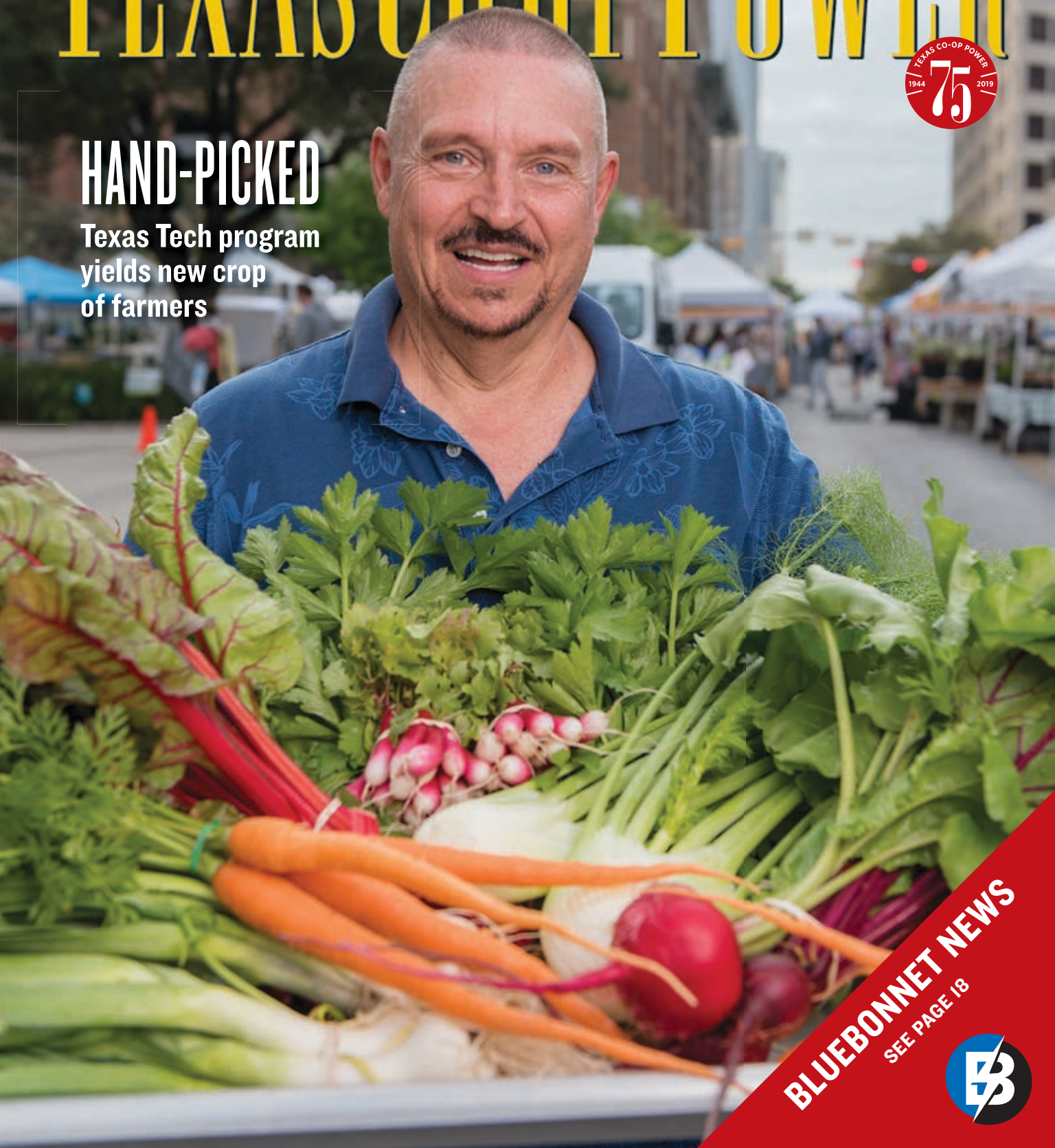


TEXAS CO-OP POWER



HAND-PICKED

Texas Tech program yields new crop of farmers



BLUEBONNET NEWS
SEE PAGE 18





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A class in a Texas Tech vineyard weighs pruned clippings.

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ON THE COVER *Richard Ney, owner of Texas Food Ranch in Fredonia, at a farmers market in downtown Austin.* Photo by Wyatt McSpadden

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Pig Rescues

These people are doing a wonderful thing. They spend their time rescuing unwanted piggies and giving them a safe home [*This Little Piggy*, May 2019].
KAREN SUSIE GILCREASE | VIA FACEBOOK

Pot-bellied pigs are often given up or abandoned in the first months of ownership. It's essential to thoroughly research any pet/animal before one gets it and not base it on what's trendy.

SUE LATTERELL-ALLEN | VIA FACEBOOK

Hike to the Desk

On Google Street View, you can take a virtual hike up to the teacher's desk referred to in Chet Garner's *Higher Education* [May 2019], thanks to some kind (young and healthy) soul who carried a 360-degree camera while hiking up to the desk. A pretty view, volcanic rocks, cacti and even some notebooks in the desk drawers are visible. To see the desk, search "30.370752, -103.644667" in Google Maps and drag the Street View icon onto the map.

Pardon me, while I catch my virtual breath after such a strenuous hike.

KEN KONVICKA | GRAHAM UNITED COOPERATIVE SERVICES

Tumbleweed Memory

The article about tumbleweeds [*Russian Interference*, May 2019] brought to mind an incident concerning a dear departed friend, Dana Dickey. In 1984, she picked up a brand-new Buick Riviera convertible in Lubbock and immediately started off to Midland for sales calls. En route, she was unable to

Life With Pet Pigs

I was given my first little pig for my 40th birthday, some 40 years ago [*This Little Piggy*, May 2019]. A friend took me to see the litter, and I chose the runt. He was wild as a deer but gentled down with his first belly rub. After he moved into my barn and my heart, I went on to rescue more.

Over the last 40 years, I have been appalled at the greed surrounding these wonderful creatures and the lies told. I love my pigs and have homes for them, assuming they outlive me, but I know that they aren't suitable pets for everyone.

NANCI FALLEY | LOCKHART | BLUEBONNET EC



avoid a very large tumbleweed.

She stopped the car to check for damage and found the huge plant had torn off the radio antenna and severely scraped the pristine maroon finish of the Buick. She described in vivid detail how she, on the shoulder of the highway, cursed and cried and stomped on the offending tumbleweed until it was a fine powder.

Since that day, when I see a tumbleweed, I think of Dana.

RJ BROSELOW | SOUTHLAND LYNTGAR EC



Wide-Open Secret

Shhhh...don't tell everyone! [*Wide-Open Spaces*, April 2019]
CHERYL COOPER COTTON | VIA FACEBOOK

First-Class Cookies

You published a recipe for Brown Butter Oatmeal Raisin Cookies in September 2018. I tore the page out to try it, but then wadded it up and pitched it due to a sad review/letter. But before the garbage went out, another review came through praising it.

Oh, the indecision. I dug the recipe out and tried it. This is a devastating cookie! No one can get enough of them. They are absolutely first class.

MIKE OTTEN | CEDAR PARK PEDERNALES EC

Dance Hall Days

It was most refreshing to read about the dance halls of my

time—I am 88 [*Hail the Halls*, February 2019]. I used to go to Appelt's Hill Hall, Recreation Hall and Wied Hall in and around Hallettsville. The Bill Mraz Hall in Houston was the best of all. I met my husband during intermission.

RITA CEJKA WACHEL | HALLETTSVILLE

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   Texas Co-op Power

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HAPPENINGS

Celebrate Littlefield

Littlefield's annual festival was developed by its chamber of commerce as a way to celebrate the community's centennial in 2013. The town began as a settlement in 1913, when it had a station on the railroad that became the Panhandle and Santa Fe Railway.

Today, Littlefield, home to Lamb County Electric Cooperative, is in the heart of the largest cotton-producing region in the world, the South Plains of Texas. **CELEBRATE LITTLEFIELD, JULY 19-20**, features live music, a sanctioned barbecue cook-off, parade, and food and merchandise vendors.

INFO ▶ (806) 385-5331

CO-OP PEOPLE

FROM INTERN TO TOP JOB

Alan Lesley grew up in Downing, northeast of Brownwood, in the 1980s, planning to become a peanut farmer like his father. He went to Tarleton State University and studied agricultural business.

Lesley spent his final semester, in the fall of 1997, as an intern in the member services department at Comanche Electric Cooperative.

It changed his life. Comanche hired Lesley, who became general manager in 2009. "I think the internship was a step in the right direction," he says. Words of wisdom for today's interns as we mark National Intern Day on July 25.



◀ LOOKING BACK AT COMMERCE THIS MONTH



SINCE 1944, the year *Texas Co-op Power* debuted, the Texas economy has flourished. Sure, Texas produces oil, but we also are major players in computers, coolers and hair care products.

1940s



1945 Academy Tire Shop in San Antonio changes its name to Academy Super Surplus. Today, Academy Sports and Outdoors has more than 250 stores in 16 states.

1946 Texas-based Tote'm Stores changes its name to 7-Eleven to reflect newly extended hours—7 a.m.-11 p.m. seven days a week.

1950s



1950 A hamburger stand named Whataburger opens in Corpus Christi, the first of what has grown into a chain of more than 800 restaurants.

1951 A 55-acre site in Hurst, near Fort Worth, is selected for Bell Aircraft Corporation's helicopter division, Bell Helicopter.

1954 James Avery starts his jewelry business in a two-car garage in Kerrville. There are now 86 stores in five states.

1960s

1963 Mary Kay Ash, born in Hot Wells, launches her business, now called Mary Kay Cosmetics, in Dallas.



1965 The Astrodome debuts as the first domed stadium ever built.

1965 NorthPark Center in Dallas opens as the largest shopping mall in the country.

Giants in Their Community

DONNA STOTTLEMYER has always had a soft spot for animals. But the longtime Farmers Electric Cooperative employee's goodwill extends to humans, too. Since 2015, she has led the Rockwall/Royse City chapter of Love on a Leash, a nonprofit that brings free pet therapy services to people.

