

HE TAUGHT HOLLYWOOD  
STARS TO TALK TEXAN

BESSIE COLEMAN'S REACH  
KNEW NO BOUNDS

CHAGRIN OVER  
MY FATHER

# Texas Coop Power

FOR BLUEBONNET EC MEMBERS

JUNE 2021

## After Nature Strikes

How co-ops join forces  
to get the power back on

**BLUEBONNET  
EC NEWS**

SEE PAGE 18



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# June 2021



07

## 'That's What Co-ops Are For'

Three months of historic weather in 2020 and the February polar vortex unleash the full force of Texas' co-op family.

*Stories by Chris Burrows*

**ON THE COVER**

A co-op crew works to restore power near Lake Charles, Louisiana, after Hurricane Delta.  
*Photo by Chad Simon | Sam Houston EC*

**ABOVE**

Lineworkers across Texas scrambled to restore power during the polar vortex in February.  
*Photo courtesy Pedernales EC*

## 12 Texas Talk Man

Robert Hinkle had some of Hollywood's biggest stars talkin' and dressin' the part.

*By Jessica Ridge*

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Parent Imperfect  
*By Martha Deeringer*



# Sunset Cinema

**DRIVE-IN THEATERS** have enjoyed a resurgence since last spring as the COVID-19 pandemic forced folks to find forms of entertainment that didn't risk their health. Even before that, drive-ins were thriving in Texas, as we wrote about in *Drive in, Chill Out* in June 2019.

## June 6 National Drive-In Movie Day

Grab some popcorn and celebrate.

“Noble fathers have noble children.”

—EURIPIDES

## Can-Do Perspective

Recycling one aluminum can saves enough energy to run a 14-watt CFL for 20 hours, a computer for three hours or a TV for two hours.



## Storm Surge

A record 30 named storms formed in the Atlantic Ocean in 2020. Thirteen of those named storms turned into hurricanes, and three of them—Hanna, Laura and Delta—brought high winds or heavy rain or both to Texas, which mobilized lineworkers across the state. See *'That's What Co-ops Are For'* on Page 8.

As the planet warms, scientists say, hurricanes are lingering longer and staying stronger once they make landfall.

Alas, hurricane season begins again June 1 and runs through November.

# Heavy Metal

**THE LARGEST PLAYABLE GUITAR** in the world is 43½ feet tall, 16½ feet wide and weighs 1 ton, according to Guinness World Records. Built by students from the Conroe Independent School District Academy of Science and Technology, it's modeled on a 1967 Gibson Flying V and was first played in June 2000 with the opening chord of *A Hard Day's Night*.



## TCP Contests and More

[ON TEXASCOOPPOWER.COM](https://www.texascooppower.com)

### \$500 RECIPE CONTEST

Pies

### FOCUS ON TEXAS PHOTOS

Fillin' Stations

### RECOMMENDED READING

*Gas With Class* (January 2013) visited a fillin' station that still offered full service.



## A CAREER TAKES OFF

Nothing is cooler for an aspiring writer than to see her work in print for the first time.

Ainsley Shaw gets that thrill this month with the publication of *Queen Bess Soared* on Page 29.

Shaw is a first-year student at Maastricht University in the Netherlands, but she began writing about Bessie Coleman, the Texan who became the first African American woman and first Native American woman to earn a pilot's license, in 2020, when she was a senior at Leander High School.

Shaw, a Pedernales Electric Cooperative member, participated in the Leander school district's Career Opportunities on Location week by shadowing the staff at *Texas Co-op Power*. "Being in a real writing environment has only reinforced my intention to pursue writing as a career," she said of her COOL experience.

**FINISH THIS SENTENCE**  
I ALWAYS LAUGH WHEN MY DAD ...

**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. Below are some of the responses to our April prompt: **I thought I was smart until ...**

I realized I was mistaking knowledge for wisdom.

GAIL DURFEE  
MAGIC VALLEY EC  
MCALLEN

I left home.

PATTY LONGINO SMITH  
VIA FACEBOOK

I began talking less and listening more.

TAMMIE MANCHESTER  
JACKSON EC  
SARGENT

To see more responses, read *Currents* online.



DAVE SHAFER

**The Seed Flourishes**

“Great story on vintner Alphonse Dotson. Michael Hurd could have added that Dotson shows great character by his choice of dog—the blue Lacy pictured on the cover.”

**BEN ROBERTS**  
HAMILTON COUNTY EC  
GATESVILLE

**Runaway Scrape’s Anquish**

Janice Woods Windle wrote about her family’s involvement in the Runaway Scrape in her historical novel *True Women* [*The Runaway Scrape*, April 2021]. One detail I’ll never forget is that a child who died on the way east was later dug up and reinterred near home, after the danger was over.

Mary Pritchard  
HILCO EC  
Midlothian



Gotas de Oro is the best wine, and I’m not a wine drinker [*The Seed Flourishes*, April 2021]. I could get used to it.

TERESA ATOR  
LEIFESTE  
VIA FACEBOOK

**Botched Attempt**

You state that Sarah Fuller was the first female athlete to play in a major college football game and two weeks later was the first woman to score in such a game [*A Big Step*, Currents, April 2021]. Wrong on both counts.

Katie Hnida played for the University of Colorado in 1999 and New Mexico 2002–04. On August 30, 2003, she kicked two extra points against Texas State to become the first woman to score in a Division I game.

Mike Lusk  
Medina EC  
San Antonio



COLLEGIATE IMAGES / GETTY IMAGES

**Real as It Gets**

I must say that in today’s world of polemic divisiveness, your homey, well-written and informative magazine is a breath of fresh air. In a world of hypercommercialism at mind-blowing speeds, thanks for being so real.

Douglas Stewart  
Pedernales EC  
Wimberley

**TCP WRITE TO US**

letters@TexasCoopPower.com

Editor, Texas Co-op Power  
1122 Colorado St., 24th Floor  
Austin, TX 78701

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

Texas Co-op Power

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BY CHRIS BURROWS

# WALKING THE LINES

WHEN FEBRUARY'S polar vortex brought to Texas enough snow, ice, cold and wind to strain every bit of infrastructure, Cody Hansen, a Bandera Electric Cooperative lineworker, parked his bucket truck on the side of a Hill Country road. He was hoofing it.

"The roads were super snowed over. Then instead of patches of black ice, we had all black ice," he said. "It's a lot more difficult when you have to walk the lines out and try not to break an ankle."

Bandera EC and many of the state's 65 other distribution cooperatives supplied line crews with foul-weather gear—even if they couldn't supply their homes with power—and the lineworkers in turn restored power to millions between grid-mandated rolling outages. Those workers faced fender benders, exhausting conditions and 12-plus-hour shifts as they knocked ice from poles and hammered at frozen gates and chains to keep power flowing to co-op members.

But for many, the work wasn't done when their lights were back on. Not when others still needed help.

About a dozen co-ops sent workers to other cooperatives after ice broke thousands of poles across Co-op Country and residential heating demand overwhelmed other electrical equipment, stretching thin co-ops and crews.

"When our system was on the ground and members were without power, it was reassuring to know we had support from our co-op family," said Kathi Calvert, general manager at Houston County EC.

Borne out of hardship and guided by the Seven Cooperative Principles, including Cooperation Among Cooperatives, Texas' electric co-ops worked together, helped along by the very members they serve, to do what they've always done.

"Our crews in the field were constantly stuck and having to be pulled around due to the icy conditions," said Bryan Chandler, operations manager at Heart of Texas EC. "Our members came to our aid with food, fuel and tractors to help pull trucks."

It took everyone working cooperatively.

"This was definitely the worst winter storm I have worked in," said Doug Grimm, a 20-year linework veteran for Bluebonnet EC. "We did what we always do: Come together and get the job done." ■

**AFTER TEXAS THAWED AND THE LIGHTS CAME BACK ON IN FEBRUARY, CO-OP LINEWORERS STILL WEREN'T DONE**

COURTESY FEDERNALES AND SAM HOUSTON ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES





# 'THAT'S WHAT CO-OPS ARE FOR'





BY CHRIS BURROWS



### THREE MONTHS OF HISTORIC WEATHER IN 2020 UNLEASHED THE FULL FORCE OF TEXAS' CO-OP FAMILY

**I**T wasn't the 16-hour days or the searing heat. It wasn't the meager accommodations—a 100-man tent—or the fact that he'd had only five days off in seven weeks. Speaking from a mud-caked work truck in southwest Louisiana, James Warden didn't bring up any of those things.

"The hardest part is being away from home," Warden said. He had just missed his youngest son's eighth birthday. "When I'm working at home, I still get to see my kids and wife when I come in late at night. I at least get to kiss 'em good night, but here it's just a phone call."

The construction foreman for Deep East Texas Electric Cooperative was five days into his second trip in about a month to DeRidder, Louisiana, where he was helping an electric co-op severely damaged by hurricanes Laura and Delta. It was mid-October 2020, and Warden's crew, based out of San Augustine in East Texas, was setting poles and hanging lines, some of which they'd already reset and rehung weeks before, following Laura. That hurricane knocked out power to Warden's own home and heavily damaged his own co-op's lines.

