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# September 2024



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Photos by Scott Van Osdol*

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Texas School for the Deaf players burst onto the field through smoke and confetti.  
*Photo by Scott Van Osdol*

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Cooperative volunteers from CoServ help build a ramp for a North Texas resident with mobility limitations.  
*Photo by CoServ*

# Boosting Rural Texas

A STATEWIDE NONPROFIT wants to make sure rural communities don't miss out on their share of the billions in federal dollars available for broadband, water and energy upgrades; transportation infrastructure; and other projects.

Texas Rural Funders works to connect communities with grant opportunities and grant writers to work through a process that is often overwhelming.

Our state is expected to receive about \$2.5 billion for water infrastructure. As the state with the largest rural population, it also will receive billions in federal dollars in broadband infrastructure grants. In more than half of Texas counties, a majority of residents lacks access to high-speed internet.

To see if TRF can help your town or organization, visit [texasruralfunders.org](http://texasruralfunders.org).



**365** The length, in feet, of an aircraft in development called the WindRunner, which is intended to deliver wind turbine blades too large for transport on public roads. Its proposed record-breaking length would be three times the distance of the Wright brothers' first powered flight, in 1903.



## FINISH THIS SENTENCE

### My first job was ...

**TCP** Tell us how you would finish that sentence. Email your short responses to [letters@TexasCoopPower.com](mailto: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: **I'd like to be famous for ...**

Designing a health care system for all.

DORIS REDMAN  
BLUEBONNET EC  
BRENHAM

A little while.

VERA FIELDS  
VIA FACEBOOK

Being a quiet listener instead of a loud talker.

JOE BABIN  
BLUEBONNET EC  
BASTROP

Making sweet potato pie.

ELENORA RICKETTS  
VIA FACEBOOK

Visit our website to see more responses.

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Parks

**RECOMMENDED READING**  
National Kids Take Over the Kitchen Day is September 13. We have the perfect recipes. Check out *Kids Cooking* from August 2021.



JULY 2024 Vegan Panhandlers

“Here in Kerr County we enjoy calling ourselves Center Pointers, Kerrvillians, Ingramites, Hunters and Mountain Homies.”

LYNETTE WALDREP  
CENTRAL TEXAS EC  
MOUNTAIN HOME



SHAW NIELSEN

**One Town's Social Glue**

What are folks in my town called [*Vegan Panhandlers*, July 2024]? Little Elmites? Little Elmians? A quick search lends the most validity to Little Elmers. Whimsical and a bit silly. I think Mr. Strong would approve.

Carrie Binns  
CoServ  
Little Elm

I live in Fischer and my name is Peter, so I like to call myself a Fischerman.

Peter Locke  
Pedernales EC  
Fischer

You omitted one obvious city that doesn't fit your demonym paradigm: Mesquite. People from Mesquite are referred to as Skeeters.

Ed Girard  
HILCO EC  
Hillsboro

One night during dinner when I lived in Oklahoma, the local weatherman referred to the people of Moore as Morons. I'll never forget it. I choked and spit food everywhere.

We never saw that young man on TV again.

Donna Allon  
Bluebonnet EC  
"A Bastropian"

**Literary Menu**

We stumbled across the Cactus Book Shop while looking for a restaurant 20 years ago [*Texas Book Man*, July 2024]. We found books by Paul Patterson, John Erickson, Elmer Kelton and others. Forgot about lunch and bought a first edition of *Crazy Women in the Rafters*, which I loaned to a friend and never saw again.

Now I'm going to call Felton Cochran and see if I can get another copy of that lost masterpiece.

J. Phil Dering  
Pedernales EC  
San Marcos

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DAVE SHAFER

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# Calling an Audible

Texas School for the Deaf fights preconceptions and a pandemic with gridiron grit

BY MARK WANGRIN • PHOTOS BY SCOTT VAN OSDOL

**ENERGIZED AND RAUCOUS**, it was largely a pep rally like any other. Teams introduced. Cheerleaders cheering. Students screaming. The sound was deafening, even if in fact nearly all the attendees were already deaf.

The differences in the packed Austin gym on the Thursday before the Texas School for the Deaf's homecoming game were subtle but noticeable. No band. No chanting.

Sign language more than made up for that.

That's the rule at TSD, the only Deaf high school in Texas. Although there's a wide range of hearing loss among the students and staff, American Sign Language is the only allowed means of communication.

Except on the football field. There, anything goes.

Pad-popping hits are a universal language. Players who can talk, talk loudly and emphatically—the Rangers even got flagged in a recent season for “cussing.” Music blares in the weight room, the more bass the better. But communication is mostly by sign language, the intense looks on coach's faces and the use of other senses sharpened by hearing loss.

Players can't watch their opponent and coaches simultaneously, so signing from the sidelines isn't an option on the field. They can't hear opponents changing plays to better counter or attack, or teammates shouting adjustments. Paul Hubbard, a player at Gallaudet College, a Deaf school in Washington, D.C., invented the football huddle in the early 1890s to prevent opponents from stealing signs.

TSD's Kenneth Montanez, who shared head coaching duties with Archie Savannah Jr. in 2023, played multiple sports growing up but always loved football. He played five years at what is now Gallaudet University and kept feeding his passion by playing semipro football and rugby.

“It's more than physical for them,” writes Montanez, who lost his hearing as a baby in New York City. “It teaches self-discipline and how to achieve things as a community.”

The Rangers' annual 10-game schedule includes at least two games against other Deaf state schools, one home and one away. The host school puts on a dinner and dance for the visitors, with the idea of forming a nationwide network of peers who face similar obstacles.

Ursa Rewolinski's network was closer to home. Her godfather is former TSD head coach Andy Bonheyo, and she grew up in Austin as a fan of the football team. By age 3, she could identify NFL teams playing on TV by their helmets. After



OPPOSITE AND TOP: Quarterback Xiovan Tomlinson is aware of preconceptions in the hearing world. “They think that we have low IQs or we can't drive,” he says. “But really, deaf people can do anything.” ABOVE: Ball carrier Daniel Sweet looks for an opening during a scrimmage.

graduating from the Maryland School for the Deaf, she returned to teach at TSD in 2019, her football passion evident but unfulfilled.

“Everybody’s like, ‘Why are you not a coach?’ You know what, the door hadn’t really opened up for me,” she says through an ASL interpreter. “And so, long story short, I came back here, became a teacher and the door opened, and now I’m here.”

She became the team’s first female coach last season.

## Great and Small

TSD began playing sports with a baseball team in 1887. Since then its teams have won 69 national championships in 12 sports, including 16 in football. And while those titles were meaningful, they weren’t statement-making the way a 2020 championship was. All it took was a pandemic and remarkable adaptability.

When the COVID-19 pandemic began in spring 2020, it hit TSD hard. Some 40% of the 500 students live on campus—they come from all over the state—and many concerned parents kept their children home. Other players fell ill.

