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SEPTEMBER 2023

Mum's the Word

Kisha Clark makes no
secret of her network
of mum-makers



**BLUEBONNET
EC NEWS**
SEE PAGE 16



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September 2023



08

Bigger and Better—Together

Makers grow Texas' colorful homecoming mum tradition—and their own skills—by working cooperatively.

Story by Kristen Pettineo
Photos by Wyatt McSpadden

ON THE COVER

Kisha Clark, right, with Lundyn Byrd, whom she mentored in the art of mum-making.

ABOVE

Materials that will blossom into mums.

Photos by Wyatt McSpadden

12 Dance Hall Darlings

After decades of rocking the countryside, the beloved Triumphs take a final bow.

Story and photo by Erich Schlegel

04

Currents

The latest buzz

06

TCP Talk

Readers respond

16

Co-op News

Information plus energy and safety tips from your cooperative

25

Footnotes in Texas History

When Pigs Fly
By Tom Widlowski

26

TCP Kitchen

No-Bake Desserts
By Vianney Rodriguez

30

Hit the Road

Mysterious Markings
By Chet Garner

33

Focus on Texas

Photo Contest: Night Sky

34

Observations

Wild Blue Yonder
By Pam LeBlanc

Planter Banter

RESEARCHERS HAVE LEARNED that plants “talk,” using a process called cavitation, when tiny bubbles burst and produce mini shock waves inside a plant’s vascular system. Sort of like what happens in your joints when you crack your knuckles.

Nice to meet you.



Come here often?



“There’s two kinds of coaches: Them that’s fired and them that’s gonna be fired.”

—BUM PHILLIPS

FINISH THIS SENTENCE

My favorite swimming hole is ...

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 July prompt: **Darkness is only scary when ...**

You’re 91 years old, living alone a mile from a neighbor, the power goes out and you can’t find your cellphone.

HAROLD R. CLARK
NUECES EC
KINGSVILLE

It’s the bottom of your empty bag of chocolates.

MONICA MILLER
COSERV
CARROLLTON

You’re 10 years old and have to go to the outhouse at night.

NORMA KRANZ
UNITED COOPERATIVE SERVICES
SOMERVELL COUNTY

You feel something furry and you know the dog is outside.

GAYLA LEECH
CECA
ALBANY

You can’t see what is making noise and coming toward you.

BOBBY REA
TRINITY VALLEY EC
ELKHART

Visit our website to see more responses.

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LIGHTBULB MOMENT

Here's a reading recommendation
for children that will enlighten them
about how rural electrification
changed America for the better.

Wish Upon a Crawdad takes
place in 1940 Oregon. It tells the
tale of 12-year-old Ruby Mae Ryan,
whose family is about to get elec-
tricity for the first time thanks to
the electric cooperative formed
by her parents and neighbors
and who is trying to earn enough
money to buy a surprise gift for
her mother.

"I hope kids will take away a
greater appreciation for all the
wonderful things they can do be-
cause of electricity," says author
Curtis Condon, a retired co-op
magazine editor.



In a Manner of Speaking

KINDLY NOTE that Austin is the politest American city.

That's according to a survey of more than 1,500 residents of
the 30 largest metropolitan areas in the U.S. Preply, a language
learning app and e-learning platform, conducted the survey.

Fort Worth ranks third.

Pardon us for saying so, but the same survey lists Houston
as the 10th-rudest city.

September 4

National Newspaper Carrier Day

**"Were it left to me to decide whether we should have
a government without newspapers or newspapers
without a government, I should not hesitate a moment
to prefer the latter." So said Thomas Jefferson.**



JULIA ROBINSON

JULY 2023 'I Love All the Love Here'

“As a parent of an autistic child who participated in Camp CAMP for many years, I was overjoyed to see this fine organization recognized in your magazine.”

MARTIN GIBLIN
PEDERNALES EC
SPRING BRANCH

Knowing Natives

Native grasses? Really? The first grass you list (Johnson grass) was imported from Turkey [*Ranchland Revival*, July 2023]. I can remember my father cursing it and the man it was named for when I was a boy. It is listed as a noxious weed in 19 states and under certain circumstances becomes deadly to cattle and horses.

Jim Evans
Victoria EC
Port Lavaca

EDITOR'S NOTE Sharp eye, Jim. Rancher Jon Taggart has planted Johnson grass until native grasses become established, but it's not native to Texas.

My grandmother was one of the original Rangerettes [*Kilgore's Kickers*, June 2023].

HOLLY ANTHONY
VIA FACEBOOK

Historical Details

I had never known about the post-revolution battles with Mexico [*Second Sacking*, July 2023]. I also learned a new word or two from the author.

Keith Brown
Pedernales EC
Lago Vista

I noticed a discrepancy. At the end it says the two attacks on Texas drove the Texians to join the United States six years after the Mexican

attacks in 1842. That would make it 1848 when Texas joined the U.S. In school, we learned that Texas joined the U.S. on December 29, 1845. Did I miss something somewhere?

Bill Beverly
Trinity Valley EC
Canton

EDITOR'S NOTE Our mistake, Bill. Texas joined the U.S. three years after the 1842 attacks. The story has been corrected on our website.

Old-School Luxury

These fantastic hotels are true reminders of old-school luxury and comfort [*Sleeping Giants*, July 2023]. I recommend stepping out and trying all these magnificent hotels.

Bill Koenig
Fayette EC
West Point



COURTESY GAGE HOTEL

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

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Makers grow Texas' colorful homecoming mum tradition—and their own skills—by working cooperatively

BIGGER AND BETTER—TOGETHER

Homecoming season is upon us.

How can you tell? Well, there's football, for sure. And the unflinching heat finally starts standing down. But maybe the biggest—BIGGEST—clues are the over-the-top mum assemblies that high school students flaunt in the name of school spirit and Texas tradition.

It used to be that homecoming mums meant corsages, a nice arrangement easily pinned to a dress. But sometime in the 1970s, Texas mums became Texas-sized—extravagant masses of ribbons, buttons, charms and bells.

Families could spend hours creating them. Or they can turn to someone like Kisha Clark, for whom mums are serious business. Just don't call them cute.

"When I hear someone call my mum business cute, that's like nails on a chalkboard to me," Clark says, laughing. "This isn't a hobby. I'm not just throwing glitter at the kitchen table. Mums are works of art. I take them seriously, and I take my business seriously, too."

So seriously that Clark launched Mums Inc., a professional organization for mum-makers. Clark, who lives in Providence Village, near Denton, believes there's power in numbers and in working cooperatively—whether it's for sourcing materials in bulk, staying on top of new trends, referring customers or building skills.

"Really anything," Clark said. "When I first got started making mums, the business was competitive. But I think



we're better together. I mean, doctors have professional membership organizations. Attorneys do too. But nobody was talking about the mum industry this way. Why not?"

Clark, a member of CoServ, an electric cooperative based in the Metroplex, has been in the mum business for more than 20 years, first learning the trade from her grandmother while growing up near Fort Cavazos (formerly Fort Hood) in Killeen. She loved making mums in high school but never dreamed of making a career of them. Instead, she went to college and studied something totally different: cybersecurity.

But she wasn't out of the mum business for long.

"It was 2002. I was 23 years old and driving home from my first cybersecurity job in Plano, and I passed a school with a big sign out front," Clark said. "It said something about picking up homecoming mums, and I suddenly

OPPOSITE Kisha Clark, a cybersecurity expert, is fully immersed in the mum-making business.

RIGHT A vast array of ribbons serves as Clark's palette.



remembered how much I loved making them in high school. I thought, ‘Hey, I could do that.’ And from that moment, I became kind of obsessed with learning the business and making mums again.”

Clark scoured the internet to source supplies, get a better understanding of the market and network with other mum-makers. But in the early 2000s, information was scarce online. The mum business was driven mostly by word-of-mouth referrals, and it could be tough to get a foothold.

Clark saw an opportunity. With her unique combination of crafting skills and computer expertise, she says she became one of the first mum-makers to sell supplies, mum kits and custom mum designs on the internet.

Her first year was slow. She sold just two mums. But each homecoming season, Clark’s customer base grew, and within just a few years, it became less a hobby and more a bona fide side hustle. Today that business, DK Florals, produces 30–35 mums every season. Some take up to 24 hours of work, and they sell for anywhere from \$250 to well over \$800.

Maybe it’s because of Clark’s day job—managing a team of engineers—or maybe it’s because she’s a self-described leader by nature. But as her mum business grew more successful, Clark felt like there was potential for something much bigger.

“I was talking to another mum-maker friend,” Clark says. “She needed some supplies, and we ended up trading some items we both needed. We got to talking about the business, and we realized we needed to create some kind of network.”

