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May 2023



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08 Surf Your Turf

Texas doesn't have the best or the biggest waves, but that's never stopped surfers.

*By Jennifer Simonson
Photos by Kenny Braun*

In a Whole New Light

A Rio Grande Valley museum showcases a transcendental collection of century-old art.

*By Eileen Mattei
Photos by John Faulk*

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By Shane Torno

ON THE COVER

Surfers arrive at the beach on South Padre Island.

Photo by Kenny Braun

ABOVE

Te Deum, the Gelman Stained Glass Museum's largest work, invites contemplation.

Photo by John Faulk



EISENHOWER STATE PARK

A Most Scenic Century

ADVENTURER PAM LEBLANC, a frequent *TCP* contributor, appreciates the splendor of Texas' state parks about as much as anybody: "I don't own a ranch or a big chunk of Texas wilderness, but because of our state park system, I feel like part of this big, beautiful state belongs to me."

Thanks to state leaders 100 years ago, Pam and all Texans can escape to 89 state parks, historic sites and natural areas. The State Parks Board was created in May 1923 to begin setting aside land for parks, and in 1963 it merged with another agency to form the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. Happy trails, y'all.

May 20

National Be a Millionaire Day

Texas has some 650,000 million-aire households, second only to California.

Made in a Shade

Viva Magenta—a nuanced crimson that balances warm and cool—is the color of the year. The hue, announced last winter by Pantone Color Institute experts, was inspired by the red dye derived from cochineals. "This color merges the warmth of the natural world with the endless, rich possibilities of the digital space," says Pantone's Elley Chang. Learn more about the tiny insects called cochineals in our 2019 story *The Bugs That Make You See Red*.



TCP Contests and More

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FINISH THIS SENTENCE

MOM ALWAYS SAID ...

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 March prompt: **If I could fly, I would ...**

Finally take down all my Christmas lights.

WILLIAM MARTIN
SAN BERNARD EC
WALLER

Never be stuck in traffic again.

NANCY DABNEY
HILCO EC
HILLSBORO

Really hope I wasn't afraid of heights anymore.

JUDI RAISH
TRI-COUNTY EC
GRANBURY

Hope I could land.

KENNETH BRINSON
WISE EC
PARADISE

Not sit on power lines.

TERRY WOLBRUECK
HEART OF TEXAS EC
MOFFAT

Visit our website to see more responses.

Play It Safe

May is National Electrical Safety Month. It's also when many of us hit the water. Never swim near a boat, marina or launching ramp. Residual current could put anyone in the water at risk of electric shock drowning.

“I've learned that success comes in a very prickly package.”

—SANDRA BULLOCK



Ironing Out the Rough Edges

SOME 1,000 MEN and even more horses and mules trained in San Antonio 125 years ago in preparation for their participation in the Spanish-American War.

By the end of May 1898, Theodore Roosevelt, above center, and his Rough Riders were on their way to Florida before sailing to Cuba, where the future president led the charge up San Juan Hill.

While in San Antonio, the Rough Riders trained at what is now Riverside Golf Course, near the water hazard on the 16th hole.



COURTESY CHET GARNER

'Lonesome' in a Library
 “The Wittliff Collections took us by total surprise. What a gem! This museum within a beautiful campus library offers surprisingly rich, diverse exhibits.”

SARA DUNN
 PEDERNALES EC
 WIMBERLEY

Allies in Aging

A Pet Project [March 2023] resonated perfectly. I have an 18-year-old black beauty named Rhiannan. She was my wife’s loyal companion until my wife passed away over five years ago and has since become very needy and close to me. She is skin and bones but eats well and fortunately does not appear to be in any distress or pain.

I am 82 myself, so we are dealing with aging together. I hope to outlive her so she won’t have to suffer.

Charles L. Glisan
 Pedernales EC
 Cedar Park

We need to honor and appreciate these men who risk their lives every day [First Responders, February 2023].

BETH CHAPMAN
 VIA FACEBOOK

Readers on a Roundup

Kudos to Eric Schlegel for his excellent photography and capturing the voices of the Huebner Bros. Cattle Co. cowhands in this fascinating story [Until the Cows Swim Home, March 2023].

As readers we felt we were moving across the Matagorda and Colorado waters, past the snakes, onto the island and back to the ranch.

Martha Everman Jones
 Victoria EC
 Victoria

Dove Doings

We had a *Lonesome Dove* party 30 years ago. Everyone had to dress as their favorite character of the miniseries/book. My husband dressed as Augustus McCrae, and I dressed as the stone-throwing Janey. My mother dressed as Peach and carried a live chicken under her arm.

Susan Mansell
 Coleman County EC
 Ballinger

CORRECTION

Though the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives had said in 2016 that the deadly 2013 fertilizer explosion in West was triggered by an intentionally set fire, other experts have since raised doubts about that finding [Rise Up West, April 2023].



ERICH SCHLEGEL

TCP 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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SACRED STONE OF THE SOUTHWEST IS ON THE BRINK OF EXTINCTION



Centuries ago, Persians, Tibetans and Mayans considered turquoise a gemstone of the heavens, believing the striking blue stones were sacred pieces of sky. Today, the rarest and most valuable turquoise is found in the American Southwest— but the future of the blue beauty is unclear.

On a recent trip to Tucson, we spoke with fourth generation turquoise traders who explained that less than five percent of turquoise mined worldwide can be set into jewelry and only about twenty mines in the Southwest supply gem-quality turquoise. Once a thriving industry, many Southwest mines have run dry and are now closed.

We found a limited supply of turquoise from Arizona and purchased it for our *Sedona Turquoise Collection*. Inspired by the work of those ancient craftsmen and designed to showcase the exceptional blue stone, each stabilized vibrant cabochon features a unique, one-of-a-kind matrix surrounded in Bali metalwork. You could drop over \$1,200 on a turquoise pendant, or you could secure 26 carats of genuine Arizona turquoise for just \$99.



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SURF



YOUR



TURF

Texas doesn't have the best or the biggest waves, but that's never stopped surfers

DURING THE HOT SUMMER months, thunderstorms develop in Central Africa each afternoon like clockwork. If the monsoon is at least partially active, a disturbance can intensify over North Africa as it marches west before being thrust out over the Atlantic Ocean near Cape Verde. Sometimes storms peter out right there, but if the ocean is warm and the conditions are right, a storm can continue its trek across the Atlantic, picking up power along the way until it reaches the Gulf of Mexico.

That's when a small but mighty group of Texas surf enthusiasts break out their boards.

Hurricanes bring world-class waves to the sluggish waters of the Texas Gulf Coast—waves that area surfers sometimes wait years for. When a storm begins tracking on the radar and swell reports look promising, pent-up surfers call out sick, miss family obligations and put plans on hold to head to the nearest beach.

“Most people are driving away from the ocean during hurricanes, but Texas surfers are driving towards it,” says William “Boog” Cram, owner of Ohana Surf & Skate in Galveston.

The existence of a passionate surfing community in Texas might come as a surprise to many—even those who grew up here. But surfing culture in Texas dates back to the 1960s, when the surf craze perpetrated by the Beach Boys, the documentary *The Endless Summer* and Gidget movies swept the nation. Much more recently, a renewed interest in the sport began when the pandemic pushed more people to embrace outdoor activities. Landlocked Texans wanting to escape city lockdowns headed to the beach, rented surfboards and tried their hand at a sport many people don't realize exists here.

