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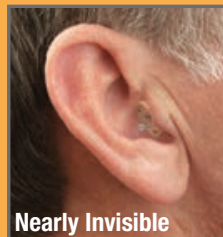
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July 2023



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Camp CAMP has fostered community and joy for decades.

Story and photos by Julia Robinson

Sleeping Giants

Henry Trost's handsome and historic hotels remain welcome West Texas oases.

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Jacob enjoys the big swing at Camp CAMP—Children's Association for Maximum Potential.

Photo by Julia Robinson

ABOVE

Hotel El Capitan's inviting lobby.

Photo courtesy Hotel El Capitan



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FINISH THIS SENTENCE
Darkness is only scary when ...

TCP Tell us how you would finish that sentence. Email your short responses to letters@TexasCoopPower.com or comment on our Facebook post. Include your co-op and town.

Here are some of the responses to our May prompt: **Mom always said ...**

Because I said so!

POLLY HALE
PEDERNALES EC
BLANCO

Kill them with kindness.

PHYLLIS SUTTLE
MIDSOUTH EC
IOLA

The only teeth you need to floss are the ones you want to keep. (She lived to 102 and had all her own teeth.)

KATHRYN SHELTON
WISE EC
PARADISE

Make your words soft and sweet just in case you have to eat them.

GARY L. RAYBON
GENERAL MANAGER/CEO
WHARTON COUNTY EC

Visit our website to see more responses.

July 11
Cow Appreciation Day

Texas has more reasons to celebrate than any other state. With about 12.5 million head of cattle, we have almost twice as many as the next most-populous state, Nebraska.

Ascending Over Arizona

ABILENE'S ARIELLE ASH led the first-ever all-female flyover at the end of the national anthem at the Super Bowl in February.

Ash, a lieutenant in the Navy and a graduate of Texas Tech University, piloted an F/A-18F Super Hornet.

The four-aircraft flyover commemorated 50 years of female pilots in the U.S. Navy. Women were first admitted to Navy flight school in 1973.



Skeeter Bleeders

Rice University bioengineers have teamed with other experts to study the bloodsucking behavior of mosquitoes using patches of synthetic skin made with a 3D printer, eliminating the need for human volunteers.



MEGAN MYERS

Berry Burst Pavlova

“Wow! The whole family loved it, which is miraculous. My granddaughter says that’s what she wants for her birthday cake every year—for the rest of her life. She’s 24.”

MARY RILEY
BRYAN TEXAS UTILITIES
COLLEGE STATION

A Vanishing Tongue

Auf Wiedersehen [May 2023] was a bittersweet read. Less than a week earlier, in the *Fredericksburg Standard-Radio Post*, it was reported that upper-level studies in German would no longer be offered at the high school, as only half of the minimum registrants required to offer the classes had signed up. How sad.

The UT project participants certainly have their work cut out for them.

Françoise Wilson
Central Texas EC
Gillespie County

I grew up in Fredericksburg hearing Spanish (or Tex-Mex), English and Texas German. Talk about confused. When I moved, someone asked if I was from Fredericksburg. How did you know?, I asked. Your accent.

Julie Ausbrook
Via Facebook



NOAH WOODS

In Texas and Beyond

The assertion that if you can learn to surf the sloppy chop in Texas, you can surf just about anywhere is true, as I have been able to surf in California, Mexico, Hawaii and Japan [*Surf Your Turf*, May 2023].

But I must point out that Brad Lomax’s partner in the Texas Surf Museum was Pat Magee (not McGee). If you look at the background in the photo of Brad Lomax, that’s Pat surfing in the blue trunks to Lomax’s right.

Joe Bonorden
Pedernales EC
Canyon Lake

Recalling Kitty Hawk

Although I didn’t serve aboard the Kitty Hawk, I was deployed in its battle group in 1984 while serving aboard the USS Long Beach, and we were there in the Sea of Japan on March 21, 1984, when the collision with the Soviet nuclear submarine occurred [*Breaking Up*, February 2023]. I have a photo of that damaged Soviet sub in my home office. Thank you for the well-deserved remembrance.

Thomas Mueller
Fayette EC
Rutersville

TCP WRITE TO US
letters@TexasCoopPower.com

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Austin, TX 78701

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

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TEXAS CO-OP POWER Volume 80, Number 1 (USPS 540-560). *Texas Co-op Power* is published monthly by Texas Electric Cooperatives. Periodical postage paid at Austin, TX, and at additional offices. TEC is the statewide association representing 76 electric cooperatives. *Texas Co-op Power's* website is TexasCoopPower.com. Call (512) 454-0311 or email editor@TexasCoopPower.com.

SUBSCRIPTIONS Subscription price is \$4.44 per year for individual members of subscribing cooperatives and is paid from equity accruing to the member. If you are not a member of a subscribing cooperative, you can purchase an annual subscription at the nonmember rate of \$7.50.

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‘I
Love
All
the
Love
Here’



A treasured Hill Country summer camp fosters community and joy



It was 44 years ago when Dr. Chris Plauche wrote a letter clearing one of her pediatric patients to take part in summer camp. The child wanted to ride a horse that summer.

But Plauche was devastated to learn that her patient was denied entry anyway. So she, along with other doctors and health care professionals, took 32 children with disabilities for a weekend camp experience themselves.

“It was 1979, so it was before the Americans with Disabilities Act and nothing was accessible and it rained all weekend,” Brandon Briery says. “But they pushed wheelchairs through the mud and rode horses and canoed in the rain and had the time of their lives.”

The physicians knew that couldn’t be a one-time experience.

More than four decades later, participants are still having the time of their lives at Camp CAMP—Children’s Association for Maximum Potential—nestled along the Guadalupe River in Center Point. It’s a special kind of summer camp that changes lives. Located on a sprawling property about 55 miles northwest of San Antonio, Camp CAMP is a haven for visitors of all abilities, offering them the opportunity to make lifelong friendships, gain independence and have fun. Last year it served more than 1,400 children and adults with weeklong summer camp sessions, respite weekends for caregivers and family retreats.

Nobody Is Invisible

It’s a warm cloudless morning, and parents are dropping off their kids for a CAMP weekend. After the COVID tests and medical briefings, each camper is paired with a counselor and assigned a cabin.

Hugs and high-fives abound because many campers and counselors know each other already. One camper-counselor pair plays basketball; others bring out coloring books. Over in the “swing-zebo,” several campers sway in the circle of porch swings, a popular spot for those with autism or other sensory processing disorders for whom swinging is a soothing activity.

Camp CAMP was designed to be fully accessible, with wheelchair ramps, accommodating bathrooms and specialized equipment that allow campers with physical disabilities to fully participate. During the summer, more than 70 counselors, many of whom are college students or recent graduates, receive extensive training to work with the campers. More than 100 health care staff are on-site to administer medications, provide overnight care and ensure the safety of participants. Dedicated volunteers return year after year to help as well.

Gia Barrera, a 16-year-old assistant cabin counselor, started out as one of those volunteers and made the transition to full-time staff last summer. She is sitting with Erin, a camper in her early 20s who is nonverbal but communicates with smiles, vocalizations and touch. Erin rocks back and forth as they eat lunch and plan out the afternoon.

“Camp is for the camper,” Barrera says. “They have complete autonomy over any decision they want to make.” For some, that means no formal activities at all, if that’s what they desire.

One of Barrera’s campers last summer wanted to make friendship bracelets all day. Another camper who loves machines spent hours with her in the laundry room, watching the spin cycle. “Working here gives you a greater understanding of everything,” she says. “It puts a lot of things into perspective for you. I love all the love here.”

CAMP’s mission is simple: to strengthen and inspire individuals with disabilities and those who care for them through recreation education. Campers are 5–55 years old with mild to severe medical conditions, including physical, intellectual and developmental disabilities. Some campers require breathing assistance, others have Down syndrome, cerebral palsy or autism spectrum disorder. But at CAMP, everyone is simply a camper.

OPPOSITE At Camp CAMP in Center Point, campers and counselors bond over activities that include archery, field sports, outdoor cooking and canoeing. ABOVE Savannah, left, and Audrey share a moment on a swing.



Every activity, including swimming and horseback riding, is adaptable to each person's needs so they all can have fun. Crafts, field sports, canoeing, outdoor cooking, an evening dance party and the big swing, which suspends campers in a harness attached to utility poles, offer a variety of adventures.

First up today is archery, where Michael Maffei, assistant camp director, greets campers as they line wooden bleachers. Maffei first attended as a camper back in 2003, so he knows how special the place can be.

He spent his early working life in the private sector but felt something was missing when he rejoined CAMP as an employee. "In the second hour of being in a full-time role here, I helped a young man named Soren shoot a bullseye," Maffei says. "He was so excited he just vibrated like a teakettle that was about to erupt. In that moment, I had more fulfillment and job satisfaction in my second hour at camp than in the four previous years."

Down at the canoe launch, staff members gently place Cassie into a supportive chair cradled by one of her counselors. She is unable to use her limbs and is nonverbal, but it's clear she loves being on the water.

