

# TEXAS CO-OP POWER



## GO WEST, GO WILD

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SPECIAL TRAVEL ISSUE



BLUEBONNET NEWS  
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The Big Bend encompasses two major parks and three inviting towns.

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**Texas USA**

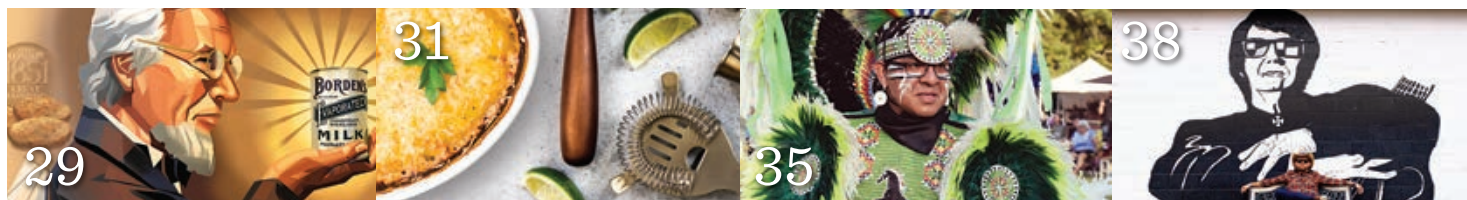
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**Texas Faces**

*A Storied Life*  
By Lonny Taylor

**NEXT MONTH**

**Putting Others First** Volunteer fire departments, with strong co-op ties, sustain rural life.



MAP BACKGROUND: E. DAN KLEPPER. OUTLINE: ILLPOS | SHUTTERSTOCK.COM. FIRETRUCK: ROB WILSON | SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

**ON THE COVER** *Hikers at a natural arch above the Upper Burro Mesa Pour-Off Trail in Big Bend National Park.* Photo by E. Dan Klepper

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## Touching Texas Soil

When I went to my brother's funeral in Norway, I took a zip-close bag of soil from my yard in College Station [*Native Soil*, July 2019]. To make sure I wasn't going to introduce foreign enzymes or insects, I sterilized the soil in the oven.

Before the service, my sister and I sprinkled the soil into the open grave. We were comforted in knowing that even that far from home, his body rested on Texas soil.

JEAN W. MCDERMOTT | COLLEGE STATION  
BRYAN TEXAS UTILITIES

I did this! Lived in Oklahoma when my first kid was born. Had a bag of dirt from my hometown and one from Dad's hometown. The nurse wasn't happy about dirt in her operating room (C-section)!

SUZIE BATES CLARK | VIA FACEBOOK

Love, love, love this story. Wish I had thought of it in 1986 when my daughter was born in Boston. Fortunately, she's in Austin now, and my grandson, Owen, is a bona fide Texan.

CASSANDRA CAMP | AUSTIN  
PEDERNALES EC

## Geronimo and History

My mother grew up at Fort Sam Houston as my grandpa was in the Army. My grandpa was fond of telling tall tales, and one of our family favorites was when



## Far From Texas

I wish I'd had a bag of soil when my second daughter had to be born so far from home [*Native Soil*, July 2019]. While my first daughter, Katie, got to be born in Houston and live there for a year, my second, Jeanne, was born in New York. Then the poor tyke couldn't touch Texas soil till she was 14 months old, when we got off the plane in Corpus Christi.

ANNE STEVENSON | CORTEZ, COLORADO | PEDERNALES EC



he told all of his kids that he captured Geronimo [*Geronimo in San Antonio*, July 2019]. They proudly marched to school to tell their friends and teachers. Imagine their disappointment when they found out it wasn't possible: My grandpa was born in 1902, well after Geronimo had left the Quadrangle.

DEBORAH PAGE | BURNET  
PEDERNALES EC

Native Americans have been mistreated more than any other group of people in the history of this country. Their lands were stolen by the U.S. government and given for free to settlers. Thank you for the article. We must never forget what was done to the Native Americans.

ROBERTA MCLAUGHLIN | LORENA  
HEART OF TEXAS EC

## Wonderful Pigs

I love pigs, so my daddy bought a pot-bellied pig for me and my husband in 1992 [*This Little Piggy*, May 2019]. Yes, he

did grow to about 250-300 pounds, but he was wonderful.

It breaks my heart that people don't really understand what they are doing when obtaining an animal. Thankfully, there are people like the ones in your story who bless these intelligent, wonderful animals.

JO ANN AND TERRY ELY | LUBBOCK  
SOUTH PLAINS EC

## Texas Tech Studies

Tech has a history of interesting degree offerings in hospitality careers. This one is cooler yet [*Grown Locally*, July 2019].

KEVIN STAHNKE | VIA FACEBOOK

## Slice of Life

Giving a knife to someone as a gift signifies a desire to cut the relationship [*Bad Moon Waning*, June 2019]. Don't know if that qualifies as a superstition or an unspoken gesture.

LISA KEENAN | VIA FACEBOOK

## Another Drive-In

Was sorry to see that there was

no mention of the great drive-in located on FM 2920 in Hockley [*Drive In, Chill Out*, June 2019].

C. MARTIN | BELLVILLE  
SAN BERNARD EC

**Editor's note:** We couldn't mention every Texas drive-in theater in our story. We did, however, put together a map of drive-ins across the state, which includes Hockley's Showboat Drive-In. See the map at [TexasCoopPower.com](http://TexasCoopPower.com).

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



Texas Co-op Power

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Dorothy Bray is third from right.

**WEB EXTRAS**  
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## HAPPENINGS

# Fighting Kidney Disease

Dorothy Bray has been hit hard by polycystic kidney disease, a genetic disorder that causes the growth of fluid-filled cysts. She has undergone two kidney transplants and watched her father and two older siblings die of the disease. Her son, daughter and a granddaughter also have PKD.

So Bray, a longtime member of Guadalupe Valley Electric Cooperative, passionately volunteers for the annual **SAN ANTONIO WALK FOR PKD**, which this year is **SEPTEMBER 14**.

“I feel so blessed to live in an age of medical advancement that makes it possible for someone like me to survive much longer than people like my dad ever had a chance to,” says Bray, 72.

**INFO** ► (210) 414-6614, [walkforpkd.org/sanantonio](http://walkforpkd.org/sanantonio)

## ALMANAC

**75 YEARS AGO:** Navy pilot George H.W. Bush was hit by anti-aircraft fire during a World War II bombing run on Chichi Jima, a Japanese island. Before bailing out into the Pacific Ocean on September 2, 1944, he dropped his four 500-pound bombs on the target, a radio facility. He banged his head on his plane's tail after he ejected, and once in the water, jellyfish stings and swallowed seawater made him sick.



## BY THE NUMBERS

**Those are the odds of an amateur golfer making a hole-in-one.** A pro golfer has a much better chance—2,500-1. This month marks the 150th anniversary of the first known ace. Young Tom Morris hit a hole-in-one September 15, 1869, during the Open Championship in Scotland.

## ◀ LOOKING BACK AT TRAVEL THIS MONTH



**TRAVEL AROUND, over and into Texas has marked many milestones in the 75 years since Texas Co-op Power debuted in July 1944. Here are just a few:**

### 1940s

**1945** The Texas Aeronautics Act establishes the Texas Aeronautics Commission as a nonfederal public entity that oversees civilian flying.

**1947** The Spruce Goose, a creation of eccentric millionaire Howard Hughes of Houston and the largest wooden airplane ever constructed, makes its first and only flight.

### 1950s

**1950** The Los Ebanos Ferry, connecting Los Ebanos, Texas, to Ciudad Díaz Ordaz across the Rio Grande, is established. It is the last Coast Guard-licensed ferry in the U.S. to be powered by the tug of a rope.



### 1960s

**1963** The state creates the Texas Tourist Development Agency. By 1970, visitors to Texas would triple, totaling 21 million.



**1967** The first specialty license plate becomes available from the Texas Department of Transportation.

**1969** Houston Intercontinental Airport begins operations.

# Tackling Hunger in Eldorado

**WHEN BRENDA HARDESTY** moved from Austin to Eldorado about 13 years ago, the former social worker didn't know many people in the small town, about 45 miles south of San Angelo. But she eventually came to know Leigh Lloyd, the pastor at her church, First United Methodist, who worked with Hardesty to turn what was an emergency food closet in the church into a full-fledged pantry for those in need.

"Our community has a high rate of unemployment at various times and a high rate of poverty," Hardesty said, adding that stable jobs and reliable child care can be hard to come by in the oilfield town. "So we have a lot of people getting by on very little income."

The Eldorado Second Harvest Food Pantry provides monthly food distributions to more than 60 households, or about 130 people, in Schleicher County. Hardesty, a member of Southwest Texas Electric Cooperative, has coordinated food intake and distribution—the whole process—since the pantry began in August 2016. Lloyd has since moved to another church in another town, but Hardesty now has connections across the county.

"The people that hand out the boxes get a lot of joy from actually giving a box of food to somebody that needs it," Hardesty said. "Seeing how many people in our community are willing to pitch in and help people in need is a fulfilling part to me—to see that a lot of people care in this community and are willing to back it up with some work."

**INFO** ▶ [facebook.com/eldoradoservicecenter](https://www.facebook.com/eldoradoservicecenter)

**Brenda Hardesty at the Eldorado Second Harvest Food Pantry.**



**POWER OF OUR PEOPLE** recognizes co-op members who improve their community's quality of life. Nominate someone by emailing [people@texascooppower.com](mailto:people@texascooppower.com).



## 1970s

**1971** You are now free to move about the state. Southwest Airlines begins service to Dallas, San Antonio and Houston with \$20 one-way fares.

**1973** The Motorcycle Safety Foundation is established, with curriculum shaped in part by motorcyclists at Texas A&M.

**1974** The first commercial flight lands at DFW International, now the fourth busiest airport in the U.S.

## 1980s

**1982** The iconic Pennybacker Bridge over Lake Austin, with its unique untied arch suspension construction, opens in Austin.