Football is a physical sport that requires numbers—11 players per team on the field at any one time. It began looking like the Rangers might not have the numbers to field a team, much less compete, as the pandemic tore through its roster.

TSD belongs to the Texas Association of Private and Parochial Schools, which also sponsors six-man football, with smaller teams that play on shortened fields. To keep playing, the Rangers downsized.

“To continue to have a football program, it was the best decision that we ever made,” says athletic director Chris Hamilton, a member of Pedernales Electric Cooperative. “However, we had to deal with some very upset community



“It’s more than physical for them. It teaches self-discipline and how to achieve things as a community.”





OPPOSITE, FROM LEFT: Family members escort Lev Shayman, a member of the homecoming court, onto the field. Jermiah Garcia played most of his life in the hearing world but didn't feel he got the proper support, academically or socially. He transferred to TSD in 2022. ABOVE: Cheerleaders keep school spirit front and center for the fans.

members and explain to people that we just couldn't make it as a full team.

"So it took time. The community kind of went through a grieving process."

And the team went through, well, a shrinking process. An 80-yard field was marked at their on-campus stadium, even as the goalposts remained in place for a 100-yard field. Illness and injury occasionally limited the 20-person roster to seven players.

But they won. And kept winning, through a 63-32 state championship victory over crosstown power Veritas Academy, which had routed them in a preseason scrimmage.

"Winning the state title as a Deaf school is way more challenging than winning the national title," writes Kylar Sicoli, a senior wide receiver on that team, in an email. "A Deaf school will always win the [Deaf] national title. We never won a football state title, so we made history."

## Sound of Success

Winning the state title was another step in dismissing preconceptions hearing people might have.

"They think that we have low IQs or we can't drive. Things like that," says quarterback Xiovan Tomlinson, a third-generation deaf player at TSD. "But really, deaf people can

## Sign of Their Times

**American Sign Language has thousands of signs, from "aah" to "zucchini," but sometimes they just don't seem to be enough.**

For example, there are two signs for Ranger, the TSD mascot. One is for park ranger. One is for forest ranger. Phil Mauro, a former TSD athletic director, didn't think either evoked the courage, resourcefulness and independence of the name-sake legendary Texas lawmen.

"Texas A&M had Gig 'Em, Miami had the 'U,'" recalls Mauro, 79, who is still coaching football in Ohio. "The biggest thing was to make the kids feel they were on the same level as everyone else."

Mauro borrowed the Hook 'em Horns sign from that school 3 miles up Congress Avenue in Austin, the University of Texas, and customized it by wrapping the middle finger over the index finger—the ASL sign for "R."

Almost 40 years later, it still represents what it means to be a Ranger.

"I'm really glad they still use it," Mauro says. "It was and is our Rangers No. 1 sign."



ABOVE: Players come together after a pregame pep talk. RIGHT: Theo Savannah with his father, Archie, who shared head coaching duties last season.

do anything.”

Montanez points out that he’s seen studies that deaf drivers are safer because they aren’t easily distracted and “have a lifetime’s learning on using their peripheral vision. It’s the same in football.”

AD Hamilton, who joined the school in 2001, says this is nothing new.

“Historically, Deaf teams have been oppressed just as deaf people have been oppressed, but hey, we’re here,” he says. “We’re doing this. We can do it. We’re just like you, and we’re better than you in some cases.”

Jermiah Garcia played most of his life in the hearing world and was a budding standout as a freshman at Shoemaker High School in Killeen, but he didn’t feel he got the proper support, academically or socially. So, encouraged by his interpreter, a TSD alumnus, Garcia transferred to TSD for his sophomore season in 2022.

“I was really lost trying to communicate with my teammates. I couldn’t have my interpreter on the field,” Garcia says. “My interpreter would tell me, some of the students are saying that you can’t do this, you can’t do that, you can’t play.”

Teammate Niven Zhang is more succinct. “I just feel like going to a public school would be really a waste of time because there’s a lot of logistical things that we have to work



“When coaches like me are able to communicate clearly, in depth and spatially, I can see the ‘aha’ moment in their eyes and faces.”



Ursa Rewolinski grew up with strong connections to the TSD football team. She became a teacher at the school in 2019 and last season became an assistant coach, the first woman to do so in the team’s history.



out with interpreters,” he says. “Here at Texas School for the Deaf, everything works just like it should.”

Montanez knows his players are in the right place for success.

“Too often, when they’re being coached by someone who doesn’t understand them (tends to be hearing), things fly over their head,” he writes. “When coaches like me are able to communicate clearly, in depth and spatially, I can see the ‘aha’ moment in their eyes and faces.

“I love seeing that.”

## Help Ahead

One of the main challenges of a football player not being able to hear is, not surprisingly, communication.

Whistles. Audibles. Referee warnings. In-game coaching. Fans. Trash talk.

“Oh yeah, every opponent we go against has a lot of trash talk,” junior Theo Savannah says. “Then we show them we can play.”

Midway through the 2023 season, AT&T introduced a field-leveling technology, equipping helmets with 5G-augmented reality lenses that can display text.

NCAA rules, which many high school associations, including TAPPS, follow, prohibit electronic devices in hel-

metts, but Gallaudet was granted a one-game waiver to use the technology. The Bison promptly ended a four-game losing streak.

Sicoli, one of several TSD alums playing for the Bison, writes that the technology could help them avoid late hit penalties caused by not being able to hear the ref’s whistle.

“That could be a game changer for some deaf players,” Sicoli writes. “Also the helmet would help the coach and players communicate during the game. The coach always has difficulty getting the player’s attention.”

David Goodnight, a referee from Somerville who is a member of Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative, doesn’t know ASL—few who officiate TSD games do—but officiating deaf teams’ games is an ongoing education.

“I just learned two words last week,” he says. He points just above his temple for “heads” and puts the palm of his right hand over the top of left hand and wags his left index finger for “tails.”

Goodnight says deaf players do a good job avoiding late hits. “Coaches say you play to the whistle,” he says. “Deaf players understand you play till the end of the play.” ■



# THE RAMP CHAMPS

**Volunteers and wood corralled by the Texas Ramp Project lift neighbors statewide**

BY BOB MCCULLOUGH

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Patsy Beasley with her late husband, ramp recipient Oral Beasley. Cooperative volunteers from CoServ with a ramp they built in Denton, and Wood County EC volunteers with one of their finished projects. OPPOSITE: CoServ volunteers have built dozens of ramps, and the CoServ Charitable Foundation has awarded more than \$70,000 to the Texas Ramp Project.

Texans love the ability to go and do as they desire—freedom that a lot of folks can take for granted. For some, leaving home is a struggle.

But Texans also care about their neighbors, so it's not surprising that a statewide army of 3,500 volunteers works year-round to give life-changing mobility to those dependent on wheelchairs.

The nonprofit Texas Ramp Project has coordinated the construction of more than 27,500 ramps that, if placed end to end, would stretch 142 miles. Recipients of the simple but durable wooden ramps are low-income older adults and others with disabilities identified by health care providers.

