

TEXAS CO-OP POWER



2019

Holiday

RECIPE CONTEST
WINNERS

BLUEBONNET NEWS
SEE PAGE 20





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J. Alex Ruiz crafts a blade that will last a lifetime.

FEATURE

8 **In the Making** Artisans infuse their singular creations with uncommon passion.

Story and photos by Julia Robinson

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ONLINE

TexasCoopPower.com

Find these stories online if they don't appear in your edition of the magazine.

Texas USA

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By Clay Coppedge

Observations

My Grandmother and LBJ
By Lee Gaddis

NEXT MONTH

The Call of the Tamalada Making tamales is a holiday tradition, though eating them never ends.



RUIZ: JULIA ROBINSON. TAMALES: LUNAMARINA | SHUTTERSTOCK.COM



ON THE COVER Courtney Perry's grand prizewinning recipe, *Spiced Cookie Cheesecake With Caramel Sauce*. Photo by Jody Horton

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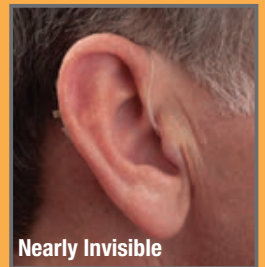
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Other Musical Greats

Chet Garner began by mentioning Willie Nelson, Janis Joplin, George Strait and Roy Orbison because they were born in small Texas towns [*Wink's Spectacle*, September 2019]. He missed the singer with by far the best voice that was born in a small Texas town—Johnny Mathis, from Gilmer. **JOE E. AND SHARON MCINTYRE**

Big Bend Beckons

The Window Trail is an easy hike that emanates from the Chisos Mountain Lodge and provides a truly wondrous view of the valley below. And to see Casa Grande Peak lit up at sunrise is a sight one never forgets. Thanks to E. Dan Klepper [*Big Bend's Golden Triangle*] and Joe Nick Patoski [*Which Big Bend?*] in September for their superb commentaries.

TIM O'NEIL | PAIGE BLUEBONNET EC

Definitely on my bucket list! I've been to Big Bend twice but never Fort Davis!

PATRICIA JANECEK BURT | VIA FACEBOOK

I enjoyed *Which Big Bend?*, but it needed some fact-checking. Big Bend National Park gets about 400,000



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A Nod and a Wink

In 1954, I was a fourth grader in Odessa. On Saturday afternoons, my sister and I watched the only show on television, several hours of West Texas talent. Roy Orbison was on this show—if not every Saturday, close to it. We really didn't think at that time that he had talent [*Wink's Spectacle*, September 2019].

The next thing we knew, he is doing very well for himself. So much for the opinions of a 7- and 9-year-old.

NANCY LEWIS | WIMBERLEY | PEDERNALES EC



visitors annually, not 4 million. **CATHRYN HOYT | BIG BEND NATIONAL PARK RIO GRANDE EC**

Editor's note: Our astute readers help keep us sharp, for which we are grateful. The online version of this story has been corrected.

Point of History

As a Texas history teacher for more than 30 years, I often use *Texas Co-op Power* articles as supplementary reading in my classroom. I was excited to see the story about Gail Borden but was disappointed it did not

mention that he was one of the original 300 colonists brought by Stephen F. Austin—something your readers learned from their seventh grade teachers but probably have forgotten [*Gail Borden's Follies*, September 2019]. **DONNA ENGLISH | HIGHLAND VILLAGE COSERV**

Bush's Bailout

Any military pilot who read your Almanac item in Currents [September 2019] probably could correct the facts surrounding George H.W. Bush's being downed by anti-aircraft fire in 1944. Ejection seats didn't exist in 1944, so he actually went over the side (bailed out), hitting his head as he did so. **WILLY CARROLL | KERRVILLE CENTRAL TEXAS EC**

Sally the Mountain Lion

Fun in the Past Tense [August 2019] mentioned a mountain lion named Sally that a man

from Pearsall had kept as a pet. That man was my father, Jack "Hoss" Keith.

The bigger mountain lion in the same museum is Charlie. During breeding, Charlie killed Sally. My father was well known in the Pearsall area as an avid cat hunter with his dogs. **ALLEN KEITH | BOERNE BANDERA EC**

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MARK YOUR
CALENDAR

BUTTING OUT

Only 14% of American adults smoke, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. That's an all-time low in the U.S.

Trying to kick the habit? November 21 is the Great American Smokeout, an annual event since 1977 aimed at encouraging Americans to stop smoking.

HAPPENINGS

McAllen Holiday Parade

MCALLEN, the self-declared South Pole of Texas, kicks off the festive season with its **HOLIDAY PARADE**, which the city describes as the largest illuminated holiday and helium balloon parade in Texas.

The 1½-mile parade, **DECEMBER 7**, will feature more than 50 lighted floats, more than 30 inflatable character balloons and marching bands.

INFO ▶ (956) 681-1200, mcallenholidayparade.com

ALMANAC

50 YEARS AGO: Richard M. Nixon became the first president to attend a regular-season NFL game while in office. Nixon sat in the stands at RFK Memorial Stadium in Washington, D.C., as the Dallas Cowboys beat the Washington Redskins 41-28 on November 16, 1969.

◀ LOOKING BACK AT SOCIETY THIS MONTH



IN THE 75 YEARS since *Texas Co-op Power* debuted in July 1944, folks like **Audie Murphy** and **Walter Cronkite** became household names, and **Leonards Department Store** and the **National Women's Conference** helped change society.

1940s

1944 Jackie Robinson, who in 1947 would become the first black player in major league baseball, is court-martialed for refusing to move to the back of a bus at Fort Hood.

1945 Audie Murphy of Kingstons receives the Medal of Honor. He later becomes the most decorated U.S. soldier of World War II.



1950s

1955 Using the August 22, 1949, *Life* magazine cover of Panhandle rancher Clarence Hailey Long as its inspiration, Philip Morris creates the Marlboro Man, an advertising campaign that increased the brand's cigarette sales by 3,241%.

1958 Philanthropist Ima Hogg donates the Varner-Hogg Plantation to the state.

1960s

1960 Leonards Department Store in Fort Worth becomes the first major retailer in that city or Dallas to take down all segregationist signs and welcome African Americans.

1962 Walter Cronkite, raised in Houston, helps launch the *CBS Evening News* and serves as its news anchor until his retirement in 1981.



A Leader of Kind Strangers



IT'S HARD TO KEEP UP WITH ELLEN FULLER. "I'm a serial volunteer," she says, and her fast-paced conversation and exuberant attitude make it easy to believe she devotes boundless enthusiasm to any cause she might undertake.

These days, Fuller focuses her abundant energy on Wreaths Across America, a nationwide organization that places holiday wreaths on veterans' graves. In 2018, with Fuller as co-chair of the statewide effort, WAA collaborated with 674 groups to place 160,000 wreaths on almost one-third of veterans' graves across Texas, as featured in *TCP* in November 2018.

Fuller now serves as treasurer on WAA's national board.

"My dad passed in 2011," she says, "and he was buried in Arlington National Cemetery. I visited his grave in December 2011 and wondered what kind stranger had placed a wreath on his grave."

The kind stranger was a volunteer with Wreaths Across America, an effort started in 1992 when Worcester Wreath Company of Harrington, Maine, placed extra holiday wreaths to honor those buried at Arlington. That effort evolved into the Arlington Wreath Project and ultimately into Wreaths Across America.

If you're wondering what a holiday-focused organization does year-round, bear in mind that WAA's reach in Texas has grown 30%—from 86 cemeteries in 2017 to 112 in 2018 and more for 2019. Because wreath day in 2019 is December 14, Fuller and crew will not stop counting until the very last day. Their motto is, "Any vet. Anywhere."

Besides, as Fuller, a customer of Bryan Texas Utilities, says, "Any day is a good day to thank a veteran."

INFO ▶ wreathscrossamerica.org



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

LOOKING BACK AT ARTS AND FASHION NEXT MONTH ▶

1970s

1971 The Lyndon Baines Johnson Library and Museum, which houses more than 45 million pages of historical documents, opens on the campus of the University of Texas at Austin.