“Usually when you tell people that you surf in Texas, the immediate response is: ‘There is surf in Texas?’” says Frank Floyd, longtime surfer and owner of Wind & Wave Watersports in Corpus Christi. That question is often followed up with a curiosity of what it's like to surf in Texas.

Are Texas waves large? No.

Do they have power behind them? Also no.

But can one surf in crystal clear water so beautiful that they forget about the waves? Absolutely not.

Surfing in Texas is not for the faint of heart. The state's 367 miles of coastline have a reputation for producing small, choppy, inconsistent surf in water with a less-than-ideal hue, and the Texans who surf here accept that. There's no false bravado that even the waves are bigger in Texas. What there is among surfers is an unwavering appreciation for the waves in their backyard.

“Texans are extremely enthusiastic about surfing in Texas. We have an amazing culture here,” Brad Lomax says. “To be a surfer in Texas you need to be an optimist with low standards.” A good sense of humor helps, too. Lomax has sold T-shirts that read, “Texas Waves: Slow, mushy and hard to catch” and “Texas Surfing: It is better than it looks.”

Lomax has been surfing the waters of the Coastal Bend since the mid-1960s. Originally from San Antonio, he spent his teenage summers selling T-shirts on the beach in Port Aransas just to live near the ocean. The surfer teen grew into a businessman who never left. After the success of his first Corpus Christi restaurant in 1983, Lomax opened the Executive Surf Club in 1990.

“My friends and I all had jobs, but we also surfed as much as we could, so we called ourselves the Executive Surf Club,” he says. “I wanted to open a place with a vibe where everyone could come together—guys from the refinery, old ladies, surfers, everyone—and unwind after a long day of work.”

There's no missing the surf vibe when walking into the brick building originally built in the 1800s. Surfboards line the walls, hang over the bar and are used as tables.

Fifteen years after opening the Executive Surf Club, Lomax along with a good friend, surfing legend Pat McGee, opened the Texas Surf Museum next door. Before it closed in September, the institution told the story of the evolution of Texas surfing with photos, vintage memorabilia, newspaper clippings, short videos and more than 30 legendary surfboards.

Galveston also draws surfers despite its similarly less-than-stellar waves. The continental shelf along the barrier island is long and shallow, creating small swells. The wimpy waves are welcoming for newcomers to the sport. Every summer, children in surf camps can be seen on the beach practicing pop-ups and in the water riding waves with a face full of concentration, arms up, hands pointed

OPPOSITE FROM TOP Rachel Gore takes on a wave at Isla Blanca Park on South Padre Island. A classic woody, the most iconic of surfmobiles.

Where To **HANG 10** in Texas

1 Surfside Beach Just south of Galveston, in Brazoria County, you'll find a variety of waves, including big swells, for a range of skill levels.

2 Matagorda Peninsula Specifically, where the Colorado River empties into the Gulf. The strong waves there, thanks to the area's deep ocean floor, are best for experienced surfers.

3 Port Mansfield Jetty The cut that separates North and South Padre islands is incredibly isolated but has arguably the best waves in the state—for seasoned surfers.

4 South Padre Island Jetties The gentle beach-break waves here, where the continental shelf drops off dramatically, are great for longboarding—from beginners to pros.

5 Boca Chica Beach Just a little farther south, Boca Chica is known for occasionally producing barreling waves when the swells are strong. With sometimes serious undertow, this beach is for the best of the best.



toward the shore—just like they're taught. The shallow water, relatively flat sandy bottom and lack of rocks make area beaches a great place to learn.

"If you can surf here, you can surf anywhere," Cram says from his surf shop in Galveston. "When you can master the wave here, you can take those skills to any waves around the world."

Cram started surfing in Galveston in the early 1970s after inheriting a hand-me-down surfboard from a friend's older brother. He and a friend would ride bikes 1 mile to the 47th Street break, between them holding the 9-foot board weighing close to 40 pounds. He has been surfing and skateboarding the island ever since. In 2005, Cram opened his brightly colored, Hawaii-style surf and skate shop across from one of Galveston's most popular surf spots—



the Pleasure Pier. His team teaches surfers to catch a wave even in the worst conditions.

While the beaches near Galveston are perfect for newbie surfers, as one travels south along the coast, the waves become bigger and more powerful. This is because the shallow continental shelf of the Gulf gradually deepens near the southern point of South Padre Island.

Beaches with the best waves, like Port Mansfield Jetty, are often in secluded areas requiring four-wheel-drive vehicles. Because of that, most surfers stick to their local beaches for an afternoon surf session. Weather patterns can change quickly and never last long. When the perfect conditions don't arrive, surfers make do.

"Texas gets some great quality surfers because we have to make something out of nothing," Floyd says.

When traveling, Texas surfers tend to have the most fun of anyone in the water, Floyd says. They appreciate waves that other surfers might take for granted, knowing that they're probably better than the waves at home. Unless, of course, a hurricane is on its way.

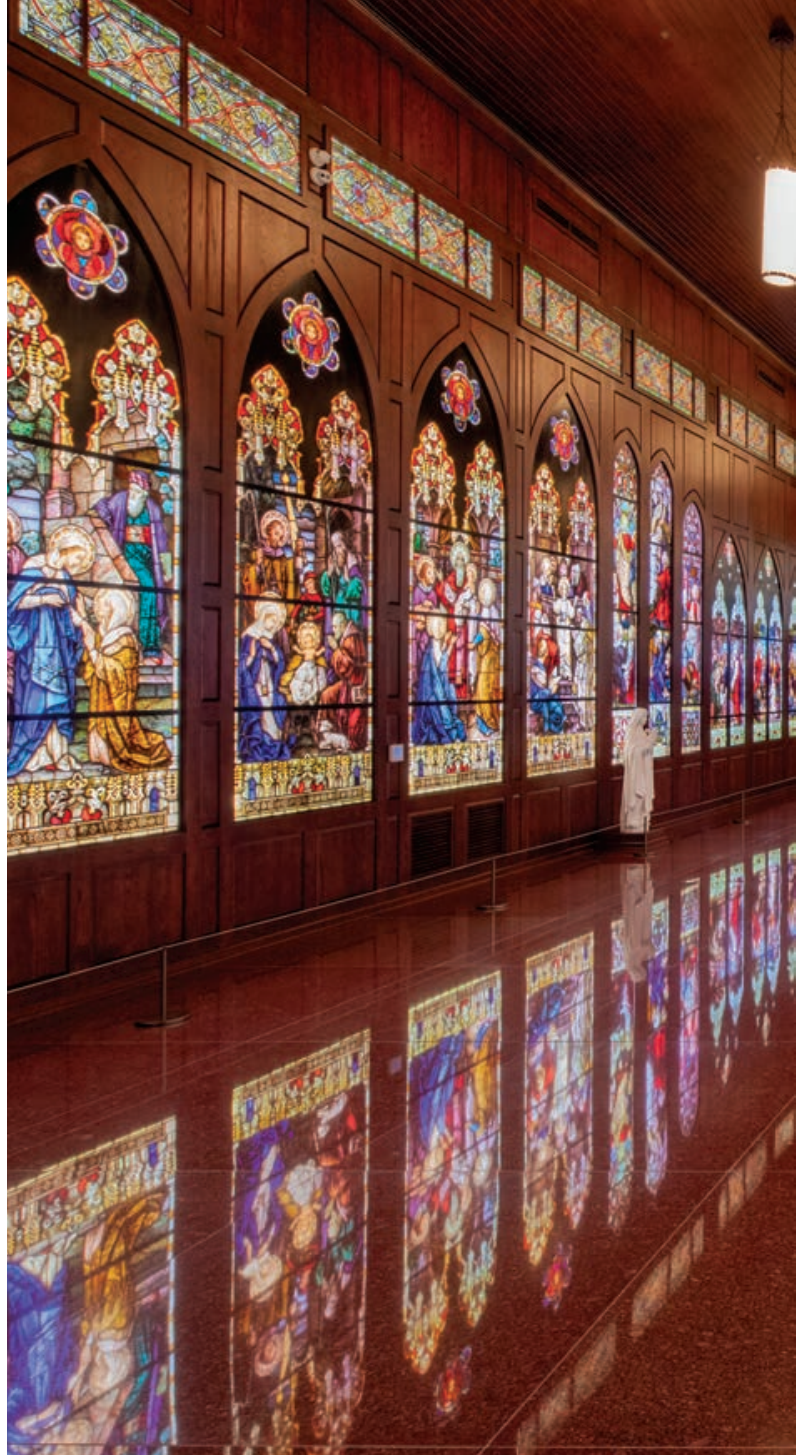
"We have to work at getting good in Texas," he says. "Then we can go anywhere." ■

