

GRANDMA IS A
TIKTOK STAR

HOLIDAY SIDE DISHES
FOR YOUR GATHERINGS

WHEN TEXAS REACHED
INTO WYOMING

Texas Coop Power

FOR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE MEMBERS

NOVEMBER 2022

Prize Catch

High school anglers
reel in championships
and scholarships



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November 2022



08

Grandma Goes Viral

She's a TikTok star whose down-home videos have amassed a global following.

*By Mark Wangrin
Photos by Scott Van Osdol*

12 Lakes' Allure

High school anglers get their hooks into lucrative tournament prizes and experiences.

*Story and photos
by Erich Schlegel*

ON THE COVER

Tyler Anderson of Lake Travis High School lands a bass during a tournament.
Photo by Erich Schlegel

ABOVE

Dawn Hodges has put her Bellville kitchen on the social media landscape.
Photo by Scott Van Osdol

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Over the Moon

WANT TO SEE a total lunar eclipse?

The moon will pass through the darkest part of the Earth's shadow November 8, a phenomenon that will be visible in Texas wherever skies are clear.

Check it out 2:01–7:58 a.m. It's the last chance to see a total lunar eclipse from Texas until March 14, 2025.



Edible Edifice

The Traditions Club near Texas A&M University holds the world record for the largest gingerbread house, built in November 2013 in Bryan.

The brown gingerbread bricks lacquered in frosting required 1,800 pounds of butter, 7,200 eggs, 7,200 pounds of flour and nearly 3,000 pounds of brown sugar.

All told, the house stacked up to be 60 feet long, 42 feet wide and 10 feet tall. Oh, and it contained nearly 36 million calories.

FINISH THIS SENTENCE IT'S BEEN SO LONG SINCE I ...

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.

Below are some of the responses to our September prompt: **Rural life is ...**

Seeing the dust rise a mile away and knowing you better get the laundry off the line and folded before mother pulls into the driveway.

BARBARA TWEED
TRI-COUNTY EC
FORT WORTH

Seeing more tractors go by your house than cars.

JOHN AND SHERRIE MOORE
BLUEBONNET EC
PAIGE

When you see every star in the sky and you can hear every sound that nothing makes.

COREY JACOB
PEDERNALES EC
DRIPPING SPRINGS

Knowing and helping your neighbor even though he's acres away.

ROBERT LANKFORD
HOUSTON COUNTY EC
APPLE SPRINGS

Far from Walmart.

ANGEL GORKA
CECA
MAY

Visit our website to see more responses.

75 Years of Insight

Meet the Press, the longest-running program on American TV, first aired November 6, 1947.

Dig This

NOVEMBER 4 is Arbor Day in Texas.

Your electric cooperative wants to keep you safe and your power on, reminding you that regardless of where you're planting, never dig without first calling 811 to locate underground utilities.



Landmark Election

Edith Wilmans became the first woman elected to the Texas Legislature when Dallas County voters chose her 100 years ago this month—November 7, 1922.

She served one term in the House and then ran unsuccessfully for governor.

Make sure to cast your vote on Election Day, November 8.



S-U-R-R-E-A-L

That's how San Antonio teen Harini Logan, above, described winning the 2022 Scripps National Spelling Bee in June.

Surreal could also describe Texans' prowess at spelling. Three of the other 12 finalists call Texas home. And Logan joins six other Texans who have won outright or shared titles since 2014.

That includes three from the state who were among the octo-champs in 2019—the only time eight contestants were co-champs.

Contests and More

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TAYLOR GALLERY

Roll Call

“In 1959 my bus driver, Mr. Wisely, gave me a Standing Liberty quarter when he saw me crying over losing my Big Chief tablet.”

DAN KING
LAMAR ELECTRIC
PARIS

Returning Home

I loved the article showcasing young people returning to the family farm as entrepreneurs [*Connecting With the Land*, September 2022]. I am in a similar circumstance with my rancher father in a San Saba nursing home.

We have been in the area for five-plus generations, but I have lived all over and find I, too, am a “weirdo.” Glad to see I am not alone.

I was also pleased to see the article highlight how one family set up a business inviting more diverse communities, including LGBTQ and people of color, to the area to camp.

Michelle Pollock
Hamilton County EC
Lometa

This is a delicious burger [Homemade Popper-Topped Burgers, August 2022]. And the topper can also be tweaked into a topper for something hot off the grill. Yum.

MELINDA WOOD
SASARAK
VIA FACEBOOK

Costly Payoff

Kirk Tidwell’s statement, “I only get paid once a year, and this is my payday right here,” shook me [*Prized Fibers*, July 2022]. I guess I have always known that farmers only get paid when crops are sold, but seeing it in writing made it so real. Farmers and others in agriculture should be the most appreciated workforce in this country.

Roberta McLaughlin
Heart of Texas EC
Lorena

Landry’s Followers

As I traveled around the country, I tried to schedule trips to coincide with a Cowboys game [*The Most Glorious Autumn*, August 2022]. I watched Coach Landry sign autographs in every hotel lobby for almost 30 minutes before he could make it to the elevator.

Bill “Cowboy” Lamza
San Bernard EC
Hempstead



JULIA ROBINSON

WRITE TO US
letters@TexasCoopPower.com

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Austin, TX 78701

Please include your electric co-op and town. Letters may be edited for clarity and length.

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The very best hunting knives possess a perfect balance of form and function. They're carefully constructed from fine materials, but also have that little something extra to connect the owner with nature. If you're on the hunt for a knife that combines impeccable craftsmanship with a sense of wonder, the **\$79 Huntsman Blade** is the trophy you're looking for.

The blade is full tang, meaning it doesn't stop at the handle but extends to the length of the grip for the ultimate in strength. The blade is made from 420 surgical steel, famed for its sharpness and its resistance to corrosion.

The handle is made from genuine natural bone, and features decorative wood spacers and a hand-carved motif of two overlapping feathers—a reminder for you to respect and connect with the natural world.

This fusion of substance and style can garner a high price tag out in the marketplace. In fact, we found full tang, stainless steel blades with bone handles in excess of \$2,000. Well, that won't cut it around here. We have mastered the hunt for the best deal, and in turn pass the spoils on to our customers.

