

2019 ANNUAL MEETING & BOARD ELECTION FAQ

Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative's Annual Meeting is Tuesday, May 14, 2019, at The Silos on 77, formerly the Sons of Hermann Hall, 1031 CR 223 in Giddings. Registration will begin at 1:30 p.m. and end at 2:30 p.m. The meeting will start at 2:30 p.m. If you need more information after reading the questions and answers below, call 800-842-7708 between 7:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, or email memberservices@bluebonnet.coop.

What is the Annual Meeting, and why is it important to attend?

Bluebonnet's Annual Meeting is one of the many benefits of being a member of an electric cooperative. The meeting, held each year in May, offers members the opportunity to meet the Board of Directors, the general manager and the co-op's executive staff. Members hear a "State of the Co-op" message, elect directors and attend to any business that may come before the membership.

Bluebonnet's service area is divided into seven districts. Can I vote for candidates in all districts or just the district in which I live?

During contested Board elections, co-op members can vote for directors in all districts. The districts in the co-op's service area were drawn along Bluebonnet's service area boundary and county lines. The seven districts are represented by one to three directors based on, among other things, the number of meters in each district.

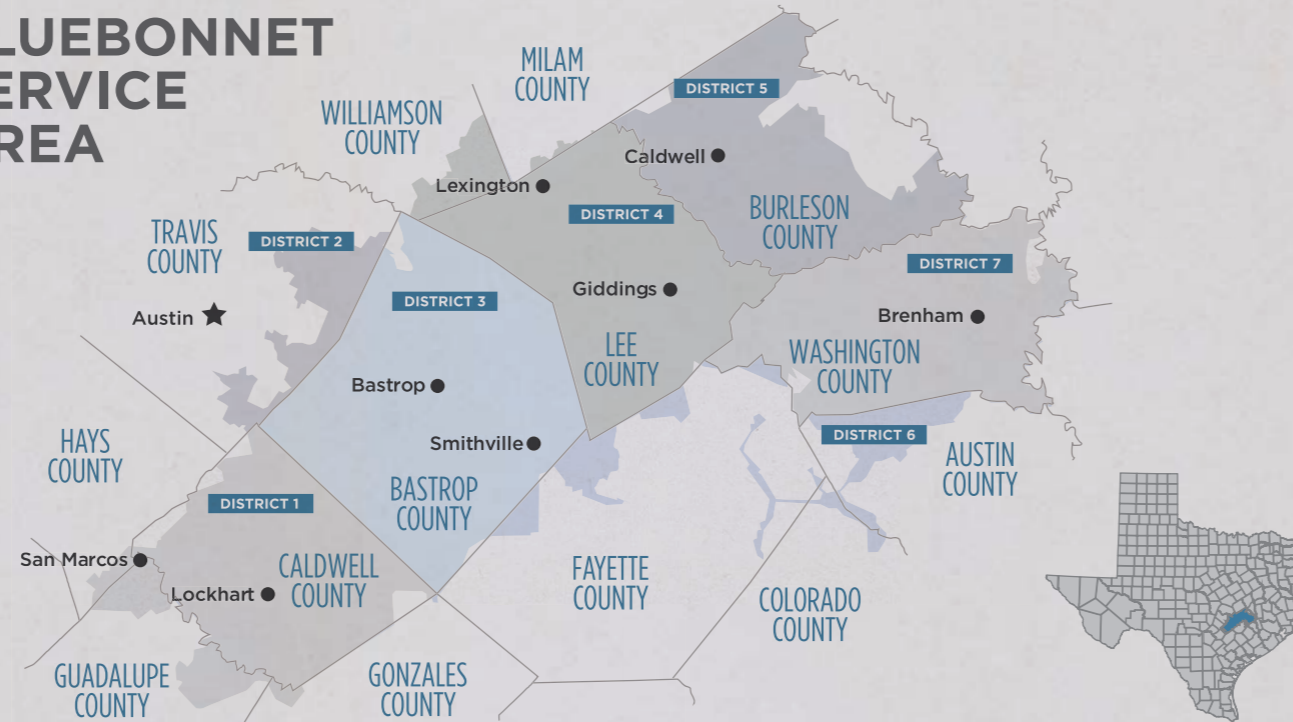
How many Board of Director seats are up for election?

Four of the 11 seats on Bluebonnet's Board of Directors are up for election this year. Three of the candidates — Milton Shaw, District 1, representing Caldwell, Gonzales, Guadalupe and Hays counties; Ben Flencher, District 5, representing Burleson County; and Ken Mutscher, District 7, representing Washington County — were unopposed and are elected by general consent in accordance with Bluebonnet's by-laws. There are four candidates for the District 3 seat, representing Bastrop County: incumbent Debbi Goertz and contenders Juanita Valarie Neidig, Ron Spencer and Matthew Weilert.



Open this dust cover to read more about board candidates and the Annual Meeting

BLUEBONNET SERVICE AREA



What are my voting options?

There are four candidates for the co-op's District 3 Board seat. There are currently no additional ballot items to be voted on this year. However, items can be added to the Annual Meeting agenda that would require a vote by members. Those items would have to be added no later than 10 days before the Annual Meeting. Your proxy could be used in that vote, which is why your proxy selection is important.

What is proxy voting, and how does it work?

Proxy voting allows members who cannot attend the Annual Meeting to designate another person to vote in his or her place. On the proxy, members can assign their vote to either Bluebonnet's Proxy Committee or to an individual. Proxies are counted together with those registered at the Annual Meeting to ensure at least 1 percent of Bluebonnet's membership is present in person or represented by proxy to constitute a quorum.

Who serves on Bluebonnet's Proxy Committee?

The Proxy Committee is composed of all Bluebonnet Board members whose terms are not currently up for election. This year's Proxy Committee members are Roderick Emanuel, Byron Balke, Shana Whiteley, Bryan Bracewell,

Russell Jurk and Robert Mikeska.

How do I vote by proxy?

Complete the proxy form and return it by mail or drop it off at any of Bluebonnet's member service centers in Bastrop, Brenham, Giddings, Lockhart or Manor. If you misplace the proxy form, stop by a member service center to pick one up or call 800-842-7708 and ask a representative to mail one to you. Proxies must either be hand-delivered to a member service center by 5:30 p.m. May 7, 2019, or mailed to:

**Bluebonnet Elections Processing
c/o Election Services Co.
P.O. Box 9020
Ronkonkoma, NY 11779-9822**

Mailed proxies must be postmarked by May 7, 2019.

Can this proxy be used again at future Annual Meetings?

No, the proxy is valid only for the meeting specified on the proxy form.

Can I vote at the Annual Meeting if I sent in a proxy form?

When you register at the meeting, you may revoke your proxy and then vote in person.

What information do I need to bring with me to register at the Annual Meeting?

You will be asked to verbally recite two pieces of information that are on

your account. This account verification process is identical to the one performed any time members would like to transact business on their accounts. You can simply tell the member service representative at the registration desk any two of the following pieces of information about your account: the name(s) listed on the account, your Bluebonnet account number, your birthday, last four digits of your Social Security number, your driver's license number or your mailing address.

Who administers the election?

Election Services Co., which is a third-party, independent vendor that specializes in administering corporate elections nationwide. It has the skills, experience and equipment to efficiently and accurately tally proxies and votes while adhering to the Federal Trade Commission's Red Flag requirements that protect members' confidential account information.

Can I change my address or do other business at the Annual Meeting?

Bluebonnet's member service representatives at the information booth will be able to help members with most of their co-op business and answer any questions they would normally handle at any member service center or through the call center.



80th

ANNIVERSARY

JOIN US!

for the

Bluebonnet

ANNUAL MEETING

The Silos on 77
(formerly Sons of Hermann Hall)
1031 CR 223, Giddings, TX

REGISTRATION 1:30-2:30 P.M.
MEETING STARTS AT 2:30 P.M.

May 14, 2019



2019 NOMINEES FOR BLUEBONNET'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Ben Flencher District 5 (Incumbent)



Flencher, chairman of the Bluebonnet Board of Directors, has been on the electric co-op's Board since 1987. He is an ex-officio member of Bluebonnet's Board committees — Audit & Finance, Employee Services, Energy Services, Legal & Governance, Member Experience and Technology. He grew up in a banking family in Somerville and began his lifelong banking career by rolling coins and filing checks as a young boy at the bank where his father worked. He was officially hired when he was in eighth grade and continued to work at the bank while in college. Today, he is president of that same bank — Citizens State Bank, Somerville — a position he's held since 1981. Under his leadership, the bank has grown to six locations. Flencher graduated from Texas A&M University in 1974 with a degree in finance. He is a lifelong member of the First Lutheran Church in Somerville. He and his wife Betsy, have four sons: Aaron and Cory, who work in the banking industry; Ryan, who works in commercial real estate; and Josh, who owns a dirt contracting company. The Flenchers have five grandchildren, and another one due in mid-April.

Debbi Goertz District 3 (Incumbent)



Goertz has served on the Bluebonnet Board of Directors since 2017. She has earned the Credentialed Cooperative Director and Board Leadership certifications through the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. She chairs Bluebonnet's Technology Committee and is a member of the Energy Services and Legal & Governance committees. Goertz has been an attorney in Bastrop since 2004, representing clients in civil matters including trusts and estates law, and some Medicaid issues. She was born in Kilgore and grew up there and in Bryan. After graduating from Bryan High School, she received a bachelor's degree in education and a master's degree in merchandising from Texas Tech University in Lubbock. She worked at Bloomingdale's in Dallas as a department manager before opting for a career change. Goertz attended Baylor Law School in Waco and earned her law degree in 1993. After graduation, she moved to Bastrop and has been a Bluebonnet member since 1998. Goertz worked briefly in a Bastrop law firm before beginning a career with the Texas Department of Public Safety, first as a hearing examiner, then as Texas' administrator for school bus safety. She has worked with numerous Bastrop and Smithville nonprofit groups, including Samella Williams Angels Unaware Ministry, Children's Advocacy Center, Bastrop County Historical Society and Family Crisis Center, and was a Girl Scout leader for 10 years. Her daughter, Abby, is a student at the University of Texas at Austin.

Juanita Valarie Neidig District 3



Neidig is an accomplished business owner with more than 30 years of experience in the electric supply industry. In 2002, she started LTH Enterprises Ltd. and is the managing partner. The company provides electrical, plumbing and custodial materials for new and remodeled construction projects, as well as maintenance and operations supplies to clients that include schools and universities as well as city, county and federal governments. She was born and raised in east Austin, graduated from Johnston High School, and immediately went to work at an electrical distribution company. She held positions in several electric supply companies, gaining 14 years of experience and knowledge that led to the start of her successful business. She serves on the Elgin ISD Board of Trustees and the Elgin Education Foundation. She is active at Sacred Heart Catholic Church and Elgin High School's scholarship committee, athletic booster club, and baseball & softball fundraising committees. Neidig is a proponent of Blue Santa, Coats for Kids in Austin and the Ronald McDonald House charities. In her spare time, she is an avid runner, qualifying for the Boston Marathon, completing five marathons and more than 50 half marathons and triathlons. She and her husband of 22 years, Harlan, have two children: Jacob, who will attend Stanford University in the fall, and Emma, who is active in Elgin High softball and volleyball. They live on their working cattle ranch that straddles Travis and Bastrop counties.

