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SEPTEMBER 2023

Mum's the Word

Kisha Clark makes no
secret of her network
of mum-makers





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September 2023



08

Bigger and Better—Together

Makers grow Texas' colorful homecoming mum tradition—and their own skills—by working cooperatively.

*Story by Kristen Pettineo
Photos by Wyatt McSpadden*

ON THE COVER

Kisha Clark, right, with Lundyn Byrd, whom she mentored in the art of mum-making.

ABOVE

Materials that will blossom into mums.

Photos by Wyatt McSpadden

12 Dance Hall Darlings

After decades of rocking the countryside, the beloved Triumphs take a final bow.

Story and photo by Erich Schlegel

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By Pam LeBlanc

Planter Banter

RESEARCHERS HAVE LEARNED that plants “talk,” using a process called cavitation, when tiny bubbles burst and produce mini shock waves inside a plant’s vascular system. Sort of like what happens in your joints when you crack your knuckles.

Nice to meet you.



Come here often?



“There’s two kinds of coaches: Them that’s fired and them that’s gonna be fired.”

—BUM PHILLIPS

FINISH THIS SENTENCE

My favorite swimming hole is ...

TCP Tell us how you would finish that sentence. Email your short responses to letters@TexasCoopPower.com or comment on our Facebook post. Include your co-op and town.

Here are some of the responses to our July prompt: **Darkness is only scary when ...**

You’re 91 years old, living alone a mile from a neighbor, the power goes out and you can’t find your cellphone.

HAROLD R. CLARK
NUECES EC
KINGSVILLE

It’s the bottom of your empty bag of chocolates.

MONICA MILLER
COSERV
CARROLLTON

You’re 10 years old and have to go to the outhouse at night.

NORMA KRANZ
UNITED COOPERATIVE SERVICES
SOMERVELL COUNTY

You feel something furry and you know the dog is outside.

GAYLA LEECH
CECA
ALBANY

You can’t see what is making noise and coming toward you.

BOBBY REA
TRINITY VALLEY EC
ELKHART

Visit our website to see more responses.

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LIGHTBULB MOMENT

Here's a reading recommendation for children that will enlighten them about how rural electrification changed America for the better.

Wish Upon a Crawdad takes place in 1940 Oregon. It tells the tale of 12-year-old Ruby Mae Ryan, whose family is about to get electricity for the first time thanks to the electric cooperative formed by her parents and neighbors and who is trying to earn enough money to buy a surprise gift for her mother.

"I hope kids will take away a greater appreciation for all the wonderful things they can do because of electricity," says author Curtis Condon, a retired co-op magazine editor.



In a Manner of Speaking

KINDLY NOTE that Austin is the politest American city.

That's according to a survey of more than 1,500 residents of the 30 largest metropolitan areas in the U.S. Preply, a language learning app and e-learning platform, conducted the survey.

Fort Worth ranks third.

Pardon us for saying so, but the same survey lists Houston as the 10th-rudest city.

September 4

National Newspaper Carrier Day

"Were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter." So said Thomas Jefferson.



JULIA ROBINSON

JULY 2023 'I Love All the Love Here'

“As a parent of an autistic child who participated in Camp CAMP for many years, I was overjoyed to see this fine organization recognized in your magazine.”

MARTIN GIBLIN
PEDERNALES EC
SPRING BRANCH

Knowing Natives

Native grasses? Really? The first grass you list (Johnson grass) was imported from Turkey [Ranchland Revival, July 2023]. I can remember my father cursing it and the man it was named for when I was a boy. It is listed as a noxious weed in 19 states and under certain circumstances becomes deadly to cattle and horses.

Jim Evans
Victoria EC
Port Lavaca

EDITOR'S NOTE Sharp eye, Jim. Rancher Jon Taggart has planted Johnson grass until native grasses become established, but it's not native to Texas.

My grandmother was one of the original Rangerettes [Kilgore's Kickers, June 2023].

HOLLY ANTHONY
VIA FACEBOOK

Historical Details

I had never known about the post-revolution battles with Mexico [Second Sacking, July 2023]. I also learned a new word or two from the author.

Keith Brown
Pedernales EC
Lago Vista

I noticed a discrepancy. At the end it says the two attacks on Texas drove the Texians to join the United States six years after the Mexican

attacks in 1842. That would make it 1848 when Texas joined the U.S. In school, we learned that Texas joined the U.S. on December 29, 1845. Did I miss something somewhere?

Bill Beverly
Trinity Valley EC
Canton

EDITOR'S NOTE Our mistake, Bill. Texas joined the U.S. three years after the 1842 attacks. The story has been corrected on our website.

Old-School Luxury

These fantastic hotels are true reminders of old-school luxury and comfort [Sleeping Giants, July 2023]. I recommend stepping out and trying all these magnificent hotels.

Bill Koenig
Fayette EC
West Point



COURTESY GAGE HOTEL

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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Mums Inc.
Homecoming Mum Professionals

Makers grow Texas' colorful homecoming mum tradition—and their own skills—by working cooperatively

BIGGER AND BETTER—TOGETHER

Homecoming season is upon us.

How can you tell? Well, there's football, for sure. And the unflinching heat finally starts standing down. But maybe the biggest—BIGGEST—clues are the over-the-top mum assemblies that high school students flaunt in the name of school spirit and Texas tradition.

It used to be that homecoming mums meant corsages, a nice arrangement easily pinned to a dress. But sometime in the 1970s, Texas mums became Texas-sized—extravagant masses of ribbons, buttons, charms and bells.

Families could spend hours creating them. Or they can turn to someone like Kisha Clark, for whom mums are serious business. Just don't call them cute.

"When I hear someone call my mum business cute, that's like nails on a chalkboard to me," Clark says, laughing. "This isn't a hobby. I'm not just throwing glitter at the kitchen table. Mums are works of art. I take them seriously, and I take my business seriously, too."

