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March 2021



08

Flower Power

Wildflowers proliferate in an explosion of color along the highways and byways of Texas each spring, inspiring artists to capture the state's wild beauty and luring travelers off the beaten path.

By Sheryl Smith-Rodgers

ON THE COVER

A red patch of Indian paintbrush highlights a field of wildflowers near New Berlin.

ABOVE

A firewheel.

Photos by Rob Greebon

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By Eli Winter

Month of Tweets

OF THE 654 SPECIES of birds documented in Texas, over half are migratory. Millions of these will fly the Texas skies starting this month on their way to northern breeding grounds after wintering in Mexico and Central and South America.

Some species, such as the prothonotary warbler, below, and red-eyed vireo, will go no farther north than Texas, where they'll make their home until the fall, when they migrate south again.



Scout's Honor

Since the Boy Scouts of America created the Eagle Scout rank in 1911, about 2.6 million Americans have earned one of Scouting's highest honors. Until last year, all Eagle Scouts were boys.

When Abby Winkelman, whose family is a member of Sam Houston Electric Cooperative, became an Eagle Scout in October, when she was 14, she made history, becoming one of the first girls to reach the rank.

"I don't think I've ever set a goal this ambitious for myself, so I'm just really proud of myself that I met my goal," said Winkelman, of Troop 5131 in Austin, "and I planned and I got help from all my friends and all my community."



Hank the Cool Dog

Texas' coolest dog meets Texas' coolest character.

A new podcast series stars Matthew McConaughey as Hank the Cowdog, based on the long-running series of children's books written by Texan John R. Erickson, illustrated by Gerald L. Holmes and set in the Panhandle.

The podcast, which debuted in the fall, is available on all major podcast platforms.

“I will never forsake Texas and her cause. I am her son.”

—JOSÉ ANTONIO NAVARRO

FINISH THIS SENTENCE

THE SONG THAT GOT ME THROUGH A YEAR OF PANDEMIC IS ...

TCP Tell us how you would finish that sentence. Email your short responses to letters@TexasCoopPower.com or comment on our Facebook post. Include your co-op and town. Here are some of the responses to our January prompt: **Life was better ...**

When my skate key was hanging around my neck, my knees were scabbed and the wind was blowing my hair from my face.

JANICE F. CONWAY
TRINITY VALLEY EC
KEMP

Before COVID-19.

GARY GALLOWAY
TRI-COUNTY EC
WEATHERFORD

When we could reach out and touch someone, literally. I miss hugs and handshakes.

CARMEN LOCKSTEDT
VICTORIA EC
VICTORIA

When the only screen we had was in our door, and we could see through it.

PATRICIA RAPACKI
MIDSOUTH EC
MONTGOMERY

After I recovered from ovarian cancer.

SHERRI JEFFERY
GRAYSON-COLLIN EC
MCKINNEY

To see more responses, read Currents online.



Drink to That?

USING HOUSTON as a model, researchers at Rice University have developed a plan to recycle wastewater economically and make it drinkable, which could reduce the need for surface water—from rivers, reservoirs and wells—by 28%.

“All the technologies needed to treat wastewater to drinking water quality are available,” Rice researcher Qilin Li said. “The issue is that today they’re still pretty expensive.”

This proposed system makes up for that by bringing down the cost of a city’s water supply. Recycled water doesn’t have to travel as far and is therefore cheaper.

Cheers.



TCP Contests and More

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Night Life

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Enter to win *Texas Wildflowers: A Field Guide*.

“Katmai National Park and Preserve holds a contest every year to name the fattest bear at Brooks Falls.”

A large wooden trestle bridge spanning a body of water, with a car visible on the deck. The bridge features a complex lattice of wooden beams and a curved arch structure. The scene is set against a warm, orange-hued sky, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. A car is visible on the bridge deck, and a power line tower is visible in the background.

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SEASONAL SWAY OF COLORS
DRIVES TEXANS WILD

Flower POWER

BY SHERYL SMITH-RODGERS

NATURE'S PALETTE CAPTIVATES Texans every spring. Sapphire blue, lemony yellow, crimson red, golden orange, lavender purple and ivory white. We love our wildflowers so much that we'll drive great distances to see them. Frame their colors in countless photos. Designate official state titles in their honor. Celebrate their return with festivals, parades and dances. Spread their seeds across our yards, campuses and roadsides. Pen words, compose music and paint landscapes that hail their natural glory.

We also revere the Texans who've promoted our 5,000-plus species of wildflowers and native plants. Foremost was Lady Bird Johnson, who started her national highway cleanup campaign during Lyndon B. Johnson's presidency and co-founded the National Wildflower Research Center in 1982. Now called the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, the 284-acre complex in Austin supports the Botanic Garden and Arboretum of Texas as well as cultivated gardens and wild natural areas.

Another wildflower hero is Carroll Abbott of Kerrville, a native plant expert who lobbied in 1981 to establish the fourth Saturday in April as Texas Wildflower Day. That same year he was instrumental in founding the Native Plant Society of Texas, which now boasts 34 chapters with 2,800 members.

Other wildflower advocates made a difference, too. San Antonio civic leader Sallie Ward Beretta launched a state-wide campaign in the 1920s to stop the bluebonnet from being overpicked. As president of the City Federation of Women's Clubs and the San Antonio Council of Girl Scouts, she recruited volunteers to gather seedpods in fields around the city. Then they shared the seeds with other cities across the state and nation.

Large or small, every effort to protect our wildflowers makes a difference. You can do your part: Please don't pick, trample or uproot bluebonnets or any other wildflowers. No law prohibits Texans from picking bluebonnets unless they're on private property or state park land, but any flower picked or damaged can't reseed for the next spring's bloom.

So welcome back, wildflowers. We look forward to yet another glorious show!



ROB GREEBON | IMAGESFROMTEXAS.COM



A field of bluebonnets in the southern Chisos Mountains welcomes the sun as it rises on Big Bend National Park.

