

YOUR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE NEWS

AUGUST 2019

Our Fearless Forefather

Beef Recipes

Bandera Frontier Museum

# TEXAS CO-OP POWER

SPECIAL  
ANNIVERSARY  
ISSUE

LOOKING BACK  
TEXAS CO-OP POWER  
1944 75 2019  
MOVING FORWARD







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**SPECIAL  
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*The Baby is Born* heralds the debut of this magazine in July 1944.

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### 8 Reliable as Electricity *Texas Co-op Power*, trusted voice of co-ops across the state, turns 75.

Story by *Texas Co-op Power* contributors | Illustrations by David Vagin

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ANNIVERSARY: DAVID VAGIN. HIKING BOOTS: MAREKULIASZ | SHUTTERSTOCK.COM



## NEXT MONTH

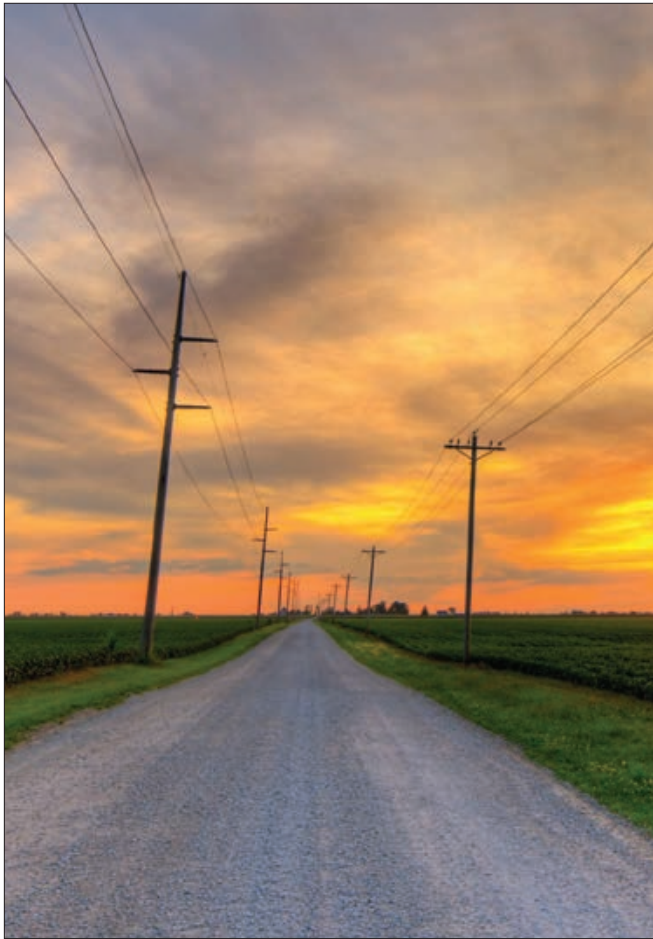
**Which Big Bend?** Visitors to this rugged region have state and national parks as options.



**ON THE COVER** For 75 years, *Texas Co-op Power* has committed to improving co-op members' quality of life. Illustration by David Vagin

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## No Concept of Electricity

Reading about your 75th anniversary made me think of a story my father told me when I was a kid.

Just before World War II, when they were electrifying rural western Louisiana, my father was a foreman for Brown & Root Construction. One day, he was in a small town near the Louisiana-Texas border, finishing up checking out a new substation. A group of the townspeople approached him, and one man stepped forward and said, "We hear we are going to get electric lights soon."

Dad responded with, "That's right. As soon as I am finished here, I will radio the crew over in the next town and they will turn on the power."

With that, the man asked, "How long will it take to get here?"

Dad said, "It will be here as soon as they turn it on."

Without another word, they all turned and walked away, thinking my father was making fun of them. He said he never forgot the look on the man's face as he turned away.

Today, we take electricity for granted. It's hard to imagine a time when there were those who had no concept of it.

JACK L. TYLER | ARLINGTON PEDERNALES EC

## Hungry Mockingbirds

*Feedin' Time* [Focus on Texas, June 2019] has a photograph of a nest of unidentified baby birds. Fittingly, they are the Texas state bird—northern mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos*).

RAY C. TELFAIR II, CERTIFIED WILDLIFE BIOLOGIST | WHITEHOUSE CHEROKEE COUNTY EC



## Drive-In Dating

I dated during the late '40s and early '50s. The drive-in theater was where, on Saturday night, they only charged \$5 for a carload of people [*Drive In, Chill Out*, June 2019]. Saw many a movie there over the years.

HELEN PERRY | VIA FACEBOOK

### This Little Piggy

Those working on the pig rescue program [*This Little Piggy*, May 2019] seem like caring, compassionate people. Perhaps all of us, however, need to look farther out our kitchen windows today and see something else—like Katy Hamner and Avery Graves [below, left to right] helping kids with diabetes [*A Butterfly's Touch*, May 2019].

RUTH HENSON | GOLDTHWAITE HAMILTON COUNTY EC



### Flight of a Lifetime

I really enjoyed your article about ex-Navy pilot Trey Hayden taking clients over the USS Lexington in Corpus Christi [*What Moves You?*, April 2019]. I was stationed aboard the USS Bennington aircraft carrier 1962-1966. I spent my time seven decks below in the engine room. In March, Hayden took me on the flight of a lifetime.

BERNIE PHILLIP | DEVINE MEDINA EC

### Great Reading

For such a little magazine, *Texas Co-op Power* has a lot of good articles. In May, you had three that were of special interest to me—the one on Tom Lea [*Tom Lea's War*], the one on R.E.B. Baylor [*Baylor, the Man*] and the one on Sul Ross State University [*Higher Education*].

Lea is one of my favorite authors. I didn't go to Sul Ross, but a couple of my classmates from Bandera High went on football scholarships.

RALPH REAVES | KINGSLAND CENTRAL TEXAS EC

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   Texas Co-op Power

**TEXAS CO-OP POWER VOLUME 76, NUMBER 2** (USPS 540-560). *Texas Co-op Power* is published monthly by Texas Electric Cooperatives (TEC). Periodical postage paid at Austin, TX, and at additional offices. TEC is the statewide association representing 75 electric cooperatives. *Texas Co-op Power's* website is TexasCoopPower.com. Call (512) 454-0311 or email editor@TexasCoopPower.com. **SUBSCRIPTION PRICE** is \$4.20 per year for individual members of subscribing cooperatives and is paid from equity accruing to the member. If you are not a member of a subscribing cooperative, you can purchase an annual subscription at the nonmember rate of \$7.50. Individual copies and back issues are available for \$3 each. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to *Texas Co-op Power* (USPS 540-560), 1122 Colorado St., 24th Floor, Austin, TX 78701. Please enclose label from this copy of *Texas Co-op Power* showing old address and key numbers. **ADVERTISING:** Advertisers interested in buying display ad space in *Texas Co-op Power* and/or in our 30 sister publications in other states, contact Elaine Sproull at (512) 486-6251. Advertisements in *Texas Co-op Power* are paid solicitations. The publisher neither endorses nor guarantees in any manner any product or company included in this publication. Product satisfaction and delivery responsibility lie solely with the advertiser.

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## HAPPENINGS

# Fayette County Fair

Josh Turner and Casey Donahew are the headliners August 31 at the **FAYETTE COUNTY FAIR**, which runs **AUGUST 29–SEPTEMBER 1** in La Grange.

“If you have never seen our River View music venue, for our top entertainment, you’re missing some of the best sunset views of Central Texas,” says Michael Zuhn, a Fayette Electric Cooperative member and president of the fair, which calls itself “The Best Little Fair in Texas.”

The first Fayette County fair was in 1927. Last year, about 9,000 fairgoers came through the gates. The theme for 2019 is For the Kid in All of Us. Indeed, youths are a top priority: The fair awards 20 academic scholarships of \$1,000 each and another \$5,000 in scholarships to contestants in the fair queen pageant.

**INFO** ▶ [fayettecountyfair.org](http://fayettecountyfair.org), (979) 968-3911



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## HISTORY LESSON

# PEACEMAKER TURNS DEADLY

**175 years ago**, in 1844, President John Tyler, who made Texas statehood a focus of his time in office, celebrated with more than 400 guests aboard the USS Princeton after a milestone annexation treaty. The newly built boat’s “peacemaker” gun—at the time the largest naval gun in the world—was showing off its power when a misfire killed six and injured several others.

**Among the dead** were Abel P. Upshur, secretary of state, and Thomas Walker Gilmer, secretary of the navy—well-known names in northeast Texas—who worked alongside Tyler to admit Texas as a slave state. All three were outspoken supporters of slavery.