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Watch Grandma Cook

She's a TikTok star whose down-home videos have amassed a global following

THE MOST UNLIKELY TIKTOK INFLUENCER

in Texas lives in an old country house behind a scattering of oak and hickory off Highway 36 about 5 miles north of Bellville, which is about the time it takes to drink a beer, judging by the number of empties Dawn Hodges usually finds beside the roadway in front of her farm.

Quick-witted and flashing a smile beneath her piercing blue eyes, this Houston native is 76 years old, not quite 5 feet tall, uses glasses sparingly and can hear a visitor knock on the back door from her kitchen at the other end of the house.

We mention the kitchen because that's how we got here. Dawn cooks—well. And she loves to share her recipes on a social network most septuagenarians are as likely to use as a skateboard.

"I don't have the big head," says a bemused Dawn. "I'm not feeding off it—but I am enjoying it. I never thought people would be so interested in watching a grandma cook."

And yet, here she is, a TikTok star who has posted 173 videos and boasts more than 200,000 followers; her three-minute video on how to make pickles has 1.9 million views. At a follower's request, she filmed a shorter video with her 17-year-old grandson, Caden, and his friend, sampling the pickles, crunching loudly and looking happy. It got 166,800 views. Heck, a TikTok of her riding a tractor got 42,400 hits.

If there's one thing about a grandmother being a TikTok star that makes sense, it's that Dawn loves to talk. A visitor could come with 30 minutes' worth of questions and leave



four hours later with a notebook full of scribbling and a belly full of her delicious chocolate zucchini cake. (Yes, her recipe is on TikTok.)

A question about her cooking might lead to a yarn about Willie, the ill-fated family pig. One about how many critters she has on her farm turns into a tale of Squeaky, a sturdy, good-tempered feral cat who likes to kill gophers and drag them above an open door in her garage, much to the dismay of her two dogs—and anyone standing there when the door comes down.

Outside the house, cobbled together from homes and parts of homes from the 1800s and filled with antiques of the same period, is the rest of the L-shaped, 95-acre

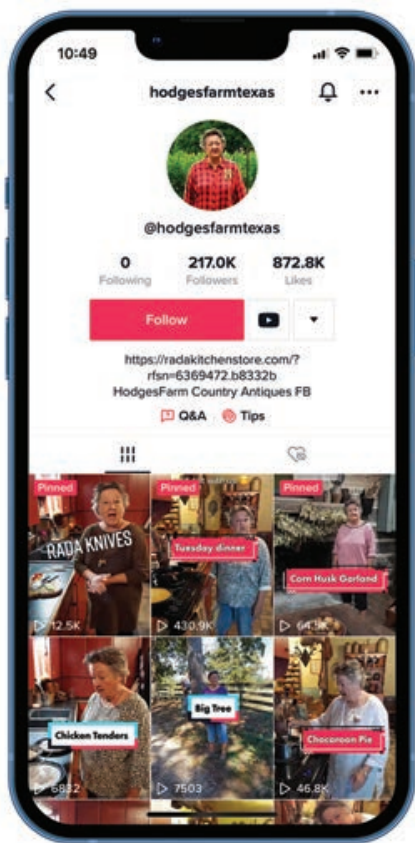
spread. There's the potting shed, a garden, a log cabin and an older structure surrounded by an overhanging porch that served as a commercial kitchen when Dawn and her late husband, Doug, gave a go at a business—a result of her fame as the Pimento Cheese Queen of Bellville, a story for another day—but now houses antiques and a refrigerator she stocks with farm eggs that neighbors can stop by and pick up on the honor system. Out back is the barn, a chicken coop, pasture, pond and the home of her daughter, Amy Owens.

Amy sparked Dawn's TikTok adventure because she wanted others to enjoy her mom's prowess in the kitchen.

"Well, I've always wanted to do that," Amy says, "because she's really good at telling people what to do. Anybody will tell you that."

And Dawn could always cook. Anybody will tell you that, too.

OPPOSITE Dawn Hodges serves up a plate of fresh-baked oatmeal chocolate chip cookies.
ABOVE Hamburger steak, as TikTok viewers see it come together.



FROM LEFT Millions of viewers like seeing what Hodges is up to in her kitchen. Grandson Caden Owens shows the simplicity of producing a TikTok video. “I never thought people would be so interested in watching a grandma cook,” Hodges says.

In October 2020, Doug passed away. He spent 31 years as an office and then business manager at San Bernard Electric Cooperative before retiring in 2005, and he slowly succumbed to dementia. “It was the worst time of my life,” Dawn says.

Looking to lift her mother’s spirits, Amy suggested producing videos for YouTube and later Facebook. Dawn admits the videos were long and unfocused, but it was valuable experience.

One evening about a year ago, Amy, Caden and Dawn were eating supper when Caden said, “You should put them on TikTok. That’s where the videos go crazy.”

So they posted a blackberry custard pie video, and it has since gotten over 54,000 views. “And we’re like, whoa,” Amy recalls.

Her fame took off from there, with Dawn getting to share her passion with strangers all over the world.

“I don’t care whether you believe it or not, but God puts stuff on your heart,” she says. For her, that has almost always been cooking.

As a child, Dawn spent summers on her Aunt Mary’s farm. Mary was a superb cook, and Dawn was inspired. Dawn’s mom “cooked because she had to,” so Dawn became the self-

taught family chef-in-residence.

Enter TikTok, where creators can make short videos, ranging from a few seconds to up to 10 minutes, often set to music and modified by filters. It skews young—almost half its users are under 25.

After making its international debut four years ago, TikTok has captured short attention spans among Americans. The platform boasts 3.5 billion mobile app downloads worldwide. It’s a popular platform for businesses, marketing and entertainers trying to make it big and people who create memes, attempt unusual challenges and generally try to go viral.

Dale Blasingame hates the expression. “I think marketers use it too much,” says the assistant professor of practice in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at Texas State University, where he specializes in social media. “They promise everything will go viral. If you’re producing consistently good content, you have a much greater chance of something finally hitting than if you’re doing nothing but trying to go viral all the time.”

Which brings us back to Dawn. Blasingame can see why she’s successful.