1975 Gloria Dean Randle Scott of Houston becomes the first black president of the Girl Scouts of America.

1977 The National Women's Conference takes place in Houston.

1980s

1982 Molly Ivins begins writing columns at *The Dallas Times Herald*. In syndication, her columns appeared in 350 papers across the U.S.



1987 More than 700 music fans attend Austin's inaugural South by Southwest festival, which has evolved into a major annual tech, music and media event.

1990s

1990 Marguerite Ross Barnett becomes president of the University of Houston and the first black woman to lead a major American university.

1992 Gov. Ann Richards buys the first Texas Lottery ticket, a Lone Star Millions scratch-off, at an Austin feed store.

1993 West Texas A&M University in Canyon, which previously went under several different names, adopts its current name.

2000s



2012 Big Tex, the 52-foot-tall mechanical cowboy that towered over the State Fair of Texas for 60 years, catches fire and is destroyed. His replacement debuted the next year.

IN THE
making

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THE MADE IN TEXAS moniker gets applied to so much more than boots, hats and Texas-shaped tchotchkes. I went in search of distinctive makers and found diverse artisans with deep thoughts about the act of creation. Whether fulfilling grand ambitions and pushing the limits of a craft or rendering spiritual communion and psychological healing, these Texans use their minds and hands to transform raw materials into objects of beauty and purpose.

This holiday season, let's remember to invest in our local makers. Here are a few from Co-op Country to get you started.

See more of **Julia Robinson's** work at juliarobinsonphoto.com.





✦ THE CHARACTER OF LEATHER ✦

ODIN CLACK wandered into a leather store one day in 2012 and exited with \$200 worth of goods and a new curiosity. He wondered if he could make a laptop sleeve from the leather and began tinkering at his dining room table. The graphic designer found a new challenge in leathercraft and was soon making wallets, belts and bags for family and friends.

“The thing I love about leather is that the way it looks to me is different from the way it will look in a year from now. How we use it affects the way it looks and feels,” Clack says. “Every dent and scratch tells a story.”

In 2018, Odin Leather Goods moved out of the family’s garage and into a workshop in Coppell, near the Tri-County Electric Cooperative service area. Odin and his wife, Rachele, work with one shop assistant to fulfill orders for their wide range of products. “When people buy local, they know their dollars are going towards daycare and swimming lessons and supporting a local family,” Clack says. “It also trickles down because I buy my materials and hardware from other U.S. companies.”

ODINLEATHERGOODS.COM





✧ FORGED WITH HEART ✧

J. ALEX RUIZ has always loved making things with his hands. He spent his childhood sculpting and crafting historical replicas, which led him to study archaeology in college, where he discovered the tools and crafts of long ago.

A penchant for colonial-era ironwork brought him into a blacksmith shop, where he made functional ironworking tools like bladesmithing tongs, hammers and knives.

As a maker, Ruiz feels a deep kinship to those historic people we learn about through artifacts. “When I go to museums and look at historical weapons or ironwork, I like to see the flaws,” he says. “As someone who actually makes these things, I can spot if something has been broken and fixed.”

Ruiz, a member of Karnes Electric Cooperative, began teaching and performing demonstrations around Texas and earned a spot on the History Channel’s *Forged in Fire* competition, where he won \$10,000 for a medieval horseman’s battle axe. Volundr Forge is Ruiz’s business that he runs part time from his home in Adkins. It’s not uncommon for his shop to reach 120 degrees, and there is a 16-week backlog for his custom knives. “My market is the everyday guy that wants something handmade that’s going to last a lifetime,” he says.

VOLUNDRFORGE.COM



❖ JEWELRY AND TIME HEAL ALL THINGS ❖

In 2006, **TARA HUTCHINSON** was serving her 10th year as a soldier—a military police sergeant on deployment in Iraq—when a truck she was in was hit by an improvised explosive device. Hutchinson lost her right leg above the knee and suffered a traumatic brain injury that left her with muscle tremors and difficulty controlling fine motor skills.

“I couldn’t use my hands to do anything after my injury,” Hutchinson says. “I couldn’t write. I couldn’t feed myself. I had no control over my hands at all.”

The loss of a career she loved and her independence sent Hutchinson into a deep depression. “I definitely contemplated suicide on multiple occasions because I couldn’t see any kind of a worthwhile future for myself,” she says.

A physical therapist suggested she find a new hobby to help her regain muscle strength, and Hutchinson found jewelry making. “Before that, I didn’t even own any jewelry at all,” Hutchinson says. “I was in the Army and playing in the dirt with the guys.”

She took a class, and after making jewelry for six months, Hutchinson’s jerky hand movements were smoothed out. Making gave her new purpose and new hope. She spent two years researching jewelry making and became a master goldsmith.

Hutchinson runs Tara Hutch Jewelry out of her home studio in San Antonio. “Now to be able to help women feel beautiful is the most amazing thing ever,” she says. “People can take home something that reminds them that if I can make it through this hard time, anyone can.”



TARAHUTCHJEWELRY.COM

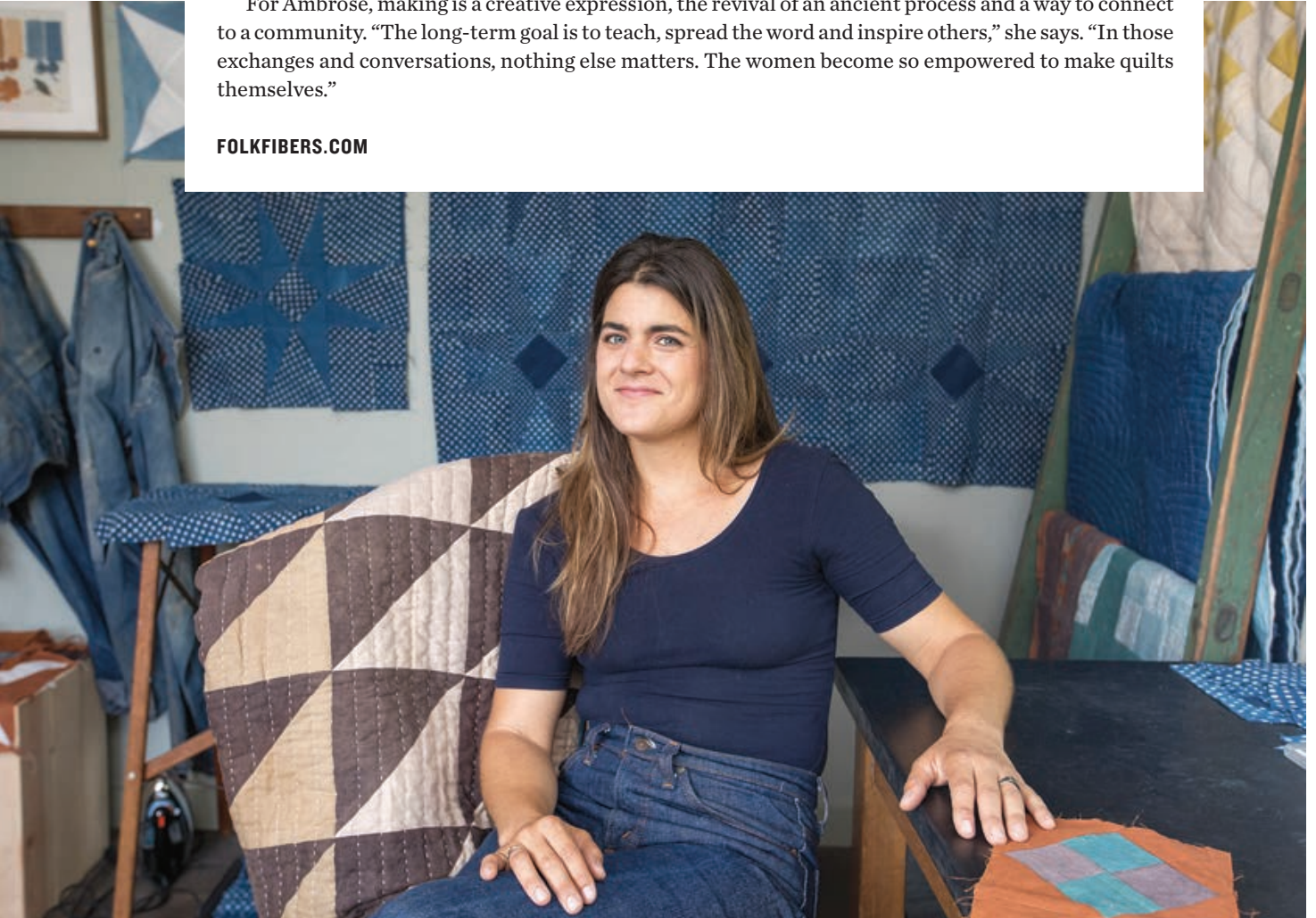
❖ THE FIBER OF OUR BEING ❖

MAURA GRACE AMBROSE studied textile design and fiber arts at the Savannah College of Art and Design in Georgia, where she found a passion for natural dyes and quilting. “The natural dyes were soft and chalky and harmonious, and it played into the poetic, beautiful parts of art,” says Ambrose, a Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative member. “The colors were alive because they came from something that was alive.”

