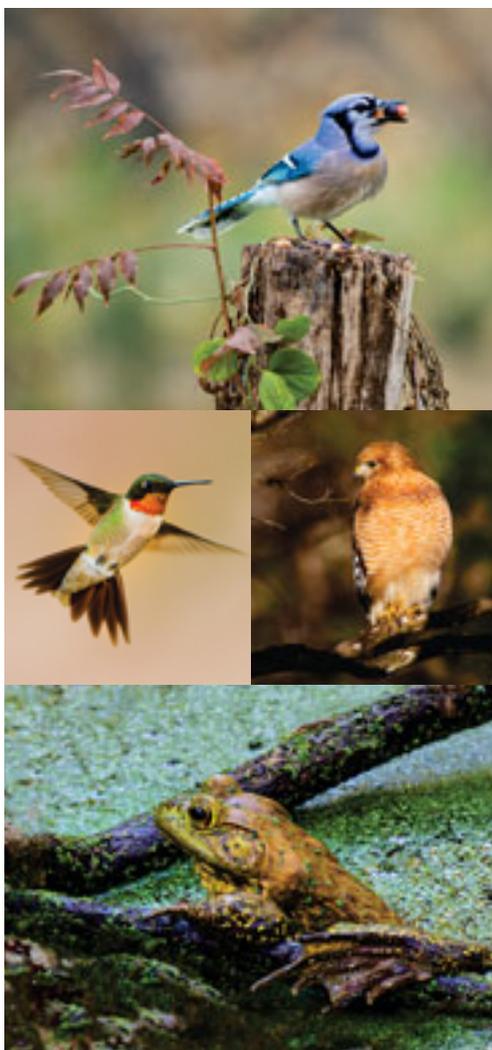
**KLEB** left an indelible mark on Sansom, too. “For many years, I kept a photograph of the old gentleman on my wall in the executive office at Parks and Wildlife to remind me of his life’s work and the privilege of having known him and playing a small role in helping him accomplish his dream,” Sansom says.

Kleb Woods Nature Preserve, located in northwest Harris County on FM 2920, is open from 7 a.m. until dusk. Visitors may wander among the restored historic farm buildings or take shady trails that lead through towering pine and oak forests and scattered wetlands. A new nature center houses an auditorium and classroom, which attracts groups interested in birding and local history.

“Kleb Woods offers a unique sanctuary in the midst of an urban landscape,” says park visitor Cynthia Beman. “Walking the trails, enveloped by the trees, birds and verdant heart of the woods, one can certainly understand Elmer Kleb’s tenacious hold on the land and can almost feel his presence. It is easy to picture him sitting on the porch of his home, completely at peace with his surroundings.”

Today, Kleb Woods opens a window into the environmental and cultural history of Harris County. The preserve exists because of an unlikely alliance of environmentalists, government officials and lawyers who helped a reclusive man save his beloved wilderness from becoming another subdivided housing development.

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



**Wildlife spotted at Kleb Woods includes, clockwise from top, bluejays, red-shouldered hawks, bullfrogs and ruby-throated hummingbirds.**

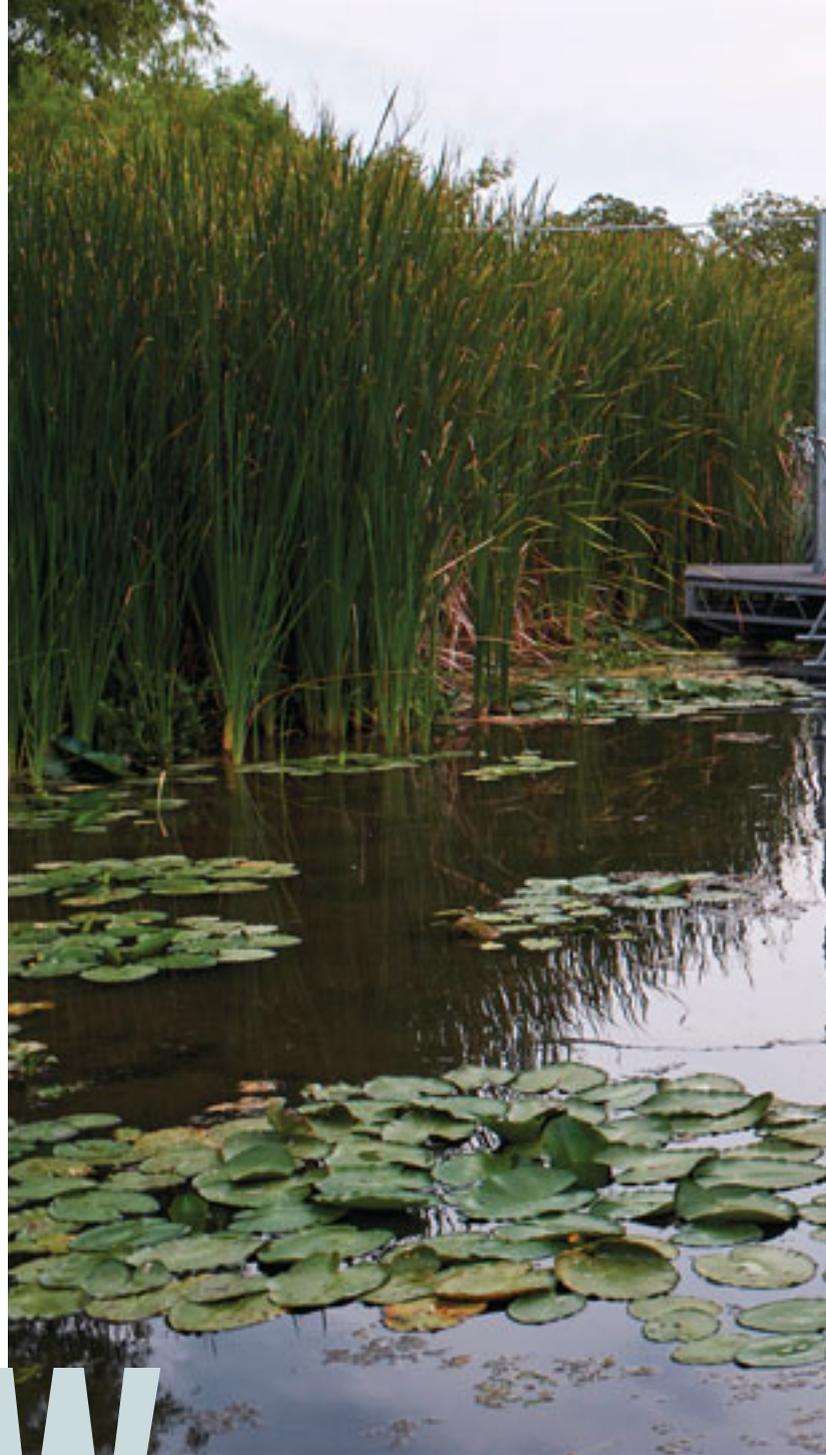
# THIRST

≈ for ≈

# KNOWLEDGE



**Ancient watering hole—  
turned-Aquarena Springs  
resurfaces as research center  
at Texas State University**



# W

hen my three kids were little, we made several trips from Austin to Aquarena Springs in San Marcos.

