

AGGIES' 12TH MAN
TURNS 100

SATISFYING
SOUPS AND STEWS

WINDOW SHOPPING
AT PRADA MARFA

Texas Coop Power

FOR BLUEBONNET EC MEMBERS

JANUARY 2022

In the Care of Canines

How rescue dogs
are learning
to help people

**BLUEBONNET
EC NEWS**

SEE PAGE 18



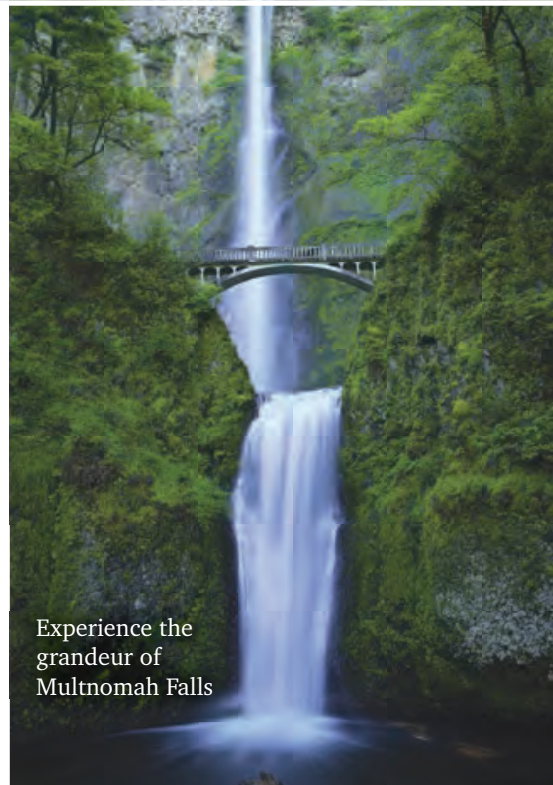


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12

08 Furred Responders

A Texas organization trains rescue dogs to help people overcome challenges.

Story and photos by Laura Jenkins

Aggie Standouts

Texas A&M's 12th Man tradition, a spirit that 'engulfs you,' turns 100.

By Rhonda Reinhart

04

Currents

The latest buzz

06

TCP Talk

Readers respond

18

Co-op News

Information plus energy and safety tips from your cooperative

29

Footnotes in Texas History

Joined by a Fence
By W.F. Strong

30

TCP Kitchen

Soups and Stews
By Megan Myers

34

Hit the Road

Faux Chic, for Sure
By Chet Garner

37

Focus on Texas

Photo Contest:
Fired Up!

38

Observations

Buck's Pluck
By Martha Deeringer

ON THE COVER

Peter Slush, a firefighter and paramedic with Bexar County District 7 Fire & Rescue, shares affection with Rudy.
Photo by Laura Jenkins

ABOVE

Members of the 12th Man on the sidelines in the 1980s.
Cushing Memorial Library | Courtesy TAMU Press

High Alert

DON'T SAY THEY didn't warn you.

It's long been known that rattlesnakes rattle their tails to alert aggressors or distract prey. But researchers recently reported in *Current Biology* that when a perceived enemy ignores the initial warning, the snakes switch from a low- to a high-frequency rattle to give the impression they are much closer than they actually are. When the initial slow, steady rattling rate of 12 hertz is ignored, rattlers will dial it up to as high as 100 hertz.



TCP Listen to a rattler's rattle with this story online.

CFKFP REFP

PBKRBK@B
THIS YEAR,

I'M FINALLY

GOING TO ...

TCP Tell us how you would finish that sentence. Email your short responses to letters@TexasCoopPower.com or comment on our Facebook post. Include your co-op and town. Below are some of the responses to our November prompt: **A Texan Would Never ...**

Squat with their spurs on.

JULIE BAKER
BLUEBONNET EC
CALDWELL

Pick a bluebonnet.

TRACEY POWELL
TRI-COUNTY EC
ALEDO

Miss a chance to brag about Texas (and rightly so).

DONNA FALDYN
VIA FACEBOOK

Turn down barbecue.

THELMA BEASLE
LIGHTHOUSE EC
MEMPHIS

Ask someone else to finish their sentence.

JAY GEIS
HEART OF TEXAS EC
MOFFAT

To see more responses, read Currents online.

A COLD, HARD FACT

A fridge made 30 years ago uses almost four times as much electricity as a modern one.

66

distribution co-ops operate in Texas, from as far north as North Plains EC in Perryton and as far south as Magic Valley EC in Mercedes, and as far west as Rio Grande EC in Dell City and as far east as Jasper-Newton EC in Kirbyville. Co-ops power most of the state's landmass.



TCP Hvu6m161hulav0m

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\$500 RECIPE CONTEST
Weeknight Dinners

FOCUS ON TEXAS PHOTOS
Feathered Friends

RECOMMENDED READING
Where Birders Perch from April 2018 took readers to the World Birding Center, which spans nine sites in the Rio Grande Valley with ideal photographing opportunities.



What's New, Chet?

TCP's website! The redesigned TexasCoopPower.com is easier to use and more mobile-friendly. Check out the latest in travel, history, recipes and personalities. Point your smartphone at the code below—and throughout the magazine—to get there pronto.



A Farsighted Mission

MOST ASTRONAUTS who spend at least a month in space return to Earth with impaired vision. And as NASA gears up for an eventual mission to Mars, which would require astronauts to spend at least 1½ years in space, the agency is turning to the Texas A&M University College of Medicine to study the effect of long-term spaceflight on the eyes and on the arteries, veins and lymphatic vessels that serve them and maintain vision.





DAVID MOORE

Dad's Service Station

"I too changed lots of tires and melted lots of hot patches on tires at Red's service station on the side of the hill."

EDDIE BOLCH
BRYAN TEXAS UTILITIES
BRYAN

The Tormenting Cries

I am thankful that Mary Ann Goodnight had a kind heart for animals [*Last of Their Kind*, November 2021]. It must have been tormenting to hear the cries of the bison calves whose mothers were slaughtered for their hides.

The U.S. government came up with the idea of killing off the bison to subjugate the Indians, and what a slaughter of immense proportions the idea produced.

The bison are as much a part of Texas' and this country's heritage as any other living thing. They have earned their right to survive.

Roberta McLaughlin
Heart of Texas EC
Lorena

My mom made meringue where it had little sugar tears [*The Alchemy of Egg Whites*, November 2021]. I could never get it right. She baked it on top of banana pudding. Fond memories.

LETA MASSEY
VIA FACEBOOK



EARL NOTTINGHAM | TPWD

Lro Lib Elrpc

I wanted to let you know how much I enjoyed Sheryl Smith-Rodgers' article on the Bendele family house [*Not About To Fixate*, October 2021]. My kids all got a kick out of remembering the details you wrote about. It made us all smile.

Kathy Bendele
Pedernales EC
Hye

Agree—we don't need to make everything new and shiny.

Roberta Dunn Dobie
Via Facebook

Meaningful Learning

I enjoyed the article about the Comstock high school kids doing research on Indigenous rock art with the Shumla Archaeological Research and Education Center [*Learning Rocks*, October 2021]. It sounds like a great way to engage kids in meaningful learning.

Felicity Hannay
Central Texas EC
Golden, Colorado

TCP WRITE TO US
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Austin, TX 78701

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

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The Invention of the Year

The world's lightest and most portable mobility device

Once in a lifetime, a product comes along that truly moves people. Introducing the future of battery-powered personal transportation . . . The Zinger.

Throughout the ages, there have been many important advances in mobility. Canes, walkers, rollators, and scooters were created to help people with mobility issues get around and retain their independence. Lately, however, there haven't been any new improvements to these existing products or developments in this field. Until now. Recently, an innovative design engineer who's developed one of the world's most popular products created a completely new breakthrough . . . a personal electric vehicle. It's called the **Zinger**, and there is nothing out there quite like it.

"What my wife especially loves is it gives her back feelings of safety and independence which has given a real boost to her confidence and happiness! Thank You!"

—Kent C., California

The first thing you'll notice about the **Zinger** is its unique look. It doesn't look like a scooter. Its sleek, lightweight yet durable frame is made with aircraft grade aluminum. It weighs only 47.2 lbs but can handle a passenger that's up to 275 lbs! It features one-touch



Available in Green, Black (shown) and Blue



The Zinger folds to a mere 10 inches.

folding and unfolding – when folded it can be wheeled around like a suitcase and fits easily into a backseat or trunk. Then, there are the steering levers. They enable the **Zinger** to move forward, backward, turn on a dime and even pull right up to a table or desk. With its compact yet powerful motor it can go up to 6 miles an hour and its rechargeable battery can go up to 8 miles on a single charge. With its low center of gravity and inflatable tires it can handle rugged terrain and is virtually tip-proof. Think about it, you can take your **Zinger** almost anywhere, so you don't have to let mobility issues rule your life.

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POWER OF OUR PEOPLE

Furred Responders

A Texas organization trains rescue dogs to help people overcome challenges



FROM TOP Trainees at Service Dogs Inc. near Dripping Springs. First responders with Bexar County District 7 Fire & Rescue with Rudy. OPPOSITE PAGE, FROM TOP Sheri Soltes, president and founder of Service Dogs, with Poppy, a trainee. Austin Meredith, a senior computer science student at the University of Houston-Clear Lake, and his service dog, Peaches, live on campus.



STORY AND PHOTOS BY LAURA JENKINS

The room was grim and silent, save for the rustling of papers. Lady, Rudy and Chanel—two yellow Labs and a golden retriever mix—slipped in as police officers studied security camera footage, surveying the aftermath of the shooting that left 23 people dead at an El Paso Walmart in 2019. The dogs knew what to do.