Ambrose runs Folk Fibers from her home studio in Bastrop, where she forages and tends an organic garden for plant-based dyes. It takes about 250 hours to make a bed-sized quilt with Ambrose’s process of natural dyeing and hand stitching. “I can’t compromise on the process because that’s what makes them special and makes them an heirloom,” she says.

For Ambrose, making is a creative expression, the revival of an ancient process and a way to connect to a community. “The long-term goal is to teach, spread the word and inspire others,” she says. “In those exchanges and conversations, nothing else matters. The women become so empowered to make quilts themselves.”

FOLKFIBERS.COM





✧ WORKING WITH WOOD ✧

RYAN DRAPELA grew up selling watermelons near his home in El Campo, southwest of Houston. “I was born with the hustle,” Drapela says. He sold small skateboards in third grade, duct tape wallets in middle school, and candy and jerky in high school.

“We grew up super broke,” explains Drapela, a member of Wharton County Electric Cooperative. “I started buying all my school clothes and supplies myself in the seventh grade.” Drapela walked into his high school woodshop and found a new business opportunity creating cutting boards from wood scraps. His offerings expanded to clipboards, bottle-cap tabletops and custom plaques. The orders from his Etsy store kept growing.

In May 2019, Drapela earned his degree and the title of Entrepreneur of the Year from Texas A&M University’s agriculture school. He runs Drapela Woodworks with 15 employees fulfilling 1,000 orders a week for his Man Stands docking stations. “I grew and grew from persistence and hard work, not pure talent, not pure intellectual knowledge,” he says. “Just from working harder, longer and more consistently than competitors.” For Drapela, his success is a measure of his ability to create change in the world, whether it’s a new product or jobs for the local economy. “Whatever I’m doing, it’s a way to chase my capacity,” he says.

DRAPELAWOODWORKS.COM





❖ DIVINE INTERVENTION ❖

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"Monks have always worked to support themselves by their own hands," Martin says. "There is a beautiful relation between making food and the idea of communion. We are making something that people are going to put into their bodies for their sustenance and enjoyment, and there's a communion of spirit there."

Today, the eight monks of the Mt. Carmel Hermitage live in silence and solitude. "Our order is a very simple order," Martin says. "We're not interested in scholarly work or writing papers or books. We just try to pray and work and maybe we do badly sometimes, but we try. We try hard."

The hermitage has a gift shop and an online store from which they ship all over the world.

CARMELITEHERMITS.ORG



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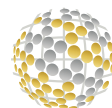
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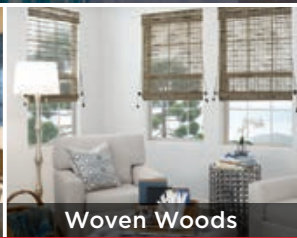
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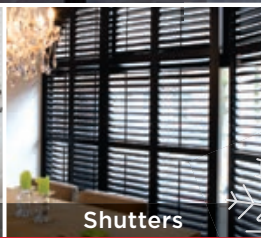
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DEER SEASON IN TEXAS

IT'S A FAMILY AFFAIR

BY PATRICK BEACH

Victor Moberg grew up in the 1960s as the grandson of Austin's king and queen of sausage making, so meat was a regular item on the menu at home. A lot of those meals included venison.

His grandparents — Smokey Denmark sausage company founders Albert “Smokey” and Eloise Denmark — showed reverence and enthusiasm for making food. Moberg and his family carry on that tradition today on their land south of Smithville where they raise animals and hunt deer.

The Mobergs are among hundreds of thousands of Texans who will hunt white-tailed deer this season. Many of them will be up before the crack of dawn in early November for the start of the general hunting season for white-tailed deer in the Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative service area. Nov. 2 is the first day of the hunting season for adults in the North Texas hunting zone, which includes the Bluebonnet area. That season ends Jan. 5, 2020.

Deer hunting is big in Texas and so is the deer population. “Texas boasts a robust white-tailed deer population of about 5.4 million deer, which should contribute to hunter success this season,” according to a statement from the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department.

Even though much of Texas experienced triple digit heat over the late summer, “hunters should expect an excellent deer season with above average antler quality and fawn recruitment,” said Alan Cain, the department's white-tailed deer program leader. Early rain in the fall of 2018 resulted in an excellent crop of winter weeds that lasted well into the spring, he said, and that provided the nutrition for white-tailed bucks to grow larger antlers.

In May 2006, Moberg said, he and his wife, Shana, bought property about seven miles south of Smithville when their daughter Dakota was 3 and son Mason was just 6 months old. The 33 acres are surrounded mostly by cow pastures, and a wet-weather creek runs through it. The family calls the low-lying land Swampy Acres.

Dakota and Mason are now 17 and 14, and they help their parents tend to the acreage. Both grew up sitting in the deer stand, sometimes quietly playing games on their phones. Shana hunts but would rather let the kids go. When Dakota was young, she would shoot while sitting on her dad's lap. There are not a lot of rules in the Moberg family deer stand, a 4-by-8 foot box about 12 feet high and accessible by ladder. No perfume. No cologne. No smoking. Be really, really quiet. Once, all it took for Dakota to spook a deer was to accidentally tap the muzzle of her rifle



Image courtesy of [unreadable]

Continued on page 22



The Mobergs — from left, Victor, daughter Dakota, mom Shana and son Mason — have made it a family tradition to hunt deer on their 33 acres near Smithville. Dakota and Mason learned early by sitting quietly in the deer stand. (Photo by Sarah Beal)



tesy Texas Parks & Wildlife

by the NUMBERS

Estimated number of white-tailed deer in Texas **5.4 million**

1 Bucks a hunter can take per season with a maximum 13" 'inside spread' of its antlers (or a buck with two branched antlers).

252

Counties in Texas with a white-tailed deer hunting season (in other words, all but 2)

91%

Deer in Texas killed with a rifle

Amount of water a mature white-tail deer drinks daily

4 to 6 quarts

1%

Deer in Texas killed by muzzleloader

Deer in Texas killed by bowhunting

8%

18%

Texas archers that successfully kill; Texas ranks low among all states

Below, Tyler Goerig, left, and David Padgett load deer feed into the back of a truck at Carmine Feed & Fertilizer. During hunting season, they sometimes load up more than 100 trucks a day. At right, Dakota Moberg, with dad Victor by her side, takes aim from the family's deer blind during hunting season 2018. Below right, a white-tailed doe is seen through the scope of a Winchester .243. (Photos by Sarah Beal)



Continued from page 20

very lightly against the roof.

Hunting for deer and working the land has left its mark on the Moberg children. Dakota graduated early and is now studying wildlife management at Texas A&M University-Kingsville. Mason is thinking about becoming a game warden.

Wildlife and hunting were not the priority when the Mobergs moved to their property. They simply wanted their food to be as organic as possible. But the family got into wildlife management in a big way — preparing food plots, feeding hundreds of animals all year long, improving the area, plowing and planting.