Stottlemeyer coordinates visits to hospice centers and assisted living facilities and, along with other volunteers, deploys the

POWER OF OUR PEOPLE recognizes co-op members who improve their community's quality of life. Nominate someone by emailing people@texascooppower.com.

organization's 16 trained, certified canines to lift moods and soothe souls. One hospice patient who often experienced agitation would calm as soon as the therapy team

entered her room. "She would chat with us, and she had a beautiful smile ... and she would pet the dog," Stottlemeyer said.

Odin, Stottlemeyer's 175-pound Irish wolfhound, has brightened spirits at a children's bereavement program in Rockwall, northeast of Dallas, and encourages a love of books as a reading education assistance dog at local libraries. Odin and other dogs serve as nonjudgmental listeners for children to read to, building their confidence and skills.



Odin listens patiently and accepts hugs with equal aplomb, according to Stottlemeyer, who described him as a "sweet and gentle giant."

Paxdin Rees reads to Odin at the Rockwall County Library.

His handler has a heart for service to match.

INFO ▶ loveonaleash.org

LOOKING BACK AT RURAL LIFE NEXT MONTH ▶

1970s

1972 Half Price Books launches as a secondhand bookshop in an old laundromat in Dallas.

1973 The first Michaels store opens, at Northtown Mall in Dallas.

1973 USA Unilever unveils its new headquarters in San Antonio. The main building is three-fourths of a mile long.

1978 Felix Stehling founds Taco Cabana in San Antonio.



1980s

1980 John Paul DeJoria of Austin and Paul Mitchell launch hair care empire John Paul Mitchell Systems.

1984 As a pre-med freshman at the University of Texas at Austin, Michael Dell starts his computer business, then called PCs Unlimited.

1986 Oil prices plunge by two-thirds, putting 50,000 Texans out of work within a year.



1990s

1997 Bert "Tito" Beveridge of San Antonio creates Tito's Vodka.

1997 Alamo Drafthouse Cinema opens its first theater, in Austin. Twenty-five cities, from New York to San Francisco, now have an Alamo.

1999 The Texas Department of Agriculture begins its Go Texan campaign to promote Texas business and agriculture.



2000s

2001 Texas becomes the top exporting state in the U.S.—a position it has held ever since (\$264.1 billion in 2017).

2006 Yeti is founded in Dripping Springs, west of Austin.

2017 Amazon buys Austin-based Whole Foods for \$13.7 billion.

2018 Apple announces plans to build a new \$1 billion campus in Austin, where it could eventually employ 15,000 people.



NATIVE SOIL



I grew up in Texas, but I've now spent more than half my life away from my home state. When people ask me where I'm from, I don't say New York, where I work, or New Jersey, where I've lived for the past 18 years. I haven't lived in Galveston since 1975, but when asked, that's where I say I'm from: Proudly born on the island—BOI.

But work and life take us places, and journalism moved me to jobs in New York and Washington, D.C. I'm not complaining. These days, I work for *The New York Times*, happily. But I'll never not be a Texan and miss home. I've wanted my own kids to have a sense of belonging to the Lone Star State, from the time of their births onward.

And that's how a bag of dirt became a part of our lives and of the lives of several of our friends.

When my wife, Jeanne, was pregnant with our first child, in 1987, of course we couldn't fly to Texas for the delivery. After

thinking about it, I came up with a plan: Get some dirt from Texas to put under the delivery table.

That might sound crazy—and maybe it is—but it's not new, or unique to Texans. I first heard of it during a study abroad program in Siena, Italy, in the 1970s. The Sieneese have fierce loyalty to their neighborhoods, or *contrade*. Since there was, historically, only one hospital per *contrada*, people from the others would bring some dirt from their own neighborhood into the delivery room for births.

I'd loved that part of Sieneese life, along with the excellent espresso and gelato, and so I started planning for a Texan delivery, *contrada* style. I gathered dirt from various parts of the state, including Galveston. A friend also sent some—he said he chipped a piece off the Alamo, too, but I don't believe him. The resulting mixture fit neatly into a baggie.

When I asked the doctor about bringing it into the hospital,



BY JOHN SCHWARTZ

How a simple bag of Texas dirt connects distant newborns to a beloved land

she was, luckily enough, charmed. She's Italian. She said it would be fine so long as it was in a sterile container and under the delivery table.

Unfortunately, that baby, Elizabeth, was born without the benefit of the dirt because she was delivered in an emergency procedure, and I was stuck in traffic trying to get to the hospital. The dirt was the least of our worries, but it all turned out OK: Elizabeth is 31 now, with a daughter of her own—who was born in Texas! So something must have worked.

Being born over a baggie confers no official status, of course. I was, however, able to get a friendly member of the Texas Senate to pass a resolution that mentioned the dirt and declared Elizabeth “a child of the Lone Star State.” (The resolution did not, alas, declare her eligible for in-state tuition.) And I held on to the bag, which was present for the births of our second and third children, born in 1990 and 1996, in New York and Maryland.

They got resolutions, too. Resolutions are fairly easy to get when your father is the late A.R. “Babe” Schwartz, a former member of the Texas Senate.

That much-traveled bag of dirt has taken on a life of its own. My friends Jay and Alice had their first child at St. Vincent's hospital in New York City. Jay, born in El Paso, called the night of the delivery and asked if I could bring it to him. I raced downtown. He stepped out of the delivery room to meet me in a hospital hallway. I tossed the bag. He snapped it out of the air and ran back to the delivery room.

St. Vincent's is gone now. Jay and Alice are back in Texas, and their daughter, Lily, is going strong.

The bag of dirt has also been pressed into service within the newsroom of *The New York Times*. Last October, *Times* metro reporter Emma Fitzsimmons borrowed the bag for the birth of her first child, Hudson. Her dad wrapped the bag in a little Texas flag and, she tells me, “touched the flag to his cute little baby toes within a few hours of his birth so that he would step foot on Texas soil before any other.” More recently, the dirt made its way into the hospital room of *Times* business reporter Amy Chozick, a San Antonio rose, to help Texanize the birth of Cormac Aidan Ennis.

I held on to the Texas flag wrapper that Emma's dad provided, so the dirt looks classier now. After all, there are worse ways to start out in life than with this slightly silly but meaningful ritual.

John Schwartz is a science writer for *The New York Times*.



BY SHERYL SMITH-RODGERS | PHOTOS BY WYATT MCSPADDEN



Eric Hequet grew up eating fresh-picked tomatoes bought at farmers markets near his home in Paris, France. To this day, he can still taste their juicy goodness, topped with a drizzle of olive oil and a dab of salt. Fast forward to where he lives now, and shopping for vegetables at big-box grocers makes him grimace.

“Many tomatoes today don’t have a true tomato flavor,” says Hequet, chairman of the plant and soil science department at Texas Tech University in Lubbock. “They’re round and red like tomatoes, but they’re tasteless because they’ve been bred to be hamburger-



TEXAS TECH PROGRAM PUTS STUDENTS ON A PATH TO FARM-TO-TABLE CAREERS

friendly. That means they have a long shelf life and very little juice so they won’t get a bun wet. Unfortunately, fruits and vegetables with little to no taste are common in the marketplace.”

To change that, Hequet, an award-winning researcher in cotton genetics, led efforts to establish a new undergraduate degree specialization at Texas Tech for 2018. The new program allows students to focus on local food and wine production systems.

Texas Tech University’s local food and wine production program reflects increasing demand for regionally grown foods produced sustainably by small-scale farms.

This study concentration, the first of its kind in Texas,

will prepare students for farm-to-table careers, such as an urban farmer, orchard manager, crop consultant, winery cellar master, or fruit and vegetable marketing specialist.

Such forward thinking has kept Texas Tech at the cutting edge of ag education. In 2010, motivated by the rapidly growing wine industry in Texas, the university established the state’s first viticulture and enology degree program. The new local food and wine production program is a response to an increasing demand for fruits, vegetables and other edibles produced by small farms using earth-friendly practices. According to one report published by Packaged Facts, a source of market research for the food industry, local foods generated \$11.7 billion in sales in 2014 and are predicted to reach \$20.2 billion this year.

What makes a food “local”? It depends on whom you ask. “Locavores,” a term coined in 2005, encourage people to eat food



The business of local production IS NOT JUST ABOUT GROWING CROPS BUT WORKING WITH WINERIES AND RESTAURANTS TO ENHANCE THEIR CUSTOMERS' EXPERIENCE WITH THE BEST LOCAL PRODUCTS.

grown within 100 miles of home. But under the 2008 Farm Act, a product may be considered local if it's shipped within the same state or less than 400 miles from its origin. Consumers want more.

But given food producers' thinning ranks, who will produce that local food? In the U.S., more than 31% of farm operators were 65 or older in 2012, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Texas Tech University officials hope that an ag degree with a focus on small-scale farming will entice more young people into the field.

"Cotton production is very important around Lubbock," explains Hequet, who researched cotton fiber technology in Africa and France before joining Texas Tech in 1997. "However, a young person lacking an ag background or family in the business can't spend millions of dollars to get started in growing cotton. It's impossible.

"However," he adds, "they could buy a few acres and grow high-quality vegetables for sale to restaurants and high-end stores in the city."

Hequet stresses the importance of introducing city kids—not just the sons and daughters of row-crop producers—to agriculture. He suggests that growing fruits and vegetables to feed local markets is more appealing and more marketable, because of the growing urban agriculture trend.

HILL COUNTRY CAMPUS

The local food and wine production program, which kicked off in fall 2018, enrolls students both in Lubbock and at Hill Country University Center in Fredericksburg. Texas Tech partners with several Central Texas colleges so students can seamlessly transfer credits. Ed Hellman, a viticulture and enology professor at Texas Tech since 2000 and member of Central Texas Electric Cooperative, moved from Lubbock to Fredericksburg to oversee the program, which could expand to encompass animal products.