She looks different from many TikTok performers, he says. She’s genuine, displaying a rare comfort level with the platform, unlike many her age. Her videos have solid production value (“Just me and my fancy Samsung phone,” Amy says), aren’t overproduced and are clear, simple and easy to understand.

And she’s typecast for her role.

“When you stop to think about who you trust with cooking



tips, she kind of fits the exact bill, right?" Blasingame says. "Especially when you think about the typical TikTok user, who's probably between 15 and 30. She's Grandmother's age."

Not much is known about the algorithm TikTok uses, but one thing that's obvious, Blasingame says, is that it's equal opportunity.

"The greatest aspect of TikTok's algorithm is that you don't already need to be a celebrity, a superstar or a big name or have a big following to become a shining star on TikTok," he says. "Unlike Facebook, Twitter or Instagram, it's the one platform where anyone, literally anyone, can produce one piece of content that can catapult them to tens of thousands, even a million, followers."

That's not lost on Dawn, who ponders the ridiculousness of becoming a TikTok influencer.

"This blows my mind," she says, shaking her head. "I thought TikTok was just a bunch of kids jumping around and acting crazy."

She has also become aware of the flip side of TikTok fame—the trolls. Commenters will rag on her for using Velveeta instead of traditional cheese, for mentioning God a lot or any one of a dozen or more things.

"I had to almost ban a troll last night for just being tacky

"This blows my mind. I thought TikTok was just a bunch of kids jumping around and acting crazy."

because Mom used a packet of gravy on her hamburger steak instead of making it homemade," Amy says.

Dawn has her go-to reply for those instances: "I just respond with a heart emoji."

The rest of her followers bring her joy. She hears from fans in Finland, Mexico, Canada, Germany and France, to name a few, and some ask for recipe substitutes when they can't find some of the ingredients she grows in her spacious garden. And then there's the Corpus Christi artist who created an oil painting of Dawn in 80 minutes, recorded a time-lapse video of the process and sent the TikTok to her.

She's got a new fan, too. Blasingame, who became a vegetarian in May, still is intrigued by Dawn's videos. There are the biscuits and sweet potato casserole, of course, but there are also memories of his own mother, who passed away in 2021.

"She kind of even looks like my mom a bit; they have a very similar hairdo," he says sweetly. "When I watched her videos, that was the first thing that popped into my mind. My mom was a great cook."

"I wish I had videos like this preserved in time, you know, to try to remember all of her amazing recipes."

Thanks to TikTok and Dawn Hodges, he kind of already does. ■



Lakes' Allure

High school anglers
get their hooks
into lucrative
tournament prizes
and experiences

How about a big fish tale?

Within the first few casts at the 6 a.m. start of one of the biggest Texas high school fishing tournaments this year, Hunter Boren and Joe Fleming hooked the biggest catches of the day—within seconds of each other. Captain and boat driver Mike Boren had to scramble to figure out which fish to net first.

“Mine weighed 7.95 pounds, and seconds later Joe caught his that weighed 7.6 pounds,” Hunter Boren says. “Those first few minutes were insane madness.”

With those fish, the Pearland High School seniors won the Texas High School Bass Association’s Angler of the Year tournament on Lake Conroe in June. Three weeks earlier, the team scored nearly the same quick hits to finish seventh in the THSBA State Championship on Belton Lake in Temple.

On the first day of the state championship—within minutes of the sunrise start—Fleming caught the first and biggest fish of that day. The 5.81-pound bass jumped once, then Fleming quickly wrangled it into the net, pumped his fist and high-fived Hunter Boren.

The Angler of the Year event is the final tournament in the THSBA circuit, which includes more than 50 tournaments. According to Matt Tolnay, who heads operations for the series, more than 3,100 anglers from 300 Texas schools compete for more than a half-million dollars in scholarships.

Boren and Fleming each won \$3,000 scholarships and \$1,000 gift cards from Academy Sports + Outdoors for winning Angler of the Year. Because THSBA isn’t part of the state’s University Interscholastic League, it can award prizes and scholarships.

The THSBA is the largest fishing circuit for high school anglers, but there are several smaller series, including Deep East Texas High School Fishing, based at the Sam Rayburn



OPPOSITE Early positioning—4 a.m.—helped Joe Fleming, left, and Hunter Boren land 30 pounds of bass and first-place trophies.
ABOVE Boat captain Mike Boren prepares to net one of Fleming’s bass.

Reservoir; the Central Texas High School Tournament Trail; and Texas B.A.S.S. Nation, run by Bassmaster.

On THSBA tournament days, boat ramps are busy with teams backing their crafts into a lake in the dark well before dawn, their glowing red and green navigation lights reflecting on the water. The tournament organizer gathers the teams to announce the rules and time for weigh-in.

Then, as dawn’s colors creep into the sky, anglers stand on their bows as the national anthem is played over a loudspeaker. When the starting horn goes off, teams zoom off to their first fishing spots, which they had identified in their preparation for the day. Tournaments are typically won in the first hour of fishing.

The rules are similar at most tournaments: one or two anglers per boat, driven by a registered adult “captain” (usually a parent). One- and two-day tournaments will usually start at 6 a.m., with weigh-in starting mid-afternoon. Anglers keep fish in live wells in their boats, then transfer them into oxygenated water troughs using a perforated bag for weigh-in. The heaviest bag of fish wins. The fish are then released back into the lake.

Most tournaments hold a practice fishing day before the competition begins, offering crucial preparation for competitors learning a new lake. Experienced anglers will know the fish patterns for that time of year—a serious advantage. Another way to get a leg up: Rise early on tournament day.

“In the Angler of the Year tournament, we were in our spot just after 4 a.m. and waited there to hold that spot until we could start fishing at 6 a.m.,” Hunter Boren says. “Fishing tournaments is competitive, but after weigh-in, it gives you the opportunity to walk around and meet new people from around the state.”

More than 3,100 anglers from 300 Texas schools compete for more than a half-million dollars in scholarships.

Mark Hooker, coach for the high school fishing teams from Montgomery, north of Houston, calls his program the most decorated in the state. “This year we have 92 anglers and are very competitive within our own team,” he says.

That competitive spirit led one of his teams to a historic national championship.