Milton Shaw District 1 (Incumbent)



Shaw has served on the Bluebonnet Board of Directors since 2010. He has earned the Credentialed Cooperative Director and Board Leadership certifications and Director Gold credential through the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. Shaw is chairman of Bluebonnet's Legal & Governance Committee and is a member of the Employee Services and Member Experience committees. He grew up in Luling and traveled America during a 30-year career with Shell Oil Co. He and his family moved to six states while he managed marketing of Shell's real estate assets and oversaw multimillion-dollar budgets. Shaw has decades of experience in community relations and customer service. After graduating from what is now Texas State University in San Marcos in 1962, Shaw managed a store for Western Auto and later was a manager in the Sears department store chain's management development program. He retired from Shell in 1998 and returned to Luling with his wife and high school sweetheart, Judy. They run a few head of cattle on 46 acres in Caldwell County. Shaw is active in his community, including service over the years in the Luling Chamber of Commerce, Community Action, Inc., Kiwanis Club, Caldwell County Development Board, Polonia Water Supply Corp. and McNeil Baptist Church. He and Judy have three sons: Milton Jr., a worldwide customer service manager for Shell; Mark, executive vice president — chief legal and regulatory officer for Southwest Airlines; and Michael, partner in the Jackson Walker law firm in Houston. The Shaws have seven grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

Kenneth Mutscher District 7 (Incumbent)



Mutscher, vice chairman of the Bluebonnet Board of Directors, has been on the electric co-op's Board since 1998. He has earned the Credentialed Cooperative Director and Board Leadership certifications and Director Gold credential through the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. He chairs Bluebonnet's Employee Services Committee and is a member of the Technology Committee. He also serves as an ex-officio member of the Audit & Finance, Energy Services, Legal & Governance and Member Experience committees. Mutscher was an investigator for the state's Board of Pharmacy, a National Guard officer and owned a financial services business in Brenham. He is retired and lives in Brenham. He was an all-around athlete at Brenham High School, lettering in football, baseball, basketball and track. He attended Blinn College on a baseball scholarship and graduated from the University of Texas at Austin in 1965 with a business administration degree. He has worked with several community organizations, including the Brenham Lions Club, the Chamber of Commerce, the Coastal Conservation Association, Washington County Little League and the Bluebonnet Beef Breeders Association of Washington County. He is a director of the Blinn College Foundation Board and has held numerous offices as a member of Grace Lutheran Church. Mutscher enjoys golf, fishing, hunting, traveling and raising Brangus cattle. He and his wife, Sarita, have a son, Kevin, who is an attorney in Brenham, and one grandson.

Ron Spencer District 3



Spencer grew up in Houston, where he graduated from high school in 1974 and then attended technical school to become a certified welder. He moved up the ladder during six years in the oil rig industry. In 1980 he joined his family's business, International Management Services Inc., a Houston-based consulting firm specializing in helping companies work in America's free-trade zones. During his 10 years with IMS, Spencer worked at a subsidiary, overseeing procurement and logistics of medical supplies and pharmaceutical materials. In 1990, he moved to Austin and began working at Dell, where he worked in the procurement department and was responsible for all mass storage products. At Dell, Spencer developed the framework for a new supply chain design and inventory management system. He became global senior manager, overseeing the procurement of the company's mechanical devices and power supplies. In 2000, he left Dell to set up his own consulting practice, working with global suppliers of electronic components. After living in Florida for three years, he returned to his Texas roots, moving to Bastrop in 2011. He is semi-retired, but is an active investor in real estate and restaurants. He has also been an avid pilot for 15 years. Spencer is on the board of directors for the Bastrop Economic Development Corp. and on the advisory board for the Smithville Airport. His son, Justin, is a University of Texas at Austin graduate working in the Austin restaurant industry. Spencer has two grandchildren.

Matthew Weilert District 3



Weilert has more than 30 years' experience in corporate safety and risk reduction. He is a decorated Navy veteran who grew up in Bastrop. His father was CFO of Austin Meter, a maker of boiler turbine generator control systems. Weilert graduated from Bastrop High School and earned a degree in safety engineering from Texas A&M University in College Station in 1985 on a Navy scholarship. In 1996, he founded Systems Thinking Institute, which brings field-tested process improvement concepts to international businesses. Companies that have used those concepts include Battelle, GM, United Defense, Kratos Defense and Panera Bread. The concepts have been taught in the U.S., Canada and Malta. The institute uses structured questions within day-to-day business operations to help companies improve their bottom-line results. Weilert moved the institute from New Hampshire to Texas in 2010. He set aside that work for nearly two years to care for his father in hospice until September 2018. Since then, Weilert launched a startup he hopes will "disrupt Amazon" by building a team that will deliver authentic, individual interactions for online shoppers and put a personal face to that process. Weilert, an Eagle Scout, has been active in Boy Scouts in Austin, Bastrop and Pensacola, Fla. He has been a member of Ascension Catholic Church in Bastrop since childhood and was part of a team that introduced a men's leadership program to more than a dozen Catholic churches in the Austin diocese. He has a son, 9-year-old Stephen Carl.

Flip to the back and **open this dust cover** to read about **other board candidates**, the election and the Annual Meeting



VOTE AND YOU COULD WIN GREAT PRIZES!

Anyone who votes either by proxy or in person at the Annual Meeting on Tuesday, May 14, will be entered in a drawing to win a truck being retired from Bluebonnet's fleet. Anyone who votes by proxy will be entered in a drawing for more prizes. Get more information on **Page 27** inside this issue of Texas Co-op Power magazine.

TEXAS CO-OP POWER



ON THE MOVE WITH CHET

SPECIAL
TRAVEL
ISSUE

Daytripper Chet Garner
begins yearlong
Hit the Road series

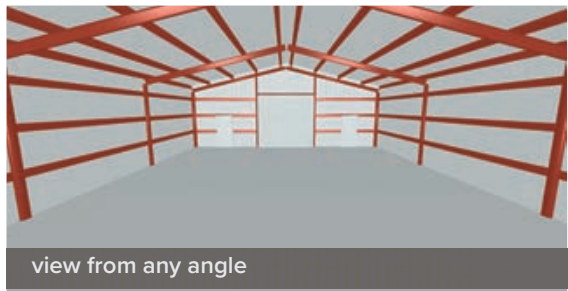


BLUEBONNET NEWS
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Texan Warbird Adventures offers flights in this World War II-era T-6 Texan.

SPECIAL TRAVEL ISSUE

FEATURE

8 **What Moves You?** How to make your travels around Texas be about the experience, not just the destination.
By Melissa Gaskill

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By Lee Gaddis

Observations

Wide-Open Spaces
By Joe Nick Patoski

NEXT MONTH

This Little Piggy When pet potbellies outgrow expectations, rescuers step in.



ON THE COVER Starting this month, enjoy Chet Garner's one-of-a-kind stories from Texas' back roads. Photo by Todd White | Courtesy Chet Garner

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Learning To Dance

I grew up in the 1930s going to these halls with my parents [*Hail the Halls*, February 2019]. That's how I learned to dance—on Daddy's toes and watching my parents having fun. My sister and I would run and play, then when it got late, fall asleep under the benches on a quilt listening to the music.

Anhalt Hall still looks just the same and is continuing the tradition today. Thanks for bringing it all back.

DOROTHY ALVES RODGERS | SCHERTZ
GUADALUPE VALLEY EC

I was amused by the part that said Hank Wilson got his start in Texas dance halls. My reaction was that somewhere in the great beyond, Leon Russell is smiling. Russell chose that name for his first country album, *Hank Wilson's Back*, in 1973. I always appreciated that clever move to combine the last names of the two country music Hanks, Williams and Thompson.

STEVE FINLAY | LORENA
HEART OF TEXAS EC

Editor's note: The reference to Hank Wilson, which was in error, has been corrected to Hank Williams in the online version of the story.

My two favorites are (of course) the archetypal, venerable Gruene Hall in New Braunfels and Schroeder Hall near Fannin. I've heard a lot of good music in both.

SYLVIA PESEK | VIA FACEBOOK

Read Right Here

My kin have been scattered throughout Texas since their

It Was the Place To Be

Hail the Halls [February 2019] reminded me of a hall that was not mentioned, located in Lometa on U.S. 183.

The building is still

there but not in operation. Jimmy Heap and the Melody Masters played there every third Friday night. It was the place to be if you liked to dance.

My late husband and I had our first date at a Jimmy Heap dance, where he told me, "I'm going to marry you someday." He did just that four years later.

MARTHA O. BURNHAM | SAN SABA | HAMILTON COUNTY EC



arrivals between 1839 and 1848. Yet, incredibly, I had never heard of or knew about cochineals [*The Bugs That Make You See Red*, February 2019]. Thanks to Martha Deeringer for bringing that most interesting and enlightening story to the pages of *Texas Co-op Power*.

MIKE NEAL EDMONDS | AUSTIN
PEDERNALES EC

Texas' First Flag

I don't see the first flag of the Republic of Texas [*A Chapter in La Bahia's History*, Currents, February 2019]. In fact, the only place I've ever seen it depicted as our flag is on the Texas State Historical Association website.

It perplexes me that the flag originally authorized by Texas' first Congress is everywhere ignored: "an azure ground with a large golden star central." Our

present flag didn't fly over Texas until January 1839.

JERRE CONDER | VAN ZANDT COUNTY
TRINITY VALLEY EC

Thanking a Veteran

As the proud father of a member of the 3rd Marine Logistics Group in Okinawa, I have a message for Vietnam veteran Dave Swallow of San Marcos [*Remembering Veterans*, Letters, February 2019]: A belated welcome home, sir, and of course, thank you for your service.

DANNY BOOTE | LITTLE ELM
COSERV

The Concept of Giving

I think there is a more meaningful interpretation of "charity begins at home" [*The Need for Charity*, Letters, January 2019]. The concept of charity begins at home.

I had the good fortune and blessing of being raised by two

exceptional and godly parents. I learned from hearing their words and observing their lives that you don't have to be Bill Gates to be a philanthropist. There are very few of us who can't give something.

DORA S. WHITE | ROCKSPRINGS
PEDERNALES EC

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

   Texas Co-op Power

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HAPPENINGS

San Jacinto Revisited

The largest battle re-enactment in the state is the centerpiece of the **SAN JACINTO DAY FESTIVAL, APRIL 13**, on the grounds surrounding the San Jacinto Monument in **LA PORTE**. The re-enactment portrays the events leading up to Texas winning its independence from Mexico at the decisive Battle of San Jacinto on April 21, 1836.

Visitors can wander among the Mexican and Texian camps to learn what soldiers and their families experienced before the battle. At 3 p.m., the official (and historically accurate) re-enactment of the Battle of San Jacinto—considered the largest re-enactment in the Southwest—begins.

INFO ▶ sanjacinto-museum.org, (281) 479-2421

WEB EXTRAS
▶ Find more happenings online.