“During the 2011 drought I realized it was about helping the wildlife,” Victor Moberg said. “We have good water wells. We irrigate a chunk of it. It’s hard work when it’s 100-plus degrees out. It becomes kind of an obsession.”

As for hunting, “it’s not about the kill. It’s about being out there and appreciating everything Mother Nature has to offer,” he said.

When Victor Moberg was growing up in the Webberville area in eastern Travis County, he never saw deer. But after buying the Bastrop County property, he has seen plenty of deer thanks to a suggestion he received after moving to the land.

“I invited my brother-in-law to come out and he said, ‘This looks like a deer highway. Let’s put up a game camera.’ It was an instant hook,” Moberg said. “The photos were phenomenal — bobcats, coyotes, hogs, bucks, does. We’ve seen some unbelievable things that you don’t see when you’re sitting on a sofa or have your nose in your phone.”

It’s impossible to say how much land in Texas is used for deer hunting because it’s rarely if ever

used for that exclusively. But it’s a lot. The King Ranch alone has more than 800,000 acres and some of the biggest white-tailed deer in Texas.

And the sport’s popularity is holding steady.

“Deer hunting is just as popular as it’s been over the last several decades,” said Cain, the white-tailed deer expert at Texas Parks & Wildlife. “Our numbers have grown but so has the population. Other states have seen declines, but Texas has done pretty well. We’re stable. That’s a good thing.”

Cain said his department doesn’t track much demographic data on who hunts, but anecdotally he sees businesses more aggressively marketing to women and young hunters.

“That’s your next generation,” he said. “It’s important to educate youngsters about conservation and how hunting plays a role in it.”

And, Cain said, families like the Mobergs aren’t alone in their near-obsessive stewardship of the land and accumulation of data — everything from measuring antlers on bucks to lactation in does.

The Texas Deer Association puts the economic impact of breeding and hunting at about \$1.6 billion annually. That includes payments on leases, lodging, ranch hunts and trophy fees. Like so many pastimes, hunting isn’t a question of how much it costs but how much someone is willing to pay. A hunting license costs \$25 for Texas residents (or \$7 for seniors). Out-of-state residents pay \$315. A lifetime hunting license is \$1,000. A 40-pound sack of deer corn is generally under \$10 and available anywhere from the neighborhood feed store, Buc-ee’s and — of course — Amazon. Feeders start at under \$100 but can cost as much as \$1,000.

As for rifles, deer hunters gravitate to bolt-

Talk the talk

Like many a pastime, deer hunting has its own thicket of special terms. Here are just a few:

White flag: Something a hunter never wants to see. When a



or lever-action and the sky's the limit on price. Some guided hunts with fancy lodging and meals can cost \$15,000 or more. Is hunting cost-effective? Almost certainly not, especially when factoring the cost of travel, land and processing. But hunters can't put a price on the social aspect that goes with all the trouble and expense.

"Like Christmas only comes once a year, (the start of deer season) was traditionally a big social thing for people," said Mike Leggett of Burnet, a Texas writer who has specialized in hunting and the outdoors for decades.

"On the first Saturday of deer season every year on the land we hunted, we'd have a gigantic dinner with hundreds of people and barbecue and pies and cakes and all kinds of vegetables. You'd hunt during the day and have this gigantic dinner at night. The high school kids would be sneaking off in the dark and the little kids would be playing hide and seek. That got ingrained in me, to enjoy that as a family activity."

These days Leggett bow hunts for deer, meaning he's likely to get one only every three or four years.

"I'm just looking," he said. "Every time — and I mean every time (I hunt with a bow) — I see something I've never seen before. It may be

a bird, a fox chasing a rabbit, a coyote, you just don't know. I tell my grandkids, 'Look at what this animal does.' And there's a link between them, me, my father and grandfather. That's the biggest part of it."

Victor and Shana Moberg agree.

With a freezer full of venison, a substantial part of the Moberg family's animal protein comes from what they kill. Mason has taken one buck and one doe. The first animal Dakota shot was an elk weighing between 600 and 700 pounds on a guided hunt on a 1,100-acre ranch in Meridian, northwest of Waco. A fierce storm blew in from the north during the hunt. They slept in a tent and wondered if they'd make it through the night.

"I hardly believe it today," Victor Moberg said. "She still rubs it in: 'I shot an elk and you haven't.' It's not about the kill, it's about the memories."

He hasn't missed an opening day of white-tailed deer season since the family moved to Swampy Acres. Dakota and Mason squabble over who gets to go with dad.

It's likely the deer hunting tradition will continue on through future generations of the Moberg family. If it's November, a Moberg probably will be in a deer stand. ■

white-tailed deer senses a predator, it raises its tail and heads for the hills. Which means that's the last thing you'll see of it.

Blowing: The loud snorting sound a deer makes to alert other deer when a threat is near. That usually happens just before that white flag.

Glassing: Using a scope or binoculars to keep eyes on the prize.

Still hunting: Rather than sitting in a stand, this is when a hunter walks slowly and quietly through the woods to spot prey.

Rub: A buck's spring antlers come in with a velvet-like material that

it scrapes off on tree bark. That's also a way to mark its territory and exercise neck muscles.

Grunt tube: A call that hunters blow to mimic the sound of a buck grunting, which it does during breeding season to signal aggression to other bucks.



Lockhart's Jo Nell Schulze recalls life before and after electricity on a visit to her grandparents' home

THE POWER OF MEMORIES

By Clayton Stromberger

The time-worn house sits a distance off the county road, nestled among weeds, dormant wildflowers, yuccas and a few thirsty-looking trees. It's ringed by weathered structures of an earlier era: a listing tin-roofed garage, a dark metal cistern on concrete legs, the old post-and-wire pen in the back for calves. Out front, a tractor rusts where it was last parked decades ago.

"There's the old homeplace," Jo Nell Schulze says quietly as she walks up the dirt drive at a steady, eager clip.

We are just a few minutes' drive southeast of downtown Lockhart, out on Seawillow Road, and Schulze, who will be 84 on Nov. 18, is paying one of her occasional visits to her maternal grandparents' old homestead. She moved in with her grandparents in 1943 when she was 8, after her parents divorced. She arrived with her mother, Maxine Boyd, and younger brother and sister.

Maxine's parents, Dudley and Florence Littleton, farmed and raised cattle on this land, which goes "all the way back to Plum Creek," Schulze says. She lived in the house until she married her high school sweetheart, Albert "Pete" Schulze, at age 18, after he graduated from Lockhart High School.

No one has lived here since Schulze's mother died in 2009. Florence Littleton died in the early 1960s, and "Dud" Littleton died a few years later.

"He grieved himself to death," Schulze says. "He would just sit on the front porch and say, 'I want to go, I want to go.'"

Schulze's brother, Mackey Boyd, lives in nearby McMahan. His son, Britt Boyd, who lives between Lockhart and Luling, is remodeling the interior of the house. Schulze's sister, Nelda Fox, lives in Corpus Christi.

Schulze, who lives in Lockhart now, drops by the old homestead

every once in a while to check on things and see how the remodeling is going.

"The old windmill is gone, I just noticed," Schulze comments as she approaches the front of the house. "It used to squeak all through the night."

The hoary old mesquite tree in the front yard with the strange, down-curving trunk – perfect for hopping on and sliding down – is showing its years but still carries some green sprouts.

"Every kid rode that tree for a horse," Schulze says, laughing. "Every thorn on it has been scooted off. And I bet there were four kids who fell off it and broke their arms."

The frame of the structure still stands strong, but the white paint is peeled and the wooden front porch is gone. Inside are exposed boards and old nails poking out here and there. None of that deters the spry Schulze, who steps over obstacles to re-enter the old home through the back door.

Schulze has spent most of her life within a few miles of this spot. She was born in the old community of Seawillow, just a few miles to the south. Her family on her mother's side, the Browns, have been in the area "for a long time," Schulze says, and helped found the old community of Brownsboro, a bit south of Seawillow.