Although most high school anglers are boys, more and more girls are getting out on lakes. Montgomery anglers Fallon Clepper and Wyatt Ford, students at Lake Creek High School and members of MidSouth Electric Cooperative, won the 2022 High School Bass Fishing National Championship—the top tournament in the U.S. for high schoolers—in June at Pickwick Lake near Florence, Alabama.

The team spent 11 days practicing at the lake, researching fish patterns and water levels. Their hard work paid off, and Clepper became the first female national champion. “We definitely had our game on,” says Clepper, who split the \$10,000 cash prize with Ford. “My parents and grandparents were jumping up and down and cheering at the weigh-in.”

There’s big money to be made in professional bass fishing. But these days, there’s another route for turning passion for the sport into a career.

Tyler Anderson founded the Lake Travis High School fishing team when he was a sophomore, finishing fourth at state his senior year, in 2015. When he got to Texas A&M University, he joined the school’s fishing team and started expanding a YouTube channel he started back in 2013. Nine years, 782 videos and a quarter-million subscribers later, Tyler’s Reel Fishing boasts more than 32 million views, and Anderson is able to make a living off his content and sponsorships.

“I’m pulling my new 2022 FXR21 Skeeter bass boat with a Yamaha 250-horsepower engine and Native Slayer 10 kayak on my truck roof rack—all sponsors of mine,” Ander-

son says over the phone as he drives to Michigan to film smallmouth bass fishing. “I get paid by them and from YouTube ads.”

Anderson, a Pedernales Electric Cooperative member, helps pro anglers Alton Jones and Alton Jones Jr. of Lorena, outside Waco, with their video content.

“I enjoy being outdoors with friends and family, making memories,” Anderson says. “As soon as I realized I could make a living fishing, I compared that to my friends’ jobs and realized that I could make a career out of my passion if I worked as hard as I could.” ■

ABOVE Wyatt Ford, left, and Fallon Clepper teamed up to win the 2022 High School Bass Fishing National Championship, making Clepper the first girl to do so.



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Holiday Entertaining Safety Checklists

AS THANKSGIVING and Christmas approach, use these tips to ensure that your home is ready for festive activities.

Fire Safety

- ▶ Test your smoke alarms monthly and make sure your house is protected by an adequate number of working alarms. Smoke alarms should be installed in each bedroom, outside each sleeping area and on every level of your home.
- ▶ Share your fire escape plan, including the location of your outside meeting place, with any overnight guests. Everyone should know at least two ways out of each room in your home.
- ▶ Keep halls, stairs and doorways properly illuminated and free of clutter and other objects that could hinder an escape during a fire emergency.
- ▶ Consider having older guests or those with mobility issues sleep on the ground floor.

Decorating Safety

- ▶ Avoid overloading electrical outlets, which can overheat and cause a fire.
- ▶ Do not place extension cords where they could be tripping hazards.
- ▶ Do not run extension cords under rugs or furniture.

- ▶ Keep decorations at least 3 feet away from heat sources, including space heaters and fireplaces.
- ▶ Keep young visitors in mind: Place cords, breakables, candles and other potentially dangerous items out of children's reach.
- ▶ Turn off and unplug decorations before leaving home or going to sleep.
- ▶ Use only weatherproof electrical devices for outside activities. Protect outdoor electrical devices from moisture.
- ▶ Make sure live Christmas trees are watered daily.

Heating Equipment Safety

- ▶ Have your heating system inspected annually by a licensed, qualified professional.
- ▶ Use space heaters properly and safely. Keep them out of high-traffic areas and at least 3 feet from anything that can burn.
- ▶ Do not leave a space heater running unattended. Turn off space heaters and unplug them when you leave the room or go to sleep.
- ▶ Never leave an open flame, including a fireplace, unattended. ■

10 Bad Energy Habits To Break

SOME HABITS ARE so ingrained that we don't even realize we should break them. When it comes to wasting energy, here are 10 no-brainers from the Alliance to Save Energy that could save energy and money on your electric bill.

1. Leaving the lights on in an empty room. Turning them off when you leave a room will save energy and help your lightbulbs last longer.
2. Burning old incandescent lightbulbs. LEDs are safer, more efficient and longer-lasting.
3. Leaving electronics plugged in when you're not using them. Plug your TVs, computers and phone chargers into power strips that make it easy to turn off multiple appliances at once.
4. Running an extra freezer that's empty. Unless you really need it for overflow from your main refrigerator or freezer, unplug it.
5. Holding the refrigerator door open while you decide what you want out of it. Staring into the fridge wastes an average of 7% of the energy the appliance uses. Decide what you want to eat or drink before opening the door.
6. Running the dishwasher when it's not full.
7. Choosing hot water for washing clothes. Unless your clothes are soiled with oil or grease, switch to cold water, which will get them plenty clean.
8. Setting the water heater temperature too high. The Department of Energy recommends 120 degrees.
9. Keeping the thermostat too high in winter and too low in summer—even when the house is empty. A programmable thermostat will automatically adjust the temperature when everyone leaves the house, returns home, goes to bed and wakes up. Just set the times and let the thermostat "remember" them.
10. Forgetting to change the air filters in your heating system. Filters trap dust, pet hair and other airborne particles. Once they're clogged, your heater has to work harder. ■



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Check Your Washing Machine Hoses

FEW HOME MISHAPS are as costly as the failure of a washing machine hose.

Hose failures cause millions of dollars in damages to homes in the U.S. and Canada each year, according to State Farm Insurance.

Take the time to inspect your washing machine hoses, and replace them if necessary. A new set costs about \$20 and can save you a lot more if the investment prevents a flood in your laundry room.

Some tips:

- ▶ When replacing hoses, straighten them out so they're free of kinks and tight bends.
- ▶ Leave at least 4 inches between the water connection and the back of the washing machine. This will reduce the chance that the hose could kink.
- ▶ Check hoses regularly, and replace them every three to five years to keep them in good working order.
- ▶ Check hose connections to make sure they're secure, including the drain hose.
- ▶ Don't leave the washing machine running while you're asleep or out of the house.
- ▶ Make sure you have ground-fault circuit interrupters anywhere water could come into contact with electricity, including laundry rooms. ■



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Pack Your Emergency Kit

A collage of emergency kit items. In the foreground, a yellow flashlight with a black handle stands vertically. To its right, a clipboard with a black clip holds a white sheet of paper titled 'EMERGENCY' in large, bold, black letters. Below the title, the text 'Section 1: Emergency' is visible, followed by a checklist with two items, each preceded by a square checkbox. The first item is 'Water' and the second is partially visible. In the background, there are several white plastic containers with silver metal lids. At the bottom, several black AA batteries are visible, along with a blue first aid kit.