**1986** Jeana Yeager, born in Fort Worth, co-pilots the first nonstop around-the-world flight over nine days.



## 1990s

**1995** Bernard Harris Jr. of Temple, payload commander aboard space shuttle Discovery, becomes the first African American to walk in space.

**1995** The Fred Hartman Bridge between Baytown and La Porte, built to withstand hurricane-force winds, replaces the Baytown Tunnel as a means to cross the Houston Ship Channel.

## LOOKING BACK AT OUTDOORS NEXT MONTH ▶

## 2000s



**2003** Space shuttle Columbia breaks up over Texas as it returns to Earth, killing the seven astronauts on board.

**2018** Mid-South Synergy launches electric vehicle charging stations in the co-op's territory.

# Big Bend's

**GOLDEN  
TRIANGLE**



**Story and photos by E. Dan Klepper**

**B**efore you begin a Big Bend adventure, bear one thing in mind: Once you arrive at your destination, you might not want to go home again.

It might be the dry, temperate afternoons and cool evening breezes that keep you here—especially in the summer months, when the rest of the state is sweltering. Or it might be the sensational vistas with their high desert grasslands; rugged, sky-island mountaintops; and miles of empty blacktop countering the traffic-packed freeways and crowded suburbs. Maybe it will be the challenging nature hikes, the one-of-a-kind artworks, the fine dining and luxury getaways, or the quirky vacation rentals. Or perhaps it will be something as simple as the unexpected stillness when you pause during your morning cup of locally roasted coffee and realize that the only things you can hear are birdsong and your own quiet

thoughts. But whatever ends up taking your breath away, rest assured you'll return, if not for good then at least for more.

Big Bend covers a considerable amount of territory. Although composed of only three counties—Jeff Davis, Presidio and Brewster—it encompasses more than 12,000 square miles. That's more area than Connecticut, Delaware and Rhode Island combined. Its vast size means a lot of driving. To minimize road time and maximize downtime, you may want to focus a trip around the Big Bend's "golden triangle"—Fort Davis, Marfa and Alpine. You'll sample everything Big Bend has to offer with the least amount of tire rotation. In fact, less than an hour separates one town from the next, yet each one offers something unique.

If traveling first to Fort Davis, the triangle's apex, you'll likely be driving south along Texas Highway 17, one of the prettiest routes in the state. You'll be cruising through the Davis Mountains, the second-highest range in Texas, and slowly gaining elevation with each bend in the road. The range is a result of volcanic activity that took place millions of years ago, making it ground zero for geology enthusiasts. Avid birders and wildlife watchers also favor





## Visit Fort Davis, Marfa and Alpine—lofty destinations that offer big skies, luxury and down-to-earth adventure



**Above:** Looking northeast into Alpine. **Left:** Stellina is a chic dining option in Marfa.

the range, particularly the upper elevations around Mount Livermore—at 8,378 feet above sea level, it’s the fifth-highest peak in Texas. Considered a “sky island” for its wetter, cooler, more diverse habitat than the elevations below it, Livermore offers a friendly environment for hundreds of species, including a variety of birds making their seasonal migration across North America. Much of the mountain is protected by the Nature Conservancy, which provides opportunities to visit its Davis Mountains Preserve on open-to-the-public days.

My own decision to move to the Big Bend, 20-plus years ago, occurred during one of the preserve’s open weekends in the late 1990s. Over the course of a 24-hour period, I hiked to the craggy peak of Livermore, took a dip in a rainwater tinaja—a natural pool, saw a Mexican spotted owl and sheltered in a ponderosa pine forest during a torrential rainstorm before camping under a canopy of starlight. “I want all of this right outside my own back door,” I thought to myself that night.



Fort Davis features an assortment of quaint, old-fashioned lodging, including the grande dame of them all—Hotel Limpia. Constructed from locally quarried stone in 1912, the Limpia features 21 rooms and 10 suites, an outdoor patio, indoor fine dining courtesy of the Blue Mountain Bistro, and a pool for you and your fellow “summer swallows” (as guests were known during the hotel’s early years). Or, for adventurers on a budget, try the Stone Village Tourist Camp with its creature comforts, a pool and the best deli market in town.

Once you’ve unpacked and relaxed, get out of

**Above: Al Campo in Marfa offers indoor and outdoor spots to chill—and stay warm. Below: El Cosmico, a campground and hotel in Marfa, has a quirky gift shop.**

this world with a visit to nearby McDonald Observatory. Check for sun flares through the observatory’s solar program, in which live, safe views of the sun are projected onto a giant auditorium screen. Then join a star party and see the stars the way the observatory’s researchers see them—up close and personal.

To continue, view some luminaries of the art world by heading to Marfa, where the internationally known Chinati Foundation houses works by Donald Judd, Dan Flavin, Robert Irwin and Roni Horn—members of the American art canon. Designed specifically for the location, the works include *Things That Happen Again: For a Here and a There*, Horn’s hand-lathed identical copper forms; Irwin’s ethereal *untitled (dawn to dusk)*, an installation of scrimlike material that transforms the interior space as the light changes outside; Flavin’s colorful large-scale fluorescent light piece called *untitled (Marfa Project)*, installed in six Chinati buildings; and Judd’s *100 untitled works in mill aluminum*, in which each of the works retains the same outer dimensions but features unique interior dimensions. They are installed throughout two enormous former artillery sheds on the Chinati grounds.

Marfa offers visitors an opportunity to indulge at the town’s latest lodging addition, the elegant Hotel Saint George. The Saint George adds an international chic to the local character, providing stylishly appointed rooms and fine art throughout. The hotel also offers day passes to its Bar Nadar pool and grill, a fine place to swim and socialize.

If you feel a little more adventurous, set up a tent at El Cosmico, a 30-acre campground within walking distance of downtown. El Cosmico sponsors the annual Trans-Pecos Festival of Music + Love with its lineup of bands from all over the country. If tenting is not your thing, book one of El Cosmico’s luxury tepees, yurts or vintage travel trailers.





**A trek around Big Bend's golden triangle won't leave you struggling to fill your time. You'll have plenty to do, even if it's just sitting on a porch rocker sipping a favorite beverage and watching the sun drop.**

Then satisfy your hunger at Al Campo, Marfa's indoor-outdoor wine bar and bistro. With a relaxed atmosphere and uncomplicated menu, Al Campo offers rustic countryside cooking, inspired by Chilean and Argentinian cuisines, and a robust selection of wines and beers. Or score a meal at Stellina, where you can order small plates of queso fundido and seafood tostadas or fill up on enchiladas suizas or wild salmon Veracruz. Stellina, possibly the most popular eatery in Marfa, doesn't take reservations. Just walk in and you'll be seated on a first-come, first-served basis. If it's busy, relax. It's worth the wait.

**W**hen you're ready to leave the high life behind, head to Alpine and back down to earth. You'll find yourself in cowboy country, home to rodeo cowboys, cowboy poets and plain ol' hardworking ranch hands. Alpine, the largest of the three communities, is also home to Sul Ross State University, considered the frontier university of Texas. The campus is home to the Museum of the Big Bend, where visitors learn about the region's history, from its ancient geology to its 19th-century ranching culture. Changing exhibits complement an array of permanent displays designed to provide a comprehensive overview of Big Bend's unique character.

Explore history and then overnight in some with a room at Alpine's Holland Hotel, designed in 1928 by Henry Trost, the acclaimed Southwest architect. Trost designed the hotel in the Spanish Colonial Revival style of the period, and after decades of renovation and repair, its splendid lobby now reflects its original grandeur. The ground floor also features the Century Bar and Grill, a lively gathering spot for locals and guests.

Alpine offers year-round events for visitors, including the annual Trappings of Texas, an exhibition and sale of contemporary West-



**Top: Hikers atop Mount Livermore, northwest of Fort Davis. Above: Spurs from an annual Trappings of Texas exhibition at the Museum of the Big Bend in Alpine.**

ern art and custom cowboy gear; an entire professional baseball season featuring the homegrown Alpine Cowboys; and the Viva Big Bend Music Festival, with big-name head-

liners among the more than 50 bands that perform all over the region during the four-day fest.

A trek around Big Bend's golden triangle won't leave you struggling to fill your time. You'll have plenty to do, even if it's just sitting on a porch rocker sipping a favorite beverage and watching the sun drop. But consider this: The triangle comprises only the Big Bend's high country. A vast network of desert and mountains, national and state parks, river drives, hiking, lodging and dining await throughout the rest of the region. In other words, your adventures in the Big Bend have just begun.

**E. Dan Klepper** is a photographer, author and artist who lives in Marathon.

# Which

West Texas explorers have many answers to this enduring question

Story by **Joe Nick Patoski**

Photos by **E. Dan Klepper**

W

hat do you mean, which Big Bend? There's only one Big Bend!

That's true, geographically. The Big Bend is where the Rio Grande makes a 100-mile end-around of the Chisos Mountains on its way to the Gulf of Mexico. This Big Bend encompasses three majestic canyons—Santa Elena, Mariscal and Boquillas—all within the 801,000-acre Big Bend National Park. That's the Big Bend most folks have been talking about since the national park was established in 1944.

Now, Big Bend also refers to the neighboring Big Bend Ranch State Park, a 311,000-acre spread west of the national park that first opened to the public in 1991.

My first encounter with the national park was a visit at age 8, when I was immediately awed by the Chisos Mountains and

javelinas. Since then, I've paddled all three canyons as well as the Lower Canyons, hiked 80 miles from Rio Grande Village to the town of Lajitas and completed the 14-mile round trip to the South Rim with my family.

I started visiting Big Bend Ranch as soon as it became accessible. I've paddled Colorado Canyon, hiked 14 miles from the Lower Shutup to near Lajitas, bushwhacked to Madrid Falls and spotlighted scorpions with a black light while taking a desert survival course.