“When I first got started making mums, the business was competitive. But I think we’re better together.”

That’s when Mums Inc. was born. It started as a Facebook group for mum-makers in 2012, but the conversation kept getting bigger.

“We started buying supplies together, which got us a better cost,” Clark says. “And as our numbers grew, we began teaching marketing. And from there, it just took off.”

Before long, Clark was hosting events for Mums Inc. members and leading in-person and virtual classes. What started as a homegrown Facebook group has now spun into a full-fledged professional membership organization with 188 members from all over Texas and some from Oklahoma, New Mexico and Florida. For an annual fee of \$35, mum-makers become part of a professional network, gaining access to its tips and techniques, resources, and referrals.



FROM OPPOSITE Clark shows Lundyn Byrd some of her techniques for crafting a mum. Byrd, a 2023 Aubrey High School graduate, has had her own mum business for three years. Mums can easily weigh 10 pounds and sometimes twice that.

friends' high school-aged kiddos needed a mum or a garter, they'd call me and I'd do it."

Clark saw McGlothin's work and saw the potential for a business. She reached out through Facebook and encouraged McGlothin to consider joining Mums Inc.

"That's when I realized that this could be more than just a hobby," McGlothin says. "I was just barely breaking even at the time, and I wasn't really approaching this as an entrepreneur. And now I have a profitable business."

But mostly, McGlothin is grateful that there's a group of skilled artisans passing down a Texas tradition.

"In our group, there are so many years of professional mum-making experience," she says. "We have people who have been making mums for their kids and grandkids, going back decades. That kind of experience is priceless—and it's being handed down generation by generation in our group. We share braiding techniques, know-how and new trends. I find it all incredibly valuable.

"And I'm glad it's not getting lost."

For Clark, that kind of connection embodies the potential she envisioned when she started the mum collective. Yes, the big, beautiful mums themselves are the end product. But for Clark, Mums

Inc. is really about people reaching their potential and building a community.

"Whether I'm managing engineers or leading Mums Inc., deep down, it's about people growth," Clark says. "I like to see people beyond what they see in themselves. Mums Inc. was like a bunch of flower seeds. They were going to grow, but now they're in the same pot, growing together. And now we have this beautiful rainforest."

Clark takes pride in knowing Mums Inc. members can help put their children through college, pay for family vacations or leave their jobs—because of mums.

"Yes, I love mums," Clark says. "But my joy? It's in seeing this community succeed." ■

Mums Inc. has its own TikTok account where Clark shares social media marketing expertise. After all, the video-sharing social media network is practically tailor-made for showing off her big, colorful, ornate designs. And these days, most of Clark's Generation Z customers are on there, too.

"TikTok has been great for us, but this is about so much more," Clark says. "This is about us being taken seriously and giving people the tools they need to realize their full potential. And we're not just a bunch of crafty moms. We're businesswomen."

Erica Muñoz McGlothin, a mum-maker and Mums Inc. board member, wholeheartedly agrees. The Temple mom began making mums for friends and family as a hobby.

"I'm kind of a creative person by nature," she explains. "I love the pageantry of it. I love that it's so Texas. So when my

Dance Hall Darlings

After decades of rocking the countryside, the beloved Triumphs take a final bow

IT ALL BEGAN in the summer of 1959 in Rosenberg, southwest of Houston. Tim Griffith's dad was a traveling salesman and came home one day with a used electric guitar and amp.

Obviously, the younger Griffith needed a band.

"I played saxophone in the nearby Needville High School band," Don Drachenberg says. "We got a few other friends together, and next thing you know, we're playing our first gig in January of 1960. A sock hop in Richmond."

Band member Denny Zatyka's dad was a distributor for Lone Star beer and allowed the teens—the Triumphs—to practice in a beer warehouse, Drachenberg says. "Through the years we all had regular jobs," he says. "I became an American history high school teacher; Denny inherited the Lone Star beer distributorship; Tim Griffith was a civil engineer; Teddy Mensik worked in a machine shop; and Gary Koeppen was an insurance salesman."

In 1966 the band recorded the Hank Williams tune *I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry*, sung by another founding member, B.J. Thomas. It became a national hit. The song launched a solo career for Thomas, a Grammy winner whose hit songs included *Raindrops Keep Fallin' on My Head* and *Hooked on a Feeling*.

From there the Triumphs started playing the Central Texas dance hall circuit, through the '60s and into the '70s, bringing their rock tunes to dance halls in towns including Brenham, East Bernard, El Campo, Hillje, La Grange, Schulenburg, Shiner, Tate and Weimar.

Dance hall historian Gary E. McKee, editor of *Texas Polka News*, says Saturday nights were for rock 'n' roll dances; Sunday afternoons were for polka bands and an older crowd. On Friday nights, of course, folks were busy with high school sports.

Through the 1960s, the Triumphs were among the best-known circuit bands in Central Texas, along with the Barons and Roy Head and the Traits.

By 1980, as the world embraced disco and the Triumphs missed spending time with their families after more than a decade of working weekends and holidays, the band took a break. They regrouped in 1992.

But on a chilly Saturday night this past February, the Triumphs took their final bow in appropriate surrounds: at Swiss Alp Hall near Schulenburg in Fayette County. Sixty-three years after that first sock hop in Richmond, they played their last show.

Butch Bosak was there—along with about 450 loyal fans. Bosak played guitar with the Barons way back when. "When we were playing, we owned the place," he says. "We competed with [the Triumphs], but they were always family to us. We'd go to their New Year's Eve dances. Now that they are gone, there is a void."

"These old dance halls have wooden floors on pier-and-beam foundations," Drachenberg explains. "The floor would bounce like crazy when our fans danced and stomped to our music. The floors were going 'whoomph! whoomph!' We had big speakers stacked on top of each other in front of the stage, and we figured we better tie them down so they don't fall down on our fans."

Jonathan Socha, owner of Lee County Peanut Co., followed the Triumphs through the ages. "If you weren't soaking wet with sweat from dancing, you weren't having a good time," he says. "Swiss Alp was basically a hay barn with windows. We sweated our tails off."

Sandy Randolph grew up in Smithville. She would catch a ride with friends to any performance nearby. "I started sneaking into the dances when I was 13," she says. "The shows were the big social gathering of our area."

The Triumphs played at lifelong fan Catherine Poppe's 50th wedding anniversary.

"They play all kinds of music, they attract all kinds of people," says Poppe, who retired from Fayette Electric Cooperative in 2021. "It's just truly amazing the draw that this band has, and now they're going to be part of history."

Over the past few years, as the band's members aged, "the band lost its family feeling," Drachenberg says. "We discussed that it might be time to stop."

Co-founder and lead guitarist Tim Griffith died in December 2022. "Tim's death was the exclamation point on our decision to hang it up," says Drachenberg, 81, a member of Fayette EC. "Our band had a magical *something*. From that magic, our fan base grew and grew. It was great to see fans that have been following us for 60 freaking years.

"We had a hell of a run."

During intermission of the final performance, McKee presented the Triumphs with an honor from Texas Dance Hall Preservation.

"It was bittersweet," McKee says. "They played the soundtrack of my life." ■



The Triumphs play their final show February 18 at Swiss Alp Hall near Schulenburg.

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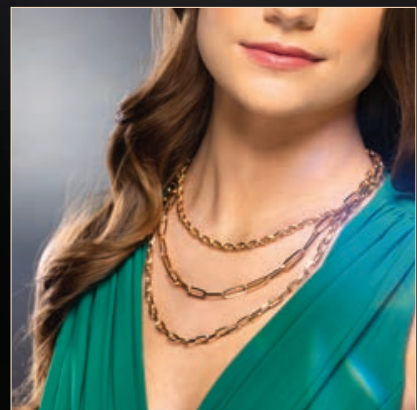
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Lines form outside the 30,000-square-foot Big Red Barn, right, located about a mile from the show's original Rifle Hall location. *Courtesy The Original Round Top Antiques Fair*



Assorted vintage items, below right, for sale at the Marketplace Warrenton pavilion during the spring antique show this year. *Sarah Beal photo*

Next month, tiny Round Top will again transform into one of America's biggest shopping destinations, drawing 150,000 or more treasure hunters from near and far.



THE GREATEST ANTIQUES SHOW IN TEXAS

By Sharon Jayson

NANCY KRAUSE has been here since the beginning.

She is the last remaining dealer from the 25 or so who set up shop at the first Round Top Antiques Show in the fall of 1968.

Next month will mark her 55th year selling rare and vintage finds. You can find her, as usual, in booth 327 in the 30,000-square-foot Big

Red Barn venue, about a mile from the original show's location, Rifle Hall.