So seriously that Clark launched Mums Inc., a professional organization for mum-makers. Clark, who lives in Providence Village, near Denton, believes there's power in numbers and in working cooperatively—whether it's for sourcing materials in bulk, staying on top of new trends, referring customers or building skills.

"Really anything," Clark said. "When I first got started making mums, the business was competitive. But I think



we're better together. I mean, doctors have professional membership organizations. Attorneys do too. But nobody was talking about the mum industry this way. Why not?"

Clark, a member of CoServ, an electric cooperative based in the Metroplex, has been in the mum business for more than 20 years, first learning the trade from her grandmother while growing up near Fort Cavazos (formerly Fort Hood) in Killeen. She loved making mums in high school but never dreamed of making a career of them. Instead, she went to college and studied something totally different: cybersecurity.

But she wasn't out of the mum business for long.

"It was 2002. I was 23 years old and driving home from my first cybersecurity job in Plano, and I passed a school with a big sign out front," Clark said. "It said something about picking up homecoming mums, and I suddenly

OPPOSITE Kisha Clark, a cybersecurity expert, is fully immersed in the mum-making business.

RIGHT A vast array of ribbons serves as Clark's palette.



remembered how much I loved making them in high school. I thought, ‘Hey, I could do that.’ And from that moment, I became kind of obsessed with learning the business and making mums again.”

Clark scoured the internet to source supplies, get a better understanding of the market and network with other mum-makers. But in the early 2000s, information was scarce online. The mum business was driven mostly by word-of-mouth referrals, and it could be tough to get a foothold.

Clark saw an opportunity. With her unique combination of crafting skills and computer expertise, she says she became one of the first mum-makers to sell supplies, mum kits and custom mum designs on the internet.

Her first year was slow. She sold just two mums. But each homecoming season, Clark’s customer base grew, and within just a few years, it became less a hobby and more a bona fide side hustle. Today that business, DK Florals, produces 30–35 mums every season. Some take up to 24 hours of work, and they sell for anywhere from \$250 to well over \$800.

Maybe it’s because of Clark’s day job—managing a team of engineers—or maybe it’s because she’s a self-described leader by nature. But as her mum business grew more successful, Clark felt like there was potential for something much bigger.

“I was talking to another mum-maker friend,” Clark says. “She needed some supplies, and we ended up trading some items we both needed. We got to talking about the business, and we realized we needed to create some kind of network.”

“When I first got started making mums, the business was competitive. But I think we’re better together.”

That’s when Mums Inc. was born. It started as a Facebook group for mum-makers in 2012, but the conversation kept getting bigger.

“We started buying supplies together, which got us a better cost,” Clark says. “And as our numbers grew, we began teaching marketing. And from there, it just took off.”

Before long, Clark was hosting events for Mums Inc. members and leading in-person and virtual classes. What started as a homegrown Facebook group has now spun into a full-fledged professional membership organization with 188 members from all over Texas and some from Oklahoma, New Mexico and Florida. For an annual fee of \$35, mum-makers become part of a professional network, gaining access to its tips and techniques, resources, and referrals.



FROM OPPOSITE Clark shows Lundyn Byrd some of her techniques for crafting a mum. Byrd, a 2023 Aubrey High School graduate, has had her own mum business for three years. Mums can easily weigh 10 pounds and sometimes twice that.

friends' high school-aged kiddos needed a mum or a garter, they'd call me and I'd do it."

Clark saw McGlothin's work and saw the potential for a business. She reached out through Facebook and encouraged McGlothin to consider joining Mums Inc.

"That's when I realized that this could be more than just a hobby," McGlothin says. "I was just barely breaking even at the time, and I wasn't really approaching this as an entrepreneur. And now I have a profitable business."

But mostly, McGlothin is grateful that there's a group of skilled artisans passing down a Texas tradition.

"In our group, there are so many years of professional mum-making experience," she says. "We have people who have been making mums for their kids and grandkids, going back decades. That kind of experience is priceless—and it's being handed down generation by generation in our group. We share braiding techniques, know-how and new trends. I find it all incredibly valuable.

"And I'm glad it's not getting lost."

For Clark, that kind of connection embodies the potential she envisioned when she started the mum collective. Yes, the big, beautiful mums themselves are the end product. But for Clark, Mums

Inc. is really about people reaching their potential and building a community.

"Whether I'm managing engineers or leading Mums Inc., deep down, it's about people growth," Clark says. "I like to see people beyond what they see in themselves. Mums Inc. was like a bunch of flower seeds. They were going to grow, but now they're in the same pot, growing together. And now we have this beautiful rainforest."

Clark takes pride in knowing Mums Inc. members can help put their children through college, pay for family vacations or leave their jobs—because of mums.

"Yes, I love mums," Clark says. "But my joy? It's in seeing this community succeed." ■

Mums Inc. has its own TikTok account where Clark shares social media marketing expertise. After all, the video-sharing social media network is practically tailor-made for showing off her big, colorful, ornate designs. And these days, most of Clark's Generation Z customers are on there, too.

"TikTok has been great for us, but this is about so much more," Clark says. "This is about us being taken seriously and giving people the tools they need to realize their full potential. And we're not just a bunch of crafty moms. We're businesswomen."

Erica Muñoz McGlothin, a mum-maker and Mums Inc. board member, wholeheartedly agrees. The Temple mom began making mums for friends and family as a hobby.

"I'm kind of a creative person by nature," she explains. "I love the pageantry of it. I love that it's so Texas. So when my

Dance Hall Darlings

After decades of rocking the countryside, the beloved Triumphs take a final bow

IT ALL BEGAN in the summer of 1959 in Rosenberg, southwest of Houston. Tim Griffith's dad was a traveling salesman and came home one day with a used electric guitar and amp.

Obviously, the younger Griffith needed a band.

"I played saxophone in the nearby Needville High School band," Don Drachenberg says. "We got a few other friends together, and next thing you know, we're playing our first gig in January of 1960. A sock hop in Richmond."