The state park is most definitely part of the geographic Big Bend. That was easy to see flying over the region in a Cessna named Brownie piloted by Marcos Paredes of Rio Aviation in Terlingua. The bending of the Rio Grande starts in Colorado Canyon, which

forms the southern boundary of the state ranch, long before the river reaches the national park.

But visitors, especially first-timers, still ask: Which Big Bend? When asked, six people who know the region well, starting with Paredes, a retired river ranger for Big Bend National Park, had



JOE NICK PATOSKI

# Big Bend?



some answers. “What separates the state park from the national park is live water,” he says. “That’s what stands out as you fly over this country. The cottonwood *bosques* and the live streams scattered throughout the arroyos and canyons of the state park are conspicuous and their absence is glaring as you come over the national park.”

Big Bend Ranch State Park is loaded with 118 springs, seeps, tinajas, and Texas’ second- and third-highest waterfalls. The national park has hot springs to soak in, 100 miles of the Rio Grande, a hidden waterfall and Ernst Tinaja—a natural pool, campsite and trail.

“The Chisos [Mountains] are a lot higher than anything in Big Bend Ranch,” explains John Karges, a conservation biologist. “On the other hand, the Big Bend Ranch has the Solitario.”

The Solitario is a volcanic dome, a mile across, that emerged from a collapsed caldera, a wholly unique feature that doesn’t dazzle like the Window in the Chisos or the mouth of Santa Elena Canyon in the national park until you see it from above.

Big Bend National Park is nearly three times the size of Big Bend Ranch and more developed, with paved, RV-friendly road-

**Big Bend National Park, opposite, with the Chisos Mountains, is considered more approachable than Big Bend Ranch State Park, with its sparse amenities.**

ways, big campgrounds, and a hotel and restaurant. The only paved road in the state park is River Road, FM 170, along the park’s southern boundary. State park campsites are primitive.

“You have to bring your own water and carry out your waste,” Karges says. “It’s a little more of a rugged experience.” The sole alternative to camping is a bed in the bunkhouse at Saucedo headquarters and use of its kitchen.

Karges says the national park is tailored for windshield tourists—the majority of first-timers, who tend to stick to their vehicles. “You spend a day or two driving to the highlights at both ends and the [Chisos] basin,” he says of tourists who seek out Santa Elena and Boquillas canyons. On the other hand, “Big Bend Ranch, you really have to want to go there.”

Photographer Crystal Allbright lives and works between the parks and takes advantage of each. “If I want to go on a multiday river trip in a designated wild and scenic area, I head for the national park,” she says. “For mountain biking trails and a few



MARCOS PAREDES

JOHN KARGES

CRYSTAL ALLBRIGHT

PAM LEBLANC

DON ALEXANDER

KARL FLOCKE

dog-friendly areas, it's the state park. If I have to choose hiking, camping or dark skies ... well, then I might have to flip a coin."

Writer Pam LeBlanc from Austin leans ranch, which she visited six times in 2018, including for several multiday bicycle treks. "They are entirely different worlds," she says. "I go to the national park for the South Rim. I can lay on my belly and peer down on a million miles of what looks like ruffled rhinoceros hide. Or I climb to my secret spot on Mesa de Anguila to take in the best view in the state. But when I feel scrappy and wild, like I need to get lost among the rocks and spiky things, I go to the state park. No one can find me there."

The desert, the remoteness and the heat can test visitors of either destination. Don Alexander, a Big Bend regular from Waco, observes that the popularity of the national park makes it difficult to find absolute solitude, which he says is "one of the highlights of the Chihuahuan Desert."

**B**ig Bend National Park attracts about 4 million visitors annually, peaking at around 8,000 daily. Big Bend Ranch State Park hosts fewer than 50,000 visitors, with 8,000 visiting the park itself, 28,000 stopping at the Barton Warnock Visitor Center in Lajitas and about 5,000 at the Fort Leaton State Historic Site at the western edge of the park, near Presidio.

times I have heard people comment that the state park is how they remember the national park being 'back in the day,' he says.

Flocke nonetheless recommends experiencing the national park first. "This isn't out of any attempt to scare people away or to suggest that the state park is only for people who are worth their mettle," he says. "It is simply that the national park is much more approachable. The Chisos Mountains offer contrast of scenery for those who may not be wowed by desert expanses. There are more restrooms, more trash service, better trails, more ranger programs, convenience stores and restaurants. Intrepid hikers still have the opportunity to get off the beaten path, but no matter where you go, it seems like you are more likely to see people in the national park."

Then try the alternative. "The gravel road into the center of the state park is a portal that transports you to an entirely different time and place," Flocke says. "Something about that washboard road really disconnects you from the rest of the world. It lends a wilderness vibe to the park that is unlike anywhere else in Texas.

"First-timers, inexperienced family campers and RVers—go to the national park. Experienced family campers, backpackers, bikers, horseback riders and Jeepers—give the state park a try. Go there before it gets discovered."

One factor that complicates comparisons is that each park operates differently. "The national park is federal and has more mandates, doctrines and management protocols than the Big



**Karges says the national park is tailored for windshield tourists—the majority of first-timers, who tend to stick to their vehicles. On the other hand, "Big Bend Ranch, you really have to want to go there."**

Alexander's most recent Big Bend adventures have been with his 75-year-old brother-in-law, who has mobility issues and a fear of heights. "That means 2-mile hikes with rocky scrambles, such as Upper Burro Mesa in the national park, are out," he says.

Alexander found the state park campgrounds at Lower Madera Canyon and Grassy Banks, just off FM 170, to be less crowded than those at the national park but susceptible to sounds of passing traffic. He says they found "perfect desert silence" camping near Big Bend Ranch's Saucedo headquarters, after driving 27 miles of rough gravel road to the center of the ranch.

Karl Flocke's idea of the ultimate Big Bend experience is "solo hiking through a remote canyon, rounding a bend to the next expansive view and wondering if I'm the first modern man to stand in this spot," he says. "While the answer is most likely 'no,' I find it much easier to entertain these kind of thoughts at the state park."

As a former law enforcement ranger at Big Bend Ranch, Flocke, now a woodland ecologist for the Texas A&M Forest Service in Austin, may be biased. But it's not just him. "I can't recall how many

Bend Ranch State Park," explains Bonnie McKinney, wildlife coordinator at El Carmen Land and Conservation Company adjacent to the national park and a onetime Texas Parks and Wildlife Department employee. "They have similar rules and regulations, particularly pertaining to artifacts and historic sites, but differ on wildlife and land management," McKinney explains. "Most national parks let nature take its course. Big Bend National Park doesn't create water sites for wildlife. Big Bend Ranch has built water sites in remote areas for wildlife."

Maybe the best answer to "Which Big Bend?" depends on which way you plan to enjoy exploring the region. Will you be driving through or staying a while? Does the next adventure involve a long hike in the desert or in the mountains, a short one-mile hike from the road, off-road bicycling or four-wheel drive, or a canyon paddle on the river? With all these options, the answer to "Which Big Bend?" really is "Both."

Writer **Joe Nick Patoski** lives outside Wimberley and is a member of Pedernales Electric Cooperative.

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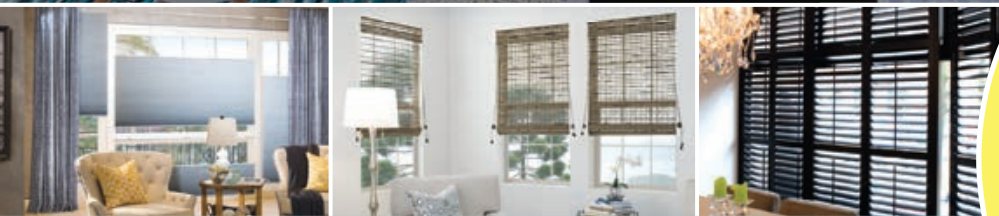
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This is the first in a series of periodic stories on fitness, recreation and outdoor adventure in the Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative region.

## Get Going

— WITH —

### Pam LeBlanc

*For decades, Pam LeBlanc, a Texas A&M University graduate, has written about fitness, adventure and recreation in Central Texas. Her work has appeared in Texas Monthly, Texas Highways, Texas Parks & Wildlife and Real Simple magazines, and in the Austin American-Statesman. She has competed in endurance canoeing, a marathon, half-marathons, triathlons and swimming events. She has found adventures across Texas, in Glacier National Park and in Fiji, Costa Rica, Portugal, the Galapagos Islands, the Caribbean, Switzerland and beyond.*

Pam LeBlanc runs down a shady trail at McKinney Roughs Nature Park near Bastrop. The 1,140-acre park's trails are open to hikers, runners, horseback riders and mountain bikers.  
*Sarah Beal photo*



# ON THE BEATEN path

A guide to **trail running** on the colorful routes all around the Bluebonnet region

By Pam LeBlanc

**S**ometimes, when I'm lacing up my shoes and contemplating a nice relaxing run, the thought of hitting neighborhood roads or community sidewalks makes me cringe.

The same old route? One more run on a surface so hot I feel like I'm trotting on a giant frying pan?

On those days, I fill up a few water bottles and head to the parks scattered around Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative's service area. There, I can log my miles on softer dirt and gravel paths that blaze through fields, twist through forests and undulate over terrain far away from buzzing traffic.

The advantages to off-road running are many.

One, since you're navigating uneven trails studded with rocks and roots, you're planting your feet a little differently every time. That means less likelihood of repetitive motion injury (but a chance of tripping, so stay alert to prevent a fall).

Two, natural trails are softer than asphalt, which means less impact on your body. You'll probably run at a slower pace, but that's OK — you'll feel less beaten up afterward, too.