"I usually like to bring colors and pottery that lend themselves to fall decorating," Krause said, explaining how she will prepare her 9-by-20-foot booth for October's event. "I know where everything is going before I get there."

Krause, 87, has operated Nancy's Antiques in Brenham since 1965. She has missed only one



Center: The Blue Hills shopping venue beckons four friends from Houston last spring. From left are Colleen Nichols, Veronica Griffin, Pippa Fraumeni and Sarah Barrett. Sarah Beal photo

At top and above: Scenes from the Marburger Farm antiques venue, where more than 300 dealers fill 10 historic buildings and nine tents with items from around the globe. Photos courtesy Marburger Farm

Nancy Krause, left, at her booth at the Big Red Barn this spring. She was one of the vendors at the first Round Top Antiques Show in 1968 and plans to be back this fall for her 55th year. Sarah Beal photo

Round Top show, in the spring 54 years ago, when she gave birth to her youngest child.

Those original sellers probably never dreamed their little event would evolve into a global shopping phenomenon.

Now, every spring and fall, as many as 4,000 dealers from around the nation and other countries set up shop for 150,000 or more shoppers at the Round Top Antiques Show. It's been called the country's largest antiques festival, both for the square footage of shopping space and the square mileage it occupies.

The events are located almost midway between Austin and Houston, within the Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative service area.

It's not just one show: Almost 100 venues are set up, most along an 11-mile stretch of State Highway 237, stretching from Carmine to Warrenton. Other venues can be found in Burton and Fayette-

ville, all within a 20-mile radius of Round Top in Fayette County.

The town's 87 residents, by Mayor Mark Massey's count, see their area transformed for a few weeks each spring and fall into an Instagram darling for destination shopping. Their streets are packed with visitors from out of town, out of state and overseas. There is a winter show in January, but it is shorter, smaller and draws fewer participants.

Whether a devoted Round Top veteran or a novice, everyone is on something of a treasure hunt. Mingling amid the serious shoppers and casual browsers are celebrities, TV and social media influencers, decorators and designers arriving to see what's there and to be seen.

The next fall event begins in mid-October. Some venues open as early as Oct. 12, others as late as Oct. 24. All end by Oct. 29.

Merchandise here ranges from high-end European furniture and

Continued on next page

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fine art from around the globe that can cost thousands (or tens of thousands) of dollars, to flea-market bargains that will get you change back from a \$20 bill. There is an eclectic mix of styles: Americana, Texana, midcentury modern, French country, classic European and contemporary, to name a few. Shoppers can find decor, jewelry, clothing, vintage signs, stylish Western boots and hats, one-of-a-kind collectibles and unusual collections spilling from tents, trailers, barns, air-conditioned buildings and historic properties.

“Round Top has an amazing reputation as a place with a lot of design energy,” said Beth Berke of Chicago, who was selling her antiques for the first time at Round Top during this year’s spring show. “It attracts people from all over the U.S., and I thought it would be fun to come and be a part of that,” she said. “I was excited when a space opened up.”

Her 15-by-30-foot space at Round Top’s Marburger Farm Antique Show limited her to “a sampling” of inventory from her 6,000-square-foot South Loop Loft showroom in Chicago: furniture, decorative arts, rugs and textiles, lighting, accessories and artisan items. She specializes in one-of-a-kind European pieces from the 1940s through 1990s.

The Marburger Farm show, just south of Round Top, features more than 300 dealers selling primarily antiques inside nine tents — five the size of football fields — and 10 historic buildings on 43 acres, said Tracy Blacketer, show manager.

Not all of Round Top’s vendors offer high-end goods. Sure, shoppers can buy elite items that come with certificates of authenticity, but they can also find collectibles sold from small roadside tents.

“Round Top is extraordinary in that it provides an escapism many are seeking, regardless of their bank account,” Blacketer said.

The venues have multiplied and spread for miles from that first show in Rifle Hall. The Original Round Top Antiques Fair, as it is now known, includes the Big Red Barn (a climate-controlled building with an array of antiques, fine glass, art and jewelry), the Continental Tent (an air-conditioned tent with antique furnishings) and the Barn’s Annex.

“People started to see this magical antique wonderland,” said Stephanie Layne Disney, the show manager of the Original Round Top Antiques Fair. The Layne family, native Houstonians and sixth-generation Texans, bought the show in 2022. They had previously purchased another major Round Top venue, Blue Hills, south of the Big Red Barn and north of Round Top. That 100,000-plus square feet of shopping space includes

Continued on Page 18C



Beth Berke, above, is a new Marburger Farm vendor, selling her antiques at the Round Top show for the first time this spring. Ken Herman photo



Tracy Blacketer, left, is the Marburger Farm show manager. Sarah Beal photo

Stephanie Layne Disney, below center, is the show manager of the Original Round Top Antiques Fair, which she and her family purchased last year. She is flanked by her sister, Caroline Layne, and her brother, Corey Layne, at the Blue Hills venue, also owned by the Layne family. Sarah Beal photo



IF YOU GO TO THE ROUND TOP ANTIQUES SHOW

Getting there, the big venues and more

About 100 venues hosting up to 4,000 vendors will open for business in October during the Round Top Antiques Show. Most are concentrated along an 11-mile stretch of State Highway 237, starting at the intersection with U.S. 290 and heading south to Warrenton. Some shopping is available in nearby communities as well.

Dates and times of operation will vary. The first venue opens Oct. 12 and the last opens Oct. 24; the final day of sales is Oct. 29.

Some of the larger venues, heading south along State Highway 237, include:

BIG RED BARN and ANNEX, and CONTINENTAL TENT (also known as the Original Round Top Antiques Fair): south of the intersection of State Highway 237 and U.S. 290

BLUE HILLS: 26-acre property with 100,000 square feet of shopping space, more than 60 vendors

THE ARBORS: about 70,000 square feet of shopping; more than 120 dealers selling antique and new furniture, textiles, jewelry and art

THE HALLES: largely open-air venue with eight buildings (three enclosed) where vendors sell art, antiques, artisan furniture and lighting

BADER RANCH AT ROUND TOP: antiques and garden decor, as well as midcentury modern furnishings and assorted vintage and handmade apparel and jewelry

MARBURGER FARM: more than 300 dealers with goods from around the world across 10 historic buildings and nine tents

THE COMPOUND: six barns (two climate-controlled) where shoppers can find antiques, furniture, decorative arts, lighting and architectural objects, as well as jewelry, silver and more

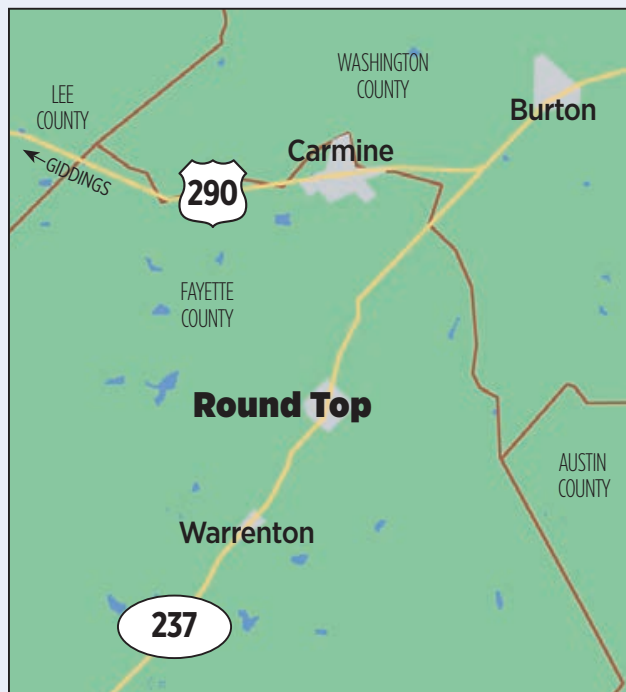
WARRENTON: small town that has come into its own as a venue or, rather, multiple venues that stretch along several miles of State Highway 237. A hodgepodge of goods spill across open fields, out of tents and in structures, both temporary and permanent

NEARBY COMMUNITIES

BURTON: north of the intersection of U.S. 290 and State Highway 237, has some small shops; La Bahia venue, just south, is one of the first on Highway 237

CARMINE: on U.S. 290, just west of its intersection with Highway 237 and near the major venues; has several year-round antiques shops

FAYETTEVILLE: several miles southeast of Warrenton, has some offerings, including year-round antiques stores



Most of nearly 100 venues that are part of the Round Top Antiques Show are on an 11-mile stretch of State Highway 237, from Carmine to Warrenton. Other shopping can be done in Burton and Fayetteville. The sellers are within a 20-mile radius of Round Top in Fayette County.