But the day after the lights were back on in East Texas, Warden was in Louisiana. He left his own family to help another family—the co-op family.

In his 24 years as a lineworker, Warden has worked the front lines of major recovery efforts, including after hurricanes Katrina and Rita. But he had never experienced anything like this. He'd never had to miss one of his four kids' birthdays.

"When we first got here, there weren't hardly any lines up in the air," he said. "Their whole system was tore up. It was just wiped. When you drove down the highway, just about every pole you would look at was broke."



Co-ops follow the Seven Cooperative Principles, including Cooperation Among Cooperatives, through which they seek aid from and offer assistance to fellow co-ops during times of crisis.

COURTESY BLUEBONNET, HILCO, HOUSTON COUNTY, PEDERNALES, SAM HOUSTON AND SWISHER ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES



**'EVERY TIME WE HAVE A STORM AT HOME AND IT GETS REAL BAD, PEOPLE VOLUNTEER TO COME HELP US. BEING A LINEMAN, WHAT YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO DO IS GO HELP PEOPLE.'**

Relentlessly dedicated lineworkers like Warden have for more than 80 years ensured that the lights stay on across Co-op Country, where cooperatives rely on one another when disaster strikes. The full force of that network was on brilliant display last fall, when Laura in August, Hurricane Sally in September and Delta in October ripped through the South, including parts of Texas, killing dozens, displacing many more and destroying electrical infrastructure. And then an unprecedented ice storm tore apart co-op grids in West Texas and the Panhandle.

By the end of last October, lineworkers from every part of Texas had helped restore power for more than a quarter-million co-op members in Texas, Louisiana and Alabama—resetting thousands of poles along hundreds of miles.

But lineworkers like Ben Perry don't measure progress in miles or meters. They measure it in relieved faces.

"That's probably what will stick with me the most—the people that were there, the hospitality," said Perry, a foreman for United Cooperative Services, a co-op based south of Fort Worth. Perry, like Warden, was part of a crew dispatched to Louisiana to help Beaufort EC, whose entire electrical system was taken offline by Laura—the strongest recorded hurricane to ever make landfall in Louisiana. The Category 4 storm killed 77 after it made landfall August 27, 2020, packing 150 mph winds.

Laura dealt serious damage to several Texas co-ops but decimated Beaufort EC, prompting a call for help that

draw more than 1,200 lineworkers from across the South and Midwest, including Warden and Perry, for a massive monthslong power restoration effort. "We really couldn't do it without them," said Danielle Tilley, communications specialist at Beaufort EC.

"The devastation from that storm was unreal," said Brad Morrow, another United lineworker. "It seemed like everywhere you drove, there were trees and debris, and any sort of house or building was destroyed."

Twenty Texas co-ops sent help to Jasper-Newton EC, where 90% of that East Texas co-op's 22,900 meters had no power. General Manager Mark Tamplin was grateful. "Assistance from other cooperatives was extremely critical to the restoration effort," he said.

"Every time we have a storm at home and it gets real bad, people volunteer to come help us," Warden said. "Being a lineman, what you're supposed to do is go help people."

Cooperation Among Cooperatives, one of the Seven Cooperative Principles that guide all co-ops, ensures that help is just a phone call away when any co-op anywhere needs it.

"Whenever they call us, we're obligated to go help because there'll be times in the future when I know we'll need help," Perry said. "That's just what you do."

Tate Glasscock knows firsthand.

The foreman at Lighthouse EC, based in the Texas Panhandle, also made the trip east after Laura's onslaught, driving eight hours to spend 10 days helping Jasper-Newton EC.



From August through October, Texas lineworkers faced sweltering and then arctic conditions after hurricanes in the Gulf and an ice storm in West Texas and the Panhandle devastated co-ops' infrastructure.

“That’s what co-ops are for—to help each other,” Glasscock said.

Just a few weeks after returning from East Texas, Glasscock’s own co-op was hit by a devastating ice storm that snapped upward of 3,700 power poles and knocked offline more than 63,000 meters across 15-plus cooperatives in West Texas and the Panhandle. The October storm coated power lines with half-inch-thick ice, which can add 500 pounds to a single span of line, toppling crossarms, lines and poles across sparse stretches of plains.

Help poured in to the co-ops affected by the ice, which a South Plains EC spokesperson called “the most devastating storm we’ve had in 20 years”; Lighthouse EC general manager Albert Daniel said was “the worst storm to ever hit Lighthouse by all recollections”; and Lyntegar EC called “likely the largest single outage event ... in the history of the cooperative.”

Suddenly Glasscock and many fellow first responders were the ones in need of help after they just provided it.

“In my nearly 20-year career, I’ve never seen anything this detrimental to our system,” Glasscock said. “Most of the time it’s in one specific area. This was our whole system.”

United lineworkers Perry and Morrow headed west, just weeks after their tireless work out east, joining a major rebuilding effort in the Panhandle.

“Just seeing those guys roll through the gates, I thought, ‘Man, we’ve got help,’” Glasscock said. “I knew we were in

good shape then.”

Progress was much slower in the Panhandle, where homes can be separated by miles.

“I believe the first day that we went out, there were 13 or 14 poles that were on the ground that fed one house,” Morrow said. “In Louisiana that might have gotten 30, 40, 50 people on, if not more.” But the payoff was no different. “The relief in people’s eyes and the joy that they experience is the same.”

Between the hurricanes and ice storm, Perry spent about three weeks away from his family over the course of about two months. “I don’t know that I’ll ever forget this year,” said Perry, a 16-year line work veteran. “This has been one of the craziest years that I’ve been a part of in this work.”

Those in need kept him going. That was just as true this past February, when co-op members supported crews through an unprecedented polar vortex. Dangerous roads, iced-over lines and poles, and grid-mandated outages made lineworkers’ jobs even more challenging.

“There was the normal fatigue that comes from working so many 12-hour days in a row, but sometimes that was compounded by coming home to a cold house,” said Kendal Fiebrich, a Bluebonnet EC lineworker.

Sympathetic members lent support online and in the field—like a woman in Moss Bluff, Louisiana. She cooked up a meal of gumbo “and any kind of Louisiana fixin’s you could think of,” Morrow said, for linemen from Texas and Missouri who restored her power after weeks of living off a generator.

Strangers united by the co-op family.

“It’s the people who make it worthwhile,” Morrow said. “You’ll never find someone more thankful and willing to help you when you’re there to help them.” ■

# Texas Talk MAN

A photograph of an older man with a goatee, wearing a black cowboy hat, a white long-sleeved shirt, and a black leather vest. He is leaning on a thick, mossy tree branch. He has a large silver bolo tie, a gold watch, and a diamond ring. In the background, a brown horse is grazing in a field under trees.

He had some  
of Hollywood's  
biggest stars  
talkin' and  
dressin'  
the part

# Robert Hinkle

likes to sit where he can see everyone in the room and who's walking through the door. He leads me to the corner of a long table at the back of a pandemic-emptied Masonic Lodge in Leander and chooses a seat with a clear view of the entrance. He wears an Air Force cap and a sky-blue Mason's shirt embroidered with "N. Hollywood," each emblematic of the twists and turns of his prolific career.

Attention to wardrobe figured into Hinkle's duties as unofficial technical adviser on the West Texas and Panhandle sets of *Giant* and *Hud*, two better-known entries in the catalog of midcentury Texas cinema. When costume design choices went awry—a hat that wasn't creased correctly or was impractical for work, jeans too short for horseback riding—he would issue a concise verdict: "A Texan wouldn't wear that," then figure out a fix.

That was just one duty on two projects over an entertainment career that spanned decades and comprised a raft of roles: stuntman, actor, writer, producer, director and Texas talk man, as *Giant* director George Stevens dubbed him.

Hinkle's preference for an unobstructed view isn't surprising, either. A few years before he coached Hollywood luminaries Rock Hudson, Elizabeth Taylor and Paul Newman on the nuances of a type of Texas dialect—leaving the "g" off words like "walking" and emphasizing r's when they ended a word such as "mother" or "father"—he enjoyed an embarrassment of bird's-eye views.

Born and raised in the South Plains of Texas, Hinkle left high school in 1947 to join the Air Force at 17 after securing a promise from a recruiter that he could continue his education while enlisted. "Nobody in my family ever had a high school diploma," he says. After earning that credential, he spent several months in Europe working on a crew that flew coal from Frankfurt to Berlin.

On one trip, the co-pilot had a heart attack midflight. Hinkle took over co-pilot duties for the rest of the round



Robert Hinkle lassos Elizabeth Taylor on the set of *Giant*.

trip, thanks to the private pilot's license he'd earned at 16.

While stationed overseas, Hinkle's first stop in Vienna was to board the Riesenrad, a 212-foot-tall Ferris wheel. It was a precursor to a ride he'd take a few years later, on a Ferris wheel much closer to home, with his good friend James Dean.