WELL, I DO DECLARE!
OFFICIAL STATE DESIGNATIONS

Officially WILD

STATE FLOWER

Most U.S. states claim one official state flower. Not Texas. We have at least 16. In 1901 the bluebonnet (*Lupinus subcarnosus*) went up against the prickly pear and cotton boll for the right to be named state flower. Rep. John “Cactus Jack” Nance Garner of Uvalde lobbied for the cactus bloom. Other legislators argued that cotton had made Texas rich. In the end, the National Society of the Colonial Dames of America carried the day, and the bluebonnet won.

But floral dissent wasn’t over. Many didn’t like the bluebonnet choice. Of the state’s six bluebonnet species, *Lupinus subcarnosus* was the “least attractive,” opined botanist Howard S. Irwin in *Roadside Flowers of Texas*. So in 1971 state lawmakers amended legislation to include the more popular Texas bluebonnet (*Lupinus texensis*) in addition to *Lupinus subcarnosus* and all other varieties of bluebonnet as the official state flower.

Since then, horticulturalists have developed different colors of bluebonnets, such as white and maroon. To date, they’ve introduced at least 10 bluebonnet varieties. Thus, Texas has at least 16 official state flowers ... for now.



WILDFLOWER CAPITAL OF TEXAS

DeWitt County

Wildflower trails crisscross DeWitt County, northwest of Victoria, where more than 1,000 wildflower species have been documented. A 1999 resolution adopted by the Texas House recognized the county as the Wildflower Capital of Texas.

TEXAS WILDFLOWER DAY

Fourth Saturday in April

In April 1981 the Legislature declared the fourth Saturday of April as Texas Wildflower Day. The resolution asks the governor “to issue an appropriate proclamation annually” to encourage the proper observance of the special day.

BLUEBONNET CO-CAPITALS OF TEXAS

Burnet and Llano counties

Every spring visitors admire wildflowers along the Highland Lakes Bluebonnet Trail, which winds through Burnet and Llano counties in Central Texas. In 1981 the Legislature designated the pair as Bluebonnet Co-capitals of Texas.



EDDIE WHITE

STATE FLOWER SONG

Bluebonnets

Our state flower song, *Bluebonnets*, has roots in Washington County. Julia D. Booth of Chappell Hill wrote lyrics for the song, which was composed by piano teacher Lora C. Crockett. On February 8, 1933, Alice Clay Routt of Chappell Hill, accompanied by Crockett on the piano, sang the tune for the Texas House. It was then adopted as the state flower song by the Legislature.

OFFICIAL BLUEBONNET FESTIVAL OF TEXAS

Chappell Hill Bluebonnet Festival

The Chappell Hill Historical Society hosted its first bluebonnet festival in 1964, calling it the Bluebonnet Antique Show. In 1983 the name changed to Chappell Hill Bluebonnet Festival. In 1997 the Legislature named the event, in the town east of Brenham, as the Official Bluebonnet Festival of Texas.

**WILDFLOWER SEEDING
BRIGHTENS ROAD TRIPS**

Take It ON THE ROAD

SINCE THE 1930s the Texas Department of Transportation has planted native flowers and grasses along state highways. In 1934 the agency directed staff not to mow until wildflowers had set seed, a policy that still guides mowing schedules.

TxDOT's wildflower program has expanded in both scope and vision, and the department now maintains 800,000 acres of roadside along with 80 safety rest stops and 12 travel information centers. Every year TxDOT must reseed approximately 4,800 construction projects.

Enter native plants, which require less care, provide wildlife habitat and increase biodiversity. "Every fall we sow approximately 30,000 pounds of native flower and grass seed mixes," says Travis Jez, a TxDOT vegetation specialist. "Because monarch butterflies have become a species of major concern, we're also planting pollinator gardens and milkweeds, such as zizotes. What's cool is that all pollinators benefit."

No single seed source can supply the 15 tons that TxDOT sows annually. So Jez works with six Texas companies that specialize in producing seeds for native species. TxDOT also collaborates with Texas Native Seeds of the Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute, a nonprofit program that develops commercial seed supplies of native plants for use in restoring habitats on private and public lands. The program supports six regional projects that select and grow plants endemic to their areas.

While you're searching for wildflowers, look out for bright green carpets along Texas roadsides. Those indicate that the areas have been hydro-seeded with a slurry of seeds, mulch and water. "The process is used for spreading seeds and to control erosion," Jez explains. "The mulch also holds in water and helps the seedlings get started."

As for the green color, "It allows applicants to see where they've sprayed the slurry," Jez says.



ROB GREEBON | IMAGESFROMTEXAS.COM



Bluebonnets and Indian paintbrush accompany travelers along a stretch of Texas 16 in Gillespie County.

Picture THIS

IN APRIL 1961 nature enthusiasts hurrahed the publication of *Roadside Flowers of Texas*. The classic guide written by botanist Howard S. Irwin showcases 257 wildflower paintings by Mary Motz Wills, a prolific artist and amateur botanist whose work was exhibited nationally. Her attention to the smallest details led to floral watercolors that were, as one columnist noted, “botanically accurate as well as artistically superb.”

Wills attended formal art schools and began painting flowers in 1913 while recovering from an illness in Panama, where her husband, a U.S. Army colonel, was stationed. After his death in 1925, Wills moved to Georgia and then to Abilene, where she aspired to record as many Texas flowers and plants as she could.

At her home studio, Wills painted plants that she collected or were sent to her by friends. She sometimes woke at 4 a.m. or worked through the night to capture blooms in their most natural form. “Some flowers only bloom at night, so I stay up until I get them painted,” she told a newspaper reporter in 1958.

A stickler for accuracy, Wills often noted on her paintings the common and botanical name of plants and where they grew in the wild.

In all, Wills produced more than 2,000 Texas botanical paintings. Many of the plants that she painted “were endangered species in her day, and some have disappeared entirely since then,” writes Cecilia Steinfeldt in *Art for History’s Sake: The Texas Collection of the Witte Museum*.

Wills died at 86 in 1961. Today, many of her delicate watercolors are housed for safe-keeping in Austin’s Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, San Antonio’s Witte Museum and Abilene’s Grace Museum. ■

TCP WEB EXTRA Pick up more wildflower facts and win a book that can make you an expert.