“Lady started making herself known to those who were going through security footage,” says Frankie Trifilio, Lady’s handler and one of three emergency medical services managers who flew to El Paso with the dogs from Methodist Healthcare in San Antonio to support first responders. “When Lady rolled on her back, a tall, muscular guy who looked like a member of a SWAT team asked me, ‘What is she doing?’

“I said, ‘She’s making herself available. She likes belly rubs.’”

The officer went back to what he was doing. But within a matter of minutes, he succumbed.

“He knelt down and started rubbing her belly, saying, ‘Oh come here. Who’s a good girl? Who’s a good girl?’” says Trifilio. “That was the catalyst for others to interact with the dogs, and suddenly everything came alive. Everyone started talking. There was laughter. When we left, people were communicating and collaborating. I can only speculate that it helped with the investigation. But I know firsthand that it helped those officers personally and emotionally.”

Providing trained dogs for people in need is nothing new to Sheri Soltes, founder and president of Service Dogs Inc., the organization that trained and placed Lady, Rudy and Chanel. An attorney by trade, Soltes was headlong into a successful career more than 30 years ago when she realized that the stress of the job was taking a toll on her health. She was living in Houston when she started thinking about a career change. At the time she had no idea what was next.

“One day I was at the eye doctor and picked up a maga-



zine that had an article about dogs helping people with disabilities,” says Soltes. “At the end it said that some of the groups used dogs from animal shelters, and that appealed to me because I’ve always been drawn to animals, especially those in need.”

Soltes saved the article and contacted organizations mentioned to find information that would help her build a nonprofit. She conducted a survey in Houston to see how many hearing-impaired people might be interested in a hearing dog; 75% answered affirmatively. Then she found a local dog trainer who agreed to visit shelters with her and help her find dogs best suited for service.

What began in 1988 as a home-based, one-dog-at-a-time endeavor has grown into a 6-acre campus near Dripping Springs, complete with a training facility, kennel and devoted team of trainers and caregivers. Even though SDI, a member of Pedernales Electric Cooperative, has placed more than 750 assistance dogs over the years, the operation is no assembly line. Soltes says they’ve developed an “artisan” approach to training because they select, train and match dogs to meet each client’s specific needs.

RIGHT Methodist Healthcare EMS relations managers and their dogs. BELOW Becky Kier, a former trainer at SDI, leaves the Humane Society of the New Braunfels Area with Lily, who is now in hearing dog training.

It might seem like any dog could be trained to mitigate any disability, but Becky Kier, former director of training at SDI, explains that when it comes to assistance dogs, one size definitely does not fit all.

“What they all have in common,” says Kier, “is that they’re all super sociable, obedient and have really good temperaments as far as loving and accepting all humans and animals. They’re not rattled by anything. But beyond that it comes down to the disposition of each individual dog. A hearing dog, for example, must take cues from the environment. We teach them what to do at first, but at some point, they have to take ownership of that.”

Kier says guide dogs for the visually impaired are hardest to find because they must be obedient and proactive without a lot of redirection. Even though SDI does not train animals to serve people with visual impairments, it does get a lot of “career-change” dogs from Guide Dogs for the Blind, the largest guide dog school in North America. Career-change dogs can have an excellent temperament, but they can also have qualities and traits that disqualify them from guide dog service.

“One of our recent graduates, Sensi, was released from GDB for not liking to work in the rain,” says Kier. “She didn’t want to guide through puddles. But she’s an ideal hearing dog.” Kier notes other examples of career-change dogs, such as Artist, who needed more supervision in the home than a blind person could provide, and Tootsie, who didn’t like the guide harness. “Dogs have idiosyncrasies just like people do,” she says.

Before the partnership with GDB provided career-change animals, all of SDI’s dogs came from rescue organizations. Many still do. For more than three decades, Soltes and her team have been searching animal shelters, offering a life of love and service to abandoned and unwanted dogs. Kier found Sherlock, a terrier mix, on a routine visit to the Humane Society of Central Texas. After his training, he was partnered with Megan Harris of Austin, who’s had a hearing impairment since she was 15 months old.

“Before he entered my life, I didn’t feel comfortable being left at home by myself,” says Harris, who has been partnered with Sherlock for more than eight years. “Anybody could enter the house at any moment, and I wouldn’t hear them. I worried about hearing smoke alarms, the doorbell and timers. Once Sherlock became my hearing dog, I felt more relaxed and at ease at home and in public.”

In the beginning Soltes was focused solely on the need for hearing dogs. But before long others began asking if she could train dogs to meet other specific needs, and SDI expanded its programs.



LEFT Patty Maginnis, a district court judge in Montgomery County, with Sumi, who provides victim support in the courtroom. BELOW Sherlock has been assisting Megan Harris of Austin for eight years.



“A couple of years into it, a young man who had become paralyzed from the shoulders down asked if we could train a service dog for him,” says Soltes. “Another woman with paraplegia did too. We weren’t sure, so we did two as a test run, and it was successful.”

Soltes thrives on the challenge of innovating new programs to meet the needs of those who seek help.

“A few years ago, we were at a Texas Medical Association conference in Houston and a battalion chief said to me, ‘Our suicide rate is approaching that of veterans. Can you help us?’” Soltes says. “I took that information, did some research, and we created a program that provides dogs to support first responders.”

Lady, Rudy and Chanel are a result of that initiative.

Soltes says it takes approximately \$50,000 to adopt, train and provide lifelong follow-ups for one dog. Despite that cost, SDI provides each one at no cost beyond nominal application fees and personal travel expenses. They rely on donors, sponsors, grants and fundraisers to operate. But Glenda Ann Kea says you can’t put a price tag on the profound difference SDI is making in the lives of Texans with disabilities. When her systemic lupus became debilitating, she got so depressed she

stayed in bed for nearly two years.

“At that time the doctors were prescribing me tons of narcotics because I was in so much pain,” says Kea, who lives in Allen, north of Dallas. “I couldn’t get up on my own and I didn’t want to. I didn’t see the point. If I dropped something, my day was over because there was nobody there to help me pick it up. Seriously, I wanted to die.

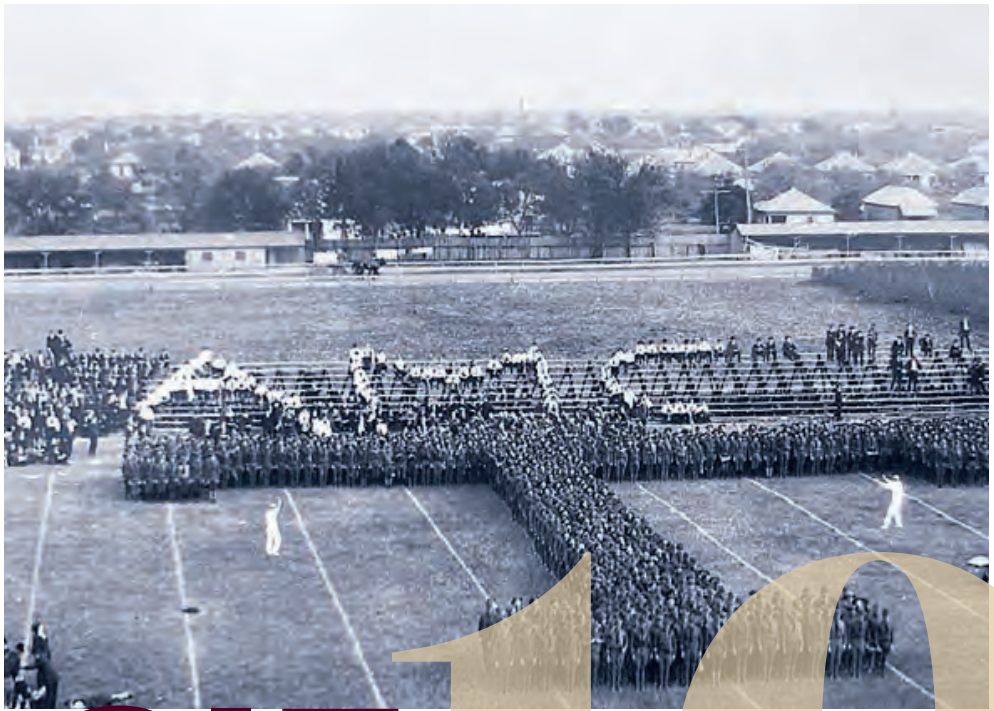
“But when I got DaVinci, I had to brush him and feed him, so I’m moving and breathing and going outside, even if it’s only my back-yard. When I’m in my bedroom, he can hear if something drops on the tile. He’ll get up, come in here and look at me like, ‘Do you need me to get that?’ Now I genuinely want to get up every day. In a very real sense, DaVinci saved my life.” ■



Visit servicedogs.org to help SDI further its mission.

TCP POWER OF OUR PEOPLE

To nominate a co-op member who makes a difference in your community, email details to people@texascooppower.com.



AGGIE 10 STANDOUTS

BY RHONDA REINHART

There are long shots—and then there are long shots. On January 2, 1922, at the inaugural Dixie Classic bowl game in Dallas, few fans thought the Texas A&M University football team had even a sliver of a chance at victory. The Aggies' opponents, after all, were the top-ranked Praying Colonels from Centre College in Danville, Kentucky. Centre included three All-Americans and had just knocked previously unbeaten Harvard out of the No. 1 national ranking.

The outlook was grim for the Aggies. “We were absolutely the unmitigated underdog,” says author and historian John Adams, a member of A&M’s class of 1973. “The papers all had A&M losing 40 to nothing, 30 to nothing, 20 to nothing.”

Then came the bumps, bruises and fractures. A&M’s captain and quarterback, Heine Weir, broke his leg on the third play of the game, and that started a domino effect of injuries, including at least one concussion. “At that time—and I think it’s still a rule—if you can’t have 11 players out there, you have to forfeit the game,” says Adams, a Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative member. “So it’s getting close to halftime, and they have 11 players, but they’ve got five of them that are injured.”