As the boat is launched into the Guadalupe River, a relaxed smile spreads across her face. Two counselors paddle her downstream and back again—a simple journey that most people would take for granted.

"There are so many times out there in the cold, cruel world that the disabled either get overlooked, purposefully left out, unintentionally left out or they're just invisible," says Briery, CAMP's chief program officer. "CAMP isn't about the buildings, it's not even about the activities. It's about building relationships, building community and bringing people together."

FROM LEFT Kristi takes her turn on the big swing. Caleb readies his archery shot with help from Michael Maffei and Samika Iyer.

Dignity in a Safe Place

For many campers, CAMP is a life-changing experience where they develop a sense of independence. For parents, CAMP provides peace of mind knowing their child is in a safe and supportive environment being cared for by trained professionals. Kristen Reid says sending her son was an easy decision.

"As soon as you drive in and you get out, everyone's so friendly, everyone's so welcoming," Reid says. "They know what they're doing, and they love these children."

At a fall retreat, she got to spend a weekend at Camp CAMP with her whole family. She shared a cabin with Payton, 9; her husband; and 6-year-old daughter.

Reid rode a horse with Payton, who is nonverbal. They share a passion for the animals, and the experience was unforgettable.

"Not only could I see it with his hand movements, I could hear it with the sound that he was making ... I could feel he was shaking with excitement," Reid says. "For me to be there and actually see and feel it for myself was a really, really touching moment for me."

The retreat also connected the Reids to other families with similar needs. "And then you can kind of bounce ideas off each other or sometimes just vent to each other when you're having a bad day and you've spent three hours on the phone with insurance," Reid says.

That community and that belonging are exactly what Briery hopes CAMP provides.

"Some days are super long and hard in different ways, helping to manage what can be challenging behaviors," he says. "It's all worth it in the end because we create this safe space where people are treated with dignity, and they're respected, and they know that they belong." ■



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SLEEPING GIANTS

HENRY TROST's handsome and historic hotels remain welcome West Texas oases

BY PAM LEBLANC



SIT ON A ROCKING CHAIR on the front porch of the Gage Hotel in Marathon, and time slips away.

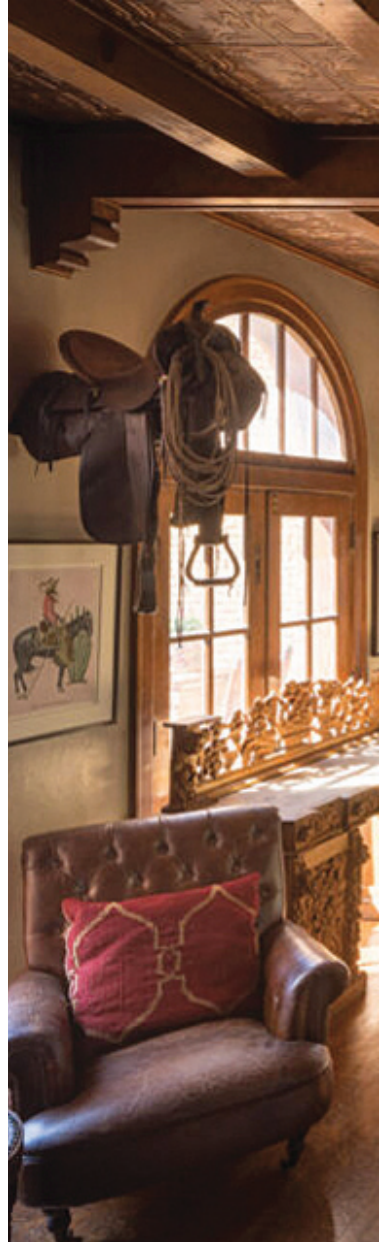
In the lobby behind you, a worn leather saddle hangs from the wall. Across the street, a train rumbles past. In the distance, a gray-green carpet of cactus and brush ripples into the distance like a prickly runway.

The view probably hasn't changed much since architect Henry C. Trost designed this hotel nearly a century ago.

The two-story brick structure, with its arched entryway and wrought-iron door, is just one of hundreds of buildings—fire stations, city halls, high schools, banks and courthouses—that Trost designed across Texas, Arizona and New Mexico.

But it's the four hotels scattered throughout far West Texas that many know best. They're full of character, thoroughly Texan and located in a region of the state known for its dramatic landscapes and independent-minded residents. There was almost a fifth hotel here, too—architectural documents found at the El Paso Public Library indicate plans for a hotel in the small town of Valentine, also in the Big Bend.

"I would encourage people to get off the interstate, drive down into town to visit the hotels and take a step back in time," says Margaret Smith, great-niece of Henry Trost and secretary of the board of the Trost Society, which works to preserve the architect's work. "Learn the history that was made in the hotels and the history of the area."



PHOTOS COURTESY GAGE HOTEL



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT Marathon's Gage Hotel, which opened in 1927, features a grand lobby and rooms that are at once modern and rustic.



Born in 1860, Trost was the son of German immigrants. He moved from Toledo, Ohio, to El Paso in 1903 and co-founded Trost & Trost, an architectural firm, with brother Gustavus (Smith's grandfather). A third brother, Adolphus, a structural engineer, joined later.

The company built its well-appointed West Texas hotels near railroad stations and designed them with spacious lobbies and large dining rooms to accommodate business dealings. Later, the hotels also became popular among families. The firm was also known for its artistic touches and for using reinforced concrete for fireproofing.

"The buildings look like a piece of art and not just a building," Smith says. "That makes them stand out."

GAGE HOTEL Marathon

Trost "was considered *the* architect of the Southwest in those years," says Carol Peterson, general manager. "If you were going to hire the best architect in those days, you would hire Henry Trost if you could."

That's what Alfred S. Gage did. The cattleman, who moved from Vermont to Texas in 1878 to seek his fortune, accumulated more than a half-million acres. He commissioned Trost to build a hotel that could double as a base to oversee his empire.

The hotel opened in 1927, but Gage died just a year later. A series of owners took over after his death, including one who tried to "spruce up" the hotel with dropped ceilings and linoleum floors.

"[Trost] had a very wide-ranging style," Peterson says. "The Gage is a bit more Mission style, as opposed to the Holland and Paisano."

J.P. and Mary Jon Bryan of Houston bought and renovated the Gage in 1978, and they still own it today. In addition to 14 rooms in the original building, with its delightfully creaky wooden floors and ranch décor (including a stuffed mountain lion), guests can book more modern rooms in the Los Portales annex.

"It's really become a very beloved, iconic Texas property," Peterson says. "It's not commercial, it's not cookie cutter. Everything about it has a hand-touched feel."

HOLLAND HOTEL Alpine

Trost wasn't involved in designing the original Holland Hotel, which opened in 1912. But he designed the "new" larger building, which opened next door in 1928 and was later connected to the first.

Sink into a comfy couch in front of the fireplace in the grand lobby, and you'll see the same arched windows and decorative tiles of some of Trost's other properties.

"The thing that makes the Holland special is the position it occupies in the town of Alpine—not geographically but in people's minds," says Alicia Fernbaugh, who manages the 27-room hotel and lives in what once served as the ballroom. "It's very much the heart of the town."

The building stood vacant in the 1960s and '70s, and for a time in the '80s, part of it was converted into offices. Over time, some of the old furnishings were sold off. Now and then, an old bedframe or chandelier discovered in an attic finds its way back home to the hotel.

The Century Bar and Grill, with its shady patio, is known for its margaritas and chicken-fried steak.

"It's very welcoming and warm," Fernbaugh says. "People feel very at home here."



LESLEY VILLARREAL | COURTESY HOLLAND HOTEL



MICHAEL HOWARD | COURTESY HOLLAND HOTEL

FROM ABOVE Holland Hotel décor and the Century Bar and Grill in Alpine.

HOTEL EL CAPITAN Van Horn

Just two blocks off Interstate 10 in Van Horn, the red neon sign of Hotel El Capitan invites travelers to pull off and enjoy a quiet respite in a mostly forgotten town.

The 50-room hotel, named for the rocky peak at Guadalupe Mountains National Park, an hour away, looks much like it did when it opened in 1930, as part of the Gateway chain of hotels operated by Charles Bassett in El Paso. Back then, ranchers gathered in the lobby to sell cattle, make land deals and sip coffee.

The Pueblo Revival-style concrete structure attracted cross-country travelers and tourists exploring nearby national parks.

The hotel closed in the late 1960s, and a bank took over the space. Then in 2007, Lanna and Joe Duncan of Fort Davis, who also own the Paisano, bought it from the bank.

"Although we are sister properties to the Paisano, and the layout inside is almost identical, the exterior is 100% different," says Starvanna Cottrell, general manager. "El Capitan was made to look more like adobe, although it's concrete. The Paisano's exterior is much more European looking."

A fountain bubbles in the courtyard. In the lobby, colorful tiles, exposed wooden beams and wrought iron banisters add character. A sign salvaged from the old coffee shop hangs opposite the fireplace.