Not bad for a kid from Brownfield who didn't officially exist on paper until his 20s.

The country doctor who attended Hinkle's birth on an unelectrified Terry County ranch in 1930 misrecorded his first name as "Bobbie." It didn't get corrected until some 22 years later, when Hinkle went to the courthouse with his aunt and uncle in tow to vouch for his identity. Today, the nonagenarian takes that misnomer in stride, along with the doctor's weeklong delay in recording his birth on the county rolls. "That old doctor," he says, not unkindly. "At least he got me here."

Hinkle's family followed the crops around for work for a time after his birth. "We were poor," he says. "They were



James Dean shows Hinkle how well he's learned to hogtie.

intense focus on getting the part of Jett Rink, the anti-hero of *Giant*, just right.

"He told me, the day I met him, 'I want you to help me be a Texan 24 hours a day,'" Hinkle says. During filming, the pair grew close as the dialogue coach modeled Texan sensibilities for Dean. They shared meals, pulled pranks and hunted rabbits together. "He was like a brother," Hinkle says, "just like I was raised with him there in Brownfield."

Hinkle says Dean wasn't a big star then, having only one film credit at the time. But his commitment to his craft

and his precision in shaping a character in the likeness of his mentor precipitated a friendship.

"He was so dedicated," says Hinkle, a Pedernales Electric Cooperative member. "He wanted to be with me all the time. Because he wanted to be a Texan. I mean, he watched everything I did and everything I said, watched every person that I met, how I met 'em and things like that, and he just studied it."

That osmosis translated to the screen. Dean received a posthumous Oscar nomination for the role, which came as no surprise to his grieving friend.

"He could have played *Giant* a different way, you know," Hinkle says. "He wanted to play him just as an old down and out cowboy, didn't have anything and didn't figure he'd ever have anything, except a dream."

After filming of *Giant* ended, Dean gave a replica Oscar to Hinkle, inscribed with his name, to thank him for creating the character.

Back at the Masonic Lodge, the afternoon unspools. Just before he tells me about recruiting Buddy Holly to headline a car-selling telethon starring Western character actor Chill Wills, strains of *El Paso* fill the room. It's Hinkle's iPhone ring tone. His eyes crinkle. "That's Marty Robbins," he says. "I managed him for 14 years."

Looking back on his half-century career, spanning roles from cowboy stuntman to mentor to manager and many points in between, I ask if there's anything he'd change.

"No," he says. "I'd just love to do it again. I've had a lot of rough times and things—boy, I'd take them right along with the good ones, if I could just do it one more time." ■

**TCP WEB EXTRA** Want to see more from Hinkle's Hollywood days? Visit our website.

poor people." After the military and before setting out for Hollywood, Hinkle worked as a weekend rodeo cowboy and in construction, among other jobs. His 12-hour shifts in a West Texas oil field in 1950 and 1951 earned him \$1.76 an hour and, years later, a foothold in a conversation with Howard Hughes, the manufacturing scion and film producer.

An uncredited role in a 1956 film, *The First Traveling Saleslady*, led to a chance meeting of the two Texas transplants in Hollywood. After being instructed by the director to all but pretend not to even see Hughes as he visited the set, Hinkle was wrangled into meeting him anyway when the film's star, Ginger Rogers, walked him over. The inventor didn't offer to shake hands, Hinkle says, but the two quickly found common ground: Much to the magnate's approval, the drill bits the supporting player had used in his oil field days were manufactured by Hughes Tool Company.

During *Giant*'s 1955 production, Hinkle, James Dean and Elizabeth Taylor, along with a handful of other cast and crew members, repaired to Dallas over the Fourth of July weekend, all because the famously violet-eyed star couldn't resist the siren song of Neiman Marcus. Hinkle called the luxury retailer and dropped a few names. Stanley Marcus, the store's owner, not only agreed to allow the group entry to the store on a Sunday, when it would typically be closed, but also sent a plane to Marfa to whisk the group to Love Field.

After being feted by Dallas society in Stanley and Billie Marcus' Highland Park mansion, Hinkle, Taylor and Dean embarked on their shopping excursion, followed by an outing to an offseason Fair Park, home to the state fair, where they rode a rickety wooden roller coaster, sampled carnival fare, played midway games and boarded the soaring Texas Star.

The lighthearted weekend contrasted with Dean's



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This year's mintage of freshly struck One-Ounce Silver Maple Leaf coins has just been released, meaning NOW is the time to secure yours at an incredible price!

## One of the World's Purest Silver Coins — Guaranteed

The Canadian Silver Maple Leaf is one of the world's purest silver coins, struck in a full Troy ounce of 99.99% ("four nines") pure silver. As an official legal-tender coin with a face value of \$5 Canadian, its content and purity come guaranteed by the Canadian Government. By contrast, the U.S. Silver Eagle is only struck in 99.9% purity and carries a \$1 U.S. legal-tender value.

## Iconic Maple Leaf Design

Take one look at this coin, and you know exactly where it was created. The reverse features an iconic design featuring a single sugar maple leaf, the national symbol of Canada. This lifelike design features superior texture and detail, and comes surrounded by a vivid burst of radial lines—lines that serve a dual function...

## Advanced Security Features

In addition to its high purity, the Silver Maple Leaf boasts special security features, such as laser-engraved radial lines and a small micro-engraved maple leaf, that make it nearly impossible to forge. It's not just one of the world's purest silver coins, but also one of its most secure—an important benefit for silver buyers.

## Reputation Matters

Why are we releasing these high-purity coins at such a remarkable price? We want you to know what hundreds of thousands of satisfied collectors and stackers have known since 1984 — GovMint.com is *the best source for coins worldwide*.

## Call Now and Beat the Crowd!

This is a strictly limited release of one of the purest silver coins in the world—and a great opportunity to secure one or more hefty 2021 One-Ounce Silver Maple Leafs in their original freshly struck Brilliant Uncirculated (BU) condition.

These newly minted, 99.99% pure silver coins will quickly be secured by collectors and stackers around the world, so don't wait—call 1-866-450-5687 and use the offer code below. Secure five or more and you'll even receive FREE domestic shipping!

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- 10-19 Coins- \$35.25 ea. + **FREE SHIPPING**
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# SACRED STONE OF THE SOUTHWEST IS ON THE BRINK OF EXTINCTION



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

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

We found a limited supply of turquoise from Arizona and snatched it up for our *Sedona Turquoise Collection*. Inspired by the work of those ancient craftsmen and designed to showcase the exceptional blue stone, each stabilized vibrant cabochon features a unique, one-

of-a-kind matrix surrounded in Bali metalwork. You could drop over \$1,200 on a turquoise pendant, or you could secure 26 carats of genuine Arizona turquoise for just \$99.

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The supply of Arizona turquoise is limited, don't miss your chance to own the Southwest's brilliant blue treasure. Call today!

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<b>Complete Set**</b>	<del>\$747</del>	<b>\$249</b>	<b>Save \$498</b>

\*\* Complete set includes pendant, chain and earrings.

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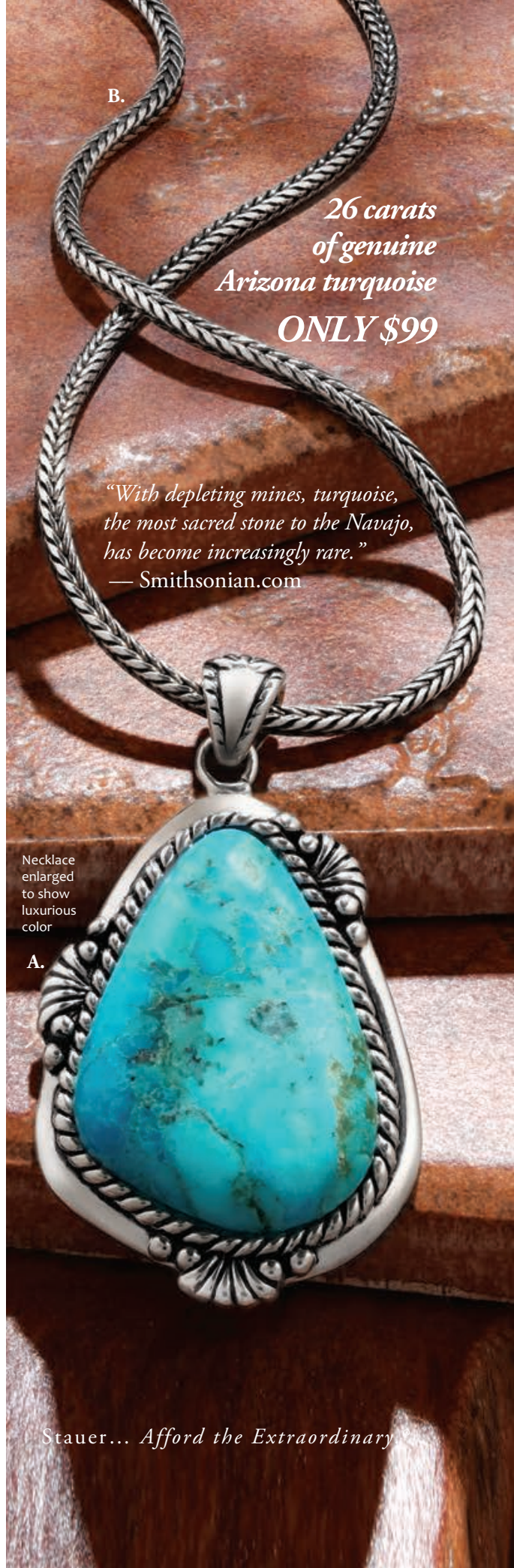
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Stauer... Afford the Extraordinary

# the DOCTOR

COVID-19 accelerated the use of telemedicine across rural Central Texas.