What happens next is the stuff of legend and the beginning of one of Texas A&M’s most revered traditions. With things looking bleak, Aggies coach Dana X. Bible remembered a kid named E. King Gill, class of 1924.

Though Gill was a member of the football team, he wasn’t

part of the squad traveling to the bowl game. He did, however, hitchhike from College Station to Dallas to see his buddies play at Fair Park, and he was up in the press box helping Waco sports writer Jinx Turner identify players on the field. But as the number of injured players quickly swelled, Bible had other ideas for the unsuspecting sophomore.

“All of a sudden, the coach turns and looks at the press box and waves at Gill,” Adams says. “So he comes out of the press box during halftime, goes under the stands—there’s no dressing room—and changes clothes with Heine Weir, the guy who broke his leg, and puts on his uniform. Gill comes out and stands on the sideline ready to go play. And then, little did they know, there is the beginning of the 12th Man.”

In Adams’ newest book—*Standing Ready: The Golden Era of Texas Aggie Football and the Beginning of the 12th Man Tradition*, published in December by Texas A&M University Press—he recounts the tale of the history-making bowl game, which was replaced by the Cotton Bowl Classic. Along with historical photos and little-known details from the game, *Standing Ready* features interviews with most of the major figures involved in the 1922 outing, including the bowl game’s founder, Joe Utay, class of 1908 and captain of the 1907 A&M football team, as well as Gill himself. “I spent five years working on this book, but I’ve been interviewing these guys for over 40 years,” Adams says. He interviewed Utay and Gill in the mid-1970s, before Gill died in 1976 and Utay in 1977.



OPPOSITE The block Aggie T formed at halftime by the Corps of Cadets at Kyle Field in 1920. LEFT E. King Gill, the original 12th Man. BELOW The Aggies make a goal-line stand in the 1922 Dixie Classic.



TEXAS A&M'S 12TH MAN TRADITION, A SPIRIT THAT 'ENGULFS YOU,' TURNS 100

One hundred years later, in honor of Gill and his willingness to stand up for his team, the A&M student section stands for the entirety of every football and basketball game. And what a student section it is. At every home game at Kyle Field, an average of 38,000 students decked out in maroon and white stand ready, cheering for their team and waving white flags emblazoned with "12th Man." A&M set an NCAA record for largest student section attendance in 2014 when 40,032 students watched the Aggies play Ole Miss.

Annie McGinnis, class of 2017 and director of communications at Tri-County Electric Cooperative, has attended A&M football games since she was a child. "I was born on Thanksgiving Day, so rumor has it I watched the first Aggie game with my dad the day I was born," she says. Her father, David McGinnis, class of 1990 and general manager and CEO at Grayson-Collin Electric Cooperative, confirms the tale. "She came at lunchtime, like 11-ish in the morning," David McGinnis says. "We played TCU that year, and she and I watched that game while Mom slept, sitting in the hospital."

Annie McGinnis describes the A&M student section as having a "spirit that pretty much engulfs you" and says that any potential discomfort from standing for four hours is no issue for Aggie fans. "There's so much adrenaline and camaraderie amongst the students who are standing with the 12th Man that you don't even think about your feet hurting because you're standing on wobbly bleachers," she says.

Cameron Smallwood, class of 1996 and CEO and general



Aggies captain Heine Weir, left, whose injury paved the way for the 12th Man, with coach Dana X. Bible.



LEFT The first A&M football team, organized in the fall of 1894. BELOW A letter from President Ronald Reagan to coach Jackie Sherrill recognizes the 12th Man.

TCP WEB EXTRA Enter online to win a copy of *Standing Ready: The Golden Era of Texas Aggie Football and the Beginning of the 12th Man Tradition*.

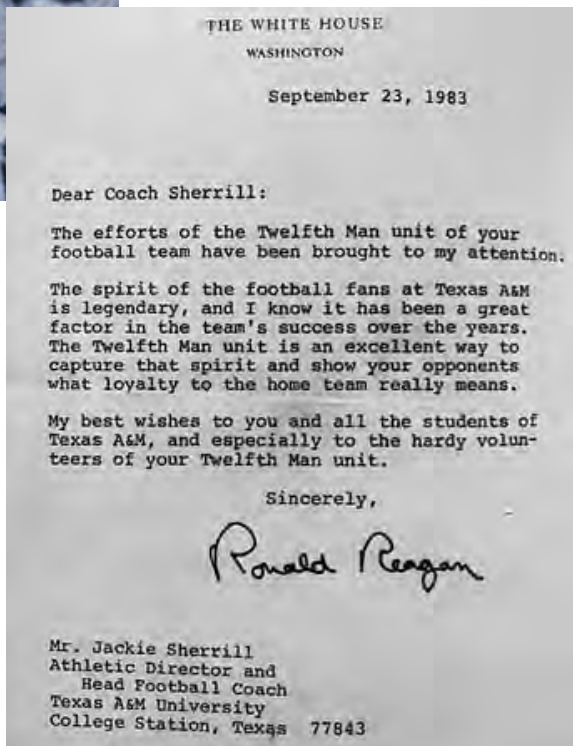


manager at United Cooperative Services, attended games as a student and has held season tickets for football and basketball games for many years since. “It’s like being part of a big family there cheering on the team,” he says. He likens the student spirit at A&M—and that eagerness to pitch in when needed—to working with an electric cooperative. “It’s a job with purpose,” he says, “so it fits our training pretty well.”

Like the McGinnises and Smallwood—and so many students before and after them—Gill never had to go on the field that winter day in 1922. The team didn’t need him to play after all. In fact, the banged-up country boys from College Station went on to win 22-14, accomplishing one of the biggest upsets college football has ever seen. The game made newspapers nationwide and, by Adams’ estimation, put Texas football—and Texas sports in general—on the map.

“It put a spotlight on sports in the state of Texas. That’s what the Dixie Classic did,” Adams says. “There had been some great SMU teams during that time. There had been some good TCU teams. University of Texas had a good team in 1919. But none of them got any attention—no All-Americans, no recognition, no ranking.”

While attention and accolades are, of course, welcomed with open arms, those aren’t what propel Aggie students to show up on game day, 12th Man towels in hand, and stand for their team. Gill, a longtime Corpus Christi physician, possibly said it best. In a 1964 campus speech, without even



a whiff of self-aggrandizement, he talked about that day at Fair Park and his role as the original 12th Man: “I’ve never thought that the 12th Man really belonged to a personality. It belongs to the A&M student body,” he said. “And every one of you can be a 12th Man. You stand up—stand up for what’s right and be ready to serve.” ■

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At the military training camp in Bastrop County, a barracks breaks ranks with traditional building methods and breaks records with its size.

3D BARRACKS

PRINTING A BETTER BUILDING AT CAMP SWIFT

By Ed Crowell

Military troops learn to live and sleep in unusual spots — from inside a desert foxhole to wedged between a rock and a hard place.

Now, some Texas soldiers will have an opportunity to rest, comfortably, in a revolutionary new barracks in Bastrop County.

At Camp Swift — the National Guard's main training facility in Texas — some troops will sleep in the largest structure in North America built by a giant robotic 3D printer.

The computer-guided printer produced long, narrow and thin layers of a specialized concrete mixture to form walls for the 3,800-square-foot structure.

The 72 personnel who will use the barracks will be the first troops in the world housed in a 3D-printed building, according to military representatives and ICON, an Austin company that develops advanced construction technologies. The company built the Camp Swift barracks in partnership with the Texas Military Department.

The massive printer, which looks somewhat like a bridge, spanned the width of the building's already completed concrete slab foundation. It moved on rollers along the foundation's length, as programmed, while monitored through the computers of on-site operators for ICON.

The printer weighs 9,500 pounds and is 15½ feet tall by 46½ feet

Continued on page 20

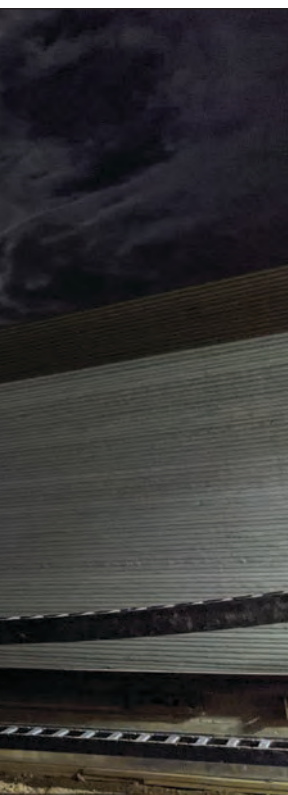


The massive 3D printing machine at work, creating the walls of a barracks at Camp Swift. The machine weighs 9,500 pounds and can print a wall up to 10½ feet high. *ICON photo*



The largest 3D-printed building in North America is a 3,800-square-foot barracks that can house 72 military personnel at Bastrop County's Camp Swift. The computer-guided machine that built the barracks was developed by Austin-based company ICON. *Laura Skelding photo*

KS



Above, a look inside the completed 3D-printed barracks to house Army or National Guard members for training at the military camp. *Laura Skelding photo*

At left, a close-up look at the machine while creating the barracks walls. It extruded 105 layers of a liquid concrete mixture developed by ICON to build double walls for the building. *ICON photo*



There are curves instead of sharp corners in the finished 3D-printed barracks at Camp Swift. At right, Army Col. Zebadiah Miller said the project began in late May of 2020. *Laura Skelding photos*

‘The printed barracks will not only provide our soldiers a safe and comfortable place to stay while they train, but because they are printed in concrete, we anticipate them to last for decades.’