BY THE NUMBERS

2     

Campbell's Soup estimates 20 million households served the Thanksgiving staple green bean casserole last year. Dorcas Reilly, a Campbell's employee, came up with the simple, six-ingredient recipe in 1955. When Campbell's began putting the recipe on cans of its cream of mushroom soup in 1960, the dish's popularity took off. Reilly, 92, died in October 2018.

ALMANAC

Heart to Heart

50 YEARS AGO: On April 4, 1969, in Houston, Dr. Denton Cooley implanted the first completely artificial heart in a human being. The patient lived on the artificial heart for 64 hours but died 32 hours after receiving a new human heart. The first artificial heart is in the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C.

◀ LOOKING BACK AT MUSIC THIS MONTH



CAPTURING TEXAS' rich music culture in two pages is impossible. Heck, multiple books have been written about Willie Nelson alone. We'll just try to hit the high notes.

1940s

1946 Bob Wills and His Texas Playboys release their biggest hit, *New Spanish Two Step*, which spends 16 weeks at No. 1 on the country chart.



1946 Clifton Chenier designs the first *frottoir*, or zydeco washboard, with Willie Landry in Port Arthur.

1950s

1953 Willie Mae "Big Mama" Thornton of Houston releases the song *Hound Dog*, which later becomes a hit for Elvis Presley.

1956 Perryville's Ray Price releases *Crazy Arms*, which spends 20 weeks at No. 1 on the country chart.

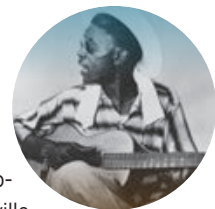
1958 Pianist Van Cliburn, from Kilgore, achieves worldwide recognition when he wins the inaugural International Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow.

1960s

1960 Blues artist Sam "Lightnin'" Hopkins of Centerville debuts at Carnegie Hall.

1960 *He'll Have To Go* by Panola County's Jim Reeves reaches No. 1 on the charts.

1964 The Beatles play their first Texas show, at Dallas Memorial Auditorium. A year later, they return for two shows at Sam Houston Coliseum in Houston.





LINEMAN
APPRECIATION DAY

'THERE'S NO ERASER'

Joe Huerta III started as a groundman at Medina EC, based in Hondo, in 2003—with “zero knowledge in this field,” he says—and worked his way up to become a journeyman lineworker.

“**My cousin** was a lineman for Medina EC, and every time we hung out, he would tell me stories about his job,” Huerta says. “I was told the job was hard, the hours were long, and the work was underappreciated. At the end of the day, the work of a lineman is a great way to provide for your family, to feel proud of a skill that you earn and continually learn throughout the years, and a great way to give back to the community.”

Today, Huerta is the safety and loss control manager at Nueces EC in Robstown, where the co-op will join others nationwide to celebrate Lineman Appreciation Day on April 8. Huerta is responsible for maintaining a culture of safety among the lineworkers.

“**In lineman’s work**, there’s no eraser,” Huerta says. “Once something happens ... that could be it.”

POWER OF OUR PEOPLE

Beatons Bag Attention of Co-ops Nationwide

HUNTER BEATON has won two national awards from the Boy Scouts and one from the Daughters of the American Revolution on top of the support that comes with a Texas Senate proclamation. It’s all for his Day 1 Bags initiative, which started as an Eagle Scout project but has grown to provide thousands of foster children with duffel bags brimming with clothes, toothbrushes and other supplies during what can be a tough transition.

Now Beaton and his mom, Paula, have the attention of electric co-ops across the U.S. after they won second place in the nationwide #WhoPowersYou contest, established by Touchstone Energy “to honor inspirational people in co-op communities—the people who power our lives.” The honor includes a \$2,000 prize.

Day 1 Bags and the Beatons, who live in Boerne and are members of Bandera Electric Cooperative, first appeared here in July 2018. They’re back as we debut Power of Our People, *Texas Co-op Power’s* campaign that recognizes co-op members who improve their community’s quality of life.

Watch this space as we showcase more examples of the Power of Our People in coming months.

VISIT TexasCoopPower.com to nominate a community treasure for recognition or email people@texascooppower.com with details.



LOOKING AHEAD TO ELECTRICITY AND ENERGY NEXT MONTH ►

1970s

1971 Icon Willie Nelson moves from Nashville to Austin, forever changing its music scene.

1972 The first Kerrville Folk Festival is held.



1975 Accordionist Flaco Jiménez of San Antonio releases his first studio album, *El Rey de Texas*.

1979 Asleep at the Wheel wins its first Grammy Award with the single *One O’Clock Jump*.

1980s

1980 Austin music venue the Armadillo World Headquarters holds a New Year’s Eve blowout before closing its doors for good.



1982 *Fool Hearted Memory* becomes the first No. 1 hit for Poteet’s George Strait.

1985 Stevie Ray Vaughan and Double Trouble win their first Grammy with their album *Blues Explosion*.

1990s

1994 Lake Jackson’s Selena wins a Grammy for best Mexican-American album for *Live!*

1998 The Texas Country Music Hall of Fame is created in Carthage.



2000s

2001 Houston’s Beyoncé wins the first of her 23 Grammys when her group Destiny’s Child’s song *Say My Name* wins twice in the R&B category.

2004 ZZ Top of Houston is inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

2007 *Sound Grammar* by jazz great Ornette Coleman of Fort Worth wins the Pulitzer Prize for music.

HOW TO MAKE TRAVEL
BE ABOUT THE EXPERIENCE,
NOT THE DESTINATION

What MOVES you?

We typically think of transportation simply as a means to get from one place to another—a way to take a trip. Sometimes, though, a trip becomes as much about the way you travel as where you go.

Hit the road on a bicycle, and you get a completely different perspective than riding in a car along the same route. The scenery looks vastly different from a small boat on the water, where a river sets your route and speed, than from the shore. Aircraft a few thousand feet high offer a view you can't get any other way, along with the singular combination of the quiet of the sky and the thrill of speed. A horse not only goes places no road can, it also provides pleasant company along the way; plus, a horse does most of the work for you.

These experiences can be had across Texas, on your own or with established outfitters. Here are four excellent adventures featuring alternate modes of transport to get you started, along with suggestions for other opportunities that will move you.

TWO WHEELS

Nothing beats sightseeing from a bicycle. Pedaling down a country road, you feel the breeze on your face and sun on your skin, smell the grass and flowers, and hear the birds and rustling leaves. A bike makes it easy to stop and linger or take a scenic detour. All that plus some exercise, too.

All you really need is a bike and back roads with light traffic. But on a guided tour, someone else figures out the route, packs the snacks and even brings the bicycle. Texas Bike Tours creates custom itineraries for guided bike rides throughout the Hill Country, from a few hours to a few days. Owner Deaton Bednar says one popular route goes from Fredericksburg to Comfort.



Elizabeth and Daniel Piercey, from England, cycle around Fredericksburg, opposite. Afterward, they visit with Urban Herbal owner and chef Bill Varney, above.

CYCLISTS: SCOTT VAN OSBOL





A BIKE MAKES IT EASY TO STOP AND LINGER OR TAKE A SCENIC DETOUR.

Wendy and Kevin Parker of Houston spent a half day making the 32-mile ride, complete with a picnic and plenty of other stops. Their daughter Kennedy, 5, came along in a bike trailer.

“My husband and I love to bike and wanted to expose our daughter to biking somewhere outside of the city,” Wendy says. “We spread trips up to 60 miles over four or five days, riding around Fredericksburg and out through the Hill Country. Deaton even let my daughter jump into the van when Kevin got tired of pulling her.”

That’s another benefit of a guided tour: the sag wagon. One followed the Parkers the entire way and took the family’s luggage to Camp Comfort, where they spent the night. Their route followed scenic ranch roads along the Pedernales River, past old log cabins, farms, alpacas, donkeys and goats. The last leg into Comfort provided impressive views and a roller coaster of small hills, ending with lunch at High’s Café & Store.

“We totally had a blast,” Wendy says. They plan to do another trip once Kennedy can ride her own bike, counting on the sag wagon option.

From their home in England, Elizabeth and Daniel Piercey

Elizabeth and Daniel Piercey booked their cycling trip with Texas Bike Tours.

plan annual walking holidays to remote parts of Europe. They discovered Texas a couple of years ago when they added a few extra days to a Houston business trip. “We have to admit that we discovered the allure of Texas quite by chance,” Daniel says.

“Cycling in the Hill Country gave us a chance to slow down, relax, see the country at closer range and spend some time with (and get to know) a few locals,” he says. “Texans, so we’ve heard, like to talk, and we found this to be true. Maybe it is the lack of hurry, but people seem happy to share their thoughts.”

Those seeking a shorter taste of two-wheeled sightseeing can pedal miles of roads and trails at Resaca de la Palma State Park near Brownsville, where bike rentals are available. If it’s all about miles and speed, Bike Night at Circuit of the Americas near Austin turns riders loose on the 3.4-mile, 20-turn race-track from 6 p.m. until dark every Tuesday, March until July. Participants must register on-site or online, and rentals are available.

Texas Bike Tours, (760) 332-8668, texasbiketours.com

Resaca de la Palma State Park, (956) 350-2920, tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/resaca-de-la-palma

Bicycle Sport Shop Bike Night, bicyclesportshop.com/cota-bike-night

A HULL

Travelers flock to San Antonio to see its famous River Walk. Those who stay on the shores of the San Antonio River are missing the boat.

The San Antonio River Authority and partners have been restoring the river south of downtown, returning natural contours and planting thousands of trees, shrubs and wildflowers. Enjoy the results in a kayak rented from Mission Adventure Tours at Espada Park or the King William District, on routes of 2, 3 or 4 miles, on your own or guided.

Teresa Maslonka has paddled with Mission Adventure Tours several times. “The amount of wild-ness incorporated into this city is phenomenal,” she says. “On the river, you’re in the city but feel like you’re away from it. We saw all different kinds of birds,

turtles and other wildlife, and it is so different from being on the sidewalk looking at the river.”

A guided trip not only puts those without experience at ease, but the guides also share knowledge about the river’s abundant wildlife. Single- and two-person kayaks are available and friendly dogs welcomed.



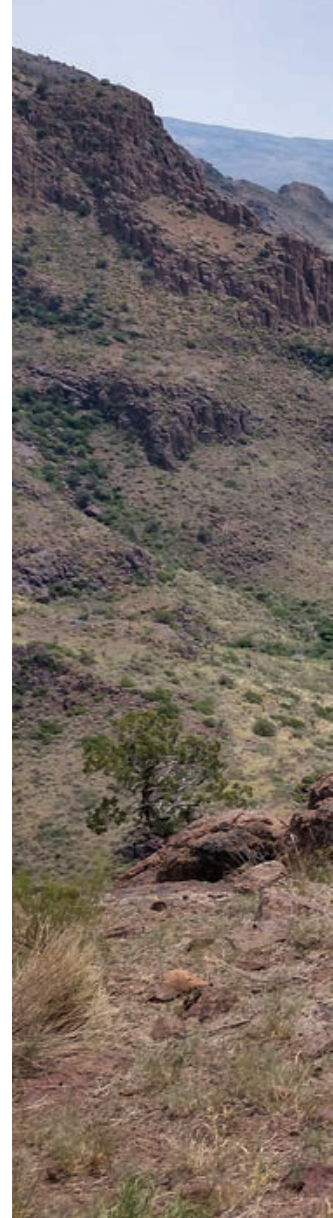
Kayaking the San Antonio River includes thrilling chutes, above, and the serene waters of Espada Park, below.



