

TEXAS CO-OP POWER

SPECIAL ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

LOOKING BACK
MOVING FORWARD



BLUEBONNET NEWS
SEE PAGE 18





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SPECIAL ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

The Baby is Born heralds the debut of this magazine in July 1944.

FEATURE

8 **Reliable as Electricity** *Texas Co-op Power*, trusted voice of co-ops across the state, turns 75.

Story by *Texas Co-op Power* contributors | Illustrations by David Vogin



ANNIVERSARY: DAVID VOGIN. HIKING BOOTS: MAREKULIASZ | SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

ON THE COVER For 75 years, *Texas Co-op Power* has committed to improving co-op members' quality of life. Illustration by David Vogin

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TexasCoopPower.com
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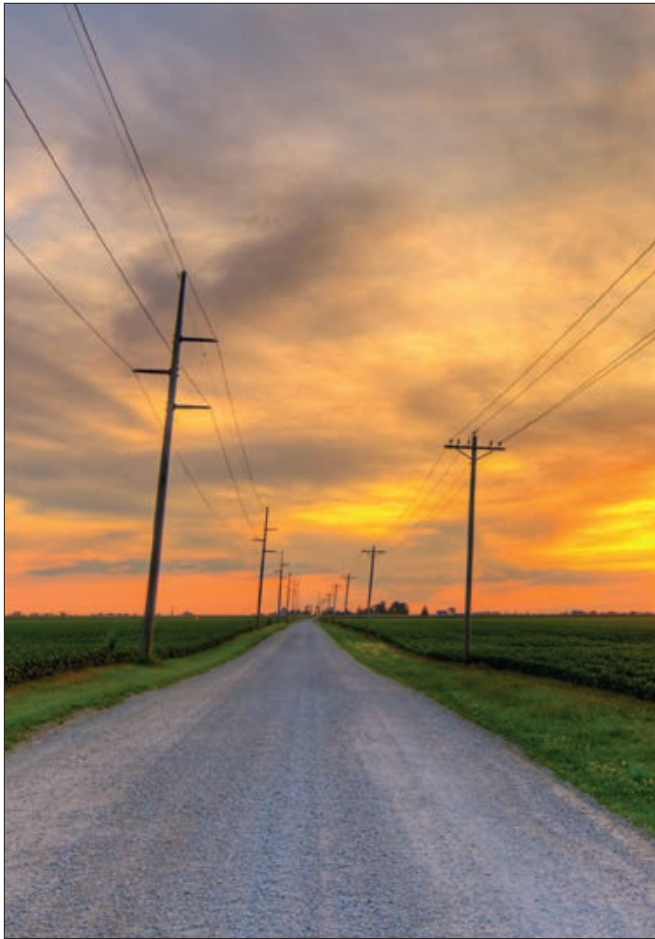
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NEXT MONTH

Which Big Bend? *Visitors to this rugged region have state and national parks as options.*





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 **IT'S UPTIME**

No Concept of Electricity

Reading about your 75th anniversary made me think of a story my father told me when I was a kid.

Just before World War II, when they were electrifying rural western Louisiana, my father was a foreman for Brown & Root Construction. One day, he was in a small town near the Louisiana-Texas border, finishing up checking out a new substation. A group of the townspeople approached him, and one man stepped forward and said, "We hear we are going to get electric lights soon."

Dad responded with, "That's right. As soon as I am finished here, I will radio the crew over in the next town and they will turn on the power."

With that, the man asked, "How long will it take to get here?"

Dad said, "It will be here as soon as they turn it on."

Without another word, they all turned and walked away, thinking my father was making fun of them. He said he never forgot the look on the man's face as he turned away.

Today, we take electricity for granted. It's hard to imagine a time when there were those who had no concept of it.

JACK L. TYLER | ARLINGTON PEDERNALES EC

Hungry Mockingbirds

Feedin' Time [Focus on Texas, June 2019] has a photograph of a nest of unidentified baby birds. Fittingly, they are the Texas state bird—northern mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos*).

RAY C. TELFAIR II, CERTIFIED WILDLIFE BIOLOGIST | WHITEHOUSE CHEROKEE COUNTY EC



Drive-In Dating

I dated during the late '40s and early '50s. The drive-in theater was where, on Saturday night, they only charged \$5 for a carload of people [*Drive In, Chill Out*, June 2019]. Saw many a movie there over the years.

HELEN PERRY | VIA FACEBOOK

This Little Piggy

Those working on the pig rescue program [*This Little Piggy*, May 2019] seem like caring, compassionate people. Perhaps all of us, however, need to look farther out our kitchen windows today and see something else—like Katy Hamner and Avery Graves [below, left to right] helping kids with diabetes [*A Butterfly's Touch*, May 2019].

RUTH HENSON | GOLDTHWAITE HAMILTON COUNTY EC



Flight of a Lifetime

I really enjoyed your article about ex-Navy pilot Trey Hayden taking clients over the USS Lexington in Corpus Christi [*What Moves You?*, April 2019]. I was stationed aboard the USS Bennington aircraft carrier 1962-1966. I spent my time seven decks below in the engine room. In March, Hayden took me on the flight of a lifetime.

BERNIE PHILLIP | DEVINE MEDINA EC

Great Reading

For such a little magazine, *Texas Co-op Power* has a lot of good articles. In May, you had three that were of special interest to me—the one on Tom Lea [*Tom Lea's War*], the one on R.E.B. Baylor [*Baylor, the Man*] and the one on Sul Ross State University [*Higher Education*].

Lea is one of my favorite authors. I didn't go to Sul Ross, but a couple of my classmates from Bandera High went on football scholarships.

RALPH REAVES | KINGSLAND CENTRAL TEXAS EC

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   **Texas Co-op Power**

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HAPPENINGS

Fayette County Fair

Josh Turner and Casey Donahew are the headliners August 31 at the **FAYETTE COUNTY FAIR**, which runs **AUGUST 29–SEPTEMBER 1** in La Grange.

“If you have never seen our River View music venue, for our top entertainment, you’re missing some of the best sunset views of Central Texas,” says Michael Zuhn, a Fayette Electric Cooperative member and president of the fair, which calls itself “The Best Little Fair in Texas.”

The first Fayette County fair was in 1927. Last year, about 9,000 fair-goers came through the gates. The theme for 2019 is For the Kid in All of Us. Indeed, youths are a top priority: The fair awards 20 academic scholarships of \$1,000 each and another \$5,000 in scholarships to contestants in the fair queen pageant.

INFO ▶ fayettecountyfair.org, (979) 968-3911



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HISTORY LESSON

PEACEMAKER TURNS DEADLY

175 years ago, in 1844, President John Tyler, who made Texas statehood a focus of his time in office, celebrated with more than 400 guests aboard the USS Princeton after a milestone annexation treaty. The newly built boat’s “peacemaker” gun—at the time the largest naval gun in the world—was showing off its power when a misfire killed six and injured several others.

Among the dead were Abel P. Upshur, secretary of state, and Thomas Walker Gilmer, secretary of the navy—well-known names in northeast Texas—who worked alongside Tyler to admit Texas as a slave state. All three were outspoken supporters of slavery.

Incredibly, two of Tyler’s grandsons, Lyon Gardiner Tyler Jr., born in 1924, and Harrison Ruffin Tyler, born in 1928, are still alive today.

◀ LOOKING BACK AT RURAL LIFE THIS MONTH



SINCE 1944, the year *Texas Co-op Power* debuted, rural Texas has faced unprecedented droughts, benefited from advancements in farm equipment and celebrated red grapefruit.

1940s

1945 An estimated 3.2 million pecan trees make Texas one of the nation’s leading pecan producers.



1945 The farm-to-market road system comes into being.

1948 A Colorado farmer invents the center pivot irrigation machine, which revolutionizes irrigation farming.

1950s

1950 Stihl unveils the first one-person, gasoline-powered chain saw.

1950 Texas’ rural population falls below 50% for the first time—to 37.3%.

1954 Social Security coverage is extended to farm operators.

1957 Texas’ historic seven-year drought ends; the state loses nearly 100,000 farms and ranches in the 1950s.

1960s

1960 International Harvester launches the Cub Cadet as the first lawn and garden tractor produced by a major tractor manufacturer.