By Mary Ann Roser

**IN DECEMBER 2019**, Clarice Schneider had a procedure for an irregular heartbeat in Houston, where she was living. Later that month, she and her husband moved to a new home in Lincoln in Lee County.

To stay on top of her heart health, she connected with a cardiologist in Bryan-College Station, about an hour away, and saw him for the first time in April 2020. But then the COVID-19 pandemic worsened, instead of fading, and that changed everything.

Her new cardiologist was advising patients not to come into his office. Schneider still needed follow-up care, and COVID-19 posed a serious threat to her. “I was scared to go outside,” said Schneider, who is retired. What to do?

Without leaving home, she joined millions of Texans who, for the first time, used a phone, tablet or computer to visit a health care provider. In Schneider’s case, the virtual visit with her new Baylor Scott & White cardiologist in Bryan-College Station was by phone. In less than 10 minutes, she answered his essential questions about her blood pressure — she was taking it at home and it was normal — and whether she still was experiencing heart palpitations — she wasn’t. She felt assured that she was healing well.

Call it telehealth, telemedicine or virtual care: The pandemic loosened restrictions around these visits, allowing audio-only calls, more kinds of health care professionals to engage in telehealth and more circumstances under which Medicare patients could

It's made distant and close-to-home physicians a call or 'virtual' visit away.

# can SEE YOU now



My first visit was 8:15 in the morning, and I didn't have to get up and drive to Bryan-College Station.

— CLARICE SCHNEIDER  
Telehealth patient

Bluebonnet member Clarice Schneider has appreciated being able to make virtual doctor visits from the comfort of her home in Lincoln. *Sarah Beal photo*

take part, among other things. Now doctors and other providers could be paid for a variety of virtual appointments.

"The cat is out of the bag," Dr. Ashis Barad said. The pediatric gastroenterologist is also medical director of virtual specialty care services for Baylor Scott & White Health. Before the pandemic, his system's telehealth visits were about 1 percent of their total outpatient visits. The week of April 6, 2020, at the height of the response, telehealth had skyrocketed to 72 percent of visits.

Now, virtual visits are holding steady at about 11 percent of all outpatient encounters at Baylor Scott & White.

"Where you live, your ZIP code, is the biggest factor in your health care

outcomes," said Barad, who is based in Temple. "The beauty and potential of telehealth is geography shouldn't matter."

Since 2020's telehealth tsunami, use of the technology has ebbed, but no one expects it to recede to pre-COVID-19 levels. Patients say they appreciate the simplicity, safety and convenience. Schneider expects to continue virtual appointments for routine matters.

"My first visit was 8:15 in the morning, and I didn't have to get up and drive to Bryan-College Station," Schneider said of the initial phone session with her cardiologist.

Having the telemedicine option has been "very comforting" during the pandemic, she said, adding that she still

hopes to meet in person with her cardiologist and her primary care physician in Brenham at least once a year.

## Fewer hospitals, doctors

**RURAL RESIDENTS** have long grappled with shortages of medical providers and mental health professionals. COVID-19 underscored that inequity. A primary reason is a lack of rural hospitals.

Texas has seen more hospital closures than any other state. Since 2010, 27 rural hospitals in 22 communities have shuttered, according to John Henderson, president and CEO of the Texas Organi-

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Karina Rea, a physician assistant, works with Ascension Seton on its Care-a-Van, bringing care to Luling, Lockhart and other communities. *Rodolfo Gonzales photo*

**Continued from previous page**  
 zation of Rural and Community Hospitals, known as TORCH. The state has 158 remaining rural hospitals, and over half of those — 82 — are at high risk of closing, according to a recent report from the federal Center for Healthcare Quality and Payment Reform. The primary reasons cited are cuts in Medicare and underpayments from Texas Medicaid.

Unfortunately, when a hospital goes, so do specialists and other health care providers.

When access to care declines, “people put off care and become very ill,” Barad said. He has telehealth visits with children across Texas because of a shortage of pediatric GI specialists. “People getting admitted to hospitals are sicker,” he said, and expensive emergency departments get overused.

Telehealth has helped expand access to care across the state’s rural areas.

By May 2020, 4.5 million Texans had

made their first telehealth visit, according to Mark Olney, a Dallas-based managing director at Accenture, a global professional services and consulting company. These first-timers were more than double the number of pre-pandemic telehealth users, Olney said. With many clinics and offices closed to in-person visits, it was the only option for many.

Now Olney is seeing telehealth start-

ups emerging to help people manage chronic health conditions.

Roy Lehmann of Luling said one of his daughters hurt her back this spring and was not up for a long car ride. Instead, they used a cell phone for a telehealth visit with physician assistant Karina Rea, who is the primary care provider for Lehmann’s daughter. Rea works with Ascension Seton on its Children’s Care-

Randy Wells, right, executive director of Faith Mission & Help Center in Brenham and administrator of the Washington County Health & Service Center, has teamed up with Carly McCord, on screen, director of telebehavioral health at Texas A&M College of Medicine, to provide mental health counseling to more patients from the privacy of their homes. *Sarah Beal photo*



# KEEPING THE CARE-A-VAN ROLLING

**SINCE 2003**, a custom RV converted into a mobile medical unit has provided essential medical care to children and adolescents in mostly rural Caldwell County. The Ascension Seton Edgar B. Davis Care-a-Van is funded by donations from community residents, businesses and grants. Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative has been a supporter since 2008.

Services include well visits, vaccinations, minor acute visits and physicals. During the pandemic, the Care-a-Van has incorporated telemedicine into their services. Over the years, a small team has provided service to an estimated 24,000 young people from Caldwell County, many of whom are uninsured or underinsured. A lack of primary care physicians in the area has made the Care-a-Van an essential source of accessible, affordable health care. The Seton Hays Foundation is working to create a \$1.5 million endowment for the van to provide medical care for generations to come.

The van pulls into different Caldwell County communities every week. Call 512-738-0625 to schedule an appointment. For news and updates, go to their Facebook page @SetonCareAVan.



Ascension Seton's Care-a-Van fills a need for accessible, affordable health care for babies, children and adolescents in Caldwell County. *Rodolfo Gonzalez photo*

a-Van, a specially equipped RV that is on the road in Caldwell County, Tuesdays through Fridays, stopping one day each in Luling, Lockhart, Prairie Lea and Dale. The van was not in Luling the day the Lehmanns needed an appointment, but telehealth made it possible.

"Using telehealth made it much easier for us because we didn't have to drive to Lockhart or Prairie Lea," said Lehmann, a truck driver. And he didn't have to miss a half day of work.

During the pandemic, Care-a-Van providers encouraged telehealth visits, when possible, to protect patients, family

and staff from COVID-19 infection. The mobile facility's patients range from newborns to 18-year-olds from across Caldwell County. Even now, although the moving health facility that began operations in 2003 is fully operational, a virtual visit may still be the best option.

"It's an indispensable technology and a game changer for access to care," said Henderson, of TORCH, about telehealth. "Before the pandemic, I saw telehealth provide rural communities access to specialty physician services. But out of necessity, the pandemic has applied that to primary care.

"There's just not going to be any going back."

## One-stop shop

**BEFORE THE PANDEMIC**, rural residents needing a specialist, including a mental health professional, might have had to take the day off work or school to make what might often be a long trip. Others would go to a hospital or clinic closer to home and sit in front of a screen to communicate virtually with a specialist or therapist.

That's the model Faith Mission & Help Center started back in 2013 when people receiving primary care at its Brenham clinic or social services at the mission needed psychological counseling. People still use Faith Mission's interactive screen for visits, but the pandemic enabled many to get care from home, whether with a local provider or one farther away,

Randy Wells said. He is executive director of Faith Mission and administrator of the Washington County Health & Service Center. The center provides non-emergency health services, medication and counseling in partnership with the city of Brenham, Washington County, Baylor Scott & White, private providers and Texas A&M University.

For many in the community, it is a one-stop shop for care.