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Since 1986, the design of the "Silver Eagle" has remained unchanged: Adolph A. Weinman's classic 1916 Walking Liberty design paired with former U.S. Mint Chief Engraver John Mercanti's stunning eagle reverse. But in mid-2021, the U.S. Mint plans to replace the original reverse. This initial release is the FINAL appearance of the U.S. Silver Eagle's original design!

Collectors are Already Going Wild for This "Final" Release!

For any popular coin series, two dates tend to rise to the top of demand: the first and the last. This coin represents not just the final issue of perhaps the world's most popular silver coin, but also its 35th anniversary — an additional draw for collectors, who are already chomping at the bit, ready to secure as many coins as possible. And it's not just about the special anniversary and "last" that has them excited...

Higher Values + Slowed Production = DEMAND!

In the last 12 months, average monthly values of silver bullion have increased nearly 68%! Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in the U.S. Mint slowing production of freshly struck 2020 Silver Eagles—and this could reoccur. Add in the final issue of the original design, and you have a trifecta of demand that has buyers around the world ready to pounce.

Timing is Everything

This is a strictly limited release offer for one of the world's most popular silver coins. As the last mintage to feature the original, 35-year-old design, it represents the end of an era at a time when silver values have seen a massive increase. Once word gets out that these 2021 U.S.

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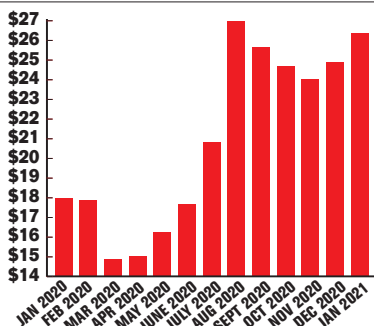
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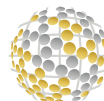
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Silver Trend Chart: Price per ounce based on monthly averages.

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Strategic Planting

Clever planting can create an aesthetically pleasing garden while providing organic structures that slow your home's resource consumption.

Arrange plants by their water requirements. Thirsty plants do well in sheltered areas, where they will lose less water through transpiration. Planting in groups also reduces how much you have to move the hose.

Create a windbreak. Evergreens can provide shade as well as windbreaks, which help reduce drafts in homes and cut down on evaporation from gardens.

Use native plants. Plants that grow naturally in your region provide a low-maintenance option for gardens. After all, they adapted naturally to your area.

Plant shade trees. Shading your house and especially its roof with trees can reduce indoor temperatures and the

need for air conditioning. The shade will help your outdoor space feel cooler, too.

Smart Watering

Having a garden that uses water efficiently doesn't mean you're confined to xeriscaping or hardscapes. Instead, use these tactics to make sure your water doesn't go to waste.

Use a trigger. If watering your garden with a hose, use a nozzle that has a trigger that allows you to turn the spray on and off to avoid spraying the ground between plants.

Time watering. Water early in the morning or in the evening to allow plants time to absorb the water. Watering in the heat leads to evaporation and waste.

Amend the soil. Healthy soil retains water better, so adding materials such as compost and organic matter like wood chips can help the ground stay moist.

Remove part of your lawn. As beautiful as it might be, that green part of your yard consumes a lot of resources. Removing it conserves water and frees up space for alternatives.

Let it drip. A drip system slowly emits water and keeps it close to the ground. Drip tape reduces evaporation and runoff.

Energy Conservation

Even outdoor spaces can consume resources such as electricity or fuel, but a couple of changes can keep utility costs down.

Use solar lights. These can be easily installed to illuminate gardens at night without having to rely on the electric grid.

Consider an electric mower. If you have a small lawn, an electric mower can be more efficient than a gas-powered mower, depending on the price of fuel.

Self-Care

Remember to conserve your personal energy when gardening, which can be physically strenuous.

Keep it close. Plant your garden close to the house and a water source to limit how far you have to haul a hose or watering can.

Scale smart. Keep your garden to a manageable size so you don't feel overwhelmed or overworked.

Lift light loads. If you must move heavy bags of mulch or soil, consider dividing the material into smaller, more manageable loads by using a wheelbarrow or garden cart.

Sit while you work. A kneeler seat or rolling garden chair can help you work near the ground.

Vary tasks. Avoid doing the same task so many times that it overstresses one part of your body.

Use ergonomic tools. Select garden tools that fit your hand and that have curves and padding. Wear gloves to protect against blisters and scrapes.

Take breaks. Gardening should be enjoyable, so take breaks to rest and enjoy the beauty of your garden. ■



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Stay Away From Scams That Promise Savings

AS INTEREST IN green energy programs grows, consumers are discovering that not every claim to energy efficiency is true.

Dishonest people are taking advantage of the movement's popularity to deceive others for their personal gain. Ploys include products that promise to work miracles, fake contractors who run away with customers' money, energy company impersonators and cybercrime.

Several bogus products on the market today claim to reduce power usage. One such product is sometimes described as a "power saver" or "power factor corrector" that plugs into an electrical outlet or is hard-wired into an electrical panel. The nefarious manufacturers of these products claim that electricity use is lower when something is plugged into it. These simply don't work. Also beware of any device that requires tampering with an electric meter, which is dangerous and illegal.

Phony contractors might use a made-up license number to sell products and services such as solar panels and installation, or offer energy efficiency repairs. Be sure to look into the legitimacy of a company by contacting the state licensing board and checking with the Better Business Bureau before signing any contracts or paying for any services.

Impostors posing as utility employees sometimes go door to door offering to do energy audits or make electricity repairs. They might try high-pressure tactics, make false promises or attempt to collect personal info. Be especially suspicious of pairs of workers: One might attempt to distract you while the other steals your valuables. Never let into your home anyone who claims to be with your electric cooperative without first checking with the co-op.

Phishing emails that appear to come from the U.S. Department of Energy might falsely promise a tax refund for green home improvements. Don't open the email or any attachment, and don't respond to any requests for information. The email could contain a computer virus or be an attempt to collect your personal information.