ON THE RIVER, YOU'RE IN THE CITY BUT FEEL LIKE YOU'RE AWAY FROM IT.



A Go Rio boat travels along the San Antonio River Walk downtown. The company's fleet of barges operates with electric, eco-friendly engines.



A more urban experience awaits on one of Go Rio Cruises' San Antonio River Walk rides. Thirty-five-minute tours depart from several spots along the River Walk every 15 minutes from 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily, and food and drinks are welcome aboard. Boat captains point out the sights in this historic-meets-modern area: the former circa-1850 school for boys, now the Omni La Mansión del Rio River Walk hotel; the Hyatt Regency San Antonio hotel, designed to avoid casting a shadow on the nearby Alamo; the first restaurant to offer riverside dining, now available at dozens of establishments; and a series of bridges spanning the river.

Go Rio also offers a boat shuttle service with 13 designated stops, from downtown through the Museum Reach section of the river north of downtown to the Pearl District. The shuttle offers a great way to see the sights, including a lock-and-dam system that takes a boat about seven minutes to go through.

You can experience other Texas cities from the water as well. Get a boat's-eye view of the birds and marine life of Galveston Bay and its historic port with Galveston Harbor Tours, and see the bustling maritime industry along the Houston Ship Channel on the Sam Houston Boat Tour's free 90-minute voyage. Rent a kayak or canoe at Backwoods Paddlesports to see the Fort Worth skyline from the Trinity River.

- Mission Adventure Tours**, (210) 383-0872, missionkayak.com
- Go Rio Cruises**, (210) 227-4746, goriocruises.com
- Galveston Harbor Tours**, (409) 763-1877, galveston.com/harbortours
- Sam Houston Boat Tour**, (713) 670-2631, porthouston.com/sam-houston-boat-tour
- Backwoods Paddlesports**, (817) 470-2613, backwoodspaddlesports.com



RIVER BOAT: COURTESY GO RIO. HORSES: MISSY GANTRELL



THE VIEWS ARE TO DIE FOR. YOU CAN SEE FOREVER.

FOUR LEGS

As the sun sets over the toothy horizon of the Davis Mountains, riders finish up their supper and gather around a campfire. The swish of horses' tails blends with the crackle of the fire and rustle of the breeze. Stars fill the expanse of sky above and invite lingering, but soon the lure of cushy bedrolls proves too much. After all, tomorrow brings another full day of riding with Texas Horseback Adventures, based in Alpine.

"Every day out there, it's the best thing, the sheer beauty of the property and the amazing opportunity to ride through it," says Margaret O'Donnell, who has taken a number of overnight trips. "It is so relaxing to come back in the evening to sit and watch the horses then the sunset and eat a beautiful meal. People are stunned by the beauty of the skies and sunsets out here."

Opportunities like this ride on the open range, where you can disappear into a landscape with no trails or fences, are few and far between. Riders spend the night at cow camps on a vast ranch, striking out each day to explore the terrain of canyons, peaks and open country. Owner and guide Missy Cantrell chooses routes

based on riders' experience and desires and says it's all about giving them an authentic experience. Days include about six hours of riding, with a break for lunch with a view.

Along the way, riders see native plants, roadrunners and other wildlife, and signs of mountain lions and bears. "We saw mule deer and javelina and heard coyotes at night," O'Donnell says. "The views are to die for. You can see forever."

Days in the saddle and nights in a tepee aren't for everyone, of course. Those with a hankering for just a few hours astride a steed have many options around the state, including guided rides with Elm Creek Stables near Garner State Park with views of the Frio River canyon. There are also excursions through the dramatic landscape of Palo Duro Canyon with Old West Stables. Or channel your inner Fabio with a ride on the beach at sunset, courtesy of Stables at South Padre Island.

Texas Horseback Adventures, (325) 226-1966, texashorsebackadventures.com

Elm Creek Stables, (830) 232-5365

Old West Stables, (806) 488-2180, oldweststables.com

Stables at South Padre Island, (956) 761-7743, spistables.com

WITH THE CANOPY OPEN, YOU FEEL THE AIR BLOWING, SMELL THE SALT AIR.



Pilot Trey Hayden takes passengers over Corpus Christi Bay in his World War II-era open-cockpit plane.

Aransas Ferry, down the beach, over Corpus Christi Bay and downtown, past the iconic Harbor Bridge and USS Lexington aircraft carrier, now a museum.

“Over the beach, you can see people playing in the surf and on the sand. The sand was white and the water was clear and green,” Phillips says. “We made a few circles over the Lexington and saw the same type of plane as the one we were in parked on the deck, a bright yellow one.”

“The open cockpit is the coolest thing. With the canopy open, you feel the air blowing, smell the salt air,” says Patrick Kaufer, another recent passenger. “It is very enjoyable and different. You get to see something that not a lot of people get to see. The Lexington, as big as it is, looks tiny from the air.”

More than 600 T-6 Texans still ply the skies, but only a few offer rides to the public. “I loved the idea of riding in an old plane,” Phillips says. “It looked like something out of a museum, but it’s clear the Haydens take wonderful care of it. Their love of what they’re doing really shows.”

Get sky-high views of the sprawling metropolis of Houston with Texas Biplane. And Greatest Generation Aircraft offers tours in a World War II-era C-47 from Fort Worth’s Meacham International Airport.

Texan Warbird Adventures, (844) 359-7654, texanwarbirdadventures.com
Texas Biplane, (281) 698-7524, texasbiplane.com
Greatest Generation Aircraft, (817) 291-3261, ggal.org

See more of **Melissa Gaskill**’s work at melissagaskill.blogspot.com.

A PAIR OF WINGS

From 1,000 feet in the air, the world looks bigger and cleaner, its flaws less visible. Soaring above Mustang Island, the wide ribbon of sand and colorful clusters of people, umbrellas, chairs and beach towels become a work of art. Waves in the Gulf of Mexico draw sparkling lines of white, and ships on the blue water look like toys.

Texan Warbird Adventures offers this unique perspective from a World War II-era Navy T-6 Texan, a low-wing, open-cockpit plane known as “the pilot maker” for its role preparing pilots for combat. Retired Navy pilot and private aviation enthusiast Trey Hayden and his wife, Brandie, bought the plane about four years ago and started the tour company to share the thrill of flight, the history of the aircraft and Corpus Christi’s connection to military flying. George H.W. Bush, Neil Armstrong and John McCain all passed through Naval Air Station Corpus Christi.

Local resident Barry Phillips celebrated a recent birthday with a T-6 tour, flying over the Intracoastal Waterway and Port

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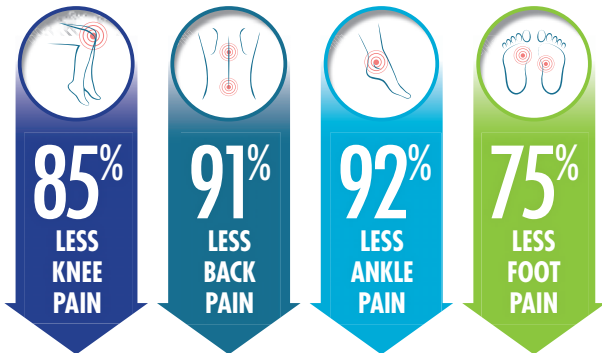
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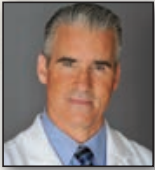
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Dr. Steven Battaglia
Board Certified Ear, Nose
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MDHearingAid Makes Hearing Aids Affordable for Everyone

Advanced Hearing Aid Technology For Less Than \$200

Too many people with hearing loss go without a solution because they can't afford hearing aid prices. As a practicing Ear Nose and Throat Surgeon, Dr. Steven Battaglia has seen first-hand the hardships people suffer when they have hearing loss. That's why he jumped at the opportunity to join MDHearingAid in their quest to make FDA-registered, high quality hearing aids available to everyone who needs one.

"MDHearingAid has done an incredible service for the millions of people suffering from hearing loss, but can't afford high-priced hearing aids," states Dr. Battaglia.

It's Nearly Invisible One of the most important requirements for the new line of hearing aids would be for the device to be hard for others to see. One of the biggest objections people have to wearing a hearing aid is that they are embarrassed. MDHearingAid's design helps people get past this concern.

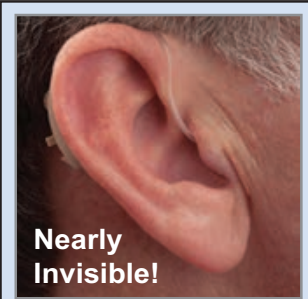
FDA-Registered Hearing Aid Outperforms Competitors

The new medical-grade hearing aid is called MDHearingAid PRO®. It is sleek, lightweight, and full of the same advanced technology found in higher-priced devices, but at a small fraction of the price. MDHearingAid couldn't understand why technology based products kept coming down in price, like computers, TVs, and DVD players, but not hearing aids. Once MDHearingAid was able to produce a device that costs less than \$200, the industry was turned upside down.

So How Did They Do It?

Since about 95% of the people who need a hearing aid only require a few settings, MDHearingAid PRO® simplified the need for certain variable components not needed by most people. This also makes it so easy for people to try the product, because no prescription is needed, even though it's an FDA-registered, medical-grade hearing aid.

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"I have a \$2,000 ReSound® Live Hearing aid in my left ear and the MDHearingAid PRO® in the right ear. I am not able to notice a significant difference in sound quality between the two." – Dr. May, ENT Physician



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spectacular large carat weight jewelry. "It's just recently that luxury jewelers have fallen in love with helenite," says James Fent, GIA Graduate Gemologist. "Clear green color in a stone this size is rarely found in emeralds but helenite has come to the rescue."

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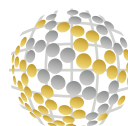
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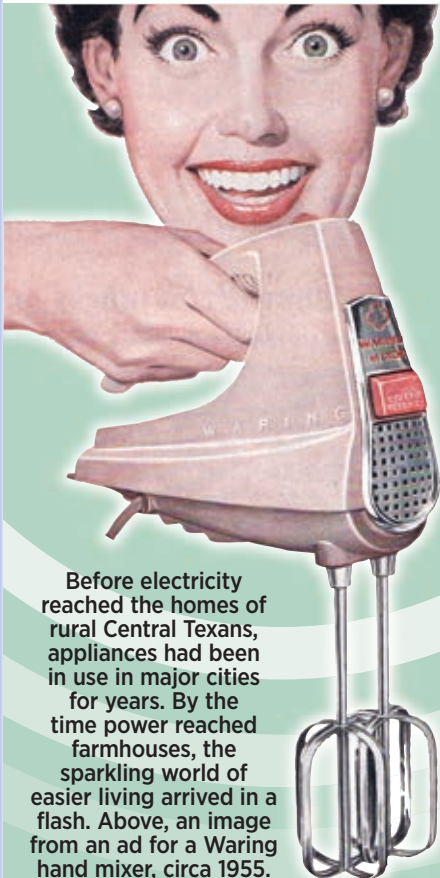
A brief history of

Elect

From a single light bulb to a know-it-all virtual assistant, the past century has taken us on a roller coaster of innovation



A TIMELINE OF ELECTRIC HOME DEVICES



Before electricity reached the homes of rural Central Texans, appliances had been in use in major cities for years. By the time power reached farmhouses, the sparkling world of easier living arrived in a flash. Above, an image from an ad for a Waring hand mixer, circa 1955.