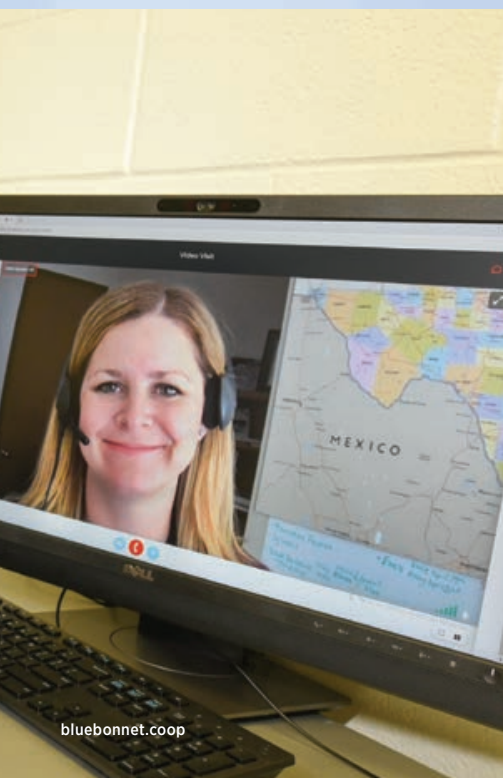
Wells collaborates with Carly McCord, director of telebehavioral health at the Texas A&M College of Medicine, to expand community access to mental health counseling. Over half of the state's 254 counties are without a single psychologist or psychiatrist, McCord said. And two-thirds of all of the psychologists and psychiatrists in Texas work in the five largest cities, she added.

McCord and Wells have spoken at state and national conferences about their successful collaboration. "It's the only ... model like it in the country," Wells said with pride.

Before COVID-19 struck, about 90 percent of the mental health patients assisted by Texas A&M in Washington County went to the therapist's office or clinic for counseling, while 10 percent had a telehealth visit. The pandemic reversed those numbers, McCord said.

"Telehealth brings the provider to the community," she said. She is training the next generation of psychologists — graduate students working on doctorates

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— to work with rural residents.

“We rolled out telehealth in 130 schools, covering almost 65,000 lives,” McCord said of A&M’s role.

Wells hopes the privacy of telehealth and the mental health difficulties that the pandemic has stoked will reduce the stigma around seeking help.

“You could be depressed and under the covers in bed, but you can still get counseling from the comfort of your home,” he said.

Wells sees room for growth and hopes more businesses will embrace telehealth to keep people on the job and functioning without slipping into a crisis. “We still have a lot of work to do,” he said.

## Counseling the kids

**CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS** have not been left out of the telehealth trend.

Schools, partnering with university health centers, are jumping in to fill a yawning gap in mental health services for students, some of whom have experienced pandemic-related anxiety and depression. Fortunately, the Texas Legislature in 2019 provided money to launch the Texas Child Health Access Through Telemedicine program as part of the new Texas Child Mental Health Care Consortium. The consortium, administered by the University of Texas System, includes Texas’ 13 state-funded health-related institutions of higher education. They provide psychiatrists, therapists and doctoral students to help children and adolescents while they’re in school.

At Caldwell Elementary School in Burleson County, Beverly Lilie is the only counselor for the school’s 550 pupils in pre-kindergarten through third grade. She has trained teachers how to identify students who could benefit from the telemedicine program, and if the parents agree, the child receives four free telehealth counseling sessions, plus an intake visit. Students needing longer-term care receive referrals to therapists.

“It’s been absolutely wonderful,” Lilie said. She now has an effective, convenient way to help struggling children. “I like that they are communicating with the parent and give the parents ideas and suggestions” on helping their child.

Because the students in her school are so young, Lilie wondered how well they would adapt to working with a counselor on a screen. She has been pleasantly surprised.

“They all, within a short period of time, built a relationship with that person and



They all ... built a relationship with that person and really looked forward to seeing them. ... Some of them were sad when they were told it was their last session.

— BEVERLY LILIE,  
Counselor,  
Caldwell Elementary School

Beverly Lilie, left, the counselor at Caldwell Elementary School, trains teachers to identify children who could benefit from a program that provides telehealth counseling. Above, a student prepares to take part in a session. Sarah Beal photos

really looked forward to seeing them,” Lilie said. “Some of them were sad when they were told it was their last session.”

## An old-school graduate

**BEFORE THE PANDEMIC** spread telehealth, many doctors were skeptical.

Dr. Karen Smith, a family medicine physician with Baylor Scott & White in Manor, describes herself as an “old-school, paper-and-pencil” doctor who was not “gung ho about pushing on the edges of technology.” She rarely had telehealth appointments with patients before COVID-19’s arrival.

The pandemic was like switching on a light. With her clinic suddenly closed to in-person care, all of Smith’s visits in the early days of the pandemic were

by telehealth, 12 to 14 a day, she said. “It was amazing how fast it changed,” she added. “We barely missed a beat. It was a huge switch and . . . it pushed us forward.

“It was a relief I could still take care of my patients.”

One of her patients is Manor school board president, Realtor and pandemic relief volunteer Monique Cledon. When Cledon fell ill in 2020 with COVID-19, she went to the clinic but was too sick to get out of the car. Staff came to her in the parking lot. Cledon soon discovered that with telehealth she could have follow-up visits with Smith from home.

“I would recommend this to anyone, unless you have an emergency situation,” Cledon said.



Dr. Karen Smith, with Baylor Scott & White in Manor, switched to seeing her patients via telehealth appointments when COVID-19 became a pandemic. Today, Smith uses telemedicine less often with her patients. She has discovered that she likes seeing her own doctor via telemedicine, though. Sometimes, she says, nothing but an in-person meeting with the doctor will suffice. *Sarah Beal photo*

She doesn't plan to go back to in-person visits only because telehealth has made it possible for her to maintain a busy work-and-volunteer schedule. She is more likely to keep telehealth appointments and believes virtual appointments have made it possible to better manage her diabetes.

"My sugar levels have gone down, and it's really changed the way I see doctor appointments," Celedon said. "I have been paying more attention to my health and it's just so simple. . . . My hope is more physicians will provide this sort of service and more people would continue to use it."

Smith, who now sees about three telehealth patients a day, has found that she also likes seeing her own doctor that way. "I love it," Smith said, "and I don't have to miss work."

But sometimes, nothing but an in-person visit will do, Smith said. "It means something to be eyeballed by a doctor. You can tell if someone is jaundiced, if they are having trouble breathing."

## Barriers to telehealth

**THE EXTENT OF** post-pandemic telehealth depends largely on whether health insurers and government programs continue to cover the costs. They may require the patient be seen on a screen. Would a phone call still be OK?

"We certainly hope that the current momentum for increased use of telehealth services will be sustained," said

**On bluebonnet.coop:** A list of Ascension Seton and Baylor Scott & White regional health centers in the Bluebonnet region

Dr. Jeffrey Newport, chief of women's postpartum mental health at UT Health Austin.

The Women's Reproductive Mental Health Clinic he oversees provides psychiatric care to women in the weeks before and after childbirth. The clinic serves the Austin area as well as East Texas, North Texas and the Panhandle, Newport said.

In many rural areas, spotty high-speed internet access impedes online telehealth.

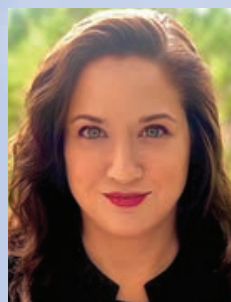
"In a rural market, a lot of people don't have smart phones or (internet) connectivity. Some have to drive to a grocery store or restaurant for that," said Denise Watson, an Ascension Seton nurse who directs the health system's rural clinics. Lack of high-speed internet "is the main issue we have."

A July 2020 report by the Texas Governor's Broadband Development Council says an estimated 926,859 Texans lack access to high-speed internet, or broadband, at home. "This is particularly problematic for those who need to attend school virtually, visit a doctor online, or work remotely, either due to the

COVID-19 pandemic or other factors," the report says.

Solving that issue and the reimbursement question are critical, said Henderson, with TORCH. "When I think about the future of rural health, it's not going to be as inpatient-focused; it's going to be more outpatient care, with a lot more technology."

Mari Robinson, director of telehealth at the University of Texas



Mari Robinson leads telehealth at the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston.

Medical Branch at Galveston, is hopeful about the future of virtual care and the promise it holds for rural Texans. She is coordinating a statewide telehealth system, the UT Virtual Telehealth Network, that leverages the power of UT's eight health science centers and medical schools to expand health care services in rural and remote areas.

"The pandemic has really shown people you can use this technology, and it's OK to use it beyond screening for COVID," Robinson said. "I'm very optimistic this is an opportunity to get really good-quality medical care to underserved areas so folks can form good, long-term relationships with the specialists they need. They can use telemedicine, when it's appropriate — and that's really exciting — and they can go and see the specialist when they need to."

Just like Clarice Schneider discovered. ■

**Bluebonnet** ● POWERED BY

# Safety

Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative has 220 vehicles rolling on the roads of our 3,800-square-mile service area, and safety is front-of-mind for all of our drivers. Here are some ways we play it safe:

## NO DISTRACTIONS

It's at the top of the list because it causes so many accidents nationwide. No drivers of Bluebonnet's vehicles are allowed to use a portable electronic device while driving. They can view it — hands free — for navigation only. Only hands-free telephone use when the vehicle is moving. We keep an eye out for other drivers who are distracted, too.