Three, it's peaceful. You'll hear chirping birds and rustling leaves. The scenery can lull you into a mellow mood. And if you ever decide to do a trail race, you'll discover a less intense, more laid-back crowd of runners at your side.

Trail running takes more focus than road running. You can't "zone out" the way you can on predictable paved routes. You have to pay close attention, lest you roll an ankle, step on a snake or whack your head on a low-hanging branch. But you get to scamper through nature like a feral beast, hopping rocks, zigzagging around roots and splashing through water on occasion.

I like all that, because it makes me feel like a kid again. You might, too.

To scout some of the best running routes in the Bluebonnet area, I enlisted the help of Joe Prusaitis, 64, a former race director who started the Central Texas-inspired Rogue Trail Series and the Tejas Trails race series. He also helped to create a trail running camp for military veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder. He's got more than 350 races under his belt, including 27 100-milers, and he loves to run on trails. Plus, he's fun company, and running's always better when you've got a friend to share the trail.

"It's just where my heart and soul is," Prusaitis says when I ask why he prefers trails. "I don't do it for fitness. I like who I am because of what I do, and I like to do this."

Read on to learn about some of our favorite trail running spots — many of which will be shadier and cooler this time of year — in Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative's region.



Ultra-experienced trail runner Joe Prusaitis takes a break at one of Rocky Hill Ranch's water stations. The ranch has some great running and mountain biking trails, he said. Pam LeBlanc photo

Along the running trails at Bluff Creek Ranch near Giddings, the only onlooker might be a longhorn. Post-run, you can buy steaks and ground beef by the pound from the ranch. *Pam LeBlanc photo*

## Bluff Creek Ranch

**537 Owl Creek Road**

Warda, 9 miles south of Giddings

**979-242-5894**

\$10 per person or \$5 for ages 6-12

### IF YOU GO

Most of the trails are twisty single tracks, with soft dirt- or pine needle-covered surfaces.

The course is one-way, so pay attention to your direction.

For \$20, visitors can sleep on a cot in a bunkhouse at the ranch. Bring your sleeping bag; restroom, shower are downstairs.

### FUN FACT

Pets are allowed, but must be under good voice control or leashed.



**T**his working cattle ranch offers 8 miles of twisty trails that roll through patches of pine trees and hardwoods, a couple of open pastures, a dry creek bed and along a namesake bluff.

“Bluff Creek is a stimulating and multivariable set of trails,” Prusaitis says.

One-way trails, which are shared with mountain bikers, are marked by pink ribbons on the left. The ranch hosts running events, including the Dirty Dozen 12-hour race each February and the Wild Hare 10K,

25K, 50K and 50-miler each November.

If all that running makes you hungry, take note. Bluff Creek Ranch also sells all-natural grass-fed longhorn beef, either ground or in steaks, which you can order online.

Want to make a weekend of it? An on-site campground fronts a nice pond (swim at your own risk), and facilities include showers and restrooms. Or, you can pay \$20 for a spot on a cot in the bunkhouse, located in the loft of the barn. Bring your own bedding.

## Other area state park trails

We didn't run them, but two other Bluebonnet-area state parks offer multiple trails:

### Buescher State Park

**100 Park Road 1E, Smithville**

**512-237-2241**

\$5 adults; free for ages 12 and younger

The park has about 6 miles of trails, most fairly short. Two of them, CCC Crossover and Big Tree Trace, are suited for strolling. Roosevelt's Cutoff, Pine Gulch Trail and Winding Woodlands Trail are open to walkers, runners or mountain bikers. The longest trail is Pine Gulch, listed as “challenging” at 3.5 miles.



### Lockhart State Park

**2012 State Park Road, Lockhart**

**512-398-3479**

\$3 adults; free for ages 12 and younger

Lockhart State Park offers about 3 miles of trails. The best for running are the Clear Fork Trail, with its views of the creek and some of the park's biggest trees, and the Wild Rose Loop; if you enjoy hills, try Rattlesnake Run.



## Rocky Hill Ranch

**578 FM 153**

4.5 miles northeast of Smithville

**361-548-5728**

\$10 per person per day; free for ages 12 and younger

### IF YOU GO

The ranch is open 24 hours a day, every day (except during race events).

If you like to climb, check out Black Trac, which features two Texas-sized quad burners.

Camping is \$15 per tent per night and \$30 for RVs.

### FUN FACT

Grey and Pam Hill opened Rocky Hill Ranch to mountain bikers and other trail users in 1993.

**L**ike Bluff Creek Ranch, Rocky Hill Ranch offers a great network of trails open to both mountain bikers and trail runners. Start your run on this long, narrow slice of property with a gradual climb up a sometimes flower-speckled field beneath a slowly rotating windmill, then cut into thickets of trees and soft, pine needle-coated trails. The owners even staff water stations throughout the property.

At some point, everyone ends up on a trail named Fat Chuck's Demise, which serves up hill after hill of loose gravel and rock. If you make it to the top, you'll find a fake headstone dedicated to Chuck. Park owner Grey Hill said there is no Fat Chuck — the trail is named after someone who helped create it. But winded runners often take the opportunity to yell at the fictitious Chuck when they top the hill, anyway.

We're sad to note the actual demise of an old wooden saloon at the property entrance, but in its place stands a covered pavilion, complete with showers and restrooms. Overnighting is an option, with a shady campground and plenty of picnic tables.

"Rocky Hill Ranch has been going strong for 20-plus years as a mountain bike ranch with some great running trails," Prusaitis says. "The Tunnel of Pines and Avenue of Pines are beginning to age and thin, so it's not quite the lush tree canopy it used to be, but it's still fun."

Each April, the ranch hosts the Hells Hills 10K, 25K, 50K and 50-miler, one of the oldest trail races in the area.

Joe Prusaitis crosses a wooden bridge at Rocky Hill Ranch. 'I like who I am because of what I do, and I like to do this,' he said. *Pam LeBlanc photo*

## McKinney Roughs Nature Park

1884 Texas 71 West

Cedar Creek, 10 miles west of Bastrop

512-303-5073

\$5; free for ages 12 and younger

### IF YOU GO

Some trails are open to equestrians. If you encounter a horse, step to the side and stand quietly as it passes.

Pay the admission fee at the science center, where you can get information on plants and animals at the park.

For best views of the Colorado River, explore the Riverside and Cypress trails.

### FUN FACT

Check out the huge pecan tree on Pecan Bottom trail on the north side of the park.



**T**he nice thing about the trails at McKinney Roughs? They're mostly dirt, without a lot of sharp limestone to shred your shins in case you trip and fall (not that you'd ever do that). If you like lots of punchy ups and downs, intermingled with flowy curves, here's your spot.

One section unfolds along the Colorado River, which curls past in greenish swirls, then takes you up and over hills before dipping into thick woods. The trails are steep enough to crank up your heart rate, but not overly difficult. Keep an eye out for osprey and bald eagles while you roam the 1,100-acre park, operated by the Lower Colorado River Authority. The multiuse paths are directional, with bicyclists traveling one way and equestrians and hikers the other.

"McKinney Roughs has a wonderful set of trails with some great variety, fun hills and waterfront," Prusaitis says. The Circus trail race takes place here each December.

## Palmetto State Park

78 Park Road 11 South

10 miles southeast of Luling

830-672-3266

\$3 for adults; free for ages 12 and younger

### IF YOU GO

Some of the trail is on boardwalk, so be prepared to transition from dirt to wooden planks.

The park offers tent and RV camping,

**I** got familiar with Palmetto State Park while training for the 2019 Texas Water Safari, a 260-mile canoe race from San Marcos to the Texas Gulf Coast in 100 hours or less. We'd take out our canoe in this park, on the low-water bridge. But it's not just about paddling the San Marcos River.

The park provides some shorter hiking and running trails that weave through clus-

as well as fishing and swimming in the San Marcos River, which cuts through the property.

Keep an eye open. The park's namesake is the tropical dwarf palmetto that grows there.

### FUN FACT

Members of the New Deal's Civilian Conservation Corps built many of the stone structures, including the group pavilion, in the 1930s.

ters of the namesake dwarf palmetto plants, which make it look like something out of "Jurassic Park." Link together 1-mile loops through Ottine Swamp, Mesquite Flats and along the San Marcos River, but brace for humidity and watch for snakes. The trail, at places, is an elevated boardwalk. Bonus? You can jump in the river to cool off after sprinting. And you can pitch a tent in the park campground.

**T**he 13-mile Lake Somerville Trailway, which connects the Birch Creek and Nails Creek units of this state park, has been closed for some time because of flooding, but park officials say that most of it was slated to reopen by the end of August. Two damaged bridges remain closed. Birch Creek and Nails Creek trails are mostly open now, they said, but the park is still closed to equestrian use.

Once the full trail opens, trail runners and birders looking for bald eagles will have access to long swathes of mostly flat terrain that traverses oak forest and pastureland, occasionally offering views of Lake Somerville.

Distance runner Fawn Simpson, who describes the trailway as one of her favorite places to log long training runs, said the pump-operated horse troughs on the trailway are good for dunking your head on hot days.

"The appeal for me is that it's 13 miles long in one direction, so when I was doing ultras I could put in a good run out there," Simpson says. "There are lots of places where it's half in the woods on shady, pine needle paths, a few rocks, a few roots, then some wide open running through pasture spots. It's so serene. Sometimes you're by the water, and other times you're just out in the open."

Pack your endurance (and plenty of drinking water) for this one. Keep an eye out for the rarely seen resident alligator of Yegua Creek.

## Lake Somerville State Park

14222 Park Road 57

Somerville, 19 miles southeast of Caldwell

979-535-7763

\$4 for adults; free for ages 12 and younger

### IF YOU GO

Bring a swimsuit. After your run, you can take a dip in the lake.

Runners can access the open sections of the Railway from either the Birch Creek or Nails Creek sides of the park, but will have to turn back at the closed bridges about 5 or 6 miles in.