In Warrenton, shoppers should be prepared to do a lot of walking, because the small town is host to a variety of venues along both sides of State Highway 237. *Sarah Beal photo*

GET MORE INFORMATION

- roundtexasantiques.com
- exploreroundtop.com/antiques-show/
- roundtop.com
- antiqueweekend.com
- Check websites and Instagram feeds of individual venues

SHOP, DON'T DROP

Tips for making the rounds at the Round Top show

Expect traffic deys, especially on opening days. The scenery on State Highway 237 changes as you move from the more polished Round Top-area venues to the less fussy temporary tents with a flea-market feel in the Warrenton area.

- Each of the more than 100 venues is independently owned and operated, setting their own opening and closing dates within the time frame of the overall show. Amenities vary: Some are air-conditioned, others not; some have permanent bathrooms, others don't. Some have restaurant-like seating and dining, others have limited menus, takeout or food trucks.

- Admission prices for venues vary. Early-admission tickets to Marburger Farm are \$40; VIP tickets to the Original Round Top Antiques Fair venues are \$25; others range from \$15 to free for most.

- Plot your strategy, and do your research. You can opt to visit multiple sales, but with so many big venues on large grounds stretched far apart, covering one or two may be all you can manage in a day. Be prepared to both walk and to move your car from place to place. Some parking is free; some isn't.

- Newbies, manage your expectations. Have a shopping list. There is more merchandise for sale than you can imagine, and another show is always around the corner. Large items can usually be shipped, and there are many shipping options. You will need to lug around the rest of your purchases and load them into your vehicle. The bigger your vehicle, the more room for unplanned purchases.

- Dress for comfort and prepare to walk for miles. Wide-brimmed hats can help. Broken-in sturdy shoes or boots are essential. There's not a Round Top uniform, but if you want to see what folks wear, check the venues' Instagram feeds.



Outside The Continental Tent, adjacent to the Big Red Barn, dozens of sandstone balls from the 1920s — covered by decorators as accent pieces — are on display. The balls were part of a water filtration system on the Chattahoochee River in Georgia. *Ken Herman photo*



A group of friends shops at Punkie's Place in Warrenton, above. Many shoppers pull their purchases around in carts. From left are Jennifer Crow from Lipan, Katie Foster and Shelly Self (in the pink jacket) from Chandler, Emily Rogers from Kilgore and Jodi Robinson from Lipan.



Suzanne Fox, an antiques vendor from California, specializes in high-end pieces at her Silver Dollar Saloon booth near the center of Marburger Farm.



Jodi Douglas of Bombshell Betty Shop at Henkel Square in Round Top makes jewelry from recycled belts. She also sells vintage cowboy boots and hats. *Sarah Beal photos*



KEEP AN EYE PEELED FOR FAMILIAR FACES

Former Texas First Lady Linda Gale White, the widow of Gov. Mark White, discusses an item with her friend Suzie Johnson. Both are from Houston. They traveled with a group of friends for the Big Red Barn opening day last spring and then White came back for the Marburger Farm opening the following day. White owns a small antiques business at the Memorial Antiques & Interiors showroom in Houston. Many celebrities — actors, singers, sports stars and TV interior designers and decorators — have been spotted in the crowds of shoppers, including, clockwise from top center, TV home makeover stars Chip and Joanna Gaines, designer/actor Carson Kressley, former NFL star Peyton Manning, country singer Miranda Lambert and actor Matthew McConaughey. *Upper left photo by Ken Herman*



Ed Gage, a co-founder of the Marburger Farm show about 25 years ago, can still be found in his original Tent A booth location. He specializes in antique jewelry. *Sarah Beal photo*



Dallasites Jennie Logan, left, a first-timer at the antiques festival this spring, with her friend and designer Lacy Lange, who has been coming to the events for the past six years, examine wares at the Big Red Barn. *Ken Herman photo*

Continued from Page 18

more than 75 vendors, plus food, parking and restrooms.

Disney, who lives in Fort Worth, has an interior design and antiques background. Growing up, she and her mother often shopped the Round Top shows. Now, the events aren't just about shopping: "It's about what you're wearing, where you are, what events you're at," she said.

Almost every evening, venues host events where brands promote products. "A lot of people put on a dinner and invite other influencers," Disney said. Sought-after invitations and tickets are part of the Round Top scene.

Former Texas First Lady Linda Gale White arrived at the Big Red Barn for the spring opening day earlier this year with a group of friends who have been coming to Round Top for more than 30 years. She returned the next day for Marburger Farm's opening.

"I love finding the little jewel that attracts my eye," said White, 81, who was shopping for items for her small antiques business in Houston.

The Marburger show, which opened in 1997, is owned by a Dallas-based real estate development and investment services company. Manager Blacketter touted the quality of Marburger's offerings: "These are masterfully created vignettes that come from merchandise sourced all over the globe," she said.

Among Marburger's dealers is one of its co-founders, Ed Gage. Many know Gage for Uncommon Objects, his longtime South Congress Avenue shop in Austin. In the mid-1990s, he and a partner bought the 44-acre Marburger property that was once a farm. He calls himself "a lifelong treasure hunter."

"We're kind of road-warrior gypsies who travel from town to town," said Gage, who sells mostly jewelry and art. "There's a huge camaraderie and support system of people who love their neighbors, treat each other well and see each other at the next show."

Among those who planned to be first in line when Marburger's doors opened last spring was first-time show shopper Jennie Logan of Dallas. She was on a mission to find a buffet for her dining room. She was with her friend and interior designer Lacy Lange, a Round Top regular for at least six years.

"All these people who have stand-alone shops all around the country and bring the best of their stuff to this small town are pretty amazing," Logan said.

"I did find the elusive buffet I was looking for and had to get that shipped," she said, adding that she also bought "probably 15 pieces of art, a big rattan bench, two side tables and two lamps."

Continued on next page

A NEW VENUE

8,000-square-foot A.R.T. opened in spring

As existing Round Top venues expand and new ones seek footholds, one of the newest is A.R.T., which stands for Antique Round Top. The 8,000-square-foot, climate-controlled space opened its doors this spring.

The venue, at 2260 N. State Highway 237, north of Marburger Farm and south of Round Top, is the brainchild of longtime dealers Ted Fuehr and his wife, Jennifer Fuehr, of Shawnee, Kan.



Ted Fuehr and his wife, Jennifer Fuehr, have been dealers at Round Top shows for 15 years.

Their 47-year career as show dealers includes more than 15 years at Round Top, where they began selling 18th- and 19th-century American furniture and accessories, then added items from other genres and time periods.

"I've watched Round Top grow from a small amount of venues to become a megamarket," he said. "We're getting major decorators and designers from both coasts — New York, L.A., Miami, Seattle, Atlanta, Denver, San Francisco and quite a few from North Carolina — and they're spending a lot of money buying, in some instances, a semitrailer load of merchandise."

Ted Fuehr said Round Top is cost- and time-efficient for designers and decorators because of the variety of goods sold in one area. Buyers can find items for homes, stores, restaurants or hotels.

Janet and Rick Waldrop of Carthage in East Texas were among those checking out A.R.T. this spring. They weren't just casual shoppers. Janet Waldrop makes jewelry and art from antique "found objects" for her business, Skip 2 My Lou, inside the Marburger Farm venue.

"It's amazing how many new people are coming in from everywhere," she said. "They all say (the antiques festival) is so much more than that they thought it would be."

— Sharon Jayson



Janet and Rick Waldrop of Carthage take in the offerings at A.R.T., which stands for Antique Round Top. Janet makes jewelry and art from antiques for her Skip 2 My Lou shop's booth at Marburger Farm. Ken Herman photos

Continued from previous page

Does all the selling and buying benefit the residents of Round Top? Massey, the town's mayor, a Houston native who was elected in 2020, said the antique show is "entrepreneurship at its finest."

"We all talk and cooperate as best we can. There's no organization that runs it or checks in with vendors," he said. "Each venue is independently operated. Outside of our town's one square mile, the town has no jurisdiction over the venues," and many are expanding their existing sites, he added.

"The town of Round Top has witnessed a major increase in year-round tourism, resulting in annual sales tax revenue of just over \$400,000 in the last fiscal year," Massey said.

This fall will be Round Top native Lauriano Pineda Jr.'s fourth show as a dealer of art, decor, furniture and pottery imported from Mexico. He and a partner operate Terracotta Cowboy out of an 80-by-40-foot leased building in the Round Top venue Cisco Village.