**Incredibly**, two of Tyler’s grandsons, Lyon Gardiner Tyler Jr., born in 1924, and Harrison Ruffin Tyler, born in 1928, are still alive today.

## ◀ LOOKING BACK AT RURAL LIFE THIS MONTH



**SINCE 1944**, the year *Texas Co-op Power* debuted, rural Texas has faced unprecedented droughts, benefited from advancements in farm equipment and celebrated red grapefruit.

### 1940s

**1945** An estimated 3.2 million pecan trees make Texas one of the nation’s leading pecan producers.



**1945** The farm-to-market road system comes into being.

**1948** A Colorado farmer invents the center pivot irrigation machine, which revolutionizes irrigation farming.

### 1950s

**1950** Stihl unveils the first one-person, gasoline-powered chain saw.

**1950** Texas’ rural population falls below 50% for the first time—to 37.3%.

**1954** Social Security coverage is extended to farm operators.

**1957** Texas’ historic seven-year drought ends; the state loses nearly 100,000 farms and ranches in the 1950s.

### 1960s

**1960** International Harvester launches the Cub Cadet as the first lawn and garden tractor produced by a major tractor manufacturer.

**1965** Mohair output in Texas reaches a peak when ranchers clip 31.6 million pounds from 4.6 million Angora goats.







## MUSICAL NOTES

# Texans Rock Woodstock

**FIFTY YEARS AGO**, 31 bands and more than 400,000 people turned a dairy farm in upstate New York into the site of the legendary Woodstock music festival. At least four of the musicians to play during the concert, August 15–18, 1969, were Texans: Janis Joplin of Port Arthur; Johnny Winter, with his brother Edgar, both of Beaumont; and Sly Stone of Denton from Sly and the Family Stone.

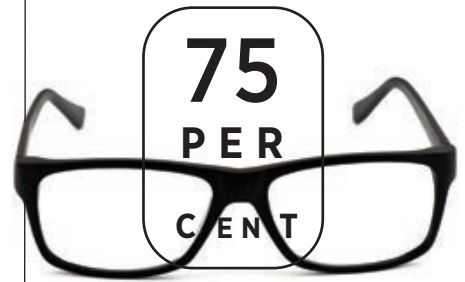
Two weeks later, the same Texas artists were among some two dozen bands at the Texas International Pop Festival, which drew upward of 150,000 to Lewisville, where CoServ, an electric cooperative in Corinth, has many members. That concert, August 30–September 1, was at the Dallas International Motor Speedway, which was demolished in 1973.

## WORTH REPEATING

*“If men can run the world, why can’t they stop wearing neckties? How intelligent is it to start the day by tying a little noose around your neck?”*

—**LINDA ELLERBEE**, an American TV journalist most known for her work at NBC News and Nickelodeon, who turns 75. She was born August 15, 1944, in Bryan.

## BY THE NUMBERS



**August is National Eye Exam Month, and the Vision Council says about 75% of adults use some sort of vision correction.**

## MILESTONE BIRTHDAY

# No Candles, Please



**Smokey Bear turns 75** this month. On August 9, 1944, he debuted as fire prevention spokesman for the U.S. Forest Service. He is part of the longest-running public service advertising campaign in U.S. history.

**Chances are** he wouldn’t approve of 75 candles burning on his birthday cake.

## LOOKING BACK AT TRAVEL NEXT MONTH ►

### 1970s

**1970** Geneticist Norman Borlaug receives a Nobel Peace Prize for developing high-yielding, disease-resistant wheat.



**1977** Members and supporters of the Texas Farm Workers Union march 420 miles from San Juan, in the Rio Grande Valley, to Austin in support of fieldworkers’ right to vote on union representation.

### 1980s

**1980** John Deere produces a four-row cotton picker, the first in the industry, and estimates the unit will increase operators’ productivity 85%–95%.

**1984** Texas researcher Richard Hensz develops the Rio Red grapefruit.

**1989** The Native American Seed Company is founded in Argyle. It moved to Junction in 1995.

### 1990s

**1993** The Legislature designates Texas red grapefruit as the official state fruit.



**1994** Farmers begin using GPS to aid use of water, fertilizer and pesticides.

**1995** Texas voters approve Proposition 11, which allows land used to manage wildlife to qualify for tax appraisals in the same manner as agricultural land.

### 2000s

**2012** Texas leads the nation with 248,800 farms and ranches—far fewer than the 420,000 that existed in 1940.

**2017** The Hill Country ranks second in wine tourism after Napa Valley. Texas’ wine industry boosts the state’s economy by \$13.1 billion and supports more than 104,000 jobs.





# A Commitment to Quality of Life

ILLUSTRATIONS BY DAVID VOGIN

Since July 1944, *Texas Co-op Power* has been a trusted voice for Texas electric cooperatives, bolstering a movement to light up rural areas and tell the stories of people who live there. The magazine's mission to empower rural communities has been the constant behind the headlines.

Following World War II, *Texas Co-op Power* fought for the very existence of electric cooperatives and the Rural Electrification Administration. The headlines reflected the intensity of the battle: *Phony Campaign Aimed at Co-ops* or *Utility Lobby Unveils Its Power Grab Plan*.

In the '40s and '50s, the magazine amplified the voices of farm families disenfranchised from electric power, countering outlandish charges that co-op members were communists or that nonmembers were taxed to support rural electricity.

The co-ops' life-or-death struggle with investor-owned utilities evolved into community building through shared information. The magazine's focus shifted to optimizing the opportunities offered by electricity and answering questions about new appliances for the recently electrified farm.

The magazine set its sights on identifying challenges and outlining solutions, whether it was describing the home of the future or simply explaining how to use a waffle iron. And not all policy talk was about power. One 1982 article outlined a tough forecast for agriculture, noting that, in 1981, a bushel of corn that sold for \$2.40 cost a farmer \$3.11 to produce.

Rural Texans are not as isolated now as they were in the days before electricity. Yet, *Texas Co-op Power* remains a valued resource for understanding the fundamental changes technology brings.

For our 75th anniversary, we reflect on the magazine's work to educate readers on the benefits the cooperative model affords—to shine a light on the fruits of cooperation. Whether it was the glow of a homestead's first lightbulb or the gentle hum of a modern family's new electric vehicle, *Texas Co-op Power* explained these advances. And when the next mystifying technology inserts itself into your life, we'll be there, too.

BY CHARLES LOHRMANN | EDITOR



# THE DOMESTIC ELECTRIC

In the 1930s and 1940s, power lines newly installed across the countryside didn't just deliver light. As the once-quixotic prospect of an electrified rural home became a reality, the electricity the lines carried ultimately delivered families from the drudgery of onerous, time-consuming chores that many urban residents had already dispensed with. Quotidian routines could be accomplished faster and with less tedium, and tasks that once were tethered to the sun's schedule could now be completed under a lightbulb's glow.

Amid this development, *Texas Co-op Power* consistently advocated readers' parity with urban dwellers. As the November 1944 issue asserted, "New or old, the farm home that has high-line electric service easily can and should have as modern a kitchen as any found in the most up-to-date city residence." That story detailed the timesaving benefits of an electric range, refrigerator and dishwasher while also cautioning readers to proceed sensibly. Noting that the expense of a modern kitchen could be financed, the magazine offered an alternative for readers loath to take on consumer debt: "You can install it piece by piece as your income permits."

The Cranek family, members of Wharton County Electric Cooperative, took advantage of this convenience. Before getting an electric range in 1943, Mrs. L.V. Cranek cooked on a wood stove, and in July 1951, she told *Texas Co-op Power* that the range was "just like a dream in comparison." The homemaker didn't mince words when she summed up the difference electric light and appliances made: "Before rural electrification the farm was no pleasant place to live."

From its earliest days, *Texas Co-op Power* has provided safety tips and practical guidance to help readers derive the greatest value from the life-changing innovations rural Americans had for so long gone without. In particular, thrift achieved through timely maintenance has been a refrain. "Major repairs, or replacements, can often be avoided by proper care of your appliances and by making minor repairs," the August 1950 issue advised. "By these preventative measures, you can realize the fullest efficiency, value, and longevity from household tools."

It's advice that has stood the test of time—just like this magazine.

BY JESSICA RIDGE | COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST





## THE DIGITAL AGE

**L**et's face it. The digital age has been hard sloggling for those of us raised during the typewriter age. I am happy to say that *Texas Co-op Power* has been helping educate us about digital technology since the '70s.