"And you can still get a 5-cent cup of coffee, no matter how you want it," Cottrell says.

COURTESY HOTEL EL CAPITAN



COURTESY HOTEL PAISANO

FROM ABOVE The Hotel Paisano's pool was added in 1960. Outside, an inviting courtyard, and inside, a 5-cent cup of coffee.

HOTEL PAISANO Marfa

Another hotel in the Gateway chain, the Hotel Paisano in Marfa, also opened in 1930. “Hotels were built different years ago,” says Vicki Barge, general manager. “They were built with more of a sense of community.”

Step inside its lobby and you’ll find ornate tilework hand selected by Trost, leather chairs and a stuffed buffalo head.

Like the Gage, the Paisano had close ties to the cattle industry. When it opened, trains regularly stopped in Marfa to load and unload cattle. Several ranches kept offices at the hotel.

“He wanted his buildings to look like they belonged to the landscape, and he did a great job of that,” Barge says. “They do look like they should be just where they are.”

Many guests know the Paisano for its connection to the 1956 film *Giant*, starring James Dean. Photographs of Dean hang on walls, and the movie plays nonstop in the lobby.

Dean, along with co-stars Elizabeth Taylor, Rock Hudson and Dennis Hopper, stayed at the Paisano for about two weeks during filming. Today, guests can book one of the hotel’s 42 rooms or suites and swim in a pool that was added in 1960.

“I find it warm and friendly,” Barge says. “It’s kind of a look back at bygone days but still extremely viable now.” ■



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They're at fairs and fundraisers,
community meetings
and nonprofit events.

They connect the cooperative
with new subdivisions and businesses.
Get to know the people who grew up,
live in and love
the regions they serve.

By Melissa Segrest ● Photos by Sarah Beal

IF YOU'VE BEEN to a recent festival or fundraiser in the Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative service area, you've probably seen Kyle Merten, Jo Anna Gilland, Josh Coy, Sherry Murphy or Tim Schultz.

Maybe you met one of them at a chamber of commerce or city planning meeting. Perhaps you know a student who met them at a career fair or received a Bluebonnet scholarship, a program the representatives help organize.

Bluebonnet's five community representatives all grew up in the areas where they live and work: Merten in the Brenham area, Gilland in the Lockhart region, Coy in Bastrop County, Murphy in the Giddings region, and Schultz in the Manor and Elgin areas.

There is plenty of sweat that comes with handing out bottled water and setting up cooling fans at hot summer events. But there's sweat equity and skill required to be liaisons between Bluebonnet, community leaders and those who are bringing new subdivisions, large businesses or industrial facilities to the cooperative's 3,800-square-mile service area.

"Our representatives actively involve themselves in all aspects of our communities," said Wesley Brinkmeyer, the cooperative's manager of community and development services. "The reps' knowledge of area nonprofits, local governments and businesses in the region gives us a feel for what is important to our members collectively and what is important to the communities where members live and work."

Being a community representative means being a conduit for information between Bluebonnet and its many types of members.

"A rep could easily find themselves discussing infrastructure and rates with a large economic development project in the morning, answering questions at a chamber of commerce meeting at lunch and working an event that same evening," Brinkmeyer said.

Brinkmeyer knows: He started at Bluebonnet in 2011 as the Brenham-area representative.

"The role of our community representatives has evolved alongside Bluebonnet's growing number of members," Brinkmeyer said. "Their expertise proves invaluable to all members, whether you've been part of our cooperative for years or are a newcomer to the area."

The representatives are there to answer questions about how Bluebonnet would provide power, its rates for electricity and planned upgrades to power lines and equipment. They work with the cooperative's engineering, planning, construction and member service teams

Continued on Page 18

MEET
BLUEBONNET

Community



**PROFILES OF THE COMMUNITY
REPRESENTATIVES AND MORE,
PAGES 18-18D**

NET'S *Community* REPRESENTATIVES



Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative's community and development services team is, from left, Kyle Merten, Jo Anna Gilland, Josh Coy, manager Wesley Brinkmeyer, Sherry Murphy and Tim Schultz. Together they serve as the connection between the cooperative and the communities it serves.

ON THE REPS' TO-DO LISTS

- Meet with community leaders, elected officials and local government representatives to discuss growth, economic development and providing power across the region
- Answer questions from members, particularly new commercial and industrial members
- Volunteer at school activities, area fairs and festivals and community initiatives; set up cooling fans and hand out bottles of water at events
- Attend community events and fundraisers
- Help support community and area nonprofits' events
- Present information at schools on electric safety, how electricity is provided and about the cooperative
- Attend career fairs across the region and discuss jobs at Bluebonnet
- Help organize the cooperative's scholarship programs
- Maintain direct communication with businesses and community officials during power outages and storms, providing updates on power restoration, estimated restoration times and important safety information
- Partner with the Lower Colorado River Authority to provide grants to nonprofit community groups and first responders
- Collaborate with Bluebonnet's engineering and power line construction teams on service enhancements such as upgrading electric lines to increase voltage and providing redundant, or secondary, sources of power



Tim Schultz

Eastern Travis County & Elgin

TIM SCHULTZ is as local as you can get in Manor and Elgin. A 1981 Manor High School graduate, Schultz has been around long enough to see significant changes, growth and progress in the areas he represents for Bluebonnet.

"I moved to Manor in 1976 from Austin. Back then it was all country. One of my favorite things about it now is that I still live in the country, but we are close enough to a big city to have everything we need," he said.

After graduating from high school, Schultz went to Concordia University in Austin, then on to pitch in the Pittsburgh Pirates' Pioneer minor league from 1984-85. After leaving baseball, he started a family in Manor and worked for 10 years as operations coordinator at Austin's Robert Mueller Municipal Airport, then the city's main airport. He had oversight of construction projects and worked as a liaison between the city and airport.

Staying in his hometown area was a no-brainer for Schultz. He wanted to live in a place that valued community.

In 1993, he helped start Manor-based KST Electric (now Rosending Electric Inc.), an electrical construction company for both commercial and industrial clients. He worked there for 22 years and was the director of operations and purchasing before becoming a Bluebonnet representative in 2015.

"I've loved seeing my children grow up in the same community I did. They played select sports in the area and were high school athletes in Elgin," Schultz said. His son, Brian, 40, excelled in both football and baseball at Elgin High, while daughter Morgan, 28, played softball and volleyball, and youngest Makenna, 22, played volleyball in high school and college.

What Schultz learned at KST Electric has proved to be helpful to new commercial and industrial members of the cooperative in his region. He understands the challenges they face.

"Something that most folks don't realize about a community representative is that we do a lot for our commercial members. The initial conversations we have when a business is looking to open or move to the Bluebonnet area are essential to ensuring they know what to expect from the cooperative and the area," Schultz said.

Community representatives' support goes beyond the initial construction of power lines for businesses. They also continue to support commercial and industrial members through energy audits and providing practical solutions to help businesses reduce their electricity costs.

"Coming from an electrical construction background, I understand how significant the cost of electricity is for members and businesses," Schultz said. "I start by conducting energy audits. I walk through their facilities and identify ways they can make changes to buildings or their operations to save money. It's rewarding to find practical solutions that help benefit their bottom lines."

"The Manor and Elgin areas are still growing with new families, homes and restaurants, grocery stores and retailers. There are new manufacturing and supply chain companies here, too, bringing more jobs and opportunities. We're working together to make our communities better."

— TIM SCHULTZ

Continued from Page 16

— all key participants in sometimes complex projects — to ensure these new members will have electricity to meet their needs.

After new developments and businesses open, Bluebonnet's representatives stay in contact to provide ongoing information. They maintain direct communication during major power outages and answer questions regarding electric use.

"Our members often see us at nonprofit events or activities that we sponsor," Kyle Merten said, "But they may not know we also work with folks at large businesses if they have a power outage. Helping in that moment means I'm directly helping Bluebonnet members."

The representatives know that whether you live in an expanding community or a quiet rural area, growth benefits all cooperative members. It brings enhanced services, increased job opportunities, stronger local economies and affordable, reliable electricity to everyone.

"Because we live in the areas we represent, our job is nothing short of purposeful and fascinating," Jo Anna Gilland said. "We have the privilege of being deeply connected to our communities, understanding their needs and working tirelessly to ensure Bluebonnet members receive the electricity and support they deserve."

These five men and women work directly with many people to improve life in the communities Bluebonnet serves, and they love what they do.

— Sidni Carruthers contributed to these stories

THINGS TO DO IN MANOR & ELGIN

Tim Schultz recommends the parks that both towns offer. "With the amount of young families moving in, we have a great selection of outdoor play options," he said. Try Elgin Memorial Park, 1127 N. Main St., with 26 acres of grass and trees, two volleyball courts and a playscape. In Manor, you can pick from four parks. Each offers something different: a pond, gazebos, covered pavilions and playscapes. Get information about them at www.cityofmanor.org/page/pw_street_parks.