"Our program is unique in that we include wine because it is such an important component of the farm-to-table movement," Hellman says. "The local wine and food connection is really strong, especially here in the Hill Country. Human connection is another driving force. It's reassuring to people to know that their food was grown or made with care by someone local they can talk to."

Under Tech's new program, coursework focuses on the sustainable production of fruits and vegetables and introduces students to wine science, grape growing, wine marketing and hospitality management.

"The business of local production is not just about growing crops but working with wineries and restau-

Dabs and John Hollimon, who own 1851 Vineyards near Fredericksburg, earned viticulture and winemaking certificates through Texas Tech.



Above: Instructor Kirk Williams shows how to make a final pruning cut at a Texas Tech vineyard. Right and below: Richard Ney, front, and Alik Hovhannisyanyan of Texas Food Ranch near Fredonia sell their produce 100 miles away, at the Sustainable Food Center's farmers market in downtown Austin.



program teaches students, and Ney underscores the importance of the small producer. “People want to know their farmer,” Ney says, “so they know the vegetables are not pumped full of chemicals.”

MOVE OVER, PEACHES

Two decades ago, tourists flocked to Fredericksburg for peaches, not wine. Back then, only four wineries and one wine tour company operated in the area. Today, Hill Country wine tourism is booming, and the area around Fredericksburg includes more than 50 wineries and 18 tour companies.

rants to enhance their customers’ experience with the best local products,” Hellman notes. He explains that the program emphasizes sustainable practices, which use products and methods that are considered to be safer for the environment but still economically feasible.

Nelson Avila, a Lufkin native who completed most of his general education classes at Austin Community College, chose to specialize in Tech’s program. At 43, he’s working toward earning a Bachelor of Science degree because he wants to make a difference.

“We’re running out of land because it’s being developed or overtilled,” says Avila, who paints houses in Austin to help pay his family’s bills. “The world is growing, and people need to eat. I want to grow sustainable crops on a small farm and teach my kids how to care for the land.”

Central Texas EC member Richard Ney and his partner grow a selection of vegetables, fruits and berries on the Texas Food Ranch, their property near Fredonia, 100 miles west of Austin. They practice what the Texas Tech



“Peaches are still important, and they still are a driver in the local farming and agritourism industry, but vineyards and wineries are now leading through sheer numbers,” says Jim Kamas, associate professor and extension specialist with Texas A&M AgriLife in Fredericksburg. “With that, peach grower demographics are changing. They’re getting older, and they’re wanting to grow fruit crops on a smaller scale that emphasize quality over quantity.”

Toward that goal, Kamas, a member of Pedernales Electric Cooperative, evaluates pears, figs, raspberries, blackberries and pomegranates at the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Viticulture and Fruit Lab near Gillespie County Airport. He also helps small producers identify varieties of specialty fruit crops uniquely suited for their local markets.

ALTERNATE SCHOOLING

Food producers and people wanting a career change can get a boost from professional certificate programs earned through Texas Tech. The two-year viticulture certificate program, which started in 2008, has graduated 177 students, many of whom have started their own vineyards and wineries. Since 2014, the two-year Texas winemaking certificate program has awarded 53 professional certificates.

In the near future, the school plans to offer a small-scale farming course on sustainably producing fruits and vegetables for local markets. All certificate programs are a mixture of online classes and hands-on sessions in Fredericksburg and Lubbock. For example, viticulture students plant and propagate grapevines at the on-site vineyard at the

WEB EXTRAS

▶ Read this story on our website for more about the small producer program and farmers markets.

Hill Country University Center.

“For doctors, lawyers, engineers and other people who don’t want to go back to college, our continuing ed programs allow them to get up to speed,” Hellman says. “Many of our students want to work at a winery, but they don’t want a college education. This is a way for them to get an education without the full commitment and cost.”

Dabs and John Hollimon, who own 1851 Vineyards, south of Fredericksburg, respectively earned a winemaking and viticulture certificate. With help from their grown children, they resurrected a vineyard that Dabs inherited. In 2013, they planted 600 grapevines followed by 5,000 more the next year. Five years later, their medium-sized winery has an annual capacity of 10,000 cases of bottled wine.

“Our 2016 Estate Tannat was a double gold winner in the 2019 San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition,” says Dabs, a retired schoolteacher and member of Central Texas EC. “That’s a lot of validation for what we’re doing with our grapes and winemaking. We couldn’t make the quality wines that we do if we hadn’t taken the Texas Tech courses.”

Their 1851 Vineyards label is among more than 25 Texas wine-makers carried at the Cabernet Grill in Fredericksburg. Since 2006, chef Ross Burtwell has offered a Texas-only wine list, which he combines with locally sourced ingredients to create what he calls his Texas Hill Country cuisine.

“As they say, what grows together goes together,” says Burtwell, a member of Central Texas EC. “It’s fantastic what Texas Tech is doing. We’re facing a labor shortage, and to be able to hire passionate people who are knowledgeable about local food production will be great for our industry.”

Sheryl Smith-Rodgers, a member of Pedernales EC, lives in Blanco.

Fennel and beets for sale at the Sustainable Food Center’s farmers market in downtown Austin.



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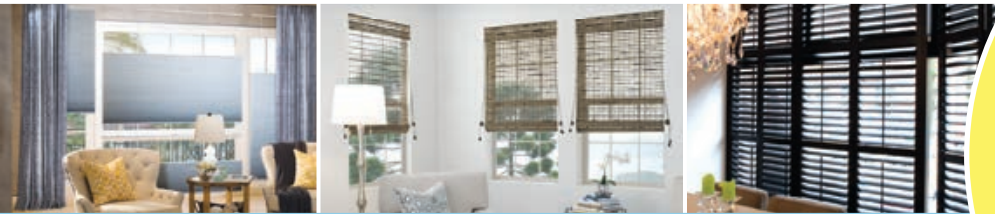
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WHERE THE WILD THINGS ARE

At its new location near Elgin, Austin Wildlife Rescue will help injured, ill or orphaned creatures — great and small — at a rate of about 6,600 a year

RESCUED

Austin Wildlife Rescue

PHONE: 512-472-9453
(rescue hotline and inquiries)

HOURS: Every day, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.,
both locations

MAIN ANIMAL INTAKE CENTER:
5401 E. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Austin, TX 78721

NEW REHABILITATION CENTER:
111 Elbow Bend
Elgin, TX 78621

MAILING ADDRESS:
P.O. Box 302695
Austin, TX 78703

WEBSITE: austinwildliferescue.org

Story by Denise Gamino
Photos by Sarah Beal

Less than two weeks after an area-wide wildlife rehabilitation center opened a new state-of-the-art headquarters in Bastrop County, someone brought in a majestic symbol of America: a bald eagle. It was injured and underweight.

X-rays taken at the spacious Austin Wildlife Rescue facility outside Elgin in April showed a BB pellet lodged in the eagle's right wing. Veterinarian Susan Skyler's exam found the adult male eagle was suffering from parasites and mites. Its wing wound was old and minor, but shooting a bald eagle is a federal offense punishable by up to

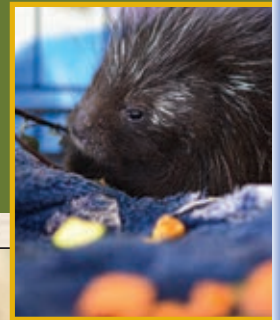
\$250,000 in fines or two years in prison.

"It's very frustrating," said Derek Rennspies, the Milam County game warden who rescued the eagle from a creek bed near the small town of Buckholts after a landowner found it. "The (BB) wound was so old, there were really no leads to go on. Bald eagles travel so much, there was really no way to tell where that eagle came from."

The game warden is just one of thousands of public workers and private citizens who contact Austin Wildlife Rescue for help in saving injured, ill or orphaned animals. The nonprofit runs a widespread operation that expects to aid 6,600 animals this year — an average of 18 a day — at its new Bastrop County headquarters. (Austin Wildlife Rescue has turned its former animal rehab center in east Austin into its main animal intake center. Every evening, volunteers drive that day's newly arrived animals to the far roomier Bastrop County rehab center.)

Austin Wildlife Rescue is not a 24-hour operation. But "they are always willing to come out and meet me when I'm in a bind,"

Continued on page 20



Hayley Hudnall, Austin Wildlife Rescue's executive director, right, with a 1-month-old raccoon after feeding time. Above, left to right:

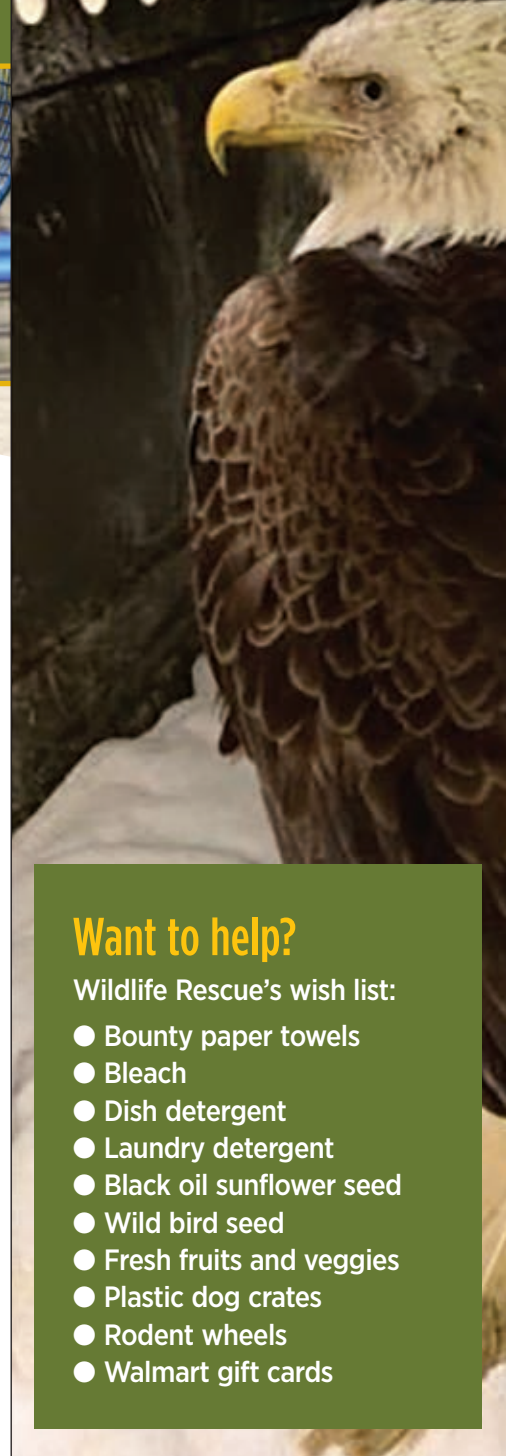
- A great horned owl recovers from surgery due to neck abrasions.
- A yarn nest for sparrows only a week old.
- A 1-week-old fawn with its trademark big glistening eyes.
- A cluster of tiny days-old squirrels.
- A North American racer snake, kept in a tight hold.
- A baby porcupine, also known as a porcupette, that was brought to the Bastrop County center from Buda, where it was found wandering around a construction site.