Campsites with electricity are \$20 per night; those with water are \$12 per night and tents are \$10 per night.

### FUN FACT

Bobcat, river otter, alligator, white-tailed deer, coyote and raccoons live in the park.

## Pam LeBlanc's 12 tips on trail running

Trail running isn't the same as road running. It's a little trickier but a lot more fun. Keep a few things in mind if you haven't tried it before.

- 1** Invest in good trail running shoes with stiffer soles and lugged bottoms that will hold up in rough terrain.
- 2** Scan the trail about 6 feet ahead of where you're running. Last-second changes in direction are tricky, so choose your line and stick with it.
- 3** Pay attention. Roots, rocks and uneven surfaces can ruin a good run. You must mentally focus more when you're trail running than on pavement.
- 4** Watch your head, too. Low-hanging limbs can cause injuries.
- 5** If you start to fall, try not to brace yourself with an arm, just go with the flow. You'll probably just land in a bush, so roll with the punches.
- 6** Take shorter strides because trail surfaces can be uneven, slippery or more challenging than they appear.
- 7** Carry plenty of water, either in a hand-held bottle or in a small bottle on a waist belt. Use sunscreen.
- 8** Beware of the flora and fauna. Watch for snakes, poison ivy and stinging insects.



In summer especially, staying hydrated is a top priority and requires planning for runs on remote trails. *Pam LeBlanc photo*

- 9** Carry your cell phone in a waterproof bag. (You might get to splash through a creek!)
- 10** If you wear a cap, consider wearing it backward so it doesn't block your peripheral vision.
- 11** If you're running someplace you've never been, bring a trail map.
- 12** Tell a friend where you're going and when you expect to return.

**B**astrop State Park, at 82 years old and 6,600 acres, has many miles of great terrain for trail running, with undulating spits of land that crisscross the park.

"What they have there is shaded and fun to run, but ... there is less shade or distance on the back side," Prusaitis says. Bring plenty of water, sunscreen and a wide-brimmed hat on cloudless hot days.

The park has seven trails that total 12.5 miles. From the park's website (go to [tpwd.texas.gov](http://tpwd.texas.gov) and search for Bastrop State Park) you can find both interactive and printable trail maps. Check with the park first to get the status of trails.

There are five trails of "moderate" difficulty, ranging from 0.3 miles to 1.7 miles. There are another 5 miles of "easy" walking and stroller paths.

Lost Pines Loop, at 4.3 miles, is the longest trail in the park, with hills and descents. Park officials advise you to bring plenty of water, snacks and sunscreen on that trail. Take a break for a scenic view from Fehr's Overlook, named after park architect Arthur Fehr.

From May to September, bring your swimsuit for a post-run dip in the big oval swimming pool built in 1937 as part of President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal jobs program. It is operated by the Bastrop YMCA.

The park also offers all types of camping sites, or visitors can stay indoors in one of its historic cabins. ■



## Bastrop State Park

100 Park Road 1A

Bastrop

512-321-2101

\$5 for adults; free for ages 12 and younger

### IF YOU GO

Bastrop's 13 cabins date back to 1934-35, when they were built by the Civilian Conservation Corps during the Great Depression.

Take a break on your Lost Pines Loop run for the scenic view from Fehr's Overlook, named after park architect Arthur Fehr.

Farkleberry Spur is great for morning bird watching, according to the park website.

### FUN FACT

A portion of the historic Camino Real, an important Spanish travel route that helped colonize Texas, runs through the park.



Second in a series on some of Bluebonnet's earliest residential members.

At 98, Mildred Richter still has vivid memories of the days electricity arrived at her family's farm. Old family photos include, at right, the Gay Hill baseball team, with her husband, Wilbert Richter, sitting in the front row, fourth from left. He went on to play for the St. Louis Cardinals in 1942 until he was drafted into the military; Mildred and Wilbert on their wedding day, Dec. 12, 1943; at far right is her father, Fritz Kramer, seated in front and flanked by his parents Henrietta and W.M., also seated and surrounded by other family members.



Richter family photos



Sarah Beal photo





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# A WALTZ THROUGH TIME

**Mildred Richter shares memories of life  
in Washington County before and after electricity arrived**

**By Clayton Stromberger**

**O**ne-two-three, one-two-three ... Like a graceful waltz, Mildred Richter's life has moved gently and joyfully through almost a century of time and space in Washington County — through rows of cotton and corn on the family farm in Prairie Hill and through sing-alongs, church socials and volleyball games in her youth, like the one where her husband-to-be Wilbert flirted by wrapping the net around her.

She went to countless community barn dances on weekend nights, the music often supplied by brothers and cousins who sometimes played till dawn.

She had a happy marriage and raised three sons. Her dance through life included years of taking care of parents and parents-in-law, and being a grandmother and great-grandmother.

And she can still remember when electricity first arrived to guide her way.

Through it all, Richter, 98, still moves forward, just a bit more slowly. She laughs often, makes her famous hot rolls for family gatherings and shows her grandchildren how to quilt. She probably still would be trying to use the riding mower at her home north of Brenham, but her son James cut in on that dance about five years back.

"I took the lawnmower away from her," he says in a firm admission of guilt.

"He was going to put new belts in it, and it never came back," Mildred says.

Richter was born in 1921 in Prairie Hill, one of 10 children of Fritz and Lena Kramer, whose families emigrated from northern Germany in the late 1800s. Land was 50 cents an acre, and her parents farmed 114 acres. Her family lived the way all farm families lived before electricity — doing everything by hand, attuned to the rhythms of nature.

"When I was 6 years old, we'd all be out in the cotton patch, picking cotton, and if it was too hot, we could sit under the tree for a little bit," Richter remembers. "We always had to be working. We were 10 children. When the older ones went away, I had to take over, and the younger ones took over after me.

"Cotton, corn, sorghum — we had big barns, and we

**Continued on page 22**

Continued from page 21

canned two or three hundred bottles of food for the winter. We had everything — peas and beans and cabbage and lettuce, onions. We never did buy any food, except flour and sugar, at the grocery store up the hill. We raised everything we ever ate, we made all our own clothes, made them out of feed sacks.”

Richter rode a donkey with a neighbor the first day she went to school, 4 miles away. The children went barefoot until their father could buy some leather and fashion a set of family shoes.

For a time, Richter’s whole family lived in one house, including her father’s parents. One kerosene lamp lit the living room. “We all went to bed before dark,” Richter says. “But sometimes we’d sit out on the woodpile, and we’d sing at night.” The neighbors down the road would hear the sound and stroll over and join in. “When the moon was out, it was so pretty,” she remembers. Hymns were a favorite, especially “Amazing Grace.”

The farm, which Richter’s father sold in the early 1960s, is still visible from the road in Prairie Hill. The old family house was torn down earlier this year.

Richter vividly remembers the day electricity came to the area.

“Here we saw these people come into our land,” she says, “and we thought, ‘What in the world are they doing?’ And all at once we saw them put poles up, and they were walking on the poles with cleats, and they had these little green cups made out of glass that they connected way up on top.” Eventually a power line from Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative (at that time named the Lower Colorado River Electric Cooperative) led from a pole to the farmhouse.

“We just had one light,” she recalls. “We’d pull the string, and we thought we were in heaven.” Richter laughs at the memory. “My brother-in-law wired the light, without knowing how to do it. We could read and everything, and we didn’t have to use candles or kerosene.”

Richter’s parents embraced the electrical age. “My dad was this way: If he could find anything that worked with electricity, he would buy it,” she says. “A washing machine



*Richter family photos*  
Mildred’s parents, Fritz and Lina Kramer, top, and her paternal grandparents, W.M. and Henrietta Kramer.

and a stove and a refrigerator.” Her father drove to Sears, Roebuck & Co. in Brenham or Montgomery Ward and brought home each new appliance.

Richter grew up using a traditional treadle sewing machine until the electric models arrived. “The electric one worked a lot better,” she says. “But my mother-in-law wouldn’t touch that machine for nothing in the world. She never did — she was scared of it.”

Mildred and Wilbert, a native of neighboring Gay Hill, married in 1943.

Wilbert was trained to be a tail gunner during World War II. But before the war was over, his parents’ health began to fail and he

had to leave the service to return home. He and Mildred lived on his parents’ farm until 1962, when Wilbert’s mother died. Wilbert took a job on a nearby ranch, and the family moved there — with Wilbert’s father — until they built the home in the late 1970s where Richter lives today.

At some point, a television took its place in the family home. James Richter recalls the Saturday night ritual: “We had to watch Lawrence Welk, and Joe Feeney would be singing.”

Mildred and Wilbert danced whenever they could. “He loved to waltz,” she remembers. “We had a lot of fun.”

Wilbert died in 1996. “I still miss him,” she says simply.

Richter uses a walker a lot these days, but she can still cut a rug, softly, when music plays. “My last dance was a few years ago at my nephew’s wedding at Round Top,” she says. “My granddaughter and I both went, and we danced like everything that night. It was good!”

She’s the last surviving member of that big family in the farmhouse illuminated when electricity arrived. “Everybody is gone but me,” she says. “We girls, my sisters, they were always there; we were always together. We quilted together, danced together, taught each other how to cook.”

Her advice to her grandchildren and great-grandchildren?

“Always be happy,” she says. “If they can just keep going, that would be my prayer. You don’t ever stop. You don’t stop living.” Richter works out daily on a gently sloping exercise ramp with rails that James built for her in the garage.

A visitor asks: Would she be willing to waltz a bit? “Sure!” She maneuvers the walker to her little kitchen, a waltz is found on a laptop computer, and Mildred dances again by the small table, beaming, perhaps seeing Wilbert there, smiling back at her: One-two-three, one-two-three, one-two three . . . ■



Mildred Richter’s electric sewing machine is a vast improvement over the old treadle machines of decades past.