CLOCKWISE FROM OPPOSITE PAGE Catching a wave off Port Aransas. Aarin Hartwell, with baby Brixton, is founder of SPI Sessions, a surf and water sports shop on South Padre Island. Brad Lomax has been surfing the waters of the Coastal Bend since the mid-1960s. A board, a bike and, down the road, a beach. Henry Fry's surfboards were some of the first made in Texas, in the 1960s.

IN A WHOLE NEW LIGHT

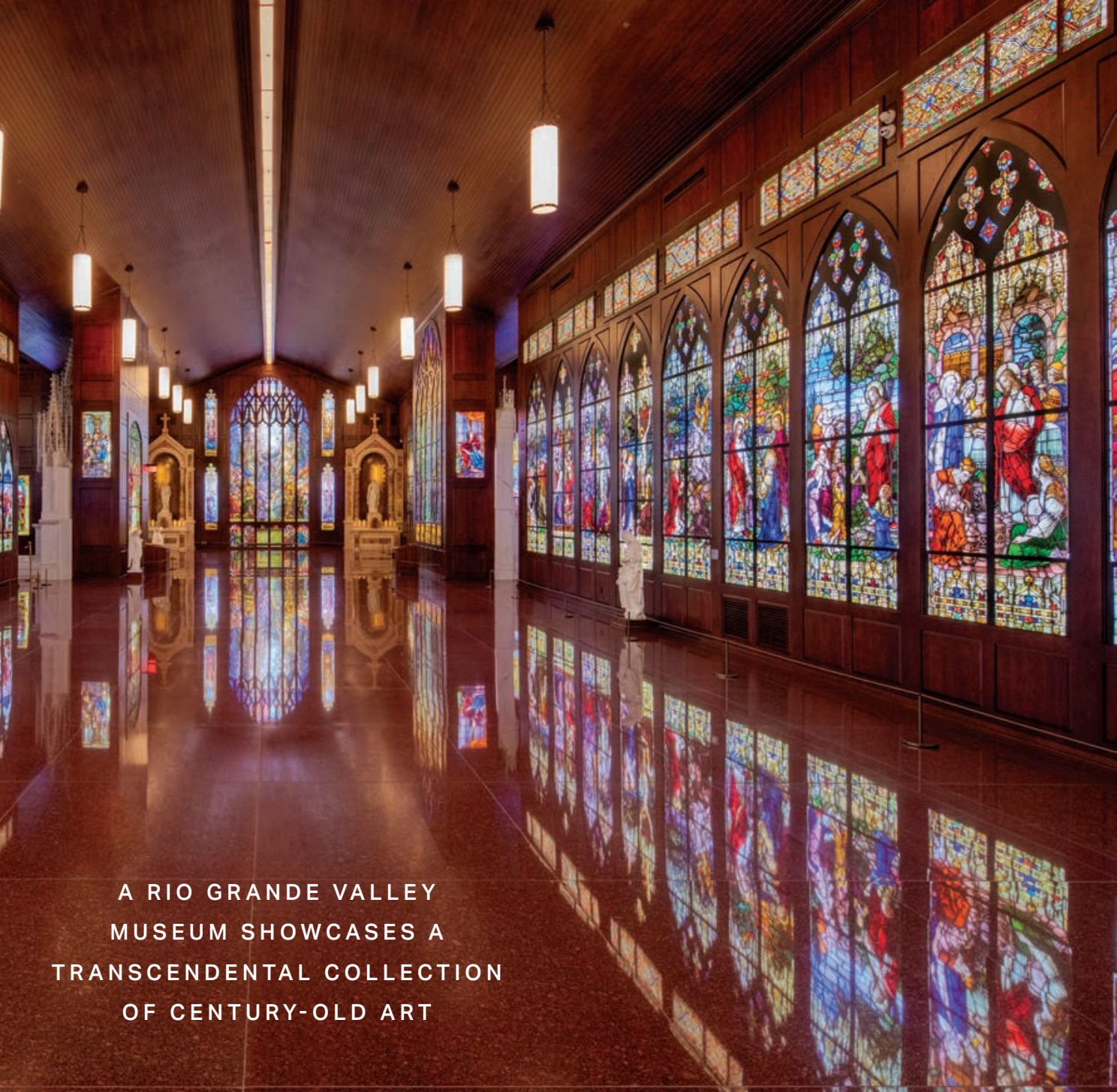


ABOVE The museum boasts eight Tiffany stained-glass windows depicting the Beatitudes, or blessings, including Blessed Are the Merciful. OPPOSITE A navelike passage illuminates works from now-closed churches.



I PULL OPEN THE DOOR of the Gelman Stained Glass Museum and step inside a kaleidoscope. More than 150 stained-glass windows and their reflections in the highly polished red granite floor immerse me in light, color and space. Then my eyes and brain begin to separate the profusion of shapes and colors into windows of religious scenes ranging from 10 to 25 feet tall, illuminated by what seems to be heavenly light.

Inside a gray stone building just off the highway in the heart of San Juan, in the Rio Grande Valley, the narrow, cross-shaped space is cool and dim. Most of the stained-glass windows in the museum, which opened in November 2021, originally graced now-closed East Coast churches, where they had been dedicated as memorials to departed loved ones. In their safe, new climate-controlled home, the complex LED arrays that backlight all the windows provide



A RIO GRANDE VALLEY
MUSEUM SHOWCASES A
TRANSCENDENTAL COLLECTION
OF CENTURY-OLD ART

a steady, otherworldly glow that compensates for variations in the thickness of the glass and paint amid the absence of natural light.