— Army Col. Zebadiah Miller, director of facilities for the Texas Military Department headquartered at Camp Mabry in Austin

Continued from page 18

wide. It can print a wall up to 10½ feet high.

As the printer rolled along the edges of the barracks’ foundation, the walls were formed with a proprietary concrete mixture called Lavacrete made by ICON. A nozzle on the printer that resembles a jumbo pastry piping bag pumped out 2- to 3-inch-wide layers of the wet concrete mixture until 105 layers were in place.

The new white-walled barracks, which has two large rooms separated by a breezeway, stands in contrast to the collection of concrete block and corrugated metal quarters of varying ages at Camp Swift, which was originally built during World War II.

The military facility is between Bastrop and Elgin off Texas 95. U.S. Army and Texas National Guard troops train there, using a variety of gunnery ranges and vehicles to stay prepared for emergency deployments.

“Texas has become a technological center of gravity within the nation,” said Maj. Gen. Tracy Norris, Adjutant General of Texas. “The Texas Military Department is proud to be a conduit for introducing these innovative solutions into the military community.”



The long-range plan at Camp Swift is to build seven more barracks to replace older ones, perhaps using 3D printing for the new ones.

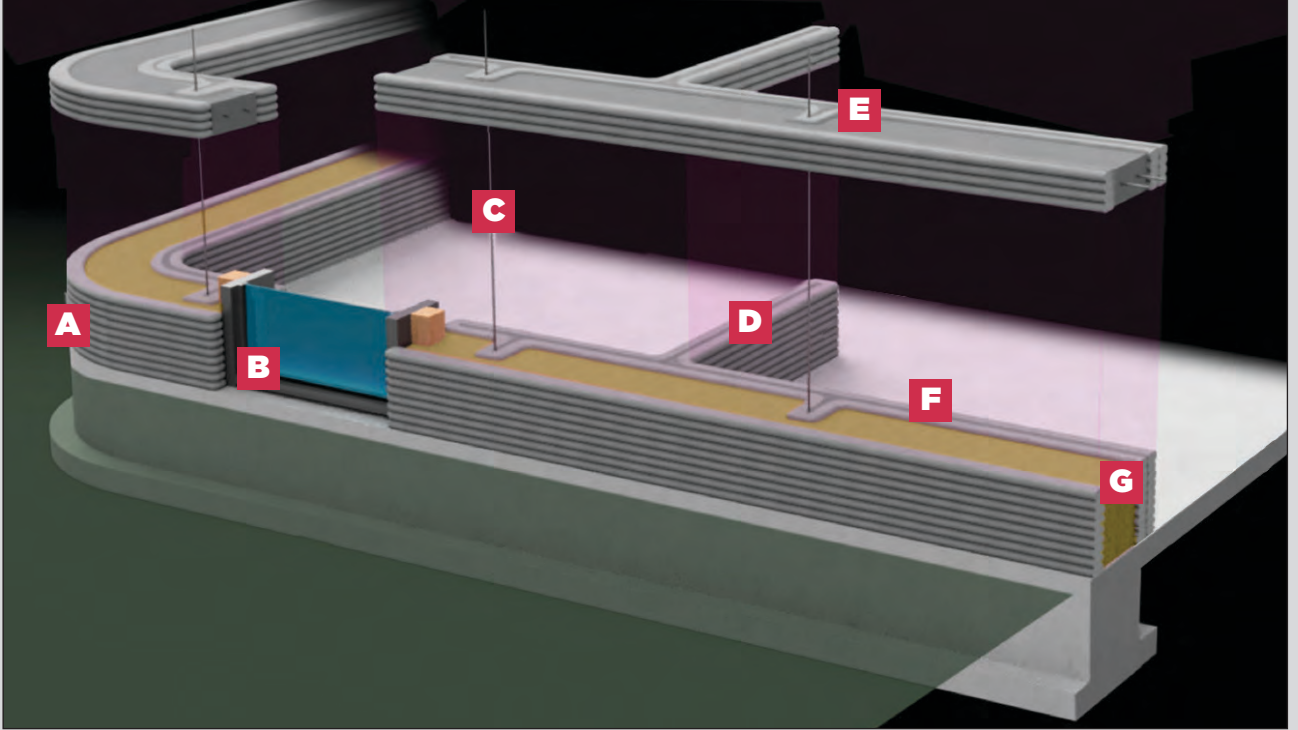
It took the 3D printer only 120 hours to build the barracks walls, said Army Col. Zebadiah Miller, director of facilities for the Texas Military Department headquartered at Camp Mabry in Austin. That was a fraction of the year it took to build the floor slab, roof, windows, bathrooms, wiring, air conditioning and the outdoor walkway ramps.

The barracks are double-walled, with the second same-sized wall printed 6 inches away from the first. Metal tie-rods and insulating foam fill the gap between the two walls.

Military officials said the concrete mixture’s strength was rated at 6,000 psi (pounds per square inch), making it waterproof and double the usual psi rating for residential walls.

The walls curve instead of having traditional corners. Printing in 3D often includes curving or circular designs because corner joints are unnecessary. The curves in dwellings made with 3D printers have

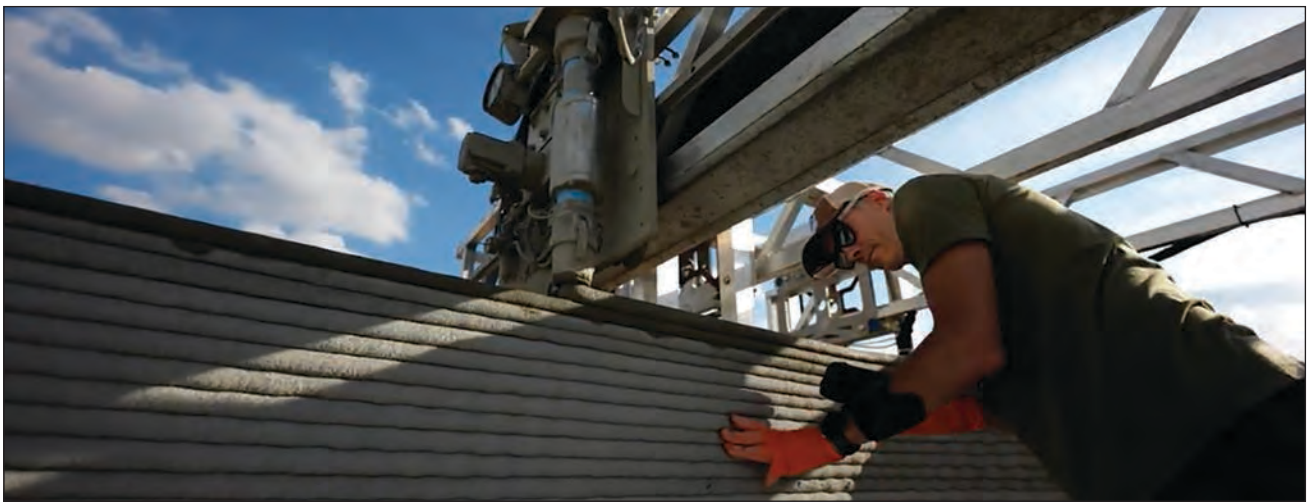
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ICON illustration

PARTS OF THE 3D-PRINTED WALL SYSTEM

- A.** Exterior printed wall
- B.** Integrated windows and doors
- C.** Vertical structural reinforcement
- D.** Interior printed wall
- E.** Top wall structural reinforcement
- F.** Interior double wall
- G.** Interior insulation



Above: A worker monitors the progress and quality of the Camp Swift barracks walls built by ICON in conjunction with the military.

At left: An aerial view of the building's walls as they were being created.
ICON photos



Continued from page 20

been described by some as making a resident feel embraced, like getting a “house hug.”

For the barracks, long windows were set atop the one-story walls. A metal roof supported by metal beams topped off the building. The large rooms have bunk beds, bathrooms and plentiful electric outlets so troops can plug in their computers and phone chargers.

It all brings a smile to Miller, who said the project began after he returned from Afghanistan in late May of 2020. “It happened very fast, even with delays during the winter (2021) freeze and protocols for Covid,” he said.

A micro-grid generator was installed near the new barracks with the assistance of Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative. The natural gas-powered generator could supply electricity to the barracks and other Camp Swift facilities for two weeks without refueling if power were interrupted, military officials said.

“The printed barracks will not only provide our soldiers a safe and comfortable place to stay while they train, but because they are printed in concrete, we anticipate them to last for decades,” Miller said. The barracks, when occupied, are expected to be more energy efficient than the old quarters nearby. Although no prices were made available, the cost of the 3D printed barracks could be significantly less expensive than a traditional barracks.

ICON is a fast-growing, four-year-old company that started by making small 3D-printed houses in Mexico. Before contracting with the company, Miller and other officials with the Texas Military Department visited ICON’s development laboratory and several previously built structures.

The first Central Texas project for ICON was at the 51-acre Community First! Village in Northeast Austin for people who were living without homes. Housing and support services have been provided there since 2015. A welcome center and six tiny houses, both made by 3D printing, were added to the development.

More recently, ICON built four larger, stylish new homes for sale on East 17th Street in Austin. The two-story houses (only the first floors were 3D printed) sold quickly for prices ranging from \$450,000 to \$800,000.

The Camp Swift barracks and the 17th Street houses were designed by Logan Architecture of Austin.

Funding for the Camp Swift project came



Above: The Austin-based company ICON uses specialized materials and software and 3D printing robotics to develop its construction technologies. It has worked with NASA to design prototype 3D-printed buildings for use on the moon or Mars.