1965 Mohair output in Texas reaches a peak when ranchers clip 31.6 million pounds from 4.6 million Angora goats.





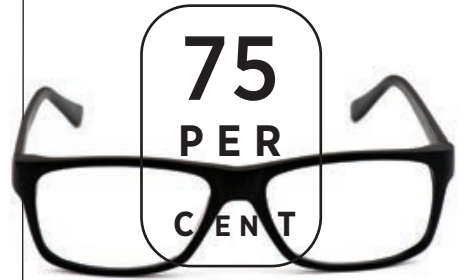
MUSICAL NOTES

Texans Rock Woodstock

FIFTY YEARS AGO, 31 bands and more than 400,000 people turned a dairy farm in upstate New York into the site of the legendary Woodstock music festival. At least four of the musicians to play during the concert, August 15–18, 1969, were Texans: Janis Joplin of Port Arthur; Johnny Winter, with his brother Edgar, both of Beaumont; and Sly Stone of Denton from Sly and the Family Stone.

Two weeks later, the same Texas artists were among some two dozen bands at the Texas International Pop Festival, which drew upward of 150,000 to Lewisville, where CoServ, an electric cooperative in Corinth, has many members. That concert, August 30–September 1, was at the Dallas International Motor Speedway, which was demolished in 1973.

BY THE NUMBERS



August is National Eye Exam Month, and the Vision Council says about 75% of adults use some sort of vision correction.

MILESTONE BIRTHDAY

No Candles, Please



Smokey Bear turns 75 this month. On August 9, 1944, he debuted as fire prevention spokesman for the U.S. Forest Service. He is part of the longest-running public service advertising campaign in U.S. history.

Chances are he wouldn't approve of 75 candles burning on his birthday cake.

WORTH REPEATING

“If men can run the world, why can't they stop wearing neckties? How intelligent is it to start the day by tying a little noose around your neck?”

—**LINDA ELLERBEE**, an American TV journalist most known for her work at NBC News and Nickelodeon, who turns 75. She was born August 15, 1944, in Bryan.

LOOKING BACK AT TRAVEL NEXT MONTH ►

1970s

1970 Geneticist Norman Borlaug receives a Nobel Peace Prize for developing high-yielding, disease-resistant wheat.



1977 Members and supporters of the Texas Farm Workers Union march 420 miles from San Juan, in the Rio Grande Valley, to Austin in support of fieldworkers' right to vote on union representation.

1980s

1980 John Deere produces a four-row cotton picker, the first in the industry, and estimates the unit will increase operators' productivity 85%–95%.

1984 Texas researcher Richard Hensz develops the Rio Red grapefruit.

1989 The Native American Seed Company is founded in Argyle. It moved to Junction in 1995.

1990s

1993 The Legislature designates Texas red grapefruit as the official state fruit.



1994 Farmers begin using GPS to aid use of water, fertilizer and pesticides.

1995 Texas voters approve Proposition 11, which allows land used to manage wildlife to qualify for tax appraisals in the same manner as agricultural land.

2000s

2012 Texas leads the nation with 248,800 farms and ranches—far fewer than the 420,000 that existed in 1940.

2017 The Hill Country ranks second in wine tourism after Napa Valley. Texas' wine industry boosts the state's economy by \$13.1 billion and supports more than 104,000 jobs.



A Commitment to Quality of Life

ILLUSTRATIONS BY DAVID VOGIN

Since July 1944, *Texas Co-op Power* has been a trusted voice for Texas electric cooperatives, bolstering a movement to light up rural areas and tell the stories of people who live there. The magazine's mission to empower rural communities has been the constant behind the headlines.

Following World War II, *Texas Co-op Power* fought for the very existence of electric cooperatives and the Rural Electrification Administration. The headlines reflected the intensity of the battle: *Phony Campaign Aimed at Co-ops* or *Utility Lobby Unveils Its Power Grab Plan*.

In the '40s and '50s, the magazine amplified the voices of farm families disenfranchised from electric power, countering outlandish charges that co-op members were communists or that nonmembers were taxed to support rural electricity.

The co-ops' life-or-death struggle with investor-owned utilities evolved into community building through shared information. The magazine's focus shifted to optimizing the opportunities offered by electricity and answering questions about new appliances for the recently electrified farm.

The magazine set its sights on identifying challenges and outlining solutions, whether it was describing the home of the future or simply explaining how to use a waffle iron. And not all policy talk was about power. One 1982 article outlined a tough forecast for agriculture, noting that, in 1981, a bushel of corn that sold for \$2.40 cost a farmer \$3.11 to produce.

Rural Texans are not as isolated now as they were in the days before electricity. Yet, *Texas Co-op Power* remains a valued resource for understanding the fundamental changes technology brings.

For our 75th anniversary, we reflect on the magazine's work to educate readers on the benefits the cooperative model affords—to shine a light on the fruits of cooperation. Whether it was the glow of a homestead's first lightbulb or the gentle hum of a modern family's new electric vehicle, *Texas Co-op Power* explained these advances. And when the next mystifying technology inserts itself into your life, we'll be there, too.

BY CHARLES LOHRMANN | EDITOR



THE DOMESTIC ELECTRIC

In the 1930s and 1940s, power lines newly installed across the countryside didn't just deliver light. As the once-quixotic prospect of an electrified rural home became a reality, the electricity the lines carried ultimately delivered families from the drudgery of onerous, time-consuming chores that many urban residents had already dispensed with. Quotidian routines could be accomplished faster and with less tedium, and tasks that once were tethered to the sun's schedule could now be completed under a lightbulb's glow.

Amid this development, *Texas Co-op Power* consistently advocated readers' parity with urban dwellers. As the November 1944 issue asserted, "New or old, the farm home that has high-line electric service easily can and should have as modern a kitchen as any found in the most up-to-date city residence." That story detailed the timesaving benefits of an electric range, refrigerator and dishwasher while also cautioning readers to proceed sensibly. Noting that the expense of a modern kitchen could be financed, the magazine offered an alternative for readers loath to take on consumer debt: "You can install it piece by piece as your income permits."

The Cranek family, members of Wharton County Electric Cooperative, took advantage of this convenience. Before getting an electric range in 1943, Mrs. L.V. Cranek cooked on a wood stove, and in July 1951, she told *Texas Co-op Power* that the range was "just like a dream in comparison." The homemaker didn't mince words when she summed up the difference electric light and appliances made: "Before rural electrification the farm was no pleasant place to live."

From its earliest days, *Texas Co-op Power* has provided safety tips and practical guidance to help readers derive the greatest value from the life-changing innovations rural Americans had for so long gone without. In particular, thrift achieved through timely maintenance has been a refrain. "Major repairs, or replacements, can often be avoided by proper care of your appliances and by making minor repairs," the August 1950 issue advised. "By these preventative measures, you can realize the fullest efficiency, value, and longevity from household tools."

It's advice that has stood the test of time—just like this magazine.

BY JESSICA RIDGE | COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST





THE DIGITAL AGE

Let's face it. The digital age has been hard slogging for those of us raised during the typewriter age. I am happy to say that *Texas Co-op Power* has been helping educate us about digital technology since the '70s.

The earliest tech reports dealt mainly with the billing process. Readers later learned of electronic meter-reading technology, cooperative-provided satellite TV, computer programs designed to simplify and quantify farm and ranch operations, and software that could digitally monitor entire electrical systems. I particularly enjoyed a 1986 column titled *Memo From Mary* explaining how new "cellular telephones" allowed you to "make a telephone call from anywhere, your car, the beach, or from a picnic table." What a wonder.

Co-ops worked hard in the '90s to help rural areas keep up. For example, Fayette Electric Cooperative helped organize a Texas Rural Internet Conference. Many co-ops developed internet services and created their own digital homepages with practical advice about all things electrical. Co-ops pushed to get

rural school libraries and hospitals wired.

A handy new column named *Dot.com Corner* was born in 2000, the year I went to work for the magazine. In 2001, I wrote a story called *Cyberspace Country*, for which I visited co-op members Don and Diane Harmeier, who had been able to get a dedicated T1 phone line, enabling them to operate a software company on their ranch 8 miles outside Kerrville. It was 50 times faster than the commonly available dial-up service.

Texas Co-op Power and local cooperatives vigorously advocated and frequently provided greater communications services for co-op members such as the Harmeiers. Today, most members speed confidently along the information highway. But many rural Texans still can't get fast fiber-optic internet like I have in Austin because it requires digging underground and laying cable at great expense. Google just offered my neighborhood Fiber 1000, which can download a high-definition movie in 43 seconds. But, co-op folks, be consoled by how far service has come. In 2001, when I was checking what rural areas could get, it took many long hours to download just a short video on a dial-up connection. Stream on.

BY KAYE NORTHCOTT | EDITOR 2001-2010

A few miles west of Marfa, along state Highway 90, is a delightful art installation celebrating the iconic movie *Giant*, a larger-than-life celebration of the mythic Texas oil industry. The '50s classic, starring Elizabeth Taylor, Rock Hudson and James Dean, was filmed on a nearby ranch.