What to do if you find a babe in the woods

If you spot a very young animal on the ground, Austin Wildlife Rescue workers advise that you first:

- 1) Take photos.
- 2) Check around the location to see if you can find a nest or an anxious mom.
- 3) Call the center and send photos before you touch the animal. The goal is to avoid separating the babies from their mothers.



Continued from page 18

the game warden said. “Every time I call them, they help me.”

Austin Wildlife Rescue helps wild creatures great and small — from bobcats and deer to blink-and-you’ll-miss-them hummingbirds, baby turtles no bigger than silver dollars, newborn squirrels that haven’t opened their eyes, wounded beavers, and even the occasional porcupine or skunk. “You never know what’s coming in,” said Hayley Hudnall, the organization’s executive director.

Austin Wildlife Rescue is the oldest and largest wild animal rehabilitation center in the booming Austin region. It began in 1977 as a shoestring volunteer hotline. Now it has spread its own wings after 15 years of saving money in a building fund. It had outgrown its center in a former three-bedroom house in east Austin. So in 2014, it used donations to buy 6.7 acres about 14 miles south of Elgin to build a large, modern rehabilitation facility.

“It’s a dream we’ve had for so long,” Hudnall said.

The new, \$655,000 center has a 7,200-square-foot main building, half of which is temperature-controlled with central air and heat. Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative provides the electricity. For the first time, the center has a surgery suite for volunteer veterinarians, a food preparation area, a quarantine space for contagious animals and individual rooms for each type of animal. Outdoors are a tall, 100-foot raptor flight cage, roomy deer pens, and cages for small mammals like opossums, foxes and skunks. Foundation grants helped pay for cages.

The mission of the wildlife center is rescue, rehabilitate and release. Volunteers recall the day a few years ago when a Ford pickup collided with a low-flying red-tailed hawk and the raptor got stuck in the truck’s grille. The driver immediately diverted to Austin Wildlife Rescue’s intake center in Austin with the entangled bird of prey. The wildlife staff freed the hawk and a volunteer veterinarian set its wing. After the hawk healed, it was re-

leased to the open skies.

On any given day, the animals at the rehab center may include a fawn covered in fire ant bites, a toad stuck in a sewer cover hole or a snake that swallowed a golf ball. Even local animal control workers stop by to drop off injured wild animals such as raccoons. Those workers alone bring in 500 to 600 wild animals a year.

The public can bring injured wild animals to the new Bastrop County facility even though Austin Wildlife Rescue’s main animal intake center remains in Austin. Both locations are open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., seven days a week.

“I don’t ever want to be a center that turns animals away simply because we’re full,” Hudnall said. “We’ll never turn them away. Where would they have gone if we didn’t take them?”

Hudnall, who earned a master’s degree in wildlife ecology from Texas State University, spends part of her time educating the public about why wild animals are worth saving. “We try to tell people cool facts and reasons why it’s important, and how we can co-exist with them,” she said.

Wild animals “were here before we were,” she said. “We moved into their backyard, not the other way around, where they came into our house. Really, we came into theirs.”

“There are so many people who want to know, ‘Why do you need another raccoon?’ or ‘Why do you need to save another opossum?’ We start out by explaining, ‘Well, do

Continued on page 20C

Want to help?

Wildlife Rescue’s wish list:

- Bounty paper towels
- Bleach
- Dish detergent
- Laundry detergent
- Black oil sunflower seed
- Wild bird seed
- Fresh fruits and veggies
- Plastic dog crates
- Rodent wheels
- Walmart gift cards

Courtney Antonucci, at right, an animal care technician at the new Bastrop County rescue center, marks labels for syringes of formula for the next shift of workers who will feed the animals. Above, from left, a rescued squirrel, a young opossum, a bald eagle, a baby skunk and a 1-month-old gray fox.





Wildlife rescue by the numbers

EVERY 20 MINUTES

How often baby songbirds must be fed, from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m.

3 TIMES A DAY

How often pigeons and doves are fed because they store food in a muscular pouch before digestion.

EVERY 4 HOURS

How often a baby squirrel must be fed.

\$300

Cost to rehabilitate a baby raccoon for 6 months.

14

Daily laundry loads.

\$20,000

Annual cost of formula for baby squirrels, deer, opossums, bunnies, raccoons and other small mammals.

\$200

Weekly grocery bill for the rescued animals

\$5,000

Cost of each new animal cage at the Bastrop County rehab center.



Eagle photos courtesy of Austin Wildlife Rescue



One of the first animals to arrive at the new rescue center in Bastrop County was a bald eagle that had been shot with a BB pellet. The eagle was sent to a raptor rehabilitator in East Texas because the facility's raptor cage was not yet finished. The eagle will be released where it was found.

g Blvd., Austin, TX 78721

Fun facts

● In 2017, Austin Wildlife Rescue took in 7,700 animals, a record-breaking number prompted by Hurricane Harvey and a mild winter. The center received 400 animals in one week, including 250 squirrels. A rescue group from Amarillo helped out by taking 40 of those squirrels.

● Baby skunks don't spray humans, and most adult skunks spray only as a last resort to protect themselves. Skunks pounce with their front feet as a warning before they spray. However, the Austin Wildlife Rescue crew gets sprayed when releasing a skunk to the wild.

● Porcupines are not as aggressive as people think. But wildlife rescue workers must wear thick gloves and drape a towel around porcupines when handling them.

● Baby hummingbirds must be fed three times every hour with nectar from a medicine dropper.



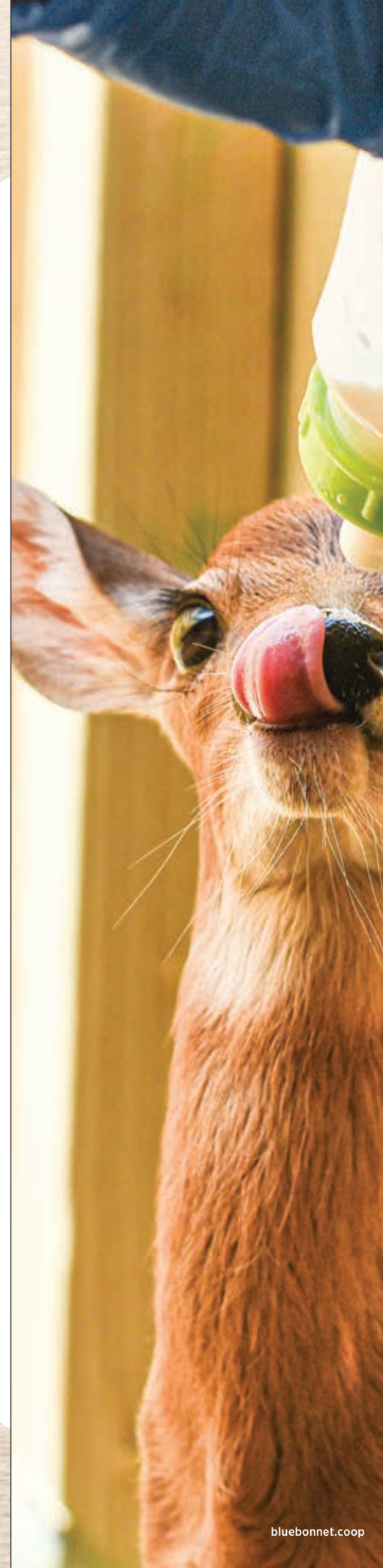
Khanh Phan, an animal care technician, prepares syringes of formula and medication for the next feeding cycle. With so many tiny mouths to feed, the technicians rarely get a break between feeding and caring for the hungry animals.

About the volunteers

About 100 volunteers — about half of whom are always working or available — help out each year. Volunteers logged 6,000 hours in 2018. Twenty volunteers are licensed wildlife rehabilitators. New volunteers are accepted in December and in the spring. Volunteers must be 18 or older and willing to work one shift per week, in the morning, afternoon or evening during the busy season (March-September) or morning or afternoon in the off-season (October-February). Applications for volunteers are available on the organization's website in December and in the spring.



Tito, a 35-pound African spurred tortoise, is a permanent resident of the new rescue center. He was found in Wimberley, but no one claimed him, so Austin Wildlife Rescue now takes him on the road for educational programs. At right: A month-old fawn can't wait to get some of the tasty formula offered by a technician.





Back to the wild: some curious raccoons being released after getting healthy at Austin Wildlife Rescue. The center has about 50 private property release sites of at least 100 acres each, far away from populated areas. *Photo courtesy of Austin Wildlife Rescue*

Continued from page 20

you know how important opossums are? Opossums eat bugs, including ticks that can carry diseases. They eat snakes that could be poisonous. They eat dead things, so they're cleaning up the environment.

"So having an opossum in your yard is never a bad thing. They have such a low body temperature, they rarely carry rabies even though most people think they can be rabid. They've been around since the dinosaurs, so they're doing something right. And they're marsupials; all their babies are in their pouch — up to 13 at one time."