They marveled at fish and turtles beneath glass-bottom boats, wiggled enough to frighten me in our sky-ride gondola car and spent their allowances in the gift shop. Once, we even stayed in the cotton-candy colored hotel overlooking the water. It was low-key, affordable family fun.

Recently, I returned to see how this place has transformed into the Meadows Center for Water and the Environment, a Texas State University research and conservation facility.

The center kept the glass-bottom boats, and I was happy to spot the familiar springs, bubbling up through sand like boiling pots of Cream of Wheat. Some 200 springs in Spring Lake create the headwaters of the San Marcos River, and the water sometimes



**BY MELISSA GASKILL**

SPLASH: IRINA | ADOBE STOCK.COM | POSTCARDS: MEADOWS CENTER FOR WATER AND THE ENVIRONMENT



reaches 40 feet deep. But through the glass-bottom boats, the lake floor looks close enough to touch, the water still gin clear thanks to filtering through limestone and a flow that completely refreshes the lake about every 24 hours.

Our boat driver tells a story similar to the one my kids heard when they were young, including a boast that this area is widely regarded as one of the oldest continually inhabited sites in North America, its first occupants arriving nearly 12,000 years ago. Native peoples gathered here regularly, and the first Europeans arrived in 1691. In 1831, colonial Spanish governor Juan Martín de Veramendi received a land grant around the springs. His heirs sold some of the land to Nathaniel Lewis in 1840, and in 1845, Lewis sold to Gen. Edward Burleson. Burleson dammed the river to form Spring Lake and used the outflow to operate a gristmill.

**Opposite page: Postcards tout some attractions from the onetime Aquarena Springs. Above: A floating boardwalk over restored wetlands at the Meadows Center for Water and the Environment.**

Local businessman A.B. Rogers purchased this tract in 1926 and built the Spring Lake Park Hotel, later called the Landmark Inn. His son Paul Rogers founded Aquarena Springs Resort in 1949, adding the boats and putting in a submersible theater where visitors watched mermaids and Ralph the Swimming Pig perform. The sky ride went up around 1959. By the 1970s, the resort drew 250,000 visitors a year and employed more than 200 people.

By the 1980s, when I first brought my kids, the park looked a little down on its luck. “The Rogerses were pioneers, but they couldn’t compete with the second generation of tourism destinations,” says Andrew Sansom, former director of the Texas Parks



and Wildlife Department and current Meadows Center director. The family sold to an investor, who offered to sell to TPWD. The department didn't see an amusement park fitting its mission, though, and passed.

In 1994, what was then Southwest Texas State University bought the property. "President Jerry Supple understood this is a globally significant site and something bad would happen to it unless he acted," Sansom says. "There is no other university in the world with anything like this on its campus."

With the San Marcos community concerned about the economic impact of losing Aquarena Springs, the university kept it open at first. But that didn't work. In 2005, the university, now Texas State, created the Meadows Center and brought Sansom on board.

By 2014, almost every trace of Aquarena Springs had disappeared—the sky ride dismantled; the submarine theater removed; and the gift shop, restaurant and outbuildings demolished. A \$5 million project had created several miles of nature trails and a floating boardwalk over restored wetlands.

"San Marcos is one of the fastest-growing cities in the United States, so the issue of the economic impact became moot," Sansom says. "And we still have 125,000 visitors each year."

I can see why. In addition to the boat tours, visitors can enjoy indoor displays, which include endangered Texas blind salamanders, and an interactive exhibit about the Edwards Aquifer, as well as the outdoor trails and boardwalks. Plans call for turning an entire floor of the old inn into a visitors and research venue. The Meadows Center conducts water-related research around the world, including on the Edwards Aquifer and endan-

**The Meadows Center conducts research around the world and at the springs in San Marcos, above. Visitors enjoy a glass-bottom boat tour, right.**



gered species in Spring Lake.

I return one more time, to kayak, an experience offered in partnership with REI Outdoor School, along with stand-up paddleboard lessons and special tours, including under a full moon.

Apart from the glass-bottom boat tours, these outings provide the only public access to the lake.

I spot herons and egrets on the shore. Under the clear water, largemouth bass, redbreast sunfish, Rio Grande cichlids and toothy spotted gar swim among forests of furry-stalked cabomba and long-leafed arrowhead grass. The center has dramatically increased the population of endangered Texas wild rice, found nowhere else on the planet, and the lake boasts one of the highest concentrations of turtles anywhere.

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

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JANUARY 10

# Celebrate National Cut Your Energy Costs Day



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**IF YOU'VE RESOLVED TO SPEND LESS AND SAVE MORE IN 2019,** cutting back on a few regular expenses is a great place to start. January 10 is National Cut Your Energy Costs Day, so we've rounded up a few of our best savings tips to help trim your electric bills without making major lifestyle changes.

**Cut heating and cooling costs.** A programmable thermostat is the place to start. It allows you to adjust the temperature when you're out of the house, and many can learn (or be programmed to) your family's patterns to know when it's OK to move the temperature up and down without compromising comfort. And be sure to change filters frequently to keep your system clean and breathing freely.

**Watch out for energy-draining appliances.** Big appliances like refrigerators, washers and dryers consume a lot of energy, so the next time you replace one of these appliances, upgrade to an energy-efficient Energy Star model. These units are designed to use much less energy than their older counterparts and often end up paying for themselves over time. Keep

these appliances clean and well maintained to ensure optimal performance and efficiency.

**Pull the plug.** As we continue to be more and more "plugged in," it should come as no surprise that we're spending more on electricity to keep all of our devices charged and running. To keep costs reasonable, plug electronics into a power strip and turn it off when they're not in use. Some newer power strips even include an auto shut-off feature for an added level of convenience, so there's no excuse for wasted energy. Institute a weekly electronics-free family game night to make memories while trimming your electric bill.

**Hit the lights.** We all know to shut off the lights when leaving the room, but you also can make light-bulb swaps that increase energy efficiency. LED lights are the most efficient lighting available—and they last longer.

**Downsize.** Another easy way to conserve energy is to use small appliances such as microwaves,

toasters or convection ovens. These smaller cooking appliances use one-third to one-half the energy of a full-size oven. Slow cookers are also a great option for savings.

**Plan now for next December.** The holidays are just behind us, which means many retailers will have discounted seasonal merchandise. Snag some marked-down LED strands to replace older, less efficient holiday lighting. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, over the course of 40 days, a strand of LEDs requires less than one-tenth the energy of incandescents over that same period.