What we don't have, but should, is a movie celebrating the unsung efforts of those scientists, engineers, technicians and, yes, electric co-op professionals who have been working to harness the wind, sun and other renewables. Flip through the past 40 years of *Texas Co-op Power*, and you won't find material for a modern-day Taylor-Hudson love story—though when I was editor, we staged a James Dean look-alike cover—but you will find articles chronicling efforts to find alternatives to fossil fuels. It's an ongoing story of the exotic becoming the everyday.

In 1971, the talk was of electric tractors. In 1978, it was a solar satellite that would beam electricity back to earth by microwave. *Texas Co-op Power* reported in 1980 that Sen. James McClure of Idaho foresaw electric cars dominating American highways by 2000. The senator's prediction was a bit optimistic, and yet other "experimental" efforts the magazine explored have gone mainstream.

Near Tulia, in 1979, a wind turbine located on a Swisher Electric Cooperative member's farm was help-

ing irrigate corn and grain sorghum fields. In 1980, Lighthouse Electric Cooperative was involved in a solar "power tower" project to help meet the power needs of Crosbyton. The power tower used the sun's energy to produce steam, which drove a conventional turbine.

Also in 1980, Elton McGinnes, manager of Southwest Texas Electric Cooperative in Eldorado, told *TCP* about a geothermal resources committee that was overseeing probes into the earth in search of temperatures high enough to generate electricity.

In 2004, *Texas Co-op Power* proclaimed the West Texas town of McCamey the "wind energy capital of Texas." The magazine reported that hundreds of "monolithic metal giants with three-pronged blades" had brought renewed prosperity. "The wind power source will never be capped. There will always be potential," Walt Hornaday of Cielo Wind Power enthused.

The magazine also quoted a United Nations study concluding that Texas had more renewable energy in wind, solar and biomass than any other state.

Can't you just see it? Today's Rock Hudson and Elizabeth Taylor—George Clooney maybe? Jennifer Lopez?—standing on the porch of their rambling solar-powered ranch house and staring contentedly into the distance at giant, white windmills, blades turning in the West Texas breeze, producing energy forever renewed. And the new James Dean to play Jett Rink? Maybe he plays a poultry farmer, relying on the West Texas sun to keep his birds warm and healthy.

BY JOE HOLLEY | EDITOR 1998–2000



VEHICLES OF THE HEREAFTER

The future, it seems, is a fickle friend. It always gets here faster than expected, yet it ever lingers as some distant dream. Our high-tech way of life has changed more radically than we could have imagined 25 years ago—but we still are not zipping around through time and space like the folks on *The Jetsons*.

Back in 1893, the *Abilene Reporter* noted distant rumblings of “an important change in the method of municipal transport.” Stages or carriages, the paper observed, might soon move London’s populace about by means of electric power. “Storage batteries are to be used. No one ... will deny that the perfection of the storage battery will make this possible.”

By the time *Texas Co-op Power* came along, the internal combustion engine had long displaced such electro-transport visions as the German Elektrowagen. More recently, as scientists warn of the dangers of climate change, the electric vehicle has returned as an alternative. And the magazine has been riding shotgun to report the news.

In 1998, the magazine reported on the development of the Toyota Prius, “the world’s first mass-produced hybrid-electric passenger car that doubles the efficiency and halves the emis-

sions of a comparable conventional car.” The following year, then-editor Joe Holley explained that the Prius used both electric power and a gasoline engine, with an onboard computer that “automatically switches” between them or utilizes a combination of the two.

Today, drivers can choose from dozens of hybrid and all-electric vehicles. As *Texas Co-op Power* noted in 2010, “By 2040, 75 percent of the light-duty vehicle miles traveled in the U.S. should be electrically powered.”

Another futuristic gizmo, the drone, has acquired the problematic reputation of being flown dangerously close to commercial airliners. Yet as the magazine reported in 2017, Pedernales Electric Cooperative linemen deployed the remote control quadcopters to repair lines after the Blanco River flooded in 2015, restoring power in hours instead of days.

George and Jane Jetson, we’re catchin’ up at *Texas Co-op Power*.

BY GENE FOWLER | TEXAS CO-OP POWER CONTRIBUTOR





SMART LIFE

I am a technophobe. I'm doing well to operate a cell-phone and a laptop. So I wondered, how did I end up writing about high-tech "smart life" for this 75th anniversary issue of *Texas Co-op Power*? Then I remembered a story I wrote for the magazine back in 2011: *High-Tech Co-ops Changing Energy Realities*. I visited five co-ops across the state where the introduction of new technology made a significant difference to co-op members. Some were seeing the benefits of the "smart grid," while others were enjoying making their own energy with the help of the wind, and still others were monitoring their energy consumption at home from their personal computers.

The story was not an abstract, speculative treatise on technology. This was real life with real people. The co-op staff and members I met showed me how technology, rather than being intimidating, was something that could make life easier by saving time and money.

Looking back over 75 years, it is clear that co-ops were on the forefront of high-tech developments such as the "smart house," a concept introduced back in 1987 in *Texas Co-op Power* and actually constructed with co-op sponsorship in 1993.

Remember when there was no internet? No tweets? No electronic meter reading? All of which are taken for granted now. The internet alone has altered life with its seemingly infinite capability to deliver information, from the price of hog bellies on the stock exchange to how to make the perfect mac 'n' cheese. You've already heard about the "internet of things" in the pages of *Texas Co-op Power*, and you're sure to hear more as cloud-based apps further enable communication between your smartphone and appliances and electronic systems in your home.

Not only does *Texas Co-op Power* inform readers about new technologies on the horizon, it helps you understand how they work and what the benefits will be. The magazine can fill that role because it's a trusted voice and echoes the sentiments of a general manager who once said, "Before we adopt any technology, we look at how it will make us more efficient and benefit our members."

So maybe I'm really not afraid of high tech, after all. I just need a little *TCP TLC*.

**BY CAROL MOCZYGEMBA | LONGTIME STAFF MEMBER
AND EXECUTIVE EDITOR 2007-2013**



THE FUTURE NOW

The robotic assistants and flying cars promised by the golden age of science fiction still haven't materialized in Texas' homes and garages, but plenty of seemingly sci-fi technologies have. This next generation of tech—the culmination of decades of advances in biotechnology, computer sciences, nanotechnology and engineering—exists mostly in labs and in the cloud (or clouds). But some of it is already starting to show its potential for our everyday lives. The future is now.

For decades, farmers have envisioned a time when automation could put some of their workload in the hands of machines—Willie Wiredhand instead of Willie farmhand. In January 1971, Dick Pence, *Texas Co-op Power's* Washington correspondent, wrote about such visions: "The research quest for new machines and instruments has produced some exotic-sounding ideas ... electric-powered laser beams to control the depth of laying drainage pipe; computer-controlled feeding; electrostatic separation of seeds during cleaning processes; portable sensors to measure how much water plants lose during growth; and dozens of other devices."

But even Pence likely couldn't have imagined how drones equipped with powerful infrared cameras, automation software and GPS tracking could be used

to monitor crops from the air without the farmer ever having to get up from his desk. In April 2017, *Texas Co-op Power* wrote about that technology, which Juan Landivar, Corpus Christi director for the Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension Center, told us was still a few years away from commercial viability.

Such technologies have the power to revolutionize agribusiness. Other tech promises to change the way Texans do business, travel, interact and, well, live. That's why we've got our eye on advancements such as 5G wireless technology, which may one day make broadband obsolete with its superior wireless connection speeds. And artificial intelligence promises to one day drive our cars for us, produce works of art and defend our skies.

Then there's wireless electricity. Long dreamed about, it already exists today in the form of wireless pads that charge cellphones, for example. Researchers are looking to apply that concept on a much larger scale. An oddly shaped tower with a metal ball at its peak, along Interstate 35 East in Ellis County, is part of one such study, run by scientists at Viziv. Their goal is the wireless transmission of electricity over large distances.

"The Viziv surface wave systems will improve the quality of life for people everywhere by enabling the delivery of affordable electricity throughout the world," the company's website reads.

If they're ever successful, rest assured, we'll let you know.

BY CHRIS BURROWS | SENIOR COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST



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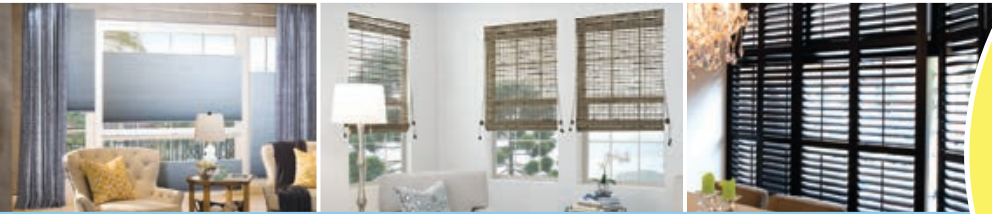
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This is the first in a series of profiles of some of Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative's earliest residential members.