The public also may not understand the importance of rescuing vultures. "Vultures are cleaning up the environment," Hudnall said. "It would be pretty stinky around here, with a lot more roadkill without the vultures."

And some people may consider squirrels to be nuisance animals that chew up patio furniture. But they are sowing trees that provide shade, food and clean air for humans. "They are good tree planters," Hudnall said. "All the pecans, all the acorns—they are not going back to all the nuts they buried, so they are planting all those trees for us."

Once animals are healthy, wildlife rescue workers release them back to the wild, but not on the property near Elgin. The animals are released on private property with permission from the landowner. The organization has about 50 release sites far outside city limits on land that is at least 100 acres and has a water source that never runs dry. Deer require a release site of 1,000 acres. Release sites are rotated and never used more than once a year. Volunteers sometimes drive up to two hours to get to a release site.

The bald eagle arrived at the new Bastrop County rehab facility before the \$50,000 raptor flight cage was finished. So Austin Wildlife Rescue contacted a licensed raptor rehabilitator in East Texas who brought the eagle back to health.

Once the eagle is healed, Rennspies, the

Animal safety warning

What wildlife rescue workers want you to know:

- People who put out rodent bait not only poison rats and mice, but also other animals that eat the bait, such as hawks, owls, foxes, and bobcats. This spring, Austin Wildlife Rescue saved a baby great horned owl that was sick from poisoning. Glue traps for insects and rodents also capture birds, snakes and lizards.
- Research shows that a wild animal that is trapped and relocated has an 80 percent chance of dying because it is unfamiliar with the new environment and doesn't know where to find food and water or how to cross roads in the area.
- Never rescue a wild animal and keep it as a possible pet. State and federal laws protect nearly all wild animals. It is against the law to keep an animal or bird or nests, feathers, or eggs without permits.

Milam County game warden, will work with Austin Wildlife Rescue to release it. "The bird will be released back where I found it," Rennspies said.

"We protect the natural resources," he said. "We want our future generations to enjoy the same natural resources that the past and current generations have enjoyed." ■

80 years and 100,000 meters



Bluebonnet celebrates milestones, members re-elect 4 board members

By Will Holford

More than 600 Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative members and guests filled The Silos on 77 event center in Giddings on May 14 for the co-op's Annual Meeting. They enjoyed live music and took home 40 door prizes, in addition to conducting important business that culminated with the re-election of four directors.

Board Chairman Ben Flencher opened the business portion of the meeting by thanking Bluebonnet's members for their support during the past 80 years.

"It is an honor for me and my fellow directors to serve on Bluebonnet's board," Flencher said. "In my 32 years on Bluebonnet's Board of Directors, this is the most exciting one so far. We are celebrating our 80th anniversary and an-

other important milestone we achieved last month, surpassing the 100,000-meter mark for the first time in our history."

Flencher told meeting attendees that the co-op's directors are an extension of Bluebonnet's members because they know them from church, school, work, sports leagues and other civic activities.



Debbi Goertz "Because we have those relationships, every action that we take, every decision that we make, every vote that we cast is done with your best interests first and foremost," he said.

Three incumbent directors in this year's Board election were unopposed and elected by general consent in accordance with Bluebonnet's bylaws: Ben Flencher, District 5, Burleson County; Kenneth Mutscher, District 7, Washington County; and Milton Shaw, District 1, Caldwell, Gonzales, Guadalupe and Hays counties. Incumbent Director Debbi Goertz, District 3, Bastrop County, defeated three challengers in her bid for re-election. Sadly, shortly after his re-election, Mutscher passed away after a brief illness. Read more about his life and tenure on the Board on Page 23.

"I am honored to have received so much support from Bluebonnet's members," Goertz said. "The last few years serving on Bluebonnet's Board has been a whirlwind. I am looking forward to continuing the wonderful work this Board and all the dedicated employees are doing to serve our members."

Bluebonnet is a member-owned electric cooperative governed by an 11-member Board. Bluebonnet's members elect their directors, who serve staggered three-year terms. One-third of the 11-member Board of Directors is up for election every year. More than 6,900 members participated in this year's Annual Meeting, voting by proxy or casting votes during the meeting.

Flencher also introduced a video tribute to his predecessor as Board chairman, Director Rick Schmidt, who died in February. "Rick was one of Bluebonnet's strongest supporters. He led Bluebonnet through some of the co-op's most difficult, challenging times. His presence on our Board will be missed and can never truly be replaced," Flencher said.

General Manager Matt Bentke closed out the business portion of the meeting with a report on the co-op's service to its members and communities, and its financial and operational strengths. Highlights of Bluebonnet's performance included saving members \$3.4 million in wholesale power costs in 2018, and more than \$8.3 million in the past



At left, Bluebonnet lineman Matt Hollingsworth, dressed in full gear, poses for a photo with Gertrude Nowak during Bluebonnet's Annual Meeting on May 14. The canvas behind them features a 1945 photo of the co-op's original headquarters in Giddings. Above, Patricia Rodriguez of Cedar Creek votes in the Board election. Sarah Beal photos



Bluebonnet member John Gardner, above, talks about the solar panels on his Brenham-area home with member service representative Brittany Hardy. Before the meeting began, members stopped by displays and information tables where they could see vintage appliances, learn about tree trimming, see linemen's equipment or update their contact information. At right, Rosalinda Serrano of Cedar Creek talks with General Manager Matt Bentke before the meeting. Below, a crowd of more than 600 attended the meeting.



three years. Bluebonnet worked hard to significantly reduce its annual operating expenses and return \$5.4 million in capital credits to members last year, Bentke said.

“Capital credits are what makes us a co-op,” he said. “We charge no more than is necessary, we run our business very efficiently, and anything left over goes back to our members in capital credits.”

Bluebonnet’s record growth in the past two years has benefitted members, Bentke said, by enabling the co-op to reinvest in its electric grid, technology, employees and communities, without raising rates.

“We haven’t had a rate increase in several years, and we presented our Board a five-year plan with no distribution rate increase in it,” he said. “Our expectations are high; our performance standards are high. We will continue to work hard to control expenses and be more efficient for our members every single day.” ■



At left, Bluebonnet Board Chairman Ben Flencher begins the business of the Annual Meeting. Above, the winners of a 2010 Ford F-150 truck are Manuel Rodriguez of Dale and wife Rosalinda. The vehicle was retired from the co-op’s fleet and was awarded after a random drawing from among the more than 6,900 members who voted in Board elections, either by proxy or at the Annual Meeting.

BLUEBONNET
wishes to say

*Thank
You!*

Your generous donations toward door prizes helped make our Annual Meeting a success!

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Bracewell LLP

Burlin Power Line LLC

Carlton Industries

Chemical Weed Control

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Irby Construction

KBS Electrical Distributors

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Over and Under LLC

Phillips Painting Co.

Rudd and Wisdom Inc.

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Techline Inc.

It's rodeo time!

Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative will be sending two journeyman lineman teams, 11 apprentices and several judges, barbecue team members and other volunteers to the 23rd annual Texas Lineman's Rodeo at Nolte Island Park near Seguin on July 20. The event gives line workers a chance to compete against others across the state and showcase some of the skills they perform on the job. The competition includes a pole climb with a raw egg in a bag, a pole-top rescue of a mannequin the size of an injured lineman, mystery events and a barbecue cook-off. Cheer on our teams in person or keep track of their progress via Bluebonnet's Facebook and Twitter pages throughout the day. Learn more about the event at tira.org.

'Every year we strive to practice more, but we prioritize and our members come first. The rodeo just makes us better and more prepared linemen,' says Randall Bowns, coordinator of the co-op's rodeo team, shown at right competing at last year's event. *Sarah Beal photo*



You're invited to our
80th
BIRTHDAY
celebration

Enjoy refreshments, check out a display of vintage appliances, take a picture in our photo booth and enter for a chance to win a prize!

Stop by one of our five member service centers between 2 and 5:30 p.m. on these dates:

Tuesday, July 30 — Brenham

Thursday, Aug. 1 — Giddings

Monday, Aug. 5 — Lockhart

Wednesday, Aug. 7 — Manor

Friday, Aug. 9 — Bastrop

BONUS: If you come by between 3:30 and 5 p.m., you can meet a lineman dressed in full gear!

21-year Board member remembered as respected business, community leader

By Melissa Segrest

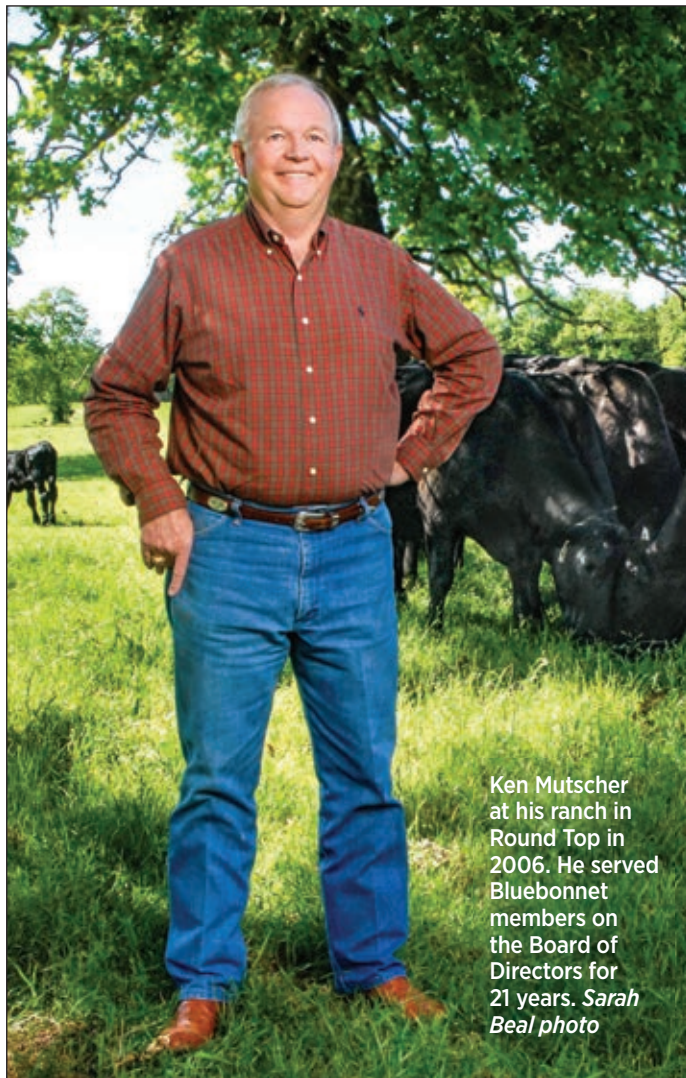
Kenneth Mutscher, a member of the Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative Board of Directors for more than two decades and vice chairman since 2014, died May 20 after a brief illness. He was a respected business and community leader in Brenham and Washington County.