“Ramps change lives,” says Keith R. Henderson, TRP president. “They bring safety, independence and improved quality of life. They also ease the burden on family and caregivers. With safe access, older adults can age in place at home in their own environment. Where else can you show up on a Saturday morning and go home four hours later having transformed a person’s life?”

Such transformations originated in 1985, when members of the Richardson Kiwanis Club built a wheelchair ramp. One build after another led to the creation of the Dallas Ramp Project, which led to the construction of 1,400 ramps and showed a clear statewide need.

In 2006, TRP was incorporated to build ramps on a much

*"Where else can you show up on a Saturday morning and go home four hours later having transformed a person's life?"*

broader scale. John Laine, who had served as volunteer director of the Dallas Ramp Project, founded TRP and became its executive director. He continued in that capacity until late last year.

"Personally, I believe God gave each of us skills, and our job is to learn what those skills are and to use them to help others," Laine says. "I was given certain skills that seem to have blended well with TRP. It has been a blessing for me to have had this work put into my path."

TRP doesn't accept direct requests from clients or families seeking ramps. Referrals must come from a third-party health care provider via the TRP website, [texasramps.org](http://texasramps.org). That's also the web address for volunteering and making donations.

After an eligible ramp request is processed, TRP directs a trained surveyor to visit the prospective ramp recipient and design a structure that meets the client's needs. A volunteer construction crew then implements the design, typically in a few hours, with the help of precut wood delivered by TRP.

"Two hours of preparation probably saves three hours at the build site," says Tom Canfield of Fredericksburg, a surveyor and construction coordinator. Canfield has had a hand in more than 100 ramps.

**Shortly after daybreak** in July 2023, he and four friends converged on the rural home of Oral Beasley, who used a motorized wheelchair because of a stroke. Thanks to Canfield's prep work and his team's carpentry skills, Beasley was cruising smoothly on his new ramp by midday.

Beasley died just three months after the build, but his wife, Patsy, says the ramp drastically improved his well-being. She praises Canfield and his crew "for doing such a beautiful thing, the first time anyone helped us like that. It took away my husband's fear about tumbling over."

Regaining freedom and no longer feeling trapped at home are common experiences relayed by ramp recipients.

To make mobility miracles happen, TRP partners with churches, civic clubs, businesses, military units, youth groups and other organizations, says Sandy Knutson, TRP executive director. Among the most active are electric cooperatives, which are guided by the co-op principle of Concern for Community.

Co-op employees live up to that principle by performing community service for members who are also their neighbors and friends.

CoServ, an electric co-op based in Denton, became actively involved in TRP in 2016, and since then CoServ employees have built more than three dozen ramps. The CoServ Charitable Foundation has awarded \$71,000 in grants to the nonprofit.

"For people facing surgery or who have other mobility issues, traversing even a few steps can be dangerous," says Conan Tearney, CoServ client services manager. "It's a great feeling knowing you helped build something with your hands that means so much to a co-op member."

Another ardent TRP supporter, Wood County Electric Cooperative, has donated \$25,000 through its member-funded charitable foundation that helps nonprofits in its nine-county service area in northeast Texas. Employee volunteers are also involved in builds.

"Our mission statement is: Providing safe and reliable electric service while improving our communities where we live and serve," says Paige Eaton, communications director. "Caring for the communities we serve is embedded in what we do every day. Our members are our neighbors, and in Co-op Country, you look out for one another. TRP is just one of the ways we can do that." ■







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30	9.06	7.88	9.79	8.66	14	11	18	16	58	29.07	21.98	50.58	36.96	91	65	172	119
36	9.21	8.31	10.35	9.51	15	13	22	18	59	31.60	23.51	55.57	39.88	101	71	190	129
37	9.21	8.58	10.54	9.93	15	14	22	20	60	34.14	24.28	61.26	42.99	113	76	209	140
38	9.21	8.71	11.69	10.25	17	14	24	21	61	37.60	25.65	66.80	47.11	126	86	238	157
39	9.46	8.86	12.35	10.66	18	15	25	22	62	41.49	27.91	74.28	51.33	141	95	267	172
40	9.63	9.10	12.94	11.08	18	16	27	24	63	44.70	34.39	85.55	59.60	157	104	288	190
41	10.05	9.22	13.66	11.83	20	17	30	27	64	48.23	38.53	93.16	64.38	173	114	327	212
42	10.48	9.26	14.21	12.67	22	19	33	29	65	53.18	41.15	101.79	70.36	191	127	361	234
43	10.98	9.50	14.74	13.52	25	20	39	31	66	59.15	44.62	115.13	75.41	213	139	398	258
44	11.58	9.84	15.80	14.36	27	22	43	34	67	65.66	49.09	130.13	83.65	235	152	443	284
45	12.25	10.17	17.07	15.20	29	24	48	38	68	74.33	59.65	145.11	112.92	262	174	491	322
46	12.84	10.65	18.09	16.18	31	25	51	40	69	82.98	65.91	161.68	129.33	293	188	548	352
47	13.43	11.16	19.18	17.07	33	27	56	44	70	93.20	73.30	181.25	148.72	330	204	615	387
48	13.48	11.88	20.44	17.76	35	29	58	48	71	102.45	82.71	204.38	159.34	374	235	702	443
49	13.71	12.33	21.77	18.77	38	31	63	52	72	113.68	94.13	232.46	172.23	427	272	807	512
50	14.46	12.99	23.41	20.00	40	34	69	57	73	127.55	108.24	267.15	188.15	493	319	937	596
51	15.38	13.75	25.38	21.18	45	35	78	62	74	142.08	123.01	303.50	204.84	562	367	1074	685
52	16.37	14.87	28.02	22.76	50	38	88	67	75	159.25	140.48	346.45	224.56	644	424	1235	789
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## Unplug and Upgrade for Energy Savings

**AMONG YOUR APPLIANCES**, the two biggest energy users are water heaters and refrigerators, which are nearly always on duty. After that, you might be surprised by another energy hog: consumer electronics.

Think about all the electronic devices plugged into your outlets—many with lights that glow even when the device is not being used—drawing small-but-steady vampire loads of energy and adding to your power bill: coffee maker, toaster, phone charger, printer, TV, cable box, video game console.

A quick walk through the house, unplugging as you go, can save you a few bucks a year on items that only need power when you're using them. Even better, use power strips to swiftly switch them off.

Water heaters, which keep hot water at the ready for kitchens and bathrooms, are the second-biggest household energy users after air conditioners. Saving money here depends on finding the right unit for your home and climate.

If it's time to replace your water heater, consider a heat pump version. They can cut your water heating energy costs in half, but they can be pricey up front. There also can be installation challenges to consider. Heat pump water heaters operate most efficiently in conditioned spaces, so garage locations are not ideal, and they tend to be physically larger than traditional units, so they may not fit in your existing water heater's space.

Another option to replace a high-capacity water heater is to

buy two smaller water heaters, perhaps even installing them closer to where they're needed. The most important consideration is to plan ahead.