About 30 years ago, an auction catalog prompted Lawrence Gelman, an Edinburg anesthesiologist, to go to Atlanta, Georgia, to view a stained-glass window as it was being repaired. He later phoned in his winning auction bid and purchased the 4-by-7-foot landscape. “There’s something about the vividness of colors when light passes through stained glass,” Gelman says.

Captivated by the art, Gelman delved into the history and mastery involved, collecting more and more stained-glass windows until he had enough to fill a museum, which he chose to locate in San Juan, near the Basilica of Our Lady of San Juan del Valle. That shrine annually receives more than 1 million

visitors, an audience primed to appreciate Gelman’s collection.

“Dr. Gelman wanted to replicate a sacred, transcendental experience,” says Miriam Cepeda, the museum’s director.

He has succeeded, no question.

Created between 1880 and 1910 by 12 master glasswork artists and studios of the art nouveau era, the works comprise the largest American museum collection of stained-glass windows. And with 71 Louis Comfort Tiffany windows, the Gelman has the largest collection of Tiffany glass windows in the U.S. Other noted glass artists represented here include John La Farge, Mary Elizabeth Tillinghast and those at J&R Lamb Studios—the oldest continuously operating glass studio in the nation, dating to 1857.

Cepeda gives me a quick explanation of stained glass. Traditionally, stained glass was actually painted glass.



WITH 71 LOUIS COMFORT TIFFANY WINDOWS, THE GELMAN HAS THE LARGEST COLLECTION OF TIFFANY GLASS WINDOWS IN THE U.S.

The glass panels are supported and joined by flexible channels of lead called comes—and, in some cases, by copper foil. Tiffany Studios popularized the use of opalescent glass and layered glass to achieve shimmering, flowing colors for landscapes. Looking closely, I notice that even the faces and hands of Christ, the apostles and other religious figures have been painted onto the glass.

MANY OF THE WINDOWS represent biblical scenes, such as the Nativity, flight into Egypt, Good Shepherd, and Madonna and child, as interpreted by the artists. But La Farge’s works here mostly portray medieval scenes.

The vivid jewel tones of Franz Mayer’s stained-glass windows contrast with the luminous blues and greens of Tiffany Studios’ masterpieces, such as the *Te Deum*. The museum is just one glorious work of art after another.

An eye-catching group of eight Tiffany windows portrays angels as stern warriors and loving guardians presenting the Beatitudes—sayings attributed to Jesus. These windows adorned a private mausoleum, out of the public eye for 108 years, until Gelman put them on display.

Similar memorial inscriptions evoke a bygone time, such as “To the Glory of God and in Loving Memory of Charles Chamberlain Gay 1835–1913.” One narrow window honors the memory of three women who died in the wreck of a ship called the Paul Jones in January 1899 in the Gulf of Mexico.

The small but magnificent north chapel shimmers with windows rich in pastels. In the south chapel, a large pipe organ and an electronic organ, backed by superb sound systems, enhance the sensory feast. The museum hosts orchestral and chamber music concerts and has been the setting for weddings, workshops and secular celebrations.

The museum chose not to add interpretive displays to the windows, instead providing guests a compact map with QR codes that, with a click of your phone camera, link to in-depth descriptions of the windows, their artists and their techniques. The map also identifies the marble altars, statues and mosaics throughout the building.

La Casa del Vitral, an art studio in Edinburg, took on the restoration of the century-old windows and installed the glass art in the museum. They also made replicas of several windows held in other museums.

Admission to the Gelman Museum is by appointment only, made through its website, gelmanmuseum.org.

Once visitors are inside, benches invite sitting and contemplating. Subtle light washes over me while I listen to recorded voices raised in Gregorian chant. Peace and beauty. ■

The Good Shepherd, baptism of Jesus and flight into Egypt are among the biblical stories portrayed in stained glass framed by red oak paneling.



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How To Rock a Walking Stick

An essential part of a gentleman's wardrobe



In the 17th century, the walking stick overtook the sword as an essential part of a gentleman's wardrobe. Though it was primarily used as a decorative accessory, it could also function as a weapon if necessary. For men of the era, these walking sticks were a statement piece, and a way to communicate their wealth and refinement.

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— Steven, Arlington, VA



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— Chas, Placida, FL

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Contractor Scam Season Is Here

YOUR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE will never send anyone to your house to ask you if you need work done. When someone does come for a legitimate reason, you'll see a uniform, a truck with the cooperative's logo on it and valid identification.

But there are lots of scammers out there who may knock on your door with ill intent. Don't be surprised if you get phone calls, uninvited visitors looking for work and loads of door hangers offering landscaping, roofing, painting and solar power services.

Your best bet: Say no to all of them. When you contact a business, you know who's on the other end of the line. But when someone contacts you first, you can't be certain they're telling the truth. You don't know if they are who they say they are. And remember, email addresses and caller ID information can be faked.

If you need work done around your house, visit the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation's website or join a contractor referral network that recommends only contractors who are licensed, insured, bonded and experienced.

A few other tips:

Be wary of contractors with out-of-state license plates or detachable, magnetic company signs on their trucks. These could be "travelers," who follow the warm weather from state to state and hire themselves out as home improvement contractors. They're almost always unlicensed in your state, and if you discover a problem with their work later, they'll be long gone.

Do not pay in cash, and do not pay upfront. Instead, work out a payment schedule that allows you to pay in increments as the work is completed. A contractor who works on a cash-only basis is probably not paying taxes and almost certainly not paying for insurance. The same goes for a contractor who wants to get paid each day. Drop them like a hot potato.

Get bids from three reputable companies before you start. If you get one offer that's way lower than the other two, something is probably amiss.

Don't fall for these two lines: "I just finished a job at your neighbor's house and I'll give you a good price if you hire me today because I'm already in the neighborhood" or "I have leftover materials from a job I just did, and I'll sell/install them here for a deep discount because I don't need them." If a contractor claims he's already got materials he wants to pass along to you at a discount, watch out. Usually, these materials are seconds, ungraded or below-grade minimums for code, or they "fell off a truck." Small contractors rarely buy in volumes that yield these big discounts. If they do, they severely misjudged quantities on a previous job, which doesn't speak well of their ability to estimate and plan jobs.

Hiring contractors can be expensive. Don't waste your money on one who's not licensed and legitimate. ■

Summer Efficiency Upgrades To Help You Save

SPRING AND SUMMER ARE opportune times for home upgrades and DIY projects. If you're planning to make improvements to your home, consider upgrades that promote better energy efficiency.

Here are a few projects that can help you save energy and money—and increase the comfort of your home.

Installing a smart thermostat is one of the simplest ways to manage home energy use and keep summer bills in check. Smart thermostats are easy to install and allow you to control your heating and cooling system from your phone. You can purchase an Energy Star-certified smart thermostat for as little as \$100, and it can save you 8% on annual heating and cooling costs—about \$50 per year. This upgrade will quickly pay for itself, and you'll gain insight into better ways to heat and cool your home.