“The electric one worked a lot better. But my mother-in-law wouldn’t touch that machine for nothing in the world. She never did — she was scared of it.”

— MILDRED RICHTER

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# LABOR of LOVE



Bluebonnet's line workers showcase their skills and devotion to safety at event

Photos by Sarah Beal

It was a good day to beat the heat. That's why line workers from across the state started their competition in the annual Texas Lineman's Rodeo at 6:45 a.m. on July 20 at Nolte Island Park near Seguin. By the time the strenuous events that required rapid work atop unenergized poles were finished around 11 a.m., temperatures were creeping into the mid-90s.



2

Competitors confronted the additional challenge of facing off in several "mystery events," in which the nature of the challenge is kept secret until moments before the timer starts.

Founded in 1996 and hosted by the Texas Lineman's Rodeo Association, the Texas Lineman's Rodeo is a labor of love for the line-worker trade that is now in its 23rd year. The events are designed to mirror challenges encountered daily by utility crews who work, sometimes in dangerous conditions, to ensure reliable power to more than 28 million Texas residents. Participating utilities, the majority of which are cooperatives, also supplied event judges, volunteers and barbecue teams.

Sixteen competitors from Bluebonnet participated this year. Apprentice Michael Guajardo was Bluebonnet's most successful team member, taking 5th place in the overall appren-

tice category. Out of 122 apprentices, Taylor Rutledge finished 8th, Drew Brownwood finished 10th and Ty Kaspar finished 12th. The journeyman team of Jeffrey Bolding, Chris Rivera and Danny Bolding finished 18th out of 52 journeyman teams.

A three-member Bluebonnet barbecue team competed at the rodeo, serving up its best brisket, ribs and dessert.

"We did very well. Bluebonnet made a heck of a showing," said Randall Bownds, coach of Bluebonnet's team and an assistant superintendent of co-op field operations in Giddings. "As always, I'm very appreciative and proud of our guys for the dedication they put into the rodeo every year. It tells me that we not only have a great bunch of linemen now, but we will in the future — not just in the rodeo, but in how we serve our members." ■



3



4



1

**1)** Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative sent two journeyman teams and 10 apprentices to the Texas Lineman's Rodeo. The 2019 rodeo team members are, back row, from left: Jeffrey Bolding, Danny Bolding, Chris Rivera, Troy Moore, Jeremy Lynch, Kendal Fiebrich, apprentice coach Daniel Fritsche, Michael Guajardo, Drew Brownwood, Tra Muston, Dylan Dussetschleger and Taylor Rutledge. Front row, from left: Ty Duesterheft, James Flores, Ty Kasper, Brooks Kasper and Stephen LaFrance.

**2)** Apprentice Ty Duesterheft works his way through the 'hurtman rescue' event, which requires competitors to quickly and safely lower a heavy dummy to the ground.

**3)** Daniel Fritsche, left, the apprentices' coach, congratulates Michael Guajardo for bringing home a fifth place finish out of all 122 apprentices competing at the rodeo.

**4)** Matt Hollingsworth, holding up some ribs, was one of the grill-masters from Bluebonnet competing for barbecue honors.

**5)** Journeyman linemen Chris Rivera, left, and Jeffrey Bolding team up for a 'mystery' event, working on a pole crossarm on the unenergized lines set up for the competition.



5

## Move-over law now protects utility workers on roadside

Texas lawmakers passed an important bill in the 2019 legislative session that will protect utility workers. Motorists in Texas must now move over or slow down when passing stationary utility vehicles with flashing amber or blue lights.

The state's Move Over/Slow Down law was expanded to include utility vehicles — including those of electric cooperatives. The law already protects police, fire, medical emergency, Texas Department of Transportation vehicles and tow trucks.

Starting Sept. 1, drivers must, if possible, get out of the lane nearest any parked vehicle with

amber or blue lights flashing, or slow down to 20 mph below the posted speed limit.

"We greatly appreciate the Texas Legislature and Gov. Greg Abbott passing and signing into law this bill that will do much to protect the safety of not only our servicemen and women, but motorists as well," said Matt Bentke, general manager of Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative. "Safety is paramount to Bluebonnet. This is an important measure that will help protect our employees and the public while our crews are working along the numerous, well-traveled roads in our service area."



The Texas Legislature expanded the 'Move Over' law to include utility workers flashing blue or amber lights. Motorists must change lanes or slow down near them, starting Sept. 1. Sarah Beal photo

## Bluebonnet goes gold, then pink to support fight against cancer

Bluebonnet's buildings, vehicles and employees are going gold in September to put the spotlight on Childhood Cancer Awareness Month. In October, gold will give way to pink for National Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

This is the second year Bluebonnet has marked Childhood Cancer Awareness Month by illuminating its buildings in gold light, decorating its vehicles with gold decals and handing out gold bracelets, pins or temporary tattoos to members. Member service representatives will wear special gold angel-wing pins to commemorate the month. Employees will wear gold rub-

ber bracelets that say "No One Fights Alone."

For the seventh year, in October, Bluebonnet will bathe its member service centers in pink light, add pink ribbon decals to its trucks, hand out pink ribbon pins in the communities it serves and replace its blue-and-white hard hats with pink ones. Employees will wear pink T-shirts to remind everyone of the ongoing effort to raise funds to support prevention and treatment of breast cancer.

Check Bluebonnet's Facebook and Twitter pages for information about these awareness campaigns during September and October.

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# Gail Borden's Follies

The invention of canned condensed milk followed many failures, including the meat biscuit

BY MARTHA DEERING

GAIL BORDEN JR., AN INVETERATE INVENTOR with just a year and a half of formal schooling and not a scintilla of scientific training, discovered an ingenious method of condensing milk so it could be stored without refrigeration and safely shipped great distances. The 1856 invention reversed the dismal failure of his earlier discoveries.

In 1844, when he lived in Galveston, Borden lost his wife and 4-year-old son to yellow fever. Devastated, he reasoned that, because the disease raged in summer and receded after the first frost, a giant refrigerator could “keep patients for a week under a white frost” and cure them. No one volunteered to test the theory.

Another invention, a terraqueous machine, was supposed to navigate land and sea equally well. The wagon-sailboat combination, complete with mast, sail and wheels that served as paddles in the water, worked admirably when a horse pulled it across land. However, on its first voyage into the Gulf of Mexico, the contraption capsized and dumped its passengers into the surf.

Despite these spectacular failures, Borden was not a buffoon. Born in 1801 in Norwich, New York, he was a teacher and surveyor and was said to have been captain of the local militia before his move to Galveston. In Texas, he founded a newspaper, *The Telegraph and Texas Register*, and prepared the first topographical map of the state.

In 1849, a Borden invention called meat



biscuits promised wholesome, portable nutrition, and the biscuits won a gold medal at London's Great Exhibition in 1851. Borden explained that the nutritive portions of beef or another meat would be separated from the bones and other parts of the body by boiling. Next, the water holding the nutritious matters in solution would first be evaporated to extreme thickness and then made into a dough with firm wheat flour. This meaty dough would be rolled and cut into a biscuit shape, then baked at a moderate heat to achieve the appearance and firmness of crackers—so it would keep for years.

The chairman of jurors at the Great Exhibition called it “one of the most important discoveries of the age.” Borden set up a plant in Galveston to manufacture meat biscuits for a worldwide market. Borden planned to market them with a partner named Ashbel Smith.

“Dr. Smith, a gentleman of scientific reputation,” according to an 1850 article in *Scientific American*, “has communicated a paper on the subject to Prof. Bache, president of the American Association for the Advancement of Science,” in which he

says, “I have several times eaten of the soup made of this meat biscuit. It has a fresh, lively, clean and thoroughly done or cooked flavor.”

In spite of favorable recommendations from Smith; Texas Ranger Rip Ford, who preferred to sweeten and fry the biscuits; and Dr. Elisha Kent Kane, who took a supply on two Arctic expeditions, the meat biscuit failed to win badly needed military contracts.

The Army deemed it “not only unpalatable, but [it] failed to appease the cravings of hunger, producing headache, nausea and great muscular depression.” By 1852, Borden, who had poured his fortune into the manufacture of meat biscuits, was bankrupt.

Just three years later, in 1855, he employed an oddly shaped copper vacuum pan to successfully condense milk. The dairy business boomed. Borden's Eagle Brand Condensed Milk saw many a starving soldier through the Civil War and escorted Gail Borden's bank balance back into the black.

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



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**OFFICIAL RULES:** ALL PRIZES GUARANTEED TO BE AWARDED AS OFFERED. NO PURCHASE OR PAYMENT NECESSARY TO WIN. VOID WHERE PROHIBITED. ALL GIVEAWAYS ARE VOID IN THE PROVINCE OF QUEBEC AND RESIDENTS OF THAT PROVINCE ARE NOT ELIGIBLE TO ENTER OR WIN. Contest Officials will take a special early look for a matching winning number in just a few weeks. A prize of \$1,000.00 A-Day-For-Life will be paid to the winner of Giveaway No. 13000 if the timely returned winning entry for our October 25th Special Early Look SuperPrize Event comes from this promotion. If an eligible matching winning number is not returned, an alternate winner will receive a \$1,000,000.00 prize. Award subject to verification of identity and eligibility. Winner must sign an Affidavit of Eligibility within 30 days or alternate winner will be selected. Principals and employees of PCH and their immediate families are not eligible. Board of Judges' decisions are final. Bulk entries will not be accepted. Not responsible for lost or mutilated mail. Entry constitutes permission to use winner's name and photograph in television commercials, in website promotions, and for other promotional purposes, unless prohibited by law. Subject to complete Official Rules available at website or mail address provided. Entry must be received by 10/4/19.