At left: Four contemporary homes were built with 3D-printed first-story walls on East 17th Street in Austin. ICON plans to partner with Lennar homebuilders to build 100 3D-printed homes in a housing development in the Austin area. The location of that development has not been revealed. *ICON photos*

PRINTED-HOME COMMUNITY PLANNED

Another major 3D building project by ICON is to build 100 houses in the Austin area in partnership with Lennar, one of the largest homebuilders in Texas.

There are 18 Lennar subdivisions in Central Texas, and one is Sun Chase in Del Valle, which is served by Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative.

The builder and the 3D printing company have not revealed the project’s location, but have stated that it will be the largest community of concrete-printed homes in the world. The companies partnered with the Bjarke Ingels Group, based in New York and Copenhagen, to design the houses.

Concept drawings show one-story houses with metallic photovoltaic roofs on every house to capture solar energy.

Lennar says the cost of these 3D-printed homes will be similar to other Lennar homes in the area, according to a quote in the Wall Street Journal from Eric Feder, president of LENX, Lennar’s investing arm.

The median home sale price in the Austin metro area in October was \$455,000, according to the Austin Board of Realtors.

Jason Ballard, ICON’s co-founder and CEO, noted the existing housing supply deficit of 5 million new homes in the United States. “There is a profound need to swiftly increase supply without compromising quality, beauty or sustainability, and that is exactly the strength of our technology,” he said.

— Ed Crowell

from the federal Small Business Innovation Research Strategic Fund, the Texas Military Department and the U.S. Air Force’s in-house innovation incubator known as AFWERX.

The 3D-printing process is under evaluation by the military for suitability in troop deployment locations, potentially reducing construction time, costs and risks.

ICON isn’t just looking at Earth-bound projects. The company is working with NASA to develop prototypes for dwellings

on the moon and, eventually, on Mars.

“Building humanity’s first home on another world will be the most ambitious construction project in human history and will push science, engineering, technology and architecture to literal new heights,” said Jason Ballard, co-founder and CEO of ICON. “NASA’s investment in space-age technologies like this can not only help to advance humanity’s future in space, but also to solve very real, vexing problems we face on Earth.” ■

Bluebonnet, LCRA grant to support Ellinger Community Center

Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative and the Lower Colorado River Authority recently provided a \$21,315 grant to the Ellinger Chamber of Commerce to purchase a walk-in cooler and HVAC unit for the Ellinger Community Center. The grant is part of LCRA's Community Development Partnership Program to give back to the communities it serves. Bluebonnet is one of LCRA's wholesale electric customers and a partner in the grant program. Applications for the next round of grants will be accepted through Jan. 31. Learn more at lcra.org/cdpp.



Pictured, from left to right, are Paula Urban, Ellinger Chamber of Commerce treasurer; Paulette Urban, Ellinger Chamber of Commerce director; Margaret D. "Meg" Voelter, LCRA board member; Mark Johnson, Bluebonnet's Giddings-area community representative; Nicole Ramirez, Ellinger Chamber of Commerce vice president; Tom Kubena, Ellinger Chamber of Commerce director; Byron Balke, Bluebonnet Board assistant secretary/treasurer; Michael Schlabach, Ellinger Chamber of Commerce president; Charlotte Michalsky, Ellinger Chamber of Commerce director; Miranda Schlabach, Ellinger Chamber of Commerce grant writer/volunteer; and Kyle Merten, Bluebonnet's Brenham-area community representative. *Sarah Beal photo*

HOLIDAY CLOSINGS

Bluebonnet offices will be closed Jan. 17 in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day. If you have a power outage, you can report it by texting OUT to 85700 (to register, text BBOUTAGE to that number), online at bluebonnet.coop, via our mobile app or by calling 800-949-4414. You can pay bills any time online, on our mobile app or call 800-842-7708 (press option 2 when prompted).



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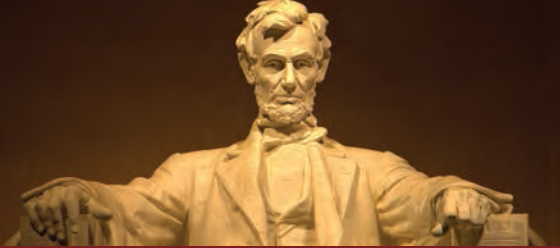
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*Tour dates could be affected by COVID restrictions.

STANDBY GENERATOR DOs & DON'Ts

- **DO** plan ahead for how much power you'll need from the generator. It should produce more power than you think you'll need in order to avoid an overload. Find a sizing calculator at generac.com.
- **DO** keep your generator on a flat, stable surface, with its exhaust venting away from windows and doorways. This will prevent carbon monoxide poisoning. A generator cover can protect it from the elements.
- **DO** use the proper type of extension cords that are in good condition. Using frayed or ungrounded cords could cause a fire or electric shock. Overloading a multi-plug extension cord can be dangerous.
- **DO** use qualified, licensed electricians to install and maintain your generator, and follow all manufacturer directions and local regulations.
- **DO** install battery-operated carbon monoxide alarms in your home.
- **DON'T** overload a generator. Look at its power rating. Overloading can damage valuable appliances and electronics.
- **DON'T** connect a generator to your home's wiring without a professionally installed transfer switch. That switch prevents backfeeding (reversal) of electricity along power lines, which could pose safety risks to line workers restoring power during an outage.
- **DON'T** use your generator if it is wet or in standing water, or if you are wet. That could result in safety hazards and damage to the generator. Try to keep the generator dry and covered.

WORRIED ABOUT V

A guide to power generators for the home

By Alyssa Dussetschleger

After last February's record winter storm, Central Texas residents have rushed to buy back-up generators in case their electricity is out for a prolonged period. However, generators can be dangerous, particularly portable ones that typically run on gasoline. A larger, permanently mounted standby generator, installed by a licensed, qualified electrician, can be a safer option, but they are backlogged by months at retailers, are more expensive and also pose some hazards. Although the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration predicts a warmer Texas winter in 2022, the Farmers' Almanac says January could bring subfreezing temperatures. Whatever the winter of 2022 has in store for Central Texas, consumer interest in standby generators is likely to continue well beyond the season.

ABOUT STANDBY GENERATORS

Although less-expensive portable generators are readily available, more costly and larger standby generators are getting attention from many Central Texas residents because they produce more power and are safer than portables.

These larger home generators must be permanently mounted outdoors by licensed, qualified professionals. Because they are in high demand in Texas, there are lengthy waitlists to buy and install these generators.

Home Depot and Lowe's offer standby generators for \$2,500 to \$6,500, based on size requirements. Consultation and installation costs range from \$3,000 to \$6,500.

Among the most popular manufacturers of standby generators are Generac, Champion, Briggs & Stratton and Honeywell. The most popular brand sold by Zaskoda Repair in the city of Caldwell is Generac's Guardian 24,000-watt generator. "These are typical for 2,000- to 2,200-square-foot homes," said Zaskoda Repair's owner, Tim Zaskoda. At his store, a

A home in the Giddings area with a Generac standby generator and essential pieces of equipment that allow it to switch from electric grid power to generator power. A Bluebonnet line worker must be on site to disconnect power to a member's home before a standby generator can be installed. Alyssa Dussetschleger photo



generator, materials and installation range from \$12,000 to \$14,000. You can get an assessment appointment within two weeks from Zaskoda, but demand has led to months-long delays of generator delivery and installation.

In the Brenham area of Washington County, Zenith Power Systems sells and installs generators, but they have a waitlist of about six months for generators to arrive and be installed. The waitlist is shorter (about three months) for the company to send a factory-trained technician to survey your property and help you select a generator.

When connecting a standby generator, a certified generator installer or licensed electrician must temporarily have Bluebonnet disconnect your electric power to safely connect the generator to a transfer switch and your meter.

Bluebonnet members can speak to a member service representative by calling 800-842-7708 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, to schedule a line worker to temporarily disconnect power to the members' home or business while a generator is installed and reconnect

WINTER?



THE ABCs OF GENERATORS

There are three basic types of generators, which vary in size, price, power source and safety:

◀ STANDBY

Standby (whole house) generators are the most powerful and safest for home use. They range in power from 5,000 to 50,000 watts, and can cost nearly \$2,000 up to \$20,000. They run on natural gas or liquid propane and must be installed by a licensed, qualified electrician. A typical home requires, at minimum, a 5,000-watt generator to power its electric essentials. Right now, large permanently pad-mounted standby generators are backlogged several months at major home improvement stores, and for as long as a year for some area retailers that sell the popular Generac brand.



This DuroMax portable generator costs \$750 and can deliver 5,500 watts of power for a few hours. It is designed primarily for camping or tailgating, but can briefly power lights or a household appliance. If used improperly, portable generators can pose serious safety risks. *DuroMax photo*

▲ PORTABLE

Portable generators typically run on gasoline, but some use diesel or propane. They can provide 3,000 to 8,500 watts of power and cost about \$400 up to \$2,500. In November 2021, many were available in large home improvement stores in the Bluebonnet region. Lower-cost, lower-power models provide just enough power for essential items, such as a refrigerator and to charge a few phones.

Portable generators can produce harmful levels of carbon monoxide if operated in an enclosed area. At least 430 people die from carbon monoxide poisoning every year, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. This type of death is preventable if portable generators are operated outdoors and safety guidelines are followed.



An inverter generator, like this Westinghouse iGen 4500, can produce 4,500 watts and runs on gasoline. Other types of inverters can run on propane. They are less noisy than portable generators but also must be operated outdoors. *Westinghouse photo*

◀ INVERTER

Inverter generators produce about the same amount of power as portable generators and also operate on gasoline. They cost from \$300 to \$4,000 and must be operated outdoors to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning. They are usually lighter and more quiet than portable generators because they automatically throttle down to provide only power when it is needed, according to Lowe's home improvement store website. A 2,000-watt inverter generator can power a single household appliance.

power when the job is done. Line workers also inspect the connection from the generator to the meter to ensure it meets safety requirements.