**Wipe out water wasters.** Dripping faucets waste water—and electricity if it's a hot water tap. Immediately repair any water leaks. To save more, take short showers instead of baths, and turn off the water while brushing your teeth or shaving. Run the dishwasher and clothes washer only for full loads to cut more costs.

Making just a few small changes can add up to big savings on your electric bill.

# Smoothing Out Winter Bills

**AS WE TRUDGE THROUGH WHAT CAN BE THE COLDEST AND DREARIEST PART OF** winter, we at your electric cooperative wish to remind our members that the season's chilly temperatures and shortened days frequently lead to increased electricity usage at home, which can cause uncomfortable spikes in electric bills. You can soften the blow by expecting at least a modest increase in power bills compared to bills from the fall, of course, and adjusting your household's monthly budget to make up the difference. But you also can employ a few strategies to smooth out those upcoming bills.

Now that the holiday blitz of parties and gatherings is mostly behind us, elaborate dinners and dishes can take a back seat. Pull your slow cooker out from the back of your pantry and put it to work. Meals made in a slow cooker or pressure

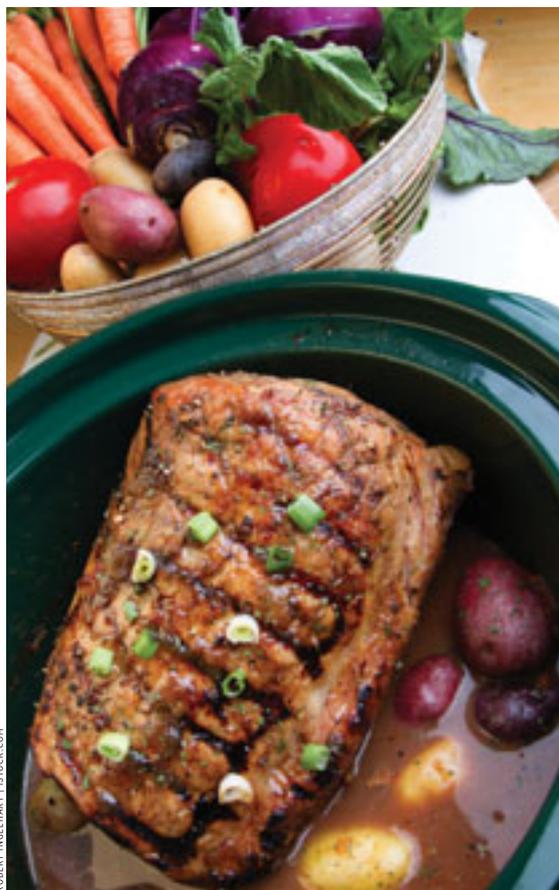
cooker typically use less energy than those cooked in a conventional oven. Plus, hearty stews and braised dishes make the perfect comforting accompaniments to a cold winter's night.

Unplugging chargers that aren't charging anything is another opportunity for significant savings. Once your cell-phone, tablet or other device is fully charged, unplug the charger. Otherwise, it still draws a small but measurable amount of power that adds to your bill at no benefit to you or your electronics.

A final quick tip for hedging against billing peaks: If you don't use a smart thermostat to control your home's heating and air conditioning system, install one. If that's not practical at the moment, make a habit of

decreasing the temperature in your home by around 10 degrees before leaving for work in the morning and before turning in for the night. When the decrease in energy used for heating your home is sustained for eight hours, the savings really can add up.

As always, your electric cooperative wants to partner with you in minimizing your energy spending while maximizing the value you derive from it.



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## Keep Outdoor Electrical Devices Clear of Debris

**THE OUTDOOR UNITS THAT RUN YOUR** air conditioning system, heat pump and standby generator need plenty of breathing room.

So if yours are covered with autumn leaves or debris that blew around during a heavy winter rainfall, go clean them off.

When debris accumulates on your outdoor units, they might not operate properly. To circulate well through the appliances, outdoor air needs a clear pathway in and out.

To avoid damaging equipment, use a broom to clear the unit and immediate area and then a rake or shovel to finish the job.

It's a good idea to keep outdoor meters, valves and piping clear so they're easy to see. Someone in your family—or even a utility crew member—who can't see an obstructed device could accidentally strike it, possibly interrupting your service.

Likewise, keep outdoor vents for water heaters, gas fireplaces and clothes dryers clear year-round. Look inside vents for birds' nests and critters as well as for leaves, lint and anything else that could interrupt the fresh air supply or block the exhaust path.

# Rustling Roses

The quest to save antique varieties lost to the market

EXCERPT BY GREG GRANT  
AND WILLIAM C. WELCH

ROSE RUSTLING IS NOTHING NEW; FOR AS long as there have been roses, there have been those seeking them out. Famed and witty newspaper columnist Leon Hale described the phenomenon of rose rustling in perhaps the best language in a 1982 feature he wrote for the *Houston Post*:

“What rose rustling means, it means you go out and find old rose bushes blooming in isolated places. Roses that you can’t buy any longer but have survived around country houses and grown-up fence rows and the like. And you take cuttings and try to make the roses bloom and search in old seed catalogues and look for identifications. Lot of people interested in that now, it seems—going out and rustling old roses.”

Many of the old roses found today in the American South were bred in Europe and were initially grown by the royal and the wealthy. The queen of rose rustling must surely have been Empress Josephine, first wife of Napoleon Bonaparte. After all, she strived to have every rose in the world growing in her garden at Malmaison, near Paris. It is even reported that wars were paused while ships carrying her new finds passed through. Rose buffs like us can be thankful that she had Pierre-Joseph Redouté paint a number of them. He went on to publish his famous *Les Roses* (1817–1820), which featured around 75 of her Malmaison roses in its 168 plates.

Antique roses made their way from Europe to the American South via botanical gardens and fine nurseries and then into wealthy plantations and city gardens. Then, as newer roses were developed and became all the rage, the most popular of

the older ones filtered down into the hands of the common people, who ultimately shared them with their kin and friends. This eventually brought them to farmhouses and rural cemeteries, where a precious few managed to survive into the twentieth century.

Throughout the 1980s, a small band of Texans scouted these rural homesites, abandoned places, and cemeteries searching for forgotten roses. We called ourselves the Texas Rose Rustlers, but we were far from outlaws. The name belied our lofty intent and sense of decorum. “Always ask for permission” and “Never desecrate the site of a found rose” were cardinal rules. To preserve raw, fragrant beauty and resilience, with repeat blooming as a bonus, was the aim. Exasperation with the hybrid tea roses popular at the time fueled our purpose. Most gardeners were fussing with hybrid teas and failing miserably, achieving at most a single large bloom at the top of short, stick-like branches. To control black spot and mildew, it was necessary to spray weekly during the growing season. Most of these modern roses were weak growers grafted onto a vigorous rootstock. They lacked fragrance along with vigor, drought tolerance, and general worthiness.