Jo Anna Gilland

Caldwell County, portions of Hays, Guadalupe and Gonzales counties

JO ANNA GILLAND always knew she wanted to stay in the Luling and Lockhart area and raise a family, even when she was a little girl. Now, she is passing along the things she loved about life in Caldwell County to her 4-year-old daughter, Langley.

Gilland worked as a new accounts representative at First Lockhart National Bank from 2000-2005, then moved to Nebraska to work on a corporate team helping open new Cabela's stores across the country. She moved back to her hometown area in 2010 to work in marketing for a nursing home and hospice.

Her wealth of commercial and economic knowledge has benefited Bluebonnet since she became a community representative in 2021.

"One of my favorite things is working with developers who want to build homes and apartments in Bluebonnet's service area. Not only does the new housing provide options to those in the area, but it also helps create jobs and other economic opportunities," Gilland said. "It's important that folks know Bluebonnet's focus is on the communities it serves. That's my focus as well."

Gilland serves on four chambers of commerce: Lockhart, Luling, San Marcos and Greater Caldwell County Hispanic. She is a member of Leadership San Marcos, the Lockhart Kiwanis Club and is on the San Marcos CISD Education Foundation board.

You can always find Gilland volunteering at area events, such as the Watermelon Thump in Luling or the Chisholm Trail Roundup in Lockhart. She is also an active supporter of the Hays-Caldwell Women's Center.

"Bluebonnet has felt like family from day one. I knew I would be busy in the community at events and volunteering," Gilland said. "I love when Langley can be with me while I do those things."

When she isn't working in the community, talking to developers and project planners, or hanging out with her daughter, Gilland enjoys golf and exploring the outdoors around Caldwell and Hays counties.

Lockhart and Luling have long been known for their great barbecue. Now they are becoming known as popular places to live. Since Gilland started working at Bluebonnet, the area has added about 1,000 apartments and 700 houses in subdivisions. Now, more commercial and industrial members are moving to the area. At any given time, Gilland is working on about 20 of those projects for Bluebonnet.

"Growth has led to more community events, so there is pretty much always something to do on the weekends with your family or friends," she said. "Despite the rapid growth, the communities have been able to maintain their small-town feel."



"Part of my role is to support planners, developers, businesses and cooperative staff members to make sure they have what they need to best serve our members and communities. I stay connected in order to keep track of the rapid growth in our region. It's a privilege to work with Bluebonnet's teams. They're the ones who power our communities."

— JO ANNA GILLAND



Community representative Jo Anna Gilland, center, joins Bluebonnet line workers, from left, Joshua Tristan, Matt Mole, Joe Lockhart and Derek Morgan in a visit with students during a career day event at Clear Fork Elementary School in Lockhart earlier this year.

THINGS TO DO IN THE LULING & LOCKHART AREA

Yes, these communities are known for their barbecue restaurants, but there's more to Caldwell County than that, Jo Anna Gilland said. Her favorite place to relax is where the San Marcos River runs through Martindale's Allen Bates River Park. "Martindale is small, but it offers a great place to play in the river, away from the more crowded spots. I also enjoy visiting the Martindale River Café while I'm there," she said.

Sherry Murphy

Lee County, portions of Fayette, Williamson and Milam counties

SOME GIDDINGS residents are surprised when they see Sherry Murphy wearing anything other than her “cow clothes.” That’s because when she isn’t working for Bluebonnet, she is typically at her farm, driving a tractor, tending livestock or working on projects.

The farm has been in Murphy’s family since 1887. It is in Fayette County but touches the Lee and Bastrop county lines. “The farm is my favorite place to be. It’s a great experience to be in a place that has been in my family for so long. It’s given me strong roots to a community I love,” Murphy said.

A graduate of La Grange High School and a lifelong area resident, Murphy takes great pride in the Lee and Fayette county area communities she serves as Bluebonnet’s representative. Her daughter attended La Grange schools, and her granddaughter is a student there.

“This community is what raised me. I love being able to participate by connecting with Bluebonnet members, working at fundraisers and attending community events for the cooperative. Visiting with so many different people is the most impactful type of connection I am able to make as a community representative,” Murphy said.

Before joining Bluebonnet in 2022, Murphy worked for more than 20 years at the Bastrop-based Family Crisis Center, first as financial director and then executive director. The center serves Bastrop, Colorado, Fayette and Lee counties. It provides a range of services to address and prevent domestic and sexual violence, helping more than 1,100 adults and children every year.

Murphy has known for a long time that community work was her calling.

“The best part about my job today is that I can continue to help people and give back,” Murphy said. “Each day there’s something new. Helping organizations or working on a project that has a direct impact on people who live in this area is wonderful.”

This year, she helped organize the cooperative’s Scholarships of Excellence and Government Youth Tour programs, which provided almost \$200,000 in scholarships to area high school students.

“Interacting with schools, attending career fairs, and engaging with young people is more than just part of my job,” Murphy said. “It’s a chance to empower the next generation and help them succeed.”

You can spot Murphy on any given day at area church picnics, VFD fundraisers and nonprofit events. Work and life — visiting with friends, meeting new residents, helping neighbors — blend together.



“I’m connecting with so many people and doing so many different things: judging the poster contest at the Lee County Junior Livestock Show, sitting on the Giddings Chamber of Commerce board, helping plan events like the Texas Word Wrangler Festival. Meeting Bluebonnet members and helping folks in our communities is never boring.”

— SHERRY MURPHY

Kyle Merten, Sherry Murphy and Tim Schultz sign their names to express appreciation to first responders at the 25th Annual First Responders Luncheon in May at the Bastrop Convention Center.



THINGS TO DO IN THE LEE COUNTY REGION

Sherry Murphy encourages folks to check out the small settlements and communities in the area, such as Winchester, Dime Box or Lincoln, where there are stores, restaurants, historic sites and surprising gems. “Go explore and see what you can find. People are so surprised at the great steaks at Murphy’s Steakhouse in Winchester. After that, you can get dessert at Winchester Depot and Ice Cream Junction,” she said. “In Dime Box, the Heritage Museum provides a look at the area’s German and Czech roots.”

Kyle Merten

Washington and Burleson counties, portions of Austin and Colorado counties

KYLE MERTEN was a child of Brenham and the Washington County 4-H club. Starting at age 8, he raised and showed pigs and cattle, traveling to stock shows across Texas.

“The skills and lessons taught in 4-H really shaped who I am,” he said, citing the ability to make decisions and solve problems, set goals and be resilient among them.

Now he gives back to the area that instilled those values in him. “I love working for the co-op, because every day I have the opportunity to serve the communities around Brenham and in Washington, Burleson, Austin and Colorado counties,” he said.

Merten and his wife, Mindy, who also grew up in Brenham, both went to Texas A&M University in College Station. They lived there about 10 years, while Merten worked for the university system, then moved back to their hometown. They missed the community and wanted their children to grow up with those roots and values.

Merten started at Bluebonnet in 2018, after a job in event planning and development at Blinn College. Now, he ensures that communities in the counties he represents know they can rely on him to assist and serve. He participates in county fairs, livestock shows for special-needs participants and Camp for All, a facility near Burton where those with challenging illnesses or special needs can enjoy nature and have fun. He is also vice president of the Brenham ISD educational foundation.

In addition to his community involvement and commitment to Bluebonnet members, Merten works with developers to foster growth and make strategic site selections for their next project. He acts as a liaison between businesses in the region, both for Bluebonnet and as a member of the Washington County Economic Development Foundation. “The commercial and economic partners Bluebonnet works with have to feel confident we’re there to help them,” he said.

He wants to create opportunities that not only benefit businesses but also enhance the well-being of communities in Washington, Burleson, Austin and Colorado counties.

“I like helping our communities grow, while also keeping that ‘small-town charm’ alive,” Merten said.

His passion for 4-H never waned, either. After college, he was event coordinator for 4-H statewide, and today he still helps with community 4-H events. His children, Barrett, 12, and Gretchen, 10, show cattle and pigs. “I want my children to have the same experiences I did,” Merten said.



“I work alongside other folks at Bluebonnet — our engineering team, member services, the control center and line workers in the field — to help solve problems and improve service to members. And if there’s a power outage that impacts a big industrial operation, I’m on the phone, keeping them updated on how we’re working to restore power.”

— KYLE MERTEN



THINGS TO DO IN BRENHAM & CALDWELL

Kyle Merten recommends that visitors spend some time in bustling downtown Brenham, with its restaurants, shops, nightlife, historic sites and colorful wall murals. In Caldwell, there are parks and outdoor options, such as Davidson Creek Park, with a playscape, walking trail, splash pad in the summer and fishing ponds. “Plus, I love to just drive around and look at the beautiful scenery we have in Washington, Burleson and Austin counties,” he said.

THE REPRESENTATIVES: BY THE NUMBERS

57,600 bottles of water handed out last year

\$644,129 in Community Development Partnership Program grants, partnering with the Lower Colorado River Authority, to area nonprofits in the past 5 years

200 chambers of commerce meetings attended in the past 12 months

\$750,000 raised for scholarships in the past 5 years

3,335 meters added in **44** subdivisions last year

1,040 meters added at apartment complexes in Bluebonnet’s region last year

40 commercial or industrial members added in 2022



Josh Coy

Bastrop County

JOSH COY remembers when he taught math at Bastrop Middle School, and one of his students was Chris White. Now, when Coy is doing his job as a Bluebonnet community representative, he often runs into 24-year-old White. His former student is a communications specialist for the Bastrop Independent School District, and they are both committed to the community that raised them.