Band member Denny Zatyka's dad was a distributor for Lone Star beer and allowed the teens—the Triumphs—to practice in a beer warehouse, Drachenberg says. "Through the years we all had regular jobs," he says. "I became an American history high school teacher; Denny inherited the Lone Star beer distributorship; Tim Griffith was a civil engineer; Teddy Mensik worked in a machine shop; and Gary Koeppen was an insurance salesman."

In 1966 the band recorded the Hank Williams tune *I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry*, sung by another founding member, B.J. Thomas. It became a national hit. The song launched a solo career for Thomas, a Grammy winner whose hit songs included *Raindrops Keep Fallin' on My Head* and *Hooked on a Feeling*.

From there the Triumphs started playing the Central Texas dance hall circuit, through the '60s and into the '70s, bringing their rock tunes to dance halls in towns including Brenham, East Bernard, El Campo, Hillje, La Grange, Schulenburg, Shiner, Tate and Weimar.

Dance hall historian Gary E. McKee, editor of *Texas Polka News*, says Saturday nights were for rock 'n' roll dances; Sunday afternoons were for polka bands and an older crowd. On Friday nights, of course, folks were busy with high school sports.

Through the 1960s, the Triumphs were among the best-known circuit bands in Central Texas, along with the Barons and Roy Head and the Traits.

By 1980, as the world embraced disco and the Triumphs missed spending time with their families after more than a decade of working weekends and holidays, the band took a break. They regrouped in 1992.

But on a chilly Saturday night this past February, the Triumphs took their final bow in appropriate surrounds: at Swiss Alp Hall near Schulenburg in Fayette County. Sixty-three years after that first sock hop in Richmond, they played their last show.

Butch Bosak was there—along with about 450 loyal fans. Bosak played guitar with the Barons way back when. "When we were playing, we owned the place," he says. "We competed with [the Triumphs], but they were always family to us. We'd go to their New Year's Eve dances. Now that they are gone, there is a void."

"These old dance halls have wooden floors on pier-and-beam foundations," Drachenberg explains. "The floor would bounce like crazy when our fans danced and stomped to our music. The floors were going 'whoomph! whoomph!' We had big speakers stacked on top of each other in front of the stage, and we figured we better tie them down so they don't fall down on our fans."

Jonathan Socha, owner of Lee County Peanut Co., followed the Triumphs through the ages. "If you weren't soaking wet with sweat from dancing, you weren't having a good time," he says. "Swiss Alp was basically a hay barn with windows. We sweated our tails off."

Sandy Randolph grew up in Smithville. She would catch a ride with friends to any performance nearby. "I started sneaking into the dances when I was 13," she says. "The shows were the big social gathering of our area."

The Triumphs played at lifelong fan Catherine Poppe's 50th wedding anniversary.

"They play all kinds of music, they attract all kinds of people," says Poppe, who retired from Fayette Electric Cooperative in 2021. "It's just truly amazing the draw that this band has, and now they're going to be part of history."

Over the past few years, as the band's members aged, "the band lost its family feeling," Drachenberg says. "We discussed that it might be time to stop."

Co-founder and lead guitarist Tim Griffith died in December 2022. "Tim's death was the exclamation point on our decision to hang it up," says Drachenberg, 81, a member of Fayette EC. "Our band had a magical *something*. From that magic, our fan base grew and grew. It was great to see fans that have been following us for 60 freaking years.

"We had a hell of a run."

During intermission of the final performance, McKee presented the Triumphs with an honor from Texas Dance Hall Preservation.

"It was bittersweet," McKee says. "They played the soundtrack of my life." ■



The Triumphs play their final show February 18 at Swiss Alp Hall near Schulenburg.

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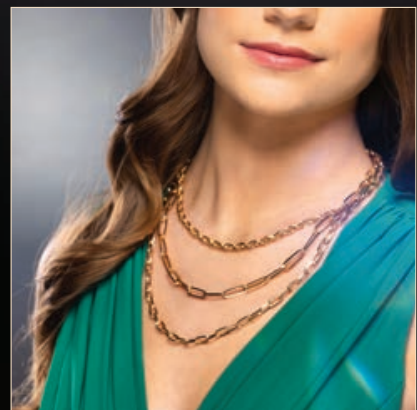
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The Power of Preparation

WITH SEVERE WEATHER EVENTS occurring more frequently, it makes sense to be prepared. During a prolonged power outage or other emergency, this means having enough food, water and other supplies to last at least a few days.

In conjunction with National Preparedness Month in September, remember the power of preparation. Even at a modest level, preparation can help reduce stress and anxiety and lessen the impact of an emergency event.

Here are general guidelines from the Federal Emergency Management Agency:

- ▶ Assemble a grab-and-go disaster kit. Include items like nonperishable food, water (1 gallon per person, per day), diapers, batteries, flashlights, prescription medications, a first-aid kit, a battery-powered radio and phone chargers.
- ▶ Create a household evacuation plan that includes your pets.
- ▶ Develop a plan for communicating with family and friends (via text, social media or messaging app).
- ▶ Have some extra cash available. During a power outage, electronic card readers and cash machines may not work.
- ▶ Store important documents (birth certificates, property deeds, etc.) in a safe place away from home (for example, a bank safe deposit box).
- ▶ Keep neighbors and co-workers apprised of your plans.
- ▶ Fill your car with gas.

Care for Family Members

If you have older family members or those with special needs, make sure they have enough medication and supplies for a few days. If you have an infant or young children, make certain that you have ample formula, diapers, medication and other supplies on hand to weather an outage lasting several days or more.

Keep Pets Safe

- ▶ Bring pets indoors at the first sign of a storm or other emergency. Animals can become disoriented and frightened during severe weather and may wander off.
- ▶ Microchip your pets and ensure the contact information is up to date.
- ▶ Store pet medical records on a USB drive or in an easy-to-remember location.
- ▶ Create an emergency kit for pets (include shelf-stable food, bottled water, medications and other supplies).