The earliest tech reports dealt mainly with the billing process. Readers later learned of electronic meter-reading technology, cooperative-provided satellite TV, computer programs designed to simplify and quantify farm and ranch operations, and software that could digitally monitor entire electrical systems. I particularly enjoyed a 1986 column titled Memo From Mary explaining how new "cellular telephones" allowed you to "make a telephone call from anywhere, your car, the beach, or from a picnic table." What a wonder.

Co-ops worked hard in the '90s to help rural areas keep up. For example, Fayette Electric Cooperative helped organize a Texas Rural Internet Conference. Many co-ops developed internet services and created their own digital homepages with practical advice about all things electrical. Co-ops pushed to get

rural school libraries and hospitals wired.

A handy new column named Dot.com Corner was born in 2000, the year I went to work for the magazine. In 2001, I wrote a story called *Cyberspace Country*, for which I visited co-op members Don and Diane Harmeier, who had been able to get a dedicated T1 phone line, enabling them to operate a software company on their ranch 8 miles outside Kerrville. It was 50 times faster than the commonly available dial-up service.

*Texas Co-op Power* and local cooperatives vigorously advocated and frequently provided greater communications services for co-op members such as the Harmeiers. Today, most members speed confidently along the information highway. But many rural Texans still can't get fast fiber-optic internet like I have in Austin because it requires digging underground and laying cable at great expense. Google just offered my neighborhood Fiber 1000, which can download a high-definition movie in 43 seconds. But, co-op folks, be consoled by how far service has come. In 2001, when I was checking what rural areas could get, it took many long hours to download just a short video on a dial-up connection. Stream on.

**BY KAYE NORTHCOTT | EDITOR 2001-2010**

A few miles west of Marfa, along state Highway 90, is a delightful art installation celebrating the iconic movie *Giant*, a larger-than-life celebration of the mythic Texas oil industry. The '50s classic, starring Elizabeth Taylor, Rock Hudson and James Dean, was filmed on a nearby ranch.

What we don't have, but should, is a movie celebrating the unsung efforts of those scientists, engineers, technicians and, yes, electric co-op professionals who have been working to harness the wind, sun and other renewables. Flip through the past 40 years of *Texas Co-op Power*, and you won't find material for a modern-day Taylor-Hudson love story—though when I was editor, we staged a James Dean look-alike cover—but you will find articles chronicling efforts to find alternatives to fossil fuels. It's an ongoing story of the exotic becoming the everyday.

In 1971, the talk was of electric tractors. In 1978, it was a solar satellite that would beam electricity back to earth by microwave. *Texas Co-op Power* reported in 1980 that Sen. James McClure of Idaho foresaw electric cars dominating American highways by 2000. The senator's prediction was a bit optimistic, and yet other "experimental" efforts the magazine explored have gone mainstream.

Near Tulia, in 1979, a wind turbine located on a Swisher Electric Cooperative member's farm was help-

ing irrigate corn and grain sorghum fields. In 1980, Lighthouse Electric Cooperative was involved in a solar "power tower" project to help meet the power needs of Crosbyton. The power tower used the sun's energy to produce steam, which drove a conventional turbine.

Also in 1980, Elton McGinnes, manager of Southwest Texas Electric Cooperative in Eldorado, told *TCP* about a geothermal resources committee that was overseeing probes into the earth in search of temperatures high enough to generate electricity.

In 2004, *Texas Co-op Power* proclaimed the West Texas town of McCamey the "wind energy capital of Texas." The magazine reported that hundreds of "monolithic metal giants with three-pronged blades" had brought renewed prosperity. "The wind power source will never be capped. There will always be potential," Walt Hornaday of Cielo Wind Power enthused.

The magazine also quoted a United Nations study concluding that Texas had more renewable energy in wind, solar and biomass than any other state.

Can't you just see it? Today's Rock Hudson and Elizabeth Taylor—George Clooney maybe? Jennifer Lopez?—standing on the porch of their rambling solar-powered ranch house and staring contentedly into the distance at giant, white windmills, blades turning in the West Texas breeze, producing energy forever renewed. And the new James Dean to play Jett Rink? Maybe he plays a poultry farmer, relying on the West Texas sun to keep his birds warm and healthy.

**BY JOE HOLLEY | EDITOR 1998–2000**





# VEHICLES OF THE HEREAFTER

**T**he future, it seems, is a fickle friend. It always gets here faster than expected, yet it ever lingers as some distant dream. Our high-tech way of life has changed more radically than we could have imagined 25 years ago—but we still are not zipping around through time and space like the folks on *The Jetsons*.

Back in 1893, the *Abilene Reporter* noted distant rumblings of “an important change in the method of municipal transport.” Stages or carriages, the paper observed, might soon move London’s populace about by means of electric power. “Storage batteries are to be used. No one ... will deny that the perfection of the storage battery will make this possible.”

By the time *Texas Co-op Power* came along, the internal combustion engine had long displaced such electro-transport visions as the German Elektrowagen. More recently, as scientists warn of the dangers of climate change, the electric vehicle has returned as an alternative. And the magazine has been riding shotgun to report the news.

In 1998, the magazine reported on the development of the Toyota Prius, “the world’s first mass-produced hybrid-electric passenger car that doubles the efficiency and halves the emis-

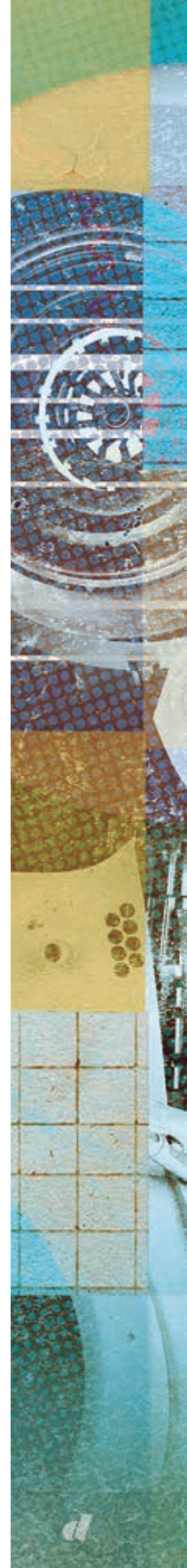
sions of a comparable conventional car.” The following year, then-editor Joe Holley explained that the Prius used both electric power and a gasoline engine, with an onboard computer that “automatically switches” between them or utilizes a combination of the two.

Today, drivers can choose from dozens of hybrid and all-electric vehicles. As *Texas Co-op Power* noted in 2010, “By 2040, 75 percent of the light-duty vehicle miles traveled in the U.S. should be electrically powered.”

Another futuristic gizmo, the drone, has acquired the problematic reputation of being flown dangerously close to commercial airliners. Yet as the magazine reported in 2017, Pedernales Electric Cooperative linemen deployed the remote control quadcopters to repair lines after the Blanco River flooded in 2015, restoring power in hours instead of days.

George and Jane Jetson, we’re catchin’ up at *Texas Co-op Power*.

**BY GENE FOWLER | TEXAS CO-OP POWER CONTRIBUTOR**







## SMART LIFE

I am a technophobe. I'm doing well to operate a cell-phone and a laptop. So I wondered, how did I end up writing about high-tech "smart life" for this 75th anniversary issue of *Texas Co-op Power*? Then I remembered a story I wrote for the magazine back in 2011: *High-Tech Co-ops Changing Energy Realities*. I visited five co-ops across the state where the introduction of new technology made a significant difference to co-op members. Some were seeing the benefits of the "smart grid," while others were enjoying making their own energy with the help of the wind, and still others were monitoring their energy consumption at home from their personal computers.

The story was not an abstract, speculative treatise on technology. This was real life with real people. The co-op staff and members I met showed me how technology, rather than being intimidating, was something that could make life easier by saving time and money.

Looking back over 75 years, it is clear that co-ops were on the forefront of high-tech developments such as the "smart house," a concept introduced back in 1987 in *Texas Co-op Power* and actually constructed with co-op sponsorship in 1993.

Remember when there was no internet? No tweets? No electronic meter reading? All of which are taken for granted now. The internet alone has altered life with its seemingly infinite capability to deliver information, from the price of hog bellies on the stock exchange to how to make the perfect mac 'n' cheese. You've already heard about the "internet of things" in the pages of *Texas Co-op Power*, and you're sure to hear more as cloud-based apps further enable communication between your smartphone and appliances and electronic systems in your home.

Not only does *Texas Co-op Power* inform readers about new technologies on the horizon, it helps you understand how they work and what the benefits will be. The magazine can fill that role because it's a trusted voice and echoes the sentiments of a general manager who once said, "Before we adopt any technology, we look at how it will make us more efficient and benefit our members."