Standby generators require annual maintenance, and many installers offer annual maintenance packages for a few hundred dollars.

Kenny Lehmann, a Bluebonnet maintenance specialist in Giddings, installed a standby generator at his home in October 2020. He tests it weekly, using an app on his smartphone to turn it on. The app lets him manually operate the generator, see when it is running and how much power it is supplying.

Standby generators can still be dangerous. Overloading the generator by using more power than the machine is rated for can damage it and anything connected to it. However, when properly installed and safety measures followed, standby generators are far less dangerous than their smaller, portable counterparts. ■

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.

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Joined by a Fence

How rural America turned barbed wire into telephone lines

BY W.F. STRONG

HISTORIAN J. EVETTS HALEY noted that the XIT Ranch was probably the largest fenced range in the world, and its barbed wire enclosed more than 3 million acres. The huge enclosure helped manage enormous cattle herds and deterred rustlers but also gave rise to the creative use of a new technology: the telephone.

Consider these reports from other parts of the West. In 1897, *The Electrical Review* reported that “on a ranch in California, telephone communication had been established between the various camps ... by means of barbed wire fences.” Also in 1897, the *New England Journal of Agriculture* observed that two Kansas farmers, a mile apart, had attached phone instruments to a barbed wire fence that connected their farms and established easy communication.

The Butte Inter Mountain included this notice in 1902: “Fort Benton’s latest development is a barbed wire telephone communication.” The article points out that people of that part of Montana were not happy with barbed wire, but they had decided to look at its practical side and created a telephone exchange that would connect all the ranches to Fort Benton.

On the XIT, given that the ranch covered more than 4,500 square miles, there was interest in creating a communication system that would be more efficient than sending out fast riders to distant camps. “In the early 1900s,” Haley wrote in his 1929 history of the XIT, “a great many telephones were placed upon the ranch. Where possible, the top line of the fences was used as a telephone line, though the ‘service’ was atrocious. It did allow for

TCP WEB EXTRA

Listen to W.F. Strong read this story.



quick communication concerning emergencies such as grassfires that required all cowboys immediately.” There was even talk among technology geeks of the era that cowboys could carry phones wherever they went and clip on to the fence to report problems.

The rudimentary use of barbed wire on the ranches led to more creative thinking about rural phone systems. Historian Don Anderson, who earned a doctorate in electrical engineering from Stanford University, told me that barbed wire phone systems led to the conclusion that “using whatever is already in place is smart planning.”

So when rural Texas wanted to extend phone service from town to town, engineers decided they could use the existing rural power lines, already installed by electric cooperatives through the Rural Electrification Administration, and run the phone signal through the electric lines at a different frequency. That saved a lot of money and brought phone service along with electricity to rural areas.

Still, many ranches liked their barbed wire systems and kept them, even though the voice quality wasn’t very good. As late as the early 1970s, a dairy farmer I knew had a barbed wire phone running a half-mile from his house to the barn. He said it was good for talking to his wife about what time to come in for supper. But most of all, he said, “It’s free. I don’t have to pay Ma Bell nothing for that phone, and I enjoy thinking that it’s a burr in their saddle.”

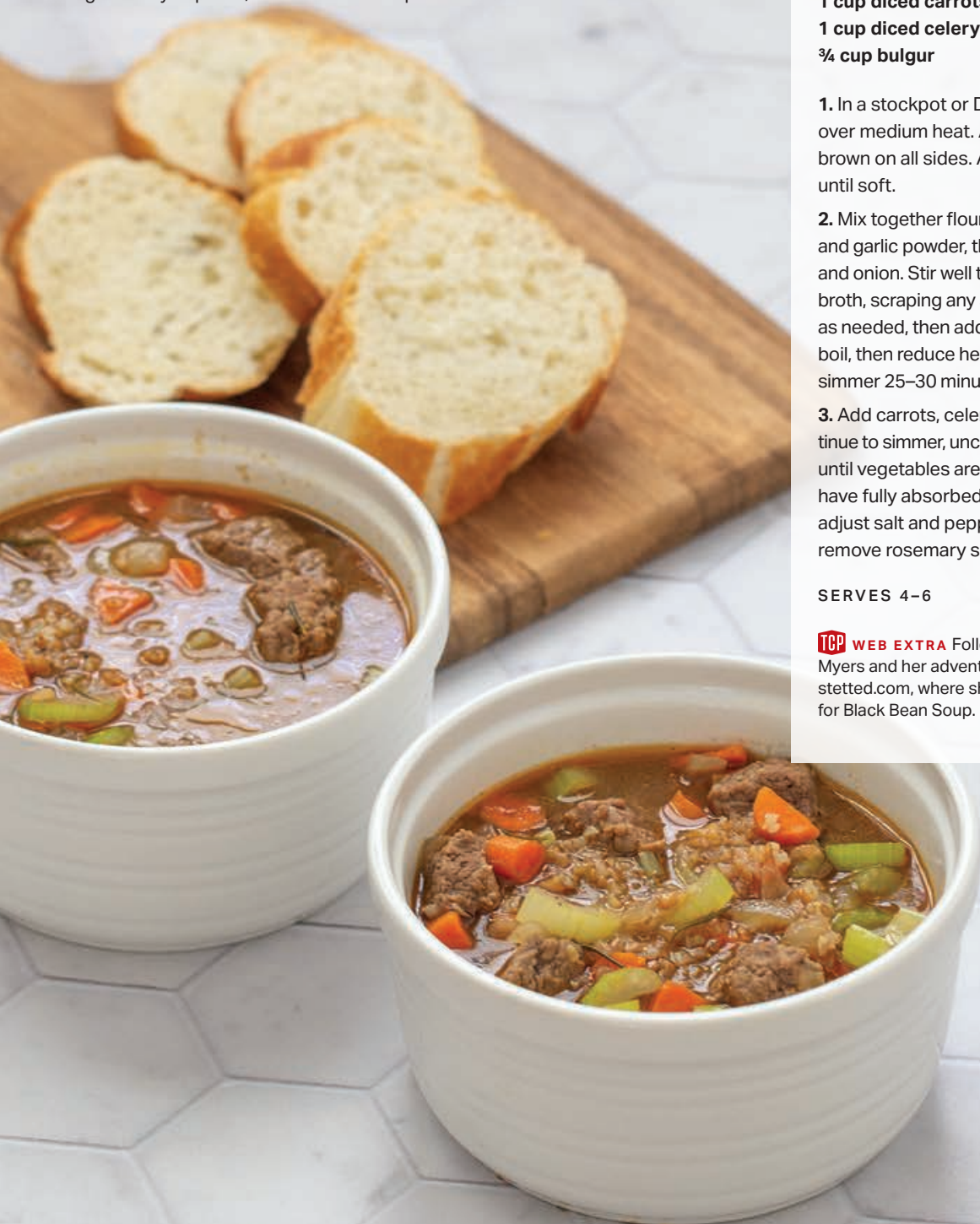
It is fascinating, Anderson said, to consider that what started as a fence system on the XIT evolved into what is XIT Communications, a co-op that provides phone service and high-speed internet to rural communities—some in the footprint of the original ranch. ■

Soups and Stews

Stir up satisfying comfort food with a variety of ingredients

BY MEGAN MYERS, FOOD EDITOR

Soups have always been a go-to dish in my house. Virtually anything can be turned into a soup, so even when I haven't been to the grocery store in a while, I know I can still throw something together. This Beef Bulgur Soup is an economical option, thanks to the tenderized round steak. Bulgur is a parcooked wheat grain that can be found alongside rice, quinoa and other grains. If you prefer, substitute a small pasta such as orzo or ditalini.



Beef Bulgur Soup

1 tablespoon butter
16 ounces tenderized round steak,
cut into ½-inch chunks
½ cup diced onion
2 tablespoons flour
1 teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon pepper
½ teaspoon paprika
¼ teaspoon garlic powder
4 cups beef broth
2 sprigs fresh rosemary
1 cup diced carrots
1 cup diced celery
¾ cup bulgur

1. In a stockpot or Dutch oven, melt butter over medium heat. Add beef, stirring to brown on all sides. Add onion and cook until soft.

2. Mix together flour, salt, pepper, paprika and garlic powder, then sprinkle over beef and onion. Stir well to coat. Stir in beef broth, scraping any stuck bits in the pot as needed, then add rosemary. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat to low, cover and let simmer 25–30 minutes, until beef is tender.

3. Add carrots, celery and bulgur and continue to simmer, uncovered, 15–20 minutes, until vegetables are softened and grains have fully absorbed liquid. Taste and adjust salt and pepper as needed, and remove rosemary sprigs before serving.

SERVES 4–6

TCP **WEB EXTRA** Follow along with Megan Myers and her adventures in the kitchen at stetted.com, where she features a recipe for Black Bean Soup.



Chicken and Ginger Soup

JENNIFER BRANNEN
BLUEBONNET EC

This Asian-inspired soup is heavy on ginger, livening up the senses whether you enjoy it for dinner or as breakfast leftovers, as Brannen recommends. Keep in mind that fish sauce is very salty, so add according to your taste.

- 12 ounces boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cubed**
- 3 ribs celery, chopped**
- 1½ ounces peeled ginger root, minced (about ⅓ cup)**
- ½ cup finely chopped cilantro**
- 7–8 cups low-sodium chicken broth, divided use**
- 3–4 tablespoons fish sauce**
- 2 cups cooked long-grain white rice**
- Green onions, thinly sliced**
- 1 serrano pepper, thinly sliced**
- Fried garlic chips**

COOK'S TIP Make fried garlic chips by frying ¼ cup of thinly sliced garlic cloves in ½ cup of canola oil until golden. Strain the garlic through a sieve but keep the garlic-infused oil for other uses.