Be Outage Ready

Severe storms may not require evacuation but may result in power outages. **Here are some tips to prepare for that possibility.**

Stock up responsibly. It's paramount to stock up on food, water and nonperishable items in case you can't heat up or cool down anything. But everyone is going to be in the same boat as you if a power outage occurs, so try not to purchase more than what you'll need and leave supplies for others.

If possible, get a generator. This can basically make it seem like you aren't even experiencing a blackout. Whether you get a portable generator to keep a few lights on, a standby generator that will automatically click on when it senses an outage or one that's powerful enough to light the whole house, it'll be one of the best purchases you've made. But it's critical that any generator be installed and used safely.

Stay in the know. Keep your eye on the sky and monitor the news as best you can to get a better idea of when things might get back to normal. ■

4 Key Factors That Impact Energy Bills

THERE ARE SEVERAL FACTORS that impact the energy bill you pay each month. Because daily costs of living seem to have increased across the board, the factors that affect electricity prices are a timely topic.

Fuel Costs

Before electricity can be delivered to your home, it must first be generated at a power plant or from a renewable source. The cost of fuel fluctuates, which is why you see a power or fuel charge on your monthly bill. This monthly charge covers cost fluctuations without your co-op having to continually restructure electricity rates.

Service Costs

Your bill includes a monthly service charge, which recovers part of the co-op's ongoing investments in poles, wires, meters, system maintenance and additional costs necessary to provide electric service. Supply chain issues and cost increases for basic equipment such as distribution transformers affect your cooperative. The service charge is the same for everyone, and the costs are shared equally across the membership.

Weather

When temperatures soar or dip, your cooling or heating equipment must run longer and at maximum capacity, which can greatly increase your energy use. Extreme temperatures can also affect electricity market prices. When the need for electricity increases due to extreme heat or cold, the price of power typically rises.

Energy Consumption

This is the amount of electricity you use each month to power your home's heating and cooling system, appliances, lighting, electronics, and more. The amount of electricity you consume is measured in kilowatt-hours. You have control over how much energy you use, which can ultimately help manage your monthly costs.

Your co-op is here to help you, too. Contact us if you have questions about your energy bill or want advice on how to save energy at home. ■



DEAN MITCHELL | ISTOCK.COM



SROJAN PAVLOVIC | ISTOCK.COM

Landscape With Energy Efficiency in Mind

THOUGHTFUL LANDSCAPE DESIGN can help keep your home cooler in the summer and warmer in the winter—a boon for your electric bill.

A well-placed tree can shave up to 25% off a home's air conditioning bill, and a shady, grassy yard can be much cooler than a sunny, paved yard.

Plant deciduous trees on the south and southwest sides of the house to provide shade from the sun in the summer. After deciduous trees lose their leaves in winter, the sunshine will help heat your home.

Plant evergreen trees and shrubs on the north and northwest sides of your home to provide shade year-round.

Evergreens also provide a windbreak, so plant them where they will protect the home from wind. Plant windbreaks at a distance from your home of two to three times the expected height of the mature tree.

Before planting a tree, consider its proximity to the house and power lines. If there are overhead power lines nearby, plan to leave plenty of space between the tree's mature size and the lines.

Avoid planting any trees too close to the house if they require frequent watering.

To identify the location of underground power lines and other utilities, call 811 before you dig. ■



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An Arts Hub

An innovative space for creators in downtown Lubbock is expanding

STORY AND PHOTO
BY ADDIE BROYLES

IF EVERY ARTIST who came to Lubbock stayed in Lubbock, there wouldn't be enough studio space for them to work.

So says Chad Plunket, the director of the Charles Adams Studio Project, which for the past 10 years has been renting studios to artists in a formerly industrial part of downtown.

Plunket knows how hard it is to stand out in a sea of creative people. The multidisciplinary artist came to Lubbock to earn an undergraduate degree at Texas Tech University in the 1990s and then left for Clemson University in the early 2000s to pursue a Master of Fine Arts in landscape architecture. In 2010, Plunket returned to Lubbock to work with noted gallerist Charles Adams, who wanted to create a downtown space where artists could live and work and open their studios to the public.

"There's so much competition, and this gives [students] a landing place for a bit to get some experience, and then they are more marketable to the

Chad Plunket runs the Charles Adams Studio Project, an innovative live-work studio space for artists in downtown Lubbock.

world,” Plunket says.

Adams grew up in the Hub City in the 1940s and '50s loving art and trying to figure out a way to make a living in it. He enrolled at Texas Tech but got kicked out in the 1960s, Plunket says, so he moved to New York City and eventually opened an eponymous gallery on Bleecker Street in 1969.

By the 1980s, Adams returned to Lubbock to open three galleries bearing his name. He sold art in shopping centers, and students who hoped to sell in his gallery one day worked in studios on campus.

During those years, Lubbock didn't have an arts district like the one Adams left in Greenwich Village, but that started to change in 2004, when the Louise Hopkins Underwood Center for the Arts opened in a former fire station near the old railyard in downtown Lubbock.

A few years later, Adams decided to consolidate his galleries into a single location downtown and outfit one of the old buildings into his home. Philanthropist Margaret Talkington, who ran a downtown clothing store called Margaret's, shared Adams' vision for providing housing and studio space for artists, so she made a donation that brought the Charles Adams Studio Project to life in 2011.

The first decade of CASP drew artists who worked with tools that were hard to buy, move and maintain. “You have artists welding in their garage; it's not the safest thing to do,” Plunket says. “And a \$12,000 etching press, it's heavy to move.”

A printmaking studio at CASP gets a lot of use with workshops for kids and families making holiday cards. Professional printmakers rent studio time. On the other side of the building, where mechanics used to work on police motorcycles, there's a metal studio for blacksmithing, welding and metal fabrication with a foundry and two forges.

In the main building, CASP rents eight studios to working artists—a roster that currently includes Flatlands Dance Theatre, the 806 Collective and painter Kristy Kristinek. “It's an empty room when the artist gets it,” Plunket says. “What the artists show in their individual studios is up to them. Once they rent it, it's their space.”