Often, when a water heater fails, it's an emergency. Nobody wants to be without hot water, so they put in whatever is on the truck. If you want to upgrade to something more efficient, decide ahead of time.

Refrigerators are dramatically more efficient than they were two decades ago and probably use half the energy. More than a third of American fridges in use are more than 10 years old, according to the Environmental Protection Agency's Energy Star program. Newer models—especially Energy Star-certified units—use less energy and add less to your household power bill.

Don't forget that old fridge in your hot garage is costing you money and probably not providing much utility. Unplug and recycle it to reduce energy use.

TVs are bigger and fancier these days, but even so, as with fridges, new technology makes them more efficient. The same holds for major appliances like washing machines and dishwashers. Age can be your gauge: for appliances more than 10 years old, a newer model—especially one with the Energy Star logo—will use less energy. ■



# Know What To Do in an Electrical Emergency

**YOU KNOW THE** electrical safety basics such as: Don't use appliances near water. But safety isn't just about prevention. It requires knowing what to do if you or someone nearby comes into contact with electricity. **Review this list now, before your next emergency:**

If someone nearby comes into contact with electricity, do not touch that person or anything the person is touching. Instead, call 911. If the source of electricity is an appliance, grab the plug—not the cord—and pull it out of the outlet. If you cannot safely remove the plug, turn off the power at the fuse or circuit breaker.

If an electrical wire falls on your car, do not get out of the car. You're generally safer inside your vehicle. Your tires protect you because electricity seeks the quickest path to the ground—through the outside of the car, through the tires and into the ground. Call 911 and your electric cooperative and stay in your car until help arrives and the electricity is shut off.

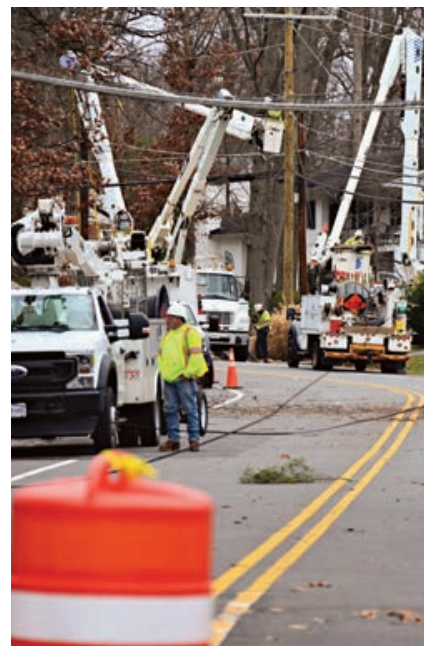
Most power lines are not insulated, so they're never safe to touch. When a wire falls to the ground, it may still be live, even if you don't see sparks. Call 911 and your co-op if you see a downed wire. Warn others to keep their distance.

Wood is a poor conductor of electricity, but it's still a conductor, especially when wet. Don't use a wooden ladder near a power line. If a ladder begins to fall into a power line, don't grab it. Let it fall and call your co-op so we can safely address the problem.

Only pure rubber is an insulator, and most household products don't contain pure rubber. Don't try to handle electrical emergencies at home, even if you're wearing rubber gloves or shoes. ■



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## Make Room for Roadside Crews

**WHEN THE POWER** goes out, so do your electric cooperative's crews.

Lineworkers are the first to respond after an outage occurs, and they work tirelessly to restore power to the communities we serve. If you see one of our line crews on the side of the road, we kindly ask that you move over if possible and give them a little extra space to work.

If you approach a crew on a road with multiple lanes, and if safety and traffic conditions allow, move over into the far lane. Or, if moving over is not an option, we ask that you slow down when approaching roadside crews. We care deeply about everyone's safety, and this extra precaution ensures just that.

Emergency responders, including those in utility vehicles, often find themselves working near busy roadways. Texas law requires drivers to either vacate the lane closest to a stopped emergency vehicle or slow down 20 mph below the speed limit. If the speed limit is below 25 mph, the driver must slow down to 5 mph.

There's plenty of room on the road for everyone. Let's work together to keep our roadways safe. ■



## Beachcombing at home.

Texas Co-op Power presents an illustrated *Seashells of Texas* poster by artist Aletha St. Romain, 20x16 inches, suitable for framing.

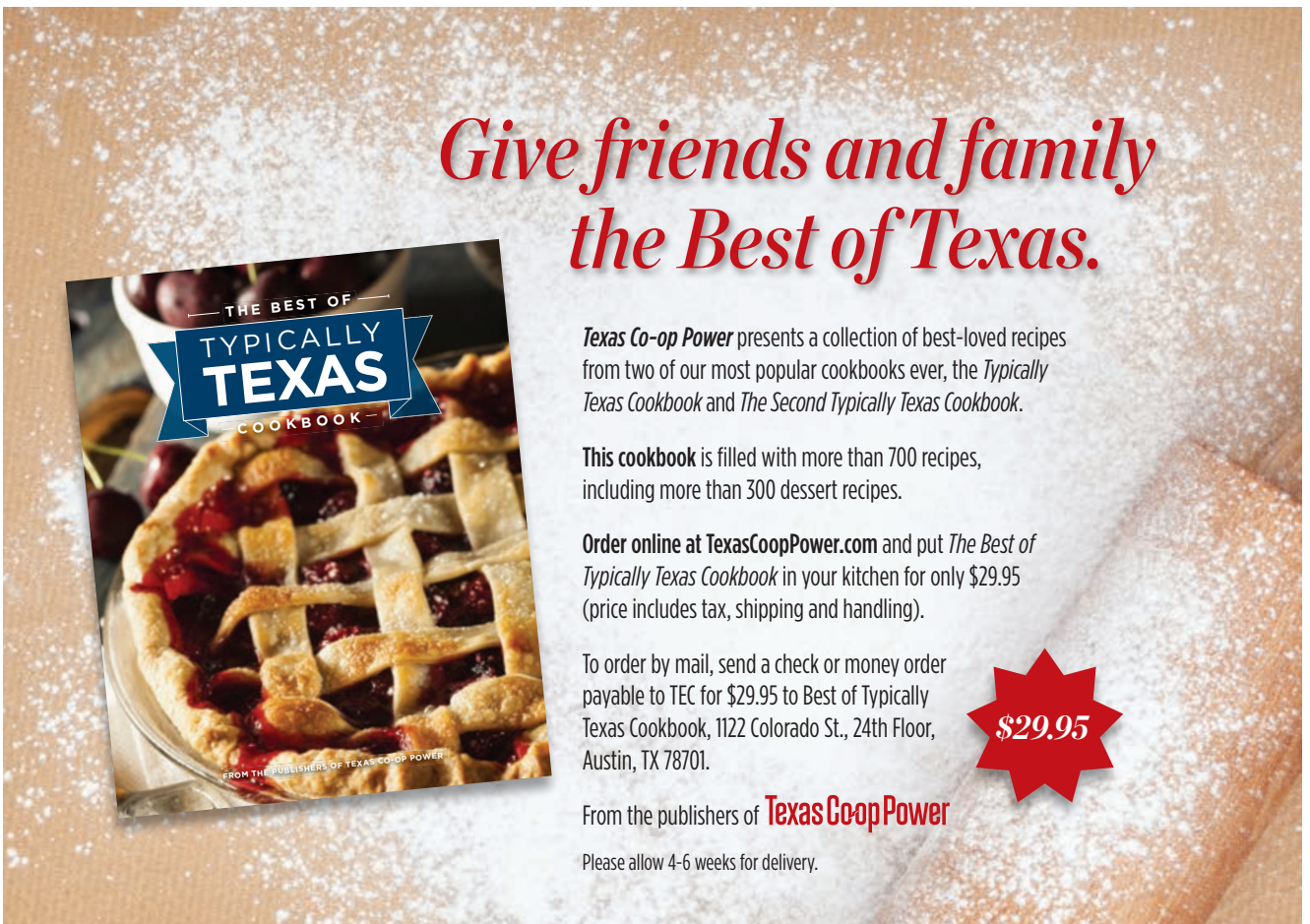
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# A Load of Toads