1882

Summer relief comes with electric fan invention by Schuyler Skaats Wheeler, a New York City engineer.



1889

Singer company introduces first practical electric sewing machine.

1916
GM buys first self-contained electric refrigerator from Alfred Mellowes, who developed it in a backyard in Fort Wayne, Ind. GM names it Frigidaire and begins mass production; 'fridge' enters the lexicon.



1891

Carpenter Electric Manufacturing Co. in Minneapolis-St. Paul introduces electric oven. Its 1893 catalog tells how to bake pies: 'in the oven, turn on the electricity for thirty minutes, then take the pies out. They will always be done.'



1919
KitchenAid produces first household electric stand-up food mixer.



1908

Hoover vacuum cleaner goes on sale after James Murray Spangler, a night janitor in Canton, Ohio, whose asthma worsens from dust, invents device using fan, tin box, sateen pillowcase and broom handle. He sells patent to Hoover.



1908

Alva J. Fisher invents electric washing machine called the Thor, made by Hurley Machine Co. of Chicago.

Electric Appliances

By Ed Crowell

W

hen Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative powered the first light bulbs in rural Central Texas in 1939, the World's Fair in New York was unveiling an all-electric home with a dazzling kitchen, complete with a refrigerator, electric range, dishwasher, coffee maker, garbage disposal, food mixer and an automatic toaster.

To allow buyers in Texas and other states to get a close look at these life-changing devices, the federal Rural Electrification Administration outfitted a traveling show of circus tents filled with innovative home appliances. The caravan of dreams drew crowds by the thousands, and by the early 1940s, appliance sales were skyrocketing.

Wood-burning stoves, clothing washboards and heavy hand irons heated by a fire — all of which required backbreaking labor — were pushed aside for these conveniences of modern living.

Timeline and story continued on page 22

1920s

Armstrong Electric Co. unveils Perc-O-Toaster, which makes toast and coffee in one. Its ad touts, "Your complete breakfast prepared in one appliance."



1926

Toastmaster, first electric pop-up toaster, goes on sale. Invented by Charles Strite, who didn't like burned toast served in cafeteria of Minnesota plant where he worked.

1926

C. G. Johnson, founder of Overhead Door Corp. (now based in Lewisville in Dallas-Forth Worth area), invents electric garage door opener in Hartford City, Ind.



1927

Architect John W. Hammes of Racine, Wis., develops first garbage disposal, nicknamed 'electric pig' by manufacturer Emerson Electric Co.

1929

Former U.S. Army Lt. Col. Jacob Schick develops electric shaver after having trouble shaving in below-zero weather while mining in Alaska.



1937

First Waring Blender debuts as Miracle Mixer at National Restaurant Show in Chicago, demonstrated by Fred Waring himself.



1938

Ross Moore, who hated hanging wet laundry as boy in North Dakota, invents clothes dryer but can't find company to build it until Hamilton Manufacturing in Two Rivers, Wis., embraces idea and begins selling first 'June Day' dryer in 1938.



1940

CBS researchers invented first mechanical color TV system in 1940, based on 1928 designs. Federal Communications Commission approved unrefined system in 1950, but first color TV sets did not hit market until early 1950s.



1946

Raytheon Corp. engineer Percy LeBaron Spencer discovered microwave cooking by accident when he got close to magnetron in lab that melted candy bar in his pocket. He experimented by cooking popcorn near magnetron, then built crude metal box for magnetron — the initial microwave oven — to heat his lunches. Practical microwaves for home use appeared in 1960s.



Continued from page 21

The consumer race for electric appliances gained momentum as World War II ended in 1945. The post-war housing boom increased consumer demand for kitchen appliances as well as electric radios and then TVs.

By the 1950s, color televisions were available, though most popular TV shows aired in black-and-white until the late 1950s or early 1960s. General Electric made its household appliances pop by adding color such as Petal Pink and Canary Yellow (a design trend that may have influenced the future Apple CEO Steve Jobs in the late 1990s when he unveiled colorful “flavors” of the iMac personal desktop computer: blueberry, strawberry, lime, tangerine and grape).

At Bluebonnet’s then-headquarters in Giddings, electric appliances could be viewed and touched, just like in a retail showroom. Bluebonnet held appliance demonstrations in small towns and communities across its service area.

The 1960s and 1970s brought the ability to save substantial time on cooking. Microwaves, Crock-Pots and Mr. Coffee — the first automatic drip machine — were unveiled and embraced by consumers. Cuisinart food processors and hot-air popcorn poppers also made kitchen time less onerous.

Again, Bluebonnet took center stage to

help consumers understand how all those new appliances could change lives. Bluebonnet hired Lavonne Morrow to demonstrate microwave cooking, and some events drew more than 100 eager learners. She shared recipes for microwave casseroles, three-minute fudge and even a tiny birthday cake baked in an ice cream cone. To consumers’ amazement, she showed how an entire meal for six people could be prepared and cooked in a microwave in just 30 to 45 minutes.

Clearly, electric appliances were changing American culture. The convenience of a microwave, washing machine or vacuum cleaner freed more time for work outside the home. Growing numbers of American women joined the workforce for a paycheck.

America turned its attention to the environment in the 1970s, as oil and gas supply crises brought long lines at the gas pumps and prompted President Jimmy Carter to ask Americans to save energy by turning thermostats to 65 or lower in the winter.

It’s no surprise that the 1980s and 1990s saw advances in energy efficiency in home appliances and a big turn toward automation. In 1992, the Environmental Protection Agency introduced the Energy Star program to promote the purchase of energy-efficient appliances.

Today’s digital age is bringing increas-

ingly “smart” electronics into the home that merge internet connectivity with phones, computers, artificial intelligence devices and appliances. Alexa, the voice-activated virtual assistant in the Amazon Echo device, was unveiled in 2016, and 100 million had been sold by the end of 2018, according to the company. A seemingly endless stream of other new devices can connect with the Echo or its top competitor, Google Home. Virtual assistants can turn on and off smart appliances and timers, stream music and read books to you, and each adds new skills regularly. A glut of smart security cameras that allow you to view the outside or inside of your home on your phone are popping up everywhere.

In the living room, consumers are making way for big-screen televisions with curved displays, screens that roll up and down and technology that illuminates every pixel in the screen. That means viewers can sit at any angle to the screen without a distorted image.

Some of today’s refrigerators have cameras inside to show whether you need to buy milk or eggs when you check from a smartphone while at the grocery store. Samsung’s \$4,100 fridge also has a computer screen on the outside door for searching recipes, displaying family photos and keeping lists and calendars. GE’s new Kitchen Hub is a smart screen on a stove ventilation hood. It

Continued from page 21

1950

Zenith develops first TV remote control, the ‘Lazy Bones,’ connected to TV by cable. Some customers complained of tripping over cable on living room floor. Similar corded remote controls came out shortly thereafter, including Emerson Model 1158, left.

1955

Kitchen appliances pop with color as General Electric introduces first rainbow hues: ‘Petal Pink, Canary Yellow, Cadet Blue, Turquoise Green and Woodtone Brown.’ Mid-century Coppertone, Avocado and Harvest Gold arrived in 1960s.



1960

Japanese inventor Kazuo Hashimoto begins U.S. sales of ‘Ansafone,’ first commercially successful telephone answering machine.

1968

Clairol’s True-to-Light Makeup Mirror allows women to put their glam on with lights simulating day, office or evening.



1970

Conair introduces popular pistol-grip hair dryer.



1972

Invention of Mr. Coffee, first in-home percolator with automatic drip process, turns homes into personal coffee shops.



1973

Home chefs slice, dice and purée food like professional prep cooks as Cuisinart unveils electric food processor.



1967

Amana unveils first countertop microwave, the Radarange, left, with \$495 price tag. Product demonstrators cook Lazy Maple bacon to entice buyers. ‘Never ever lie or exaggerate about this machine,’ team leader says. ‘You don’t have to. It’s a marvel.’



1978

Fresh popcorn spills into home kitchens when Presto and Wear-Ever introduce hot-air poppers.

controls the thermostat and lights, security cameras, and other smart appliances. Users can stream movies and music and have video chats.

Or, there is always the option to just ignore all of these chatty, mind-boggling innovations.

Today's refrigerators are a long way from the Giddings High School "home ec" classes that Shirley Hannes began teaching in 1961. She commanded four kitchen nooks filled with stoves, refrigerators, washers and dryers, all loaned by Bluebonnet. Hannes made certain her students knew how to use the latest in home appliances, some of which must have glowed in mid-century hues of Harvest Gold and Avocado.

Hannes, who now lives south of Houston in Pearland, doesn't want a virtual assistant like Alexa, but she loves the two-door refrigerator she bought in 2018 because it makes and dispenses ice.

She's not one to replace appliances just to have the newest model. "We built our house in 1976, and the stove was new then," she said. "It's still in good shape, so I'm not planning to replace it yet." ■



Women gather at an appliance showcase in the Bluebonnet region in the mid-1940s. Appliance shows like this, put on by the federal Rural Electrification Administration, drew large crowds across the country. Join us at our Annual Meeting on May 14 in Giddings to see a lineup of vintage appliances, our large appliance timeline and other nods to our 80th anniversary. The event is open to all Bluebonnet members.



1987

Bread Maker machine by Panasonic turns U.S. kitchens into corner bakery.

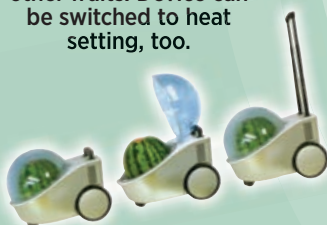
2001

Swedish company Electrolux introduces disc-shaped Trilobite, first robotic vacuum cleaner that uses sensors to find its way around room.



2010

Japanese company Joybond offers portable mini-fridge for watermelons or other fruits. Device can be switched to heat setting, too.



1992

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency introduces Energy Star program to identify and promote energy-efficient appliances.



2015

Five Elements Robotics unveils Budge, \$1,400 robotic personal assistant that can follow person and carry 50-pound load.



2016

Amazon offers Echo speaker, voice-activated virtual assistant named Alexa — an instant consumer hit. Alexa recites weather, traffic and news reports; turns on and off smart appliances and timers; tells jokes; plays music; reads books; and schedules rides. Other brands of virtual assistants soon follow.



2019

GE introduces Kitchen Hub, smart screen and virtual assistant on stove ventilation hood that controls thermostat and lights, security cameras, and other appliances. Users can stream movies and music and engage in video chats.



2019

Electronics giant LG unveils TV with flexible 65-inch screen that rolls out for viewing and rolls out of sight when not in use.