Participating artists must agree to open their studios during the city's First Friday Art Trail, a monthly event that draws 7,000 people to the arts district, which now includes dozens of studios as well as restaurants, a brewery and a bookstore.

A few years ago, CASP added four live-work studios in another once-abandoned city building a block away. “They

have 500 square feet of kitchen, laundry, bathroom and living space and 1,100 square feet of studio,” Plunket says. “But the catch is that it's one- to two-year leases.”

Artists pay between \$500 and \$700 a month. “It's only a year or two and then we force them to leave,” Plunket says. “It's intensive and most of them don't want to leave, but to keep it fresh, we have to keep new people coming in.”

Among the artists currently living there is Cassandra Trautman, a costume designer and leatherworker who grew up in Austin and San Antonio. With the time she's spent at CASP, she was able to find a way to stay in Lubbock and make art.

“I often get an idea late at night and have to act on it or I can't sleep,” Trautman says. “Being in a live-work studio, I'm always just a few steps away from my tools so I don't lose those ideas before I can act on them.”

Trautman came to Lubbock for her MFA in theater design in 2015, and she's seen Lubbock's art scene grow tremendously. “There's just so much more now—more physical places but also more collectives of artists and art market groups,” she says. “And the new Buddy Holly Hall and Ballet Lubbock building have definitely made the area more noticeable because of its sheer presence from the highway and the art it supports and brings to town.”

The \$153 million, 2,290-seat Buddy Holly Hall of Performing Arts and Sciences became a cornerstone of downtown revitalization when it opened in January 2021, just two blocks from CASP's studios.

“It is very cool to see out-of-town guests figure out the area and realize that we've got a lot to offer and more than just the Tech campus here for art and artists,” Trautman says.

The next phase for CASP is to add four more live-work studios, as well as apartment spaces for artists who don't need a physical studio or heavy equipment, like poets and playwrights.

Adams, 80, has officially retired from his gallery and CASP, but he still enjoys those First Fridays, the 12 gallery shows that CASP coordinates each year and the annual CASPFest, which takes place in October and is a reunion of sorts for all the artists who have come through the project over the years.

“We've had so many, you can't even keep track of them all anymore,” Plunket says. “A lot of them, they get a space here, and now they are all across the country.” ■

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Billie Jean King enters the Battle of the Sexes on a throne. She soon assumed a broader reign in the sports world.

King dominated Riggs, 55 years old and out of shape. When she won the first set, the women in the Astrodome gave her a standing ovation. In short order, she won the next two sets. After the final point, King tossed her racket into the air, and Riggs hopped the net and whispered into her ear, “I underestimated you.”

That was hardly news to King.

It took an act of Congress to start leveling the playing field for women. Title IX, signed into law in June 1972, heralded a promise of more opportunities for women in sports.

And yet, in September 1972, after King captured the U.S. Open title, she denounced her most unequal prize money in a press conference. She won \$10,000, while the men’s champion, Ilie Năstase, got \$25,000.

“This was ridiculous, so I said, ‘I don’t think the women are going to be back next year. We’re not going to be back in 1973 unless we get equal prize money,’” King recalled years later.

Her firm stand paid off. A year later, just weeks before the Battle of the Sexes at the Astrodome, the U.S. Open started paying women the same as men.

In the 50 years since shutting down—and shutting up—Riggs, King has become a leading advocate for women and LGBTQ+ people. She became the first female athlete awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, in 2009.

Through a 2023 lens, the spectacle at the Astrodome might seem more tiresome than outrageous. To King, being at the forefront of a social uprising in 1972 and 1973 was simply tiring.

“It was a huge year, a pivotal year for tennis and for women in general,” King told *USA Today* columnist Christine Brennan. “I just remember being exhausted all the time. As I’ve said before, when I sleep in now, I’m still catching up from the 1970s.” ■

When Pigs Fly

Billie Jean King did the unthinkable, crushing Bobby Riggs—and notching a win for gender equality—at the Astrodome

BY TOM WIDLowski

YOU HAVE TO PEEL back an almost insufferable layer of hype—garishness, really—to reach the essence of Billie Jean King’s victory in the so-called Battle of the Sexes 50 years ago this month in Houston. In truth, you have to peel back the calendar by 12 months—to King’s bold shot across the bow, when she decried the disparity in prize money between men and women.

First the hype. Bobby Riggs, a tennis star in the 1940s who later became a shameless promoter, declared no woman could beat him. Not even King, who by the summer of 1973 had already won 31 of her 39 career grand slam titles. King, 29, accepted the challenge, even agreeing to

play by men’s rules—best of five sets, as opposed to women’s best of three.

So on September 20, 1973, four shirtless members of the Rice University men’s track team carried King on a litter, à la Cleopatra, onto a tennis court set up inside the 8-year-old Astrodome. Riggs, a self-proclaimed chauvinist wearing a warmup jacket that said Sugar Daddy, entered in a rickshaw pulled by models.

King, as if to state the obvious, presented Riggs with a gift of a baby pig.

When the bluster subsided, the 30,472 in attendance, joined by some 90 million TV viewers worldwide—a tennis record that still stands—settled in for a sports contest. Except it was no contest.

No-Bake Desserts

Skip the oven but not the indulgence with these grand finales

BY VIANNEY RODRIGUEZ, FOOD EDITOR

Who says cheesecake must be complicated? This no-bake apple cheesecake is creamy and delicious and combines two favorite desserts—apple pie and cheesecake—into one outstanding treat.

Mini Apple Cheesecakes

3 tablespoons unsalted butter
2 large apples, peeled, cored and diced
¼ cup brown sugar
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
2 teaspoons cornstarch
1 package cream cheese (8 ounces), room temperature
1 can sweetened condensed milk (14 ounces)
¼ cup lemon juice
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
6 pre-made mini graham cracker pie crusts

1. Melt butter in a skillet over medium-high heat. Add the diced apples and brown sugar. Sauté until apples begin to soften. Add cinnamon and cornstarch and stir and simmer until apples are tender. Remove from heat and allow to cool completely.
2. Beat cream cheese until smooth. Add sweetened condensed milk and continue beating, scraping down sides of the bowl until well-mixed. Stir in lemon juice and vanilla.
3. Spoon cheesecake filling into graham cracker crusts. Chill in fridge until firm, about an hour, and serve topped with apple mixture.