Apprentice lineman Taylor Rutledge performs a walk-around inspection of his truck to check for potential backing hazards, loose straps, low tires or other problems. *Sarah Beal photo*

## THE WALK AROUND

Before a Bluebonnet crew gets into a vehicle to drive to or from a job, they do a “walk around” to inspect the vehicle for safety and hazards. Among the things they check are:

- Engine compartment for leaks, fluid levels and belts; brake components
- Clutch/gearshift, gauges, mirrors and windshields, lights, brakes (hydraulic and air), emergency equipment
- Tires for tread depth, air stems, inflation, damaged rims, lug nuts
- All equipment is safely stowed and secured
- Secure doors, ties and lifts, couplings/tractor lines/attachments
- Look outside for problems or hazards, like stumps, unsafe driving surfaces or the occasional friendly dog that's jumped into the truck!

## PARK THE BLUEBONNET WAY!

Back into a parking space so you can see pedestrians and the traffic flow in front of you when you leave. Don't know how to back in? Here are some instructions online: <https://bit.ly/2SfQDB1>

## GOOD CATCHES

When an employee spots a potential safety problem or hazard and takes steps to solve it, we call that a “good catch.” They are important enough to factor into our performance incentive plan for all employees. Here are a few recent driving-related “good catches”:

1. Inspecting a trailer that was about to be pulled by a truck, one employee noticed “bubbles” on the side of a tire, an indicator of an impending blow out.
2. An employee saw a big hole in the middle of a gas station parking lot and realized it was a missing the steel cover for underground fuel tanks. Gas station personnel were told about the potential hazard. Our driver left an orange Bluebonnet safety cone to mark the hole.
3. A trailer about to be pulled out of a lot wasn't properly latched and safety chains weren't connected. An eagle-eyed employee stopped the drivers to fix the problems.



## McCaul recognizes Bluebonnet for storm efforts

U.S. Rep. Michael McCaul honored Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative with a Certificate of Congressional Recognition for service to the cooperative's members during February's winter storm. McCaul represents all or parts of Austin, Bastrop, Colorado, Fayette, Lee, Travis and Washington counties. Andrew Ross, center, McCaul's district director, presented the certificate to Bluebonnet CEO Matt Bentke, left, and Bluebonnet Board Chairman Ben Flencher during the April meeting of Bluebonnet's Board of Directors.

## Are you ready? It's hurricane season

The Atlantic hurricane season started on June 1 and lasts until Nov. 30. Learn how to create a family plan, prepare for and report a power outage, stay safe during severe weather and get updates at [bluebonnet.coop/hurricanes](http://bluebonnet.coop/hurricanes).

## CO-OP INFORMATION

Contact a member service representative at 800-842-7708 or [memberservices@bluebonnet.coop](mailto:memberservices@bluebonnet.coop). To report an outage, text OUT to 85700 (to register, text BBOUTAGE to that number), call 800-949-4414, go to [bluebonnet.coop](http://bluebonnet.coop) or use the MyBluebonnet mobile app. Pay your bill any time online, on our mobile app or by calling 800-842-7708.



# Bluebonnet awards \$2,500 scholarships to high school grads

**IN APRIL**, Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative honored 60 high school seniors who will each receive a \$2,500 scholarship.

The students are pursuing an associate or bachelor's degree or a trade or technical certificate. Some of their fields of study include welding, nursing, biomedical science and business. In the past five years, Bluebonnet has given out \$700,000 in scholarships to students from across the cooperative's service area.

Look for 2022 scholarship applications on the cooperative's website, [bluebonnet.coop](http://bluebonnet.coop), by Nov. 1, 2021.

## Trade and Technical Scholarships

**Savannah Adams**, Lexington High School

**Gracie Aguilar**, Giddings High School

**Haven Black**, Luling High School

**Shelia Budnik**, Caldwell High School

**Elexus Cooper**, Lexington High School

**Destin Council**, Brenham High School

**Mynor Faena**, Bastrop High School

**Janelle Gonzalez-Vega**, Cedar Creek High School

**Joseph Gonzalez**, Bastrop High School

**Emily Gruetzner**, Giddings High School

**Ma'Darius Hamilton**, Snook High School

**Raquel Hernandez**, Bastrop High School

**Kyleigh Hruska**, Snook High School

**Kaya King**, Cedar Creek High School

**Bradley Lehmann**, Dime Box High School

**Stephen McGee**, Burton High School

**Kayla Michalk**, Giddings High School

**Kylee Muhl**, Lexington High School

**Nathan Natal**, Smithville High School

**Cecilia Rangel**, San Marcos High School

**Moriah Renken**, Brenham High School

**Clayton Royall**, Luling High School

**Rachel Saunders**, Brenham High School

**Kaitlyn Thompson**, Cedar Creek High School

**Landon Urban**, Fayetteville High School

## Academic Scholarships

**Raina Allee**, Giddings High School

**Sarah Allen**, Giddings High School

**Clayton Boeker**, Brenham High School

**Carly Bonds**, Flatonia High School

**Kailey Burgdorf**, Giddings High School

**Avery Carter**, Lexington High School

**Ramiro Chavez**, Manor Early College High School

**Kross Conley**, Luling High School

**Lisette Cruz-Gorostieta**, Cedar Creek High School

**Ian Dildine**, Bastrop High School

**Grace Dorantes**, Cedar Creek

**Layne Ellsworth**, Bastrop High School

**Kirbie Faour**, Brenham High School

**Baltazar Galindo**, Lockhart High School

**Riley Green**, Snook High School

**Jenna Hardy**, Brenham High School

**Caylee Hermes**, Caldwell High School

**Kamryn Hernandez-Gill**, Bastrop High School

**Shelby Hofferek**, La Grange High School

**Marla Iselt**, Lexington High School

**Tyler Johnston**, Faith Academy, Bellville

**MacKenzie Maurer-McMillan**, Brenham High School

**Zachary McClanahan**, Bastrop High School

**Braden Murphy**, Cedar Creek High School

**Emma Neidig**, Elgin High School

**Avanly Nietzsche**, Giddings High School

**Paige Odenbach**, Caldwell High School

**Charles Smith**, Burton High School

**John Suehs**, Caldwell High School

**Emily Svetlik**, Cedar Creek High School

**Kaitlyn Thelen**, Thrall High School

**Daelyn Warmke**, Bellville High School

**Megan Wheeler**, Lockhart High School

**Trey Woods**, Lexington High School

**Margaret Woodward**, Lexington High School

# My Bluebonnet

Helps you make a month-to-month comparison!

**Our online tool tells the tale: hot temperatures = higher bills**

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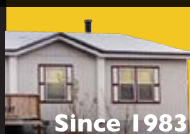
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The reverse of the 2021 release displays a scene from the famous Battle of the Alamo. It depicts two Texian soldiers including the American icon, Davy Crockett, attempting to fend off Mexican soldiers attempting to breach the walls of the Alamo.

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



### BATTLE OF THE ALAMO

second in the series ● ● ● ●

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

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

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



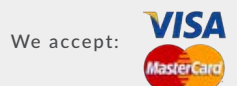
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**TCP WEB EXTRA**

See Gigi Coleman's performance as Bessie Coleman.

Back in the U.S. a year later, she became the first Black woman to perform in an air show. She toured the country making speeches, executing tricks, stunting like a daredevil and working as an activist against discrimination. Coleman, nicknamed Queen Bess, had a reputation for refusing to perform for segregated audiences. Using money she earned from barnstorming, she purchased her own plane, a Curtiss JN-4.

Tragedy struck during a test flight April 30, 1926, over Florida, when a loose wrench jammed the control gears and flipped the plane upside down. She wasn't wearing her seat belt, and the plane had no canopy. Coleman, 34, fell to her death.

Black newspapers gave her death front-page coverage, but the mainstream press barely noted it. In 2019, *The New York Times*, as part of an effort to recognize the lives of remarkable people whose deaths went unreported at the time, ran a complete obituary. "Coleman saw aviation as a way to empower Black people in America and dreamed of opening a flight school," it wrote. "Future pilots said they had been inspired by her, and flight clubs have been named in her honor."

The Challenger Air Pilots Association of Chicago began an annual tradition of flying over Coleman's grave there in 1931. The U.S. Postal Service issued a stamp in her honor in 1995 after Marion Coleman, Bessie's niece, persistently petitioned for it. Texas historical markers stand in Atlanta and Waxahachie, Bessie's former hometowns.

A great-niece, Gigi Coleman, portrays Bessie Coleman in a one-woman show that she performs around the country.

"When I do my performance, people cry," Gigi Coleman says. "I'm very proud to be a relative of hers. She was a trailblazer, and she didn't take no for an answer." ■

# Queen Bess Soared

Bessie Coleman slipped from the grips of gravity and Jim Crow to become the first African American female pilot and first Native American female pilot

BY AINSLEY SHAW

**JIM CROW SEGREGATION** laws seemed to have a grasp like gravity on Bessie Coleman—as they did for most African Americans in the early 20th century—keeping her from rising very high in life.