**SWEEPS FACTS:** Giveaway No. 13000; End Date: 2/28/20; Est. Odds of Winning: 1 in 6,200,000,000. **You Have Not Yet Won. All Entries Have the Same Chance of Winning.** We don't know who the winner is. **Enter For Free.** You don't have to buy anything to enter. **Enter As Often As You Like.** You may submit additional entries by writing to the address provided. Each entry request must be mailed separately. **Buying Won't Help You Win.** Your chances of winning are the same as someone who buys something.



**ACCREDITED  
BUSINESS  
A+ Rating**

## Happy Hours

THANKS TO THE LAUNCH OF THE FOOD Network and culinary celebrities like Martha Stewart, Emeril Lagasse and Wolfgang Puck, the 1990s ushered in an exciting decade of “gourmet” home cooking. Salsa surpassed ketchup as the country’s favorite condiment, miniature vegetables and grape tomatoes became salad staples, and instead of spaghetti, we proudly prepared fettucine, rigatoni, penne and other types of pasta. Recipes that showcase a specialty ingredient (like this Vidalia Onion Dip, which ran in March 1998), seem to say, “This is not your grandmother’s Lipton Onion Soup dip.”

PAULA DISBROWE, FOOD EDITOR

### Vidalia Onion Dip

- 2 large Vidalia or 1015 sweet onions, finely chopped
- 1½ cups shredded Parmesan cheese, divided use
- 1 cup mayonnaise
- 1 cup sour cream
- ¼ cup fresh dill, lightly chopped (or 2½ teaspoons dried dill), divided use
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley
- 1 tablespoon prepared horseradish
- Pinch crushed red pepper flakes
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, as desired

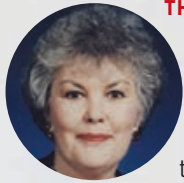
1. Preheat oven to 325 degrees.
  2. Place onions, 1 cup Parmesan, mayonnaise, sour cream, 3 tablespoons dill (or 2 teaspoons dried), parsley, horseradish and red pepper flakes in a mixing bowl and use a spatula to combine. Season to taste with salt and pepper, then transfer the mixture to a deep-dish 10-inch pie dish. Sprinkle the top evenly with the remaining ½ cup of Parmesan and remaining dill.
  3. Bake 40–45 minutes until lightly browned. Serve with chips or crackers.
- Serves 4–6.

**COOK’S TIP** To create a crispier top, bake the dip in a 9-by-13-inch casserole and finish it under the broiler.

BACKGROUND: MARCIN JUCIA | SHUTTERSTOCK.COM; DIP: IRINA ROSTONINA | SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

# Retro Recipes

## Happy Hours



### THIS MONTH'S RECIPE CONTEST WINNER

MILLIE KIRCHOFF | NUECES EC

"These are great for family gatherings or parties," says Kirchoff, who has five grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. "We have fresh tomatoes often, so those were the inspiration for the recipe. I've tried these with different fillings, but this is the way my family likes them." With their flaky crust and savory filling, we like them, too!

### Bacon and Tomato Minicups

- 1 pound bacon, cooked and crumbled
- 2 medium tomatoes, chopped
- 1 bunch green onions, chopped
- 1 cup finely shredded Monterey Jack cheese
- ½ cup mayonnaise
- 1 8-count tube (16 ounces) flaky buttermilk biscuits

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees.
2. Mix bacon, tomatoes, green onions, cheese and mayonnaise in a bowl.

3. Apply cooking spray to mini-muffin pans. Cut each raw biscuit into fourths and roll each into a ball. Flatten partial biscuits between 2 sheets of waxed paper with a rolling pin. Gently form each piece of dough into a minimuffin cup.
4. Fill with bacon and tomato mixture. Bake 12 minutes. ▶ Makes 32 minicups.

**COOK'S TIP** For a zestier flavor, add Mrs. Dash and/or cayenne pepper, to taste.

### Texas Rattlesnake Eggs

BETH GERHARDT | GUADALUPE VALLEY EC

"I've been making these Rattlesnake Eggs for over 30 years," says Gerhardt. "It's my most requested appetizer. I take these 'eggs' to parade-watching parties, Super Bowl parties or any get-together. Just a warning—they will disappear quickly!"

- 24 medium-size fresh jalapeño peppers
- 8 mozzarella cheese sticks
- 2 cups buttermilk baking mix
- 1 pound hot pork breakfast sausage
- 1 pound grated cheddar cheese
- 1 teaspoon red pepper flakes
- 1 teaspoon garlic salt

1. Line a cookie sheet with parchment or aluminum foil.
2. Remove the stems and seeds of the jalapeños, keeping each whole.
3. Cut the cheese sticks into thirds and stuff a cheese piece into each pepper. Set aside.
4. Preheat oven to 325 degrees.
5. Using a stand mixer, combine the baking mix, pork sausage, cheese and spices; mix until it forms into a stiff dough. Form dough into 24 rounded balls of equal size using a cookie scoop or heaping tablespoon. Take one piece of dough, flatten it and shape it around one stuffed jalapeño to completely seal it inside. Continue to form the dough pieces around each pepper until all are covered.
6. Place the "eggs" on the prepared baking sheet and bake 30–40 minutes, or until lightly browned. ▶ Makes 24 appetizers.

**COOK'S TIP** Wear disposable gloves when deseeding the peppers.

### Grilled Onion Mushroom Cheeseburger Dip

MARIAN EVONIUK | PEDERNALES EC

Evoniuk loves caramelized onions and mushrooms, and she knows almost everyone loves cheeseburgers, so she decided to create a dip with all those flavors. "It's like a cheeseburger with onions and mushrooms in a bowl and maybe just a little easier to eat," she says.

- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 sweet onion, coarsely chopped
- 2 cups (8 ounces) cremini mushrooms, coarsely chopped



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### \$100 Recipe Contest

February's recipe contest topic is **Forget Chocolate, My Sweetie Likes...** Not everyone is wild about chocolate. What unexpected treat do you make for your valentine? The deadline is **September 10**.

ENTER ONLINE at [TexasCoopPower.com/contests](http://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.

- 1 large clove garlic, minced
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- ½ teaspoon dried dill
- 1 pound ground beef
- 1 tub (7.5 ounces) chive and onion cream cheese spread
- ¾ cup mayonnaise
- ¾ cup sour cream
- 1 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 baguette, cut into ½-inch slices and toasted

1. Melt butter in a large nonstick skillet. Add onion, cover and cook on low heat about 30 minutes or until onion begins to caramelize.
2. Add the mushrooms, garlic, salt, pepper and dill. Raise heat to medium, cover and cook 10 minutes. Uncover and continue cooking until any remaining liquid from the mushrooms has evaporated, about 7–10 minutes. Remove from heat and transfer to a large glass mixing bowl. Set aside.
3. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

## Happy Hour in Just Minutes

The recipes on these pages require some shopping and forethought. But what do you do when a happy hour breaks out unexpectedly? Friends drop over, wine corks are loosened, and you need something to munch on. You may be able to find what you need in your pantry, fridge and freezer.

**Make up a quick relish tray** with any pickles, olives, peppers or other marinated vegetables you might have. **Cut vegetables** from the crisper drawer into sticks or bite-size pieces and serve

with any creamy dressing you have on hand.

**Raid the pantry** for crackers, cut sandwich cheese from the fridge and slice an apple.

**Voilà!** Instant party!

—SHANNON OELRICH



4. Crumble ground beef into the same skillet. Cover and cook over medium heat until beef is cooked through. Drain juices and transfer meat to the same bowl as the onion-mushroom mixture.
5. Add the cream cheese spread, mayonnaise, sour cream and Parmesan to meat mixture. Mix well and transfer to an 8-by-8-inch (or similar) oven-safe baking dish.

6. Bake until top is light brown and bubbly, about 20–30 minutes. Remove and serve hot with toasted baguette slices. ▶ Serves 12–14.

### WEB EXTRAS

▶ Read these recipes on our website to see the original Vidalia Onion Dip recipe from March 1998.

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# Texas Vacation

WHETHER BOATING, HIKING, swimming, fishing, making s'mores by firelight or checking in to a swanky hotel, Texans really know how to cut loose! Won't you join us? Lord willing and the creek don't rise, we roll out at first light. **GRACE FULTZ**

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

◀ **TANYA MURPHY**, Pedernales EC: Murphy's granddaughter enjoys her pool with spraying water. Her cow friends seem to want to join her.



▲ **DAVID LARGENT**, HILCO EC: The Light-house formation at Palo Duro Canyon State Park.

▼ **VALLERY ORR**, Houston County EC: The iconic Gulf Glider at Galveston Island Historic Pleasure Pier.



▲ **VICTORIA JOHNSON**, Sam Houston EC: Dancer at the 50th annual Alabama-Coushatta Powwow in Livingston.

▼ **MICHAEL CULOTTA**, Cherokee County EC: Surf fishing at Sea Rim State Park in Sabine Pass.



## UPCOMING CONTESTS

JANUARY FENCES	DUE SEPTEMBER 10
FEBRUARY POWER	DUE OCTOBER 10
MARCH FIRST RIDE	DUE NOVEMBER 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](http://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 Texas Arts & Crafts Fair

**Ingram** September 28-29

(830) 367-5121, txartsandcraftsfair.com

Renowned Southwestern artist Amado Peña returns to his Texas roots as the featured heritage artist at the fair. Peña, a Laredo native who now lives in Santa Fe, New Mexico, got his start at the Texas State Arts & Crafts Fair almost 50 years ago. He is among dozens of artists whose works will be on display.