Sarah Beal photo



Arthur Goertz worked on the railroad in his early 20s (in the photo above left, he is the young man to the far right). He said they would sleep on the railcars. Goertz's father-in-law, Roma Hilbig, center above, served in the Army in World War I. Above right, Arthur and his wife Erlene, at their wedding at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Rockne in 1951.

THE ROCKNE COWBOY

Arthur Goertz recalls a vibrant life before and after electricity came to his family's home

By Clayton Stromberger

Arthur Goertz sits on the front porch of his neatly kept country home, looking out over the rolling pastureland and Post Oak savannahs of southwestern Bastrop County, his eyes squinting a bit under the brim of his Resistol.

He can see it all, like it was yesterday — the old family places with wood stoves, that pollywog-fishing spot on Walnut Creek where he'd go with his father and Uncle Albert, the ranches where he worked cattle on horseback for decades, and the spot in Rockne where he met his young bride-to-be Erlene after coming back from service with the Navy in World War II.

Each is a touchstone of almost a century of living, working and raising a family — all within a few miles of this very spot.

"My grandparents lived right up here in Rockne, half a mile from here. That's where

we all grew up," he says in a strong, slightly husky voice with a hint of a German-Texan lilt. The community was mostly settled by German Catholic immigrants, including Arthur's great-grandfather Philip Goertz, and was renamed from "Hilbigville" in the early 1930s in honor of Notre Dame football coach Knute Rockne, who had just died in a plane crash.

Goertz, born in 1923, was one of nine children of Pius and Sadie Goertz, who lived between Red Rock and Rockne, near what is now FM 20. Arthur lived in that

Continued on page 20

“Coal oil lamps — they were hell. You had to clean them. We didn't have time to study at day; we had to work as long as it was daylight and then had to study our lessons at night with those coal oil lamps.”

— ARTHUR GOERTZ

Continued from page 19

home until he left to serve in the Navy after Pearl Harbor, early in 1942, according to his son A.J. Goertz.

“Grandpa and Grandma Goertz, they had around 40 to 50 grandkids.” Goertz pauses to let that image sink in and then breaks into a grin and laughs, as he often does in telling a tale. “We’d get together every weekend. See, they had nine children, and in our family, we had nine. That got pretty thick there for a while. We all grew up here, lived here together. Times were hard, and we had very little money, and we raised everything we needed to eat. And we didn’t have money to buy nothing and didn’t need nothin’. We raised our own beef, our own pork and vegetables. Didn’t have automobiles, no electricity, had to walk to school.”

Goertz is a legend in these parts, a beloved local figure who still attends Mass every Sunday morning a mile and half down the road at Sacred Heart Catholic Church, where he and Erlene were married in 1951. “Oh, Arthur, he’s in his 90s, and he still rides a horse!” remarked one neighbor. Goertz’s oldest son, A.J., reports that the family finally persuaded Arthur in 2017 to transition from horseback to a four-wheeler for his perambulations around the property. He will be 96 in September and still lives on several hundred acres off Lower Red Rock Road in the house where he and his wife raised five children.

Erlene canned everything you can think of, drove the local school bus and filed dispatches about Rockne for the Bastrop newspaper. She died 12 years ago. Their youngest daughter, Julaine Goertz, moved in a few years back to help take care of Arthur. Rambling around the property are his horses, Little Joe and Moon, and his dogs, Buster and Lulu.

There was the time before electricity came, and the time after, and Arthur Goertz has lived a full life in both.

“We had coal oil lamps and didn’t have radio or TV or ice boxes, nothing like that,” Goertz recalls. “And we had these old things they called lanterns — had a handle on ’em, run with kerosene. We’d light it sometimes, go out to the smokehouse at night, get some sausage, something like that. Coal oil lamps — they were hell. You had to clean them. We didn’t have time to study at day; we had to work as long as it was daylight and then had to study our lessons at night with those coal oil lamps.”

Goertz had been around electricity a bit before Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative (then



Arthur Goertz grew up in a large family, with eight siblings. At top, a photo from his childhood, with two brothers and two sisters. From left are Arthur, Richard, Ella Mae, Bill and Nell Rose. Above center, an older Arthur, at left, with cousins Otto, Ernest and Jake Goertz. Above, a family photo of Arthur’s maternal grandparents, Sofia and John M. Grohman. (Goertz family photos)

called the Lower Colorado River Electric Cooperative) came to the area in 1939, because a Delco generator provided power for lights at the school and church. But when he was 14 or so, the mysteries of modern technology came to Rockne. Goertz remembers how magical electricity was for a country boy who’d mostly grown up without it.

“You could reach up there and pull a string,

and the light would come on!” Goertz recalls, a hint of astonishment still in his voice. “And then we got a radio, and you could turn this button here, you know, and it’d make music, and you’d hear words. You’d think, ‘How can that be?’” He laughs heartily. “We all grew up and got used to it.”

His parents bought an icebox at some point and then a stove, and gradually the somewhat spartan and functional look of their rural home was transformed.

“When electricity got here, it was a new world,” Goertz says. “We had one clock, about so tall” — he holds his hand out a few feet above the ground — “and it was mounted in the corner of the living room, the only one we had in the house. Now you come home, and you’ve got clocks in every room, and everywhere there’s light, things like that. But we grew up without that for a loooong time and enjoyed it.” He laughs again. “Never knew better. We had to walk to school, didn’t have nothing but a (Ford Model T), and it wasn’t working about half the time, no mechanics around here. But we had a hell of a life here. We had plenty of things to do, work, good health and enjoyed it. Just went through life.”

Growing up in rural 1930s Texas, young Goertz, his parents, siblings and extended family had to be self-sufficient and live off the land to a degree that is almost impossible to imagine today. “We milked cows, we grew potatoes, tomatoes, figs, plums, peaches. You name it, we had it — sweet potatoes, onions, shallots. Papa had four mules and two horses, each with a stable, each one had their own trough where we put the hay. We baled our own hay, planted our own hay.”

For water, a cistern on a cedar post caught the rain. “We had to go to the tank with a pair of mules and two or three barrels, and get them full of water, and Mama would put ashes in the barrels, and that was what we washed our clothes with. You’d boil the water, put in the homemade soap. We had about everything you could think of.”

It was a Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn existence. When they weren’t doing chores, Goertz and his brothers and cousins roamed the woods and hunted green frogs. Armed with slingshots, they staged fierce raids on wasp colonies. As a teen, Goertz developed a side business selling possum hides.

What he knows best is cattle. “I owned my first cow when I was 14 years old,” he says. Papa gave each son a calf when he turned 14. Goertz hasn’t had “one day since then with-



Sarah Beal photo

out owning a cow.” For decades, Goertz, his horse and his dogs worked cattle on nearly every ranch and savannah patch in these parts. Goertz was the man to call in Bastrop County and adjoining counties if cows went astray or a herd needed expert tending. Goertz trained generations of Rockne-area youth to be cowboys and do things the right way.

That’s what inspired son A.J. to come up with a poetic inscription for his father’s tombstone. The stone is already in place, right next to Erlene’s at the Sacred Heart Catholic Cemetery next to the church. Erlene’s reads, Rockne’s Comical Roving Reporter, for her many years as the Rockne journalist.

“We put it on his tombstone already,” A.J. says: The Rockne Cowboy.