This hybrid tea style of flower was about all that was available. Roses were most often planted in separate beds and grown intensively for cut flowers. The large, rounded shrubs, billowy climbers on fences and pergolas, compact hedges, and graceful accent roses of earlier cottage gardens were becoming a distant memory. For this reason, Pamela Puryear



**The Maggie was one of the earliest discovered roses, named after the late Maggie Traweek, a gardener in north-eastern Louisiana.**

but despite being obviously neglected, the rose flourished beside an old log house. Pamela's cuttings of this bush, which she dubbed her "pioneer rose," rooted easily and launched a newfound passion.

Pam Puryear was the mastermind and definite dominant personality among the folks she recruited in 1982 to form the Texas Rose Rustlers, formally a regional affiliate of the national Heritage Roses Group. Created in 1975, the Heritage Roses Group, according to its website, is "a fellow-

looked twice one August when she spied a rose "bloom-ing its head off." It was a blistering hot and dry summer in south-central Texas,

ship of those who care about old garden roses, species roses, old or unusual roses—particularly those roses introduced into commerce prior to the year 1867. Its purposes are to preserve, enjoy, and share knowledge about the old roses." All of Pam's first recruits adopted this assignment with enthusiasm. In an article published in *Country America* in April 1992, Pam listed the essentials for an old rose rustle:

"All that is really needed for rustling old roses are sharp pruning shears, plenty of insect repellent, a sure cure for poison ivy, stout boots, some dollar bills, an honest-seeming face, the words for 'friend' and 'don't shoot' in several languages, plastic bags, a supply of willow water, someone to drive the getaway car and a Sense of Mission.

"This last is a polite term for the complete obsession that afflicts old rose collectors," she added.

In these pages, we attempt to chronicle our origins, adventures, and discoveries as Texas Rose Rustlers. When we met in the Horticulture Department at Texas A&M University, we immediately recognized each other as kindred spirits who shared a lifelong quest for beauty, an affinity for heirlooms, and a drive to educate. Here we present tales—some long, some short, and some tall—of the many efforts that have helped restore lost roses to not only residential gardens, but also commercial and church landscapes in Texas.

**Greg Grant** and **William C. Welch** are the authors of *The Rose Rustlers* (Texas A&M University Press, 2017).

# Sweeping Changes

How electric co-ops and Electrolux brought the modern age to the plains of Texas

BY IRENE SANDELL

MY TWO SISTERS AND I STARED WIDE-EYED as a car we had never seen rumbled over our cattle guard and drove slowly to our yard gate. Mother joined us. It was no one we knew. Two men dressed in Sunday suits got out, and they took time to put on their dress coats and straighten their ties before they walked up to the door.

My father was down at the barn and saw them, too, because he came to the house just in time to answer the front door. We didn't get many strangers in our bend of the river.

My parents had built our house in 1941, and they wired it for electricity in anticipation of promised power lines. We lived 10 miles south of Seymour and another 2 miles off Throckmorton highway, in a bend of the Brazos River where there was plenty of sand for the wind to toss around. My father raised cotton, wheat and cattle on our family farm.

The Rural Electrification Administration was bringing electricity to rural America. But on December 7, 1941, everything changed when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. All domestic programs were put on hold while our country prepared for war. People far out from town had to wait to receive electric service until the war was over, so it was 1946 before power reached our farm.

We eagerly watched from the window of the school bus as linemen worked closer and closer to our place. First, poles went up with an anthill of red soil pushed up around the base. The poles made their steady march, and at night we could follow their progress by the glow of electric bulbs

in widely scattered houses—tiny points of light spread out like earthbound constellations.

I'm sure there was a celebration when the lines finally reached our house and the power came on, but I don't remember it. What I do remember is the day the salesmen came down our road in 1946.

That spring, the sandstorms had been particularly strong, and sand seeped in under the doors and around windows, coating everything in a fine dust. My parents suffered for weeks with allergies from breathing the dust.

The men at our house introduced themselves. They said they were just discharged from the Army and had followed the new power lines out from town. They were selling Electrolux vacuum cleaners, they explained, and they would appreciate a chance to demonstrate their product.

My parents exchanged glances. They didn't know what a vacuum cleaner was or what it was capable of, but they were curious.

We all sat as the two men reeled out an electric cord and found an outlet. They set a gadget about the size of a large loaf of bread in the center of the room. It had two metal runners under it like a sled, and it was covered in shiny chrome. One man hooked a long hose and a metal wand to one end. Then he flipped a switch and guided the brush across the hardwood floor. We thought it was a miracle. The brush cut a clean path through the sandy veneer that coated the room.

I'm sure we all gasped. I think my mother may have cried a little. My father



recovered his voice and blurted, “I’ll take it!”

The two men looked up in surprise.

“I’ll take it,” he repeated, and then, as an afterthought, he added, “How much does it cost?”

“Yes, sir, that’s great!” one of the men said. “You can have this one right here.” He glanced at his partner. “But if you don’t mind, I’m training my partner here, and it would be good for him to go through the whole demonstration. Would it be OK if we cleaned the rest of the room and showed you all the attachments?”

We sat there fascinated, all five of us, as that wonderful machine sucked up all the dust. The man switched attachments to clean the drapes and upholstery; then he used the narrow wand that could slide down between the cushions before ending

the demonstration with a round brush that dusted the door frames, baseboards and tables.

I think my mother cried a little more between oohs and aaahs. No more sweeping and pushing that sand about. No more breathing in the dust.

There were other electric gadgets my father bought in the following weeks. He purchased an RCA radio and record player that brought news and music to liven up our evenings. My mother got an electric iron to replace the old flat irons that she had to heat on the stove, and in an uncharacteristic flash of whimsy, we even acquired a waffle iron for the kitchen.

The march of the modern age had reached the lower plains of Texas.

Author **Irene Sandell** is a member of South Plains EC. See her work at [irenesandell.com](http://irenesandell.com).



**“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

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

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Enter online at [TexasCoopPower.com](http://TexasCoopPower.com). Each entry MUST include your name, address and phone number, plus the name of your Texas electric cooperative, or it will be disqualified. Specify which category you are entering, Sweet or Savory, on each recipe. Mail entries to: *Texas Co-op Power*/Holiday Recipe Contest, 1122 Colorado St., 24th Floor, Austin, TX 78701. You can also fax entries to (512) 763-3401. Up to three total entries are allowed per co-op membership. Each should be submitted on a separate piece of paper if mailed or faxed. Mailed entries all can be sent in one envelope. No email entries will be accepted. For official rules, visit [TexasCoopPower.com](http://TexasCoopPower.com). **Entry deadline: June 10, 2019.**



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Sherry Zawadzki | Heart of Texas EC  
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# Still Empowering People

*Texas Co-op Power* celebrates 75 years of chronicling the cooperative movement

BY ELLEN STADER

SOMEWHERE IN TINY ANYWHERE, TEXAS, a high school senior opens her laptop, plugs her phone into its charger and clicks Play on her study music playlist. She's applying for a college scholarship she learned about in a magazine; the application is almost ready. After a final read-through, she hits Send—and, with the help of high-speed internet, makes an investment in her future.