Destined for gardening heroics one minute, hosed the next

BY SHANE TORNO • ILLUSTRATION BY JOHN KACHIK

**I MUST HAVE BEEN** 8 or 9 years old one summer when I commented to my grandmother that recent rains at our house in Corpus Christi had created a population explosion of toads in our backyard.

She was an avid gardener and always liked finding ways to use natural approaches to improve her yields.

For example, she actively brewed and used something she called “barnyard tea” to water her garden. She created the concoction by pouring water over cow manure to fill 50-gallon drums. After the “tea” had steeped for days in the summer sun, she applied it to her produce and flowers.

She was very interested in my story of the ongoing toad extravaganza and asked if I would be willing to catch the surplus amphibians for delivery to her garden in Sinton, up the road from Corpus Christi. She explained that toads eat lots of garden pests and could help her grow better vegetables and flowers (in fact, the U.S. Department of Agriculture estimates that a single adult toad can slurp up 10,000 insects in a single summer).

I was happy to have a way to help my grandmother out. My sister and cousin were just as enthusiastic to help once they heard the plan.

The next day we started early and collected toads of varying sizes all day long.

We used the garden hose in our overgrown flower beds to flush them out, and we sorted them according to size, placing them in 5-gallon buckets. By midafternoon we had a bucket for large toads and a bucket for small toads.

My mom got us loaded into the dark green—toad-colored—family van, and we set off for the 40-minute drive to my grandmother’s house.

We hadn’t even made it out of the neighborhood when my mom had to swerve abruptly to avoid an accident. This was before seat belt laws, and none of us kids were buckled in. In fact, my cousin and I rarely sat in the seats at all. We often laid on the seats or in the back cargo area.

And that’s where we were, the back cargo area, when the ride came to a sudden and unsettling stop. Mom avoided a collision, but the evasive maneuver sent the buckets of toads rolling around in the back with Keith and me in the mix.

It wasn’t until that moment that I realized just how many tiny toads fit into a 5-gallon bucket. The big

toads were easy to catch, but there seemed no end to the task of rounding up the little ones. Mom had to pull over so everyone could help wrangle the amphibians.

It turns out that a 1980s full-size van had many nooks and crannies that could hide tiny toads (some of those little guys evaded us for days). After several minutes of frantic work, we were satisfied that we had most of the toads back in the buckets and continued our journey.

When we arrived at our grandmother’s house, we told her the story of the hard-earned amphibians. She was very thankful for our labors and took the buckets out to the garden to release the toads into her neatly groomed rows.

To avoid handling the stressed little guys, she turned on the garden hose and rinsed all the little ones out of the bucket. As they came out of the bucket and washed into the straw, they acted strangely.

Instead of jumping about with all their might, as they had done in the van, they turned over on their backs and made no attempt to hop away at all. They just piled up on top of each other in an ugly heap. They were dead.

We didn’t understand what had happened until we felt the water coming from the hose. It was burning hot.

The late afternoon Texas sun had heated the hose water to almost boiling.

The toads had made it so far—only to die at the cusp of freedom. We were devastated at the loss, but there is no use crying over killed milk, or something like that.

To this day, I never turn on the garden hose for any reason without testing the water temperature and sadly thinking of those tiny toads. ■



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The Beatles perform at Dallas Memorial Auditorium in September 1964.

# Invading Dallas

Frenzied fans saw—but barely heard—music history when the Beatles came to Texas

BY LORI GROSSMAN

IT HAS BEEN MORE than 60 years since what some people call the world's first boy band appeared on a Sunday night TV show and changed everything. And this month marks exactly 60 years since the Beatles first came to Texas.

The British pop band's first U.S. tour brought them to Dallas Memorial Auditorium on September 18, 1964. The band touched down at Love Field just after midnight that day, greeted by thousands of screaming fans. North Texas was abuzz with anticipation, including 10-year-old Pud (short for Puddin') Kearns of suburban Greenville.

In early 1964, Kearns was a fourth grader when word spread that the Beatles would be on the *Ed Sullivan Show* on February 9. That night, she was watching.

"I was just blown away," she remem-

bers. "I'd never heard anything like that before. And I immediately fell in love."

Kearns and her friends acquired the band's records and read about them in fan magazines. Later that year, North Texas Beatles fans got some thrilling news: John, Paul, George and Ringo were coming to Dallas for one of 32 shows in 25 cities over 33 days.

"There was a lot of excitement when it was announced," Kearns says. "At that time, I didn't think there was any possibility that I would get to go."

But Eliza, the 10-year-old granddaughter of a family friend, had tickets and invited Kearns.

"I couldn't believe my luck!" Kearns says. The girls had no idea that a big surprise awaited them before the concert. They showed up early to have a

picnic behind the auditorium (now part of the Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center).

"All of a sudden, an ambulance drives down the ramp past us towards the auditorium. This was an old-fashioned station wagon," Kearns says. "The Beatles were in it! They looked out of the window and waved, and then they were gone. I remember seeing Paul and Ringo. They were only 20 or 30 feet from us."

A sellout crowd of 10,000 fans packed the venue and waited through three opening acts—Clarence "Frogman" Henry, the Exciters and Jackie DeShannon, all backed by Bill Black's Combo. Pud and Eliza's \$5.50 tickets earned them balcony seats, where they eagerly waited for Dallas DJ Irving Harrigan (aka Ron Chapman) to introduce the main act.

"All the girls were screaming. Eliza and I did, too," Kearns says with a laugh. "George was my favorite. I remember *All My Loving* and the first chord of *A Hard Day's Night*. You could hear opening notes but not much more because of the screaming."

The Beatles' 30-minute set list included 12 songs. The band returned to Texas in August 1965 for two sold-out shows at Houston's Sam Houston Coliseum.

An editorial in *The Dallas Times Herald* that day in Dallas took a dim view of the band: "While some others may be able to recall who or what they were in ... five years, most people will not."