Remember, some of the best ways to save energy are simple behavioral changes—such as replacing incandescent lightbulbs with LEDs and using power strips—which don't require purchasing anything new or installing expensive equipment. ■

Stay Cool on Your Deck

BUILDING A DECK off the house might expand living space, but that outdoor area is not useful if it's too hot to enjoy. Consider these solutions to stay cool on your patio this summer:

Install a retractable awning or canopy on your house to shade your deck when the weather requires it.

Try a free-standing gazebo or umbrella, paying special attention to anchoring it so that it will stay put in windy conditions. Adding mosquito netting could increase the livability of the space during summer-time, when bugs are out.

Install a ceiling fan to permanent pergolas to provide a cooling breeze. Be sure to wire it safely or plug it into a ground-fault circuit interrupter outlet.

Lay out some light-colored area rugs to reflect the sun's harsh rays and create a soft pad for bare feet.

Surround the deck with cooling landscaping options, including shade trees and grass. ■



CHARLES SCHMIDT | ISTOCK.COM

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Utility Poles Are Not Bulletin Boards

A close-up photograph of a utility pole, showing its weathered, brown, and peeling bark. A person's feet, wearing dark, rugged work boots with thick treads, are visible on the pole, suggesting they are climbing or working on it. The background is a clear blue sky. The overall image serves as a visual metaphor for the text, which warns against using utility poles as bulletin boards for various items.

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Electric cooperative workers find all kinds of no-nos on utility poles such as yard sale signs, basketball hoops, deer stands, satellite dishes, lights and birdhouses.

These obstructions are dangerous for lineworkers. Unwelcome clutter on utility poles can compromise linemen's safety equipment, leaving them vulnerable to electrocution.

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Hill Country Empire

Charles Schreiner's legacy includes the YO Ranch and a university that bears his name

BY MARTHA DEERING • ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID DANZ

THE ROUGH TERRAIN of the Hill Country that drew ambitious ranchers in the 19th century now lures vacationers seeking spring-fed rivers and limestone bluffs. That scenic beauty belies the challenges faced by early stockmen who were new to Texas.

One of the ambitious early settlers was Charles Armand Schreiner, who established a store in 1869 and methodically built a sprawling operation that covered half a million acres with the fabled YO Ranch. His name also would define banking and mercantile businesses as well as the Kerrville-based university he helped found in 1923.

Today, the legendary YO lives on with the help of creative marketing, and throughout the Hill Country, stories of the Schreiner family and its influence abound.

Schreiner was born at Reichenstein Castle in Alsace-Lorraine, a picturesque region then part of Germany and now France. In 1852, Schreiner's father, Gustave Schreiner, emigrated with his wife and five children halfway around the world, to Indianola. Once on Texas soil, they walked across the prairie to San Antonio in the sweltering September heat.

In a tragic twist, Gustave died from a rattlesnake bite 18 days after the family arrived in San Antonio. Sixteen-year-old Charles enlisted in the Texas Rangers. "It was the only way I could earn a man's wages," he explained decades later. After 2½ years as a Ranger, Schreiner took up ranching south of Kerrville. After his mother's death in 1857, he built a cabin along Turtle Creek and opened a store, supplementing his income by providing wool and beef for the government.

Schreiner married in 1861 and shortly thereafter enlisted in the 3rd Texas Infantry to fight in the Civil War. He returned to Texas four years later, after the surrender at Appomattox, with five gold dollars in his pocket. To save his funds, he walked home from San Antonio rather than ride a stagecoach.

He found his ranch and herd in miserable shape and, after working to bring the operation back to profitability, decided a store would be more lucrative. Schreiner moved his family to Kerrville and opened another store with a partner on Christmas Eve 1869. Total sales the first day were \$2.50 in cash and a bit more on credit. After 10 years in business, Schreiner bought his partner's interest, and the

Schreiner Mercantile Company grew into one of the largest general stores in the Southwest.

Most ranching operations in Texas had, like Schreiner's, suffered during the war. Millions of longhorn cattle roamed freely and by local standards were nearly worthless. Not so at the Kansas railhead markets. Schreiner joined other Texas cattlemen in discovering they could earn cash by gathering cattle and driving them north. The Western Trail plowed right through Kerrville, and Schreiner's store raked in payments in Spanish gold doubloons worth \$16 each. Schreiner used an ax to cut coins into pieces so he could make change.

Soon cowboys began to hand their cash over to Schreiner for safekeeping. Each night he hid his customers' money along with his own in a box under the floor and moved a barrel of salt over the stash. Occasionally, thieves stole merchandise from the store, but none discovered the cache under the floor. The operation grew with the region, and Schreiner chartered a bank and appointed his son as cashier, a job L.A. Schreiner held until he was nearly 100 years old and the private bank had become a chartered national bank.

Elected captain of a home guard unit in Kerrville, Schreiner also served as a county and district clerk. He increased his holdings by acquiring land (paying from a penny to 50 cents an acre) and stocking it with cattle. Later he diversified into sheep and goats, and in 1880 he purchased the YO Ranch, most of which remained in his family for more than a century.

Kerrville Mayor Bill Blackburn acknowledges the accomplishments of Schreiner and his family. "There was little farmland in Kerr County," he says, "and that left ranching, which was not easy because the soil was not deep and [was] rocky."

Schreiner built great wealth from his enterprising, Blackburn says, but especially from wool and mohair production. Other Texas ranches enjoyed long-lasting success, but Schreiner's stands out for overcoming the merciless Hill Country landscape. ■



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Wounded— Then Rejected

The first casualty of the Texas Revolution, a free Black man, had to fight for his residency in the new republic

BY MICHAEL HURD

SAMUEL MCCULLOCH JR. was biracial but considered a free Black man when, as a soldier with the Texian army, he was wounded during the Battle of Goliad on October 9, 1835, and considered the first casualty of the Texas Revolution. A musket ball shattered his right shoulder, and despite his injury and service, the postwar Texas government ordered him and all other free Blacks to leave.

Then, in a series of conflicting legislative moves, things got confusing. Could he stay, or did he have to go?