SERVES 6

TCP Follow Vianney Rodriguez while she cooks in *Cocina Gris* at sweetlifelife.com, where she features a recipe for No-Bake Concha Truffles.





Ambrosia

DEBORAH ANDERSON
COSERV

Anderson shares her version of the classic Southern dessert, ambrosia, a tropical fruit salad that can be whipped up in 10 minutes.

- 1 container frozen whipped topping (8 ounces), thawed**
- 3 cans tropical fruit (15 ounces each), drained**
- 2 cups mini multicolored marshmallows**
- 1½ cups shredded sweetened coconut**

1. Combine all ingredients. Mix well. Chill until ready to serve.

SERVES 6

Frozen Peanut Butter Banana Pie

JAN BOX
TRINITY VALLEY EC

Frozen peanut butter banana pie is an easy-to-make dessert—no oven required. Layers of hot fudge, peanut butter, whipped topping, bananas and chocolate atop a sugar cookie crust make for the perfect ending to any meal.

- 2 cups crushed sugar cookies**
- 4 tablespoons (½ stick) butter, melted**
- 1 jar hot fudge topping (11.75 ounces), warmed**

CONTINUED >

\$500 WINNER

Chocolate Éclair Dessert

BRENDA HEINRICH
MIDSOUTH EC



All the deliciousness of an éclair with no baking. Luxurious layers of pudding, graham crackers and whipped topping finished with a chocolate glaze make for one amazing dessert.

SERVES 8–12



- 2 tablespoons (¼ stick) butter, room temperature, for the pan**
- 1 box graham crackers (14.4 ounces)**
- 2 packages instant French vanilla pudding mix (3.25 ounces each)**
- 3½ cups milk, divided use**
- 1 container frozen whipped topping (8 ounces), thawed**
- 2 cups sugar**
- ⅔ cup unsweetened cocoa powder**
- 4 tablespoons (½ stick) butter**
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract**

1. Coat the bottom of a 9-by-13-inch pan with butter.
2. Line the bottom of the pan with ⅓ of the graham crackers.
3. In a large bowl, use an electric mixer to combine the pudding mix with 3 cups milk. Beat at medium speed for 2 minutes.
4. Gently fold in whipped topping. Pour half the pudding mixture over the graham crackers.
5. Layer another ⅓ of the graham crackers and the remaining pudding mixture, then top with the remaining graham crackers.
6. In a saucepan, combine sugar, cocoa and remaining ½ cup milk. Bring to a boil. Boil 1 minute.
7. Remove cocoa mixture from heat and add butter and vanilla. Mix well and allow to cool. Pour the chocolate sauce over the graham cracker layer.
8. Refrigerate overnight until set.

TCP \$500 Recipe Contest

CHOCOLATE DUE SEPTEMBER 10

We're looking for your choicest chocolate recipe—cake, brownie, whatever. Submit your best online by September 10 for a chance to win \$500.



RECIPES CONTINUED

- 1 package cream cheese (8 ounces), room temperature
- 1 cup peanut butter
- 1¼ cups powdered sugar
- 1 container frozen whipped topping (16 ounces), thawed, divided use
- 3 bananas, sliced ¼-inch thick
- 1 cup chocolate syrup

1. Mix together sugar cookies and butter and press into the bottom of a greased 9-inch springform pan.
2. Pour warmed fudge topping over the crust.
3. Blend cream cheese and peanut butter until smooth. Mix in powdered sugar until combined then fold in ¾ of the whipped topping.
4. Spoon mixture over fudge topping, spreading evenly.
5. Top with sliced bananas
6. Top with remaining whipped topping, spreading evenly.
7. Freeze 8 hours.



8. Allow pie to sit at room temperature 15 minutes before slicing. Run a knife around edge of pan and remove the outer ring.
9. Serve drizzled with chocolate syrup.

SERVES 12

TCP We have more than 1,000 recipes in our online archive, including desserts galore. Check out our website to find other options for delicious desserts.

Trust the Crust

BY VIANNEY RODRIGUEZ

My favorite part of a no-bake dessert is the crust. Think beyond the OG—graham crackers. Here are five tasty options that make a perfect base for any no-bake dessert:

Shortbread: For an extra buttery base, crumble up shortbread cookies and top with whipped cream.

Chocolate chip cookies: Kids and adults will love this chocolate-studded crust.

Gingersnap cookies: Gingersnaps add a touch of spice to a sweet treat.

Pretzels: Salty and sweet pretzels make any citrus dessert sing—and zing.

Cereal: Your favorite childhood bowl of cereal transformed into a crust pleases palates of all ages.



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COURTESY CHET GARNER

Mysterious Markings

Native drawings in aptly named Paint Rock offer intriguing clues

BY CHET GARNER

I WAS EXCITED. It was a crisp spring day, and I was about to see the famous painted rocks of Paint Rock. I watched my phone GPS like a hawk as it led me to the town and then past it. “Hmm, that’s strange,” I thought but kept my eyes on the lookout for a visitors center or giant sign marking the largest collection of pictographs in North America.

“You’ve passed your destination,” taunted my GPS. What? I didn’t see a thing. I turned around and realized I missed a small gate sign marking the entrance to Campbell Ranch. This hidden gem was especially hidden.

I entered the property and met Kay Campbell, who at 96 still greets visitors and shares the story of the ancient markings on her family’s land. Campbell’s grandfather was an archaeologist and visited Texas in the 1870s in search of Native American artifacts. Near the Concho River, he found 1,500 pictographs on a rocky bluff overlooking the river valley. He purchased the land and began his research.