Kearns knew better.

"I was a rock star in fifth grade for a while before and after the concert. I knew that I had seen something very, very special," she says. "And 60 years later, it's still a big deal." ■

# Football Favorites

We've recruited proven winners for your game day lineup

BY VIANNEY RODRIGUEZ, FOOD EDITOR

I first made my slow cooker bean dip for a Super Bowl fiesta, and boy was it a hit. It was soon requested for every family gathering and was one of the first recipes added to my slow cooker cookbook. This elevates canned beans to a whole new tasty level.

## Slow Cooker Bean Dip

1 teaspoon olive oil  
 ½ onion, diced  
 2 cloves garlic, minced  
 2 cans pinto beans (15 ounces each), drained and rinsed  
 2 cans red beans (15 ounces each), drained and rinsed  
 2 cans black beans (15 ounces each), drained and rinsed  
 2 cans kidney beans (15 ounces each), drained and rinsed  
 2 cans Mexican-style diced tomatoes (15 ounces each), undrained  
 ½ cup chopped cilantro, plus more for garnish (optional)  
 2 teaspoons cumin  
 2 teaspoons chili powder  
 1 teaspoon salt  
 1 teaspoon ground black pepper  
 Shredded cheddar cheese, for garnish  
 Mexican crema or sour cream, for garnish

1. Heat oil in a skillet over medium-high heat. Add onion and sauté 3 minutes, or until light and translucent. Add garlic and cook, stirring often, for 2 minutes. Remove from heat.

2. Combine sautéed onion and garlic, beans, diced tomatoes, ½ cup cilantro, cumin, chili powder, salt and pepper in a slow cooker. Stir until combined. Cover and cook on low 2 hours.

3. Serve warm, topped with more cilantro, shredded cheese, and Mexican crema or sour cream.

SERVES 12

**TCP** Follow Vianney Rodriguez as she cooks in *Cocina Gris* at [sweetlifebake.com](http://sweetlifebake.com), where she features a recipe for Tex-Mex Onion Dip.





## Dry Rub Baked Chicken Wings

JACKIE MCEATHRON  
PEDERNALES EC

These tender, juicy baked chicken wings coated in a mouthwatering homemade dry rub will have football fans raving! And they're so good, you won't miss the deep fryer. Serve with your favorite dipping sauce.

- 2 pounds chicken wings**
- 2 tablespoons baking powder**
- 2 teaspoons salt**
- 3 teaspoons paprika**
- 2 teaspoons garlic powder**

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Line a baking sheet with foil or parchment paper. Coat a baking rack with cooking spray and place on the baking sheet.
2. Dry chicken wings with paper towels. In a medium bowl, combine baking powder, salt, paprika and garlic powder. Add chicken wings to bowl and toss to coat evenly. Shake off each wing and place on the baking rack.
3. Bake 30 minutes, then turn and bake until golden and crispy, about 10–15 minutes longer. Serve warm.

**SERVES 4**

[MORE RECIPES >](#)



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## Texas Chili

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This brisket chili is a surefire crowd pleaser—hearty, a little spicy and packed with flavor. Garnish with your favorite toppings to make the perfect meal-in-a-bowl. Double the recipe to ensure tasty lunch leftovers.

**SERVES 6–8**

- ¼ cup canola oil**
- 1 small red onion, diced**
- 2 cloves garlic, minced**
- 2 red bell peppers, diced**
- ½ tablespoon kosher salt**
- 2 tablespoons chili powder**
- 1 tablespoon chipotle powder**
- 2 tablespoons smoked paprika**
- 1 pound smoked lean beef brisket, diced**
- 2 cans diced fire roasted tomatoes (14.5 ounces each)**
- 4 cups beef broth**
- 1 small bunch cilantro, chopped**
- Sour cream, for garnish**
- Shredded cheddar cheese, for garnish**

1. Heat oil in an 8-quart pot over medium-high heat. Sauté onion, garlic and peppers until tender.
2. Add salt, spices, brisket, tomatoes and beef broth. Reduce heat to simmer, cover and let cook 2 hours. Remove from heat and stir in cilantro.
3. Serve topped with sour cream and shredded cheese.

## **TCP** \$500 Recipe Contest

**EASY BREADS** DUE SEPTEMBER 10

If you make bread that skips the kneading and hours of rising, we want to know. Send those recipes in for a shot at \$500. Don't loaf around; enter by September 10.





## Jalapeño Wontons

SUZANNE HAWKINS  
CENTRAL TEXAS EC

The crispy wonton cups and filling can be made pregame. When it's time to nibble, fill the wontons, pop them in the oven and bake until golden.

**12 wonton or eggroll wrappers**  
**Kosher salt**  
**8 slices fully cooked bacon, diced**

**1 package cream cheese (8 ounces), room temperature**  
**1 cup shredded cheddar cheese**  
**½ cup sour cream**  
**¼ cup mayonnaise**  
**1 jalapeño pepper, finely diced, seeds removed for less heat**  
**3 green onions, chopped**  
**¼ cup chopped cilantro, for garnish**

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Coat a muffin pan with cooking spray.
2. Slice wonton or egg roll wrappers in half and place two strips crisscross in each muffin cup. Sprinkle wontons with kosher salt. Bake wontons 5–8 minutes or until lightly golden brown.
3. In a large bowl, combine bacon, cream cheese, cheddar cheese, sour cream, mayonnaise, jalapeño and green onions. Mix well. Spoon filling into wontons.
4. Bake 10–15 minutes, until bubbly. Serve warm, garnished with cilantro.

MAKES 12

## Kick Things Off Right

BY VIANNEY RODRIGUEZ

**Team spirit:** Add a few drops of food coloring in your team colors to frosting for cupcakes or cake. Sneak team colors into popcorn by stirring in colored candy.

**Drinks:** Keep plenty of beverages on hand to balance out all the salty snacks you're serving. Include options for those who don't drink alcohol, like sparkling water or soda. Don't forget the ice!

**Stay fresh:** Keep food at the ideal temperature in a slow cooker or chafing dishes. Cover food with lids or foil if hosting outdoors, and place dips and guacamole over a bowl of ice to keep them chilled.

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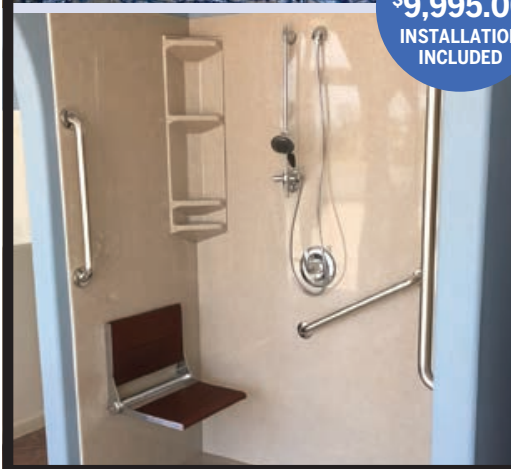
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COURTESY CHET GARNER

## Creeping Back in Time

The Munster Mansion in Waxahachie brings 1960s Hollywood to life

BY CHET GARNER

**IN MOST CIRCLES**, asking someone if they prefer *The Munsters* or *The Addams Family* can make for fun dinner conversation. But in Waxahachie, there's only one right answer. Because even though *The Munsters'* beloved sitcom wrapped in 1966, the family's iconic mansion on 1313 Mockingbird Lane lives on in this growing town south of Dallas.