So maybe I'm really not afraid of high tech, after all. I just need a little TCP TLC.

**BY CAROL MOCZYGEMBA | LONGTIME STAFF MEMBER  
AND EXECUTIVE EDITOR 2007-2013**





## THE FUTURE NOW

**T**he robotic assistants and flying cars promised by the golden age of science fiction still haven't materialized in Texas' homes and garages, but plenty of seemingly sci-fi technologies have. This next generation of tech—the culmination of decades of advances in biotechnology, computer sciences, nanotechnology and engineering—exists mostly in labs and in the cloud (or clouds). But some of it is already starting to show its potential for our everyday lives. The future is now.

For decades, farmers have envisioned a time when automation could put some of their workload in the hands of machines—Willie Wiredhand instead of Willie farmhand. In January 1971, Dick Pence, *Texas Co-op Power's* Washington correspondent, wrote about such visions: "The research quest for new machines and instruments has produced some exotic-sounding ideas ... electric-powered laser beams to control the depth of laying drainage pipe; computer-controlled feeding; electrostatic separation of seeds during cleaning processes; portable sensors to measure how much water plants lose during growth; and dozens of other devices."

But even Pence likely couldn't have imagined how drones equipped with powerful infrared cameras, automation software and GPS tracking could be used

to monitor crops from the air without the farmer ever having to get up from his desk. In April 2017, *Texas Co-op Power* wrote about that technology, which Juan Landivar, Corpus Christi director for the Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension Center, told us was still a few years away from commercial viability.

Such technologies have the power to revolutionize agribusiness. Other tech promises to change the way Texans do business, travel, interact and, well, live. That's why we've got our eye on advancements such as 5G wireless technology, which may one day make broadband obsolete with its superior wireless connection speeds. And artificial intelligence promises to one day drive our cars for us, produce works of art and defend our skies.

Then there's wireless electricity. Long dreamed about, it already exists today in the form of wireless pads that charge cellphones, for example. Researchers are looking to apply that concept on a much larger scale. An oddly shaped tower with a metal ball at its peak, along Interstate 35 East in Ellis County, is part of one such study, run by scientists at Viziv. Their goal is the wireless transmission of electricity over large distances.

"The Viziv surface wave systems will improve the quality of life for people everywhere by enabling the delivery of affordable electricity throughout the world," the company's website reads.

If they're ever successful, rest assured, we'll let you know.

**BY CHRIS BURROWS | SENIOR COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST**



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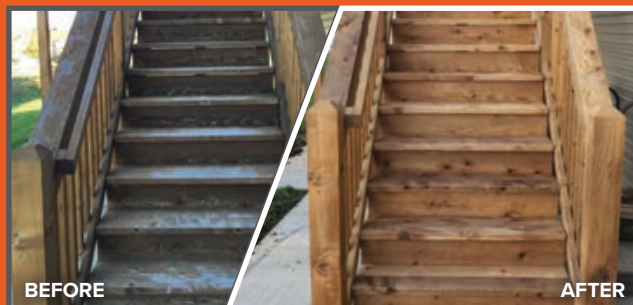


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## CONSERVATION AND SAFETY INFORMATION



# Stay Back and Stay Safe

**WORKING WITH ELECTRICITY CAN BE A DANGEROUS JOB, ESPECIALLY** for lineworkers. In fact, *USA Today* lists line repairers and installers among the most dangerous jobs in the U.S. That's why, for your electric cooperative, safety is our No. 1 priority. This is not an empty slogan: Over time, we have created a culture of putting our crews' safety and that of the community above all else.

Yes, we strive to deliver affordable and reliable electricity to you, but more important, we want our employees to return home safely to their loved ones. This requires ongoing focus, dedication, vigilance—and your help!

### Distractions Can Be Deadly

While we appreciate your kindness and interest in the work of our crews, we ask that you stay back and let them focus on their task at hand. Even routine work has the potential to be dangerous, and it takes their full attention and that of their colleagues, who are also responsible for the team's safety. Distractions can have deadly consequences. If a lineworker is on or near your property during a power outage, for vegetation management or for routine maintenance, please allow them ample room to work. These small accommodations help protect our crews—and you.

If you have a dog, try to keep it indoors while lineworkers are on or near your property. While most dogs are friendly, some are defensive of their territory and can't distinguish between a burglar and a utility worker. Our crews work best without a pet "supervising" the job.

We recognize that for your family's safety, you want to make sure only authorized workers are on or near your prop-

erty. You will recognize your co-op's employees by their uniforms and the co-op's logo on our service trucks. You may also recognize our lineworkers because they live right here in our community.

### Slow Down and Move Over

In addition to giving lineworkers space while they are near your property, we also ask that you move over or slow down when approaching a utility vehicle on the side of the road. One work zone crash occurs every 5.4 minutes across the U.S., and 70 of those each day result in injuries. There is one fatality each week from these accidents. The lineworkers' focus is on the work at hand, not on the road, so we need you to watch out for them.

Also, never text and drive—around work crews or at any other time. That message can wait, and the momentary distraction can change lives forever.

### Keep Poles Clear and Safe

Nails, staples and other attachments to utility poles not only get in lineworkers' way when they are trying to climb poles, but these foreign objects can also damage the workers' safety gear, exposing them to possible shock or electrocution. Never post signs or attach anything to utility poles.

Guy wires may occasionally be inconveniently located, but please leave them alone. The wires provide support for poles, and removing or modifying them can weaken the system, causing poles, power lines and possibly lineworkers to come crashing to the ground.

Your co-op's employees are looking out for you. Help them stay safe by returning the favor.



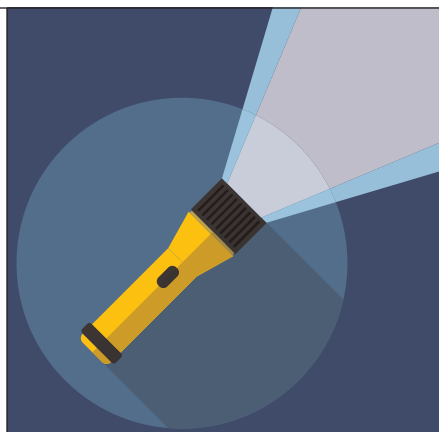
# Water, Water Everywhere—But Not Near Electricity

**DURING SUMMER MONTHS, YOU'RE LIKELY TO TAKE MORE SHOWERS THAN USUAL SINCE** there's more swimming, sports and yardwork going on. That makes it a good time to make sure your bathroom is a safe place.

The bathroom is one of the few places in the home where electrical appliances and water have a great chance to meet—and a great chance to cause electrical shock or death. If you have kids, the bathroom can be a room of hazards, electrical or otherwise, waiting to happen.

But it doesn't have to be. **Try these tips to dampen the danger:**

- ▶ All power outlets in the bathroom should be equipped with ground-fault circuit interrupters, which can sense when an electric current is improperly grounding and automatically shut down the power, potentially preventing a nasty shock.
- ▶ Use a bathmat with a nonskid bottom and use a nonslip mat or decals on the floor of the tub.
- ▶ Keep medications and vitamins in their original containers to avoid confusion, and always choose child-resistant caps. Keep medications and cleaning supplies locked away if there are small children in the home.
- ▶ Make a storage space under the counter and out of the way for hair dryers, curling irons and other electrical appliances that could be hazardous with water contact. Educate children on the dangers of mixing water and electricity.
- ▶ Never handle electrical appliances when your hands are wet or you are standing in water.
- ▶ Any exposed or frayed wiring in the bathroom—and anywhere else inside or outside your home—should be addressed and repaired immediately.
- ▶ Check the temperature of bathwater and turn the tap off before putting children in the tub. Tap water can instantly scald if it is too hot. Lower the temperature on your water heater to 120 degrees to guard against burns, but keep bathwater at 100 degrees or lower. Also, never leave children unattended during bath time.
- ▶ If you have toddlers, use toilet seat locks to prevent drowning.
- ▶ Use only electrical appliances and cords that bear the label of an independent testing laboratory, such as UL.



## Avoid the Peak To Help Avoid Blackouts

### THE ELECTRIC RELIABILITY COUNCIL OF

Texas, which counts most electric cooperatives and other power providers among its members, oversees electric reliability for more than 25 million consumers in Texas. One critical function ERCOT serves is to forecast upcoming electricity demand and then compare that figure with projected power reserves to assess the likelihood of needing to conduct controlled, rotating outages. These temporary lapses in electrical service maintain the system's overall integrity and shore up its resources against more dire outages, like a blackout across the entire state.