The drawings range in size from single figures to full shields. They depict people, animals and battles in multiple colors, but most are burnt red, created on rocks hauled in from miles away. In the 1990s observers realized that on certain days, like the summer solstice, shadows created by the rocky overhangs added additional shapes on top of the paintings. I was fascinated.

Many scientists believe this area served as an annual meeting ground for Apache, Comanche, Jumano and Tonkawa tribes. Over hundreds of years, they would meet, paint and celebrate the year. Much about their traditions is unknown, but I loved the thought of standing on perhaps the oldest family reunion grounds in Texas. ■

ABOVE Bill Campbell shows Chet around the pictographs at Paint Rock.

TCP Join Chet as he visits the tribal meeting ground in the video on our website. And see all his Texplorations on *The Daytripper* on PBS.



Know Before You Go

Call ahead or check an event’s website for scheduling details, and check our website for many more upcoming events.

SEPTEMBER

08

Wimberley [8–9] Wings Over Wimberley, (269) 290-5001, wingsoverwimberley.com

09

Rosenberg Ride to Rosenberg Car Show, (713) 502-3168, rosenbergartsalliance.com

10

Yorktown Holy Cross Festival, (361) 564-2893, holycrossyorktown.net

Gainesville [10–17] Gainesville Area Visual Arts Fall Art Exhibition, (940) 613-6939, gainesvilleareavisualarts.org

16

Seguin [16–17] St. James Catholic Church Classic Car Show and Festival, (830) 379-1796, saintjamescc.org

18

Kerrville [18–23] Paint Kerrville! Outdoor Painters Event, (830) 895-2911, kackkerrville.com

22

Glen Rose [22–23] Wine and Art Festival, (817) 291-8367, glenrosewineandartfestival.org

Sulphur Springs [22–23] Lone Star Heritage Quilt Guild Show, (209) 509-9522, sulphurspringstxquilts.com

23

Lakehills Medina Lake Cajun Festival, (830) 460-0600, cajunfestival-medinalake.com

Ingram [23–24] Texas Arts and Crafts Fair, (830) 367-5121, txartsandcraftsfair.com

24

Lakeway Arts in the Afternoon: Balcones Community Orchestra, (512) 261-1010, lakewayartsdistrict.com

Meyersville Sts. Peter & Paul Catholic Church Barbecue and Raffle, (361) 275-3868, catholiccommunityofcuero.org

Serbin Wendish Fest, (979) 366-2441, texaswendish.org

29

Fairfield [29-30] Big T Memorial State Championship BBQ Cookoff, (469) 383-8355, bigtmemorial.com

Giddings [29-30] Texas Word Wrangler Book Festival, (979) 542-2716, www.giddingspubliclibrary.org

30

Winnboro Cowboy Music and Poetry Gathering, (903) 342-0686, winnboro.centerforthearts.com

OCTOBER

06

Los Fresnos [6-7] Narciso Martinez Conjunto Festival, (956) 367-0335, narciso.martinezculturalartscenter.org

Corpus Christi [6-28] Dimension L, (361) 884-6406, artcentercc.org

07

Bowie Chicken and Bread Days Heritage Festival, (940) 872-6246, cityofbowietx.com

Jonestown Night Sky Advocacy Star Party, (512) 267-2011, jtownnightsky.com

Marble Falls Main Street Car Show, (830) 220-4489, highlandlakeskiwanis.org

TCP Submit Your Event

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

Enjoy a grand TEXAS time!

F R E D E R I C K S B U R G

FOOD & WINE Festival



**Saturday, October 28
Noon-7pm**

22 Texas wineries • Texas specialty booths

Prize pull and amazing auction

Toe-tapping music • Food concessionaires

Texas craft beer • Gargantuan grape toss

Downtown Market Square

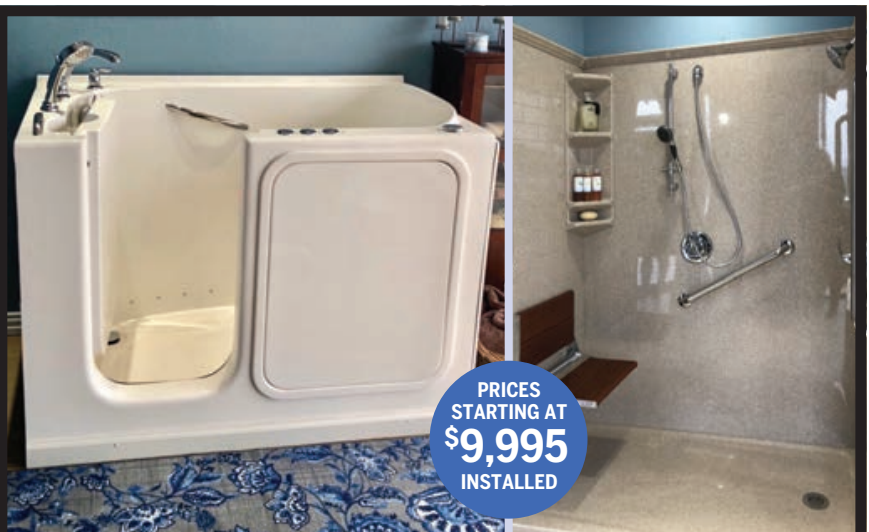
Plus three special events: Oct. 26 - Messina Hof Hill

Country; Oct. 27 - Becker Vineyards and

Oct. 28 - Marktplatz Patron Brunch

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Actual size
is 38.1 mm

New for 2023—the Morgan Silver Dollar Is BACK! **99.9% Silver, Legal Tender, Extremely Limited Availability!**

The Morgan Silver Dollar—originally minted from 1878 to 1904, then again in 1921—is the most popular vintage Silver Dollar in the world. Coin experts estimate that as few as 15% of all vintage Morgans still exist, due to the ravages of time, along with mass-meltings by the U.S. Government.

The entire market was thrilled when the U.S. Mint brought the Morgan Silver Dollar back in 2021, in honor of the popular, vintage coin's 100th anniversary.