Pulling up to the house felt like the opening scene to a scary movie, with overgrown trees obscuring the mansion's dark facade. However when I knocked on the door, I was greeted with a kind Texas smile from owner Sandra McKee, who grew up watching the show and dreaming of someday living in the kooky mansion.

When she had a chance to make her dream a reality, she and her husband, Charles, obsessed over all 70 episodes of the show to recreate the exact layout and dimensions of the haunted abode, which, ironically, never existed in real life but was just a collection of soundstages on a Hollywood backlot. But this home feels as real as Spot, the pet dragon under the stairs. The McKees host paid private tours by appointment only.

Not only has Sandra collected a number of authentic props, such as a complete dining room set, she's also found life-size mannequins of all the characters, including a towering Herman Munster and his beautiful bride, Lily. Upstairs I found Eddie holding his famous bat and Grandpa tinkering in his lab. I couldn't believe the details and the true-to-screen secret passages.

Each cobweb-filled room tapped into the dusty vaults of my brain and brought back memories of watching the show from my grandparents' floor.

Sandra proudly shared the story of the time actor Al Lewis (aka Grandpa) visited, and his eyes filled with tears of joy and disbelief. It seems this spooky reality is better than fiction. ■

ABOVE Chet cozies up to a likeness of Grandpa from *The Munsters*.

**TCP** If you dare, join Chet as he checks in on the Munsters. Watch the video 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

7

**Fredericksburg Friends of Pioneer Memorial Library Book Sale**, (830) 997-6513, [pmlfbg.com](http://pmlfbg.com)

**Levelland Cotton and Crude Concert**, (806) 894-3157, [facebook.com/cottonandcrudefest](https://facebook.com/cottonandcrudefest)

**Palestine Dogwood Jamboree: All About Classic Country**, (903) 724-2556, [visitpalestine.com](http://visitpalestine.com)

10

**Corsicana [10, 12-15] A Wrinkle in Time**, (903) 872-5421, [thewlac.com](http://thewlac.com)

12

**Grapevine [12-15] GrapeFest**, (817) 410-3185, [grapevinetexasusa.com](http://grapevinetexasusa.com)

13

**Kerrville [13-14] Arts & Crafts Show**, (830) 895-0100, [tbck.org](http://tbck.org)

**Brenham [13-21] Washington County Fair**, (979) 836-4112, [washingtoncofair.com](http://washingtoncofair.com)

14

**Chappell Hill Airing of the Quilts**, (979) 337-9910, [chappellhilltx.com](http://chappellhilltx.com)

**Rosenburg Ride to Rosenberg Car Show**, (713) 502-3168, [rosenbergartsalliance.com](http://rosenbergartsalliance.com)

**San Marcos Treasure Sale**, (512) 392-4295, [heritagesanmarcos.org](http://heritagesanmarcos.org)



### Pick of the Month

#### Xtreme Hummingbird Xtravaganza

Lake Jackson, September 14, 21  
(979) 480-0999, gcbo.org

Get a close-up look at ruby-throated hummingbirds as they make their yearly migration. Professionals will band the tiny birds, and you can symbolically adopt a hummingbird to support conservation efforts. The event includes educational booths, activities for kids, a plant sale and nature store.

21

**Azle Lord's Acre Harvest Festival & Car Show**, (817) 444-1382, facebook.com/silvercreekmc

**Blanco Classic Car Show**, (512) 632-0648, blancoclassiccarshow.com

22

**Giddings Wendish Fest**, (979) 366-2441, facebook.com/texaswendish

25

**New Braunfels [25-29] Comal County Fair & Rodeo**, (830) 625-1505, comalcountyfair.org

MORE EVENTS >

### 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.

**Fredericksburg is the Polka Capital of Texas**  
Downtown Historic Fredericksburg on Marktplatz  
[www.oktoberfestinfbg.com](http://www.oktoberfestinfbg.com)



## Cast-Iron Skillet Giveaway Contest

To celebrate 80 years of Texas Co-op Power, we're giving away 80 handcrafted, heirloom-quality No. 12 skillets from Fredericksburg Cast Iron Co.

TCP Enter Today  
[TexasCoopPower.com/contests](http://TexasCoopPower.com/contests)



### Restoring and Preserving Our History

*The Friends of Gillespie County Country Schools*

In the heart of the Texas Hill Country visit 17 historic one-room schools built between 1847 and 1936 by following the 120 mile Gillespie County Country Schools Driving Trail through the scenic Fredericksburg, Texas countryside.

A Driving Tour map and an Open House schedule are available on our website.

[WWW.HISTORICSCHOOLS.ORG](http://WWW.HISTORICSCHOOLS.ORG)

All schools listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Member of Country School Association of America.

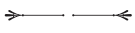


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**COME TO WHERE THE REAL LONESOME DOVE HAPPENED**

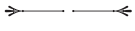


**HORSEHEAD CROSSING, ON THE PECOS RIVER**



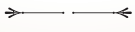
**OCTOBER 25-26**

**WINDS ACROSS THE PECOS**



**LIVING HISTORY CELEBRATION**

- Chuck Wagon Meals & Cooking Contests
- Re-enactors
- Live Cannon Fire
- Historians & Presenters
- Trail Rides
- Cowboy Poetry
- Exhibitors



CONTACT BETTY DAMRON  
 BETTYDAMRON986@YAHOO.COM  
 OR DELANE CAGLE  
 DELANEC@GMAIL.COM

\*\*\*\*\*



SEPTEMBER EVENTS CONTINUED

27

**Giddings [27-28]**  
**Texas Word Wrangler Book Festival**, (979) 542-2716, giddingspubliclibrary.org

**Mason Old Yeller Day**, (325) 347-5446, mason.ploud.net

**Harper [27-28]**  
**Frontier Days**, harpercommunitypark@gmail.com, harpercommunitypark.com

**Lewisville [27-28] Western Days**, (972) 219-3401, lewisvillewesterndays.com

**Winnsboro [27-28]**  
**Cowboy Music and Poetry Gathering**, (903) 342-0686, winnsborocenterforthearts.com

28

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

OCTOBER

4

**Dripping Springs [4-5] Lone Star Gourd Festival**, texasgourdsociety@hotmail.com, texasgourdsociety.org

5

**Huntington Catfish Festival**, (936) 635-3306, shophuntingontx.com

**New Braunfels Das Fest**, (830) 629-2943, newbraunfelsconservation.org



# Parenthood

It's the toughest, most rewarding job there is. From the moment a child is born, parenthood is an exercise in nurturing, teaching and letting go. And when the time comes for our offspring to experience the world on their own, they remain in our hearts and are never far from our thoughts.