This summer, ERCOT is projecting tighter conditions than have ever been experienced on its system, with supplies historically low compared to expected demand. Increased demand for electricity can be attributed to several factors, including statewide economic growth, more people moving to Texas, and a growing oil and gas industry in the Permian Basin.

If demand spikes and outpaces supply, ERCOT has an energy emergency plan. The contingency plan's toolkit includes conducting rotating outages that affect consumers for about 30 minutes. "Everything we do is to protect against a blackout," said Dan Woodfin, ERCOT director of system operations.

Of course, rotating outages are a last resort and will occur only if absolutely necessary. You can also help your co-op prevent them by using power sparingly from 3 to 7 p.m. each day this summer.

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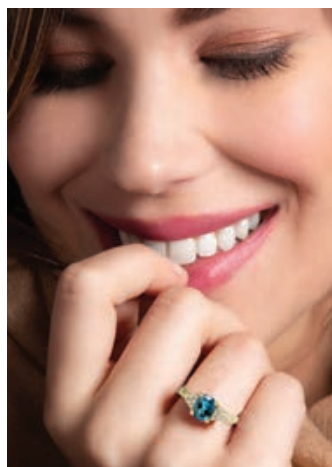
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# From the Shambles

Encased in a decrepit building in Mason, a 19th-century stone marvel

BY SHERYL SMITH-RODGERS

“THE PLACE WAS NASTY,” RECALLS SHANNON Worrell. “The electricity had been turned off, so animal carcasses left in freezers smelled awful. Trash was everywhere.”

It was a chilly day in December 2015, and Worrell was touring a rambling, one-story condemned building she owned two blocks from the charming historic square in Mason, about 100 miles west of Austin. She and Mason city administrator John Palacio entered the building with the intention of confirming plans for the structure’s demolition.

“But before we tore it all down,” Worrell says, “I wanted to see what I could salvage for future projects. In one narrow hallway, we used our cellphone flashlights to look. That’s when we saw a big rock set over a doorway.”

The rock turned out to be a hand-hewn stone lintel laid across a window opening. Another lintel and window came to light as she and Palacio picked their way through debris. They also uncovered thick rock walls. “You know,” Palacio said, “rumor has it that there used to be a rock house here.”

The rumor proved true. But could the original rock building, hidden underneath generations of additions and renovations, be reclaimed?

When Worrell and Palacio inspected the condemned building, barren ground and broken-down vehicles fronted the ramshackle hodgepodge. The structure had served as a well-respected nursing home from the late 1950s until the 1980s. To accommodate more patients, the owner built on rooms and attached two small

houses until the facility reached 10,000 square feet.

After the facility closed, Mason resident Oliver Grote bought the property and leased it. After his death in 2011, the property passed to his son, Glen, who sold it. The new owner operated a taxidermy shop in the building and lived in the back. She defaulted on the loan and abandoned the property. The building, with animal carcasses in the abandoned freezers, reverted to Grote.

By this point, the neighbors were complaining. Citing the city’s nuisance ordinance, Mason officials ordered Grote to demolish it. He offered to gift the real estate to his daughter, Worrell, a real estate investor and member of Central Texas EC,

provided that she handled the legalities. She declined but then reconsidered, deciding to take the property and tear the building down.

On the day they inspected the struc-

ture, Palacio and Worrell chipped away enough drywall to reveal the remnants of a dogtrot home concealed within the more recent structure. Worrell got the city’s OK to halt demolition.

For two weeks, three workers operating an excavator and two dump trucks hauled away 15 loads of trash and demolished add-ons. Finally, just the original rock house remained. From there, Worrell and her renovation crew worked by hand.

“We were very slow and methodical as

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we took the house apart and restored it, section by section,” Worrell says. “We peeled away sheetrock, paneling and plaster from walls. We removed carpeting, linoleum and wooden floors to reveal the original longleaf pine floors. We chinked out the old lime from the rock walls and put in new cement. We had to rebuild the front walls because they’d been removed to expand the nursing home. But we found matching native rocks and put back the original window lintels.”

Beadboard ceilings and a sleeping porch were too deteriorated to save. In their place, Worrell used salvaged beadboard from an 1860s house and added a modern bathroom and utility room. By fall 2016, she’d transformed the condemned building into the Fulton Guesthouse.

Above the fireplace mantel, scorched by flames, a portrait showcases original

owner William Zesch and his second wife, Pearl. In a binder, guests can read of the house’s history, starting when Zesch bought the lot from Marshall Fulton in 1898 for \$400.

Using native sandstone, Zesch built the modest rock house for his first wife, Carrie, who died in 1900. A year later, Zesch married Pearl. According to the *Mason County Historical Book*, Zesch built an icehouse and electric power plant on the property. In 1946, Zesch moved out of the home.

Fulton Guesthouse is a farm-style sandstone home with oak-framed windows, glass doors and a metal roof. On the rock porch, a bistro table and two chairs offer a view of the front yard and circular drive, landscaped with yuccas, prickly pear, bunch grasses and boulders. Inside, the two-bedroom home is furnished with

**Sheryl Smith-Rodgers and husband James Hearn on the front porch at the Fulton Guesthouse in Mason.**

antiques, a full kitchen and modern conveniences. At first glance, you’d never guess

that the house was previously a tumble-down wreck packed with hoarded junk.

While restoring the Zesch home, Worrell uncovered another surprise. In a box of family memorabilia, she came upon Zesch’s original 1898 property deed. A copy of the fragile paperwork, framed in glass, hangs on a rock wall in the Fulton Guesthouse.

“This place is a piece of Mason’s history that I didn’t want to lose,” Worrell says. “The house told us what to do because the bones were already there. We just had to put it all back together. And we did.”

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

# Caddo's Gems

East Texas lake once teemed with pearl hunters

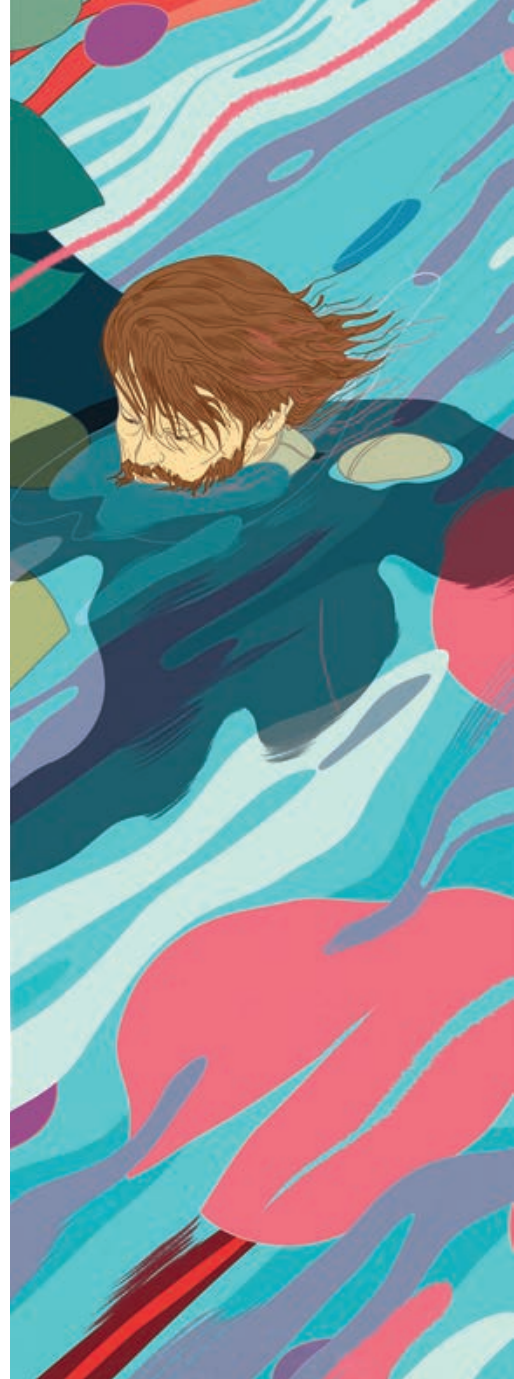
BY MARTHA DEERING

PEARLS, TREASURES FOUND IN THE FLESH of oysters, clams and mussels, were well-known and prized in 20th-century America. That's why a Japanese immigrant's 1909 discovery at Caddo Lake sparked a Texas version of the gold rush.

Sachihiko Ono Murata, believed to be the educated son of a Japanese admiral, served several years as a captain's personal chef aboard a U.S. Navy ship in the Pacific fleet before settling on the north shore of Caddo Lake around 1905. The largest natural lake in Texas, Caddo stretches 25 miles along the Louisiana border. Murata loved the lake's cypress trees and found a job cooking for workers on the oil rigs that dotted the lake.