"It's kind of a wild thing. I grew up in Round Top and watched it when nothing was here. I'm 31. I've seen it grow up from dirt roads to what it is now," he said. "I think it's wonderful. There's always somewhere to go out. To be from Round Top is like saying you're from Aspen."

Pineda's import business is open only during the shows, as are many of the venues that aren't year-round shops in permanent locations along the State Highway 237 corridor and in nearby communities. Just south of Round Top, the Marketplace Warrenton offers rental spaces for vendors' RVs. North of Round Top, the La Bahia Antique Show near Burton is in a historic 1879 dance hall and community center.

Ron Naumann, a sergeant with the Fayette County Sheriff's Office, knows all about the growth that can back traffic up by as much as 12 miles every spring and fall. He has coordinated traffic and security for shows since 1996, when events lasted only a few days. After the first year, Naumann started working on horseback to cover more ground and better coordinate with the assortment of assisting officers from other jurisdictions.

He still does his job atop a horse.

Less likely to be caught in traffic are the celebrities who make their way to Round Top, sometimes in helicopters. Actors, singers, sports stars and well-known TV interior designers and decorators have been spotted shopping. They've included TV home makeover stars Chip and Joanna Gaines, designer/actor Carson Kressley, actor Matthew McConaughey, country singer Miranda Lambert, former NFL star Peyton Manning and many more.

Long-timer Krause says it's easy for her to spot wealthy buyers.

"They come in and just say 'I'll take this,' and somebody comes behind them with a sold tag," she said.

It's a far cry from the early days when Emma Lee Turney, a Houston antiques dealer, organized that first show. Turney, who





Lauriano Pineda Jr., above, stands among the wares at his store, Terracotta Cowboy. Pineda's business partner buys pieces from Mexico and brings them to Round Top to sell. *Sarah Beal photo*



Mark Massey, left, the mayor of Round Top, touts the antiques show's impact on tourism. It is 'entrepreneurship at its finest,' he said. *Laura Skelding photo*

Below, Sgt. Ron Naumann, right, of the Fayette County Sheriff's Office, on his horse, J.R., patrols the action and traffic on State Highway 237 along with Sgt. Angela Lala, left, atop Splinter. *Sarah Beal photo*



died in 2021 at the age of 92, created a tradition that has evolved into the ultimate Texas "shoppportunity."

For Krause, the 2023 winter show in January marked a milestone in her Round Top antique-selling career: She sold out for the first time.

Her trip back to Brenham had never been easier. "I had taken some live plants I've decorated with, and when I was packing up to leave, two ladies from South Carolina asked me if the plants were for sale. So, I even sold my decorations," Krause said. "Then I picked up my purse and walked out the door." ■

STAYING OVERNIGHT?

Pros know to plan *far* in advance

There are several dozen trendy places to stay overnight in Round Top during the spring and fall shows, but the supply cannot keep up with demand. The hottest spots near town are reserved a year — or years — in advance.

A few often-mentioned overnight spots, all renovated with a chic vibe, include:

HOTEL LULU: Spread across six 19th-century bungalows and three private cottages; in earlier times, the restored buildings were known as Bybee Square; also an herb garden, formal garden and pool; 204 E. Mill St., Round Top; 979-249-5174; hotellulutx.com



Hotel Lulu

RANCHO PILLOW: Twenty-acre compound two miles from Warrenton, self-described "whimsical wonderland" with grounds that include a bathhouse, heated saltwater wading pool and treehouse; 11222 Schuster Road, Round Top; ranchopillow.com; make reservations online or email info@ranchopillow.com

THE COTTON PEARL MOTEL: Compound of properties from the early 1900s includes a main house and two cottages, pool, fi epit and pickleball court; 404 N. Live Oak St., Round Top; must book entire property for two-night minimum; thecottonpearl.com

THE FRENCHIE: Boutique hotel with assorted rooms in an 1800s vintage farmhouse, also art studio suites, poolside rooms, a private cottage and private shed, with amenities that include fi e pits, massages, hot tub and gourmet kitchen; 311 N. Live Oak St., Round Top; 979-208-9851; thefrenchieguesthouses.com

WANDER INN: Numerous chic rooms, including the Wanderlust, the Stardust and the Wild Blue Yonder, are at the inn, adjacent to the retail compound Junk Gypsy, a brand known to HGTV and now QVC shopping network fans; 1215 S. State Highway 237, Round Top; 979-249-5865; gypsyville.com/wander-inn

The Round Top Area Chamber of Commerce's member directory lists 49 options for overnight stays, including hotels, motels, bungalows, cabins, apartments, cottages, guesthouses, inns, RV parks and vacation rentals. Go to explorroundtop.com and click on Stay.

A search for "Round Top" on Airbnb.com returns more than 475 area listings stretching from La Grange to Brenham; vrbo.com shows more than 230 listings in the same area.

Bluebonnet line workers, barbecue team compete in 27th Texas Lineman's Rodeo

By Sidni Carruthers

UNDER THE HOT Texas sun, fueled by unwavering dedication, Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative line workers, barbecue pitmasters and staff judges joined hundreds of colleagues from across the state in mid-July at Nolte Island Park near Seguin for the 27th Texas Lineman's Rodeo. Before the temperature started to soar, over 200 line workers from electric cooperatives and utilities across the state got an early-morning start showcasing their skills and commitment to safety.

Nine journeymen and eight apprentice line workers from Bluebonnet competed at the July 15 event, and eight staffers were competition judges. Four line workers-turned-pitmasters competed for barbecue cook-off honors.

The Bluebonnet teams' day ended on a high note when the senior journeyman team of Michael Guajardo, Brandon Johnson and Kenneth Roush won first place in their division.

Bluebonnet's barbecue team of Tra Muston, Kyle Kasper, Tim Grimm and Logan Lancaster competed against other pitmasters for best brisket, ribs and chicken. "We really enjoy coming out and competing. Everyone on the cooking team likes to come together and work toward a goal," Kasper said.

Daniel Fritsche, one of Bluebonnet's rodeo team coaches and an assistant superintendent of field operations in Bastrop, spoke with pride of the line workers' efforts. "All of our competitors worked hard to get here. These guys not only practice for this day, but they also live it. They are out working for Bluebonnet members and then they commit to doing this as well. It takes a lot of dedication," Fritsche said. "The senior team did a great job showing the apprentices how it is done. The skills they practice are good for competition, and also our ability to provide safe, reliable service to our members."

The 2023 rodeo team members were Brayden Bauer, Brad Young, Matt Mole, J.D. Boecker, Parker Redwine, Andrew Murphy, Nick Baker, Cooper Lucherk, Chris Rivera, Kendal Fiebrich, Troy Moore, Derek Morgan, Ty Duesterheft, Joe Lockhart, Michael Guajardo, Brandon Johnson, Kenneth Roush, and coaches Fritsche and Danny Bolding, a crew supervisor in Red Rock.

To stay safe and beat the heat, competition started at sunrise. "I reminded the guys to stay hydrated and take breaks between events. We have been training in this heat



Troy Moore and Kendal Fiebrich compete in the transformer change-out event.



Bluebonnet's barbecue team includes Logan Lancaster, Tim Grimm, Kyle Kasper and Tra Muston.



Bluebonnet's senior journeyman team won first place in their division. Accepting the trophy are, from left, team members Michael Guajardo, Kenneth Roush and Brandon Johnson. Sarah Beal photos



Cooper Lucherk races to grab his climbing belt in the hurtman rescue event.



Joe Lockhart, Derek Morgan and Ty Duesterheft compete in the transformer change-out event.

all summer, but that doesn't mean it wasn't tough," Fritsche said.

During competition, line workers raced against the clock to climb and work on unenergized power poles, and to practice safely rescuing an injured co-worker from atop a pole using a heavy mannequin. Competitors also faced off in several "mystery events" that were revealed just two days before the competition. Line workers showcased their skills in wiring a transformer and changing out overhead power line equipment.

"I had a great time at the rodeo. I see

what it takes to work hard and compete with other linemen. Overall it was a great experience and I learned a lot," said Lucherk, an apprentice. Bluebonnet competitors were cheered on by their families, Bluebonnet members and other cooperative employees.

Founded in 1996 and hosted by the Texas Lineman's Rodeo Association, the rodeo events are designed to mirror challenges encountered daily by utility crews who work, sometimes in dangerous conditions, to provide reliable power to more than 28 million Texas residents.



The Bastrop Member Service Center glows with gold lights to raise awareness of childhood cancer. In addition to all five of the co-op's member service centers' lights, Bluebonnet's trucks will display gold ribbons, below. *Sarah Beal photos*

Bluebonnet supports Childhood Cancer Awareness Month

BLUEBONNET Electric Cooperative's buildings, employees and even its trucks will be showing some gold in September to support Childhood Cancer Awareness Month.