During his tenure on the Bluebonnet Board, he helped usher in significant technological advances in the face of rapid growth.

“Bluebonnet has lost more than 20 years of experience and history on our Board of Directors, but we have also lost a close friend,” Board chairman Ben Flencher said. “Ken was so easy-going and level-headed. He was blessed with the ability to really think things through and make the right decision. That made him a valuable asset on our Board and for Bluebonnet’s members. This is a tough loss for everyone who knew Ken.”

Matt Bentke, Bluebonnet general manager and CEO, described Mutscher as “a kind and gracious gentleman. He was a tremendous leader and advocate for Bluebonnet’s members. I will forever respect and miss Ken’s thoughtfulness and the fiscally conservative approach he brought to every discussion and decision as a director.”

Mutscher worked for the Texas State Board of Pharmacy, then established his own financial services business in downtown Brenham. After retiring from that job, he raised registered Brangus cattle on his ranch. Along with raising cattle, Mutscher enjoyed golf, fishing,



Ken Mutscher at his ranch in Round Top in 2006. He served Bluebonnet members on the Board of Directors for 21 years. Sarah Beal photo

hunting, traveling and spending time with his grandson.

He was active in the region’s community groups, including being a director of the Blinn College Foundation Board. He had served as president of the Brenham Noon Lions Club and director of the Washington County United Way. He was a tireless supporter of Washington County Little League and an elder and chairman of the building committee at Grace Lutheran Church in Brenham. Mutscher was an organizing member of the Bluebonnet Beef Breeders Association of Washington County and was

on a committee for the Washington County Fair.

He met his wife of 47 years, Sarita Dickmann, on a blind date to a Texas-Arkansas football game. Their son, Kevin, is an attorney in Brenham.

Mutscher had a strong work ethic, starting with a job cleaning the classroom at Grace Lutheran School, where he was a student. As a youth, he worked for a local furniture store and picked cotton in the summers.

Sports played an important role in his life. Mutscher lettered in football, baseball, basketball and track while at Brenham High School, where he gradu-

ated in 1961. He attended Blinn College for two years on a baseball scholarship and played on the school’s first team to reach the National Junior College Tournament. That love for baseball led him to coach and manage Little League teams.

From Blinn, Mutscher transferred to the University of Texas at Austin, graduating with a degree in business administration in 1965. During his time at UT, he worked for the Texas Senate’s sergeant-at-arms and, after graduation, worked for a year in the payroll department at Houston Lighting and Power. Then he returned to Brenham for an 11-year career as an investigator for the Texas State Board of Pharmacy. In that position, he traveled the state and worked with federal, state and local law enforcement. In addition to that career, he attained the rank of lieutenant during eight years with the National Guard.

Mutscher’s knowledge of pensions, health insurance and auditing made him an invaluable member of the Bluebonnet Board. His goal was to represent Bluebonnet members and he believed it was the cooperative’s responsibility to provide excellent service and low-cost power. He spoke of setting good policies and employing the best people as a win-win for Bluebonnet’s members.

While on the board, he obtained the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association’s Credentialed Cooperative Director status and completed the association’s Board Leadership Program. Members had re-elected Mutscher to the Board at the cooperative’s recent Annual Meeting.

He is survived by his wife, Sarita Mutscher; son Kevin Mutscher and his wife, Renee Mutscher; grandson Kaden Mutscher; sisters Rose Marie Prenzler and Carolyn Kuenstler; and numerous aunts, uncles, nephews and great-nephews. ■

Bluebonnet, LCRA grants to benefit VFD, Burton playground

The Lower Colorado River Authority and Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative provided grants to first responders and a school district in Bluebonnet's service area in May. The grants are part of LCRA's Community Development Partnership Program.

The Prairie Hill-Rocky Hill Volunteer Fire Department is buying a new all-terrain vehicle and other firefighting and rescue equipment thanks to a \$21,025 CDPP grant. This will mean improved access to rural areas during emergencies. From left are Evelyn Quebedeaux; Suzzette Von Gontard; Emma Quebedeaux; Ron Arnold, firefighter; Doug Zwiener, deputy fire chief; Lori A. Berger, LCRA board member; Delphine Moehlmann, firefighter; Doyle Dahmann, fire chief; Kelly Strader, firefighter; Kyle Merten, Bluebonnet community representative; Robert Mikeska, Bluebonnet Board member; and Kate Holman, LCRA regional affairs representative.



Children having fun at a popular community playground will receive some relief from the Texas sun this summer thanks to a \$10,000 CDPP grant. The Burton Independent School District will install a shade cover at Burton Elementary School's playground, which also is open to the community. Standing, from left, are Robert Mikeska, Bluebonnet Board member; Kate Holman, LCRA regional affairs representative; Kyle Merten, Bluebonnet community representative; Melinda Fuchs, Burton Elementary principal; Kirk Hanath, Washington County commissioner; Lori A. Berger, LCRA board member; Joy Fuchs, Washington County commissioner; Teresa Shuey, Burton ISD Parent Teacher Organization vice president; Dr. Edna Kennedy, Burton ISD superintendent; Felicity Shuey, student; Rachel Harmel, PTO secretary; Adison Harmel, student; and Augustus Shuey, student. Seated are students Devlin Douglas, Camryn Douglas and Austen Bostain.



Photos from the Lower Colorado River Authority

Share your cherished family heirloom recipes!

As Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative celebrates its 80th anniversary this year, part of our focus has been the kitchen. It's the heart of the home, where rural Central Texans first added electric appliances in the 1930s and 1940s.

We want to share the wonderful recipes that have been passed down from generation to generation in your family. Send your most beloved recipe — an appetizer, a main course, a side dish or a dessert — with a short explanation of what it means to your

family to Lisa Ogle at lisa.ogle@bluebonnet.coop, 512-332-7968 or c/o Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative, 155 Electric Ave., Bastrop, TX 78602.

The deadline for recipe entries is Sept. 6. We'll publish many of your recipes in Texas Co-op Power magazine and online at bluebonnet.coop.

Need some incentive? We'll give away dozens of copies of "The Best of Typically Texas Cookbook" from the publishers of Texas Co-op Power magazine to recipe entrants.



Not a
big fan
of the
dog days
of summer?



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KILL THE VAMPIRES

Gadgets silently eat electricity, even in standby mode. Plug them into an advanced power strip and turn them off when not in use.

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Can't stand 78°? Go someplace cool during the hottest part of the day: the library, grocery store, mall, gym, coffee shop.

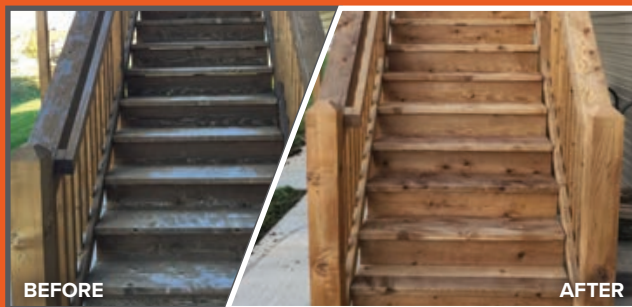


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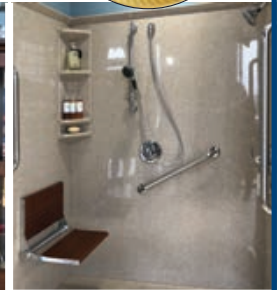
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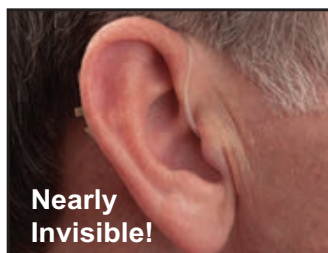
Chicago – A local board-certified physician has done it once again with his newest invention of a medical-grade, affordable hearing aid.

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This sleek, fully programmed, light-weight, hearing aid is the outgrowth of the technology revolution that is changing our world. While demand for new technology caused most prices to plunge (consider DVD players and computers, which originally sold for thousands of dollars and today can be purchased for less), the cost of a medical-grade hearing aid remains out of reach.

The doctor knew that many of his patients would benefit but couldn't afford the expense for these new hearing aids. Generally they are *not* covered by Medicare and most private health insurance plans.



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Geronimo in San Antonio

After his final capture by the U.S. Army, the Apache leader was detained at a military post

BY CYNDY IRVINE

MIDDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 1886, A SPECIAL train from Fort Bowie, Arizona, arrived at San Antonio's Sunset Depot. On board, under heavy guard, were prominent Apache leader Geronimo and 33 fellow Native Americans, en route to Florida as prisoners of the United States government.

Geronimo was a Chiricahua Apache who fought settlers and soldiers throughout the tribe's homeland in what is now Arizona and New Mexico. He was a spiritual leader and formidable warrior who led the fight against settlers' incursions into Apache lands. He had an uncanny ability to evade capture and frequently retreated into Mexico before reappearing to continue his battle.

After multiple surrenders and subsequent escapes, Geronimo and a small band of his followers, outnumbered and weary, surrendered for the last time to U.S. Army personnel September 4, 1886.

When these captives arrived in San Antonio, they were taken to the military post at Government Hill, part of present-day Fort Sam Houston, a few miles northeast of downtown. Here they were confined to the 8 acres within the limestone-walled supply depot known as the Quadrangle.