Nowhere in her mind is the fact that all this is possible because of her great-grandfather.

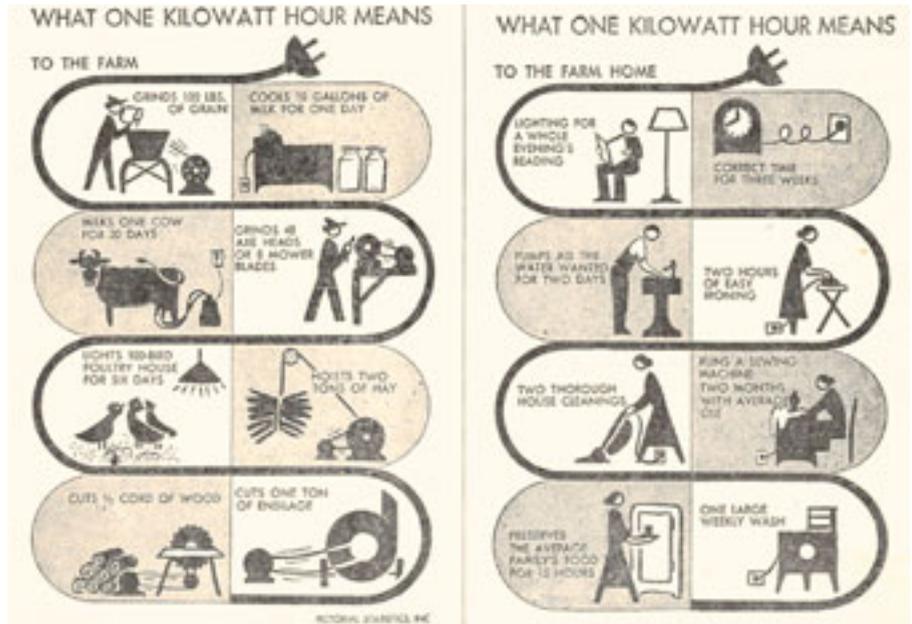
Her great-grandfather was one of thousands of Texans who banded together with neighbors in the 1930s and '40s to build cooperatives that would electrify their farms, transforming the countryside and economy. The magazine containing the scholarship information is *Texas Co-op Power*, which has chronicled the state's electric cooperative movement since 1944—and celebrates its 75th anniversary this year.

What started as four pages of newsprint titled *Texas Cooperative Electric Power* doubled to eight pages by the second issue. Circulation in the first year grew from 14,000 to 39,500 as the 49 co-ops affiliated with the Texas Power Reserve (later Texas Electric Cooperatives) continued to grow.

"It's a fascinating story this newspaper has set out to tell," read an editorial by the first editor, George W. Haggard. "In 1935 only three Texas farms in 100 had central station power—today, three in ten are solighted. Tomorrow, we hope to make it well-nigh universal."

## WEB EXTRAS

► Read this story on our website to see a timeline that puts the creation of *Texas Co-op Power* in perspective.



Written for a population poised to join in the war effort and postwar prosperity, *Texas Cooperative Electric Power* articles took a forward-looking tone. In February 1945, the name was changed to *Texas Co-op Power*. Columns like March 1945's *War Duty Checklist* encouraged readers to make "every kilowatt you use do a real war job."

After World War II, rural electrification pushed full speed ahead alongside the economy. Ads aimed at newly prosperous members offered appliances to improve home life and expand farm production. The magazine added "women's pages," filled with household tips for using new products and recipes to be cooked with electric stoves and ranges.

Pages were dedicated to developments at individual co-ops, and the words and faces of members appeared. A 1945 contest asked for essays answering the question, "How has electricity helped you?" One winner's moving response told of her daughter, born prematurely, who survived only because of the incubator that enclosed her first weeks of life. "Lyndah Nell will be 3 this month and is in perfect health," the Limestone County mother wrote.

Rural electrification eventually reached

all corners of the state, and co-op members acquired the conveniences of modern homes and farms. *Texas Co-op Power's* focus shifted from the wonders of electricity to advice on using it safely and efficiently. Industry- and government-focused articles were replaced by stories covering travel, food, gardening and other topics of general interest.

Form changed with function, too. In 1960, two-color printing brought the publication a fresh look, but 1992 saw the most visible transition when the format changed to a full-color magazine. Photo and recipe contests became a staple, as did statewide events listings. Then the 21st century came calling with a *Texas Co-op Power* website and Facebook page, allowing more interaction between the magazine and its readers.

In some ways, not much has changed. The technology is new, sure, but the magazine still strives to cover topics important to co-op members. Throughout this anniversary year, *Texas Co-op Power* delves into its 75 years of archives to see how its past informs its present and builds foundations for its future.

Ellen Stader is a writer and editor in Austin.

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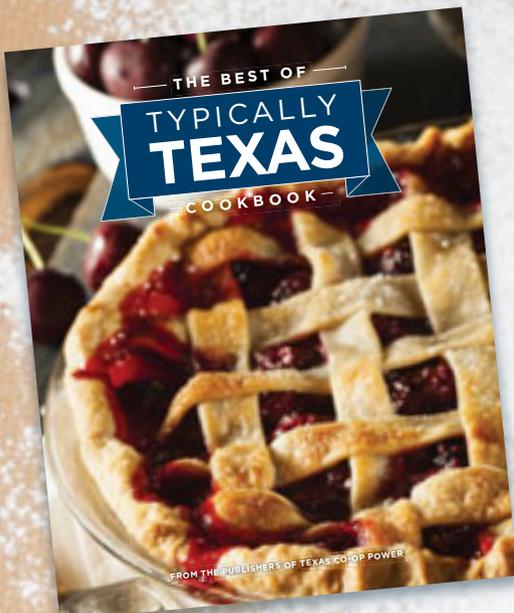
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## Sunny Citrus

EVERYONE KNOWS CELEBRATIONS call for dessert, and to ring in *Texas Co-op Power's* 75th anniversary, we're raiding our archives. Each month, we'll feature a retro recipe tweaked to accommodate evolving tastes and cooking methods. To kick off January's citrus recipes, we're sharing a Frozen Lime Pie. The recipe that ran in July 1950 featured bright green gelatin, courtesy of food coloring, and called for freezing the filling in ice cube trays before thawing it and beating until smooth. To streamline the process, we're relying on frozen limeade and sweetened condensed milk to create a refreshing, tart-sweet pie that everyone will love.