If Arthur Goertz had his way, he’d still be out there in the saddle, collecting more stories. “I’ve been around the world and the United States,” Goertz says, looking off over his land, “and I never saw a place I loved any better than here. And it’s not all that great, it’s just me. I’m country, and I was born and raised that way, and I enjoyed it, and I still enjoy life. I still feel good and

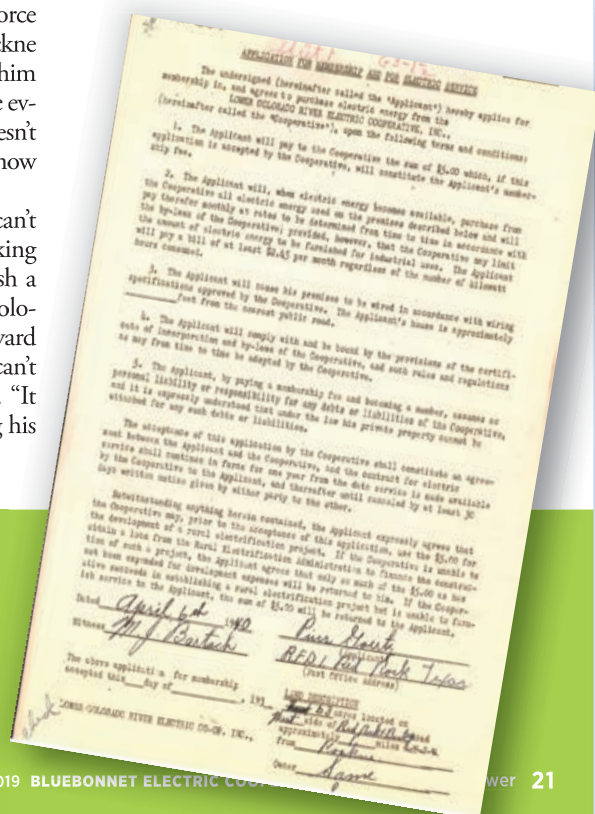
still like to get out there and work.”

But these days, he takes each day as it comes, and though he’s hard of hearing, he loves to spend time visiting with family and checking on the homestead. He’s slowed by age, of course, but still remarkably spry, and there’s always something to do, someone to greet. He doesn’t mind having company each afternoon at sundown for his nightly vodka and cranberry juice and storytelling session on the porch.

If electricity seemed like a magical force to Goertz when it first came to the Rockne area, it certainly still seems that way to him today. His children help him navigate the ever-changing world of technology. He doesn’t have a smartphone but has used one now and then.

“I just don’t know,” Goertz says, “I can’t stay up with the inventions they’re making today. You can stand out here and mash a button and talk to my daughter in Colorado, and she might be out in the yard choppin’ cotton, but you can get her. I can’t figure that out.” He pauses and laughs. “It ain’t real!” And he laughs again, shaking his head at the wonder of it all. ■

‘I’ve been around the world ... and I never saw a place I loved any better than here,’ said Arthur Goertz, above. Below, a document from Bluebonnet’s archives shows that Goertz’s father, Pius, signed up with the Lower Colorado River Electric Cooperative — Bluebonnet’s original name — in 1940. In the document, Pius agreed to pay a \$5 membership fee, which went toward the cost of providing his electricity. Adjusting for inflation, that fee would be \$91.46 today. Bluebonnet stopped charging a membership fee in 2006.



“ We got a radio, and you could turn this button here, you know, and it’d make music and you’d hear words. You’d think, ‘How can that be?’ ”

— ARTHUR GOERTZ

Bluebonnet is celebrating its 80th anniversary in 2019 by visiting some of the cooperative's earliest commercial members. This month we feature one of the many fraternal halls that joined the cooperative in 1939. See a complete list with this story at bluebonnet.coop (click Community, then News).

SPJST is taken from the Czech spelling of Slavonic Benevolent Order of the State of Texas. Members gather outside the hall in this undated historical photo. *Moree-Davison Studio photo*



Also known as Kovar Hall, it once was among the largest dance halls in Texas — and still draws celebrations

SPJST Hall No. 38 (Kovar Hall)

- 278 Zimmerhanel Road, Flatonia, 78941 (former Kovar community)
- Current hall was built in 1926
- Legend has it that, at 72 feet by 100 feet, this was the largest dance hall in Texas when it was built
- For rental information, call Donna Zimmerhanel at 830-839-4353



Sarah Beal photo

By Clayton Stromberger

Back in the day, the SPJST Hall #38 in the Bastrop County community of Kovar, with its huge wooden dance floor and side windows, was the place for a local family to go on a Saturday night — just like SPJST halls all over Central Texas.

After a hard week of working on the farm or in town, Texas Czechs in small rural communities would unwind and celebrate their heritage by dancing to polka music and having a bit of beer as the children skittered around the edges of the dance floor or played chase outside.

SPJST stands for the Slovanska Podporující Jednota Statu Texas, or Slavic Benevolent Order of the State of Texas. It's

a fraternal organization initially created to provide affordable life insurance for recent immigrants; you would buy insurance, choose a lodge and then be voted in. SPJST was founded in 1897, when a group of Texas Czechs met in La Grange in Fayette County and seceded from a similar 43-year-old national fraternal organization based in Missouri. (The Texans thought the policies and prices were

skewed to favor Midwestern Czechs).

The SPJST lodges were numbered as they joined the organization. SPJST Lodge #38 started in 1902 in Smithville, with additional members from nearby Primm (now known as Kirtley) and Kovar, about 10 miles south of Smithville. In 1904, Czechs from Kovar decided they wanted their own lodge, forming SPJST #52. They built a hall in 1910, then a larger one in 1926 — the spacious and sturdy building that stands today, surrounded by pastureland.

It's down the road from the historic Saints Peter and Paul Mission, built in 1921. In 1944, the Smithville and Kovar lodges combined, and opted to keep the lower and slightly more prestigious number of 38.

**Our
Earliest
Members**

SPJST HALL No. 38



BLUEBONNET MEMBER SINCE 1939

Bluebonnet

Q&A

with *Donna Zimmerhanel*

We dropped in on the old hall to visit with lodge treasurer, Donna Zimmerhanel, who rents the non-air-conditioned space out for events when it's not too cold or oppressively hot. When it was built, Zimmerhanel says, this was perhaps the largest dance hall in Texas for a time at 72 feet by 100 feet. The lodge has hundreds of official members, but they are scattered around the country. "Their parents bought them insurance when



they were babies, then they moved away," she says. Today there are five active officers: President Alfred Hellinger, vice-president and hall caretaker Edwin Zimmerhanel (Donna's

husband, whose grandfather helped build the hall), second vice president Johnnie Janak, reporter Dorothy Jean Lastovica, and Edwin and Donna's daughter Dana "Dee Dee" Bunte. The officers meet monthly at the hall, unless it's too cold. In that case, they meet in Smithville at Zimmerhanel's Bar-B-Que.

What was it like to come here for a dance in the old days?

Back in those days, people didn't sit around and drink and visit. They danced. They came out here to dance. They

didn't need tables. When I started dating Edwin in 1958, we used to come out here and dance all the time. We danced in La Grange at the Fair Pavilion and in Smithville at the American Legion. That's what we did for entertainment, mostly on Saturdays. There wasn't a bar inside in the early days. That little cook shed outside was where you went to get your beer. There were outhouses. The music was usually Czech bands, like Lee Roy Matocha and Joseph Patek.

This was a predominantly Czech community. There were a lot of people that lived here. We had a friend that lived in Smithville, (and) he always said the reason they moved away from here was because in the late 1890s the boll weevil struck. They were raising cotton in this kind of heavy land, and a lot of them moved up to around Taylor, where they could raise cotton. Every May, there's still a "Kovar Community Reunion" at the hall for people whose ancestors were from the community.

When did electricity come to the hall, and what changes did it bring?

I'd say in the mid-1940s, when the two lodges combined. I think fans were probably the first thing they added – there are still some old box fans in the back, and they might be 50 years old. They ran lines along the beams in the ceiling and put up lights. But they did the bare minimum. They just put one outlet on each side of the hall. When we had the hall rewired in the '80s, we had to put a big old breaker box on stage for the bands because they kept blowing all the fuses! They also added a fridge and an oven back in the kitchen. I

bet both were donated. We bought a more commercial stove and a commercial fridge. Before they added the bathrooms, there was just an outhouse.

Are there still dances here?

We don't do any public dances any more. When we first started taking care of it, our youngest daughter Laura's husband, Ronnie Frerich, had a family band called the Midnight Owls, and we used to have dances out here all the time. But people just quit going to dances, once they got TVs and phones. I think the last public dance we had here was on New Year's Eve in 1996 because our granddaughter was born that year and we kept her while they played out there that night. The problem (is) you have to have a beer license, you have to have security, and you cannot keep people from passing the beer through the windows. Not when you've got windows like this.

Who uses the hall these days?

We rent it on the weekends through July, mostly for weddings or quinceañeras — we have a lot of those now. Sometimes I come here two or three times a week to show it to people. They'll call me and say, 'I would like to go look at your venue,' and I say, 'Wait a minute, it's just an old barn! It's not a ballroom.' So many people have said, 'Why don't y'all air-condition it and heat it?' Well, that would take away from its ambience. You pick up the key on Thursday, you have all day Friday to decorate, Saturday for your event, you come back on Sunday and clean up. No wonder we rent it! Most of the places want you out by midnight. It's just like my husband said, 'That's what this hall is for, for people to use.' That's the only thing we're trying to do, just keep it going.