Have you taken steps to prepare for severe storms before they strike? Here are some important items to include in your emergency kit:

First-aid kit

Cash (banks and ATMs may be unavailable)

Battery-operated radio, flashlight and extra batteries

Important documents and records, photo IDs, proof of residence

Three-day supply of non-perishable food and three gallons of bottled water per person

Fire extinguisher

Blankets, sleeping bags and extra clothing

Prescription medications, copies of prescriptions, hearing aids, eyeglasses and other special medical items

Toilet paper, cleaning supplies, duct tape, tarp, rope

Can opener, knife, tools

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A Mighty Bulwark

LBJ made more prosperity possible by bringing dams to his beloved Hill Country

EXCERPT BY NEAL SPELCE

FOR MANY YEARS, outsiders had no idea that Austin and the Hill Country were hidden gems deep in the heart of Texas. Wasn't the Lone Star State all about cowboys, sagebrush, and rattlesnakes—the John Wayne Western movie image? People elsewhere couldn't imagine bountiful lakes and rolling hills covered in green woodlands anywhere in Texas.

But Lyndon Johnson grew up surrounded by those woods and grassy farmland, and that's where he felt at home. Soon after winning the seat in the sprawling 10th U.S. Congressional District of Texas in 1937, his first elected office, he made it a priority to support President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal programs and bring hydroelectricity and power lines to rural Central Texas.

I had met LBJ historian Doris Kearns Goodwin on several occasions, and in her book *Leadership: In Turbulent Times*, she nailed what I heard LBJ say many times about “how he had brought electric power to the Hill Country, and how electricity had changed the daily lives of thousands of farm families, letting them enjoy such modern conveniences as electric lights, refrigerators, and washing machines for the first time.”

Neal Spelce meets with John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson in Hyannis Port, Massachusetts, during presidential campaign planning July 30, 1960.

As a young congressman, Lyndon Johnson worked behind the scenes to secure federal funding to complete four hydroelectric dams in the chain of Highland Lakes that stretches for 85 miles from Austin to the northwest. His most important project was what is now Mansfield Dam. Lake Travis, a reservoir formed by the dam, provides drinking water for more than a million people in the Austin area. The lake is also a scenic recreation area with expensive shoreline homes and restaurants overlooking the water. But Mansfield Dam's essential function is to control a sometimes raging Colorado River that for decades had flooded the capital city and smaller communities downriver.

It's hard to believe now, but a study from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers indicated that between 1900 and 1913, 17 floods had caused \$61.4 million in property damage and claimed 61 lives. That's a lot of damage in century-ago dollars and casualties. There are dramatic photographs of houses drifting through Austin's downtown floodwaters in the old days.

In his remarks at the dedication of Buchanan Dam on October 16, 1937, Johnson said, "Today we are gathered here before this magnificent structure, a mighty bulwark against the blind and raging forces of nature, better to make it do our will."

Less than a year later, after a great flood in July 1938, LBJ addressed a mass rally in Austin to reassure his constituents: "Yes, we are going to have four dams. They are going to hold back floodwater and they are going to pay for themselves with some electric power which doesn't have to run through the cash register of a New York power and light company before it gets to our lamps. ... We are going to keep building these dams in a business way. When we store up floodwaters, we are going to release them through hydroelectric turbines and we are going to sell the electricity ... to the people. It will be the people's electricity, and the people are going to get it at cost—for a small fraction of what they have been paying the power monopoly for 20 years."

My family and I personally benefited from the creation of those lakes. We bought a small condo on Lake Travis and a boat, and we all enjoyed water skiing and family outings thanks to LBJ's vision.

At the same time that LBJ was firming up the physical and economic infrastructure of his beloved homeland, the University of Texas was playing a leadership role in the emergence of technology research in the Austin area and in supporting the cultural and artistic ambience of "Athens on the Colorado."

At the end of World War II, a couple of UT engineering professors negotiating on behalf of their university, C. Read Granberry and J. Neils Thompson, leased an old magnesium plant on 400 acres of prairie land north of the city, primarily to conduct military research and testing. In 1949, Senator Lyndon Johnson helped UT purchase the land from the federal government. There he was again, now a U.S. senator and a forceful advocate for his Texas constituents, securing land for what would first be called the Balcones Research Center and later the J. J. Pickle Research Campus. It was the first step in launching the University of Texas at Austin on its journey to become one of the leading research universities in America.

LBJ loved the University of Texas, even though he'd graduated from Southwest Texas State Teachers College (now Texas State University) in San Marcos, 30 miles to the south. But his wife, Claudia—Lady Bird—earned two bachelor's degrees (history and journalism) from UT, and the couple shared a strong lifelong bond with the institution. At his commencement address at UT in 1964, the president invoked the university's school spirit song, *The Eyes of Texas*: "A few nights ago in Washington, many thousands of people, among them leaders from all parts of this great land, rose from their seats with me as the band played *The Eyes of Texas Are Upon You*. Such a moment was full of pride for any Texan, but tonight it is not just the eyes of Texas which watch you—the eyes of the nation, the eyes of millions in faraway lands, the eyes of all who love liberty are upon you. You cannot get away. Do not think you can escape them until you have brought us to the early morn of a nation without rancor and a world without fear."

It was a rousing, powerful speech in which he challenged a new generation of young Texans to be worthy of their heritage "in a booming state, in a bountiful land," and to join him in building a Great Society. "The choice is yours," he told the young graduates. "The power to shape the future is in your hands, the path is clear. It is the path of understanding and the path of unity." ■

Austin journalist Neal Spelce chronicled his memories of Lyndon B. Johnson and his own career in the news media in *With the Bark Off: A Journalist's Memories of LBJ and a Life in the News Media* (Tower Books, 2021).