McCulloch was born in 1810 in South Carolina. His father was white, and his mother was Black, but no other records

of her status exist. McCulloch Sr. moved his son and three daughters, all considered free, to Texas, where they settled near the Gulf Coast in what is now Jackson County in May 1835.

The Battle of Goliad was the second skirmish of the revolution, coming one week after the brief skirmish known as the Battle of Gonzales and just four days after McCulloch joined the Texian army as a private with the 50-man Matagorda Volunteer Company. When the force attacked a Mexican army camp, McCulloch was first to enter the fort and the lone soldier wounded. The injury left his shoulder permanently disabled.

After the war McCulloch's residency status quickly began to twist and turn. Initially, the republic's constitution, adopted in September 1836, prohibited citizenship for "Africans and the descendants of Africans and Indians" and required all free Blacks to apply to the Congress for permanent residence. McCulloch made the required application for himself and his sisters in 1837, recounting his military service and stating that he had been "deprived of the privileges of citizenship by reason of an unfortunate admixture of African blood."

On June 5, 1837, the republic passed a law that permitted free Blacks to keep their residency if they had been living in Texas before the Republic's Declaration of Independence on March 2, 1836.

With his petition still pending, McCulloch saw his residency status further imperiled on February 5, 1840. That's when an act was passed to prohibit the immigration of free Blacks and demand that all free Black residents vacate the republic within two years or be sold into slavery.

McCulloch filed a successful second petition, likely because of the Ashworth Act, passed December 12, 1840. This legislation provided that the Ashworth families, Black relatives in Jefferson County, could remain in Texas after influential whites intervened.

As a disabled veteran, McCulloch was eligible for a land grant and was awarded one league (4,428 acres) of land, two-thirds of which he chose to ranch and farm near Von Ormy.

Despite his land and his disability, McCulloch soldiered again, fighting in the battle of Plum Creek in 1840 against Comanches and serving as a spy during the Mexican invasion of San Antonio in 1842. He died in Von Ormy on November 2, 1893. ■

Tacos

Some of the most creative and complex flavors ever to meet a tortilla

BY MEGAN MYERS, FOOD EDITOR

This month, readers treat us to a variety of taco recipes, so naturally we crave salsa. We turn to Austin food advocate and community coordinator Héctor González, who has been sharing his recipes since moving from Mexico. "There are taquerías there that established their fame based on their salsas," González says. But, he says, you don't have to limit the versatile ingredient's use to a condiment—it is also the perfect base for cocktails. This salsa can easily be adapted to your tastes. Increase or decrease the jalapeño pepper or try a habanero if you want an extra kick.

Roasted Red Salsa

6 plum tomatoes

1 medium white onion, halved

3–5 cloves garlic

**1–2 hot peppers, such as jalapeños,
serranos or habaneros**

Fresh cilantro (optional)

Salt, to taste

COOK'S TIP You can turn this salsa into a michelada. Press $\frac{1}{4}$ cup salsa through a fine mesh strainer into a pint glass. Add 1 tablespoon lime juice and 1 teaspoon salt, or more to taste, then slowly pour in 12 ounces of Mexican lager. Cheers!

1. Roast the tomatoes, onion, garlic and peppers on the stovetop or under a broiler. Turn vegetables as needed, blackening all over. Keep an eye on the garlic and peppers, as they will roast faster than the tomatoes.

2. Add roasted vegetables, and cilantro if you like, to a blender or food processor and blend until smooth. A couple of pinches of salt will bring the salsa's brightness to the fore. Taste and adjust seasoning to your liking. You can serve this salsa warm, or chill until ready to serve.

MAKES ABOUT 3 CUPS

TCP WEB EXTRA Follow along with Megan Myers and her adventures in the kitchen at stetted.com, where she features a recipe for Butternut Squash Tacos With Black Beans.



Fajita Tacos With Chimichurri Sauce

KITTIELE POTTS
BOWIE-CASS EC

For her fajita tacos, Potts uses a zippy chimichurri sauce that pairs beautifully with sweet caramelized onions.

FILLING

- 32-ounce sirloin steak**
- ¼ cup red wine vinegar**
- ¼ cup olive oil**
- ¼ cup Worcestershire sauce**
- 1 tablespoon salt**
- 1 tablespoon pepper**
- 1 teaspoon cumin**
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder**
- ½ teaspoon onion powder**
- ½ teaspoon paprika**

CHIMICHURRI SAUCE

- 1 cup parsley**
- 1 cup cilantro**
- ½ cup olive oil**
- ½ red onion**
- 20 green pitted olives**
- 4 cloves garlic**
- 3 tablespoons red wine vinegar**
- 1 tablespoon capers**
- 1 teaspoon oregano**
- ¼ teaspoon red pepper flakes**
- ¼ teaspoon cumin**

CARAMELIZED ONIONS

- 4 onions**
- ¼ cup (½ stick) butter, melted**
- ⅓ cup olive oil**
- 1 tablespoon sugar**
- ¼ teaspoon salt**
- ⅛ teaspoon pepper**

TO SERVE

Tortillas

COOK'S TIP The sauce is best made in advance to allow flavors to meld.

\$500 WINNER

Grilled Garden Harvest Tacos

CHERYL SCHULMAN
FAYETTE EC



These vegetarian tacos pack a surprising amount of flavor into each bite, thanks to the crisp slaw and cool avocado crème. If you can't find ancho chile powder, substitute regular chili powder and a pinch of ground cayenne.