The shallow lake, originally formed by a massive logjam on the Red River that was removed and replaced in the early 1900s by an Army Corps of Engineers dam, teemed with freshwater mussels, which Murata used as bait for catfish. In 1909, Murata found a large pink pearl in a mussel near Potter's Point. A day or two later, he discovered another pearl of similar size. Rumors flew that he sold the pearls to Tiffany & Co. for \$1,500 each. Treasure seekers came by wagon, on horseback and on foot to hunt for pearls.

Anglers who made their living on the lake set aside nets and trotlines and became "pearl hogs," vernacular for folks who crawled on all fours through the shallow water picking up mussels and tossing them into small boats they dragged to hold the catch. Most of the pearl hogs were local farmers who brought their families and camped near Caddo Lake for the summer.



In those days, farmers in Texas typically made no more than \$600 a year, so the promise of a pearl or two suggested a nice bonus. A pearl dealer named Dr. Owen came from Arkansas and set up his headquarters at Mooringsport, Louisiana, according to the July 1959 edition of *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly*. He kept a money satchel in the bottom of his boat, and when someone shouted "Pearl!" he motored to the hunter and paid cash for the find.

Most of the pearls brought \$20 or \$25, but Mrs. Jeff Stroud of the Lewis community sold a whopper for \$900, *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* reported. For three summers, pearl hunting was so lucrative that commercial





anglers on Caddo gave up fishing entirely, although some unlucky hunters reported that they worked for weeks without finding a single pearl.

During peak hunting season in the summer, up to 500 tents sprouted and up to 1,000 pearl hunters took to the lake each day. A problem arose once when a pile of discarded mussels created an awful stench, but a farmer brought his hogs, and they ate the decaying bivalves. Many families brought provisions from their farms, and a store from Oil City, Louisiana, periodically dispatched a hack with coffee, flour, lard and other staples.

In 1914, engineers expanded a dam built below the hunt area, and the lake rose 10 feet, flooding the mussel beds.

The mussel hunters went home, and the Caddo fishermen went back to fishing. Murata then opened a fishing camp. When the FBI forced Japanese Americans into internment camps during World War II, Louisiana and Texas officials, led by Texan “Cap” Taylor (Lady Bird Johnson’s father), who lived in nearby Karnack, persuaded the agents to leave Murata undisturbed. He died at his fishing camp just after the war ended.

Freshwater mussels still thrive in Caddo Lake, according to Brandon Lopes-Baca, superintendent at Caddo Lake State Park, but no collecting is allowed in the park.

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



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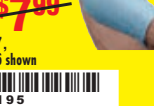
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# Our Fearless Forefather

G.W. Haggard was founding editor of this magazine and a stalwart champion of electric co-ops

BY ELLEN STADER

HE BEGAN LIFE A FARM BOY. HE GREW into a staunch journalist and rural advocate. After his death, a prestigious journalism award was named for him. The man was George Wilford Haggard, and he created this magazine.

Haggard devoted himself to a life of defending responsible journalism and the rights of rural people who received electricity from cooperatives. Texan political reporter Liz Carpenter described him as a man for whom “rural electrification is his religion.”

Born in 1908 on a farm in Comanche County, Haggard went to study in 1926 at Hardin-Simmons University in Abilene, where he took a job with the *Abilene Reporter-News*.

Haggard graduated in 1930 and embarked on a career that advanced steadily. He was city editor at the *Sherman Democrat* and later taught journalism at Abilene High School, leading the school’s student newspaper to international honors.

Eventually, the Texas Farm Bureau hired him to edit its monthly publication. Haggard proved an adept reporter and fearless fighter. After helping quash bills in the Legislature that would’ve crippled public power, he became executive secretary of the bureau.

Haggard’s next venture set the stage for his life’s work: In 1944, he became executive secretary of the Texas Power Reserve Electric Cooperative and editor of its newspaper, *Texas Cooperative Electric Power*. (Today, we call the association



Texas Electric Cooperatives and its magazine *Texas Co-op Power*.)

Haggard’s dedication to truth was auspicious, as his new position routinely required him to set the record straight. Distortions and manipulations leveled at electric co-ops by the for-profit power industry (and politicians in its pockets) kept Haggard’s rhetoric at prime fighting weight.

He answered preposterous allegations with fundamental cornerstones of the electric co-op message such as: “Co-ops are not tax-exempt. They pay local, school, county and state taxes,” and “For 50 years, private power refused to serve rural areas, claiming it was not practical or feasible. But the farmers themselves are successfully performing the task that the power people said was impossible.”

Haggard’s honest, outspoken integrity was noticed at the national level. In 1948, he joined the Rural Electrification Administration in Washington, D.C., stating his objectives by saying, “We want very much for every co-op member to realize fully that he owns the co-op. He’ll fight for what

he owns.” A year later, Haggard was promoted to deputy administrator, the REA’s No. 2 leader.

Sadly, in June 1951, Haggard and five fellow REA employees died in a plane crash outside Fort Collins, Colorado. The tragedy left a gaping hole in the REA roster and morale. U.S. Sen. Tom Connally of Texas summed up the feelings of many national officials with his condolences: “I’m grieved and shocked at the tragedy. I knew and esteemed George Haggard. ... His death will be a great loss to the state and the nation.”

In 1958, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association issued its first George W. Haggard Memorial Journalism Awards recognizing statewide publications that present “lucid, forthright contributions to electric cooperative objectives.” *Texas Co-op Power* in 2007 took home its most recent award named after its indomitable founder.

Ellen Stader is a writer in Austin. For more on Haggard’s feuds with politicians, read the June 2019 Texas History story *The Nylon Campaign* on our website.



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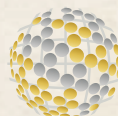
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## Here's the Beef

WHEN IT CAME TO HOME COOKING, the 1970s had a split personality. On one hand, it was the decade of sunflower seeds (not widely available until then) and healthy eating. This magazine offered instructions for making a gingerbread house with granola bars in December 1978. On the other hand, Julia Child had become a household name, and popular beef dishes ranged from Hungarian goulash to French *ragoût de boeuf* and spicy bowls of red.

The following recipe, which appeared in *Texas Co-op Power's 60 Years of Home Cooking*, won Gay Dixson (then a member of Pedernales EC) the Texas State Fair El Chico Chili Contest in 1973. A few adjustments for modern tastes (using pure ground chile and olive oil instead of shortening) make the results more vibrant and just as satisfying.

PAULA DISBROWE, FOOD EDITOR

### Texas State Fair Chili

- 3–4 pounds chuck, cubed
- 2 tablespoons kosher salt
- 1 tablespoon ground black pepper
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup flour
- 2 tablespoons olive oil (or vegetable shortening or bacon fat)
- 2 medium onions, chopped
- 2–3 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 quarts water, heated
- 3 tablespoons hot paprika
- 2 tablespoons ground cumin
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup plus 2 tablespoons pure ground chile powder (such as ancho or New Mexico)
- 2 cans (8 ounces each) tomato sauce
- Hot sauce, as desired

**1.** Place the beef in a mixing bowl, sprinkle with the salt, pepper and flour and use your hands to combine until the meat is well-coated.

**2.** Heat the oil (or shortening) in a large, heavy Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Add the beef (in batches as necessary) and brown on all sides; use a slotted spoon to

CONTINUED ON PAGE 32



# Retro Recipes

## Here's the Beef



### THIS MONTH'S RECIPE CONTEST WINNER

KITTIELE POTTS | BOWIE-CASS EC

This light and fresh take on beef is great for August heat. The steak cooks quickly on the grill, so you won't overheat (and neither will your kitchen). A versatile recipe, it easily doubles to serve more, and you can use other fruits besides strawberries, depending on your tastes and what's in season. Try peach, mango or kiwi for a different twist.

### Steak Tacos With Pineapple Salsa

- 1 pound flank steak
- ¼ cup red wine vinegar
- ¼ cup soy sauce
- ¼ cup balsamic vinegar
- 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- 5 large strawberries, chopped
- 2 fresh pineapple rings, chopped
- ½ teaspoon finely chopped cilantro
- ½ jalapeño pepper, finely chopped
- ½ teaspoon lime juice
- ½ teaspoon lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 teaspoon finely chopped red onion
- 6 flour tortillas
- 3 ounces feta cheese, crumbled
- Cilantro for garnish (optional)

1. Place the steak in a resealable plastic bag and add the red wine vinegar, soy sauce, balsamic vinegar and Worcestershire sauce. Let steak marinate 6 hours

in a refrigerator.