PAULA DISBROWE, FOOD EDITOR

### Frozen Lime Pie

#### CRUST

- 1½ cups graham cracker crumbs
- ¼ cup sugar
- 6 tablespoons (¾ stick) unsalted butter, melted

#### FILLING

- 1 container (6 ounces) frozen limeade concentrate, thawed
  - ½ can (7 ounces) sweetened condensed milk
  - 4 ounces sour cream
  - 4 ounces frozen whipped topping
- Grated lime zest or sliced limes, for garnish

**1. CRUST:** Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Combine the graham crumbs, sugar and butter in a bowl. Press the mixture into a 9-inch pie dish, making sure the sides and bottom are even in thickness, and bake 10 minutes, until fragrant and golden. Cool completely on a wire rack.

**2. FILLING:** Combine the limeade and milk in a large bowl. Using a rubber spatula, fold in the sour cream and whipped topping until the mixture is smooth. Pour the mixture into the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 32



See a video online to watch Paula make this pie.

# Retro Recipes

## Sunny Citrus



THIS MONTH'S RECIPE CONTEST WINNER

MILLIE KIRCHOFF | NUECES EC

With orange, grapefruit and Meyer lemon trees in her backyard, Kirchoff doesn't have to look far for citrus inspiration. Her fragrant quick bread makes for a delicious breakfast or midafternoon snack.

### Lemon Thyme Tea Bread

#### BREAD

- ¾ cup milk
  - 1 tablespoon chopped lemon balm
  - 1 tablespoon chopped lemon thyme
  - 2 cups flour
  - 1½ teaspoons baking powder
  - ¼ teaspoon salt
  - 6 tablespoons (¾ stick) butter, softened to room temperature
  - 1 cup sugar
  - 2 eggs, room temperature
  - 1 tablespoon grated lemon zest
- Additional lemon thyme for garnish

#### LEMON GLAZE

Juice of 2 lemons

- 1½ cups powdered sugar, plus more as desired for consistency

**1. BREAD:** Preheat oven to 325 degrees and apply butter or nonstick cooking spray to a 9-by-5-inch loaf pan. Heat the milk and the chopped herbs in a small, heavy saucepan until the mixture is hot but not simmering. Remove from heat and allow the mixture to steep until cool.

**2.** Combine the flour, baking powder and salt in a bowl. In a separate bowl, cream the butter and gradually add the sugar, beating until the mixture is light and

fluffy. Add the eggs, one at a time, then beat in the lemon zest. Combine the flour mixture by sections with the herbed milk and mix until the batter is just blended. Use a rubber spatula to transfer the batter to the prepared pan. Smooth the top and bake 50–60 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in the center of the loaf comes out clean.

**3. LEMON GLAZE:** Meanwhile, combine the lemon juice and 1 cup of powdered sugar in a bowl and whisk until smooth. Add remaining ½ cup of sugar and whisk again, until the mixture is thick and glossy but still pourable. Add additional powdered sugar as desired for consistency.

**4.** Cool bread in the pan on a wire rack placed over a baking sheet for 5 minutes, then run a knife around the inside of the pan, inverting the loaf and removing from pan. Drizzle the lemon glaze over the top of the warm cake and allow it to cool completely. Garnish with additional lemon thyme sprigs, if desired. ▶ Makes one 9-by-5-inch loaf.



### \$100 Recipe Contest

June's recipe contest topic is **Standout Summer Sides**. What do you like to serve alongside ribs, burgers and other summer entrées? The deadline is **January 10**. Readers whose recipes are featured will receive a special *Texas Co-op Power* apron.

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.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 31

prepared pie crust and freeze overnight. Garnish with lime zest or lime slices if desired. ▶ Serves 8.

**COOK'S TIP** If time is of the essence, feel free to use a prepared store-bought graham cracker or pastry pie crust.

### Lavender Lemon Cookies With Lemon Glaze

AMY STRAIN | DEEP EAST TEXAS EC

Aromatic lavender is famous for its soothing qualities, and these cookies are no exception. Speckled with pale purple buds and drizzled with lemony glaze, these elegant cookies have a delicate texture and wonderful perfume. Strain uses buds from Chappell Hill Lavender Farm and describes the results as "small treats that pack a huge citrus punch."

#### COOKIES

- 2½ cups flour
  - ½ teaspoon baking powder
  - 1 cup (2 sticks) butter
  - ½ cup sugar, plus ¼ cup for rolling (optional)
  - 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- Finely grated zest and juice of 2 lemons, divided use
- 1 egg, room temperature
  - 1 tablespoon lavender culinary buds, plus extra for garnish (optional)

#### LEMON GLAZE

- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- ½ cup powdered sugar

**1. COOKIES:** Preheat oven to 350 degrees and line two baking sheets with parchment. Combine the flour and baking powder in a bowl and set aside.

**2.** In a separate bowl (or stand mixer), cream the butter and sugar until light and fluffy, then mix in the vanilla, lemon zest and 2 teaspoons lemon juice. Mix in the egg, then gradually add the flour mixture and lavender buds, mixing until just combined.

**3.** At this point, you can roll the dough into a log and slice (or wrap with plastic and refrigerate until you're ready to bake) or shape it into balls, each slightly larger than a quarter. Coat the dough slices or roll the dough balls in additional sugar and place them on the

prepared baking sheets (pressing each ball down slightly with a fork). Bake the cookies about 14 minutes, or until lightly golden, then cool on a wire rack.

**4. LEMON GLAZE:** Whisk together lemon juice and powdered sugar until smooth. Drizzle the glaze over the cooled cookies and garnish with additional lavender buds if desired. ▶ Makes about 36 cookies.

**COOK'S TIP** Strain grinds the lavender buds in a coffee grinder that she cleans with rice beforehand. But you'll also get delicious results (and a pretty cookie) using whole buds.

## Grapefruit Pie

SUE WEST | WISE COUNTY EC

Lemon meringue pie is a classic; this clever variation uses fresh grapefruit. West showed us how the tang of pink grapefruit complements a cloud of meringue. To give the custard a firmer texture, chill the baked pie for at least two hours before serving. Note that this pie is made with a pre-baked crust.

### PIE

1 pink grapefruit  
2/3 cup plus 1 tablespoon sugar, divided use  
1/3 cup cornstarch  
1/4 teaspoon salt  
1 1/4 cups fresh grapefruit juice  
3/4 cup water  
3 egg yolks  
2 tablespoons butter  
One 9-inch pie crust, baked

### MERINGUE

5 egg whites  
1/2 teaspoon cream of tartar  
2/3 cup sugar

- 1. PIE:** Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Use a knife to trim the peel from grapefruit, then slice into segments (discarding seeds and white membrane). Sprinkle the fruit with 1 tablespoon of sugar and refrigerate while you make the pie.
- 2.** Combine 2/3 cup sugar, cornstarch and salt in a saucepan over medium

heat. Gradually whisk in the grapefruit juice and water. Lightly beat egg yolks and whisk into the juice mixture. Bring the mixture to a boil, stirring frequently. Boil 1 minute, stirring constantly, and then stir in the butter and remove from heat. Place the baked pie crust on a baking sheet, pour in the custard and set aside while you prepare the meringue.