MAKES 6 TACOS

FILLING

- 3 large carrots**
- 2 medium zucchini**
- 1 large sweet potato**
- 2 tablespoons olive oil**
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin**
- 1 teaspoon ground ancho chile powder, or to taste**
- ½ teaspoon salt**
- 2 ears corn, shucked**

"BRING THE HEAT" SLAW

- 3 cups shredded green cabbage**
- ⅓ cup chopped cilantro**
- 1 small jalapeño pepper, chopped**
- ⅓ cup diced jicama**
- ½ cup chopped red bell pepper**
- ½ cup apple cider vinegar**
- 1 teaspoon salt**
- ½ teaspoon pepper**
- ½ teaspoon sugar**



AVOCADO CRÈME

- 1 large avocado**
- ½ cup Mexican crema**
- 2 teaspoons lime juice**

TO SERVE

- 12 corn tortillas**
- Crumbled cotija cheese**
- Pico de gallo**
- Lime wedges**

- 1. FILLING** Prepare grill to cook over medium-high heat.
- 2.** Peel carrots and cut in half lengthwise. Slice zucchini into strips ¼ inch thick. Peel sweet potato and dice into ¼-inch cubes. Toss all in olive oil, cumin, ancho chile powder and salt. Set aside.
- 3. SLAW** Mix cabbage, cilantro, jalapeño, jicama, bell pepper, vinegar, salt, pepper and sugar. Set aside.
- 4. CRÈME** Combine avocado, crema and lime juice in a blender and blend on low until smooth. Set aside.
- 5.** Place a sheet of foil on half of grill grates. Place carrots flat side down on foil along with sweet potato cubes. Place zucchini strips and corn directly on grill. Turn vegetables to char on all sides. Remove vegetables once they're well charred and tender all the way through, about 6 minutes total for the zucchini and 10 minutes for the carrots, corn and sweet potato. Let cool slightly, then slice zucchini and carrots into quarters and cut corn kernels off the cob.
- 6.** To assemble tacos, grill or warm the tortillas. Layer two tortillas, then top with grilled vegetables followed by slaw and avocado crème. Garnish with pico de gallo, cotija or lime juice.

TCP \$500 Recipe Contest

KIDS COOKING DUE MAR 10

Have your kids turned into sous-chefs? Share their kitchen creations with our readers. Enter at TexasCoopPower.com/contests by March 10.

CONTINUED >



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RECIPES CONTINUED

1. FILLING Place steak in a shallow baking dish. Combine vinegar, olive oil and Worcestershire sauce and pour over steak. Cover and refrigerate; let marinate at least 4 hours.

2. SAUCE Combine ingredients in a blender or food processor and pulse until ingredients are completely chopped but not liquefied. The sauce should be somewhat thick and chunky.

3. ONIONS Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Peel off the outer paper layer of the onions, leaving the ends on. Halve onions lengthwise from stem to root. Place the onions in a casserole dish cut-sides up. Combine melted butter, olive oil, sugar, salt and pepper. Drizzle onions generously with the mixture. Cover loosely with foil and bake 30 minutes. Flip onions over and bake an additional 25 minutes, or until onions are tender and caramelized.

4. When ready to cook steak, prepare grill for direct heat cooking. Combine salt, pepper, cumin, garlic powder, onion powder and paprika, and season steak on all sides. Grill to desired doneness, about 10 minutes per side for a medium sirloin. Let steak rest 5 minutes.

5. Slice steak thinly and layer on tortillas with caramelized onions and chimichurri sauce.

SERVES 8



Instant Pot Carnitas Tacos

MELALEE WINKLER
COSERV

These carnitas tacos are made in an Instant Pot for all of the flavor in half the time. Instead of frying, Winkler finishes the carnitas under the broiler to get the crispy edges carnitas are known for. If you have leftovers, save some of the cooking liquid for reheating.

6–7 pounds boneless pork butt shoulder

1 tablespoon salt

1 tablespoon dried Mexican oregano, crumbled

1 tablespoon smoked paprika

1 tablespoon cumin

1 teaspoon chipotle powder

½ teaspoon garlic powder

2 tablespoons olive oil

1 cup orange juice

¼ cup chicken stock

1 yellow onion, quartered

TO SERVE

Flour tortillas

Diced red onion

Sliced radishes

Chopped cilantro

Crumbled queso fresco

Lime wedges

COOK'S TIP If you don't have an Instant Pot, you can also cook this in a heavy, covered pot in the oven at 325 degrees for 3½ hours.

1. Cut the pork butt into six or seven chunks. Mix together the salt, oregano, paprika, cumin, and chipotle and garlic powders. Rub the pork with the spice mixture on all sides.

2. Set the Instant Pot to sauté setting high. Heat the oil in the pot and, working in batches, brown the pork on all sides. Remove the pork and deglaze the Instant Pot with the orange juice and chicken stock, scraping up the browned bits.

3. Place the quartered onion in the pot and turn off the Instant Pot. Place all of the pork on top of the onion. Put the lid on, making sure the valve is set to seal, and set the Instant Pot to pressure cook, high, 1 hour.

4. When the time is up, allow natural release for 15 minutes, then manual release. Remove pork, reserving some of the cooking liquid. Discard the onion.

5. Pull pork with two forks and spread on a baking sheet. Drizzle with a small amount of the cooking liquid and place under the broiler until the pork is slightly browned and crispy on the edges, 3–5 minutes. Serve with grilled flour tortillas, red onion, radish, cilantro, queso fresco and lime wedges.

SERVES 12

Stauer Collector's Series

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(see details)



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BLADE STUNNER

Beautifully made, magnificent to look at, this knife is a work of art at only \$99

It's not often you happen upon a blade smith who has gem cutting skills. In fact, you stand a better chance finding a needle in a haystack. But finding needles in haystacks is what we do best, so when we saw this master craftsman's handiwork, we made certain to procure some of these Southwestern masterpieces to complete our collection.

The stainless steel blade, bolster and pommel are exquisitely etched and would have looked great with a less ambitious handle. But the results of overachieving are stunning here. The turquoise-blue colored handle is ablaze with assorted stones like jasper, marble, sunstone, and coral that have been hand cut and inlaid in a Southwestern motif that conjures images of intricately beaded belts and moccasins.

Whether you collect blades, interesting stones, or are a lover of the great American Southwest, the **Sedona Knife** is more than cut out to do the job.

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COURTESY CHET GARNER

Where Artistry Congregates

Czech and German painted churches in Central Texas are sparkling shrines

BY CHET GARNER

A TOUR OF TEXAS back roads takes you past prosaic scenes such as pastures full of grazing cows, profiles of spinning windmills and rural churches quietly awaiting their Sunday congregations. For most of these outlying houses of worship, a simple exterior foreshadows a modest sanctuary. That expectation changes in Fayette and Lee counties, where, concealed within unassuming facades, you'll find Old World decorative glory inside the region's painted churches.