Bluebonnet, LCRA grants support helipad, community center

The Lower Colorado River Authority and Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative provided two grants in Bluebonnet's service area in June. The grants are part of LCRA's Community Development Partnership Program.

The Fayetteville Volunteer Fire Department is constructing a helipad that will significantly reduce patient transport time during medical emergencies, thanks in part to a \$25,000 CDPP grant. From left are Kate Holman, LCRA regional affairs representative; Stephen Cushing, former Fayetteville mayor; Rodney Sladek, assistant fire chief; Mark Johnson, Bluebonnet community development representative; Lori A. Berger, LCRA board member; Ronnie Pflughaupt, Fayetteville City Council member; Carl Marino, Fayetteville mayor; Luke Sternadel, Fayette County commissioner; and Kyle Merten, Bluebonnet community development representative.



The McMahan Community Center will undergo a major renovation, thanks to an \$18,880 CDPP grant to the McMahan Community Women's Club. Improvements will include upgraded electrical wiring, new ceiling and wall paneling, energy-efficient lights, rain gutters, rain collection and driveway repairs. From left are Barbara Shelton, Caldwell County commissioner; Ray Chandler, Caldwell County deputy constable; Martha Aiken, club treasurer; Avenell LeMar, club vice president; Kathy Hutto, restoration committee member; Lori A. Berger, LCRA board member; Margaret D. "Meg" Voelter, LCRA board member; Candyce Mueller, club secretary; Rick Arnic, LCRA regional affairs representative; Joyce Buckner, Bluebonnet community development representative; and Pat Parsons, club president.



LCRA photos

Teens explore U.S. capital during Government Youth Tour



Hailey Sherrill, left, a Smithville High School graduate who is studying music education at Louisiana State University, and Carolina Barboza, a senior at Manor New Tech High School, toured the U.S. Capitol, met members of Congress and saw historical sites during the Government-in-Action Youth Tour in June. The teens were selected to represent Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative and joined 1,500 teens sponsored by electric co-ops, including 144 from Texas. Sherrill said her favorite stop during the tour was the Museum of the Bible, and Barboza said her favorite was the Newseum, an interactive museum dedicated to the First Amendment.

Photo by Chris Salazar, Texas Electric Cooperatives

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Our Fearless Forefather

G.W. Haggard was founding editor of this magazine and a stalwart champion of electric co-ops

BY ELLEN STADER

HE BEGAN LIFE A FARM BOY. HE GREW into a staunch journalist and rural advocate. After his death, a prestigious journalism award was named for him. The man was George Wilford Haggard, and he created this magazine.

Haggard devoted himself to a life of defending responsible journalism and the rights of rural people who received electricity from cooperatives. Texan political reporter Liz Carpenter described him as a man for whom “rural electrification is his religion.”

Born in 1908 on a farm in Comanche County, Haggard went to study in 1926 at Hardin-Simmons University in Abilene, where he took a job with the *Abilene Reporter-News*.

Haggard graduated in 1930 and embarked on a career that advanced steadily. He was city editor at the *Sherman Democrat* and later taught journalism at Abilene High School, leading the school’s student newspaper to international honors.

Eventually, the Texas Farm Bureau hired him to edit its monthly publication. Haggard proved an adept reporter and fearless fighter. After helping quash bills in the Legislature that would’ve crippled public power, he became executive secretary of the bureau.

Haggard’s next venture set the stage for his life’s work: In 1944, he became executive secretary of the Texas Power Reserve Electric Cooperative and editor of its newspaper, *Texas Cooperative Electric Power*. (Today, we call the association



Texas Electric Cooperatives and its magazine *Texas Co-op Power*.)

Haggard’s dedication to truth was auspicious, as his new position routinely required him to set the record straight. Distortions and manipulations leveled at electric co-ops by the for-profit power industry (and politicians in its pockets) kept Haggard’s rhetoric at prime fighting weight.

He answered preposterous allegations with fundamental cornerstones of the electric co-op message such as: “Co-ops are not tax-exempt. They pay local, school, county and state taxes,” and “For 50 years, private power refused to serve rural areas, claiming it was not practical or feasible. But the farmers themselves are successfully performing the task that the power people said was impossible.”

Haggard’s honest, outspoken integrity was noticed at the national level. In 1948, he joined the Rural Electrification Administration in Washington, D.C., stating his objectives by saying, “We want very much for every co-op member to realize fully that he owns the co-op. He’ll fight for what

he owns.” A year later, Haggard was promoted to deputy administrator, the REA’s No. 2 leader.

Sadly, in June 1951, Haggard and five fellow REA employees died in a plane crash outside Fort Collins, Colorado. The tragedy left a gaping hole in the REA roster and morale. U.S. Sen. Tom Connally of Texas summed up the feelings of many national officials with his condolences: “I’m grieved and shocked at the tragedy. I knew and esteemed George Haggard. ... His death will be a great loss to the state and the nation.”

In 1958, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association issued its first George W. Haggard Memorial Journalism Awards recognizing statewide publications that present “lucid, forthright contributions to electric cooperative objectives.” *Texas Co-op Power* in 2007 took home its most recent award named after its indomitable founder.

Ellen Stader is a writer in Austin. For more on Haggard’s feuds with politicians, read the June 2019 Texas History story *The Nylon Campaign* on our website.

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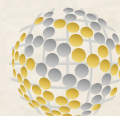
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Here's the Beef

WHEN IT CAME TO HOME COOKING, the 1970s had a split personality. On one hand, it was the decade of sunflower seeds (not widely available until then) and healthy eating. This magazine offered instructions for making a gingerbread house with granola bars in December 1978. On the other hand, Julia Child had become a household name, and popular beef dishes ranged from Hungarian goulash to French *ragoût de boeuf* and spicy bowls of red.

The following recipe, which appeared in *Texas Co-op Power's 60 Years of Home Cooking*, won Gay Dixson (then a member of Pedernales EC) the Texas State Fair El Chico Chili Contest in 1973. A few adjustments for modern tastes (using pure ground chile and olive oil instead of shortening) make the results more vibrant and just as satisfying.

PAULA DISBROWE, FOOD EDITOR

Texas State Fair Chili

- 3-4 pounds chuck, cubed
- 2 tablespoons kosher salt
- 1 tablespoon ground black pepper
- $\frac{3}{8}$ cup flour
- 2 tablespoons olive oil (or vegetable shortening or bacon fat)
- 2 medium onions, chopped
- 2-3 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 quarts water, heated
- 3 tablespoons hot paprika
- 2 tablespoons ground cumin
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup plus 2 tablespoons pure ground chile powder (such as ancho or New Mexico)
- 2 cans (8 ounces each) tomato sauce
- Hot sauce, as desired

1. Place the beef in a mixing bowl, sprinkle with the salt, pepper and flour and use your hands to combine until the meat is well-coated.

2. Heat the oil (or shortening) in a large, heavy Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Add the beef (in batches as necessary) and brown on all sides; use a slotted spoon to

CONTINUED ON PAGE 32



Retro Recipes

Here's the Beef



THIS MONTH'S RECIPE CONTEST WINNER

KITTIIELE POTTS | BOWIE-CASS EC

This light and fresh take on beef is great for August heat. The steak cooks quickly on the grill, so you won't overheat (and neither will your kitchen). A versatile recipe, it easily doubles to serve more, and you can use other fruits besides strawberries, depending on your tastes and what's in season. Try peach, mango or kiwi for a different twist.

Steak Tacos With Pineapple Salsa

- 1 pound flank steak
- ¼ cup red wine vinegar
- ¼ cup soy sauce
- ¼ cup balsamic vinegar
- 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- 5 large strawberries, chopped
- 2 fresh pineapple rings, chopped
- ½ teaspoon finely chopped cilantro
- ½ jalapeño pepper, finely chopped
- ½ teaspoon lime juice
- ½ teaspoon lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 teaspoon finely chopped red onion
- 6 flour tortillas
- 3 ounces feta cheese, crumbled
- Cilantro for garnish (optional)

1. Place the steak in a resealable plastic bag and add the red wine vinegar, soy sauce, balsamic vinegar and Worcestershire sauce. Let steak marinate 6 hours

in a refrigerator.

2. In a bowl, combine the strawberries, pineapple, cilantro, jalapeño, and lime and lemon juices.

3. In a nonstick skillet, add the olive oil and red onion. Sauté until onion is tender and translucent. Drain onion on a paper towel and add to bowl, tossing all ingredients thoroughly.

4. Remove steak from marinade. Place on a grill at medium heat. Grill 7 minutes on each side or until steak reaches desired level of doneness. Slice steak into thin strips.