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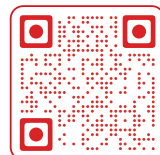
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A group of diverse people, including adults and children, are gathered around a picnic table in a wooded area, smiling and eating. A green tent is visible in the background.



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Holiday Sides

Tasty servings that just might take center stage

BY MEGAN MYERS, FOOD EDITOR

During the holidays, I gravitate toward the side dishes over any turkey or ham. Rolls are always a must at my house, and these Cheesy Ranch Rolls have become a family favorite. They're wonderfully soft with a zesty flavor, and any leftovers are perfect for sandwiches the next day. For a larger crowd, simply double the recipe.



Cheesy Ranch Rolls

2 cups flour, divided use, plus more as needed
2 tablespoons sugar
2 tablespoons (1 packet) ranch seasoning
2¼ teaspoons (1 packet) instant yeast
½ teaspoon salt
¾ cup milk
2 tablespoons (¼ stick) butter, plus more for topping
1 cup shredded Gouda or cheddar cheese

1. In a bowl, combine 1 cup flour, sugar, ranch seasoning, yeast and salt.

2. In a microwave-safe bowl or liquid measuring cup, combine milk and butter. Microwave in 15-second increments until milk is warm to the touch but not hot. Butter does not need to completely melt; it will melt as you mix the dough.

3. Pour milk and butter into dry ingredients and mix well to combine. Add ¼ cup flour and shredded cheese and mix well. Stir in remaining flour in increments, just until dough forms into a ball. Scoop onto a lightly floured surface and knead dough 6–8 minutes, until smooth and springy, adding flour as needed to prevent sticking. Shape into a ball, cover with a towel and let rest 10 minutes.

4. Cut dough into 12 pieces and roll each piece into a ball, then place in a greased square baking dish. Cover again and let rise 30 minutes. Meanwhile, preheat oven to 375 degrees.

5. Once rolls have risen, bake 20–25 minutes, until golden brown. Let cool slightly, then brush with melted butter and serve.

SERVES 12

TCP Follow along with Megan Myers and her adventures in the kitchen at stetted.com, where she features a recipe for Brussels Sprouts With Walnuts and Cranberries.



Praline Sweet Potatoes

LANELL MCDANIEL
SAM HOUSTON EC

This easy sweet potato dish has a wonderfully crunchy crumble topping. It's equally at home served as a side or dessert. You'll need 2–3 pounds of sweet potatoes. Excess potatoes can be used to make sweet potato waffles or pancakes.

POTATOES

- 3 cups cooked, mashed sweet potatoes**
- 1 cup brown sugar**
- 2 eggs, beaten**
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract**
- ½ cup milk**
- ½ cup (1 stick) melted butter**

TOPPING

- 1 cup chopped pecans**
- ½ cup brown sugar**
- ⅓ cup flour**
- ⅓ cup (¾ stick) melted butter**

1. POTATOES Preheat oven to 350 degrees and butter a 9-by-13-inch baking dish. In a large bowl, combine sweet potatoes with brown sugar, eggs, vanilla, milk and butter. Pour into prepared dish.

2. TOPPING In small bowl, combine pecans, brown sugar and flour. Stir in melted butter with a fork until a crumble forms. Scatter evenly over the top of the sweet potatoes.

3. Bake 30–40 minutes, until topping is golden brown and crunchy.

SERVES 8

[MORE RECIPES >](#)

\$500 WINNER

Caramelized Onion Potato Medley Gratin

MARIAN EVONIUK
PEDERNALES EC



Potato fans, this one is for you! With three kinds of potatoes, caramelized onions and a pop of dill, Evoniuk's gratin will have you reaching for seconds and thirds.

SERVES 8–12



- 2 tablespoons (¼ stick) unsalted butter**
- 2 large sweet onions, peeled and sliced**
- ⅓ teaspoon pepper**
- 1½ teaspoons salt, divided use**
- 2 large cloves garlic, minced**
- 3 tablespoons chopped fresh dill**
- 2¼ cups heavy cream, divided use**
- 1 pound Yukon gold potatoes, peeled and thinly sliced**
- 1 pound sweet potatoes, peeled and thinly sliced**
- 1 pound red potatoes, peeled and thinly sliced**
- 2½ cups shredded Gruyere cheese, divided use**
- 1 green onion, chopped, or 2 tablespoons chopped fresh chives**

1. Set a 12-inch nonstick skillet over medium heat and add butter, onion, pepper and 1 teaspoon salt, and cover. Cook 25–30 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the onions are lightly caramelized. Add garlic and dill and cook uncovered 1 minute more.

2. Pour in 2 cups heavy cream and bring to a boil, then reduce heat to medium-low and simmer 3–4 minutes, stirring, until mixture is slightly thickened. Remove from heat and set aside.

3. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Coat a 9-by-13-inch baking dish with butter and set aside.

4. In a large mixing bowl, combine potatoes, remaining ½ teaspoon salt and 2 cups Gruyere. Pour in creamed onions and mix well, then pour into the prepared baking dish. Combine remaining ¼ cup cream and ½ cup Gruyere in a small bowl and spread over the top of the potatoes.

5. Cover with foil and bake 45 minutes, then uncover and bake until golden brown and bubbly, 30–45 minutes. Remove from oven and let stand 10 minutes, then garnish with chopped onion or chives and serve.

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Sweet Sour Red Cabbage

NANCY FILER
COSERV

Filer's family has been serving this dish during the holidays for nearly 100 years, and it's easy to see why. Tangy and lightly sweet, it goes well with any of your favorite main dishes.

1 head red cabbage, about 1½ pounds
4 slices bacon, diced
½ cup packed brown sugar

2 tablespoons flour
½ cup water
¼ cup white vinegar
1 teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon pepper

1. Shred cabbage and measure 5 cups. Boil a large pot of water and add cabbage; bring back to boil and boil 5 minutes. Drain, transfer to a mixing bowl and set aside.
2. In a large sauté pan, fry diced bacon over medium heat until crisp. Remove and drain on paper towels.
3. Discard all but 1 tablespoon bacon drippings. Return pan to medium heat and whisk in brown sugar and flour, taking care to break up any lumps. Whisk in water, vinegar, salt and pepper. Cook, stirring often, until the mixture thickens, about 5 minutes.
4. Add the bacon and sauce to the cabbage, stirring gently to combine. Garnish with extra fried bacon if you like.