At night, member service centers in Bastrop, Brenham, Giddings, Lockhart and Manor will be illuminated in golden light. Bluebonnet member service representatives will wear gold-colored ribbon pins and will hand them out to members. Bluebonnet's trucks will display gold-ribbon stickers. The color gold has represented Childhood Cancer Awareness for more than 25 years.

Check the cooperative's Facebook, Instagram and Twitter pages throughout this month for useful information about how you can join the fight against childhood cancer.

Visit our website at bluebonnet.coop/childhood-cancer for resources and ways to get involved.



OFFICE CLOSINGS

Bluebonnet offices will be closed Monday, Sept. 4, for Labor 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 the MyBluebonnet mobile app or by calling 800-949-4414.

SAVE THE DATE



ENERGY EXPO

**Saturday,
Sept. 30, 2023**

9 a.m.-noon

Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative's
Headquarters
155 Electric Ave., Bastrop

- Listen to Solar 101, our introduction to residential solar systems
- Meet homeowners with solar systems
- Get information about electric vehicles and their chargers
- Find out about solar-power battery storage
- Explore the solar installer fair, hosted by Texas Solar Energy Society
- Open to the general public

Get more details at bluebonnet.coop/energy-expo or on Bluebonnet's Facebook, Instagram and Twitter pages.



Bluebonnet member service representative Cindy Shafer, left, visits with longtime Bluebonnet members Pete and David Garza. The brothers' business, Garza Legacy Group, operates Rental Mobile Home Park in Reedville.

**We never forget:
We're a cooperative.**

OUR
power
COMES FROM
you

“When we call, it’s such a nice experience to be able to talk to a real person. Cindy is our ‘go-to’ person. She knows us and knows our business. We’ve been members since 1982, and being a member feels like family. Thank you, Bluebonnet!”

— **Pete Garza,**
co-owner, Garza Legacy Group

Thank you, Mr. Garza.

Cindy Shafer, a Bluebonnet member service representative in Lockhart, has been helping cooperative members take care of their electric accounts for 15 years. She answers questions about electricity use, bills and service, and assists members when they start new accounts.



Grants awarded for firefighter gear, outdoor play area, LED lighting

BLUEBONNET ELECTRIC

Cooperative and the Lower Colorado River Authority recently provided grants to community nonprofit organizations and projects as part of LCRA's Community Development Partnership Program. Bluebonnet, one of LCRA's wholesale electric customers, is proud to partner with LCRA to support its members and communities.

Applications for the next round of grants will be accepted in January. Find more information about this program and the application at lcra.org/cdpp.

TOP PHOTO: A \$25,000 grant from Bluebonnet and the LCRA will help the Lincoln Volunteer Fire Department in central Lee County purchase new firefighter gear. The department provided \$11,144 in matching funds to help pay for three sets of personal protective equipment for those battling structure fires and 20 sets of protective gear for use in fighting wildland fires. Pictured, from left, are Sherry Murphy, Bluebonnet's Giddings-area community representative; Russell Jurk, Bluebonnet board member; Spencer Schneider, fire chief and Giddings city manager; Margaret D. 'Meg' Voelter, LCRA board member; Jared Boriack, assistant fire chief; and Kate Ramzinski, LCRA regional affairs representative.



MIDDLE PHOTO: A \$25,000 grant will help the St. John's United Church of Christ in Burton, in western Washington County, upgrade its outdoor play area. The grant, along with matching funds from the church, will help them complete multiple projects, including adding fencing, playground equipment and a pavilion, at a cost of more than \$100,000. Children in the church's youth Sunday school, pictured from left, are Presley Richard, Brinley Richard, Everleigh Matthies, Hallie Lechler, Eleanor Jurica and Bridgette Jurica (pink dress). On the back row from left, are Sierra Richard, playground fundraising committee member; Tracy Matthies, church member; Meghan Windham, playground fundraising chair; Deloris Koehl, playground fundraising committee member; Genna Lechler, church member; Margaret D. 'Meg' Voelter, LCRA board member; Betty Jo Rudloff, playground fundraising committee member; Robert Mikeska, Bluebonnet board secretary/treasurer; Darrin Holub, pastor; Kyle Merten, Bluebonnet's Brenham-area community representative; Elizabeth Jurica, playground fundraising committee member; and Christie Schroeder, playground fundraising committee member.



ABOVE: A \$9,730 grant will help the Bastrop Area Pickleball Association replace outdated lighting at its courts in Tahitian Village, in eastern Bastrop, with energy-efficient LED lighting. The association provided \$4,300 in matching funds. Pictured, front row, from left, are Tony Laurenzi, association board member; Dani Moss, association fundraising officer; Holly Howard, association secretary; Rick Arnic, LCRA regional affairs representative; Robert 'Bobby' Lewis and Margaret D. 'Meg' Voelter, LCRA board members; Josh Coy, Bluebonnet's Bastrop-area community representative; Susan Parker, association executive director; Gary Moss, association president; and Terry Moore, Bastrop recreation manager. Back row, from left, are: Madeline Eden, association treasurer; Jimmy Crouch, Bastrop City Council member and association member; Chris Harris, association board member; Craig Braddock, association member; Becki Womble, Bastrop Chamber of Commerce president and CEO; and Bob Dacy and Mark Mowery, association members.



LCRA photos

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Billie Jean King enters the Battle of the Sexes on a throne. She soon assumed a broader reign in the sports world.

King dominated Riggs, 55 years old and out of shape. When she won the first set, the women in the Astrodome gave her a standing ovation. In short order, she won the next two sets. After the final point, King tossed her racket into the air, and Riggs hopped the net and whispered into her ear, “I underestimated you.”

That was hardly news to King.

It took an act of Congress to start leveling the playing field for women. Title IX, signed into law in June 1972, heralded a promise of more opportunities for women in sports.

And yet, in September 1972, after King captured the U.S. Open title, she denounced her most unequal prize money in a press conference. She won \$10,000, while the men’s champion, Ilie Năstase, got \$25,000.

“This was ridiculous, so I said, ‘I don’t think the women are going to be back next year. We’re not going to be back in 1973 unless we get equal prize money,’” King recalled years later.

Her firm stand paid off. A year later, just weeks before the Battle of the Sexes at the Astrodome, the U.S. Open started paying women the same as men.

In the 50 years since shutting down—and shutting up—Riggs, King has become a leading advocate for women and LGBTQ+ people. She became the first female athlete awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, in 2009.

Through a 2023 lens, the spectacle at the Astrodome might seem more tiresome than outrageous. To King, being at the forefront of a social uprising in 1972 and 1973 was simply tiring.

“It was a huge year, a pivotal year for tennis and for women in general,” King told *USA Today* columnist Christine Brennan. “I just remember being exhausted all the time. As I’ve said before, when I sleep in now, I’m still catching up from the 1970s.” ■

When Pigs Fly

Billie Jean King did the unthinkable, crushing Bobby Riggs—and notching a win for gender equality—at the Astrodome

BY TOM WIDLowski

YOU HAVE TO PEEL back an almost insufferable layer of hype—garishness, really—to reach the essence of Billie Jean King’s victory in the so-called Battle of the Sexes 50 years ago this month in Houston. In truth, you have to peel back the calendar by 12 months—to King’s bold shot across the bow, when she decried the disparity in prize money between men and women.

First the hype. Bobby Riggs, a tennis star in the 1940s who later became a shameless promoter, declared no woman could beat him. Not even King, who by the summer of 1973 had already won 31 of her 39 career grand slam titles. King, 29, accepted the challenge, even agreeing to

play by men’s rules—best of five sets, as opposed to women’s best of three.

So on September 20, 1973, four shirtless members of the Rice University men’s track team carried King on a litter, à la Cleopatra, onto a tennis court set up inside the 8-year-old Astrodome. Riggs, a self-proclaimed chauvinist wearing a warmup jacket that said Sugar Daddy, entered in a rickshaw pulled by models.

King, as if to state the obvious, presented Riggs with a gift of a baby pig.

When the bluster subsided, the 30,472 in attendance, joined by some 90 million TV viewers worldwide—a tennis record that still stands—settled in for a sports contest. Except it was no contest.

No-Bake Desserts

Skip the oven but not the indulgence with these grand finales

BY VIANNEY RODRIGUEZ, FOOD EDITOR

Who says cheesecake must be complicated? This no-bake apple cheesecake is creamy and delicious and combines two favorite desserts—apple pie and cheesecake—into one outstanding treat.