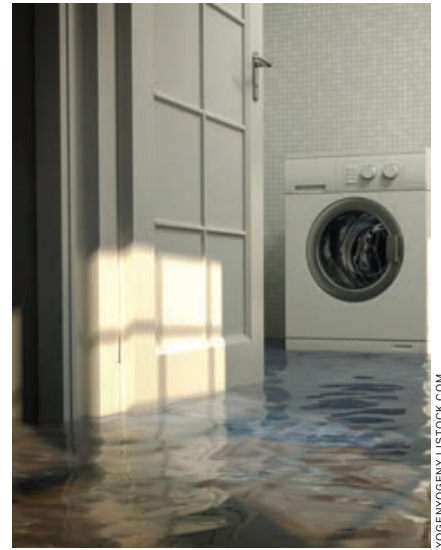
Additional devices like smart LED bulbs also offer convenient control and help boost energy savings at home. With smart lighting, you can set a schedule for when and how your lights turn on and off. And the next time you head out to run errands and realize you left the lights on, you can simply turn them off with your phone. Smart lights come in various shapes, colors and brightness levels—and you can purchase bulbs for indoor or outdoor use. Schedule outdoor smart lights to illuminate your home at night and when you're out of town for better security.

While it's not as exciting as incorporating smart technologies, sealing air leaks around your home is a simple, effective way to save energy and lower your bills. Applying new (or replacing old) weatherstripping around doors and windows can instantly make your home more comfortable and reduce energy waste. Applying caulk to gaps can also improve the seal of your home.

If your home feels too warm during summer or too chilly during winter even after you've sealed with weatherstripping and caulk, your home may need additional insulation, a more expensive efficiency upgrade. But shoring up insufficient insulation can reduce energy use and costs, so it might be an investment worth making. The cost of new insulation depends on various factors like materials, the size of your home and whether you use a contractor. Typically, the project costs can be recouped in a few years, and your home will immediately feel more comfortable. ■



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Beware of Wet Appliances

IF A STORM OR ACCIDENT has flooded your home, your washing machine and clothes dryer could wind up waterlogged—and that's not safe. Be sure to check for damage to your electrical system and appliances.

Before beginning to clean up a flooded house, turn off the electricity and unplug all appliances. Waterlogged appliances, especially those with motors close to the ground, could be damaged and should not be used until properly cleaned, dried and inspected.

Open all appliances and wipe them clean. Allow water to drain out and let each appliance dry completely, which could take up to a week. Never plug a wet appliance back in before a service technician checks it for electrical damage.

Before restoring your electricity, wipe clean all outlets that the water may have touched, and call a service technician to inspect the system.

To prevent your home from flooding while you're away, turn off the water before you leave. Also, consider adding downspouts to your gutters to divert water away from your house so it won't pour into the ground near the house. ■

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Do not touch metal objects, such as golf clubs or bicycles.

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Auf Wiedersehen

Scholars hasten to preserve a rapidly disappearing dialect: Texas German

BY LAURA TOLLEY • ILLUSTRATION BY NOAH WOODS

HANS BOAS was driving from California to his new life in Austin when he decided to stop for lunch in a picturesque Hill Country town.

Inside a German-style restaurant in Fredericksburg, he walked by a table of people who were speaking a language that was familiar to the German native. Well, sort of familiar.

“I heard these elderly gentlemen speaking this German dialect I had never heard before,” Boas recalls. Intrigued, he asked: “Where are you from?”

The men seemed puzzled by his question. “What do you mean?” they replied. “We’re from here!”

On his way to begin teaching Germanic linguistics at the University of Texas, Boas happened upon something he didn’t know existed: Texas German.

That chance encounter in July 2001 sparked a lasting passion and prompted him to establish the Texas German Dialect Project. Housed in UT’s Department of Germanic Studies and the Linguistics Research Center, the project’s mission includes recording and preserving the Texas German language as well as the culture and history associated with it.

“I just didn’t know about it,” Boas says. “Lots of people don’t know about it unless it’s your heritage.”

Texas German generally is spoken by people whose German ancestors first settled in Texas between about 1830 and the early 1900s. They came from various regions of Germany, speaking disparate dialects that melded into what became Texas German, though there are variations within the dialect. It differs from regular German in part because it hasn’t evolved much, as most languages do.

There were an estimated 160,000 speakers of Texas German around 1940, but that number has dwindled dramatically. The world wars fueled anti-German attitudes; laws were enacted that prohibited foreign languages in schools; and people moved from small communities to bigger cities.

Although there are no official numbers, Boas estimates that just 3,000–5,000 Texas German speakers remain. The dialect, he believes, will vanish in a decade or so—a void 200 years in the making.

“I think there is a certain sense of regret by some who would have liked to learn the language,” says Fredericksburg resident Evelyn Weinheimer, who grew up speaking Texas German. “It’s a missed opportunity for them.”

A primary objective of the project is interviewing Texas German speakers. Audio from those interviews is stored in the project’s Texas German Dialect Archive, which currently houses more than a thousand hours of interviews from more than 700 Texas German speakers.

“My idea was to enable students to get as close as possible to Texas German speakers—to hear spoken Texas German, to have that experience and not just be in the classroom,” says Boas, a member of Pedernales Electric Cooperative.

Students interview Texas German speakers in the small communities where they live.

“It’s such a joy to be able to get away from your computer and go talk to somebody,” says Margo Blevins, a former project manager who has interviewed more than 100 Texas German speakers.

“It’s important to preserve it because it also is such a big part of Texas history,” Blevins says. “We’re trying to preserve the language but also the memories, the history and the stories.”

Weinheimer happily talked with Blevins. The 78-year-old retired teacher and part-time archivist lives in the same house where she grew up with the dialect. While she and her classmates were not allowed to speak German in school, “you would hear it up and down Main Street.” Her grandfather, she says, was offended if she didn’t speak German to him.

In 1977, after living in Austin for years, she and her family moved back to Fredericksburg, where she began to realize the dialect was dying. She believes the project’s work is invaluable.

“It is important to keep our culture and traditions alive with the language to share with the next generations,” says Weinheimer, a Central Texas Electric Cooperative member.

The search for Texas German continues, and the project recently received a sizable boost—a \$1 million grant from an anonymous donor.

“The donation will help us interview as many speakers as possible in the next five years,” Boas says, “before Texas German will die out for good in about 2035.” ■

TCP Find this story on our website to hear speakers of Texas German.