Newspaper coverage of the spectacle reflected the jingoist attitudes of the time and included this headline in the September 11 *San Antonio Daily Express*: "Arrival of Geronimo, Nachez, squaws and papooses—the meanest nest of cut-throats in America." That very evening, soldiers guarded against an unruly crowd "that peered and surged and ... kicked around the entrance to the government build-



ings," according to the paper.

"After the Civil War, federal officials forced unrelated Apache bands to live on reservations in bleak, desolate places," says Catharine Franklin, assistant professor of history at Texas Tech University. "Geronimo and his followers faced dire poverty, isolation, hunger and illness. It's no wonder they fought outsiders whom they viewed as their enemies."

Local reporters sensationalized the captives. The *Daily Express* described Geronimo as 50 years old, of medium height, with long black hair. His face was "seamed and furrowed" and his legs "bowed by their long grip on the saddle," the paper reported.

"The residents of San Antonio didn't know, and seldom cared, about the difficult choices faced by indigenous people," Franklin says.

The prisoners were detained in the Quadrangle for six weeks while the government decided whether they were to be maintained as prisoners of war or returned to civil authorities in Arizona anxious to try them. During this time, local newspapers criticized the military officers for their

leniency with the captured Apache.

The prisoners were housed in tents pitched on the lawns of the Quadrangle campus. The *San Antonio Daily Light* reported that they were fed "with all the luxuries of the season, fresh fruit included." They passed time playing cards and were allowed visitors. Geronimo was driven on at least one carriage ride and "shown the city and its surroundings." The women were granted a shopping excursion to "a store on the Plaza in San Antonio... [where they] bought all the red calico in the shop" and posed for photographs in front of the building.

On October 22, the captives were sent to join their fellow Chiricahuas in Florida. Geronimo and his warriors were detained at Fort Pickens, and the women and children were sent farther east to Fort Marion. Large numbers of Chiricahua died in Florida from disease and the tropical humidity. The survivors were eventually relocated to Fort Sill, Oklahoma, where Geronimo died in 1909 from pneumonia after a horse-riding accident. He is buried in the Apache cemetery there, never having been allowed to return to his homeland.

Cyndy Irvine lives in San Antonio.



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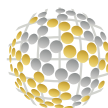
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Gulf Shrimp

THE HEART OF SUMMER IS PEAK season for two of my favorite pastimes: grilling and eating shrimp from the Gulf. This recipe for Grilled Shrimp With Herb and Wine Butter first appeared in *Texas Co-op Power* in June 1988, but its appeal is timeless. It's easy enough to prepare at a beach house and makes for the perfect light summer meal—especially when paired with a pile of angel hair pasta, crackly bread or warm steamed rice. To deepen the smoky nuance, use juice from lightly charred lemons in the butter sauce. The original recipe suggests skewering the shrimp or cooking them in a grill basket. I prefer to fire the shrimp in a preheated paella pan to retain all the buttery juices.

PAULA DISBROWE, FOOD EDITOR

Grilled Shrimp With Herb and Wine Butter

- ½ cup (1 stick) butter
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 tablespoons fresh chives
- 1 teaspoon minced fresh parsley
- 1 teaspoon minced fresh tarragon
- 1 teaspoon fresh rosemary
- ¼ cup dry white wine
- Juice of ½ lemon
- Salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste
- 1½–2 pounds large shrimp, peeled and deveined
- Olive oil
- Lemon wedges, for serving (if desired)

1. In a heavy saucepan, heat the butter and garlic over very low heat, just until the butter sizzles. Stir in the chives, parsley, tarragon and rosemary and cook 1–2 minutes more, then whisk in the wine and lemon juice (charred or fresh) and remove from heat. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

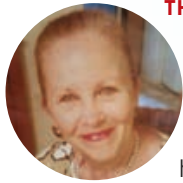
2. Place the shrimp in a large bowl and drizzle with enough olive oil to lightly coat. Season with salt and pepper and toss to combine.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 32



See a video online to watch Paula make this recipe.

Gulf Shrimp



THIS MONTH'S RECIPE CONTEST WINNER

KATHRYN TUMA | NUECES EC

This salad can feed a crowd. It's perfect for a hot day, although Tuma has served it at Christmas, too. "I love to garden, and two of my favorite herbs to grow are fresh dill and arugula," she says. "The best dill is fresh dill. If you don't have it on hand, go to your local farmers market or borrow it from a neighbor—tempt them with some salad afterwards."

Texas Gulf Shrimp and Dill Salad

- 1 large lemon, divided use
- 5 pounds Gulf shrimp, shelled and deveined (reserving a few shells)
- 1 package (3 ounces) Zatarain's Crawfish, Shrimp & Crab Boil
- 1 cup mayonnaise
- ¾ cup green olives stuffed with pimientos, plus ½ cup liquid from jar
- 1 tablespoon horseradish
- 1 can (15.5 ounces) red kidney beans, drained and rinsed
- ¾ cup chopped fresh dill
- 1 head iceberg lettuce, chopped
- 2 cups arugula
- 6 cups spring greens
- 1-2 cups chopped celery, to taste
- ½-1 cup chopped green onions, to taste

1. Zest lemon to get approximately 1 tablespoon of zest; then cut in half and juice 1 half, reserving juice. Cut other half into slices.
2. Boil shrimp, reserved shells and lemon slices in water with Zatarain's, according to package directions. Drain and cool shrimp in a refrigerator at least 1 hour.
3. In a quart-size container with a tightfitting lid, add mayonnaise, lemon juice, lemon zest, olives, olive liquid, horseradish, kidney beans and dill. Shake to mix. This bean dressing can be made ahead and refrigerated until needed.
4. In a large salad bowl or on a platter, mix lettuce, arugula, spring greens and celery. Top with green onions. Spread cooled shrimp over greens and top with bean dressing. Serve with dinner rolls, potato chips and a refreshing beverage.
▶ Serves 14-16.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 31

3. Grill the shrimp in a preheated paella pan (or in a wire basket or on skewers) about 5-7 minutes total, stirring frequently, until the shrimp is pink and just tender. (Do not overcook or shrimp will be tough.) Serve warm with additional lemon, if desired. ▶ Serves 4-6.

Shrimp and Grits With Beer Sauce

JAMES FELDMAN | BANDERA EC

This classic combination gets a boost from the beer sauce. "Meant for breakfast, but good all day," Feldman says.

GRIT CAKES

- 2 cups chicken broth
- 2 cups milk
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup stone-ground grits
- Vegetable oil, for frying
- ½ cup flour

SAUCE

- 4 tablespoons (½ stick) butter
- 2 teaspoons minced garlic
- 1 teaspoon oregano
- 1 teaspoon crushed red pepper
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 4 ounces beer

SHRIMP

- 2 tablespoons (¼ stick) butter
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice
- 1 pound jumbo Gulf shrimp, peeled and deveined

1. GRIT CAKES: Bring broth, milk and salt to a boil. Add grits and cook over medium heat about 20 minutes, stirring constantly. Pour into an 8-by-8-inch or similar size baking pan, so grits are about 1 inch thick. Let cool on counter or in refrigerator for quicker use. Once cool, cut into 4 equal squares.
2. Heat ½ inch of oil in a skillet over medium-high heat. Coat the squares with flour, then fry in skillet about 2 minutes per side, until edges are golden brown.
3. SAUCE: Melt butter in a skillet over medium heat. Stir in garlic and all spices, then add beer and reduce heat to low. Let simmer 5-10 minutes, stirring occasionally.



IF YOUR RECIPE IS FEATURED, YOU'LL WIN A TCP APRON!

\$100 Recipe Contest

December's recipe contest topic is **Cookies and Candies**. We know you'll be making these for family and friends over the holidays. Share them with our readers, too. The deadline is **July 10**.

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.



4. SHRIMP: Melt butter in skillet over medium heat. Add lemon juice and shrimp, cooking shrimp about 2 minutes per side.

5. When ready to serve, put 1 grit cake on a plate, top with 1/4 of the shrimp and pour 1/4 of the sauce over grit cake and shrimp. Serve warm. ▶ Serves 4.

Sweet and Tangy Pickled Shrimp

HONEY HARRELL | UNITED COOPERATIVE SERVICES

- 3 quarts water
- 4 tablespoons Old Bay seasoning
- 4 pounds large Gulf shrimp
- 2 cups vegetable or olive oil
- 1 cup red wine vinegar
- 1 tablespoon mustard
- 2 cups ketchup
- 1/2 cup chili sauce
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- 3 jars (6 ounces each) whole button mushrooms, drained
- 3 cups whole pearl onions, sliced into very thin rings (or 2 cups

- thinly sliced onion)
- 2 bay leaves
- Saltine crackers (optional)

1. Bring water to a boil and add Old Bay seasoning and shrimp, cooking 4 minutes. Do not overcook. Drain, cool and peel shrimp.

2. In a bowl, whisk together oil, vinegar, mustard, ketchup, chili sauce and paprika.

3. Pack shrimp, mushrooms, onion slices and bay leaves into a large jar or container with a tightfitting lid. Pour oil and vinegar mixture into container. Refrigerate at least 2 days, but preferably longer. Several times a day, turn jar over to marinate evenly. Keeps 1 week.

4. Remove bay leaves before serving. Serve in a chilled bowl with saltine crackers, if desired. ▶ Serves 12-14.

Shrimp Pilaf Florentine

MILLIE KIRCHOFF | NUECES EC

- 1 tablespoon olive or vegetable oil
- 1/2 cup diced red bell pepper

- 2 tablespoons sliced green onion
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1 1/2 cups uncooked orzo
- 2 teaspoons fresh chopped dill (or 1/2 teaspoon dried)
- 1 teaspoon lemon zest
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 1/4 cups chicken broth
- 1 cup water
- 2 cups shredded spinach
- 1 1/2 cups medium Gulf shrimp, shelled and deveined

Grated Parmesan cheese (optional)

1. Heat oil in a 12-inch skillet over medium-high heat. Cook pepper, onion and garlic in oil for 2 minutes, stirring frequently, until they are tender.