SERVES 6-8

Planning Makes Perfect

BY MEGAN MYERS

Wondering how much to serve at your next gathering? Use these guidelines when choosing dishes for the big meal.

Meat: 6 ounces per person (not including bones).

Appetizers: 6 pieces per person.

Potatoes: ½ cup per person.

Stuffing and casseroles: ½ cup per person.

Salad: 2 cups per person.

Vegetable sides: 1 cup per person.

Gravy and cranberry sauce: ¼ cup per person.

Rolls: 1-2 per person.

Keep in mind that as the number of side dish options grows, guests will likely eat less of each. Also, don't forget to plan for your favorite leftovers.



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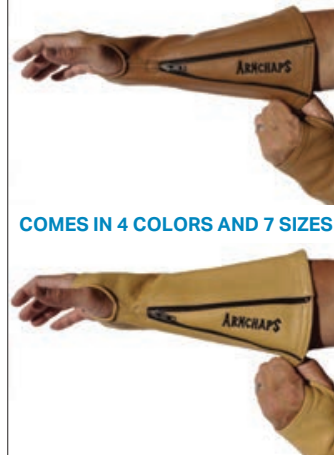
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COURTESY CHET GARNER

Toe Tappin' in Turkey

Learn all about Bob Wills—the King of Western Swing—in his Panhandle hometown

BY CHET GARNER

IF YOU ASK someone to name the king of music, they'll likely mention Elvis Presley (the King of Rock 'n' Roll) or George Strait (the King of Country). However, true students of music genres will give credit to the everlasting King of Western Swing—Bob Wills. I took a trip to the Panhandle town of Turkey to pay homage to the legacy of this Texas-sized king.

Days generally pass by quietly in Turkey, unless you're here on the last Saturday in April, when thousands attend the Bob Wills Day celebration and keep string-pickin' circles going into the morning hours. I visited on a normal Thursday afternoon and found the main drag nearly empty, save for a few folks filling their bellies at Galvan's Restaurant. After polishing off a Mexican Platter No. 9, I scooted over to the old elementary school that's now the Bob Wills Community Center.

I wasn't too familiar with Wills other than a few of his hit tunes, like *San Antonio Rose* and *Bubbles in My Beer*. But inside this museum, I received a full-on education.

Wills spent much of his childhood in Turkey and began playing music right out of the crib, as his father was a champion fiddle player. Over time, Wills became enamored with musical styles that included jazz and blues. By the early 1930s, he had formed the Texas Playboys and created a new genre called Western swing, which blended all his favorite styles. It's a feat that landed Wills in both the Country Music and Rock & Roll halls of fame.

The museum is full of artifacts and stories of Wills' rise to stardom. Visitors are sure to leave with a new appreciation for the King of Western Swing—and a foot that won't stop stomping. ■

ABOVE Chet has fun fiddlin' around the tranquil town of Turkey.

TCP Chet tunes in to Turkey's pride and joy in his latest video on our website. Watch all his Texplorations on *The Daytripper* on PBS.



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11

Fort Worth Tarrant County Veterans Day Parade, tcvc@tcvc.us, fw2022parade.org

Lubbock Lubbock Symphony Orchestra: Madam Butterfly, (806) 792-8339, buddyhollyhall.com

Victoria Golden Crescent CASA Wine Pairing, (361) 573-3734, goldencrescentcasa.org

Salado [11–13] Scottish Gathering and Highland Games, (254) 947-5232, saladomuseum.org

Ingram [11–Dec. 16] ArtMart, (830) 367-5121, hcaf.com

12

Alvin Novemberfest, alvinrotaryclub@gmail.com, alvinrotary.org

Bastrop Red, White & Blue Veterans Appreciation Banquet, (330) 418-9164, rwbveterans.com

Burton Big Star Texas Night, (979) 251-4078, burtontexas.org

Elgin Veterans Appreciation Parade, (512) 281-5724, etx150.com

Henderson Heritage Syrup Festival, (903) 657-4303, hendersontx.us

Kerrville Veterans Day Car Show and Parade, (830) 792-2580, kerrvilletexascvb.com

13

Pearland Country Music Showcase, (281) 997-5970, visitpearland.com

14

Brazoria Henry Smith Day, (979) 345-3335, brazoriahf.org

15

New Braunfels [15-17] Festival of Trees, (830) 832-0089, facebook.com/festivaloftreesnb

17

Temple Taste of the Holidays, altrusatemple.org

Palestine [17-20, 23-27, Dec. 2-11, 16-Jan. 1] Walk of Lights, (903) 723-3014, visitpalestine.com

18

Bryan Lights On!, (979) 721-9506, destinationbryan.com

Alpine [18-19] Artwalk, (210) 218-1114, artwalkalpine.com

Henderson [18-20] The Magic of Christmas, (903) 392-0691, visithenderson.tx.com

New Braunfels [18-20] Weihnachtsmarkt, (830) 629-1572, newbraunfelsweihnachtsmarkt.com

Ingram [18-19, 25-27, Dec. 2-4, 9-11] A Christmas Carol, (830) 367-5121, hcaf.com

19

Corpus Christi Wine Festival, info@corpuschristiwinfestival.com, corpuschristiwinfestival.com

MORE EVENTS >

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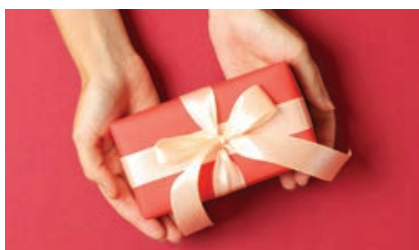
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Full Name
Complete Mailing Address
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Signature and Title of Editor, Publisher, Business Manager, or Owner
Karen Nejtcek, Managing Editor
Date
October 1, 2022



Pick of the Month

Texas Word Wrangler Book Festival

Giddings, November 18-19
(979) 542-2716
www.giddingspubliclibrary.org

Bookworms won't want to miss this free festival featuring Texas author talks and readings. When not speaking, authors will sell their books and sign autographs and be available for pictures.