PEÑA: COURTESY ANNIE COBURN | FAB SENIOR TRAVEL. CANOES: BROCREATIVE | SHUTTERSTOCK.COM. PLANE: FRANK PETERS | STOCK.ADOBE.COM

## September

7

**Beaumont Neches River Rally**, (409) 543-7967, bigthicket.org

**Goliad The Calm Before the Storm**, (361) 645-3752, texasarmy.org

**Henderson Alive & Kicking Art Show**, (903) 475-2604, facebook.com/aliveandkickingartshow

**Mansfield Music Alley**, (817) 728-3382, mansfieldmusicalley.com

8

**Yorktown Holy Cross Catholic Church Festival**, (361) 564-2893, holycrossyorktown.net

12

**Little Elm [12-15] Autumn Fest**, (972) 731-3296, littleelm.org

13

**Caldwell [13-14] Creative Memories Quilt Guild Quilt Show**, (512) 567-5020

September 7  
Beaumont  
Neches River Rally



14

**Buda Hornet Races**, (512) 376-8089, athleteguild.com

**Lakehills American Legion Centennial**, (830) 751-3711, alpost410.com

**Sanger SELLabration**, (940) 458-7702, sangertexas.com

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**Medina** [14-21] **QuiltFest**, (830) 589-2825, medinacommunitylibrary.us

## 20

**Sulphur Springs** [20-21] **Lone Star Heritage Quilt Guild Quilt Show**, (903) 235-5700, sulphurspringstxquilts.com

**Grandview** [20-22] **Antique Alley Texas**, (817) 666-5024, antiquealleytexas.com

**Plano** [20-22] **Balloon Festival**, (972) 867-7566, planoballoonfest.org

## 21

**Anson Party in the Park**, (325) 823-3259

**Bonham Farming Heritage Day**, (903) 583-5558, thc.texas.gov

**Bulverde Jubilee**, (210) 213-4319, bulverdejubilee.com

**Hallettsville Rock It, Don't Knock It Benefit Playday**, (361) 578-8182, theridingtherapycenter.org

**Pontotoc Pontotoc Ranch Fire Department BBQ & Cake Auction**, (325) 251-6670

**Terrell Flights of Our Fathers Air Show & Fly-In**, (972) 551-1122, bftsmuseum.org

**Victoria Conquer Chiari Walk Across America**, (361) 648-8948, conquerchiari.org

## 27

**Louise** [27-28] **Louise/Hillje BBQ Cook-Off & Fall Festival**, (979) 541-7056

**Trinity** [27-28] **Community Fair**, (936) 661-6138

**Lockhart** [27-29] **Western Swing & BBQ Festival**, (512) 745-0659, lockhartfest.com

September 21  
Terrell  
Flights of Our Fathers  
Air Show & Fly-In



**Round Rock** [27-29] **Texas All British Car Days**, (512) 522-5461, txabcd.org

**Burton** [27-Oct. 5] **La Bahia Antique Show and Sale**, (979) 289-2684, labahiaantiques.com

## 28

**Dumas Museum Day**, (806) 935-3113, dumasmuseumandartcenter.org

**Flower Mound Fido Fest**, humanetomorrow.org/fidofest

**Mount Selman Bull Nettle Festival**, (903) 372-6607, facebook.com/bullnettlesfestival

## October

### 4

**Forney** [4-6] **St. Martin of Tours 108th Annual Carnival**, (972) 564-9114, stmartinforney.org

### Submit Your Event!

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

## AROUND TEXAS EVENT CALENDAR

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# Wink's Spectacle

A dot on the map in West Texas boasts keepsakes from Roy Orbison's career

WHAT DO WILLIE NELSON, JANIS JOPLIN, George Strait and Roy Orbison have in common? Besides being some of America's iconic musicians, all were born in small towns in Texas. From Joplin's Port Arthur to Strait's Poteet, Texans love their home-grown troubadours. I recently made the long drive to Wink to pay homage to Orbison, one of my favorite crooners.

Sandwiched between Kermit and Pyote, Wink is a town with a population under 1,000 and not a stoplight to its name. As they say, "If you Wink, you'll miss it." It's internationally known for nearby sink-holes, named "Wink Sinks," but its true claim to fame is that it was the childhood home of the *Oh, Pretty Woman* singer himself, Roy Kelton Orbison.

I Drove All Night to get to Wink (not really, but what a great song) and arrived to find a small building with a mural of Orbison and branded "MUSEUM." It was closed, but posted on the door was a number for a volunteer who was gracious enough to open the museum for me. Note to Orbison fans: If you plan to visit, call first and arrange a time.

My Orbison education began. It turns out the man in the mysterious glasses wasn't born in Wink but 350 miles away, in Vernon, in 1936. When Orbison was 6, his father gave him a guitar and changed his life. In 1946, the family moved to Wink, and by 1949, Orbison had formed the Wink Westerners, playing honky-tonks and getting local radio airtime. Orbison's 1954 Wink High School yearbook stated, "To lead a Western band is his after school wish."



**A Roy Orbison mural makes the museum devoted to him hard to miss.**

45s, including *Only the Lonely*, *Love Hurts* and *Crying*. There was a guitar played by Orbison but owned by a neighbor, who received it one Christmas morning and immediately took it to Orbison for tuning. Newspaper clippings sang of his worldwide success; one quoted Elvis Presley calling Orbison "quite possibly the greatest singer in the world."

I was impressed with it all. However, I had yet to see the *pièce de résistance*. As I stared at items in one of the cases, the volunteer asked if I'd like to see the glasses. I assumed she was talking about the dark-rimmed, purple-hued glasses in the case. I said "sure," and she explained that these were Orbison's last pair of prescription sunglasses worn at his last concert, in 1988. "Folks love trying them on," she said. My jaw dropped.

I slowly slid them on my nose and immediately thought, "I can't see anything." Contrary to popular opinion, Orbison wasn't blind, but he did have poor


Every inch of the museum, maybe 20 feet wide and 15 feet deep, was full of memorabilia. There were

eyesight and needed the Coke-bottle glasses. The dark glasses became his signature look when he was on tour with the Beatles in 1963 and forgot his regular glasses on a plane. He wore his sunglasses onstage and never looked back. Donning his glasses was like trying on one of Elvis' jumpsuits or one of Dolly Parton's wigs.

The glasses could easily be in the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame but are here for folks to try on in Wink. How crazy is that? I nervously handed them back and let out a sigh of relief knowing I wouldn't be responsible for dropping a priceless artifact.

I had walked into the museum a true Roy Orbison fan and left even more so. His unique voice was unmatched. My experience proves what all Texans know—that big things can come from small towns. It also proves that when traveling the back roads of Texas, one can never be sure what one might find. Sometimes reality is even better than what you discover *In Dreams*.

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 Roy Orbison Museum in Wink.

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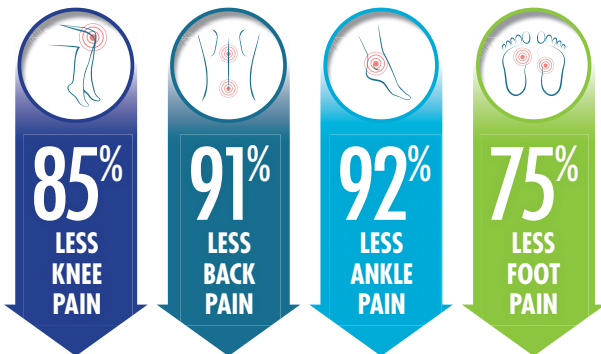


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\*Prices include Hopper Duo for qualifying customers. Hopper, Hopper w/Sling or Hopper 3 \$5/mo. more. Upfront fees may apply based on credit qualification. Fees apply for additional TVs: Hopper \$15/mo., Joey \$5/mo., Super Joey \$10/mo. All offers require credit qualification, 2-Year commitment with early termination fee and eAutoPay. Offer for new and qualifying former customers only. Important Terms and Conditions: Upfront activation and/or receiver upgrade fees may apply based on credit qualification. Offer ends 11/13/19. 2-Year Commitment: Early termination fee of \$20/mo. remaining applies if you cancel early. Included in 2-year price guarantee at \$59.99 advertised price: America's Top 120 programming package, local channels, HD service fees, and Hopper Duo for 1 TV. Included in 2-year price guarantee for additional cost: Programming package upgrades (\$69.99 for AT120+, \$79.99 for AT200, \$89.99 for AT250), monthly fees for upgraded or additional receivers (\$5-\$7 per additional TV, receivers with additional functionality may be \$10-\$15). NOT included in 2-year price guarantee or advertised price (and subject to change): Taxes & surcharges, add-on programming (including premium channels), DISH Protect, and transactional fees. Premium Channels: 3 Mos. Free: After 3 mos., you will be billed \$30/mo. for Showtime, STARZ, and DISH Movie Pack unless you call to cancel. Requires credit qualification, 2-year commitment with early termination fee and eAutoPay. Hopper upgrade fee may apply. Gift and Pre-paid Cards: Courtesy of GoDISH.com for credit-qualified customers. Customers who do not qualify may be eligible for a secondary gift offer. Cards are issued by Citibank, N.A. pursuant to a license from Visa® U.S.A. Inc. and managed by Citi Prepaid Services. Cards will not have cash access and can be used everywhere Visa® debit cards are accepted. Cards expire 6 months from date issued. Mail-in redemption form is required within 60 days of qualified activation to receive gift. Customer account must be current and in good standing at the time of redemption. Allow 6-8 weeks for delivery of gift. Other: Netflix streaming membership required. All packages, programming, features, and functionality and all prices and fees not included in price lock are subject to change without notice. After 6 mos., if selected you will be billed \$9.99/mo. for DISH Protect Silver unless you call to cancel. After 2 years, then-current everyday prices for all services apply. For business customers, additional monthly fees may apply. Free standard professional installation only. SHOWTIME is a registered trademark of Showtime Networks Inc., a CBS Company. STARZ and related channels and service marks are property of Starz Entertainment, LLC. © 2019 GoDISH.com. All rights reserved. Internet speeds, prices, and providers vary by customer address. \$39.99 price refers to 25Mbps plan. Restrictions apply. 25 Mbps internet service available nationwide, but may become temporarily unavailable to certain addresses based on local beam capacity. Availability is subject to change without notice. Internet not provided by DISH and will be billed separately. Call for details.