CURATED BY GRACE FULTZ



1

**1 CHARLES BAXTER**  
COSERV

"Mother mallard and nine ducklings."

**2 SANDRA DRAKE**  
BLUEBONNET EC

"My daughter, the youngest of four, has waited a long time for her turn at parenting. The joy her newborn baby boy brings can be seen in every fiber of her being."

**3 LINDSAY HUMPHREYS**  
SOUTH PLAINS EC

"Learning to fly fish the rivers of New Mexico with Dad."

**4 HELEN FOWLER**  
PEDERNALES EC

A father's love on his daughter's wedding day.



2



3



4

## Upcoming Contests

DUE SEP 10 **Parks**

DUE OCT 10 **I Love**

DUE NOV 10 **Small Spaces**



Enter online at [TexasCoopPower.com/contests](https://TexasCoopPower.com/contests).

**TCP** See Focus on Texas on our website for many more Parenthood photos from readers.



## The Farmer's Regret

A farm tractor will get you far—  
if you look after it

BY JOHN TERRY WENDE  
ILLUSTRATION BY  
DAVID MOORE

**THIS WAS SUPPOSED** to be a really good deal. Smart too.

We had bought a 15-acre farm south of Austin in 1974 and now, 10 years later, our (new to us) 1940s Farmall B tractor was the perfect choice for our small operation.

Living on an educator's salary and applying my knowledge as a high school economics teacher, I was proud of myself for taking extra-close care of my tractor. I even built a small shed to keep it protected and dry.

I remember that no matter what happened or what the problem was, I always found a way to keep that Farmall in good running condition.

Over the years, I have seen a number of tractors—and pictures of tractors—silently keeping vigil in their temporary-turned-final resting places.

An old Ford tractor, for years on end, sits under the canopy of a large live oak tree, proudly displaying a “for sale” sign. Then there's the tractor sitting near the corner of a fence row with an assortment of brush and vines winding their way through it. I had often wondered: How could a person abandon their machine and leave it out there all by itself?

I would never do that—would I?

Then I started having battery and generator issues and struggled to get the parts I needed to fix my Farmall. The longer that tractor sat outside in the very same spot, the less I thought about hauling it back to the shed, so I could at least get it out of the weather.

Suddenly I had become that farmer who let his machine down.

It's not just the weather you have to watch out for either. A friend told me about his family trying to raise cattle in Arkansas in the 1950s, and when that didn't work, they moved back to Texas and settled in Taylor County. They brought back all their farm equipment, including a Minneapolis-Moline tractor, which they parked between the house and the county road.

He said that, over the years, people would sneak onto his property and help themselves to various tractor parts. It made him really mad because, he said, all they had to do was ask.

Farm tractors are nearly indestructible—if you take care of them. For what I bought it for, my Farmall B gladly did everything I asked it to do. My responsibility was to take good care of it and keep it running.

I didn't hold up my side of the deal, and my Farmall fell victim to the mystic landscape of abandoned tractors, forever stuck in the mud a few feet from my tractor shed. ■

# ATTO SPORT THE MOST ADVANCED PORTABLE MOBILITY SCOOTER IN THE WORLD

Where engineering excellence meets sleek design - a lightweight, safe, customizable, and stylish scooter for UNLIMITED FREEDOM.

## How did Anna start to enjoy life to the fullest?

At the age of 56, a back operation left me dependent on a cane, significantly impacting my daily life. Simple tasks like going to the store or meeting friends became challenging, and I even had to cancel a long-awaited anniversary trip to Italy.

My husband purchased a scooter for me, but it was cumbersome and uncomfortable for everyday use, leaving me feeling more constrained than liberated. However, everything changed when I came across the ATTO SPORT. This remarkable scooter proved to be a game changer. Not only is it robust and reliable, but it also conveniently splits into two pieces, allowing me to effortlessly lift it into my car trunk on my own. I was even able to stow it in the overhead compartment on the plane, enabling us to finally take that trip to Italy! I am now independent once more, able to go wherever I please and do so with a striking sense of style. In fact, I now find that my husband struggles to keep up with me!



CRUISES



ROAD TRIPS



FLIGHTS

## What makes ATTO so unique?

- Independence and convenience:** Easy to use and conveniently folds into a compact suitcase size for simple storage. It easily separates into two parts in seconds, with the heaviest piece weighing just 37 pounds, making it easier to lift into your car trunk.
- Go anywhere:** Conquer any terrain with puncture-proof, shock-absorbing tires and a 4-inch ground clearance. Equipped with electronic stability control for added safety on descents and turns, it is also flight-approved, ideal for air travel and cruise ships. With a driving range of up to 12.5 miles (25 miles with the XL battery), a top speed of 6.2 MPH, and a maximum weight capacity of 300 pounds, this durable scooter is designed for longevity.
- Top-Notch Engineering:** Guaranteeing both comfort and durability, this scooter offers ample legroom and a big comfortable seat. The ATTO is super portable and lightweight, and still rides like a heavy-duty scooter.
- Unmatched Stylish Design:** You deserve a mobility solution that doesn't just get you from A to B but makes you feel great while doing so. ATTO stands out from the crowd with its stunning design.

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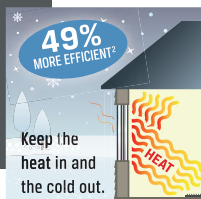
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<sup>1</sup>**DETAILS OF OFFER:** Offer expires 10/31/2024. Not valid with other offers or prior purchases. Get \$379 off each window and \$779 off each entry/patio door and 12 months no money down, no monthly payments, no interest when you purchase four (4) or more windows or entry/patio doors between 9/1/2024 and 10/31/2024. Subject to credit approval. Interest is billed during the promotional period, but all interest is waived if the purchase amount is paid before the expiration of the promotional period. Financing for GreenSky® consumer loan programs is provided by federally insured, federal and state chartered financial institutions without regard to age, race, color, religion, national origin, gender, or familial status. Savings comparison based on purchase of a single unit at list price. Available at participating locations and offer applies throughout the service area. See your local Renewal by Andersen location for details. Some Renewal by Andersen locations are independently owned and operated. License numbers available at [renewalbyandersen.com/license](https://renewalbyandersen.com/license). <sup>2</sup>Values are based on comparison of Renewal by Andersen® double-hung window U-Factor to the U-Factor for clear dual-pane glass non-metal frame default values from the 2006, 2009, 2012, 2015, and 2018 International Energy Conservation Code "Glazed Fenestration" Default Tables. <sup>3</sup>Review aggregator survey of 5-star reviews among leading national full-service window replacement companies. January 2024 Reputation.com. "Renewal by Andersen" and all other marks where denoted are trademarks of their respective owners. © 2024 Andersen Corporation. All rights reserved. RBA13747 \*Using U.S. and imported parts.