The 10 years in which Schulze grew up in her grandparents' home coincided with the time in which electricity's arrival to the region –



This is one in a series of stories about some of Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative's earliest residential members



At far left, from the back porch, Jo Nell Schulze shares fond memories of growing up at the house she moved into at age 8. At left, she stands between her sister Nelda Fox and brother Mackey Boyd at the house in an older photo that is tucked into the frame of another photo of the old house. (Photos by Ralph Barrera)



Growing up in her grandparents' home, Jo Nell Schulze remembers the slow, steady addition of electric appliances. Of the first radio: 'Granddaddy would turn it on and we had to be quiet as we could be . . . because he was going to listen to his programs.'

starting in 1939 and continuing throughout the early 1940s – set off a ripple of change in rural Caldwell County, farmhouse by farmhouse. The power lines came from Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative (at that time named the Lower Colorado River Electric Cooperative).

Schulze can't remember the date her grandparents first turned on an electric light in the old house. But before electricity, Schulze remembers her grandparents carrying coal-oil lamps from room to room during her visits as their first grandchild. She still has the base of one of those lamps in her home. She also can clearly picture her grandparents' old wooden ice box.

"Granddaddy would go to town on Saturdays," Schulze says, "and he'd take a tote sack with him, and he would go to the ice plant and get a big block of ice and put it in that ice box. And hot dog, we were going to have iced tea then!" She laughs. "That block lasted about three days. My grandmother kept her milk and eggs in the top shelf."

By the time Schulze moved in with her grandparents, they had installed electric lights. But for some reason they hadn't installed outlets in the walls. So when her grandfather took the plunge and bought

his first appliance – a refrigerator – he had to run an electric cord up through the ceiling to the light fixture.

"The refrigerator was in the hallway because there wasn't room for it in the kitchen," Schulze recalls. "They would say, 'Don't open that door, you'll run up the electric bill!' We had those little ice trays and I bet we'd drink a gallon of water a day just (so we could) get that ice out of there."

Next came an electric stove to replace the one that burned coal oil. And then a radio. "Granddaddy would turn it on," Schulze says, "and we had to be quiet as we could be. We could not laugh, talk, cut up or anything because he was going to listen to his programs."

Among his favorites were the top shows of the day, including "The Lone Ranger" and the husband-and-wife comedy "Fibber McGee and Molly."

Finally, in the early 1950s, it was time to enter the modern era with a black-and-white television, courtesy of Dud and Florence's four children – Maxine Boyd and her sister and brothers – as a gift for the couple's 50th wedding anniversary.

"Granddaddy was old at that time, and he loved that television, because he talked with it," Schulze remembers, smiling. "They would eat lunch real quick and then go in and watch "As the World Turns." There was a character who liked the ladies, and Granddaddy would fuss at him and tell him he didn't know what he was talking about. My grandmother would just laugh and say, 'Oh, Dud, that's not real!'"

The old house is filled with happy memories for Schulze. The family always gathered here for Christmas. As she moves from room to room, she sees her grandmother's chifforobe. Large and difficult to move, it is still in its spot. And under a covering in the front room sits the piano her aunt used to play.

Schulze feels pangs of loss, too, as memories return. Her husband, who co-owned Alex and Schulze Garage in Lockhart, died in 2007. "He was a good man," Schulze says. The couple raised three children in Lockhart: Son Terry lives in Rockport, son Ronny lives nearby on Seawillow Road and daughter Darla Law lives in Lockhart.

Standing in her grandparents' old "sunporch" bedroom in the back of the house, Schulze's face brightens as the big windows suffuse the barren room with morning light.

She focuses not on what is gone, but on the joy of what was.

"We would all sit back here, and when those windows were open, oh, the nicest cool breeze would blow through." ■



Above, Bluebonnet's Chad Siegmund shows Christian Pratt of Ledbetter how to assemble a mini-vehicle that can roll down the road powered by solar strips. (Photo by Sarah Beal) Right, two participants at Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative's fourth annual Solar Day examine the solar panels that provide power to the Eco Home on the co-op's Brenham campus. (Photo by Joe Stafford)



All things solar

Bluebonnet's fourth Solar Day offers ideas, advice to interested homeowners

By Melissa Segrest

As if to prove a point, Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative's fourth annual Solar Day was hot and sunny – the perfect day to generate electricity from solar panels. More than 150 Bluebonnet members, employees, area residents and solar installers participated in the event, co-sponsored by the Texas Solar Energy Society and Solar Austin, on Saturday, Sept. 14, at the co-op's Brenham Service Center on Longwood Drive.

The four-hour event, broken out into two sessions, was packed with information for curious homeowners with a lot of questions about home solar arrays. Micah Jasuta, a member of the nonprofit Texas Solar Energy Society, provided a detailed presentation during each session, answering attendees' questions about how solar works, installation and more.

Bluebonnet members Judy Dickson, Margaret and Joel Shannon, and John Gardner were available to answer questions about their experience, expenses and the effectiveness of their systems.

Bluebonnet continues to see an increase in members installing solar panels on their homes and businesses. In 2019, on average, the cooperative connects one new solar member to its grid each day. By the end of 2019, the cooperative expects to have 1,045 renewable energy systems connected to its grid. With federal tax credits, which are expected to be phased out in the next few years, and the declining cost of solar panels, some can recoup the cost of their investment in less than 15 years.

Attendees could also visit with solar installers, who were hosted by the Texas Solar Energy Society.

Bluebonnet's nearby Eco Home gets a portion of its power from a 5-kilowatt solar array, a wind turbine, and underground geothermal heating and cooling system. You can find Jasuta's presentation, along with more information about harnessing the sun's power, at bluebonnet.coop. Click on the Energy Solutions tab, then Home Renewables & Green Energy Rate.



Watch a video about the Solar Day at youtu.be/pOK39DD5Roi or with this story at bluebonnet.coop



Co-op board seats up for election in 2020

Bluebonnet members interested in serving on the co-op's Board of Directors can run for one of four seats up for election during the Annual Meeting on May 12, 2020.

Candidates, who would run in one of seven districts, can be nominated either by presenting an application for nomination with at least 50 signatures from co-op members in their respective districts or by paying a \$250 filing fee in certified funds.

Bluebonnet's Board is made up of nine directors who serve staggered three-year terms. The four seats up for election in 2020 are from District 3, Bastrop County; District 4, Lee, Milam and Williamson counties; District 6, Austin, Colorado and Fayette counties; and District 7, Washington County.

To run for the Board, candidates must be at least 21 years old, a co-op member

in good standing, agree to a background check and meet other qualifications outlined in Bluebonnet's bylaws, which are available at bluebonnet.coop. Hover your cursor over the About tab on the homepage, click on Leadership in the drop down bar and then click on the Becoming a Director link.

Application for nomination forms are available at the co-op's member service centers in Bastrop, Brenham, Giddings, Lockhart and Manor and online at bluebonnet.coop, under the About tab and then Reports & Forms in the drop down bar.

All candidates' petitions, filing fees and application for nomination forms must be submitted at any Bluebonnet member service center by 4 p.m. Feb. 12, 2020.

For more information, call a member service representative at 800-842-7708.



At left, Bluebonnet member Judy Dickson, center, talks with Margaret Weller, left, and Jennifer Stephenson about the benefits of adding a solar array. Below, Michah Jasuta, with the Texas Solar Energy Society, gives one of two presentations about the ins and outs of installing solar. (Photos by Sarah Beal)



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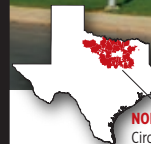
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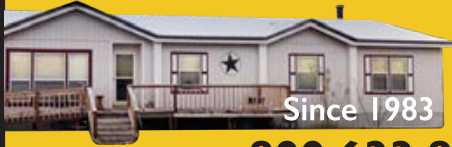

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MODEL: 25521

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19956952

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Alamo Survivor?

Legendary San Antonio character cast a convincing spell

BY GENE FOWLER

AS MUCH AS WE TEXANS HAVE remembered the Alamo over the past 183 years, you'd think we'd have all the facts nailed down. We don't. Historians are still uncertain about whether famed Tennessean David Crockett died during the battle or was executed afterward.

And while we know that a handful of noncombatants survived the battle, one often-told story of survival remains unconfirmed. In the 1880s and 1890s, the venerable Madam Candelaria recounted her dramatic story of attending to the deathly ill Jim Bowie as Mexican *soldados* besieged the mission-turned-fort.