Coy is a Bastrop High graduate. He went to Texas Christian University, then St. Mary's University in San Antonio, playing baseball at both schools. Then he spent a year crisscrossing the country, playing minor-league baseball for several teams. Coy returned to San Antonio for his master's degree and to teach. He met his wife, Angela. When daughter Lanie was born, the couple decided to move closer to family and they have been in Bastrop ever since. Lanie is now 15, and her brother, Joey, is 11.

"One of the most interesting things about my job is that Roderick Emanuel, Bluebonnet Board member, was my middle school principal. He has seen me grow up. Now, it is a pleasure to be able to work for the company he helps lead," Coy said.

Among his many job responsibilities, Coy facilitates collaborative meetings with developers or businesses who want to be in the Bluebonnet region and area economic development partners. "The growth in Bastrop County is exciting," Coy said. "In these meetings we discuss what it would take to provide them with electricity, as well as the opportunities the development or business would bring to Bluebonnet's members."

In addition to the economic development work, Coy volunteers at nonprofit events, attends chambers of commerce meetings and works at local festivals. "I love being in Bastrop, because I get to see the community through a different lens," he said.

The commitment to community is what attracted Coy to Bluebonnet in 2020. He represents Bluebonnet on the board of the Community Development Partnership Program, through which the co-op, with the Lower Colorado River Authority, provides grants to community organizations and nonprofits. The funds help improve playgrounds, parks and community buildings, and provide support for volunteer fire departments and emergency services in rural areas across the region.

"Bluebonnet allows me to do what I am passionate about: Work to help improve and further the things our members have access to," Coy said. "Bluebonnet shows me, time and time again, the importance of our members and the communities we serve."

"I feel honored to have a job that lets me give back to the community I grew up in. Bluebonnet makes a difference in peoples' lives. We have programs that help young people and partnerships with nonprofits. We play a crucial role in building stronger communities and supporting first responders."

— **JOSH COY**

THINGS TO DO IN BASTROP & SMITHVILLE

Josh Coy's favorite places are two Main Streets — one in Smithville, the other in Bastrop. There are plenty of spots to shop, dine, drink and see historic sites on both streets. In Bastrop, Coy recommends Tracy's Drive-In Grocery, 1602 Main St. In addition to grocery items, it sells popular hand-crafted coffees. In Smithville, Mosaic is a shop of colorful furniture, art, collectibles and jewelry at 218 Main St.

Josh Coy prepares one of Bluebonnet's large cooling fans to a hot-weather outdoor event in his area. Bluebonnet provided 162 community events with the fans in the past two years.





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We're a cooperative.**

OUR
power
COMES FROM
you

“I moved to Bleiberville to get out of the hubbub of Houston. I’m building a new house and needed a new power line put in. This is the first time I had to install electricity. Dylan came to our property, helped me decide what I wanted to do, explained the process and guided me through the paperwork. The next steps happened really quickly. It just made our installation a breeze. Thank you, Bluebonnet.”

— Dan Gibson,
New Bluebonnet member, Bleiberville

Thank you, Mr. Gibson.

Dylan Iselt, a Bluebonnet line design technician, has been helping members connect new electric service on their property for three years. He’s helped design plans for hundreds of sections of power lines. It takes Bluebonnet employees 11 days, on average, to install new electric service. We want bringing power to a new home or business to be as easy as possible. It is our pleasure and privilege to serve new and longtime Bluebonnet members.

ANNUAL MEETING 2023

Bluebonnet celebrates grand gathering of members



By Alyssa Meinke

A RAINY START did not dampen the spirits of more than 450 Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative members and guests at the co-op's Annual Meeting on May 9 in Giddings. Bluebonnet's Board of Directors and staff welcomed everyone to the traditional gathering at The Silos on 77 event center, as attendees reconnected with old friends and made new ones.

Three incumbent directors in this year's Board election were unopposed and elected by general consent, per Bluebonnet's bylaws, at the Annual Meeting: Roderick Emanuel, from District 3 for Bastrop County; Russell Jurk, from District 4 for Lee, Milam and Williamson counties; and Byron Balke, from District 6 for Austin, Colorado and Fayette counties. Incumbent Director Robert Mikeska won the District 7 seat for Washington County over Richard Lamensky, with a vote of 5,095 to 658.

Bluebonnet's members elect the directors who govern the electric cooperative. The nine members of the Board of Directors serve staggered three-year terms.

More than 6,300 members participated in this year's Annual Meeting, whether voting by proxy or casting votes during the meeting.

Board Chairman Ben Flencher told meeting attendees that the cooperative's directors represent Bluebonnet's members so well because they know them from church, school, work, sports leagues and other civic activities.

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



He also spoke about the impressive amount of growth in Bluebonnet's service area.

"In 2019, we surpassed the 100,000-meter mark and four months ago, we surpassed the 125,000-meter mark," Flencher said. "It took us 80 years to get to the 100,000-meter mark and only another four years to add an additional 25,000 meters."

Bluebonnet General Manager and CEO Matt Bentke then spoke of the cooperative's service to its members and communities, as well as its financial and operational strengths. He pointed out highlights of Bluebonnet's performance in 2022 and early 2023, which included a 5.95% annual growth rate in 2022. The cooperative completed more maintenance and added more assets than any time in its history, Bentke said, and returned \$8.68 million to members in the form of capital credits last year. Bluebonnet plans to return \$9.48 million in capital credits in 2023.

The cooperative's record growth during the past several years has benefited

all stakeholders — members, the electric system and local communities — and allows Bluebonnet to achieve its mission to provide safe, reliable power at cost-competitive rates, Bentke said.

"Several years ago, our Board of Directors knew that growth was coming to our area and put in place a very effective strategy that has enabled us to create prosperity and share it with all our members," he said. "I am proud of the hard work everyone in this organization does every day in service to our members."

Members and guests started the day enjoying Western swing music by the Jason Roberts Band. They snacked on kolaches and sipped coffee, browsed information tables and posed for instant photos.

Some folks — such as members and neighbors Carol Kadura, Marilyn Klaus, Blondera Saucedo, Benjamin Saucedo, Wanda Hoffman and Clayton Hoffman of Rockne — have attended Bluebonnet's Annual Meeting together for years. For others, like Tracy Burns of Smithville, it was the first

SEE A LIST OF DOOR-PRIZE DONORS, PAGE 23



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6



4



5



7

time at the gathering. “The Annual Meeting gave me a chance to learn more about how the cooperative business model works,” said Burns, who works as a stylist at Vanity Room Salon in Smithville. She had been encouraged to attend by her client Nancy Littlefield, who has been to many meetings.

Dozens of members left with door prizes awarded during the meeting. Helen Gordon, a Bluebonnet member in Giddings, won the first of two Cub Cadet zero-turn riding lawn mowers.

It was Gordon’s first Bluebonnet Annual Meeting. “I am from Giddings, lived in Austin for a while, and moved back home three years ago. My family’s property has been in the Bluebonnet area for decades,” she said.

Elvera Drews, who has been attending the Annual Meeting for 21 years, won the second mower.

A day after the Annual Meeting, the name of one lucky member out of the 6,333 participants was drawn to win a truck being retired from Bluebonnet’s fleet. Harry Penkert of Burton won the drawing for a 2013 Dodge Ram 1500 with about 191,000 miles.

“It was shocking,” said Penkert, who said he has never received a giveaway as valuable as a truck before. Penkert and his wife, Patti, have been Bluebonnet members for 45 years and participated in this year’s Annual Meeting by submitting a proxy form. “We are happy to be members of Bluebonnet,” he said.

If you missed the meeting, you can watch a video recap at youtu.be/8a3dT2ds8mU.

- 1) More than 450 members and guests attended this year’s Annual Meeting in Giddings on May 9.
- 2) General Manager and CEO Matt Bentke speaks about the cooperative’s service to its members and communities, as well as its financial and operational strengths.
- 3) Emil and Mary Richter of Smithville register with Bluebonnet member service representative Malisa Espinal.
- 4) Helen Gordon of Giddings sits on the new Cub Cadet riding lawn mower she won in a door prize drawing.
- 5) A member raises a hand as Board Chairman Ben Fleucher addresses the crowd.
- 6) Bluebonnet line worker Dior Smith accompanies Mona Griffith of Somerville through the rain.
- 7) Harry and Patti Penkert of Burton were winners of the truck giveaway.



Bluebonnet line worker Nick Baker competes in a timed event at the Texas Lineman's Rodeo in 2022. Bluebonnet will again send competitors to the annual event on July 15. Sarah Beal photo

Bluebonnet team to compete at Lineman's Rodeo in Seguin July 15

BLUEBONNET ELECTRIC Cooperative will send journeymen line worker teams, apprentice line workers, several competition judges, a barbecue team and volunteers to the Texas Lineman's Rodeo at Nolte Island Park near Seguin on July 15.