**3. MERINGUE:** Beat the egg whites and cream of tartar on high speed until foamy. Add sugar, a tablespoon at a time, until stiff peaks form. Spread the meringue over the filling, sealing to the edge of the crust. Bake the pie 28 minutes, or until the meringue is lightly browned. Transfer the pie to a wire rack to cool, then serve with the chilled grapefruit segments. ▶ Serves 8.

### WEB EXTRAS

▶ Read these recipes on our website to see the original Frozen Lime Pie recipe from July 1950.

## FOCUS ON TEXAS PHOTO CONTEST

Every month, Focus on Texas features Texas photos submitted by our readers. Send us your best photos for a chance to see your entry in the magazine!

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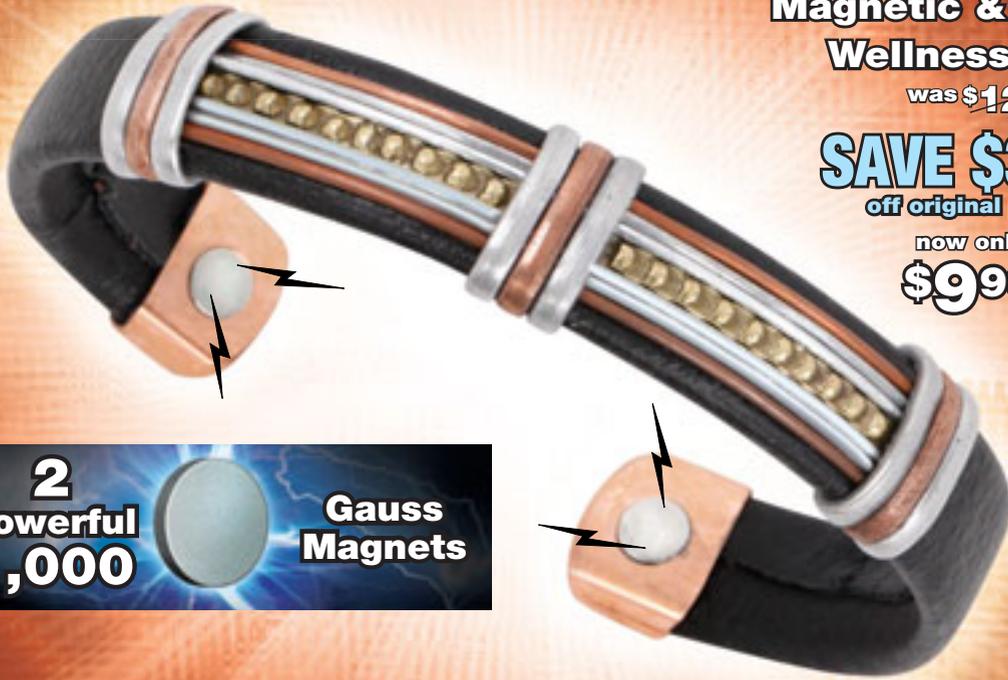
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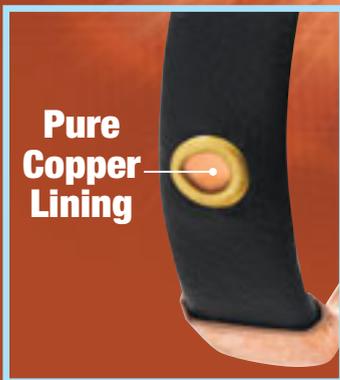
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# Harvest



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

◀ **COURTNEY WILDE**, Magic Valley EC: Granger and Bristol get ahead of the pickers to collect their share of cotton.



▲ **NANCY FALSTER**, Wood County EC: Grandson James Nichols helps with the cabbage harvest on Falster Farm.

▼ **SHARON BLACK-GREENE**, Pedernales EC: Last fall, Black-Greene planted two artichokes and a cardoon. The three plants were protected from the deer and winter chill, surviving to flower.



▲ **AMANDA CHILDRESS**, Cherokee County EC: "This is some of our homegrown produce from raised beds that my husband built. We were lucky to get this much before the heat and drought this year."

◀ **ALAN KIRBY**, Cherokee County EC: Kirby, his wife, Rebecca, and the 1959 John Deere he inherited. "I have been growing gardens my entire life in Cherokee County. This was my best year ever. I had a 21-pound return for each pound of seed potatoes planted."



## UPCOMING CONTESTS

MAY OUT ON THE RANCH	DUE JANUARY 10
JUNE FEEDIN' TIME	DUE FEBRUARY 10
JULY TRUCKS	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

### Grace Lutheran Church Wild Game Dinner

**Bandera** January 26

(830) 796-3091, [gracebandera.weebly.com](http://gracebandera.weebly.com)

Members of Grace Lutheran Church, many of whom are members of Bandera Electric Cooperative, serve up chili, soup, sliders, duck gumbo and other wild game dishes as part of this 32nd annual gathering. The event, which includes a popular raffle, supports scholarships for two Bandera County high school seniors. Church youths offer desserts for sale.

## January

### 11

**Boerne** [11-12] Kendall County Junior Livestock Show and Sale, (830) 249-9343, [visitboerne.org](http://visitboerne.org)

**Levelland** [11-13] Ultimate Calf Roping, (806) 894-4161, [ucroping.com](http://ucroping.com)

### 12

**Monahans** Sandhills Resolution Run, (432) 943-2187, [monahans.org](http://monahans.org)

**Aransas Pass** [12-13] Texas Winter Market, 1-888-225-3427, [texasmarketguide.com](http://texasmarketguide.com)

### 18

**Longview** [18-20] East Texas Boat & RV Show, (903) 237-4000, [boatrvshow.com](http://boatrvshow.com)

**Arlington** [18-Feb. 3] *Dead Man's Cell Phone*, (817) 275-7661, [theatrearlington.org](http://theatrearlington.org)

### 19

**Emory** Rains County Eagle Fest, (903) 473-2465, [emorytx.com](http://emorytx.com)

**Lago Vista** Casino Night, (512) 267-7952, [lagovista.org](http://lagovista.org)

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

**Fredericksburg** [19-20] Hill Country Gem & Mineral Show, (830) 456-5419, [fredericksburgrockhounds.org](http://fredericksburgrockhounds.org)

January 18  
Longview  
East Texas Boat  
& RV Show



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*Bluebonnet*  
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**Saturday May 18**  
**Fredericksburg**