5. Heat tortillas up by placing them individually on a hot skillet briefly. Fill tortillas with the steak, salsa and feta to make tacos. Garnish with additional cilantro, if desired.

► Makes 6 tacos.

COOK'S TIP If you don't mind the bite of fresh red onion, add it in raw in step 3.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 31

transfer to a plate.

3. Add the onions and garlic and cook, stirring, until the vegetables have softened. Add the cooked beef back into the Dutch oven along with 2 quarts of hot water and simmer 1 hour.

4. Stir in the paprika, cumin, chile powder and tomato sauce and simmer an additional hour, stirring often, until the meat is very tender. Taste for seasonings and add additional salt and hot sauce, to taste. ► Serves 6-8.

Korean Lettuce Wraps

LU FULLILOVE | GUADALUPE VALLEY EC

Make this spicy, tangy dish for a quick weeknight meal. Keep it simple or add other garnishes like cilantro, chopped peanuts or onion. For a heartier version, stir in a cup of cooked rice before serving.

- 1 pound ground beef
- 2 cups sliced fresh mushrooms
- 3 sliced green onions, green part reserved
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- ⅓ cup gochujang (Korean chili sauce)
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon rice vinegar
- 1 tablespoon sesame oil
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon grated fresh ginger
- 1 carrot, shredded
- Iceberg or butter lettuce leaves
- Sesame seeds (optional)

1. Add ground beef, mushrooms and white parts of onions to a large frying pan over medium heat. Add salt and pepper, then stir and cook until browned, 5-10 minutes. Drain beef, if desired.

2. Add gochujang, sugar, soy sauce, rice vinegar, sesame oil, garlic and ginger; cook 5 minutes. Taste for seasoning and add salt, if needed.

3. Add carrot and cook 1 minute. (Add a little water if sauce is too thick.)

4. Serve with iceberg or butter lettuce leaves. Garnish with green onion tops and sesame seeds. ► Serves 4.

COOK'S TIP I found gochujang at my local H-E-B, but it is also available online and at Asian markets.

\$100 Recipe Contest

January's recipe contest topic is **New Year's Resolution**. After holiday excess, you might be trying to eat healthier. Share the soups, smoothies and other dishes that get you back in balance. The deadline is **August 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.



This month, Food Editor **PAULA DISBROWE** offers a favorite beef recipe from her new cookbook, *Thank You for Smoking*.



Togarashi Porterhouse

You might think of a porterhouse as the T-bone's luxurious cousin. Both steaks have the iconic T-shaped bone that imparts flavor and divides the sirloin and tenderloin—the most premium cuts of beef available. But a porterhouse is cut from the rear end of the short loin, so it has a bigger section of luscious tenderloin. The meat is so extraordinary that you don't want to do too much to it. Here subtle heat is added with shichimi togarashi, a peppery Japanese condiment, and a quick turn in a garlic-soy marinade that enhances the beef's umami.

- ¼ cup soy sauce
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoons shichimi togarashi
- 2 cloves garlic, grated on a Microplane

2 1½-inch-thick porterhouse steaks, about 3½ pounds total

1. In a small bowl, combine the soy sauce, olive oil, togarashi and garlic. Pour ¾ of the marinade into a baking dish and reserve the rest. Lay the steaks in the marinade and flip them a few times to generously coat. Set aside to marinate 10 minutes.
2. Prepare a charcoal grill for two-zone cooking and build a medium-high fire, or heat a gas grill to high.
3. When the coals are glowing red and covered with a fine gray ash, add your smoke source (chips, chunks or log). Carefully wipe the preheated grill grates with a lightly oiled paper towel. Using a grill brush, scrape the grill grates clean, then carefully wipe with a lightly oiled towel again.
4. When the fire begins to produce a steady stream of smoke, place the steaks over direct heat, close the grill, vent the grill for smoking and smoke 2 minutes. Move the steaks to indirect heat, close the grill and smoke 4–5 minutes. When juices

appear on top of the meat, flip the steaks and repeat the process, starting on direct heat 2 minutes, then moving to indirect heat 4–5 minutes, until the meat is nicely charred and glossy and an instant-read thermometer inserted into the thickest part of each steak reads 125 degrees, 15–20 minutes total; carryover heat will take it to 130 degrees for medium-rare as it rests. Transfer the meat to a cutting board to rest 10 minutes.

5. Using a sharp knife, cut the meat off the bone, then cut the sections into thin slices. Serve with the remaining marinade on the side. ▶ Serves 6–8 (or 4 steak lovers).

Reprinted with permission from *Thank You for Smoking: Fun and Fearless Recipes Cooked with a Whiff of Wood Fire on Your Grill or Smoker* by Paula Disbrowe (Ten Speed Press, 2019).

CORRECTION A recipe in the June issue misidentified the reader who submitted it. Pecan Potato Salad was submitted by Allison Loesch of Pedernales EC. Please find it and the other Standout Summer Sides recipes from June at TexasCoopPower.com.

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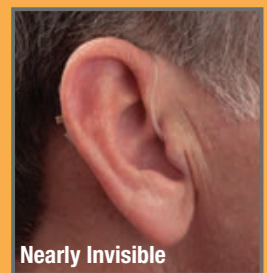
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WEB EXTRAS ▶ See Focus on Texas on our website for more photos from readers.



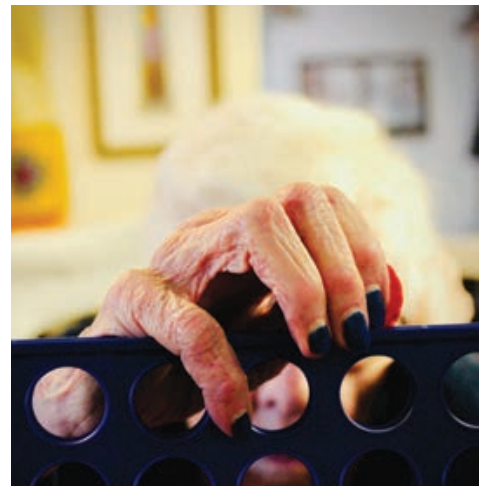
▲ **GINA HUCK**, United Cooperative Services: “Our grandson was born overseas, so my husband had to wait 3½ months for this joy-filled first meeting in Houston.”

▶ **PAUL GARCIA**, Medina EC: “This is part of my Canary Islands descendant family. The Canary Islanders first came to San Antonio on March 9, 1731. We are celebrating the feast day of Our Lady of Candelaria at Mission Concepción in San Antonio.”



◀ **M.J. TYKOSKI**, Farmers EC: “There is a special bond between a little sister and the big brother she adores.”

▶ **JENNIFER STORM NUCKELS**, Pedernales EC: Landon Nuckels, 9, took this photo of his great-grandmother, Sylba Lee Adams Storm, 95, creating family ties over a game of Connect 4.



▲ **TINA WEBB**, Bluebonnet EC: Picnicking with family on a Sunday afternoon beside St. James Lutheran Church of New Wehdem in Austin County.

UPCOMING CONTESTS

DECEMBER DESERTS DUE AUGUST 10

JANUARY FENCES DUE SEPTEMBER 10

FEBRUARY POWER DUE OCTOBER 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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New Berlin September 1
(210) 343-9570

In addition to sausage plates, the festival includes an auction, bingo, raffle, rides, kids games, country store and music by Clint Taft and the Buckwild Band. Proceeds benefit the New Berlin Volunteer Fire Department and Community Club. More info available on Facebook.