The event gives line workers a chance to compete against their peers from cooperatives and other electric utilities across the state in order to showcase some of the skills they perform on the job. Other competitions include a dexterous pole climb while carrying a raw egg in a bag — and not breaking it — and a pole-top rescue of a mannequin the size and weight of a person. There are other mystery events for line workers and a barbecue cook-off.

Come cheer on our teams in person or keep track of their progress via Bluebonnet's Facebook, Instagram and Twitter pages throughout the day. Learn more about the event at ttra.org.

OFFICE CLOSINGS

Bluebonnet offices will be closed Tuesday, July 4, for Independence Day. If you have a power outage, you can report it by texting OUT to 85700 (to register, text BBOUTAGE to that number), online at bluebonnet.coop, via our MyBluebonnet mobile app or by calling 800-949-4414.

Bluebonnet awards a record 79 scholarships to high school seniors

By Sidni Carruthers

BLUEBONNET ELECTRIC Cooperative recently awarded \$2,500 scholarships to 79 area high school seniors, a total of \$197,500. That is the largest number of scholarships awarded in a single year in the cooperative's history.

Bluebonnet is a community-focused cooperative that invests in the young people and communities within its 3,800-square-mile service area.

The cooperative helps graduating seniors pursue higher education to further their academic and career goals. Scholarship money can be used for tuition, fees, books and other educational expenses at any accredited university, college or vocational school.

The scholarship program is open to any high school senior whose parent or legal guardian is a Bluebonnet member. Applicants must submit official applications, school grade transcripts and the names of the institutions where they plan to enroll as full-time students in the fall semester.

"We're thrilled to offer this scholarship program to our local students," said Wesley Brinkmeyer, Bluebonnet's manager of community and development services. "Education is a key component of our cooperative's mission, and we believe that investing in our young people is a great way to give back to the communities we serve."

The 244 scholarship applicants were evaluated based on academic achievement, community involvement, leadership skills and other factors, such as grade-point average and essay-writing abilities.

The scholarship recipients come from a variety of backgrounds and represent a range of academic interests and career aspirations. Some are interested in jobs in science, technology, engineering and math. Others are passionate about studying the arts, humanities and social sciences. Some plan to attend vocational schools to learn trades, such as welding, land surveying and cosmetology.

Elgin High School senior Genna Crafts plans to attend Texas Lutheran University in Seguin and hopes to become a neonatal intensive care nurse. "I love helping people. I want to go to the NICU and help babies," she said.

‘Education is a key component of our cooperative's mission, and we believe that investing in our young people is a great way to give back to the communities we serve.’

Wesley Brinkmeyer

Bluebonnet's manager of community and development services

Carmen Niemeyer, a senior at Brenham High School, plans to attend Texas A&M University in the fall to pursue a degree in animal science. Her mom, Jacy Niemeyer, advises her daughter to "find something you enjoy doing and dig into it. There are a lot of opportunities out there, so take them when you can and have fun doing it."

Blaine Mueller, another senior from Elgin, hopes to open his own heavy equipment repair shop with a focus on fabrication solutions. Mueller plans to attend Stephen F. Austin University in Nacogdoches in the fall.

Bastrop High School senior Natalee Rebeles plans to attend Texas State University to study nutrition and become a nurse. Rebeles hopes to graduate in five years. After that, her goal is to "begin narrowing down what type of nursing I want to do," she said. Her mother, Damaris Chavez, is an inspiration in Rebeles' desire to become a nurse because of how hard she worked to raise her and her siblings with a loving, caring attitude.

Bluebonnet raises scholarship money with an annual golf tournament.

Bluebonnet encourages any eligible student who plans to graduate from high school in 2024 to apply for the scholarship program. Applications will be available online starting in November. Watch for more information on Bluebonnet's pages in Texas Co-op Power magazine, its social media pages and its website, bluebonnet.coop.



Scholarship recipients, on bench, from left, are Genna Crafts, Justin Balcar, Allison Benson. Middle row, from left, are Michael Svetlik, Alycen Faust, Natalee Rebeles, Blaine Mueller, Macy Bonds, Carson Klaerner, Ashlyn Cadena, Hunter Frosch, Shaylee Weldon-Diaz, Landry Masur, Jordyn Matus, Jacob Milburn, Steiley Beggs, Carson Royall. On stairs, from left, are Dawson Draehn, Liana Ybarbo, Judson Gold, Rylan Stork, Lane Bowen, Allison Frazier, Garrett Gerdes, Ehren Mitschke, Grace Sagebiel, Paige Aguilar, Melvin Evans.



Scholarship recipients, front row, from left, are Kendal Gurka, Leah Hardy, Caleb See, Emma Marth, Erick Barrientos, Grace Fromme, Kynley Hurst. Second row, from left, are Paiton Altmiller, Aubrey Gonzalez, Emmy Boyd, Dustin Rybarski, Olivia McLendon, Leonel Lopez, Kamryn Tena, Carmen Niemeyer, Kinlee Kays, Lidia Gutierrez. Standing, third row, from left, are Grant Hincley, Eli Kubicek, Emily Schulze, Chesney Johnston, Waylon Chapman, Marlin Martinez, Brady Lawhorn, Avery Burnett. On stairs, from left, are Asher Boniol, Mason Finke, Chet Fritsch, Brooklyn Walther, Shelby Prazak, Josh Poling, Grace Ann Roth, Ada Stopschinski (white shirt), Reagan Hinze, Daniel Ayala, William Webb (purple shirt), Stewart Hervey, Logan Fritsch, Dawson Rudloff, Kayla Mican. *Sarah Beal photos*

Scholarship recipients not pictured are Allison Bowers, Ryan Ferguson, Kassidy Gill, Faith Poe, Lawson Cruise, Kenzie Muhl, Amelia Meraz, Yadira Castro, Marissa Rocha, Caitlin Tims, Dulce Gomez.

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TCP Listen as W.F. Strong narrates this story on our website.



then swung north of the most traveled roads, bushwhacking his way through mesquite and mottes of trees.

When the Texians put up the white flag, they asked to return to their homes. Woll told them that “if they did not surrender at discretion, they would be exterminated without exception.”

Woll took 62 prisoners, among them several high-value civilians: seven lawyers, a judge, two doctors, a surgeon and prominent business leaders. He told them they would return with him to the border, where they would be released. Instead, they were marched all the way to Mexico’s infamous Perote Prison, where many were held for two years, subjected to hard labor and chains. A few died en route, and some died in captivity.

Woll didn’t occupy San Antonio long. His goal was to be a disruptive force, preventing Texians from feeling secure and also to inhibit migration from the U.S. Woll’s other objective was to determine if there were credible military buildups for a Texas invasion of Mexico.

Meanwhile, Texians sounded the alarm that San Antonio had fallen. Volunteers grabbed their guns and saddled their horses. They gathered in Seguin, pushed on to Salado Creek and tempted Woll to pursue them. Woll took the bait, and the Texians, from the cover of the woods, killed and wounded more than 60 Mexican soldiers while the Texians lost only one. Sadly, on another portion of the creek, three dozen Texians were killed.

Santa Anna had once again underestimated Texas. He wanted to unsettle the new republic with fear and chaos and keep them isolated. Instead, he drove the Texians toward a collective desire to join the U.S., which they did six years later. ■

Second Sacking

Six years after the Alamo, Mexican troops twice stormed San Antonio

BY W.F. STRONG • ILLUSTRATION BY TRACI DABERKO

MOST TEXANS BELIEVE the Battle of San Jacinto settled everything. Once Mexican Gen. Antonio López de Santa Anna was decisively defeated, he signed a treaty guaranteeing Texas independence. So Mexican troops would never again set foot on Texas soil nor darken our door—right?

Not quite. Just six years after Santa Anna’s Pyrrhic victory at the Alamo, Mexican forces twice tramped to San Antonio. First Gen. Rafael Vásquez showed up with 700 men to a mostly evacuated city in March 1842. They headed back across the Rio Grande after just two days, having set off a panic in Texas.

Then six months later, Santa Anna sent another army to sack San Antonio

and occupy the Alamo. Gen. Adrián Woll led a force of about 1,400 troops who awakened the town with the heart-stopping boom of a cannon blast at dawn, followed by military trumpeters playing reveille. They quickly pacified minor resistance on their way to the central plaza. This was the 19th-century version of shock and awe.

Near the plaza, Texas patriots quickly put up fierce resistance, shooting through rifle loopholes in the walls, but it was fruitless. They were surrounded by a Mexican force of many hundreds.

How did such a large army make it all the way to San Antonio without anybody noticing? Woll, a French mercenary, was quite wily. He crossed the Rio Grande about 20 miles south of Eagle Pass and

Garden Bounty

Harvest time takes on a new twist with these timely treats

BY VIANNEY RODRIGUEZ, FOOD EDITOR

Why not shake things up with a new seasonal take on sangria? A splash of mezcal over fresh peaches, sugar, lemon juice and mint gives this sangria a Mexican twist. It's a refreshing way to beat the Texas heat.