2. Stir in orzo, dill, lemon zest, salt, broth and water. Heat to boiling, then reduce heat to low. Cover and simmer 8-10 minutes or until orzo is tender.

3. Stir in spinach and shrimp. Cover and cook 2-3 minutes, until shrimp are pink. Sprinkle with Parmesan, if desired.

▶ Serves 4.

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ITEM 62434, 62426, 62433, 62432, 62429, 64178, 64179, 62428 shown
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21 GALLON OIL-LUBE AIR COMPRESSOR
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69091/62803
63635/67847 shown
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ITEM 64264/64266/64879/64881
61282/68049/62326/61253 shown
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PORTLAND SUPER COUPON

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★★★★★
NOW \$99.99
COMPARE TO \$174.44

ITEM 63255/63254 shown
LIMIT 2 - Coupon valid through 11/1/19

BADLAND SUPER COUPON

2500 LB. ELECTRIC WINCH WITH WIRELESS REMOTE CONTROL

Customer Rating
★★★★★
NOW \$499.99
COMPARE TO \$699.99

ITEM 68146
61258/61297
63476/61840 shown
LIMIT 3 - Coupon valid through 11/1/19

SUPER COUPON

HEAVY DUTY FOLDABLE ALUMINUM SPORTS CHAIR

Customer Rating
★★★★★
NOW \$19.99
COMPARE TO \$29.99

ITEM 62314
63066/66383 shown
LIMIT 4 - Coupon valid through 11/1/19

Lynxx SUPER COUPON

40 VOLT LITHIUM CORDLESS 14" BRUSHLESS CHAIN SAW

Customer Rating
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NOW \$154.99
COMPARE TO \$179.99

ITEM 64715/64478/63287 shown
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HaulMaster SUPER COUPON

18" WORKING PLATFORM STEP STOOL

Customer Rating
★★★★★
NOW \$19.99
COMPARE TO \$51.45

ITEM 62515/66911 shown
LIMIT 3 - Coupon valid through 11/1/19

HaulMaster SUPER COUPON

3/8" x 14 FT., GRADE 43 TOWING CHAIN

Customer Rating
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NOW \$199.99
COMPARE TO \$64.99

ITEM 40462/60658/97711 shown
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SUPER COUPON

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ITEM 64189/64723/63922 shown
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SUPER COUPON

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Customer Rating
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NOW \$2.99
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ITEM 69115/69121/69129/69137/69249/877 shown
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COVERPRO SUPER COUPON

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



◀ **CHAD PRAHL**, CoServ: "This hardworking Chevy now rests in Gladewater on my in-laws' land."



▲ **LINDA LEE BICKFORD**, Grayson-Collin EC: "A sweet couple sitting close in the old Ford driving in Texas."

▼ **MARILYN BRUNT**, Deep East Texas EC: "A 1952 Ford rests in Austin after over a half-century of traveling the back roads in the Hill Country."



▲ **TINA WEBB**, Bluebonnet EC: "An old red barn in Fayetteville with a neat, old Chevrolet truck with an American flag."

▼ **MELISSA FONTENETTE-MITCHELL**, Pedernales EC: "Driving down a rural road in Round Rock, I spotted this beautiful old truck resting in the Texas bluebonnets."



UPCOMING CONTESTS

NOVEMBER	UP THE CREEK	DUE JULY 10
DECEMBER	DESERTS	DUE AUGUST 10
JANUARY	FENCES	DUE SEPTEMBER 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.

Pick of the Month Spicer Gripp Memorial Roping

Hereford August 1-4
(806) 364-5362, spicergripp.com

This event includes roping, dummy roping for youngsters, golf and a barbecue cook-off and honors Spicer Gripp of Hereford. Deaf Smith Electric Cooperative sponsors some of the events. Proceeds help fund scholarships at West Texas A&M University.



July 11

Sachse Space Magic With Brett Roberts,
(972) 530-8966, cityofsachse.com

12

Kerrville [12-13] Kerrville Open Pro Rodeo,
(830) 997-1864, lmrodeo.com

Mason [12-14] Mason County Roundup
Weekend, (325) 347-5758, masontxcoc.com

13

Palacios Poker in Palacios and Seafood
Dinner, (361) 972-2615, palacioschamber.com

Weatherford Parker County Peach Festival,
(817) 596-380, peachfestivaltx.com

18

Athens [18-27] *Beauty and the Beast Jr.*,
(903) 675-3908, hcpac.org

19

Palestine Romance on the Rails,
(855) 632-7729, texasstaterailroad.net



July 13
Weatherford
Parker County Peach Festival

Dumas [19-20] D'Town Barbecue Cook-Off,
(806) 935-2123, dumaschamber.com

Paris [19-20] Balloon and Music Festival,
(903) 782-6215, parisballoonandmusicfestival.com

Temple [19-20] Wildflower Quilt Guild Quilt
Show, (254) 220-5597, wildflowerquiltguild.com

Ingram [19-20, 26-27, Aug. 2-3] *Mamma
Mia!*, (830) 367-5121, hcac.com

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AROUND TEXAS EVENT LISTINGS

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Brazoria Santa Ana Ball, (979) 248-8323, brazoriahf.org

Caldwell Texas Czech Genealogical Society: Tracing Orphans and Adoptions in Genealogy, (214) 577-0029, txczgs.org

Fredericksburg Night in Old Fredericksburg, (830) 997-2359, gillespiefair.net

Santo Christmas in July, (940) 659-3990

24

Levelland [24-27] Junior Rodeo Cowboy Association Finals, (806) 894-4161, malleventcenter.com

26

Kerrville Movies in the Park, (830) 257-7300, kerrvilletx.gov

Bonham [26-27] Quilt Hop, (903) 583-9830, visitbonham.com

Huntsville [26-27] East Texas Thimble Trail, (936) 594-1237, easttexasthimbletrail.com

Fredericksburg [26-28] Hill Country Auto Swap Meet, (254) 751-7958, earhartproductions.com

Palestine [26-28, Aug. 2-4] My Son Pinocchio, (903) 922-1126, thetexas theater.com

30

Boerne Abendkonzert, (830) 248-1635, visitboerne.org

31

New Braunfels [31-Aug. 4] Lone Star Gourd Festival and Art Show, (210) 468-9924, texasgourdsociety.org



July 26-27
Huntsville
East Texas
Thimble Trail

South Padre Island [31-Aug. 4] Texas International Fishing Tournament, (956) 943-8438, tift.org

August

1

Jacksonville [1-4] Back to School Bash, (903) 724-4100, riverrunpark.com

2

Levelland [2-4] Texas Best Show Series: Lamb Show, (806) 894-4161, malleventcenter.com

3

Corpus Christi South Texas Summer PolkaFest, (361) 215-9163, chssouthtexas.org

4

Frelsburg Sts. Peter & Paul Country Festival, (979) 732-7603

Submit Your Event!

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

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What Lies Beneath

Buffalo Bayou's forgotten cistern returns to public life

FIFTEEN YEARS AGO, ON A VISIT TO ISTANBUL, I descended into a damp underground labyrinth of stone columns known as the Basilica Cistern, which dates to Roman times. The scene was otherworldly, and I thought I would never again see anything like it. Little did I know that I would visit another subterranean marvel that would recall this otherworldly sensation—only this time it would be in Houston.

To understand Houston, one must understand Buffalo Bayou. This muddy waterway flows through the heart of the city and once drove Houston's economy. Simply put, without Buffalo Bayou there would be no Houston. In recent decades, a partnership between the city and a dedicated bayou nonprofit has reclaimed the long-neglected waterway, which now runs through world-class parks and green spaces. The Buffalo Bayou Park Cistern, however, was ignored.

The cistern was built in 1926 to hold approximately 15 million gallons of water for the residents of Houston. It did its job well for more than 80 years, until an irreparable leak caused it to be decommissioned in 2007. With no need for a leaking water tank, the city condemned the space and scheduled it for demolition. While the city searched for a demolition crew, members of the Buffalo Bayou Partnership discovered the space and decided it should be saved. One architect called it "The Cistern" because it reminded him of the one in Istanbul. The name stuck.

At ground level, the only evidence of the Buffalo Bayou Park Cistern is an unremarkable door set into a small hill. That's why it went virtually unnoticed for eight decades. And it is the reason I missed the



The Buffalo Bayou Park Cistern is about the size of 1½ football fields.

entrance three times when I first tried to visit. However, as soon as I stepped through the door and descended into the mysterious sunken world, I knew I was standing somewhere special, in one of only two underground cisterns in the world open for public tours.

I felt dwarfed by the massive room, which measures approximately one and a half football fields. The cistern's 221 concrete columns, each 25 feet tall, gave me the sense that I was standing in an underground Greek temple or even a subterranean Lincoln Memorial. That was a jaw-dropping experience. Then came the light and sound show.

Our tour guide bounced a single flashlight beam off the ceiling and into the 4 inches of water covering the cistern floor. Suddenly, the ground became an entrance into another dimension. OK, not really, but it did transform into a huge reflecting pool with a perfect upside-down reflection of the cistern. Our guide prompted us to be quiet, and when everything was still, she let out a single shout that reverberated off the walls for a full 17 seconds. I've been in

dozens of canyons, including that grand one in Arizona, and I've never heard anything like it. We spent the next hour yelling and shining our phone lights into the abyss.

Even though the room feels like a work of art itself, the cistern lives a new life as an art space. With guidance from the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, artists from around the world visit the Bayou City to take advantage of the cistern's unique sound and light capabilities for their own installations.

In Texas, we have countless buildings, including our Capitol and many county courthouses, that were built to impress. Isn't it ironic that one of our most unique and awe-inspiring spaces was built as a functional reservoir that was never intended to see the light of day? I left the Buffalo Bayou Park Cistern inspired to keep exploring because if something so cool can go unmentioned for 80 years, imagine what other treasures await discovery.

Chet Garner shares his Texplorations as the host of *The Daytripper* on PBS.

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



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