In the late 1800s, a steady stream of tourists and reporters visited her San Antonio home to witness her passionate retelling. New York newspapers reported her account. Atlanta promoters sought to book her for the 1895 Cotton States and International Exposition. Souvenir photographs of her dignified countenance abound.

Legend holds that in 1836, while managing a San Antonio hotel frequented by Texians, Madam Candelaria received a letter from Sam Houston asking her to nurse a typhoid-stricken Bowie. In one of her accounts, she was gathering medicinal herbs at 4 a.m. when she spied Santa Anna's approaching army and hurried to the Alamo to sound the alarm.

Probably born in 1803 as María Andrea Castañon near present-day Piedras Negras,



Madam Candelaria holds a special place in San Antonio lore.

Mexico, Madam Candelaria obtained her sobriquet from the first name of her second husband, Candelario Villanueva. A well-known San Antonio figure before her celebrity as an Alamo survivor, she operated a fandango parlor in the mid-1800s.

Memoirist Vinton Lee James described the parlor as a place “where the beaux and belles of San Antonio romped, played, and danced to the sweet strains of the orchestra and dined on the delicious dishes prepared by Señora Candelaria’s own hand.” In 1883, the *San Antonio Light* noted that she “keeps a stand on Military Plaza” and “would like all her old friends to give her a call.”

Though Texans were divided about Candelaria’s story of surviving the Alamo battle, the claim won her an annual state pension of \$150 in 1891. Historians remain

uncertain. Former Alamo curator-historian Bruce Winders says he finds her account unlikely.

The most recently published version of the *Handbook of Texas* stated that most historians believed her story. An abridged account in the online *Handbook* presents a nuanced version by three authors.

One of the three, Maria Gomez, Candelaria’s great-great-granddaughter, provided historical documents in 2011 for Paula Allen’s *San Antonio Express-News* history column. Among them, an 1899 Bowie genealogical text states, “A Mexican woman known as an

experienced nurse was brought into the building to attend [to Bowie] before it had been surrounded.”

“My mother’s sisters very often translated for Madam Candelaria,” Gomez said. “They told us that she always wore a long, black apron with two pockets into which she would put money that was given to her by interested tourists.”

Whether her story was true or not, her artistry inspired James to dub her “the most outstanding female character in San Antonio history.”

She often spoke of Crockett before her death in 1899, recalling “lots of singing, storytelling, and some drinking” at her hotel after his arrival. “Crockett played the fiddle, and he played it well, if I am a judge of music.... He was one of the strangest men I ever saw.”

Author **Gene Fowler** specializes in Texas travel and history.



2019

Holiday

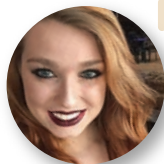
RECIPE CONTEST
WINNERS



THIS YEAR, we not only celebrate *Texas Co-op Power's* 75th anniversary but also the 15th year of our **Holiday Recipe Contest**. It all began when Anna Ginsberg won with her White Chocolate Ribbon Pumpkin Cake With Maple Glaze in 2005. Our contest was just starting out, but when Ginsberg won the Pillsbury Bake-Off just a few months later, we figured we knew how to pick a winner. The winning recipes this year are no exception. The grand prizewinning cheesecake is extra special because homemade cookies make up the crust. The Best Sweet winner is an ice cream—yes, ice cream is holiday food in Texas—that tastes so much like Texas Sheet Cake you'll do a double take. In the Best Savory category, tangy seafood enchiladas stole the show. And don't miss the honorable mentions: bread pudding with a twist and a breakfast stunner to spice up a holiday morning. Let these recipes inspire you to create your own new holiday favorite! —**SHANNON OELRICH**

\$1,000 GRAND PRIZE
Spiced Cookie
Cheesecake With
Caramel Sauce

COURTNEY PERRY | TRI-COUNTY EC



"I only delved into cheesecake making a few years ago but quickly became obsessed," Perry says. "The spice cookies provide the crumbly texture you get with a traditional graham crust but have all the flavor and essence of the holidays. I wanted to create a filling that would keep people coming back for more, which meant not too much one way or another. Velvety, but not too dense. Sweet, but not overpowering. This competition definitely has given me more confidence in my baking knowing that people outside of my inner circle enjoyed it as much as I did."

SPICED COOKIES

- ½ cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, softened
- ¼ cup sugar
- ¼ cup brown sugar
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon ground ginger
- ¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon ground allspice
- ⅛ teaspoon ground clove
- ⅛ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1 egg
- 1½ teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1¼ cups flour

CRUST

- Spiced Cookies, crumbled
- ¼ cup brown sugar
 - ¼ teaspoon salt
 - ¼ cup (½ stick) unsalted butter, melted

FILLING

- 2 eggs, separated
- 2 packages (8 ounces each) cream cheese, softened
- ¾ cup brown sugar
- 1¼ teaspoons vanilla extract
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ cup sour cream
- 1½ tablespoons flour

CARAMEL SAUCE

- ½ cup sugar
- 3 tablespoons butter, cubed
- ¼ cup heavy whipping cream

1. **SPICED COOKIES:** Using a stand mixer, beat butter and sugars until fully incorporated. Add salt and all spices. Add egg and vanilla. Beat until ingredients are fully mixed together. Add flour ¼ cup at a time until dough forms. Be sure not to overmix.
2. Wrap dough in plastic wrap and allow to chill about 3 hours or until dough is no longer tacky.
3. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Line

cookie sheets with parchment. Form chilled cookie dough into approximately 1-inch balls. Bake 17–20 minutes or until edges are golden. Remove cookies from oven and let cool on a wire rack.

4. **CRUST:** Line an 8-inch springform pan with parchment.

5. In a bowl, combine crumbled spiced cookies, brown sugar and salt. Stir in melted butter until crumbs are coated. Move crust mixture to springform pan and press into bottom and up sides. Set aside.

6. **FILLING:** Preheat or lower oven to 325 degrees. In a stand mixer, beat egg whites on high until stiff peaks form. Set aside.

7. In a separate bowl, beat cream cheese and brown sugar. Add egg yolks one at a time. Beat on high until fully incorporated. Lower speed of mixer and add vanilla, salt, sour cream and flour. Mix until just incorporated. Fold beaten egg whites into batter. Add batter to springform pan. Wrap bottom of the pan and up the sides with aluminum foil.

8. Create a water bath by putting the springform pan into a roasting pan and adding about 1 inch of hot water to the outer pan. Bake 75 minutes or until center is slightly jiggly. Turn off oven and leave oven door open about 30 minutes to allow cheesecake to cool slowly.

Remove from oven.

9. Once the cheesecake is fully cooled, cover springform pan with aluminum foil and allow cheesecake to chill in refrigerator overnight.

10. **CARAMEL SAUCE:** Add sugar to a saucepan over medium heat. Whisk until sugar is fully melted. Remove from heat and add butter. Whisk until incorporated. Slowly add heavy whipping cream until fully incorporated. Let cool.

11. Remove cheesecake from springform pan. Drizzle cooled caramel sauce over top of cheesecake and serve.

► Serves 12.

2019
Holiday
RECIPE CONTEST
WINNERS



\$500 BEST SWEET
**Whipped Sheet
Cake Ice Cream**

MARLON HAYGOOD | PEDERNALES EC

"This is my take on the classic Texas sheet cake," Haygood says.

"Starting with a whipped cream ice cream that I've been making for years off the advice of a good friend, I developed this decadent recipe. What I love most is that the recipe is so easy to adapt. I've added in dulce de leche, crushed candy bars, even ice cream cone pieces. It has a deliciously smooth taste that will please even the most die-hard ice cream lovers."



- 2 cups heavy whipping cream
- ¼ cup sugar
- 1 cup sweetened condensed milk
- ¾ cup cocoa powder
- ¾ cup chopped pecans or walnuts
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract

1. In a large bowl, use a mixer on high speed to whip cream until stiff peaks form. Add sugar a small amount at a time to aid in peak formation.
 2. In a separate bowl, mix condensed milk, cocoa powder, chopped nuts and vanilla.
 3. Fold the whipped cream into the condensed milk mixture and transfer to a freezer-safe covered container. Freeze until firm, at least 24 hours.
- Serves 8-10.