I started my own churchgoing road trip with an apricot kolach because that's what you do when visiting Texas Czech country. I was on a mission to visit the area's five painted churches that are hidden in plain sight within the Czech and German communities that dot the map. My first stop was Dubina.

I pulled into a dirt parking lot and shrugged at what appeared to be an ordinary white building known as Sts. Cyril and Methodius Church. As soon as I stepped inside, I was transported to a world of sacred traditions and intricate religious art. From floor to ceiling, the room dazzled in bright colors and inlaid metals adorning the altars and statues of saints. It was clear that the Czech immigrants who built this church in the late 1800s took great pride in their work and sought to recreate the traditions and artistry of their European homeland here in Texas.

I spent the entire day driving, relying on my GPS so I didn't miss a turn down an obscure road in Fayette or Lee counties. From St. Paul Lutheran in Serbin to St. John the Baptist Catholic Church in Ammannsville, each sanctuary had its own feel and history. In the ornately painted St. Mary Catholic Church in High Hill, known as the "Queen of the Painted Churches," the wooden columns looked just like marble. I felt transported to Europe without leaving Texas. ■

ABOVE Chet inside St. John the Baptist Catholic Church in Ammannsville.

TCP WEB EXTRA See Chet's video from the painted churches in Fayette County and check out his Texplorations on *The Daytripper* on PBS.

Know Before You Go

Some events may have been affected by COVID-19. Call or check an event's website for scheduling details.

MARCH

01

College Station [1-11] Territory: The Exhibition in a Box, (979) 458-0539, arch.tamu.edu/inside/services/wright-gallery

06

Bulverde [6, 13, 20, 27] Saturday Night Rodeo, (830) 980-2226, tejasrodeo.com

09

Houston Viano String Quartet, (713) 348-5400, chambermusichouston.org

11

Tyler [11-14] Texas Rose Spring Kickoff II Hunter/Jumper Horse Show, (903) 882-8696, texasrosehorsepark.com

12

Shiner [12-13] Pink Chandelier Market Barn Sale, (361) 798-0573, facebook.com/pinkchandeliermarket

McKinney [12-14] Third Monday Trade Days, (972) 562-5466, tmttd.com

13

Huntsville [13-14] Rusty Chippy Vintage Hippy & Garden Show, (936) 661-2545, huntsvilleantiqueshow.com

14

Dallas [14-June 20] Building on the Boulevard: Celebrating 20 Years of the Meadows's New Home, (214) 768-2516, meadowsmuseumdallas.org

Dallas [14-June 20] Fossils to Film: The Best of SMU's Collections, (214) 768-2516, meadowsmuseumdallas.org

15

Fredericksburg [15–20]
Spring Break at the Pioneer Museum, (830) 990-8441,
 pioneermuseum.net

16

Austin [16–20] **South by Southwest Online**,
 (512) 467-7979, sxsw.com

18

Brenham [18–21, 25–28]
The Absolute Brightness of Leonard Pelkey,
 (979) 830-8358,
 unitybrenham.org

19

Abilene [19–20] **Outlaws and Legends Music Fest**,
 (325) 660-8458,
 outlawsandlegends.com

Wichita Falls [19–20]
Cowboy True,
 (940) 767-2787,
 artscouncilwf.org/cowboy-true

Tyler [19–21] **United States Dog Agility Association Agility Trials**, (903) 882-8696,
 texasrosehorsepark.com

Palestine [19–April 4]
Texas Dogwood Trails Celebration, (903) 723-3014,
 www.texasdogwoodtrails.com

20

Corpus Christi Lecture: Kitchen Herbs,
 (361) 852-2100, stxbot.org

Irving Las Colinas Symphony Orchestra: Jonathan Jones, (972) 252-4800,
 lascolinassymphony.org

Luckenbach Mud Dauber Fest, (830) 997-3224,
 luckenbachtexas.com

Mesquite Eggcitement With the Bunny, (972) 216-6273,
 cityofmesquite.com/pard

MORE EVENTS >

TCP Submit Your Event

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

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Event Calendar

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Pick of the Month

Classic Car Stampede

Bellville, March 13
 (979) 865-3187
austincountycruisers.com

Austin County Cruisers is a small group of die-hard car enthusiasts who share a passion for the mixture of mechanics and art that creates a vehicle. Cars, trucks and motorcycles from 1976 and earlier will be on display.

MARCH EVENTS CONTINUED

Palestine Dogwood

Festival, (903) 729-6066,
palestinechamber.org/dogwoodfestival

Belton [20-21] A Sami Show, (512) 441-7133,
samishow.com

New Braunfels [20-21] Old Gruene Market Days,
 (830) 629-5077,
gruenemarketdays.com

21

Kerrville Celtic Angels Ireland, (830) 896-9393,
caillouxtheater.com

Belton [21, 28, April 11, 18, 25] Healthy Kids Running Series, (254) 340-4577,
healthykidsrunningseries.org

26

West [26-27] West, Central Texas Ceramic Expo & Handcrafted Items,
 (254) 716-5227,
westceramicshow.com

Burton [26-April 3] La Bahia Antique Show and Sale, (979) 289-2684,
labahiaantiques.com

27

Abilene Triple Concerto: Beethoven at 250,
 (325) 677-6170,
abilenephilharmonic.org

Burnet Hill Country Lawn & Garden Show,
 (512) 756-9396,
burnetcountyhighlandlakesmastergardener.org

Burton Texas Ranger Day,
 (979) 803-0393,
burtontexas.org

Sabinal [27-28] Wild Hog Festival and Craft Fair,
 (830) 486-8549,
sabinalwildhogfestival.com

San Antonio [27-May 9] Night of Artists,
 (210) 299-4499,
briscoemuseum.org/noa

APRIL

01

Levelland [1-3] American Business Club Pro Rodeo,
 (806) 777-1510,
abcrodeo.com

Karnack [1-24] Earth Day Flotilla, (903) 736-3063,
tinyurl.com/flotilla2021

Ennis [1-30] Bluebonnet Trails, (972) 878-4748,
bluebonnettrail.org

02

Jefferson [2-4] City-Wide Rummage Sale,
 (903) 665-2672,
jefferson-texas.com

03

Llano Fiddle Fest,
 (325) 247-5354,
facebook.com/llanofiddlefest

New Braunfels Jamestown Revival, (830) 964-3800,
whitewaterrocks.com

Palestine Easter Egg Express on the Texas State Railroad, (855) 632-7729,
texasstaterailroad.net

Diners

Diners sprinkled across the state offer cooking that tastes like home no matter where you travel. Here's what our members served up, and we're coming back for seconds!