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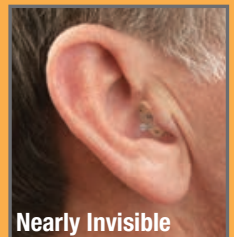
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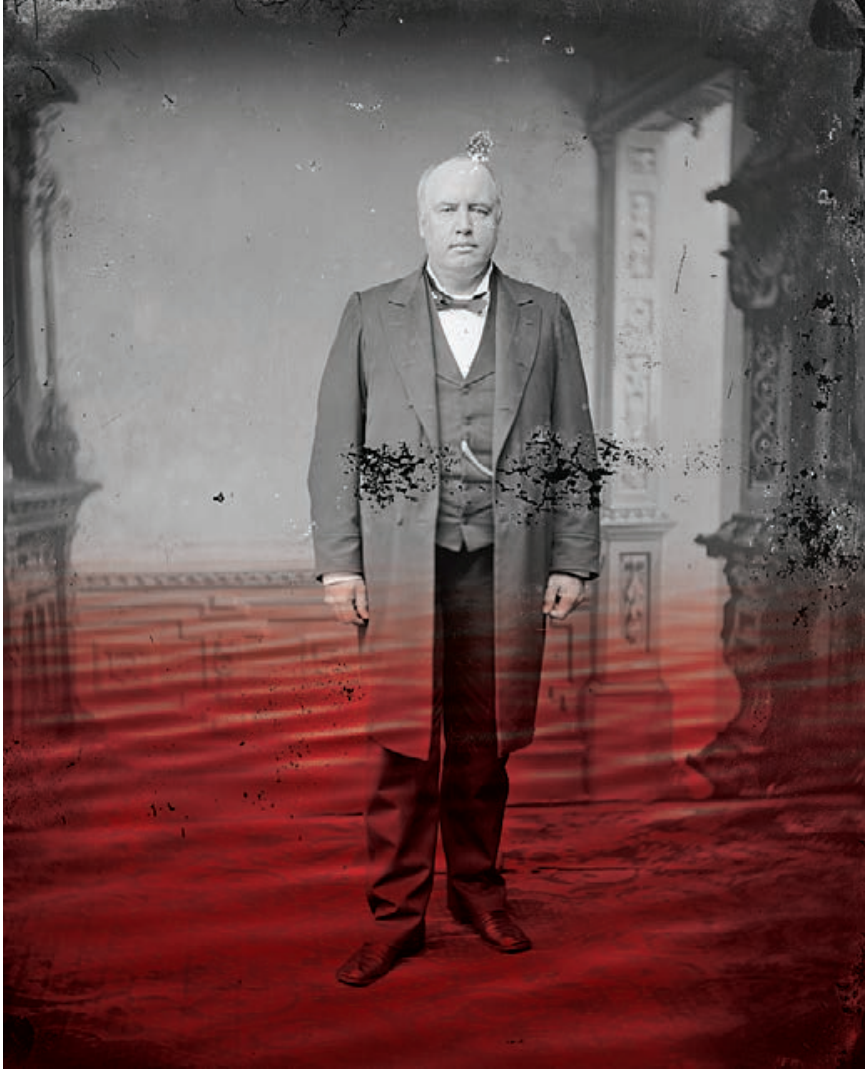


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Redwater Christening

East Texas residents washed away their sins—and their town's original name

BY W.F. STRONG

GO EAST OF DALLAS on Interstate 30 past Sulphur Springs until you reach U.S. Route 67. Take that east and before you reach Texarkana, you'll arrive in a little town of about 1,000 named Ingersoll. Well, it *was* called Ingersoll.

The name was unofficially changed to Redwater about 10 years after its 1875 founding—a change that was made official by the post office almost a decade after that.

Founders of the town admired Robert Green Ingersoll and decided to name their town after him. You may have never heard of Ingersoll, but that's only

because you didn't live in the late 1800s in America.

Back then, Ingersoll was one of the most famous people in the nation. He was friends with presidents and Mark Twain. He was a giant among politicians of the day, and any Republican who wanted to succeed at the national level needed and lusted after Ingersoll's endorsement—and his oratorical talents.

Had he wanted to, he would have made a formidable candidate for the presidency himself, except for the little problem of his nickname: the Great Agnostic.

Despite Ingersoll's reputation as a free-

TCP Listen as W.F. Strong narrates this story on our website.



thinker and anti-religious zealot, he was widely liked.

His central creed was this: "Happiness is the only good. The place to be happy is here. The time to be happy is now. The way to be happy is to make others so."

Ingersoll, a devoted reader of Shakespeare and, ironically, the Bible, was known as the most brilliant wordsmith of his age. He mesmerized audiences with his genius for creating poetic oratory. His voice was captivating in tone, and his articulation was flawless.

Ingersoll was ahead of his time. The New York native who served as the 16th attorney general of Illinois after commanding a Union cavalry regiment in the Civil War was an outspoken abolitionist and supported voting rights for Black people and women.

But Ingersoll's fame died with him, in 1899. It seemed he would be confined to the century that had defined him.

Even in Texas. A revival meeting was held in the early 1890s in the East Texas town that was named for Ingersoll, and it was a mighty successful one.

That week 110 people were baptized, or "born again," in the community. It suddenly became thoroughly devout and could not suffer the indignities of living under the name of a famous agnostic. So they agreed to rename the town Redwater, after a well that had recently been dug there was found to yield red water. Perhaps they also saw some religious significance in the name. In the Old Testament's telling, God parted the Red Sea to save Moses and the Israelites.

That's how Ingersoll became Redwater and one more reason that the man himself became, as *The Washington Post* called him in 2012, "the most famous American you never heard of." ■

Berries

Make a grand entrance with your favorite diminutive delights

BY MEGAN MYERS, FOOD EDITOR

Berries have long been my favorite kind of fruit. Not only are they wonderful eaten out of hand, these versatile little gems shine in recipes of all kinds. For these cornmeal pancakes, blueberries are combined with jalapeño for a tart, sweet, slightly spicy topping.

Cornmeal Pancakes With Blueberry Jalapeño Sauce

PANCAKES

- 1 cup self-rising flour**
- 1 cup cornmeal**
- 2 tablespoons sugar**
- ½ teaspoon baking powder**
- 1 cup buttermilk**
- 2 eggs**
- 4 tablespoons (½ stick) butter, melted, plus more for the pan**

SAUCE

- 1½ cups blueberries**
- 2 tablespoons sugar**
- 1 jalapeño, seeded and diced**
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice**

1. PANCAKES In a large bowl, stir together flour, cornmeal, sugar and baking powder. Whisk in buttermilk and eggs until smooth. Let batter rest while you make the sauce.

2. SAUCE In a small saucepan, combine blueberries, sugar, jalapeño and lemon juice and stir well. Set over medium heat and cook 5 minutes, stirring occasionally and mashing blueberries with the back of a spoon. Turn heat to low and let simmer while you cook the pancakes.

3. Warm a nonstick skillet over medium heat. Add a small amount of butter to the pan and swirl to coat.

4. Stir the 4 tablespoons melted butter into the batter. Scoop ¼ cup of batter and pour into the prepared pan, repeating as allowed for pan size.

5. Cook pancakes until edges are dry and bubbles appear (1–2 minutes), then flip and cook an additional 2 minutes. Remove to a plate and repeat until all the batter is used. Serve immediately with warm sauce.

MAKES 1 DOZEN PANCAKES

TCP Follow along with Megan Myers and her adventures in the kitchen at stetted.com, where she features a recipe for Raspberry White Chocolate Cookies.





Strawberry Burfee

SHUBHADA KORE
PEDERNALES EC

This burfee, an Indian dessert similar to fudge—also spelled burfi, barfi, barfee or borfi—is a wonderfully easy treat. Top it with coconut, sprinkles or chopped nuts for festive flair.

- 1 cup strawberries**
- 1 cup almond flour**
- 1 cup brown sugar**
- ½ cup desiccated coconut**
- 1 tablespoon butter**

COOK'S TIP Desiccated coconut can be made by pulsing shredded coconut in a food processor until finely chopped.