Legal Tender, Struck in 99.9% Fine Silver

The program was a huge success, and the relatively small mintage instantly sold out at the mint. Buyers loved the fact that these new coins were the first legal-tender Morgans in 100 years, and that they were struck in 99.9% fine silver—instead of the 90% silver/10% copper alloy of the originals.

But with only 175,000 coins struck, many buyers were left empty-handed, and frustrated by the instant sell-out. If you were able to acquire a 2021 for the 100th anniversary—congratulations!

Then—An Unplanned One-Year Hiatus

Then last year, the *entire market* was left empty-handed because—although these modern Morgans were intended to be an annual release—the U.S. Mint was caught off-guard by the global shortage of the silver blanks required to strike the coins, and cancelled the 2022 release! No silver? No Morgans!

NOW for 2023—Legal-Tender Morgan Silver Dollars Are Back. But Mintages Are Low!

Now this year, 99.9% silver, legal-tender Morgan Silver Dollars are once again available to silver buyers, Morgan enthusiasts and collectors—while they last! Though somewhat larger than last year, this year's 275,000 authorized mintage is still a crazy low number—especially when you consider all the pent-up anticipation and demand caused by the quick sell-out of the 2021 Morgans, and the fact the program was cancelled last year.

Very Limited. Don't Miss Out!

Add these bright, shiny, new legal-tender 2023 Morgan Silver Dollars, struck in 99.9% Silver, to your collection now! To secure yours, call 1-888-395-3219 right now, or scan the QR code below to order online, because these—WILL NOT LAST!

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Night Sky

Turn your eyes to the skies and behold the heavenly wonders. They say the stars at night are big and bright in Texas. Let's space out a while and see for ourselves.

CURATED BY GRACE FULTZ



1 MARK BONAME
JACKSON EC

If you look closely at the Milky Way, you'll see a horse formation called the Dark Horse Nebula.

2 MIKE PRESTIGIACOMO
BARTLETT EC

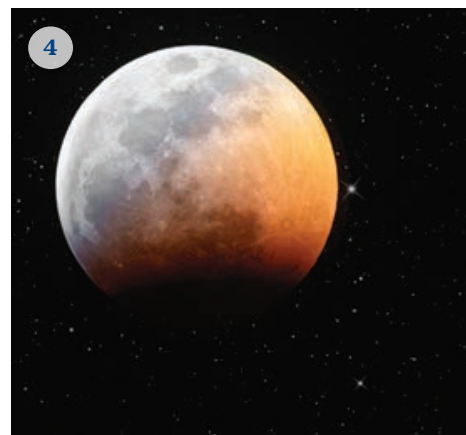
"A sudden display of colors, like fireworks on the Fourth of July, burst overhead near the Big Dipper asterism, which can still be seen."

3 JAY HOBBS
PEDERNALES EC

"A barn light is a welcoming sight for livestock in Johnson City."

4 MARK HOLLY
BANDERA EC

"It was a cold night, but I just couldn't miss photographing this rare event, the super blood wolf moon eclipse."



Upcoming Contests

- DUE SEP 10** Local Landmarks
- DUE OCT 10** Vibrant Color
- DUE NOV 10** Architecture



Enter online at TexasCoopPower.com/contests.

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



Pam LeBlanc leaps for joy when she finds a natural body of water.

I like living my life a little out of bounds, so I count all these things as positives. They make swimming feel a little less civilized and more like a daring adventure.

For years, when I worked as a staff writer at the *Austin-American Statesman*, I crisscrossed Barton Springs Pool in Austin at noon once a week. Sometimes I'd watch cormorants dive deep into the blue-green depths, hunting for lunch. I'd see crawfish prowl the mucky bottom and thumb-sized silvery fish swirl beneath limestone ledges.

What's the appeal? No chlorine, for one. My eyes don't turn red and sting after too much time in a natural swimming hole. I don't mind getting dirty, and I like to observe the native life. In a secluded setting, I also can't resist skinny-dipping, a pastime generally frowned upon at public pools but perfectly acceptable during backpacking trips into the wilderness.

For me, wilder is better.

I've leaped into the gin-clear waters of the Devils and Pecos rivers in West Texas, swam in all seven of the Highland Lakes, and soaked in a fern-lined stretch of the Blanco River that reminds me of Shangri-La. I've swum alongside dolphins in Hawaii, whale sharks in Mexico and humpback whales in the Dominican Republic.

During a relay swim race across Lake Tahoe, I got distracted watching shafts of light flicker into the 1,644-foot depths. Once I swam, as one-half of a two-woman team, a combined 28.5 miles around Manhattan Island—up the East River, through the Harlem River and down the Hudson River. (Each one had its own distinctive flavor, as my partner says.)

I don't care if I can't see the bottom. I don't mind if a minnow nips my toes. Some days, I almost expect a mermaid to rise from the blue, and that would be OK, too. To me, swimming is like getting a full-body hug from Mother Nature. And I love hugs. ■

Wild Blue Yonder

Swimming in cement?
Give me seaweed and sand

BY PAM LEBLANC

FOUR OR FIVE mornings each week, I glide back and forth across what Jethro Bodine of the 1960s sitcom *The Beverly Hillbillies* would describe as a cement pond.

As much as I appreciate these swim practices, led by a coach who stands on deck and hollers instructions that keep me healthy and fit, I prefer a wild swim over a dip in a blue rectangle of chlorinated water any day.

Wild swims—in rivers, lakes and oceans—come with undulating aquatic plants, squishy mud and rogue waves. Sometimes they include appearances by aquatic creatures like fish and turtles or even snakes and sharks. There are no formal black stripes or lines of buoys to ensure straight swimming, and flip turns are all but impossible.

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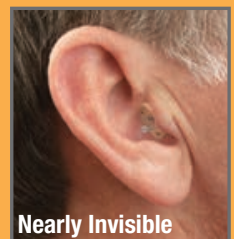
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