Coleman, born in 1892 in Atlanta, Texas, to an African American maid and a Native American sharecropper, spent her youth picking cotton. She likely never dreamed she would go on to become the first African American woman and first Native American woman to earn a pilot's license—two years before Amelia Earhart earned hers—100 years ago.

When she was 23, Coleman moved in with two of her brothers and found work as a manicurist in Chicago. Her brother John, who served in Europe during

World War I, drunkenly teased her one day about the wider range of opportunities for women in France. He told her, "Women ain't never goin' to fly, not like those women I saw in France," according to *Queen Bess: Daredevil Aviator*, a biography by Doris L. Rich.

Coleman took that as a challenge and responded, "That's it! You just called it for me." She decided to head to France, where she would face fewer obstacles for being Black and a woman.

After spending her nights learning French and days managing a chili restaurant, Coleman sailed to France and found a pilot to train her. Seven months later, she earned her pilot's license from the Fédération Aéronautique Internationale, on June 15, 1921.

# Tomatoes

Sliced is nice, but you can also bake them into saucy desserts

BY MEGAN MYERS, FOOD EDITOR

For years I avoided eating tomatoes in anything but pasta sauce or pizza. Thankfully those days are behind me, and now I look forward to when my garden starts producing piles of cherry tomatoes and sandwich-ready slicers. This cake helps use up any extra tomatoes you might have on hand—and gets kids to eat them. This recipe was one of the first to appear on soup cans, and this iteration's use of fresh tomatoes only improves it. Filled with spices and wonderfully moist, it will become a summer staple.



## Tomato Cake

### CAKE

- 1 pound tomatoes, or more as needed to yield 2 cups plus 2 tablespoons purée, divided use**
- 2 cups flour**
- 2 teaspoons baking powder**
- 1 teaspoon baking soda**
- 1 teaspoon salt**
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon**
- 1 teaspoon ground cardamom**
- ½ teaspoon ground ginger**
- ½ cup packed brown sugar**
- ½ cup sugar**
- ¾ cup (1½ sticks) butter, softened**
- 2 eggs**

### GLAZE

- 1½ cups powdered sugar**
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract**
- Reserved tomato purée**

- 1. CAKE** Preheat oven to 350 degrees and coat a 10-cup Bundt pan with cooking spray.
- 2.** Core and quarter tomatoes. Purée in a blender or food processor until completely smooth. Measure out 2 cups and set aside, reserving remainder.
- 3.** In a large bowl, sift together flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt, cinnamon, cardamom and ginger.
- 4.** In another bowl, beat sugars and butter until the batter is creamed and fluffy. Beat in eggs one at a time.
- 5.** Alternate adding flour mixture and tomato purée to the batter, starting and ending with the flour. Incorporate fully before each addition.
- 6.** Pour batter into the prepared pan and bake 40 minutes, or until a toothpick comes out clean.
- 7.** Let cake cool in pan 10 minutes, then invert onto a rack to cool completely.
- 8. GLAZE** Mix powdered sugar, vanilla and 2 tablespoons tomato purée until completely smooth. Add more sugar or liquid as necessary. Drizzle over cooled cake.

SERVES 10

**TCP WEB EXTRA** Follow along with Megan Myers and her adventures in the kitchen at [stetted.com](http://stetted.com), where she features a recipe for Roasted Corn and Tomato Salad.



## Broiled Stuffed Tomatoes

JOYCELYN SKIDMORE  
LAMAR ELECTRIC

The ideal starter for any summer dinner, these stuffed tomatoes are ready in a flash. If you have one handy, a melon baller makes easy work of removing tomato seeds.

- 4–6 tomatoes**
- ½ cup breadcrumbs**
- ¼ cup chopped fresh basil or parsley**
- 3 tablespoons minced green onion**
- 1–2 cloves garlic, minced**
- ¼ teaspoon salt, plus more for sprinkling**
- ¼ teaspoon pepper, plus more for sprinkling**
- ⅛ teaspoon dried thyme**
- ¼ cup olive oil, plus more for drizzling**

- 1.** Core tomatoes. Using a spoon, scoop out seeds and juice, taking care not to break the sides of the tomatoes. Set tomatoes upside down in a colander to drain.
- 2.** In a small bowl, combine breadcrumbs, basil or parsley, green onion, garlic, salt, pepper, and thyme. Stir in olive oil until mixture is well combined and looks like wet sand.
- 3.** Sprinkle salt and pepper into each tomato. Fill tomatoes with breadcrumb mixture and set on a rimmed baking sheet. Drizzle with additional olive oil. Broil at 400 degrees 5–10 minutes, keeping an eye on the breadcrumbs so they don't burn.

**SERVES 4–6**

[MORE RECIPES >](#)



\$500 WINNER

## Tangy Tomato Slices

DALA BURK  
WISE EC



This simple yet flavorful dish brings back summer memories for Burk, who has been enjoying this recipe for 40 years. Enjoy the slices on their own or tucked into a warm biscuit for a best-ever tomato sandwich.

**SERVES 6**

- 6 tomatoes, thinly sliced**
- 1 onion, thinly sliced**
- 1 cup olive oil**
- ⅓ cup vinegar**
- ¼ cup chopped fresh parsley**
- 3 tablespoons chopped fresh basil**
- 1 tablespoon sugar**
- 1 teaspoon salt**
- ½ teaspoon pepper**
- ½ teaspoon dry mustard**
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder**

- 1.** Layer tomato and onion slices in a 9-by-13-inch baking dish and set aside.
- 2.** In a small bowl, whisk together remaining ingredients. Pour over tomatoes and onion, using a spatula to spread herbs evenly. Cover and chill 4–5 hours before serving.

## TCP \$500 Recipe Contest

**PIES** DUE JUNE 10

OK, time to show off. We know readers all over the state serve up prize pies. Could yours be the \$500 winner? Enter at [TexasCoopPower.com/contests](http://TexasCoopPower.com/contests) by June 10.



## Savory Tomato Bread Pudding

VALERIE KRUSE  
TRI-COUNTY EC

This dish is ideal for using up day-old bread. Since the tomatoes cook down, feel free to use not-so-perfect ones.

- 8 tablespoons olive oil, divided use
- 1 large baguette, cut into 1-inch cubes
- 3 cloves garlic, chopped
- 3 pounds tomatoes, cored and cut into chunks
- 2 teaspoons sugar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon pepper
- 1 cup grated Parmesan, Asiago

or Romano cheese  
2 tablespoons chopped fresh basil (optional)

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Lightly coat a large casserole dish with cooking spray and set aside. Heat 6 tablespoons olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the bread cubes and stir to coat. Sauté about 5 minutes or until bread is lightly browned and toasted, working in batches if needed. Transfer to a large bowl.
2. Add remaining olive oil to the skillet and cook the garlic 30 seconds. Add tomatoes, sugar, salt and pepper and stir well. Cook until tomatoes have released their juices and are submerged, about 10 minutes.
3. Add tomato mixture to bread cubes. Stir well to combine. Pour mixture into casserole dish and top with cheese.
4. Bake 40–45 minutes, loosening the edges with a spatula after 30 minutes to allow juices to distribute. Remove from oven and let rest 15 minutes, then sprinkle with chopped basil and serve.

SERVES 6–8

## Tasty Tomato Types

BY MEGAN MYERS

While there are more than 10,000 varieties of tomatoes, most of us return to our tried-and-true favorites when cooking.

### Globe

Alongside beefsteak tomatoes, this round, firm and juicy variety is what you'll most likely find at the super-market. They're delicious raw and cooked, and their shape makes them suitable for stuffing.

### Roma

Roma and plum tomatoes are oblong and most commonly used for sauces thanks to their lower water content.

### Cherry and Grape

These bite-size tomatoes are perfect raw for salads but also are delicious sautéed or roasted with herbs. Sweet varieties are a hit with kids, making them a great healthy snack.

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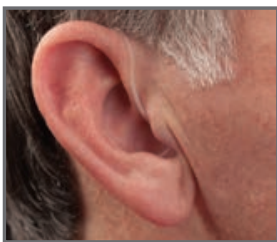


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COURTESY CHET GARNER

## Deep Dip

Wimberley's seemingly bottomless Jacob's Well invites a plunge

BY CHET GARNER

**STANDING ON A** limestone ledge and staring into Texas' strangest swimming hole, I remembered my mother's warning, "Don't jump unless you know what's underneath you." I wasn't completely sure what was beneath the surface, but with a crowd of cheering onlookers, chickening out was not an option. I held my breath and braced for the unknown.

This is the thrill of Jacob's Well, a spring-fed swimming hole near Wimberley that's been attracting visitors for centuries. The hole itself measures less than 20 feet across but looks like it plummets to the center of the Earth. In reality, it descends into a series of caverns that extend a mile back into the Earth. Every minute of every day, the Edwards Aquifer pushes a river of fresh water out of the cave and feeds Cypress Creek.