GRACE FULTZ



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP

CHRIS MILLER
BLUEBONNET EC

A diner that Miller stumbled upon during a road trip on Route 66.

REAGAN MAZY
SAM HOUSTON EC

Sunset at Ranch Hand Cafe in Cleveland.

SHELLY BORGFELD
FITZPATRICK
PEDERNALES EC

"We spent our anniversary in the charming town of Blanco and had a delightful experience at the Chess Club."

SANDRA DRAKE
BLUEBONNET EC

Drake's grandson at Mama's Daughters' Diner.



Upcoming Contests

- DUE MAR 10 Night Life
- DUE APR 10 Portraits
- DUE MAY 10 Rust & Decay

Enter online at TexasCoopPower.com/contests.

TCP WEB EXTRA See Focus on Texas on our website for more photos from readers.



Few and Far

Young musicians find out just how much luck and money far West Texas requires

BY ELI WINTER
PHOTO BY WYATT MCSPADDEN

CAMERON KNOWLER AND I rang in Christmas next to a trailer in the Christmas Mountains. It was 2018, and we had just done a show at Terlingua's Starlight Theatre. For breakfast we'd eaten cowboy omelets with Catfish, a legendary river guide who punctuated slow bites with a groan—"Oh, merciful days!"

Later that night, toward the end of an 11-hour drive to Austin, we sat in an empty Kerrville IHOP for 45 minutes without being served and wolfed down fast food in a parking lot late at night.

That's how touring goes sometimes: No matter the crowd size, guarantee or delusions of grandeur, whether you play bars, basements or arenas, you spend a lot of time driving. Especially in far West Texas.

We were just 21 and 22 but already seasoned touring musicians. My music re-

volves around instrumentals for six-string, 12-string and Weissenborn acoustic guitars. Cameron's guitar and banjo playing draws influence from old-time and bluegrass musicians of the rural South.

This tour marked the first time we had performed together regularly, reinterpreting traditional folk songs and devising our own, and our Christmas Eve concert marked a halfway point, for which we'd traveled from Houston to the desert and back—a route we had looked forward to.

Growing up in Houston, I thought of far West Texas as a region of stark beauty and mystery. I listened to *StarDate* on the radio and gave a presentation on Fort Davis in fourth grade. It seemed impossibly far.

We were surprised to have made it. On the way out of Lubbock, we stopped by Buddy Holly's grave. Holly toured similarly, and his plane use began from a desire to avoid freezing on a tour bus between shows in the rural Midwest. Our concerts, perhaps like his, were small—a nonprofit record store in Dallas, a backyard barn in Austin and a hotel bar in Marfa—but they didn't need to be big. Cameron thought of it like Hollywood, less charmed by the \$10 cacao nibs we attempted to snack on during long drives or the person who asked him before a gig if we were together, then asked, "Are you any good?"

Each day we made enough money for the next, aware of the luck that permeated our travels: playing to a packed house in a repopulated ghost town the night before Christmas, the night after playing for an attentive handful on the outskirts of Austin.

At the homecoming show in Houston, we cracked jokes about our travels, and I thought back to Catfish, as I often do. These days had been merciful indeed. ■

TEXAS MINT

We are excited to announce the release of the 2021 Texas Silver Round – Revolution Series. This is the second release of a four-year series commemorating the battles of the Texas Revolution. Each Texas Silver Round is one troy ounce .9999 fine silver.

The obverse of the high-quality mint strike features Texas' iconic lone star in the foreground. The smooth engraving of the star is framed by a textured topographical outline of the state of Texas. "TEXAS" arches proudly over the top of the round's obverse in large capital letters, with "Precious Metals" presented inversely along the opposite side. The round's mintage year is engraved in the bottom left of the round, just southwest of what would be the Rio Grande bordering Texas and Mexico.

The reverse of the 2021 release displays a scene from the famous Battle of the Alamo. It depicts two Texian soldiers including the American icon, Davy Crockett, attempting to fend off Mexican soldiers attempting to breach the walls of the Alamo.



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BATTLE OF GONZALES

first in the series ● ● ● ● ●

The stunning 2020 Texas Silver Round depicts a scene from the Battle of Gonzales, with three Texian revolutionaries defending the famous Gonzales cannon, while brandishing the Come And Take It Flag.

The Texas Silver Round can be purchased in a monster box produced exclusively for the Texas Mint. Packaged in 20 protective tubes of 25 rounds each, the monster box holds 500 1-ounce Texas Silver Rounds. Built from durable cold-rolled steel and finished with a matte black powder coat, the monster box lid features an orange cutout of the state of Texas. Each sealed monster box is secured with a unique serial number and a holographic seal to ensure maximum product protection.

The Texas Silver Round is also available to purchase in a similarly designed and secured mini-monster box, which contains 10 protective tubes of 25 rounds each for a total of 250 silver rounds.



BATTLE OF THE ALAMO

second in the series ● ● ● ● ●

The events of this famous battle took place on the days of February 23rd - March 6th, 1836. At the end of a 13-day siege, President General Antonio López de Santa Anna and his Mexican troops reclaimed the Alamo Mission, killing the Texian and immigrant occupiers.



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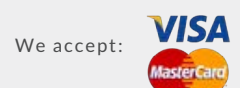
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