1. Wash, trim and purée strawberries until smooth. Set aside.
2. In a nonstick pan over low to medium heat, roast almond flour for 5 minutes or until it is lightly browned and aromatic. Pour into a bowl and set aside.
3. Return the pan to the heat and add strawberry purée and brown sugar. Cover and cook 2–3 minutes on low to medium heat.
4. Once the berry and sugar mixture is bubbling, remove lid and stir in almond flour and coconut. Mix well, then stir in butter. Cook on low, stirring constantly, until mixture comes together into a dough, about 5–6 minutes. It will be somewhat sticky, with excess moisture cooked off.
5. Let the mixture cool slightly and then spread onto greased parchment or into a buttered square pan, using a spatula to shape into ½-inch thickness. Let cool completely and slice into squares or diamonds to serve.

SERVES 8–10

[MORE RECIPES >](#)

\$500 WINNER

Berry Burst Pavlova

JUANITA GUERRA
MAGIC VALLEY EC



Pavlovas are always impressive on the table, especially when layered with a creamy filling and fresh fruit. Make sure not to open the oven during baking and cooling so the pavlova dries fully.

SERVES 12



PAVLOVA

- ¼ cup fresh or frozen berries of choice**
- ¾ cup egg whites at room temperature (about 6 eggs)**
- 1 cup superfine sugar**
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch**
- 1½ teaspoons cream of tartar**
- ½ teaspoon lemon or almond extract (optional)**

FILLING

- ¼ cup fresh or frozen berries of choice**
- 8 ounces cream cheese, softened**
- 1 can sweetened condensed milk (14 ounces)**
- ¼ cup lemon juice**
- ½ teaspoon lemon or orange extract**
- 1 pound mixed fresh berries**

1. **PAVLOVA** Preheat oven to 240 degrees. Draw an 8-inch circle on a sheet of parchment and set aside.
2. Microwave berries for 1 minute, smash with a fork and drain off any excess liquid. Set aside.
3. In a large bowl, whisk egg whites using an electric mixer on low until soft peaks form, 5–6 minutes. Continue to whisk, adding sugar 1 tablespoon at a time, waiting 15 seconds between each addition. Once all the sugar is added, increase mixer speed to high and whisk meringue to stiff peaks and until mixture is smooth. Sift in cornstarch and cream of tartar, add extract (if using), and whisk to incorporate.
4. Drop the heated berries into five areas on top of the mixture and fold in lightly with a spatula to create swirls.
5. Place a small amount of meringue onto each corner of a baking sheet and set the parchment, pencil side down, on top of it, sticking the corners down. Scoop the meringue onto the parchment, using the spatula to spread and fill the circle shape evenly. Bake 1½ hours, then turn oven off and let the meringue cool with the door closed for at least 2 hours.
6. **FILLING** Microwave berries 1 minute, smash with a fork and drain off any excess liquid. Set aside.
7. In a medium bowl, beat the cream cheese until fluffy. In another bowl, mix together the condensed milk, lemon juice and extract until smooth. Add to the cream cheese and whip until smooth and fluffy. Drop the heated berries into five areas on top and fold in lightly to make swirls.
8. To assemble, carefully transfer the cooled pavlova to a serving plate. Spread the filling into the middle and top with fresh berries.

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Raspberry Bread Pudding

JANELLE NIX
NUECES EC

Excellent for breakfast or dessert, this bread pudding is bursting with tart raspberries. It's topped with a creamy vanilla sauce, which Nix's mother has been making for decades.

BREAD PUDDING

- 1 loaf French bread
- 3 eggs
- 2½ cups half-and-half
- 1 cup sugar, divided use,
plus 2 tablespoons
- ½ cup brown sugar
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 2½ cups fresh raspberries
- ¼ cup water
- Zest of 1 small orange
- Butter for the pan

VANILLA SAUCE

- ½ cup sugar
- 2 tablespoons cornstarch
- Dash of salt



- 1½ cups half-and-half
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 tablespoons (¼ stick) butter

- 1. BREAD PUDDING** Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Slice bread into ½-inch cubes to yield 5 cups of cubes and spread onto a baking sheet. Bake 7–10 minutes, until dry. Set aside.
- 2.** In a large bowl, whisk together eggs, half-and-half, ½ cup sugar, brown sugar, vanilla and salt. Fold in the toasted bread, coating evenly. Let soak for 30 minutes.

3. Place the raspberries in a bowl. In a small saucepan over medium heat, combine water, orange zest and ½ cup sugar, stirring to dissolve sugar. Cool syrup slightly, then pour over raspberries and stir to coat.

4. Lightly coat a 9-inch square baking pan with butter. Pour ¾ of the bread mixture into the pan, then spoon raspberries and syrup over the top. Add remaining bread mixture, then sprinkle on 2 tablespoons sugar. Bake 50–60 minutes, until center is set.

5. VANILLA SAUCE While the bread pudding is baking, make the sauce. In a small saucepan, whisk together sugar, cornstarch and salt. Whisk in half-and-half, then set over medium heat. Cook, stirring constantly, until mixture thickens and coats the back of a spoon, about 10–15 minutes. Remove from heat and whisk in vanilla and butter until blended and smooth. Serve on top of the bread pudding.

SERVES 8



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COURTESY CHET GARNER

Underwater Wonderland

At Mammoth Lake Texas, it's what's inside that counts

BY CHET GARNER

I WAS WALKING like an awkward, eager duck with all my gear shaking like heavy tail feathers behind me. Mammoth Lake Texas attracts divers from all over the country, and I understood why as soon as I submerged myself into its strange underwater menagerie.

You can use your fingers to count the number of inland scuba diving destinations in Texas. Some offer a natural glimpse of spring-fed pools (like San Solomon Springs at Balmorhea State Park), and others offer swims through sunken objects. Mammoth Lake in Clute mixes the natural and artificial to create an underwater amusement park.

Below the depths of this 65-acre lake lie more than 150 objects ranging from small sculptures to the entire fuselage of a C-130 cargo plane. With a reservation and a current dive license, visitors can rent gear and embark on the most unusual underwater scavenger hunt in the state—in the largest and deepest dedicated scuba lake in Texas. Most attractions are in 35–40 feet of water, but a deeper hole reaches down to 75 feet.

I was joined by a knowledgeable divemaster, Alex Amaro, who took us on an epic expedition through a World War II submarine and a fighter jet. There's even a life-size sculpture of a Columbian mammoth marking the spot where fossils were found when this was just a sand pit. My favorite stops were the decommissioned rides from Six Flags AstroWorld, which owner Jason Burlison bought and submerged.

All around us were bass, perch and turtles that seemed to be enjoying the sunken treasures as much as I was. Unfortunately we didn't get a glimpse of the 7-foot paddlefish that call the lake home—just another reason to come back. ■

ABOVE Instructor Alex Amaro, giving the diving OK sign, with Chet and Todd White, producer of *The Daytripper*.

TCP Follow along as Chet goes sightseeing underwater. See the video on our website and check out all his Texplorations on *The Daytripper* on PBS.



Know Before You Go

Call ahead or check an event's website for scheduling details.