Gillespie County  
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## AROUND TEXAS

EVENT CALENDAR

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20

**San Angelo** Chamber Music Series: Oceana Ensemble, (325) 653-3333, samfa.org

22

**Lufkin** *Something Rotten!*, (936) 633-5454, angelinaarts.org

23

**Denton** [23-27] Black Film Festival, (214) 247-6028, dentonbff.com

24

**Galveston** *Diary of a Worm, a Spider and a Fly*, 1-800-821-1894, thegrand.com

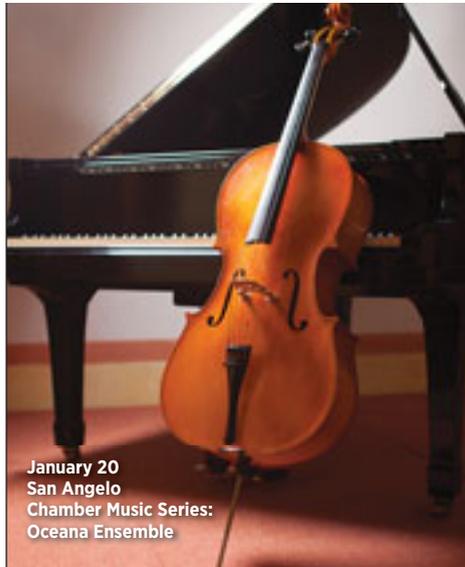
25

**Kerrville** [25-27, Feb. 2-3] Renaissance Festival, (214) 632-5766, kerrvillerenfest.com

26

**Ozona** Permian Basin Square and Round Dance Association Winterfest, (432) 685-3226, pbsrda.com

**Goliad** [26-27] El Soldado de Mexico, (361) 645-3752



January 20  
San Angelo  
Chamber Music Series:  
Oceana Ensemble

27

**Crockett** *Twelfth Night*, (936) 544-4276, pwfaa.org

31

**Waco** Mid-Tex Farm, Ranch & Garden Show, (254) 757-5611, wacochamber.com

## February

1

**Levelland** [1-2] South Plains Bull Riding Challenge, (806) 894-4161, malleteventcenter.com

2

**Surfside Beach** Marathon and Half Marathon, (409) 539-5150, surfsidemarathon.com

5

**McKinney** [5-March 22] Feathered Friends: 13 Texas Endangered and Threatened Birds, (972) 562-5566, heardmuseum.org

6

**Laredo** [6-9] Birding Festival, (956) 718-1063, laredobirdingfestival.org

### Submit Your Event!

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



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# North Texas Rail Yard

Cleburne's mural and museums hark back to the town's transportation and Native American past

BY GENE FOWLER

AS I ADMIRING THE VINTAGE STOREFRONTS around Cleburne's courthouse square, a faded soda pop bottle and hamburger sign at the tiny Burger Bar luncheonette caught my eye. "Every couple of months, someone will stop in wanting to buy the sign," said Katy Grantges, owner of the beloved eatery. The minirestaurant's building dates to 1902, when it served as the office for a wagon yard and livery stable. "They used to sell Model T's here, but it's been the Burger Bar since 1949."

"My mother used to come here and get seven burgers for a dollar," testified the diner sitting next to me in one of the Burger Bar's four counter seats as I munched my cheeseburger. "My boy lives in Corsicana," offered a customer waiting for takeout, "and the first thing he does whenever he comes home is head for the Burger Bar."

After lunch, a mural near Cleburne's square depicting historic local sites and events guided my exploration. Created by Texas artist Styfle Read, it features a gleaming, steaming locomotive that commemorates the railroad's local impact.

The **Cleburne Railroad Museum** tells the story of the rail lines and repair shops that served as the city's largest employer for nearly a century. Attired in a dapper conductor's uniform, R.A. McAlister told me the story of the Santa Fe Railroad establishing machine shops in Cleburne when its Galveston headquarters were quarantined because of yellow fever in 1898.

"When the train left Galveston heading north, looking for a place to set up temporary offices and shops, every community it stopped at greeted it with shotguns and 'keep moving' commands," said McAlister. "But when they reached Cleburne, the mayor met them with a brass band. It was a sad day here in 1989 when they closed the shops."



**The Burger Bar downtown draws a lunch crowd that overflows its 169 square feet.**

Read's action portrait of baseball great Tris Speaker recalls the Hall of Famer's first team, the minor-league champion Cleburne Railroaders of 1906. A reborn Railroaders club took to the field of dreams in 2017, playing home games at a sparkling new park called the Depot at Cleburne Station.

The mural includes rangy longhorns and a rangier cowpoke that evoke a cattle drive route west of town that was known as part of the Chisholm Trail. Johnson County's original log cabin courthouse, built in 1854, still stands among the pioneer buildings in Cleburne's **Chisholm Trail Outdoor Museum**.

Caddo Indian settlements depicted in the mural inspire a visit to the **Big Bear Native American Museum** and to the **Layland Museum**.

In a 1905 Greek Revival structure built as a Carnegie library, the Layland houses the collection of plumber William J. Layland, who took time off every summer to gather relics. Among the hundreds of artifacts, you'll see Hopi katsina figures and a late reservation-era Lakota beaded buckskin dress.

Mural work is a Read family signature,

and until recently, Read's father, Sleepy Read, painted in his publicly accessible studio in the Wright Building, a mini-mall near Styfle's mural. Another stop on the square, the **Published Page** bookstore, specializes in vintage sci-fi, Texana and Western history.

Sleepy Read's mural adorns the hallways of the **J.N. Long Cultural Arts Complex**, a former public school built in 1915. The complex offers changing exhibits and serves as the permanent home of the Texas Woodcarvers Guild Museum.

A scene at Buffalo Springs in Styfle's mural sent me back to a favorite Cleburne spot, a brick-lined spring on Buffalo Creek, right off U.S. 67, where indigenous people and wildlife came for water, followed by explorers, soldiers and pioneers. Even Sam Houston is said to have visited the spring.

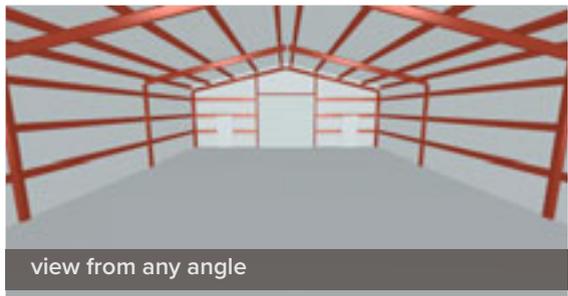
"The creek transports the spirits of those who take the time to listen and see the great blue herons, sunfish and other wildlife," said Julie Winchell, city environmental coordinator. "Buffalo Creek is a treasure."

Author **Gene Fowler** specializes in Texas travel and history.

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