Peach Mezcal Sangria

- 1 pound fresh peaches, sliced
- ¼ cup sugar
- 6 fresh mint leaves, finely chopped
- ¼ cup lemon juice
- ¾ cup mezcal
- 1 bottle white wine (750 milliliters), chilled
- 2 cups sparkling water, chilled
- Fresh mint leaves, for garnish
- Lemon slices, for garnish

COOK'S TIP Make it a mocktail by using white grape juice instead of wine and zero-proof mezcal, like that made by Houston-based Cut Above.

1. In a bowl, combine sliced peaches, sugar, chopped mint, lemon juice and mezcal and stir to combine. Refrigerate 1 hour.
2. Add refrigerated fruit and wine to a large pitcher. Stir to combine and top with sparkling water.
3. Serve over ice. Garnish with mint and lemon slices.

SERVES 6

TCP Follow Vianney Rodriguez while she cooks in *Cocina Gris* at sweetlifebake.com, where she features a recipe for Fresh Peach Tart.



Italian Turkey Zucchini Meatballs

LORI BEGGS
UNITED COOPERATIVE SERVICES

After a bumper crop of zucchini, Beggs incorporated it into her meatball recipe, knowing her son wasn't a fan and hoping he wouldn't notice. The result: meatballs that are tender, flavorful and taste just like your favorites.

- 1 cup shredded zucchini**
- 1 pound ground turkey**
- ¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese**
- ½ onion, grated with juices**
- ½ cup breadcrumbs**
- 1 egg**
- 1 teaspoon finely chopped garlic**
- 1 teaspoon Italian seasoning mix**
- ½ teaspoon salt**
- ¼ teaspoon ground black pepper**
- 2 teaspoons olive oil**

1. Spread shredded zucchini out onto a paper towel. Add another paper towel on top and press to absorb moisture from the zucchini.
2. In a bowl, mix all ingredients except for the olive oil. Form the mixture into meatballs by hand.
3. Heat oil in skillet over medium-high heat. Add meatballs to skillet, brown on all sides and cook through, about 15 minutes.
4. Serve with your favorite pasta and sauce.

SERVES 4

[MORE RECIPES >](#)



\$500 WINNER

Fresh Corn Loaf

CATHY TOWER
HAMILTON COUNTY EC

Perfect for brunch or Sunday dinner, Tower's fresh corn loaf is bursting with garden flavors. A hint of cayenne pepper makes the fresh vegetables pop. Serve warm with butter or honey. This loaf is even tastier the next day.

SERVES 8-10

- 2 cups fresh corn kernels**
- 1 cup chopped tomatoes**
- ½ cup chopped onion**
- ¾ cup chopped green bell pepper**
- ⅛ teaspoon cayenne pepper**
- 2 teaspoons salt**
- 1 cup yellow cornmeal**
- 1 cup grated cheddar cheese**
- 2 eggs**
- ½ cup evaporated milk**
- ½ cup water**

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Apply cooking spray to a 2-quart baking dish.
2. In a bowl, combine corn, tomatoes, onion, bell pepper, cayenne pepper, salt, cornmeal and cheese.
3. In another bowl, whisk together eggs, evaporated milk and water. Add to corn mixture and mix well.
4. Spoon into baking dish. Bake 1 hour, or until a toothpick inserted comes out clean.

TCP \$500 Recipe Contest

SLOW COOKER DUE JULY 10
We want your best set-and-forget recipes. Submit yours online by July 10 for a chance to win \$500.



Candied Jalapeños

JILEEN PLATT
BOWIE-CASS EC

Platt gifts her East Texas pepper bounty by cooking up candied jalapeños. These tasty gems are delicious on sandwiches, burgers, eggs and tacos. The recipe can easily be doubled.

- ½ pound jalapeño peppers**
- 1 cup sugar**
- ½ cup cider vinegar**
- ½ teaspoon ground turmeric**
- ½ teaspoon ground ginger**
- ⅙ teaspoon ground allspice**

1. Prepare a water bath canner or a large pot and heat to boiling, adding half-pint jars and lids to sterilize.
2. Slice jalapeños into ¼-inch round slices.
3. In a saucepan combine sugar, vinegar, turmeric, ginger and allspice. Bring to a boil, then reduce the heat to a simmer, stirring occasionally. Cook until syrup has reduced and thickened.



4. Carefully add jalapeños to warm jars, gently pushing down, filling up to leave ½-inch headspace.
5. Ladle hot syrup over jalapeños, leaving ¼-inch headspace and removing air bubbles. Wipe rims, top with canning lid and screw on bands. Continue until all jalapeños are canned.
6. Return jars to canner and return to a boil. Boil for 10 minutes. Remove jars, allow to cool. Store in a cool, dark place.

MAKES 4 HALF-PINT JARS

Essential Canning Tools

BY MEGAN MYERS

Canning doesn't have to be complicated, but you'll want to have these basics before you start.

Large pot: You don't need a special water bath canning pot; any pot large enough to hold jars covered with water will do. Make sure to keep jars from touching the bottom of the pot.

Jar lifter: These special tongs help you transfer hot jars into and out of the water bath.

Wooden dowel or chopstick: Use either of these implements instead of a knife to remove air bubbles to prevent scratching the inside of the jar.

Fresh canning lids: Wax seal lids cannot be reused, so be sure to have enough on hand. Rings can be reused until they start to rust.



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COURTESY CHET GARNER

One Weird Wonder

Austin's Cathedral of Junk is an unfolding work of ... art?

BY CHET GARNER

THEY SAY ONE MAN'S trash is another man's treasure. If that's true, I was standing atop one of the most valuable treasure heaps in all of Texas. But rather than a pile of gold bullion or Fabergé eggs, this treasure trove consisted of busted TVs, at least one prosthetic leg and about 60 tons of accumulated stuff. It's definitely not the sort of "treasure" that sells at fancy auctions. But for artist Vince Hannemann, this is indeed a priceless work of art.

I was in Hannemann's South Austin backyard, atop his infamous Cathedral of Junk, a 30-foot tower consisting of multiple rooms and countless layers of—for lack of a better word—junk. License plates, wheelchairs and action figures formed into one massive structure that Hannemann started building in the late 1980s using pieces of his own trash.

As it took shape, neighbors started bringing him boxes of refuse that he puzzled and wired into the ever-expanding mass. Over three decades, the pile of trash became something more. It became a cathedral.

As he gave me a tour, Hannemann pointed out some of his favorite items that came with their own mysterious origin stories. One was a dented and burned timecard punch clock. "Did somebody get fired, smash the clock and then set the building on fire?" he wonders.

At first, the cathedral's haphazard form seemed like chaos, but as I walked the grounds, I slowly noticed that every room, wall and panel had a theme. Sometimes the junk was organized by color, other times by its decade of creation. Before long, the junk transformed into a work of art before my eyes. It's a creation too glorious for any gallery and more appropriately exhibited in an Austin backyard. ■

ABOVE Appointments are required to pay homage at the backyard Cathedral of Junk.

TCP See more of the clutter that makes Chet's heart flutter in the video on our website. And see all his Texplorations on *The Daytripper* on PBS.



Know Before You Go

Call ahead or check an event's website for scheduling details, and check our website for many more upcoming events.

JULY

01

Cuero [1–August 26] Black Cowboys: An American Story, (361) 277-2866, chisholmtrailmuseum.org

07

Kerrville [7–8] Open Pro Rodeo, (830) 997-1864, kerrvilletexascvb.com

08

Weatherford Parker County Peach Festival, (817) 596-3801, parkercountypeachfestival.org

13

Fort Stockton [13–15] Water Carnival, fswatercarnival.org

14

Hempstead [14–15] Watermelon Festival, (979) 921-5095, hempsteadwatermelonfestival.com

Laredo [14–16] International Sister Cities Festival, (956) 794-2200, visitlaredo.com

Ingram [14–15, 21–22, 28–29] The Last Round-up of the Guacamole Queens, (830) 367-5121, hcaf.com

15

Brownwood Dino Day, (325) 641-1926, browncountymuseum.org

Burnet 100-Year Boat-a-Thon, (830) 798-7632, tpwd.texas.gov

Friona Cheeseburger Festival, (806) 250-2761, friona-chamber.com

19

Amarillo [19–22] Iron Horse Shoot Out, (806) 353-2911, ironhorseshootout.com

21

Fredericksburg Historic Wrede School Open House, (830) 685-3321, historicschools.org

Palestine [21-23, 28-30] Matilda the Musical, thetexasstheater.com

28

Naples [28-29] Watermelon Festival and Rodeo, (903) 458-0425, facebook.com/naplesmelonpatch

29

Boerne Hot Summer Night Antique Tractor Pull, (210) 445-1080, theagricultural.org

Giddings Sip and Shop: Christmas in July, (979) 542-3455, giddingstx.com

Kingsville Back to School Festival, (361) 500-5892, cbabbq.com

Stephenville Elks Lodge BBQ Cookoff, (254) 979-5019, facebook.com/stephenvilleelksbbq

AUGUST

04

Huntsville [4-5] Genealogy Weekend, (936) 291-5471, huntsvilletx.gov

Olton [4-5] Sandhills Celebration, (806) 285-2292, oltonchamber.org

Kerrville [4-5, 11-13, 18-20] A Murder is Announced, (830) 896-9393, caillouxperformingarts.com

05

Camp Wood Old Settlers Reunion, (830) 597-6241, nuecescanyonchamber.org

TCP *Submit Your Event*

We pick events for the magazine directly from TexasCoopPower.com. Submit your October event by August 1, and it just might be featured in this calendar.