MAY

07

Ennis Cinco de Mayo, (972) 878-4748, visitennistexas.com

09

Amarillo [9–10] Fiddler on the Roof, (806) 378-3096, amarillociviccenter.com

11

South Padre Island [11–13] Shallow Sport Owners Tournament, (956) 233-9489, shallowsporttournament.com

Abilene [11–14] Western Heritage Classic, (325) 677-4376, westernheritageclassic.com

12

Johnson City Movies at the Memorial, (830) 868-7111, johnsoncitytx.org

Saint Jo Sporting Clay Event, (817) 296-3104, saintjosportingclay.com

Boerne [12–13] Hand-made Market, boernehandmademarket.com

Coolidge [12–13] Mesquite Tree Festival, (254) 203-6198, facebook.com/mesquitetreefestival

Lindale [12–13] Piney Woods Wine Festival, (903) 881-5103, visitlindale.com

McKinney [12–13] Y'all Had To Be Here Live, (214) 769-0645, thecomedyarena.com

Ingram [12–June 23] Of the Earth: Metal and Wood, (830) 367-5121, hcaf.com

13

Brenham T. Graham Brown, (979) 337-7240, thebarnhillcenter.com

Brownwood Lake Brownwood Bash, (325) 784-5223, tpwd.texas.gov

Fort Davis Mile-High Mountains Fest, (432) 426-3337, tpwd.texas.gov

Fredericksburg Cherry Mountain School Open House, (830) 685-3321, historicschools.org

Mesquite Historic Mesquite Inc. Preservation Month Open House and Porch Party, (972) 216-6468, cityofmesquite.com

Texarkana Dragon Boat Festival, (903) 798-3211, texarkanadragonboat.com

The Woodlands Buzzfest, (281) 364-3010, woodlandscenter.org

Victoria Mother's Day Brunch, (361) 573-3734, goldencrescentcasa.org

18

Corsicana Yesterday & Today: The Beatles Experience, (903) 874-7792, corsicanapalace.com

Giddings [18-20] Lee County Fair, leecountyfairtx.com

19

Grapevine [19-21] Main Street Fest, (817) 410-3185, grapevintexasusa.com

Plano [19-21] Texas Mineral and Fossil Show, (972) 941-5840, planoeventcenter.org

MORE EVENTS >

TCP *Submit Your Event*

We pick events for the magazine directly from TexasCoopPower.com. Submit your August event by June 1, and it just might be featured in this calendar.

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fbgcraftbeerfestival.com



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Pick of the Month

Cinco de Mayo Celebration

Cleburne, May 7
 (817) 645-2455
 cleburnechamber.com

This festive celebration will feature vendors and Mexican dishes, plus ballet folklorico, dancing horses, live music, a custom car show, kids' zone and *luchadores* from Advanced Pro Wrestling.

26

McKinney [26-27] Erica Rhodes, (214) 769-0645, thecomedyarena.com

Bandera [26-28] Memorial Day Weekend Stampede, banderaprorodeo.org

Fredericksburg [26-28] Crawfish Festival, fbgcrawfishfestival.com

Kerrville [26-28] Texas Masters of Fine Art and Craft Invitational Exhibition, (469) 223-4162, texasmasters.com

27

Brenham Gunhild Carling, (979) 337-7240, thebarnhillcenter.com

New Braunfels [27-28] Randall King, (830) 606-1281, gruenehall.com

MAY EVENTS CONTINUED

19

Richardson [19-21] Wildflower Arts and Music Festival, wildflowerfestival.com

20

College Station Troubadour Festival, troubadourfestival.com

Hico Texas Steak Cook-off, (254) 485-4984, texassteakcookoff.com

La Grange Pat Byrne, (979) 968-9944, thebugleboy.org

Jefferson [20-21] Train Show, (903) 665-3733, visitjeffersonstexas.com

21

Fredericksburg The Moanin' Frogs, fredericksburgmusicclub.com

25

Grapeland [25-27] Memorial Day Gospel Bluegrass Festival, (936) 687-2594, salmonlakeresort.com

Kerrville [25-June 11] Folk Festival, (830) 257-3600, kerrvillefolkfestival.org

28

Lewisville Fiesta Charra, (972) 219-3401, visitlewisville.com

31

Navasota [31-June 10] Grimes County Fair, grimescountyfair.com

JUNE

01

Fredericksburg [1-4] Hill Country Film Festival, (866) 224-7714, hillcountryff.com

02

Hillsboro [2-3] Bond's Alley Art Festival, (254) 582-5499, hillsboromainstreet.org

03

Fredericksburg Car Fest, (830) 456-2735, fredericksburgcarfest.com

04

The Colony Take on the Heat Triathlon, (214) 370-9010, visitthecolonytx.com

Taking Flight

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CURATED BY GRACE FULTZ



1 LARRY ALFORD
PEDERNALES EC

A great blue heron takes flight at Cypress Falls in Wimberley.

2 CRYSTAL MARTIN
FARMERS EC

Blue Angels soar over Pensacola Beach, Florida.

3 FAIN ZIMMERMAN
VICTORIA EC

A female ruby-throated hummingbird and thistle plant.

4 RACHEL SPENCER
CENTRAL TEXAS EC

"The turkeys here on the ranch are very busy in the fall. On this day they were flying across one of our creeks to find more food."



Upcoming Contests

- DUE MAY 10** Night Sky
- DUE JUN 10** Helping Out
- DUE JUL 10** Golden Hour



Enter online at TexasCoopPower.com/contests.

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



TCP Try your hand at working through the maze to reach the dewberries. See the solution online.

sharp thorns, so I wear thick leather gloves. However, you cannot pick delicate berries with rigid gloved hands, so I cut off the glove tips of my thumb and index finger on my right hand.

Since I'll be kneeling or lying in the pasture, I also wear thick long-sleeved shirts and heavy long pants, which are quite uncomfortable in the May heat and humidity.

I've discovered that these berry vines love the same environment as poison ivy, and often the two plants intermingle. Since I'm focused on berries, I sometimes miss the signature three leaves of poison ivy until I am neck deep. Thus, I keep a trash bag in my supplies so I can change out of and isolate exposed clothes.

Another hazard lurking in the berry patch is the diamondback rattlesnake. The warm spring days are a holiday for them, and a step in any direction is a leap of faith. So before plopping down in the bushes, I probe with a walking stick and listen for the warning rattle.

I have been chased from a berry patch by wild hogs more than once. That's why I keep a pistol on me, though I've never had to use it.

If it's been a wet spring, you can expect good berries but also lots of mosquitoes. Ticks and chiggers are also common pests, so I apply a high-grade bug repellent. I am fair skinned, too, so I wear a large hat and sunscreen to guard against the sun.

I often wonder why no one in my family enjoys the berry picking as much as I do. Oh, they eat them, but they have quit coming with me on the harvest adventure. Once I even offered to get my 15-year-old son out of school early to tag along with me, but he said he had homework. Odd for a Friday. ■

Crawling With Trouble

Harvesting wild dewberries takes patience, will—and an armory

BY SHANE TORNO
ILLUSTRATION BY
CHANELLE NIBBELINK

DEWBERRIES GROW WILD in the scrub brush country of South Texas, and as a child I would pick them with my grandparents. Most of what we picked we ate immediately, but often we would collect enough for my grandmother to bake a cobbler that she served warm, topped with vanilla ice cream—South Texas springtime perfection.

Over the years, I have found very few locations where wild dewberries grow, and they tend to be hard to access. When I do find berries to pick, I am careful to outfit myself properly.

Usually I pick them as they trail along the ground or climb among taller pasture weeds. I have to get on my hands and knees, sometimes even lying on the ground to pick them. Mind you, dewberry vines are covered in thousands of short,

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