2. In a bowl, combine the strawberries, pineapple, cilantro, jalapeño, and lime and lemon juices.

3. In a nonstick skillet, add the olive oil and red onion. Sauté until onion is tender and translucent. Drain onion on a paper towel and add to bowl, tossing all ingredients thoroughly.

4. Remove steak from marinade. Place on a grill at medium heat. Grill 7 minutes on each side or until steak reaches desired level of doneness. Slice steak into thin strips.

5. Heat tortillas up by placing them individually on a hot skillet briefly. Fill tortillas with the steak, salsa and feta to make tacos. Garnish with additional cilantro, if desired.

► Makes 6 tacos.

**COOK'S TIP** If you don't mind the bite of fresh red onion, add it in raw in step 3.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 31

transfer to a plate.

3. Add the onions and garlic and cook, stirring, until the vegetables have softened. Add the cooked beef back into the Dutch oven along with 2 quarts of hot water and simmer 1 hour.

4. Stir in the paprika, cumin, chile powder and tomato sauce and simmer an additional hour, stirring often, until the meat is very tender. Taste for seasonings and add additional salt and hot sauce, to taste. ► Serves 6-8.

### Korean Lettuce Wraps

LU FULLILOVE | GUADALUPE VALLEY EC

Make this spicy, tangy dish for a quick weeknight meal. Keep it simple or add other garnishes like cilantro, chopped peanuts or onion. For a heartier version, stir in a cup of cooked rice before serving.

- 1 pound ground beef
- 2 cups sliced fresh mushrooms
- 3 sliced green onions, green part reserved
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- ⅓ cup gochujang (Korean chili sauce)
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon rice vinegar
- 1 tablespoon sesame oil
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon grated fresh ginger
- 1 carrot, shredded
- Iceberg or butter lettuce leaves
- Sesame seeds (optional)

1. Add ground beef, mushrooms and white parts of onions to a large frying pan over medium heat. Add salt and pepper, then stir and cook until browned, 5-10 minutes. Drain beef, if desired.

2. Add gochujang, sugar, soy sauce, rice vinegar, sesame oil, garlic and ginger; cook 5 minutes. Taste for seasoning and add salt, if needed.

3. Add carrot and cook 1 minute. (Add a little water if sauce is too thick.)

4. Serve with iceberg or butter lettuce leaves. Garnish with green onion tops and sesame seeds. ► Serves 4.

**COOK'S TIP** I found gochujang at my local H-E-B, but it is also available online and at Asian markets.

### \$100 Recipe Contest

January's recipe contest topic is **New Year's Resolution**. After holiday excess, you might be trying to eat healthier. Share the soups, smoothies and other dishes that get you back in balance. The deadline is **August 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.





This month, Food Editor **PAULA DISBROWE** offers a favorite beef recipe from her new cookbook, *Thank You for Smoking*.



## Togarashi Porterhouse

You might think of a porterhouse as the T-bone's luxurious cousin. Both steaks have the iconic T-shaped bone that imparts flavor and divides the sirloin and tenderloin—the most premium cuts of beef available. But a porterhouse is cut from the rear end of the short loin, so it has a bigger section of luscious tenderloin. The meat is so extraordinary that you don't want to do too much to it. Here subtle heat is added with shichimi togarashi, a peppery Japanese condiment, and a quick turn in a garlic-soy marinade that enhances the beef's umami.

- ¼ cup soy sauce
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoons shichimi togarashi
- 2 cloves garlic, grated on a Microplane

- 2 1½-inch-thick porterhouse steaks, about 3½ pounds total

1. In a small bowl, combine the soy sauce, olive oil, togarashi and garlic. Pour ¾ of the marinade into a baking dish and reserve the rest. Lay the steaks in the marinade and flip them a few times to generously coat. Set aside to marinate 10 minutes.
2. Prepare a charcoal grill for two-zone cooking and build a medium-high fire, or heat a gas grill to high.
3. When the coals are glowing red and covered with a fine gray ash, add your smoke source (chips, chunks or log). Carefully wipe the preheated grill grates with a lightly oiled paper towel. Using a grill brush, scrape the grill grates clean, then carefully wipe with a lightly oiled towel again.
4. When the fire begins to produce a steady stream of smoke, place the steaks over direct heat, close the grill, vent the grill for smoking and smoke 2 minutes. Move the steaks to indirect heat, close the grill and smoke 4–5 minutes. When juices

appear on top of the meat, flip the steaks and repeat the process, starting on direct heat 2 minutes, then moving to indirect heat 4–5 minutes, until the meat is nicely charred and glossy and an instant-read thermometer inserted into the thickest part of each steak reads 125 degrees, 15–20 minutes total; carryover heat will take it to 130 degrees for medium-rare as it rests. Transfer the meat to a cutting board to rest 10 minutes.

5. Using a sharp knife, cut the meat off the bone, then cut the sections into thin slices. Serve with the remaining marinade on the side. ▶ Serves 6–8 (or 4 steak lovers).

Reprinted with permission from *Thank You for Smoking: Fun and Fearless Recipes Cooked with a Whiff of Wood Fire on Your Grill or Smoker* by Paula Disbrowe (Ten Speed Press, 2019).

**CORRECTION** A recipe in the June issue misidentified the reader who submitted it. Pecan Potato Salad was submitted by Allison Loesch of Pedernales EC. Please find it and the other Standout Summer Sides recipes from June at [TexasCoopPower.com](http://TexasCoopPower.com).

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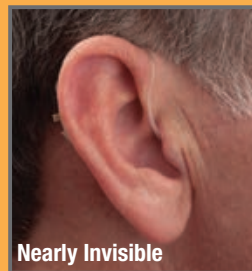
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# Family Ties

RELATED BY BLOOD, MARRIAGE, adoption or friendship, the families in our lives shape us and the state of Texas in ways big and small. Family shows up when it counts, and above all, family ties us together. **GRACE FULTZ**

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



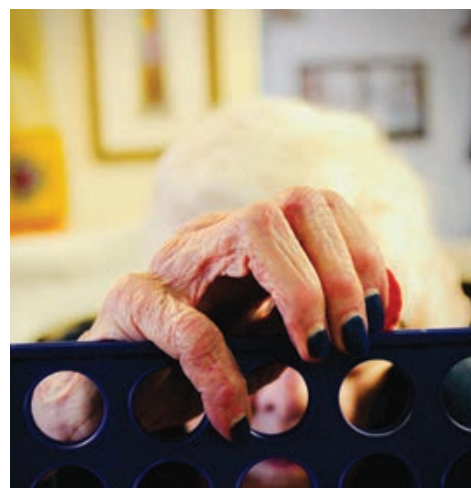
▲ **GINA HUCK**, United Cooperative Services: “Our grandson was born overseas, so my husband had to wait 3½ months for this joy-filled first meeting in Houston.”

▶ **PAUL GARCIA**, Medina EC: “This is part of my Canary Islands descendant family. The Canary Islanders first came to San Antonio on March 9, 1731. We are celebrating the feast day of Our Lady of Candelaria at Mission Concepción in San Antonio.”



◀ **M.J. TYKOSKI**, Farmers EC: “There is a special bond between a little sister and the big brother she adores.”

▶ **JENNIFER STORM NUCKELS**, Pedernales EC: Landon Nuckels, 9, took this photo of his great-grandmother, Sylba Lee Adams Storm, 95, creating family ties over a game of Connect 4.



▲ **TINA WEBB**, Bluebonnet EC: Picnicking with family on a Sunday afternoon beside St. James Lutheran Church of New Wehdem in Austin County.

## UPCOMING CONTESTS

DECEMBER DESERTS	DUE AUGUST 10
JANUARY FENCES	DUE SEPTEMBER 10
FEBRUARY POWER	DUE OCTOBER 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 Sausage Festival

**New Berlin September 1**  
(210) 343-9570

In addition to sausage plates, the festival includes an auction, bingo, raffle, rides, kids games, country store and music by Clint Taft and the Buckwild Band. Proceeds benefit the New Berlin Volunteer Fire Department and Community Club. More info available on Facebook.