Grapevine, Texas is your destination for family fun this summer! Conveniently located between Dallas and Fort Worth, Grapevine is perfectly placed for a summer staycation or day trip. Enjoy family favorites like Grapevine Vintage Railroad, Great Wolf Lodge and LEGOLAND® Discovery Center or make a splash at Gaylord Texan's Paradise Springs Water Park. You definitely won't want to miss the all-new Meow Wolf Grapevine bringing its never-before-seen immersive art experience to Grapevine Mills beginning Summer 2023!

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Waterfalls

"Just a winding stream where I can drift and dream
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 We can share it all beneath a ceiling of blue."
 —From the song *By a Waterfall* by Sammy Fain and Irving Kahal

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1 RANDY DULL
 COSERV
 Gooseberry Falls in Minnesota.

2 DEANNE BROWN
 PEDERNALES EC
 "Vernal Falls in Yosemite National Park offers hikers a reminder of the power of nature."

3 MIKE PRESTIGIACOMO
 BARTLETT EC
 Rainbow falls.

4 SABRENA ST. CLERGY
 JASPER-NEWTON EC
 "Colorado Bend State Park—a hidden gem."



Upcoming Contests

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 - DUE AUG 10 Mailboxes**
 - DUE SEP 10 Local Landmarks**
- 

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TCP See Focus on Texas on our website for more Waterfalls photos from readers.



Honest-to-Goodness Veggies

In the country, a trusted type of commerce still works

BY MIKE LEGGETT
ILLUSTRATION BY
ANNA GODEASSI

FOLKS DO THINGS differently out in the country, whether it's putting in a garden, processing their own hogs or raising beef to market.

Larry Westphal does a little of everything on his land along County Road 202 in Burnet County. Westphal, 70, has some cows and 200 head of sheep to keep him busy most of the year, but he's taken his garden to a whole new level.

He plants and harvests vegetables and tomatoes in a plot near his house that's about 40 feet square. With his wife, Judy, he picks, eats and cans what he is able to, but he still has a surplus almost every summer.

So Westphal decided to test his entrepreneurial skills and sell some of his annual harvest at local farmers markets. He also built himself a display stand several

years back and sells squash and tomatoes and sometimes peppers to anyone who wants them.

But Westphal doesn't sit by the stand, near the gate to his property. Rather, he hand-letters signs for each vegetable and sells them individually on the honor system.

The money goes into a small box that hangs off the stand, which could present a temptation for some, but this system works for Westphal. "Everybody around here is pretty honest," he says. "Unless it's a cat or one of the neighbor's chickens, I don't lose anything to somebody stealing it."

The little bit of money the stand generates doesn't go very far. "It pays for the seed," says Westphal, a Pedernales Electric Cooperative member. "That's about all it does."

Most of his business is local, too. "I think most of it is just our neighbors," Westphal says. "Everybody has been pretty honest. I figure if they're that hungry, they're welcome to it."

When we're driving past during the week, my wife and I debate how we'd eat our squash, if we bought some. I'm a sliced-and-fried guy, but Rana prefers stewed with onions—each the way our mothers made it.

Westphal comes by his gardening and farming instincts naturally. His grandfather, who emigrated to the U.S. from Germany, ran a dairy in Minnesota for years. "My dad left that place as fast as he could," Westphal says, remarking on what a tough business it was.

His maternal grandfather was a sharecropper in Oklahoma, where Westphal spent some of his early days walking along behind a tractor. "I was 4 or 5 years old, and you can't make a living off a place like that anymore."

There's not much money selling surplus vegetables for a dollar apiece either, but there's more satisfaction. And that's why he does it. ■

To some, sunglasses are a fashion accessory...

But When Driving, These Sunglasses May Save Your Life!

Drivers' Alert: Driving can expose you to more dangerous glare than any sunny day at the beach can... do you know how to protect yourself?

The sun rises and sets at peak travel periods, during the early morning and afternoon rush hours and many drivers find themselves temporarily blinded while driving directly into the glare of the sun. Deadly accidents are regularly caused by such blinding glare with danger arising from reflected light off another vehicle, the pavement, or even from waxed and oily windshields that can make matters worse. Early morning dew can exacerbate this situation. Yet, motorists struggle on despite being blinded by the sun's glare that can cause countless accidents every year.

Not all sunglasses are created equal. Protecting your eyes is serious business. With all the fancy fashion frames out there it can be easy to overlook what really matters—the lenses. So we did our research and looked to the very best in optic innovation and technology.

Sometimes it does take a rocket scientist. A NASA rocket scientist. Some ordinary sunglasses can obscure your vision by exposing your eyes to harmful UV rays, blue light, and reflective glare. They can also darken useful vision-enhancing light. But now, independent research conducted by scientists from NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory has brought forth ground-breaking technology to help protect human eyesight from the harmful effects of solar radiation light. This superior lens technology

was first discovered when NASA scientists looked to nature for a means to superior eye protection—specifically, by studying the eyes of eagles, known for their extreme visual acuity. This discovery resulted in what is now known as Eagle Eyes®.

The Only Sunglass Technology Certified by the Space Foundation for UV and Blue-Light Eye Protection. Eagle Eyes® features the most advanced eye protection technology ever created. The TriLenium® Lens Technology offers triple-filter polarization to block 99.9% UVA and UVB—plus the added benefit of blue-light eye protection. Eagle Eyes® is the only optic technology that has earned official recognition from the Space Certification Program for this remarkable technology. Now, that's proven science-based protection.

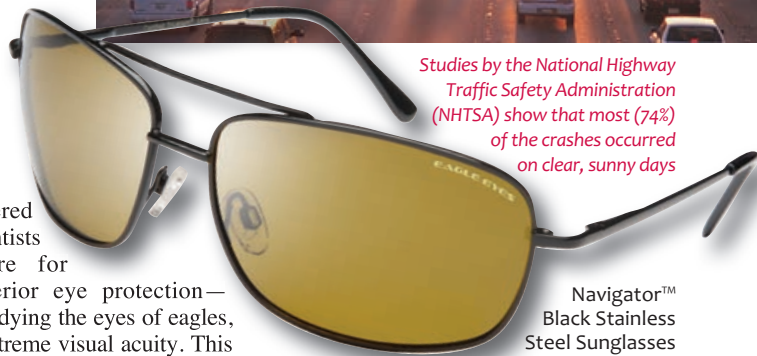
The finest optics: And buy one, get one FREE! Eagle Eyes® has the highest customer satisfaction of any item in our 20 year history. We are so excited for you to try the Eagle Eyes® breakthrough technology that we will give you a **second pair of Eagle Eyes® Navigator™ Sunglasses FREE—** a \$59.95 value!

That's two pairs to protect your eyes with the best technology available for less than the price of one pair of traditional sunglasses. You get a pair of Navigators with stainless steel black frames and the other with stainless steel gold, plus one hard zipper case and one micro-fiber drawstring cleaning pouch are included. Keep one pair in your pocket and one in your car.

Your satisfaction is 100% guaranteed. If you are not astounded with the Eagle Eyes® technology, enjoying clearer, sharper and more glare-free vision, simply return one pair within 30 days for a full refund of the purchase price. The other pair is yours to keep. No one else has such confidence in their optic technology. Don't leave your eyes in the hands of fashion designers, entrust them to the best scientific minds on earth. Wear your Eagle Eyes® Navigators



Studies by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) show that most (74%) of the crashes occurred on clear, sunny days



Navigator™ Black Stainless Steel Sunglasses

Receive the Navigator™ Gold Sunglasses (a \$59.95 value) **FREE!** just for trying the Navigator™ Black



Navigator™ Gold Stainless Steel Sunglasses



Certified EAGLE EYES® was developed from original NASA Optic technology and was recently inducted into the Space Foundation Technology Hall of Fame.



Slip on a pair of Eagle Eyes® and everything instantly appears more vivid and sharp. You'll immediately notice that your eyes are more comfortable and relaxed and you'll feel no need to squint. The scientifically designed sunglasses are not just fashion accessories—they are necessary to protect your eyes from those harmful rays produced by the sun during peak driving times.

Fit-ons available for \$39 +S&H
Black or Tortoise-Shell design



with absolute confidence, knowing your eyes are protected with technology that was born in space for the human race.

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