Text by Denise Gamino • Design by Joe Stafford

Texas barbecue legend remembered as 'fierce advocate' for co-op members

By Melissa Segrest

Richard "Rick" Schmidt, a Texas barbecue legend and larger-than-life member of the Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative Board of Directors for more than two decades, died at age 73 on Feb. 11, 2019. He was board chairman from 2002 to 2014 and oversaw significant modernization of the cooperative.

During that time, Bluebonnet upgraded every aspect of its business from facilities to technology, adding advanced tools in the field; building a new headquarters, substations and member service centers; upgrading the co-op's system for mapping and monitoring power outages, including a state-of-the-art control center; and more.

In 2018, Schmidt was preceded in death by his beloved wife of 43 years, Evelyn Schmidt.

"Rick had an enormous influence on Bluebonnet and its members during his 25 years on the Board of Directors," said Ben Flencher, Bluebonnet's Board chairman. "He brought a keen eye for business and a strong sense of fairness, right and wrong. He was never afraid to look you in the eye and speak his mind with total honesty. He was a true leader whose presence will be missed and can never be completely replaced."

From 1984 to 2010, Schmidt was owner of the storied Kreuz Market, a 119-year-old restaurant in Lockhart, long considered by many to be the home of some of Texas' finest barbecue. He retired after he sold the business to his son, Keith Schmidt.

Consistency and customer service were Rick Schmidt's bedrock beliefs as a businessman, community leader and member of the Bluebonnet Board. "He was slow to change, but he was all about making things more efficient and making things easier, especially for a customer," his son said. "We've had generations of families come in (to Kreuz Market) and say this is just as good as it was 20 years ago. You have to keep the soul and the spirit of the place alive, no matter what you may add or take away from it."

Rick Schmidt brought that same passion



A younger Rick Schmidt, showing off the famous barbecue at Kreuz Market on the cover of a magazine in 1994.
Texas Highways magazine photo

to his work as a Bluebonnet Board member.

"Rick was a fierce advocate for our members and strong supporter of our employees," said Matt Bentke, Bluebonnet's general manager. "One of Rick's greatest attributes was that you always knew what he was thinking and where you stood with him. We will remember his honesty, loyalty, integrity and unwavering work ethic. We faced some critical challenges during the last decade. Rick was unafraid to make the toughest decisions, which was integral to his and Bluebonnet's success during his tenure as board chairman."

Schmidt was born on Dec. 6, 1945. A Lockhart native, he graduated from Lockhart High School and, in 1968, earned a bachelor's degree in business administration from Texas Christian University, where he was a baseball scholarship recipient.

For a time, he worked as a salesman for large food distribution companies but took the reins at Kreuz Market in 1984 when his father, Edgar "Smitty" Schmidt, who had bought the business in 1948, sold it to Rick and his brother, Don.

Rick Schmidt was on the Lockhart Chamber of Commerce and was its president twice. "He always worked for the betterment

of Lockhart and its citizens," Keith Schmidt said. His stubbornness and straight talk were well-known. "He wouldn't hold back if something needed to be said, especially if he felt it was his duty. He would say it," his son said. Rick Schmidt's friends said his gruff exterior disguised a heart of gold.

Schmidt was proud of his role as a leader at Bluebonnet. "He felt that most of the members of the co-op were people like him, so the decisions he would make would be the decisions his constituents would also make," his son said. "It wasn't what was best for the (cooperative). It wasn't what was best for the Board. It was what was best for the co-op member. That's how he conducted himself at Bluebonnet, at Kreuz Market and anything else he did."

Rick and Evelyn Schmidt were active members of Ebenezer Lutheran Church in Maxwell, a small community near Lockhart. They supported the Maxwell Social Club, and after his retirement from barbecue eight years ago, they enjoyed traveling in their RV. He loved to hunt and fish as well. They were especially fond of old-style country music and Western swing dancing. In 2018, Rick Schmidt was key to bringing the Western Swing and BBQ Festival to Lockhart.

Standing at Kreuz Market near his father's favorite round table, with Rick's name emblazoned on it, Keith Schmidt said, "It always had a 'reserved' sign on it, and it's gonna stay that way." The table was adorned with flowers and photos in memory of his father.

Rick Schmidt was buried on Valentine's Day. He and Evelyn "were forever Valentines," their son said. "He had a really hard time after she passed. I have no doubt if she were still alive they'd both be here. I guess the best way you could say it was that he lost his joy. So many people have said it, and I believe it: He died of a broken heart."

After his father's death, Keith Schmidt posted a tribute on his Facebook page: "So long, Dad, we'll keep the table reserved for you and Evelyn to watch music on Sunday. I'll miss you more than anyone knows, but also know more than anyone how happy you were to see Evelyn's face in the light."

Rick Schmidt is survived by sons Keith and Leeman Schmidt, brother Don Schmidt and sister Nina Sells, a granddaughter, a great-granddaughter, and numerous other family members and friends. ■



Melissa Segrest photo

Rick Schmidt was on the Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative Board of Directors for 25 years and was board chairman for 12 years. He was a passionate advocate for co-op members. Schmidt, left, with some of his hunting dogs in a 2006 photo, and above, dancing with wife Evelyn Schmidt at the Bluebonnet Annual Meeting in 2017. She died less than a year before he did.

Sarah Beal photo

2019 GOVERNMENT-IN-ACTION YOUTH TOUR

First-hand glimpse into government

Two high school students selected for tour of D.C., \$1,000 scholarship

By Lisa Ogle

The two young women selected to represent Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative during the 2019 Government-in-Action Youth Tour have fine arts in common, and both most want to see veteran memorials in Washington, D.C., this summer.

Hailey Sherrill, a senior at Smithville High School, and Carolina Barboza, a junior at Manor New Tech High School, were selected for the honor in February. Jacob Neidig, a senior at Elgin High School, is the alternate to join the tour if Sherrill or Barboza is unable to attend.

The two participants will tour the Texas Capitol and the Bullock Texas State History Museum in Austin, then travel to Washington to visit historical sites, tour our nation's Capitol and meet a U.S. representative from Texas from June 12-21. They also each receive a \$1,000 scholarship after graduating from high school.

The two recipients and alternate were among 10 finalists who were interviewed at Bluebonnet's Headquarters on Feb. 11. Recipients were selected based on the interviews and essays in the application about their congressional representatives, public service, what they would like to see in Washington and what makes them special as a Texan.

Sherrill, 18, of Smithville is a varsity cheerleading co-captain and head captain of the color guard. She plays French horn and made 4A Texas All-State Band all four years. She hopes to attend Louisiana State University in the fall, majoring in education. After college, she would like to return home and teach music.

"Smithville teachers have molded and shaped me into the individual I am today, no matter the extra hours away from their families," she said in her application. "I am truly grateful for their impact on me today and hope to reciprocate the favor as an educator in the future."

In Washington, Sherrill looks forward to



Carolina Barboza, far left, a junior at Manor New Tech High School, and Hailey Sherrill, a senior at Smithville High School, were chosen to represent Bluebonnet at the 2019 Government-in-Action Youth Tour, which includes a trip to Washington, D.C., and a \$1,000 scholarship. Jacob Neidig, a senior at Elgin High School, center, is the alternate.

Sarah Beal photo

visiting the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

"Not only is it a sincere reminder of the great sacrifice made for our country, but it brings even more personal meaning to me as the granddaughter of a Vietnam War veteran," she said in her application. "I value the time given to me with my grandfather and am reminded every day that we are so blessed to be given life in a country free of retribution and fear of suppression."

Barboza, 16, of Austin serves as president of her school's Key Club, a student-led service program; takes an after-school class on computer coding; and is a member of Interact, a volunteering organization, through which she plans to go abroad for an academic year.

She plans to become a chemical engineer "because of the freedom it gives me," she said. "I love the creativity and creation aspect of engineering and that engineers improve on what already exists to further humanity. I want to be a part of the achievements they pursue."

Barboza said in her application that after researching our nation's capital, she is most looking forward to seeing the Korean War Veterans Memorial.

"The Korean War is not something thoroughly taught in public schools curriculum, and I think that is what makes it significant," she said. "History is about not forgetting the

past and the events that unfolded to lead to these catastrophic events that shaped our futures."

Neidig, who turns 19 this month, lives in Elgin and has played football, baseball and several other sports, and is president of his school's National Honor Society and Key Club. He serves as a volunteer trainer at the Ronald McDonald House Charities of Central Texas in Austin and teaches First Communion classes and serves as a lector at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Elgin. He plans to study economics or political science at Stanford University in California.

Sherrill and Barboza will join 156 other young people representing other Texas electric co-ops and 1,888 teens from around the country in the nation's capital, where they will see lawmakers in action; tour monuments, museums and other historical sites; and attend events hosted by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, an organization that represents more than 900 electric cooperatives.

The youth program began in 1964 and has more than 50,000 alumni, including CEOs and U.S. senators. For more information, visit bluebonnet.coop. Click on Community, then Scholarships. Look for 2020 Government-in-Action applications this fall. ■

April is Child Abuse Prevention Month

Bluebonnet is helping area organizations such as the Children's Advocacy Center and Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) of Bastrop, Lee and Fayette Counties raise awareness during Child Abuse Prevention Month.

The cooperative's member service centers in Bastrop, Brenham, Giddings, Lockhart and Manor will be illuminated with blue light at night, our service vehicles will display blue ribbons in support of this cause, and key community events and resources will be promoted on our social media channels throughout April.

Learn more about this topic at childwelfare.gov/topics/preventing.

Vote and have a chance to win great prizes!

Voting for candidates for Bluebonnet's Board of Directors is one of the advantages of being a member of an electric cooperative. At the Bluebonnet Annual Meeting on May 14, members will hear a "state of the co-op" report, learn about milestones Bluebonnet has reached and plans for the co-op's future.

If you cannot attend the Annual Meeting, you can vote by proxy and still have a chance to win prizes. Any Bluebonnet member who votes by proxy or in person at Bluebonnet's Annual Meeting will be entered in a drawing to win a 2010 Ford F-150 4x4 SuperCab XLT half-ton pickup

that is being retired from Bluebonnet's fleet. It has a 6½-foot cargo bed and about 158,000 miles.