1. In a large stockpot or Dutch oven set over medium-high heat, combine chicken, celery, ginger, cilantro, 6 cups broth and fish sauce and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low and simmer 30–45 minutes.
2. Stir in cooked rice and continue to simmer until the rice has absorbed the broth. Add the remaining broth if needed. Serve with green onions, serrano pepper and garlic chips on the side.

SERVES 4–6

[MORE RECIPES >](#)

\$500 WINNER

Chicken and Dumplings Soup

AMANDA DECESARO
TRINITY VALLEY EC



Perfect for chilly nights, chicken and dumplings are the ultimate comfort food. Mix the dumpling batter just before adding to the soup to retain the best texture.

SERVES 6



SOUP

- 1½–2 pounds boneless, skinless chicken thighs**
- 3 tablespoons butter**
- 1 yellow onion, diced**
- 1 teaspoon pepper**
- 1½ teaspoons salt**
- 1 teaspoon celery salt**
- 4 cups unsalted chicken stock**
- 1 cup water**
- 2 bay leaves**
- 3 cups baby carrots or chopped carrots**

DUMPLINGS

- 1½ cups flour**
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh parsley**
- 2 teaspoons baking powder**
- ½ teaspoon salt**
- ⅓ teaspoon ground nutmeg**
- ⅔ cup milk**
- 1 egg, slightly beaten**
- ⅓ cup (¼ stick) butter, melted and cooled**

1. SOUP In a large stockpot or Dutch oven set over medium-high heat, brown chicken with butter. Once browned, cut into small strips, then return to pot and add onion. Sprinkle in pepper, salt and celery salt. Sauté until onions are slightly cooked but not soft.

2. Add chicken stock, water and bay leaves. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to low and cover. Let simmer 10 minutes. Add carrots and simmer, covered, for an additional 15 minutes.

3. DUMPLINGS Mix together the dry ingredients. Add milk, egg and butter and stir until just blended.

4. When ready to add dumplings, remove bay leaves from soup, taste, and adjust salt and pepper as needed. Drop spoonfuls of dumpling batter into pot, spacing as much as possible. Cover and simmer 15 minutes, until dumplings are no longer doughy. Serve soup with a few dumplings in each bowl.

TCP \$500 Recipe Contest

WEEKNIGHT DINNERS DUE JANUARY 10

We're looking for go-to recipes for busy weeknights. Submit yours at [TexasCoopPower.com/contests](https://TexasCoopPower.com/) by January 10 for a chance to win \$500.





Potato Leek Soup With Dill

REXANNE MEAUX
PEDERNALES EC

Potato soup always hits the spot, and dill adds bright flavor to Meaux's version. To wash the leeks completely, slice and add them to a bowl of cold water, swirling to dislodge any dirt between the layers.

- 1 tablespoon butter**
- 3 large leeks, thinly sliced and washed (white and light green parts only)**

- 2 large russet potatoes, peeled and cubed**
- ¾ cup white wine, divided use**
- 4 cups chicken broth**
- 1 cup heavy cream**
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh dill, plus more to taste**
- ¾ teaspoon salt**
- ½ teaspoon pepper**
- Fresh dill sprigs, for garnish**

- In a stockpot or Dutch oven, melt butter over medium heat. Add leeks and sauté 10 minutes or until tender. Add the potatoes, ½ cup wine and broth. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to low and simmer, uncovered, 1 hour and 15 minutes or until the potatoes are very tender.
- Transfer soup in batches to a blender and blend until smooth. Return the soup to the pot and add remaining ¼ cup wine, heavy cream, dill, salt and pepper. Heat through and serve, garnishing bowls with fresh dill.

SERVES 4-6

Soup Improv

BY MEGAN MYERS

Looking for ways to riff on your soup recipe? Try one (or a few) of these ideas:

Add a cheese rind. Parmesan rinds add umami, which enhances the other flavors in your soup.

Finish with lemon to brighten the flavor. This works especially well in chicken soups.

Serve with a dollop of sour cream or yogurt for tang.

Chopped fresh herbs are a great finish to any soup.

Thicken soups without cream by puréeing beans or vegetables from the soup and adding them back in.

Brown the meat for full flavor, and deglaze the pan with a small amount of white or red wine, depending on the recipe. The alcohol will cook off, leaving only the flavor behind.

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² Based on datasheet review of websites of top 20 manufacturers per IHS, as of April 2021.

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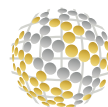
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COURTESY CHET GARNER

Faux Chic, for Sure

Like a desert mirage, Prada Marfa perplexes

BY CHET GARNER

I'M NOT A SHOPPER and never have been. So I was having an internal struggle when I found myself driving more than seven hours from my Central Texas home to visit a high-end designer retail store in the desert.

Why was I dedicating so much time to this quest when I don't even know Versace from Vuitton? Those are different, right?

But once I arrived at the remote outpost known as Prada Marfa, the answer became clear.

I reached Marfa in record time but was disappointed to learn that my destination was still 36 miles west. I cruised U.S. 90 parallel to a set of train tracks for what seemed like hours, past the crumbling set of the movie *Giant* and through the tiny town of Valentine. I was about to turn around thinking I had missed my destination when I spied a boxy building up the road on my left. I pulled over and stepped into the Texas heat.

This was Prada Marfa, a stark white building that looks like an honest-to-goodness boutique storefront beside an empty highway. It's as if anyone could walk in, slap down some cash and leave with the fanciest footwear in West Texas. However, at this Prada store there is no staff. They don't accept credit cards. In fact, the front door doesn't even open. Because even though it looks authentic, Prada Marfa is a permanent work of art constructed in 2005 by the Swedish duo Elmgreen & Dragset as a comment on consumerism.

I peered through the window at displays of thousand-dollar purses and a wall of elegantly lit high-heeled shoes. I chuckled, wondering if anyone ever trekked out here expecting to buy designer items and left disappointed. I was happy to only window-shop, but even that cost me 14 hours on the road. ■

ABOVE Chet visits the art installation called Prada Marfa, along U.S. 90, about halfway between Marfa and Van Horn.

TCP WEB EXTRA Watch Chet's dispatch from Marfa at TexasCoopPower.com/travel. And to see the front doors Chet does make it through, watch his *Texplorations* on *The Daytripper* on PBS.



Know Before You Go

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

JANUARY

08

Frisco NCAA Division I FCS Football Championship, (972) 292-5250, visitfrisco.com

Kerrville Symphony of the Hills: Outlaws and Heroes, (830) 792-7469, symphonyofthehills.org

Monahans Sandhills Resolution Run, (432) 943-2187, monahans.org

San Marcos Purgatory Trail Run, (877) 806-3987, athleteguild.com

Temple Family Day—Cabin Fever: Stargazing, (254) 298-5690, templeparks.com

Boerne [8–9] Market Days, (210) 844-8193, boernemarketdays.com

Dallas [8, 15, 22] The Dinner Detective Murder Mystery Dinner Show, 1-866-496-0535, thedinnerdetective.com

15

Fredericksburg Luckenbach Blues Festival, (830) 997-3224, luckenbachtexas.com

Granbury 7 Bridges: The Ultimate Eagles Experience, (817) 573-5548, thenewgranburylive.com

Lake Jackson Bird Banding, (979) 480-0999, gcbo.org

McKinney Night Hike, (972) 562-5566, heardmuseum.org

Jcpnrgqc J[oqgk lraqco
Hgke Go- @cic]o[qglk,
(972) 204-4925,
visitmescquitetx.com

**Fredericksburg [15-16]
Hill Country Gem & Mineral
Show,** (325) 248-1067,
fredericksburgrockhounds.org

16

**Fredericksburg Agarita
Chamber Players,**
(830) 997-6523,
fredericksburgmusicclub.com

17

**Elgin Martin Luther King Jr.
Walk,** (512) 281-5724,
elgintx.com

**Houston MLK Grande
Parade,** (713) 560-8328,
mlkgrandeparade.org

20

**Corpus Christi Third
Thursdays,** (361) 825-3500,
artmuseumofsouthtexas.org

22

**Fredericksburg Hill Country
Indian Artifact Show,**
(830) 329-2636,
hillcountryindianartifacts.com

**Irving Fela in Concert:
A Tribute to Whitney
Houston,** (972) 831-8818,
irvingsymphony.org

Orange CeCe Winans,
(409) 886-5535, lutchter.org

**Surfside Beach Food and
Art Festival,** (979) 233-1531,
surfsidetx.org

**Victoria Victoria
Symphony: José Feliciano,**
(361) 576-4500,
victoriasymphony.com

MORE EVENTS >

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yagaschiliquest.com

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JANUARY EVENTS CONTINUED

22

Belton [22–23] Sami Show Marketplace, (512) 441-7133, samishow.com

23

Lufkin Popovich Comedy Pet Theater, (936) 633-5454, angelinaarts.org

27

Corsicana Asia, (903) 874-7792, corsicanapalace.com

29

Bay City Wild Game and Wine Camofest, (979) 245-8081, facebook.com/baycitycamofest

Grand Prairie Tom Segura, (972) 854-5076, texastrustcutheatre.com

Lufkin Brit Beat, (936) 633-5454, angelinaarts.org/pines-series

Port Aransas Home Tour, (254) 289-4510, portaransasgardenclub.org

Tyler Charles Yang, Violin Rock Star, (903) 566-7424, cowancenter.org

FEBRUARY

03

Tyler Beautiful: The Carole King Musical, (903) 566-7424, cowancenter.org

San Angelo [3–20] Livestock Show, (325) 653-7785, sanangelorodeo.com

05

Abilene Abilene Philharmonic: The Wonderfully Wicked Music of Oz, (325) 677-6710, abilenephilharmonic.org

Bellville Market Day, (979) 865-3407, discoverbellville.com

El Paso Shen Yun, 1-877-663-7469, shenyun.com/el-paso

Huntsville Sam Houston Square and Round Dance Association Presidents Ball, (936) 494-8402, shsrda.weebly.com/events.html

McKinney McKinney Philharmonic Orchestra: Music in Motion, (469) 633-9104, mckinneyphilharmonic.org

Sweetwater Lift Every Voice Art Show and Concert, (325) 235-5488, sweetwaterauditorium.org

Fired Up!