## August

7

**Levelland** [7-11] S.P.O.T.C. Dog Agility Trials, (806) 894-4161, malleventcenter.com

8

**Athens** The Bulb Hunter, (903) 675-6130, txmg.org

9

**Alpine** [9-10] Big Bend Ranch Rodeo, (432) 364-2696, bigbendranchrodeo.com

**Fort Davis** [9-11] Open Weekend at Davis Mountains Preserve, (432) 426-2390, nature.org

**Jacksonville** [9-11] Luau Golf Tournament, (903) 541-4700, jacksonvilletexas.com

10

**Boerne** Kuhlmann-King Museum Tour, (830) 331-1033, visitboerne.org

**Brenham** Lavender & Wine Fest, (979) 251-8114, chappellhilllavender.com

**Carmine** Toe-Tapp'n Casino Night, (281) 799-5113, carminetx.com

**Eastland** Rip's Sip & Toss, (254) 629-2332, eastlandchamber.com

**Taylor** Michelle's Hot Peeps Beat CC 5K and Fun Run, (512) 376-8089, athleteguild.com

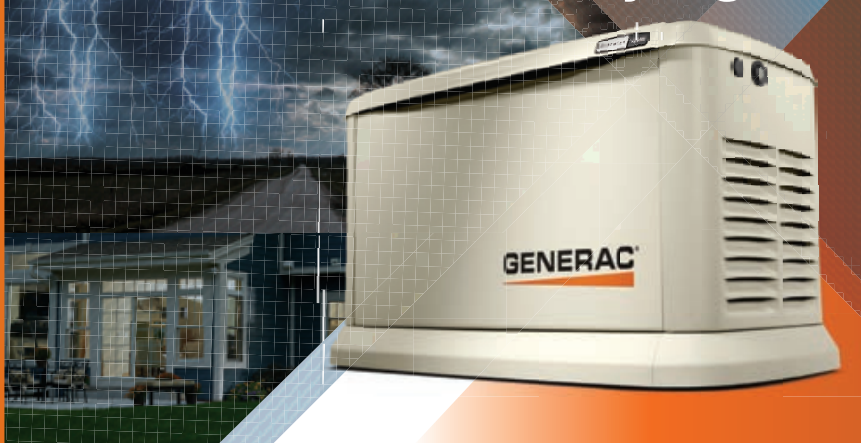
**Bandera** [10, 17, 24] Bandera Rodeo Club Youth Summer Series Rodeo, (830) 431-1030, banderarodeoclub.com



August 9-11  
Fort Davis  
Open Weekend at  
Davis Mountains Preserve

SAUSAGES: STANKO7 | DREAMTIME.COM. FORT DAVIS: MIKE TURNAGE | SHUTTERSTOCK.COM. BLUEGRASS: MICHELANGELOP | SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

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## 16

**Wichita Falls** [16-17] Texas Ranch Round-up, (940) 716-5555, texasranchroundup.com

**Highland Village** [16-18] Lions Balloon Festival, lionsballoonfest.com

**Denton** [16-24] North Texas Fair & Rodeo, (940) 387-2632, ntfair.com

**Ingram** [16-31] *Dearly Departed*, (830) 367-5121, hcaf.com

## 17

**Luckenbach** Historic Luckenbach School Open House, (830) 685-3321, historicalschools.org

**Kerrville** Kids Triathlon, (830) 257-7300, kerrvilletx.gov

**Troy** Clays for Christ, (254) 420-8899

## 22

**Fredericksburg** [22-25] Gillespie County Fair and Parade, (830) 997-2359, gillespiefair.com

## 23

**Bridgeport** [23-24] Wise County Quilt Show, (940) 683-2085, wisecountyquiltguild.blogspot.com



August 29–September 1  
Grapeland  
Labor Day Bluegrass  
Music Festival

## 27

**Stonewall** Commemoration of Lyndon B. Johnson's Birthday, (830) 868-7128, nps.gov/lyjo

## 29

**Boerne** [29–Sept. 1] Kendall County Fair and Rodeo, (830) 249-2839, kcfa.org

**Grapeland** [29–Sept. 1] Labor Day Bluegrass Music Festival, (936) 687-2594, salmonlakepark.com

## 31

**Columbus** Columbus Country Market, (979) 732-8385, columbusfmtx.org

**Doss** Doss VFD Benefit Fish Fry, (830) 669-2220, dossvfd.org

**New Braunfels** The Revivalists With White Denim, (830) 964-3800, whitewaterrocks.com

**Richmond** Labor Day Backyard BBQ, (281) 343-0218, georgeranch.org

**Lewisville** [31–Sept. 1] Texas Pop Turns 50, (972) 219-3401, cityoflewisville.com

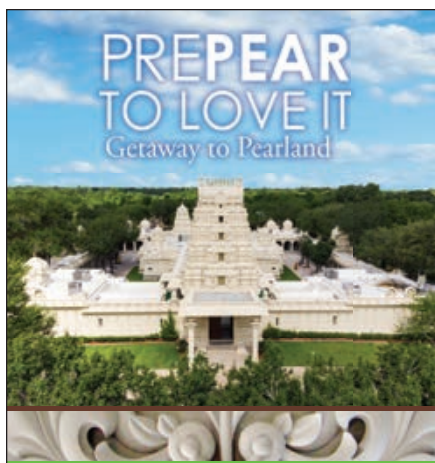
## September

## 6

**Bryan** [6-7] Brazos Bluebonnet Quilt Guild Show, (979) 204-4737, bbqg.org

### Submit Your Event!

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



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# POWER OF OUR PEOPLE

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## Fun in the Past Tense

Odd, fascinating collection at the Frontier Times Museum in Bandera makes for memorable visit

WHAT DO A TWO-HEADED GOAT, A STUFFED mountain lion and a ventriloquist doll named Gino R Tree have in common? They're part of the weird and wonderful collection of artifacts at the Frontier Times Museum in Bandera. If you find yourself tripping through the Texas Hill Country with an appetite for the abnormal, this is a must stop.

Bandera sits about 50 miles northwest of San Antonio and calls itself the Cowboy Capital of the World. Stephenville also claims that title, but that's a debate for a whole other article. What's indisputable is that cowboy culture is alive and well in Bandera. The scenic hills are full of dude ranches, the visitor center hosts weekly gunfights, and there are plenty of places to eat a cowboy-sized chicken-fried steak. The Old Spanish Trail Restaurant even has saddles instead of stools at its bar. But something you might not expect are the bizarre relics inside the town's eclectic museum.

Few probably remember *Frontier Times*, but for 31 years, the magazine published stories of the Wild West, replete with train robberies, outlaws and gold prospecting. It was started in 1923 by J. Marvin Hunter, a newspaperman and amateur historian. Very soon after Hunter launched the monthly publication, his readers began sending him their own tales along with strange family heirlooms. Hunter believed that if an item was important to its donor, it should be important to everyone, so he never turned down a gift. He filled his office with curiosities from around the globe. And if he didn't know an artifact's story, he would make one up.

Once the collection outgrew the room, Hunter tore down a wall and built a bigger



**Chet Garner discovers artifacts at the Frontier Times Museum in Bandera.**

room. Before long, he was running a full-on museum and entertaining his visitors with strange stories and circuslike curiosities, which earned him a reputation as the "P.T. Barnum of Bandera County."

Small-town museums can be strange. Some hold nothing more than rusted farming tools, while others hold treasures worthy of the Smithsonian Institution. The Frontier Times Museum is somewhere between those extremes.

The first thing that caught my attention was the building itself. Constructed in 1933, the exterior walls are made up of stone, petrified wood, quartz crystals and brain coral—a fitting allusion to the mixture of items I found inside. It seemed as though every inch of wall was covered: an old photograph, old clock or old taxidermied animal. I began by browsing the stories of Texas settlers but quickly found myself drawn to the stranger side of the museum.

There was a mummified squirrel found in someone's attic and presented in a glass case. There was a shrunken human head from South America, a sculpture made of rattlesnake rattles and a two-headed goat that was born on a local ranch and donated

after it died. Most fascinating was the story of a stuffed mountain lion named Sally that a man from Pearsall had kept as a house pet and that rode shotgun in his truck.

In the back was the Texas Heroes Hall of Honor recognizing rodeo cowboys and others who have made a lasting contribution to Texan culture. I learned about Bandera native "Mighty Mite" Ray Wharton, who was short in stature but could rope a calf like no other and won a world championship at Madison Square Garden.

That day, I gained a lot of knowledge about Bandera's history and a lot of new mental images to feed my nightmares. As I walked out, I asked the manager if the museum was still taking donations.

"Of course," she said. "What do you have?"

"Nothing yet," I replied. "But I'm sure I can find you something."

And after I find the artifact, I can work on finding the sort of accompanying story that would make Mr. Hunter proud.

**Chet Garner** shares his Texplorations as the host of *The Daytripper* on PBS.

**WEB EXTRAS** ▶ Read this story on our website to see Chet's video of his visit to the Frontier Times Museum.



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