August

7

Levelland [7-11] S.P.O.T.C. Dog Agility Trials, (806) 894-4161, malleventcenter.com

8

Athens The Bulb Hunter, (903) 675-6130, txmg.org

9

Alpine [9-10] Big Bend Ranch Rodeo, (432) 364-2696, bigbendranchrdeo.com

Fort Davis [9-11] Open Weekend at Davis Mountains Preserve, (432) 426-2390, nature.org

Jacksonville [9-11] Luau Golf Tournament, (903) 541-4700, jacksonvilletexas.com

10

Boerne Kuhlmann-King Museum Tour, (830) 331-1033, visitboerne.org

Brenham Lavender & Wine Fest, (979) 251-8114, chappellhilllavender.com

Carmine Toe-Tapp'n Casino Night, (281) 799-5113, carminetx.com

Eastland Rip's Sip & Toss, (254) 629-2332, eastlandchamber.com

Taylor Michelle's Hot Peeps Beat CC 5K and Fun Run, (512) 376-8089, athleteguild.com

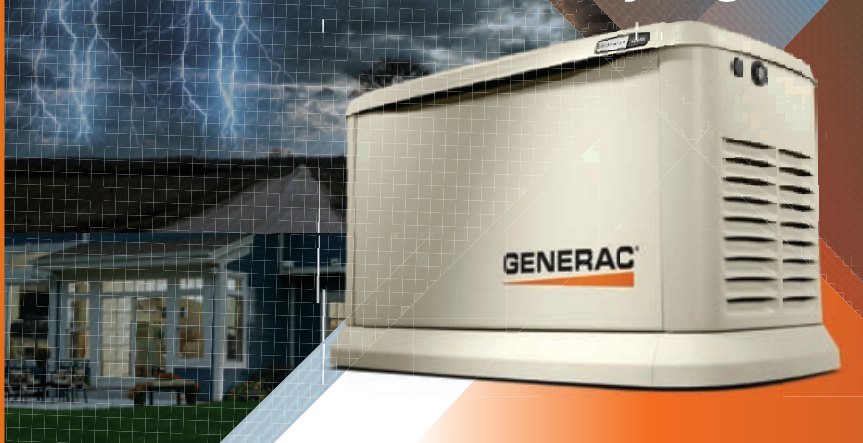
Bandera [10, 17, 24] Bandera Rodeo Club Youth Summer Series Rodeo, (830) 431-1030, banderarodeoclub.com



August 9-11
Fort Davis
Open Weekend at
Davis Mountains Preserve

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16

Wichita Falls [16-17] Texas Ranch Round-up, (940) 716-5555, texasranchroundup.com

Highland Village [16-18] Lions Balloon Festival, lionsballoonfest.com

Denton [16-24] North Texas Fair & Rodeo, (940) 387-2632, ntfair.com

Ingram [16-31] *Dearly Departed*, (830) 367-5121, hcaif.com

17

Luckenbach Historic Luckenbach School Open House, (830) 685-3321, historicsschools.org

Kerrville Kids Triathlon, (830) 257-7300, kerrvilletx.gov

Troy Clays for Christ, (254) 420-8899

22

Fredericksburg [22-25] Gillespie County Fair and Parade, (830) 997-2359, gillespiefair.com

23

Bridgeport [23-24] Wise County Quilt Show, (940) 683-2085, wisecountyquiltguild.blogspot.com



August 29-September 1
Grapeland
Labor Day Bluegrass
Music Festival

27

Stonewall Commemoration of Lyndon B. Johnson's Birthday, (830) 868-7128, nps.gov/lyjo

29

Boerne [29-Sept. 1] Kendall County Fair and Rodeo, (830) 249-2839, kcfa.org

Grapeland [29-Sept. 1] Labor Day Bluegrass Music Festival, (936) 687-2594, salmonlakepark.com

31

Columbus Columbus Country Market, (979) 732-8385, columbusfmtx.org

Doss Doss VFD Benefit Fish Fry, (830) 669-2220, dossvfd.org

New Braunfels The Revivalists With White Denim, (830) 964-3800, whitewaterrocks.com

Richmond Labor Day Backyard BBQ, (281) 343-0218, georgeranch.org

Lewisville [31-Sept. 1] Texas Pop Turns 50, (972) 219-3401, cityoflewisville.com

September

6

Bryan [6-7] Brazos Bluebonnet Quilt Guild Show, (979) 204-4737, bbqg.org

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



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Fun in the Past Tense

Odd, fascinating collection at the Frontier Times Museum in Bandera makes for memorable visit

WHAT DO A TWO-HEADED GOAT, A STUFFED mountain lion and a ventriloquist doll named Gino R Tree have in common? They're part of the weird and wonderful collection of artifacts at the Frontier Times Museum in Bandera. If you find yourself tripping through the Texas Hill Country with an appetite for the abnormal, this is a must stop.

Bandera sits about 50 miles northwest of San Antonio and calls itself the Cowboy Capital of the World. Stephenville also claims that title, but that's a debate for a whole other article. What's indisputable is that cowboy culture is alive and well in Bandera. The scenic hills are full of dude ranches, the visitor center hosts weekly gunfights, and there are plenty of places to eat a cowboy-sized chicken-fried steak. The Old Spanish Trail Restaurant even has saddles instead of stools at its bar. But something you might not expect are the bizarre relics inside the town's eclectic museum.

Few probably remember *Frontier Times*, but for 31 years, the magazine published stories of the Wild West, replete with train robberies, outlaws and gold prospecting. It was started in 1923 by J. Marvin Hunter, a newspaperman and amateur historian. Very soon after Hunter launched the monthly publication, his readers began sending him their own tales along with strange family heirlooms. Hunter believed that if an item was important to its donor, it should be important to everyone, so he never turned down a gift. He filled his office with curiosities from around the globe. And if he didn't know an artifact's story, he would make one up.

Once the collection outgrew the room, Hunter tore down a wall and built a bigger



Chet Garner discovers artifacts at the Frontier Times Museum in Bandera.

room. Before long, he was running a full-on museum and entertaining his visitors with strange stories and circuslike curiosities, which earned him a reputation as the "P.T. Barnum of Bandera County."

Small-town museums can be strange. Some hold nothing more than rusted farming tools, while others hold treasures worthy of the Smithsonian Institution. The Frontier Times Museum is somewhere between those extremes.

The first thing that caught my attention was the building itself. Constructed in 1933, the exterior walls are made up of stone, petrified wood, quartz crystals and brain coral—a fitting allusion to the mixture of items I found inside. It seemed as though every inch of wall was covered: an old photograph, old clock or old taxidermied animal. I began by browsing the stories of Texas settlers but quickly found myself drawn to the stranger side of the museum.

There was a mummified squirrel found in someone's attic and presented in a glass case. There was a shrunken human head from South America, a sculpture made of rattlesnake rattles and a two-headed goat that was born on a local ranch and donated

after it died. Most fascinating was the story of a stuffed mountain lion named Sally that a man from Pearsall had kept as a house pet and that rode shotgun in his truck.

In the back was the Texas Heroes Hall of Honor recognizing rodeo cowboys and others who have made a lasting contribution to Texan culture. I learned about Bandera native "Mighty Mite" Ray Wharton, who was short in stature but could rope a calf like no other and won a world championship at Madison Square Garden.

That day, I gained a lot of knowledge about Bandera's history and a lot of new mental images to feed my nightmares. As I walked out, I asked the manager if the museum was still taking donations.

"Of course," she said. "What do you have?"

"Nothing yet," I replied. "But I'm sure I can find you something."

And after I find the artifact, I can work on finding the sort of accompanying story that would make Mr. Hunter proud.

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 the Frontier Times Museum.

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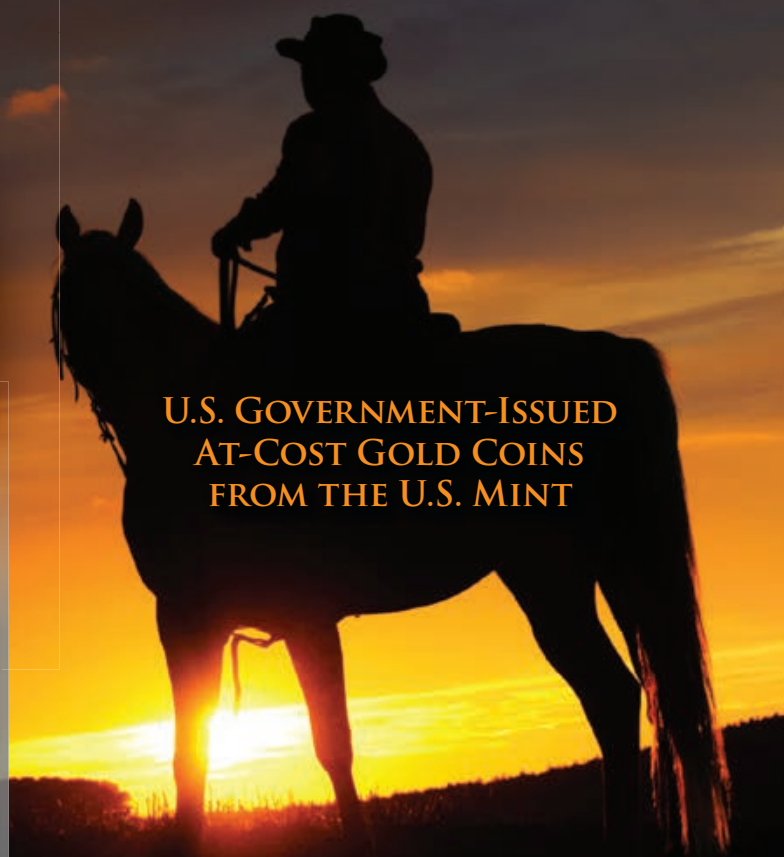
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