Mini Apple Cheesecakes

3 tablespoons unsalted butter
2 large apples, peeled, cored and diced
¼ cup brown sugar
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
2 teaspoons cornstarch
1 package cream cheese (8 ounces), room temperature
1 can sweetened condensed milk (14 ounces)
¼ cup lemon juice
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
6 pre-made mini graham cracker pie crusts

1. Melt butter in a skillet over medium-high heat. Add the diced apples and brown sugar. Sauté until apples begin to soften. Add cinnamon and cornstarch and stir and simmer until apples are tender. Remove from heat and allow to cool completely.
2. Beat cream cheese until smooth. Add sweetened condensed milk and continue beating, scraping down sides of the bowl until well-mixed. Stir in lemon juice and vanilla.
3. Spoon cheesecake filling into graham cracker crusts. Chill in fridge until firm, about an hour, and serve topped with apple mixture.

SERVES 6

TCP Follow Vianney Rodriguez while she cooks in *Cocina Gris* at sweetlifelife.com, where she features a recipe for No-Bake Concha Truffles.





Ambrosia

DEBORAH ANDERSON
COSERV

Anderson shares her version of the classic Southern dessert, ambrosia, a tropical fruit salad that can be whipped up in 10 minutes.

- 1 container frozen whipped topping (8 ounces), thawed**
- 3 cans tropical fruit (15 ounces each), drained**
- 2 cups mini multicolored marshmallows**
- 1½ cups shredded sweetened coconut**

1. Combine all ingredients. Mix well. Chill until ready to serve.

SERVES 6

Frozen Peanut Butter Banana Pie

JAN BOX
TRINITY VALLEY EC

Frozen peanut butter banana pie is an easy-to-make dessert—no oven required. Layers of hot fudge, peanut butter, whipped topping, bananas and chocolate atop a sugar cookie crust make for the perfect ending to any meal.

- 2 cups crushed sugar cookies**
- 4 tablespoons (½ stick) butter, melted**
- 1 jar hot fudge topping (11.75 ounces), warmed**

CONTINUED >

\$500 WINNER

Chocolate Éclair Dessert

BRENDA HEINRICH
MIDSOUTH EC



All the deliciousness of an éclair with no baking. Luxurious layers of pudding, graham crackers and whipped topping finished with a chocolate glaze make for one amazing dessert.

SERVES 8-12



- 2 tablespoons (¼ stick) butter, room temperature, for the pan**
- 1 box graham crackers (14.4 ounces)**
- 2 packages instant French vanilla pudding mix (3.25 ounces each)**
- 3½ cups milk, divided use**
- 1 container frozen whipped topping (8 ounces), thawed**
- 2 cups sugar**
- ⅔ cup unsweetened cocoa powder**
- 4 tablespoons (½ stick) butter**
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract**

1. Coat the bottom of a 9-by-13-inch pan with butter.
2. Line the bottom of the pan with ⅓ of the graham crackers.
3. In a large bowl, use an electric mixer to combine the pudding mix with 3 cups milk. Beat at medium speed for 2 minutes.
4. Gently fold in whipped topping. Pour half the pudding mixture over the graham crackers.
5. Layer another ⅓ of the graham crackers and the remaining pudding mixture, then top with the remaining graham crackers.
6. In a saucepan, combine sugar, cocoa and remaining ½ cup milk. Bring to a boil. Boil 1 minute.
7. Remove cocoa mixture from heat and add butter and vanilla. Mix well and allow to cool. Pour the chocolate sauce over the graham cracker layer.
8. Refrigerate overnight until set.

TCP \$500 Recipe Contest

CHOCOLATE DUE SEPTEMBER 10

We're looking for your choicest chocolate recipe—cake, brownie, whatever. Submit your best online by September 10 for a chance to win \$500.



RECIPES CONTINUED

- 1 package cream cheese (8 ounces), room temperature
- 1 cup peanut butter
- 1¼ cups powdered sugar
- 1 container frozen whipped topping (16 ounces), thawed, divided use
- 3 bananas, sliced ¼-inch thick
- 1 cup chocolate syrup

1. Mix together sugar cookies and butter and press into the bottom of a greased 9-inch springform pan.
2. Pour warmed fudge topping over the crust.
3. Blend cream cheese and peanut butter until smooth. Mix in powdered sugar until combined then fold in ¾ of the whipped topping.
4. Spoon mixture over fudge topping, spreading evenly.
5. Top with sliced bananas
6. Top with remaining whipped topping, spreading evenly.
7. Freeze 8 hours.



8. Allow pie to sit at room temperature 15 minutes before slicing. Run a knife around edge of pan and remove the outer ring.
9. Serve drizzled with chocolate syrup.

SERVES 12

TCP We have more than 1,000 recipes in our online archive, including desserts galore. Check out our website to find other options for delicious desserts.

Trust the Crust

BY VIANNEY RODRIGUEZ

My favorite part of a no-bake dessert is the crust. Think beyond the OG—graham crackers. Here are five tasty options that make a perfect base for any no-bake dessert:

Shortbread: For an extra buttery base, crumble up shortbread cookies and top with whipped cream.

Chocolate chip cookies: Kids and adults will love this chocolate-studded crust.

Gingersnap cookies: Gingersnaps add a touch of spice to a sweet treat.

Pretzels: Salty and sweet pretzels make any citrus dessert sing—and zing.

Cereal: Your favorite childhood bowl of cereal transformed into a crust pleases palates of all ages.



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COURTESY CHET GARNER

Mysterious Markings

Native drawings in aptly named Paint Rock offer intriguing clues

BY CHET GARNER

I WAS EXCITED. It was a crisp spring day, and I was about to see the famous painted rocks of Paint Rock. I watched my phone GPS like a hawk as it led me to the town and then past it. “Hmm, that’s strange,” I thought but kept my eyes on the lookout for a visitors center or giant sign marking the largest collection of pictographs in North America.

“You’ve passed your destination,” taunted my GPS. What? I didn’t see a thing. I turned around and realized I missed a small gate sign marking the entrance to Campbell Ranch. This hidden gem was especially hidden.

I entered the property and met Kay Campbell, who at 96 still greets visitors and shares the story of the ancient markings on her family’s land. Campbell’s grandfather was an archaeologist and visited Texas in the 1870s in search of Native American artifacts. Near the Concho River, he found 1,500 pictographs on a rocky bluff overlooking the river valley. He purchased the land and began his research.

The drawings range in size from single figures to full shields. They depict people, animals and battles in multiple colors, but most are burnt red, created on rocks hauled in from miles away. In the 1990s observers realized that on certain days, like the summer solstice, shadows created by the rocky overhangs added additional shapes on top of the paintings. I was fascinated.

Many scientists believe this area served as an annual meeting ground for Apache, Comanche, Jumano and Tonkawa tribes. Over hundreds of years, they would meet, paint and celebrate the year. Much about their traditions is unknown, but I loved the thought of standing on perhaps the oldest family reunion grounds in Texas. ■

ABOVE Bill Campbell shows Chet around the pictographs at Paint Rock.

TCP Join Chet as he visits the tribal meeting ground 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.

SEPTEMBER

08

Wimberley [8–9] Wings Over Wimberley, (269) 290-5001, wingsoverwimberley.com

09

Rosenberg Ride to Rosenberg Car Show, (713) 502-3168, rosenbergartsalliance.com

10

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

Gainesville [10–17] Gainesville Area Visual Arts Fall Art Exhibition, (940) 613-6939, gainesvilleareavisualarts.org

16

Seguin [16–17] St. James Catholic Church Classic Car Show and Festival, (830) 379-1796, saintjamescc.org

18

Kerrville [18–23] Paint Kerrville! Outdoor Painters Event, (830) 895-2911, kackkerrville.com

22

Glen Rose [22–23] Wine and Art Festival, (817) 291-8367, glenrosewineandartfestival.org

Sulphur Springs [22–23] Lone Star Heritage Quilt Guild Show, (209) 509-9522, sulphurspringstxquilts.com

23

Lakehills Medina Lake Cajun Festival, (830) 460-0600, cajunfestival-medinalake.com

Ingram [23–24] Texas Arts and Crafts Fair, (830) 367-5121, txartsandcraftsfair.com

24

Lakeway Arts in the Afternoon: Balcones Community Orchestra, (512) 261-1010, lakewayartsdistrict.com

Meyersville Sts. Peter & Paul Catholic Church Barbecue and Raffle, (361) 275-3868, catholiccommunityofcuero.org

Serbin Wendish Fest, (979) 366-2441, texaswendish.org

29

Fairfield [29-30] Big T Memorial State Championship BBQ Cookoff, (469) 383-8355, bigtmemorial.com

Giddings [29-30] Texas Word Wrangler Book Festival, (979) 542-2716, www.giddingspubliclibrary.org