NOVEMBER EVENTS CONTINUED

19 Henderson A Very Merry Market, (318) 780-0620, kvne.com

Luling Grinchmas Arts and Crafts Show, (830) 875-0123, lulingcc.org

Boerne [19-20] Fall Antique Show, (830) 329-2870, ci.boerne.tx.us

Fort Worth [19-20] Funky Finds Holiday Shopping Experience, (903) 665-7954, funkyfinds.com

Granbury [19-20] Winter Wine Walk, (817) 488-6789, crosstimberswinetrail.com

Wharton Christmas Holiday Parade, (979) 532-1862, whartonchamber.com

Jefferson Christmas Parade and Enchanted Forest Tree Lighting, (903) 665-3733, visitjeffersonstexas.com

Nacogdoches Wassail Fest, (936) 559-2500, nactx.us

San Angelo Santa's Santa Fe Christmas, (325) 486-2140, sanangelorailway.org

DECEMBER

01 Cameron Christmas Parade, (254) 697-4979, cameron-tx.com

Kerrville Symphony of the Hills: The Miracle of Christmas, (830) 792-7469, symphonyofthehills.org

La Grange Schmecken-fest, (979) 968-3017, visitlagrangetx.com

Tyler Rotary Clubs of Tyler Christmas Parade, (903) 593-6905, visittyler.com

Paris [1-3] Texas BBQ Blowout, (903) 784-2501, cbabbq.com

Fredericksburg Light the Night Christmas Parade, (830) 997-5000, fredericksburg-texas.com

Brenham [2-3] Christmas Stroll & Lighted Parade, (979) 337-7580, jingle.cityofbrenham.org

Bowie Fantasy of Lights Christmas Festival and Lighted Parade, (940) 872-6246, cityofbowietx.com

Fredericksburg Kinder-fest, (830) 990-8441, pioneermuseum.org

Round Top Houston Masterworks Chorus, (979) 249-3129, festivalhill.org

Aerials

We're flipping over the bird's-eye view these reader photos offer. Come along as they soar to capture the beauty of the Lone Star State.

CURATED BY GRACE FULTZ

1 JIM BLAKE
COLEMAN COUNTY EC

Springtime over Trickham, taken with a Typhoon H drone.

2 ROY O'REAR
TRI-COUNTY EC

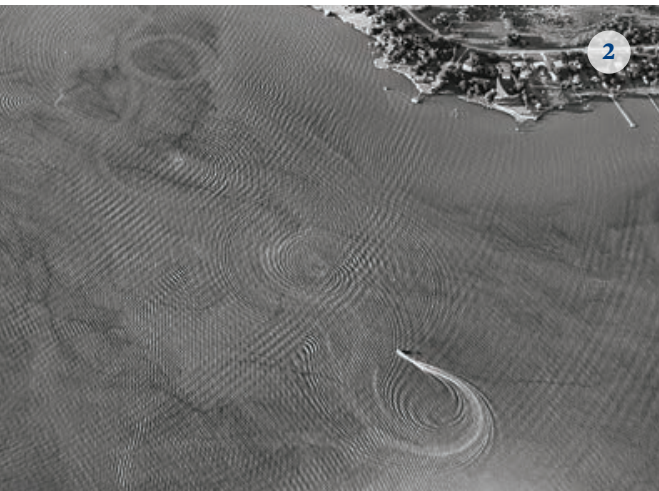
"Interference patterns in the waves made by a boat on Lake Arrowhead near Wichita Falls."

3 MIKE ZARELLA
PEDERNALES EC

"A hawk's-eye view of the Pedernales River in Blanco County before the current drought."

4 MIKE PRESTIGIACOMO
BARTLETT EC

Palo Duro Canyon State Park.



Upcoming Contests

DUE NOV 10 Land, Sea or Sky

DUE DEC 10 Riding the River

DUE JAN 10 Taking Flight



Enter online at TexasCoopPower.com/contests.

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



The Arable Twos

Thankfulness and hope for a toddler's trials and travails on the farm

BY MARTHA DEERING
ILLUSTRATION BY
CHANELLE NIBBELINK

MY GREAT-GRANDSON, Waylon, is 2 and carries all the baggage that that designation suggests. His temper tantrums are epic, but he also finds joy in everyday things and loves with his whole heart—except when his little sister wants to play with his toy tractors and trucks. “Look!” and “Wow!” are his favorite expressions, although I fear that someday soon the dreaded “No!” will find its way onto this list.

But when I watch carefully, I can already see roots sinking into the earth beneath his constantly moving (and usually grubby) feet.

Waylon is a fourth-generation Texas farm boy finding his place among the hay fields and rocky cow pastures of his Coryell County home. When he hears the rattley roar of a diesel engine starting up,

he runs toward it as if the possibility of Grandpa or Uncle Justin leaving the machine shed on a tractor without him might mark the end of the world. When the mad dash works and I see his red hoodie perched on Grandpa's lap inside the cab of that big green tractor, I know he is in 2-year-old heaven. I can still hear the echo of our son's excited voice when he was that age, yelling for a yank on the throttle: “Pull the smoker, Daddy!”

It's not just the boys. My daughter, an elementary school librarian, can still drive a hay truck with the best of them, and granddaughter Hannah, helping scoop silage into a cow trough at the age of 8, once leaned on her shovel and announced, “You know, I may run this place someday.”

Waylon has already watched a calf being born. He has learned to be quiet so the livestock won't be disturbed. He has checked cows in the pasture from Grandpa's lap on the seat of the Kawasaki all-terrain vehicle, and he's learning to count calves (although so far, he's not very reliable beyond six).

This is how farm kids learn who they are and find their places in the world. They pick tomatoes and squash in the garden and see firsthand where their food comes from, feed and water livestock, and drop fresh eggs in the dirt on the way to the kitchen. Waylon has stepped on stickers, stirred up fire ants and been knocked down by the new Lab puppy, but none of these experiences discourage him from his never-ending quest to be outdoors.

Waylon may grow up to be an electrician or a brain surgeon, but right now he is developing a respect—perhaps even a love—for the land that feeds us. I hope that will last a lifetime. ■

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— Don W., Sherman, TX

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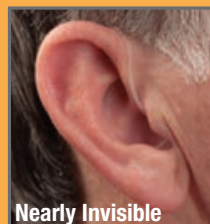
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