Any member who submits a completed proxy form by mail postmarked no later than May 7 or in person at a member service center by 5:30 p.m. May 7 will be entered in a drawing for a Yeti Tundra 65 cooler, or one of five \$100 Bluebonnet bill credits. Members do not need to be present at the Annual Meeting to be entered in the drawings.*

** Bluebonnet employees, members of the Board of Directors and their spouses are ineligible to win.*

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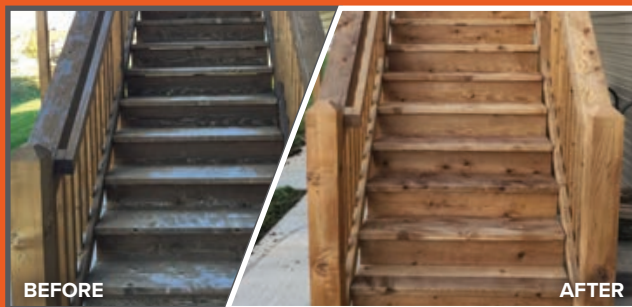


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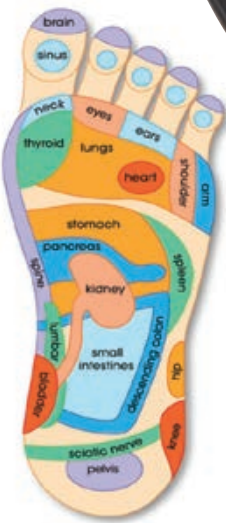
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Love From Midland

Born in Texas, silent film actress Bessie Love became a star in Hollywood

BY MARTHA DEERINGER

JUANITA HORTON, “THE PRETTIEST GIRL anyone in Midland had ever seen,” according to a 2007 article in the *Midland Reporter-Telegram*, was born in 1898 when Midland was still a barren cow town. The oil boom that would turn it into a thriving metropolis was still a few years in the future. Horton’s itinerant father moved the family from Texas to Arizona to New Mexico and finally to Los Angeles where, using the name Bessie Love, teenage Juanita would achieve stardom.

In her 1977 autobiography, *From Hollywood With Love*, Love described the poverty of her early years and the sequence of events that would gain her the attention of powerful Hollywood figures.

During a visit with the Horton family in Los Angeles, Western movie star Tom Mix suggested that Juanita should go into pictures. Her mother took this advice and hatched a plan for her daughter to wait near the entrance of famous silent film director D.W. Griffith’s studio on Sunset Boulevard in hopes she would get noticed. Instead of waiting outside, she knocked on the door, and Griffith invited her in.

Griffith asked Horton many questions. Was her family rich? Did she have stage experience? Had she studied drama? When she answered “No, sir” to each question, he inquired why she wanted to be in pictures. “Mama said I wasn’t trained to do anything,” she replied, “so there was nothing left for me but acting.” Griffith granted her an audition and a screen test, after which she was cast as an extra and paid \$2. She would continue to work as an actress for the next 60 years.



Bessie Love and Charles King in the 1929 film *The Broadway Melody*.

A Griffith associate, Frank Woods, gave her the stage name Bessie Love, claiming her real name was too long to go up in lights and no one east of the Rockies would know how to pronounce it.

In 1916, Griffith cast her in her first film, *The Flying Torpedo*, in which she played a Swedish maid. “In the early days,” Love wrote in her memoir, “movie sets were built next to each other and, since the films were silent, you might be working next to a Civil War scene while you were playing a Carmelite nun at prayers. You just ignored the noise and got on with it.”

Love made 10 films in her first year and played the leading lady opposite William S. Hart in *The Aryan* and Douglas Fairbanks in *The Good Bad Man*. A petite 5-footer with a mass of curly fair hair, Love possessed a combination of innocence and charm that drew audiences

into theaters. Her star was on the rise.

By the Great Depression, she had acted in nearly 100 films, including such classics as *Intolerance* and *The Lost World*. She made the transition to “talkies,” including 1929’s *The Broadway Melody*, for which she received an Academy Award nomination.

Love married William Ballinger Hawks in 1929 and later toured the United States in a lavishly produced variety act. During the tour, she discovered she was pregnant, but the marriage didn’t last. In 1935, when her daughter Patricia was 3, Love moved to London, returning to the states only briefly to seek a divorce.

Well into the 1980s, Bessie Love was a fixture on the stage in London and on British television. She died in London in 1986. Her star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame is a lasting testament to the little girl from Midland who became a movie star.

Martha Deeringer, a member of Heart of Texas EC, lives near McGregor.

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DIY Takeout

BOWLS BRIMMING WITH COLORFUL salads (from slaw to potato), bubbling casseroles and platters of fried chicken—foods meant to bring and share—have long been part of American culture. Golden Rice Salad, this month's retro recipe redux and a dish that appeared in the magazine in October 1968, is a perfect example. We've made the classic more contemporary with flavorful oils and vinegars and punchy additions like Dijon mustard, oil-cured olives and cornichons (feel free to use dill pickles or any pickled peppers instead). Consider this timeless preparation the next time you want to feed a crowd.

PAULA DISBROWE, FOOD EDITOR

Golden Rice Salad

- 1½ cups long-grain rice (such as Texmati)
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 2 tablespoons white wine vinegar
- 2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- ½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1 cup oil-cured olives, pitted and coarsely chopped
- 2 hard-boiled eggs, sliced
- 1½ cups thinly sliced celery
- ¼ cup chopped cornichons (or other pickles)
- ¼ cup pimiento or roasted red peppers
- 1 small onion (or 1 bunch scallions), minced
- ½ cup mayonnaise (plus more as desired for texture)
- Leaf lettuce or radicchio, for serving (optional)
- Sliced hard-boiled eggs, for garnish (optional)

1. Prepare the rice according to package directions, using water or chicken stock. Meanwhile, whisk together the olive oil, vinegar, mustard, salt and pepper in a large mixing bowl. Add the warm rice and use a rubber spatula to toss until

CONTINUED ON PAGE 36

Retro Recipes

DIY Takeout

THIS MONTH'S RECIPE CONTEST WINNER

GAIL PATTERSON | PENTEX ENERGY

Whether you use crusty rolls or an entire loaf to slice, layers of cured meats, cheese and piquant Italian flavors create a sandwich bursting with personality. Giardiniera is a vinegar-based relish made with peppers, celery, carrots, cauliflower and spices. "I make several of these at a time," Patterson says. "They last for about a week in the fridge, are best at room temp and travel well."

Pressed Italian Sandwich

GIARDINIERA

- 1 jar (10 ounces) giardiniera, drained
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- Crushed red pepper flakes, as desired for heat

FLAVORED BUTTER

- 1 jar (8 ounces) roasted red peppers (or pesto), drained
- ½ cup (1 stick) butter, softened to room temperature

SANDWICHES

- 4 ciabatta sandwich buns
 - 4 slices Genoa salami
 - 4 slices hard Italian salami
 - 8 slices pepperoni
 - 4 slices ham
 - 8 slices provolone cheese
- Olive oil

1. GIARDINIERA: Combine the giardiniera, olive oil and red pepper flakes in the bowl of a food processor and pulse until combined but still chunky. Transfer the giardiniera mixture to a bowl and set aside.

2. FLAVORED BUTTER: Add the roasted

red peppers to the food processor (no need to wash after giardiniera) and process until chopped. Transfer the peppers (or pesto) to a mixing bowl, add the softened butter and use a spatula to evenly combine.

3. SANDWICHES: To make individual sandwiches, slice each ciabatta bun in half. Spread both sides with about 1 tablespoon of the flavored butter (you will have extra). Layer half of the meat and cheese on 4 ciabatta bun halves, ending with meat. Spoon about 1 tablespoon of the giardiniera mixture onto the meat and top each sandwich with the remaining meat and cheese and another tablespoon of giardiniera.

4. Cover each sandwich with the top bun and carefully slice the sandwiches in half and then wrap tightly in plastic wrap. Place the wrapped sandwiches on a baking sheet, top them with another baking sheet and weigh it down (large cans or a cast-iron skillet work well) for at least 1 hour, or up to a day in advance. For the best flavor, allow the sandwiches to come to room temperature before serving. ▶ Serves 4–8 depending on size of sandwiches.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 35

combined. Set aside to cool briefly.

2. Add the olives, eggs, celery, cornichons, pimientos, onion and mayonnaise and toss to combine. Taste and adjust seasonings, adding more salt, pepper, vinegar or mayonnaise as desired. Serve immediately (or chill up to two days in advance) on lettuce leaves garnished with slices of hard-boiled eggs. ▶ Serves 6–8.

COOK'S TIP For a deeper golden hue, add ½ teaspoon turmeric to the dressing. Consider garnishing each serving with freshly ground black pepper and a sprinkling of smoked paprika.

This month, Food Editor **PAULA DISBROWE** offers more of her favorite DIY Takeout recipes:



Best-Ever Baked Beans With Jalapeño Bacon

Serve these rich, bacon-topped beans at backyard barbecues and picnics or tote them to school or Scout potlucks—they'll be a hit with kids and grown-ups alike.

- 10 slices thick-cut jalapeño bacon (or regular bacon), diced
- 1 large yellow onion, diced
- 1 bell pepper (any color), stemmed, seeded and chopped
- 1 jalapeño pepper, stemmed, seeded and finely chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 can (54 ounces) pork and beans
- ¼ cup ketchup
- ¼ cup molasses
- ½ cup light brown sugar
- ¼ cup cider vinegar
- 2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
- ¼ cup hot sauce

1. Cook bacon in a large, deep skillet or Dutch oven over medium heat until it's browned but still moist, then set aside to drain on a paper towel.

2. Preheat oven to 325 degrees and set rack to the lower-middle position.

3. In the same skillet, heat 2 tablespoons of the bacon grease (discard the rest) over medium heat. Add the onion, bell pepper, jalapeño and garlic and sauté 6–8 minutes, until softened.

4. Add the remaining ingredients, stirring

\$100 Recipe Contest

September's recipe contest topic is **Happy Hours**. We're kicking off fall with the best appetizers for game day, parties or family movie night. The deadline is **April 10**. Readers whose recipes are featured will receive a special *Texas Co-op Power* apron.

ENTER ONLINE at TexasCoopPower.com/contests; MAIL to 1122 Colorado St., 24th Floor, Austin, TX 78701; FAX to (512) 763-3401. Include your name, address and phone number, plus your co-op and the name of the contest you are entering.

to combine, and bring the mixture to a simmer over medium-high heat before removing from heat. Pour the beans into a baking dish and scatter the cooked bacon over the beans. Bake 2–2½ hours, until the beans have reached your desired consistency. Allow the beans to stand at least 15 minutes before serving. ▶Serves 10–12.

COOK'S TIP To feed an even larger crowd, up the amount of pork and beans to 84 ounces and make the remaining ingredients a “heaping” measurement.

Swiss Chard Slab Pie

I’ve toted this luscious, packed-with-greens pie on camping trips, taken it to potlucks, even knocked it out for weeknight dinners—happily anticipating the leftovers that are good hot or cold any time of day. The recipe is adapted from Kristin Donnelly’s excellent *Modern Potluck* (Clarkson Potter, 2016). Sprinkling the top crust with flaky salt before baking gives it a delightful salty edge.

CRUST

- 3 cups flour, plus more for dusting work surface
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 teaspoon coarsely ground black pepper
- 1¼ cups (2½ sticks) cold unsalted butter, cubed
- ¾ cup ice water

FILLING

- ½ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 large red onion, finely chopped
- 4 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
- Generous pinch red pepper flakes
- Kosher salt
- 1 tablespoon ground coriander
- 1 tablespoon ground ginger
- 3 pounds red Swiss chard, leaves roughly chopped with stems reserved and cut into ¼-inch pieces
- ½ cup dry white wine
- 3 tablespoons currants
- ¼ cup pine nuts
- ¾ cup sour cream or Greek yogurt
- Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 1 egg, beaten with 1 tablespoon water
- Flaky salt, for garnish

1. CRUST: In a food processor, pulse flour with salt and pepper. Add butter and

pulse until mixture resembles a coarse meal, with some large pieces of butter remaining. Sprinkle ice water on top and pulse just until dough comes together. Scrape onto a work surface, divide in half, and pat each half into a 6-inch square. Wrap in plastic wrap and chill for about an hour.