\$500 BEST SAVORY
**Layered Redfish
Enchiladas**

DENISE CRANE | VICTORIA EC

"My husband and I do not eat meat (other than fish)," Crane writes.

"However, this dish has been enjoyed by many of our meat-loving friends, and literally everyone who has tried it has requested the recipe."



- 2 large redfish fillets (1-1½ pounds)
- 1 teaspoon salt, divided use
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- ½ teaspoon ground black pepper
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 package (8 ounces) cream cheese, softened
- 2 small cans (4 ounces each) mild diced green chiles, drained



- ½ cup canned black beans, drained and rinsed
 - ½ cup canned corn, drained
 - 1 pepper from can of chipotle peppers in adobo sauce, chopped (or ¾ teaspoon ground chipotle pepper)
 - 2 tablespoons lime juice
 - 1 teaspoon ground cumin
 - ½ teaspoon chili powder
 - ½ cup packed fresh cilantro, finely chopped
 - 1 cup sour cream
 - 1 jar (16 ounces) salsa verde
 - 12 corn tortillas, quartered
 - 2 cups shredded colby jack cheese, divided use
- Optional toppings: diced red onion, chopped cilantro, cotija cheese, avocado slices

1. Sprinkle redfish fillets with ¼ teaspoon salt each and let sit at room temperature 20 minutes, then lightly pat dry.
2. Heat olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat, then add fish, black pepper and garlic. Cook about 3 minutes on each side, or until cooked through.
3. Reduce heat to low, and add cream cheese, green chiles, beans, corn, chipotle, lime juice, cumin, chili powder, cilantro and remaining ½ teaspoon of salt. With a spatula or spoon, fold ingredients together in the pan while breaking apart the fillets. When all ingredients are thoroughly combined, turn off heat.
4. In a bowl, mix together the sour cream and salsa verde to make the sauce.

- Preheat oven to 375 degrees.
5. To assemble enchiladas, spoon about 1 cup of the sauce into the bottom of a 9-by-13-inch baking dish. Distribute 4 of the quartered tortillas across the bottom of the dish. Spoon half of the redfish filling onto tortillas. Top with ¾ cup shredded cheese, 4 more tortillas and half of the remaining sauce. Top with all remaining filling and half of the remaining cheese. Add last 4 tortillas and all of the remaining sauce.
 6. Cover pan tightly with aluminum foil and bake 30 minutes. Remove foil, add remaining cheese and bake 10–15 minutes more, until cheese is melted and bubbly. Top as desired with diced red onion, chopped cilantro, cotija cheese and avocado slices. ▶ Serves 10–12.

2019
Holiday
RECIPE CONTEST
WINNERS

\$250 HONORABLE MENTION

Breakfast Campeones

VALERIE DOTY | COSERV



"I grew up in the Midwest and had never had much Mexican food," Doty says. "I had never even heard of sausage gravy or Frito pie. When I first moved to the Dallas area, I only ate Mexican food in Mexican restaurants. Slowly but surely, I've tried to add some Mexican flair to some of my dishes, and even gotten a little spicier each year. We all liked this breakfast so much... I started calling it Breakfast Campeones—breakfast of champions."

- 12 large jalapeño peppers
- 8-10 slices bacon, fried and crumbled
- 1 dozen eggs
- ½-1 teaspoon salt, to taste
- 4 green onions, chopped
- 1 cup shredded cheddar jack cheese
- 1½ teaspoons dried cilantro
- 1½ teaspoons ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- 12 slices colby jack cheese

1. Line a large rimmed baking sheet with aluminum foil, shiny side down. Cut the jalapeños in half lengthwise and scoop out the seeds and ribs with a grapefruit spoon. Lay the peppers on the foil, open side up.
 2. Fry bacon and remove to drain on paper towels. Remove most of the grease from the pan, then scramble the eggs in the same pan, adding salt to taste.
 3. Preheat oven to 375 degrees. In a mixing bowl, crumble the bacon and add scrambled eggs, green onions, shredded cheese, cilantro, cumin and oregano. Stir until everything is evenly distributed.
 4. Spoon a little of the mixture into each pepper half. Cut slices of cheese in half (making 24). Lay a half slice of cheese across the top of each stuffed pepper. Bake the peppers for 20-30 minutes, until the cheese starts to brown. Cool 5 minutes before serving.
- Serves 12.

MAPLE SAUCE

- 3 tablespoons salted butter
- 1 cup sugar
- ¾ cup lightly packed light brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons cornstarch
- 1½ cups heavy whipping cream
- ½ cup pure maple syrup
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract

PECANS

- 3 tablespoons salted butter
- ⅓ cup pure maple syrup
- ⅓ cup bourbon
- 3½ tablespoons brown sugar
- 1 cup roughly chopped pecans

1. **PUDDING:** Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease a 9-by-13-inch pan.
 2. In a large bowl, whisk eggs and sugars until thoroughly combined. Add milk, cream, butter, vanilla and cinnamon, and mix well. Add bread pieces into the mixture until the liquid has been absorbed. Pour into pan.
 3. Bake approximately 55 minutes or until pudding is firm.
 4. **MAPLE SAUCE:** Melt butter in a saucepan on low heat. In a bowl, mix together sugars and cornstarch. Pour into the melted butter and continue to cook on low heat, stirring constantly until sugars are dissolved. Add in cream, maple syrup and vanilla; mix thoroughly. Set aside.
 5. **PECANS:** In a skillet on low heat, melt butter. Slowly add maple syrup and bourbon and mix well, then stir in brown sugar until sugar is dissolved. Stirring slowly, add pecans. Cook on low heat, stirring constantly, 5 minutes or until thick. Mixture can burn quickly, so do not leave unattended.
 6. To serve, cut warm bread pudding into portions and pour warm sauce over each. Top with bourbon-toasted pecans.
- Serves 12-14.

\$250 HONORABLE MENTION

Maple Bread Pudding With Toasted Bourbon Pecans

KITTIELE POTTS | BOWIE-CASS EC



"There seems to be three things you can always find in our home: pecans, maple syrup and Texas bourbon," Potts says. "I just started combining everything until I came up with something that worked. The consensus was this was fantastic, and everyone asked for more."

PUDDING

- 4 eggs
- 1¼ cups sugar
- 1 cup lightly packed light brown sugar
- 2 cups whole milk
- 2 cups heavy whipping cream
- ½ cup (1 stick) salted butter, melted
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 loaf French bread, torn into 1-inch pieces



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

\$100 Recipe Contest

April's recipe contest topic is **Farmers Market**. Send your favorite veggie-driven recipe made with Texas produce. The deadline is **November 10**.

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

Up the Creek

READERS MAKE QUITE A SPLASH this month with creeks from around Texas. Y'all sent in enough photos to make our heads swim! **GRACE FULTZ**

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

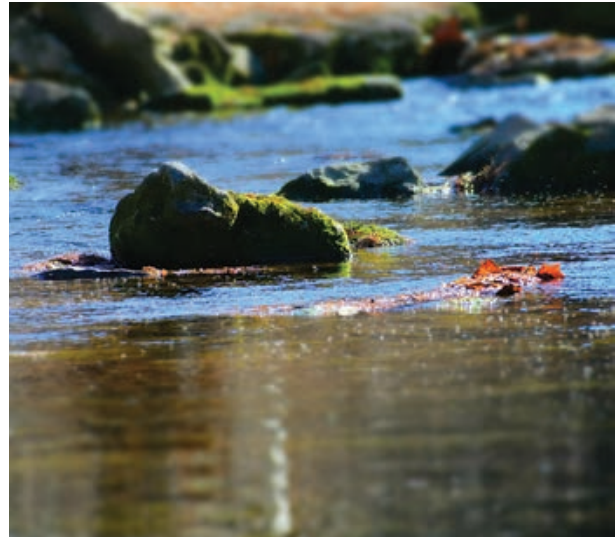


◀ **ANGIE BIRMINGHAM**, Nueces EC: Emily and Bailey the dog enjoy cool water on a hot summer day.