30

Winnboro Cowboy Music and Poetry Gathering, (903) 342-0686, winnboro.centerforthearts.com

OCTOBER

06

Los Fresnos [6-7] Narciso Martinez Conjunto Festival, (956) 367-0335, narciso.martinezculturalartscenter.org

Corpus Christi [6-28] Dimension L, (361) 884-6406, artcentercc.org

07

Bowie Chicken and Bread Days Heritage Festival, (940) 872-6246, cityofbowietx.com

Jonestown Night Sky Advocacy Star Party, (512) 267-2011, jtownnightsky.com

Marble Falls Main Street Car Show, (830) 220-4489, highlandlakeskiwanis.org

TCP Submit Your Event

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

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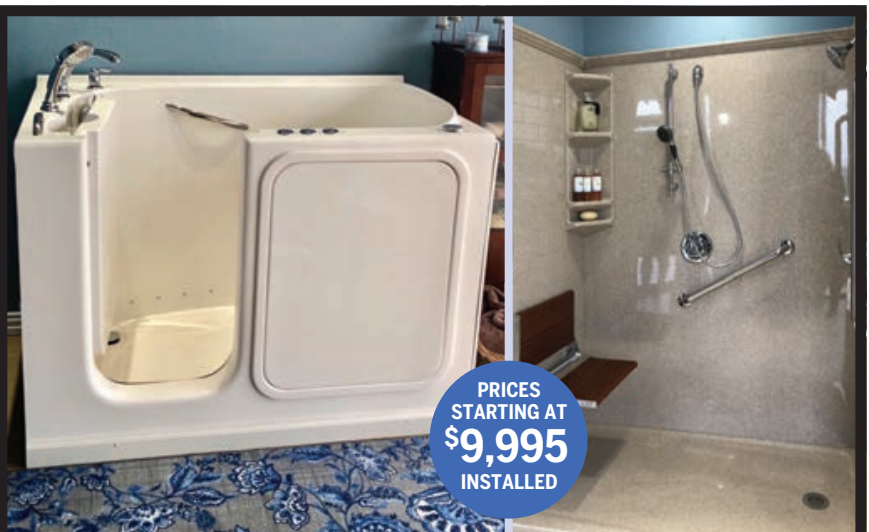
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New for 2023—the Morgan Silver Dollar Is BACK! **99.9% Silver, Legal Tender, Extremely Limited Availability!**

The Morgan Silver Dollar—originally minted from 1878 to 1904, then again in 1921—is the most popular vintage Silver Dollar in the world. Coin experts estimate that as few as 15% of all vintage Morgans still exist, due to the ravages of time, along with mass-meltings by the U.S. Government.

The entire market was thrilled when the U.S. Mint brought the Morgan Silver Dollar back in 2021, in honor of the popular, vintage coin's 100th anniversary.

Legal Tender, Struck in 99.9% Fine Silver

The program was a huge success, and the relatively small mintage instantly sold out at the mint. Buyers loved the fact that these new coins were the first legal-tender Morgans in 100 years, and that they were struck in 99.9% fine silver—instead of the 90% silver/10% copper alloy of the originals.

But with only 175,000 coins struck, many buyers were left empty-handed, and frustrated by the instant sell-out. If you were able to acquire a 2021 for the 100th anniversary—congratulations!

Then—An Unplanned One-Year Hiatus

Then last year, the *entire market* was left empty-handed because—although these modern Morgans were intended to be an annual release—the U.S. Mint was caught off-guard by the global shortage of the silver blanks required to strike the coins, and cancelled the 2022 release! No silver? No Morgans!

NOW for 2023—Legal-Tender Morgan Silver Dollars Are Back. But Mintages Are Low!

Now this year, 99.9% silver, legal-tender Morgan Silver Dollars are once again available to silver buyers, Morgan enthusiasts and collectors—while they last! Though somewhat larger than last year, this year's 275,000 authorized mintage is still a crazy low number—especially when you consider all the pent-up anticipation and demand caused by the quick sell-out of the 2021 Morgans, and the fact the program was cancelled last year.

Very Limited. Don't Miss Out!

Add these bright, shiny, new legal-tender 2023 Morgan Silver Dollars, struck in 99.9% Silver, to your collection now! To secure yours, call 1-888-395-3219 right now, or scan the QR code below to order online, because these—WILL NOT LAST!

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Night Sky

Turn your eyes to the skies and behold the heavenly wonders. They say the stars at night are big and bright in Texas. Let's space out a while and see for ourselves.

CURATED BY GRACE FULTZ



1 MARK BONAME
JACKSON EC

If you look closely at the Milky Way, you'll see a horse formation called the Dark Horse Nebula.

2 MIKE PRESTIGIACOMO
BARTLETT EC

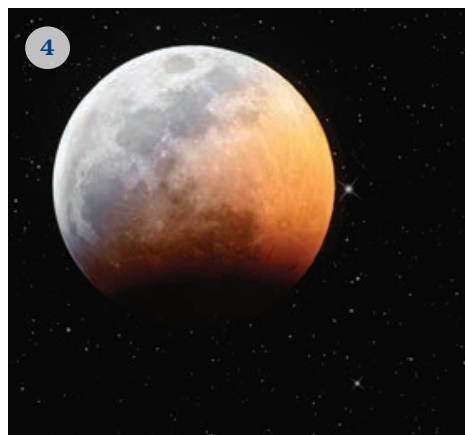
"A sudden display of colors, like fireworks on the Fourth of July, burst overhead near the Big Dipper asterism, which can still be seen."

3 JAY HOBBS
PEDERNALES EC

"A barn light is a welcoming sight for livestock in Johnson City."

4 MARK HOLLY
BANDERA EC

"It was a cold night, but I just couldn't miss photographing this rare event, the super blood wolf moon eclipse."



Upcoming Contests

DUE SEP 10 Local Landmarks

DUE OCT 10 Vibrant Color

DUE NOV 10 Architecture



Enter online at TexasCoopPower.com/contests.

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



Pam LeBlanc leaps for joy when she finds a natural body of water.

I like living my life a little out of bounds, so I count all these things as positives. They make swimming feel a little less civilized and more like a daring adventure.

For years, when I worked as a staff writer at the *Austin-American Statesman*, I crisscrossed Barton Springs Pool in Austin at noon once a week. Sometimes I'd watch cormorants dive deep into the blue-green depths, hunting for lunch. I'd see crawfish prowl the mucky bottom and thumb-sized silvery fish swirl beneath limestone ledges.

What's the appeal? No chlorine, for one. My eyes don't turn red and sting after too much time in a natural swimming hole. I don't mind getting dirty, and I like to observe the native life. In a secluded setting, I also can't resist skinny-dipping, a pastime generally frowned upon at public pools but perfectly acceptable during backpacking trips into the wilderness.

For me, wilder is better.

I've leaped into the gin-clear waters of the Devils and Pecos rivers in West Texas, swam in all seven of the Highland Lakes, and soaked in a fern-lined stretch of the Blanco River that reminds me of Shangri-La. I've swum alongside dolphins in Hawaii, whale sharks in Mexico and humpback whales in the Dominican Republic.

During a relay swim race across Lake Tahoe, I got distracted watching shafts of light flicker into the 1,644-foot depths. Once I swam, as one-half of a two-woman team, a combined 28.5 miles around Manhattan Island—up the East River, through the Harlem River and down the Hudson River. (Each one had its own distinctive flavor, as my partner says.)

I don't care if I can't see the bottom. I don't mind if a minnow nips my toes. Some days, I almost expect a mermaid to rise from the blue, and that would be OK, too. To me, swimming is like getting a full-body hug from Mother Nature. And I love hugs. ■

Wild Blue Yonder

Swimming in cement?
Give me seaweed and sand

BY PAM LEBLANC

FOUR OR FIVE mornings each week, I glide back and forth across what Jethro Bodine of the 1960s sitcom *The Beverly Hillbillies* would describe as a cement pond.

As much as I appreciate these swim practices, led by a coach who stands on deck and hollers instructions that keep me healthy and fit, I prefer a wild swim over a dip in a blue rectangle of chlorinated water any day.

Wild swims—in rivers, lakes and oceans—come with undulating aquatic plants, squishy mud and rogue waves. Sometimes they include appearances by aquatic creatures like fish and turtles or even snakes and sharks. There are no formal black stripes or lines of buoys to ensure straight swimming, and flip turns are all but impossible.

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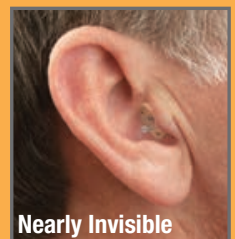
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