As I completed the plunge, my only thought was, "Wow! That's cold." The spring water holds at a chilly 68 degrees year-round. Once I regained my composure, I could appreciate the fact that I was floating above what seemed like a bottomless pit of water. I had to see what was down there.

I grabbed my goggles, pointed my head toward the bottom and started kicking. I could feel the mass of water pushing against me with its invisible current, and the water was so clear that I could see every detail of the algae-covered walls and the ledge 25 feet down. With every bit of strength and air that I had, I propelled myself to the stone shelf and from there could see the small opening to the deeper and darker caves.

That was enough to freak me out, so I quickly turned and swam to the sunshine and safety of the surface. It was time for another jump. ■

ABOVE Chet leaps into Jacob's Well.

**TCP WEB EXTRA** See Chet's video from Jacob's Well and check out his Explorations on *The Daytripper* on PBS.

## Know Before You Go

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

## JUNE

### 04

**Bandera** [4, 11, 18, 25; July 2, 9, 16, 23, 30; Aug. 6] **Riding on Faith Rodeo**, (830) 777-7129, facebook.com/ridingonfaithrodeoseries

**Denton** [4–Sept. 4] **Soul Art Renewal: General Art Exhibition**, (940) 382-2787, dentonarts.com

### 05

**Bulverde** [5–July 31] **Saturday Night Rodeo**, (830) 980-2226, tejasrodeo.com

**Hunt** [5, 12, 19, 26, July 3, 10, 17, 24, 31] **Crider's Rodeo and Dancehall**, (830) 238-4441, cridersrandd.com

### 07

**Mesquite** [7, 21] **Jazz Breaks**, (972) 216-8132, mesquiteartscenter.org

**Jacksonville** [7–12] **Tomato Fest Week**, (903) 586-2217, jacksonvilletexas.com/tomato-fest

### 08

**Victoria** [8–12] **Bach Festival**, (361) 570-5788, victoriabachfestival.org

### 11

**Luckenbach** [11–12] **Thomas Michael Riley Music Festival**, (830) 997-3224, thomasmichaelriley.com

**San Antonio** [11–Aug. 7] **Fiesta Noche del Río**, (210) 226-4651, fiestanochesa.com

### 12

**East Bernard Czech Kolache-Klobase Festival**, (979) 335-7907, kkfest.com

**New Braunfels Granger Smith**, (830) 964-3800, whitewaterrocks.com

**Terrell [12-13] Antique Tractor and Engine Show and Pull**, (214) 837-8861, north-texas-antique-tractor-and-engine-club.org

14

**Mesquite [14, 28] Music in the Park**, (972) 216-8132, mesquiteartscenter.org

17

**Big Spring [17-19] Cowboy Reunion and Rodeo**, (432) 267-5053, facebook.com/bigspringrodeo

**Stonewall [17-19] Peach JAMBoree**, (830) 644-2735, stonewalltexas.com/peach-jamboree

18

**Kerrville Urban Cowboy Reunion**, (830) 896-9393, caillouxperformingarts.com

**Lufkin [18-19] Pineywood Heifer Futurity**, (979) 277-2656, arklatexlonghorns.com

**McKinney [18-20] Third Monday Trade Days**, (972) 562-5466, thirdmondaytradedays.com

19

**Palestine Dogwood Jamboree: Country Music at Its Best**, (903) 724-2556, dogwoodjamboree.com

**New Braunfels [19-20] Old Gruene Market Days**, (830) 832-1721, gruenemarketdays.com

24

**Elgin [24-26] Western Days**, (512) 285-4515, elgintxchamber.com

MORE EVENTS >

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**Pick of the Month**  
**Honey Festival**  
Uvalde, June 11-12  
(830) 278-4115  
[mainstreetuvalde.com/honey-festival](http://mainstreetuvalde.com/honey-festival)

Pioneers of the late 19th century found an abundance of trees and caves loaded with honey around what is now Uvalde, which is 85 miles west of San Antonio. The town celebrates this history with a festival featuring street food, a 5K race, live music, kids activities and late-night shopping.

JUNE EVENTS CONTINUED

**26** **Bandera RiverFest**, (830) 796-3045, [banderariverfest.com](http://banderariverfest.com)

**Belton [26-July 4] 4th of July Celebration**, (254) 939-3551, [beltonchamber.com](http://beltonchamber.com)

**JULY**

**02** **Llano [2-4] Rock'n Riverfest**, (325) 247-5354, [llanorocknriverfest.com](http://llanorocknriverfest.com)

**El Paso [2-3, 9-10, 16-17, 23-24, 30-31, Aug. 6-7]**  
**Vival El Paso**, (915) 534-0600, [vivaelpaso.org](http://vivaelpaso.org)

**03** **Stephenville 4th of July Concert and Fireworks**, (254) 918-1295, [stephenvilletx.gov](http://stephenvilletx.gov)

**04** **Fredericksburg 4th of July Parade & Fireworks**, (830) 997-6523, [visitfredericksburgtx.com](http://visitfredericksburgtx.com)

# Man-made vs. Nature

Beauty can be found where the natural and the human-made collide. Over time some things once shiny and new return to the elements, often forming a new beauty all their own and leaving us to wonder at nature's awesome power.

GRACE FULTZ



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP

**KIM LEATHERWOOD**  
UNITED COOPERATIVE SERVICES

Nature reclaims this old service station in Glen Rose.

**DEBRA CZERNY**  
BLUEBONNET EC

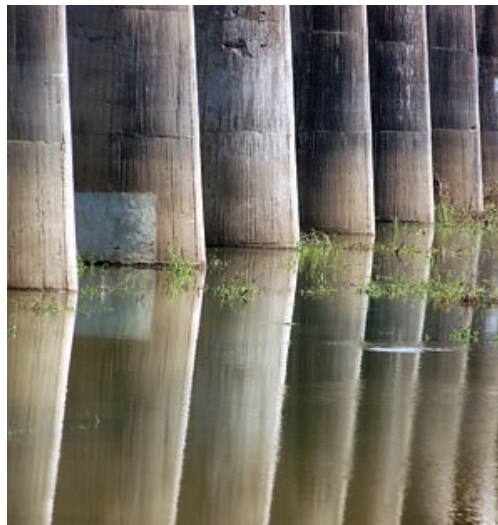
Cactus flowers growing out of asphalt.

**JACK ROBERTSON**  
CECA

A rainbow scarab impaled on barbed wire.

**STEVEN LACKIE**  
PENTEX ENERGY

The Continental Avenue Bridge over the Trinity River near downtown Dallas.



## Upcoming Contests

**DUE JUN 10** Fillin' Stations

**DUE JUL 10** Funny Signs

**DUE AUG 10** Bridges

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

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



## Parent Imperfect

Love outdistances cool  
in appreciation of a good father

BY MARTHA DEERING  
ILLUSTRATION BY KEVIN FALES

**WHAT AWFUL AFFLICTION** is it that makes preteens view their parents' idiosyncrasies through a monstrous magnifying glass?

I cringe to admit this, but in middle school I was embarrassed by my father. Born with cataracts after his mother contracted German measles, he wore Coke-bottle glasses and walked with an exaggerated high-stepping gait to avoid tripping over things. Worse, he couldn't drive like other dads. Surgery improved his vision slightly, but he was still considered legally blind.

Perhaps that was why music was so important to him; being deprived of one of his senses had sharpened another.

When my friends came over, I engineered excuses to avoid my father. He told the awfulest jokes: "What did the

mayonnaise say to the icebox? Close the door, I'm dressing." In my adolescent imagination, my friends were laughing *at* him, not *with* him.

"Your father is playing with the orchestra tomorrow night at Baylor before freshman orientation," my mother explained one night. "It's the same night as my writing class. Could you walk over there with him?"

As we crossed a busy street in the dark, my father tripped over the curb and fell forward onto his chest. His battered violin case landed with a clatter on the sidewalk along with his glasses, which suffered a spiderweb of cracks across one lens. Horrified by my inattention, I helped him up and brushed off the front of his suit coat.

"Are you all right?" I asked. "Do you want to go home? You won't be able to see the music with your glasses smashed."

"No, I can't go home," he said, checking his 200-year-old violin for damage. "They can't play the violin parts without me. I can't see the music unless I'm up close anyway, so I always memorize my parts. If you'll help me get set up on the stage, I'll be OK. Why am I so clumsy?"

Years later in high school, I began to recognize the courage it took for this gentle, loving man with a disability (he hated the designation "handicapped") to get a doctorate and then a job just after the Depression; to play Mozart, Bach and Beethoven in front of large crowds; to teach psychology to classes of graduate students; to lead brain exercise groups at local nursing homes; and to raise three children, willingly wearing out the knees of his suit pants to play the part of the horse to our cowboys and Indians.

I'm sure that my father recognized and forgave my adolescent foolishness. He was that kind of guy. ■

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