▲ **TIFFANY ROGERS**, Mid-South Synergy: "A hike into Pedernales Falls State Park in the fall gave a unique angle of the falls and the streams coming together."

▼ **TERESA BECKHAM**, Navasota Valley EC: A creek outside of Ingram.



▲ **TOMMIE CALFEE**, Pedernales EC: Morning light on Onion Creek.

▼ **AMANDA STAFFORD**, Nueces EC: "Colt Stafford playing in the Frio River at his family ranch in Leakey."



UPCOMING CONTESTS

MARCH FIRST RIDE	DUE NOVEMBER 10
APRIL SUNSETS	DUE DECEMBER 10
MAY FAIRS AND CARNIVALS	DUE JANUARY 10

Enter online at TexasCoopPower.com/Contests.

Pick of the Month The Wall That Heals

Stephenville November 7-10
(254) 552-1222, visitstephenville.com

The mobile three-quarter-scale replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., will be on display at Stephenville City Park. It contains more than 58,000 names, listed chronologically by day of casualty. Since its dedication in 1996, the Wall That Heals has been displayed in nearly 600 communities throughout the nation.



November

7

Houston Piano Concert: Great Women in Music, (713) 528-2060, czechcenter.org

8

Dallas National Philanthropy Day Awards Luncheon, (972) 233-9107, afpdallas.org

Levelland [8-9] Home for the Holidays, (806) 894-4161, malleteventcenter.com

Winnsboro [8-9] Art & Wine Festival, 1-888-559-4333, winnsboroonlineguide.com

Kerrville [8-10] Kid 'N Ewe and Llamas Too Fiber Arts Festival, (830) 792-3535, kidnewe.com

9

Bryan Brazos Valley Worldfest, (979) 845-8008, brazosvalleyworldfest.org

Kyle Pie Run 5K/1K, (512) 376-8089, ftlogpierun.com

Marshall Gary P. Nunn, (903) 934-7992, memorialcityhall.com

November 8-10
Kerrville
Kid 'N Ewe and Llamas Too
Fiber Arts Festival



Mason Mason County Wild Game Dinner, (325) 347-5758, masontxcoc.com

McKinney St. Gabriel Holiday Boutique, (972) 542-7170, stgabriel.org

San Marcos Commemorative Air Force Veterans Day Hangar Dance, (512) 396-1943, centraltexaswing.org

Kingsland [9-10] Christmas Market, (325) 388-6159, kingslandcrafts.com

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La Vernia [9-Dec. 29] Country Christmas Ranch, (830) 534-4103, facebook.com/countrychristmasranch

16

Rosanky Rosanky Baptist Church Craft Fair, (512) 360-3968, rosankybaptistchurch.com

Stonewall Historic Williams Creek (Albert) School Open House, (830) 685-3321, historicsschools.org

23

Rockdale Whistle Stop Wine Tour and Christmas Tree Lighting Festival, (512) 446-2030, rockdalechamber.com

30

Comfort Christmas in Comfort, (830) 995-3131, comfortchamber.com

Honey Grove Christmas Parade, (903) 378-7211, honeygrovechamber.org

December

5

Columbus Ladies Night Out, (979) 732-8385, columbus-texas.org

La Grange Schmeckenfest, (979) 968-3017, visitlagrangetx.com

Sinton Old Fashion Christmas Market and Parade, (361) 364-2307, sintonchamber.org



December 5
Sinton
Old Fashion Christmas
Market and Parade

6

Goliad [6-7] Christmas in Goliad, (361) 645-8767, historicalgoliad.com

Pleasanton [6-7] Vintage in Verdi, (830) 570-4552, facebook.com/vintageinverdi

Waxahachie [6-7] Christmas Market & Gift Show, (469) 309-4040, waxahachiecvb.com

7

Fredericksburg Christmas Home Tour & Market, (830) 990-8441, pioneermuseum.net

Lockney Country Christmas Ball, (806) 983-6228

Marble Falls Market Day on Main, (830) 693-2815, marblefalls.org

Onalaska Christmas in Our Town, (936) 646-5000, cityofonalaska.us

Pittsburg Home for the Holidays, (903) 856-3621, pittsburgtexas.com

Wylie Arts Festival, (972) 516-6016, wylietexas.gov

Submit Your Event!

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



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Stopping by the Stagecoach

Historic Salado landmark rides again

THE YEAR IS 1861. A TALL, SILVER-HAIRED man with a grizzled face stands on the balcony of the Shady Villa Hotel in Salado. He delivers a fiery warning to fellow Texans about the perils of secession and the danger posed by the looming Civil War. After his speech, Sam Houston steps inside the two-story building, eats his supper, then heads to bed. We don't know all of the details exactly, but the fact of Houston's speech is gospel in Salado.

And here I sit in 2019, in the room where Houston supposedly slept, sipping on a bourbon Old-Fashioned and munching on a strawberry and arugula salad, as I wait for my steak and jalapeño creamed corn. Times have changed, but some things have stayed the same at the Stagecoach Inn.

Erected just before Houston's speech, the building is the oldest in town. It was a stop for cowboys on the Chisholm Trail and for stagecoaches. Legend holds that guests included Gen. George A. Custer and Charles Goodnight. Even Sam Bass and Jesse James reportedly stayed the night. In Texas, only San Antonio's Menger Hotel has been accommodating travelers longer. And the Menger doesn't have the legend that a nearby cave holds Spanish gold.

In 1943, Dion and Ruth Van Bibber purchased the property and renamed it the Stagecoach Inn, using delicious food and Southern hospitality to attract travelers. Ruth Van Bibber added the restaurant's prix fixe menu consisting of dishes prepared fresh and recited by the waitstaff; there was no written menu. Tomato aspic (think tangy Jell-O), hush puppies, an



Chet imagines a coach ride into Salado.

entree of the day and a strawberry kiss for dessert.

The Stagecoach gained national recognition, helped along by features in *Life* magazine in 1957 and in *Time* in 1966. However, by the early 2000s, postponed maintenance and endless construction on Interstate 35 dealt a serious blow to the inn and restaurant.

In 2016, a group purchased the failing property, shuttering the Stagecoach for the first time before pouring resources into renovating the property. They reopened in 2018.

One summer night, I arrived close to dinnertime, eager to experience the hotel's new chapter. The appearance of the historic two-story building offered a comforting assurance that the new owners respect the hotel's past. After I checked into my room, which was appointed in a midcentury modern style, I walked past the pool crowded with sunbathers and headed for the restaurant. The updated dining room had a historic chic vibe and included classic and modern rooms. With

its huge fireplace, the expansive bar looked like a West Texas hunting lodge.

I settled in for dinner, and the food hit all the right spots. I had no choice but to order the signature strawberry kiss dessert—because if something has been on the menu for almost 75 years, it has to be good. It arrived with a base of baked meringue topped with a scoop of vanilla ice cream and covered in glazed fresh strawberries. After the first bite, I closed my eyes and felt my blood sugar spike to delicious heights.

As I savored the last bite, one of the new owners came out, and we chatted about the Stagecoach's transformation. He described the details of the restoration, and I asked him if he found the Spanish gold buried in that cave. He cracked a smile and said with a Texas-sized wink, "How do you think we paid for all of this?"

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 Salado's Stagecoach Inn.

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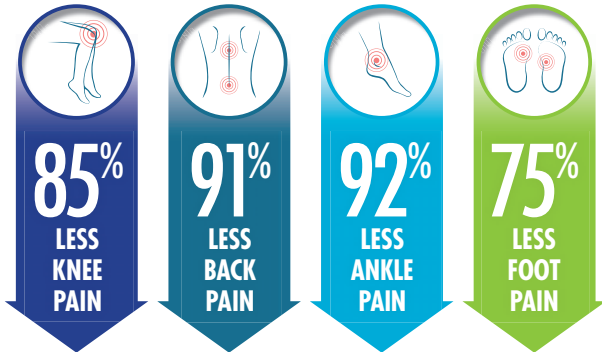
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