2. FILLING: In a large Dutch oven or pot, heat olive oil over medium-high heat. Add the onion, garlic, red pepper flakes and a pinch of salt, and cook, stirring occasionally, until the vegetables are just softened, about 5 minutes. Stir in the coriander, ginger and chard stems and cook until just softened, about 6 minutes. Stir in the wine and the currants and continue to cook until the liquid is reduced by half, about 8 minutes. Add the chard leaves in large handfuls, letting them wilt before adding more, then cook until the greens are tender and liquid has evaporated, about 5 minutes.

3. Transfer the chard mixture to a colander to cool completely and drain. When the mixture is cool, place it in a

large mixing bowl with the pine nuts and sour cream, season with salt and pepper, and use a rubber spatula to combine.

4. Heat oven to 400 degrees. Line a large rimmed baking sheet with parchment. On a lightly floured work surface, roll out one piece of dough to a 12-by-16-inch rectangle. Use a bench scraper and a rolling pin to transfer the dough to the prepared baking sheet. Spread the chard filling evenly, leaving a 1-inch border. Roll out remaining dough and drape it over the filling. Fold the rim over itself and pinch edges to seal. Cut a few slits in the top of the pie, brush with egg wash and sprinkle with flaky salt.

5. Bake the pie 50–55 minutes, until the crust is golden and cooked through. For the best slicing results, let the pie cool for at least 15 minutes before cutting and then serve it warm or at room temperature. ▶Serves 8–10.

COOK'S TIP To avoid any traces of grit in the filling, wash the red Swiss chard leaves and stems carefully.



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Sherry Zawadzki | Heart of Texas EC
Get the recipe at TexasCoopPower.com.

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Send us your best ORIGINAL holiday recipes—ones you’ve developed, not copied from a friend or found in a book or magazine. Winners will be featured in our November 2019 issue. Enter by June 10 at TexasCoopPower.com.

Go to TexasCoopPower.com for details and official rules.

TEXAS CO-OP POWER

Enter online at TexasCoopPower.com. Each entry MUST include your name, address and phone number, plus the name of your Texas electric cooperative, or it will be disqualified. Specify which category you are entering, Sweet or Savory, on each recipe. Mail entries to: *Texas Co-op Power*/Holiday Recipe Contest, 1122 Colorado St., 24th Floor, Austin, TX 78701. You can also fax entries to (512) 763-3401. Up to three total entries are allowed per co-op membership. Each should be submitted on a separate piece of paper if mailed or faxed. Mailed entries all can be sent in one envelope. No email entries will be accepted. For official rules, visit TexasCoopPower.com. **Entry deadline: June 10, 2019.**

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WEB EXTRAS ▶ See Focus on Texas on our website for more photos from readers.

◀ **DENISE CRANE**, Victoria EC: A view from a kayak in Port O'Connor.

▼ **KAY BELL**, Nueces EC: "Getting up early at Big Bend leads to beautiful sunrises. This shot was taken from Dugout Wells in Big Bend National Park."

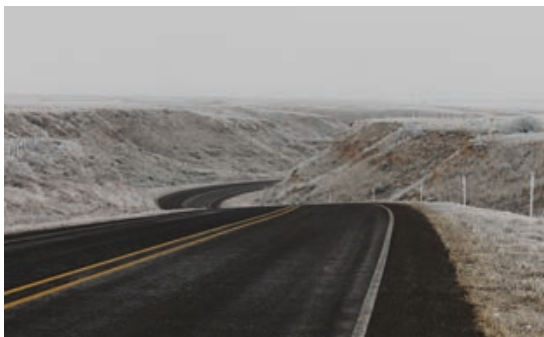


▼ **MICHAEL LANTY**, Concho Valley EC: "This old tractor is a fixture in Miles."

▶ **JONNIE ENGLAND**, Nueces EC: "The beautiful Panther Junction Road in Big Bend."



▶ **TERRI CARTER**, Rita Blanca EC: "Approaching Coldwater Draw on Highway 119 in Sherman County on a frosty winter morning."



UPCOMING CONTESTS

AUGUST	FAMILY TIES	DUE APRIL 10
SEPTEMBER	TEXAS VACATION	DUE MAY 10
OCTOBER	GIVING BACK	DUE JUNE 10

All entries must include name, address, daytime phone and co-op affiliation, plus the contest topic and a brief description of your photo.

ONLINE: Submit highest-resolution digital images at TexasCoopPower.com/contests. **MAIL:** Focus on Texas, 1122 Colorado St., 24th Floor, Austin, TX 78701. A stamped, self-addressed envelope must be included if you want your entry returned (approximately six weeks). Please do not submit irreplaceable photographs—send a copy or duplicate. We do not accept entries via email. We regret that Texas Co-op Power cannot be responsible for photos that are lost in the mail or not received by the deadline.



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Paris April 24-28
(903) 784-2501, asaarchery.com

Professional and amateur archers compete by moving from station to station in the woods along the Trail de Paris and shooting at 3D targets resembling game animals. They compete for cash prizes and signature belt buckles.

April 11

Van Alstyne [11-13] Friends of Van Alstyne Library Book Sale, (469) 855-8205, vafol.com

12

Chandler [12-14] The Passion of Christ Play, (903) 849-2379

13

Bastrop Market Days 2019, (512) 718-4781

Grand Saline Main Street Festival, (903) 962-3122, grandsalinemainstreet.com

New Berlin Community Club Craft Fair and Rummage Sale, (210) 343-9570

Palestine Neches River National Wildlife Refuge Field Day, (903) 391-2444

New Braunfels [13-14] Folk Fest, (830) 629-6504, folkfestnb.com

17

Levelland [17-20] Little Dribblers 50th Anniversary Tournament, (806) 894-3157, levelland.com

18

The Colony Spring Eggstravaganza, (972) 625-1106, thecolonytx.gov

20

Kerrville Easterfest & Cookoff, (830) 896-1155, kerrvilletx.com



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21

Fort Davis Easter Sunday Egg Hunt & Picnic in the Park, (432) 426-3015, fortdavis.com

25

Linden [25-27] Wildflower Trails of Texas Festival, (903) 756-7502, lindenwildflowertrails.net

26

Grand Prairie [26-28] Main Street Fest, (972) 237-8100, mainstreetfest.com

27

Athens Henderson County Master Gardener Plant Sale, (903) 675-6130, txmg.org/hendersonmg

Bluff Dale Discover Bluff Dale, (817) 946-0141

Dallas Day to Play, (214) 823-4500, familygateway.org/dtp

Fort Worth Hops and Props Festival, (855) 733-8627, fortworthaviationmuseum.com

Lakehills Medina Lake VFD BBQ and Auction Fundraiser, (830) 751-2525, medinalakevfd.com

Weches Mission Tejas State Park Annual Folk Festival, (936) 687-2394



April 21
Fort Davis
Easter Sunday
Egg Hunt & Picnic

Buda [27-28] Buda Country Fair and Wiener Dog Races, (512) 914-2858, budalions.com

28

Montgomery Ride for Kids, (936) 582-1200

30

Tyler East Texas Giving Day, (903) 533-0208, easttexasgivingday.org

May

2

Stonewall [2-4] Rockets 2019, (830) 997-3567, systemsgo.org

3

Fort McKavett [3-4] West Texas Heritage Days, (325) 396-2358, visitfortmckavett.com

Seguin [3-4] Yellow Rose Fiber Producers Fiesta, (830) 433-5078, yellowrosefiberproducers.com

4

New Ulm Honey/Bee Jubilee, (979) 992-3570, newulmtexas.com

Stephenville Cowboy Capital MS Trail Ride, (254) 592-1895, ccmstrailride.com

Goliad [4-5] Cinco de Mayo Celebration, (361) 645-3752

Submit Your Event!

We pick events for the magazine directly from TexasCoopPower.com. Submit your event online for June by April 10, and it just might be featured in this calendar.

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Bible-Powered Flight

The Ezekiel Airship may have made man's first flight in 1902 near Pittsburg

CHET GARNER shares his Texplorations as the host of *The Daytripper* on PBS.

TEXAS IS NO STRANGER TO TALL TALES —whether it's Pecos Bill riding cyclones in the desert or sightings of a familiar ape-man in the East Texas pines. Some of these stories were clearly created for the campfire, while others are so crazy they just might be true. The story of the Ezekiel Airship is one of the latter.

Even though Ohio and North Carolina bicker over who can claim the Wright brothers and their legendary first flight in 1903, it may be that Texas beat them both.

On a cold day in December, I walked into the **Northeast Texas Rural Heritage Center** in Pittsburg, not knowing what to expect. Of course, I found the typical collection of antique farming equipment and old photographs. But what I didn't expect was a full-sized aircraft hanging from the ceiling. It is a replica of the Ezekiel Airship, which local legend claims was the first aircraft in the world to carry a human into flight. But how could this be? I had never even heard of it, much less heard of the Baptist preacher named Burrell Cannon who built it. And so my education began.

Cannon, also a part-time mechanic, moved to Texas in the late 1800s. Inspired by a passage from Old Testament prophet Ezekiel about flying creatures and wheels within wheels, Cannon set out to design an aircraft. Given his solid reputation as a talented mechanic, and no doubt his charisma and salesmanship, Cannon was able to raise \$20,000 to fund his newly created Ezekiel Airship Manufacturing Company.



Within a few months, Cannon had finished his contraption, which donned a huge fabric canopy and eight wheels. If all worked as planned, a small gasoline engine would turn the wheels, which would rotate connected paddles and thereby push air into the canopy and lift the pilot off the ground.

As the story goes, one afternoon in 1902, two shop employees were testing the aircraft when the unthinkable happened: It flew! The airship carried unsuspecting pilot Gus Stamps about 160 feet at an altitude of 10 to 15 feet. Fearing the machine was about to crash, the pilot shut off the engine, cleared a fence and landed safely in a nearby field.

The event was allegedly witnessed only by the shop workers and a couple of children who happened to be walking by. Not even Cannon saw the flight, as he was busy preaching at a local church. To keep the developments secret until the proper time, nobody spoke publicly of the flight. No photographs were taken and no newspaper stories were written.

Cannon's grand idea was to transport the airship to the 1904 World's Fair in

Chet Garner ponders a flight in the 1902 Ezekiel Airship.

St. Louis. However, while the craft sat on a railcar near Texarkana, a thunderous storm passed through and laid the airship to waste.

Since that series of events, the debate has raged on. The young children who witnessed the flight eventually became old and, until their passing, never ceased sharing the story of how they saw the great airship fly. Cannon did attempt to rebuild the machine, but in 1913, his second model crashed into a utility pole and that was the end.

Is it true? Well, you know Texans never let the facts get in the way of a good story. However, if you ask the locals whether or not the airship flew on that eventful day in 1902, they'll tell you that "if grandma said it flew, then it definitely flew!" And that's good enough for me. Because if you can't trust grandma, who can you trust?

 **WEB EXTRAS** ▶ Read this story on our website to see Chet's video of his visit to Pittsburg.



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