Whether getting the grill ready for a barbecue or watching the big game, Texans love to get fired up. So put another log on the fire and gather 'round because these offerings are smokin'.

BY GRACE FULTZ

1 TONYA CARLIN
CECA

"Being a mother of a firefighter, this photo represents the brotherhood shared between these individuals."



1

2 PATTY DISHMAN
PEDERNALES EC

"The hot air balloon festival in Horseshoe Bay always fires me up for great photo opportunities."



2

3 BROOKE WILLIAMS
TRINITY VALLEY EC

Homecoming parade in Forney.



3

4 CADEN WILSON
UNITED COOPERATIVE
SERVICES

Cowtown rodeo.



4

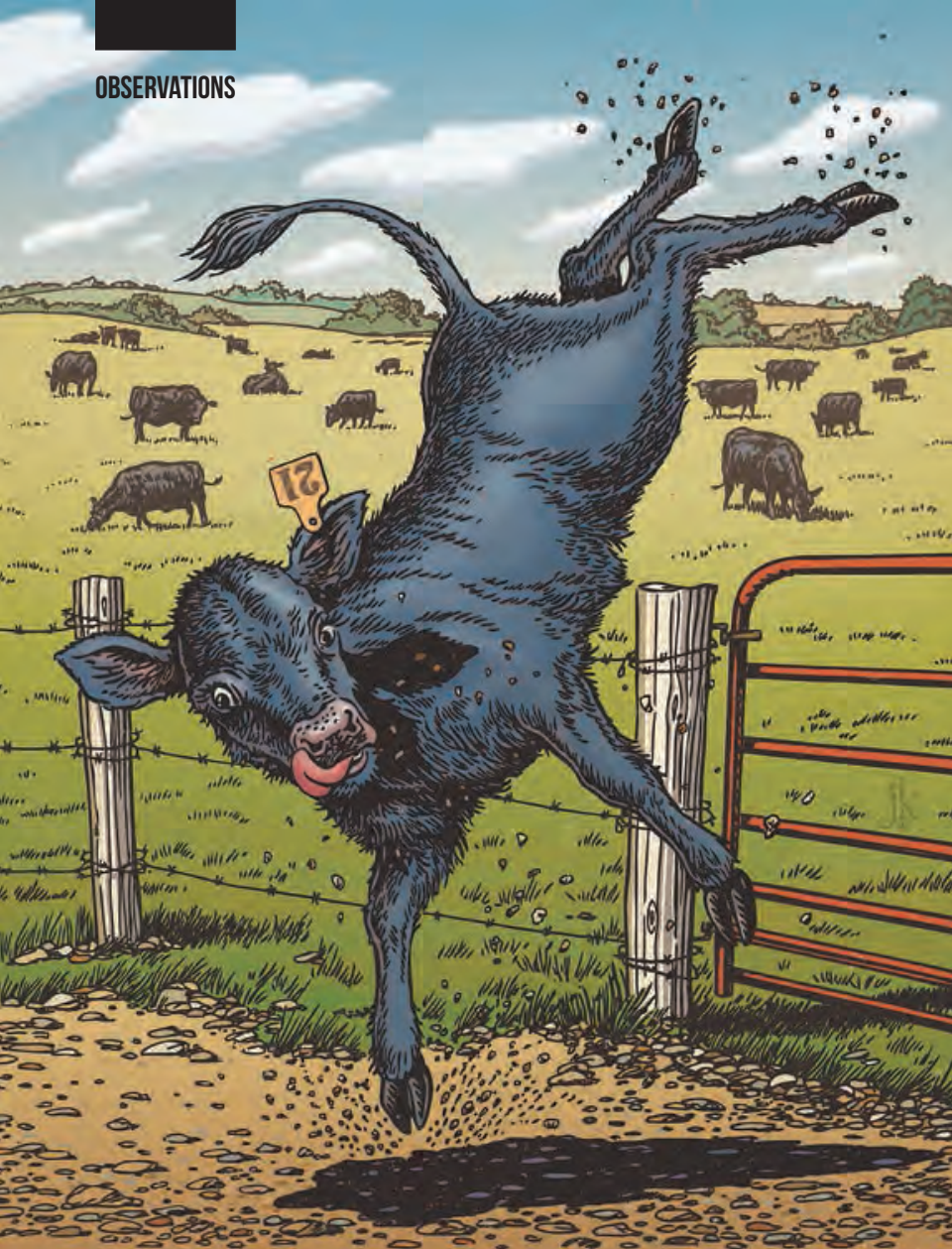
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- DUE JAN 10 Feathered Friends
- DUE FEB 10 Industrial
- DUE MAR 10 Morning Glory



Enter online at TexasCoopPower.com/contests.

TCP WEB EXTRA See Focus on Texas on our website for more Fired Up! photos from readers.



Buck's Pluck

What we learned from a spunky calf

BY MARTHA DEERINGER
ILLUSTRATION BY JOHN KACHIK

LIFE LESSONS can crop up in the oddest places. Such was the case when an undersized black calf with an oversized personality was born on our farm a few years ago. A green hillside dotted with black cows and new calves is a tranquil scene. It's almost impossible to tell one calf from another without getting close enough to read the numbers on their ear tags.

Except for Buck Rogers.

Within hours of birth, Buck Rogers, a Black Angus bull calf, hopped in circles around his mother with that peculiar tippy-toed new-calf gait, flipping his stubby tail and kicking at the sky with his hind legs. While most newborn calves wobble for a day or two, Buck Rogers bucked and kicked across the pasture with total disregard for his mother's whereabouts. An inexperienced first-

calf heifer, Mama lumbered behind, bawling out warnings about the dire consequences of not minding your mother.

We almost never name cattle. If you grow attached to them, you might find yourself a vegetarian with a bank account drenched in red ink. Buck Rogers was the exception. It was easy to spot him: He was the small black blur galloping through the peaceful scene.

Most folks who own animals will testify that the critters have distinct personalities. Samuel D. Gosling, a University of Texas psychologist, agrees. "Animals have personalities, emotions and thoughts, just as humans do," says Gosling, who has published several articles on the subject.

Across the garden fence one afternoon, we heard a tremendous clatter, something like an explosion in an aluminum pan factory. Buck Rogers, awakening from a nap under a cotton wagon, had launched into one of his outrageous bucking episodes, his head and back hitting the wagon's underside with all the force his 70-pound frame could muster. He finally bucked his way out and dashed off, leaving me wiping tears of laughter from my face. Crystal clear was the notion that the little fella lived with *joy!*

Like his namesake, a fictional space opera character from the 1930s, the bovine Buck Rogers awoke each morning bent on new adventures. Chasing guineas set off a raucous squawking chorus that seemed to amuse him. Although he never reached outer space as his cartoon namesake did, he sometimes attempted flight by leaping into the air from the top of a large mound of manure scooped from cow and horse pens.

Eventually he grew up and moved on to pastures elsewhere, but he brightened our days and made us think about the importance of living with energy and enthusiasm. ■

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 Qualification: Advertised price requires credit qualification and 24-month commitment. Upfront activation and/or receiver upgrade fees may apply based on credit qualification. Offer ends 4/13/22. 2-Year Commitment: Early termination fee of \$20/mo. remaining applies if you cancel early. Included in 2-year price guarantee at \$69.99 advertised price: America's Top 120 programming package, local channels, HD service fees, and Hopper Duo Smart DVR for 1 TV. Included in 2-year price guarantee for additional cost: Programming package upgrades (\$84.99 for AT120+, \$94.99 for AT200, \$104.99 for AT250), monthly fees for upgraded or additional receivers (\$5-\$7 per additional TV, receivers with additional functionality may be \$10-\$15). Regional Sports: RSN Surcharge up to \$3/mo. applies to AT120+ and higher packages and varies based on location. NOT included in 2-year price guarantee or advertised price (and subject to change): Taxes & surcharges, add-on programming (including premium channels), DISH Protect, and transactional fees. Premium Channels: 3 Mos. Free: After 3 mos., you will be billed \$30/mo. for Showtime, Starz, and DISH Movie Pack unless you call or go online to cancel. Remote: The DISH Voice Remote with the Google Assistant requires internet-connected Hopper, Joey, or Wally device. Customer must press Voice Remote button to activate feature. The Google Assistant Smart Home features require Google account and compatible devices. Google is a trademark of Google LLC. Other: Netflix streaming membership required. All packages, programming, features, and functionality and all prices and fees not included in price lock are subject to change without notice. After 6 mos., if selected, you will be billed \$9.99/mo. for DISH Protect Silver unless you call to cancel. After 2 years, then-current everyday prices for all services apply. For business customers, additional monthly fees may apply. Free standard professional installation only. Indiana C.P.D Reg. No. - 19-08615. ©2021 GoDISH.com. All rights reserved. Internet speeds, prices, and providers vary by customer address. \$40 price refers to widely available plan from multiple providers. Restrictions apply. Nationwide availability of 25 Mbps plan is subject to change without notice. The application of "Unlimited Data with no Hard Data Limits" varies by provider, but commonly mean that your access to the internet will not be stopped by going over a data limit, but that speeds may be lowered. Call for details. Internet not provided by DISH and will be billed separately.