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NOVEMBER 2023

Happy Tales

Cowboy poets gather
in Alpine to spin stories
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**BLUEBONNET
EC NEWS**

SEE PAGE 16

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November 2023



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'Its Own Sweet Sound'

Cowboy poetry devotees ensure a Western tradition continues to find reverent audiences.

Story by Jessica Ridge
Photos by Dave Shafer

ON THE COVER

Burleson singer-songwriter
Kristyn Harris at the Lone Star
Cowboy Poetry Gathering.

ABOVE

An ensemble of artists
performs the finale, a tribute
to Charles Goodnight.

Photos by Dave Shafer

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Like No Other
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Richardson

World Renown

WILEY POST, pictured below, famous for his around-the-world flights in the 1930s, was born 125 years ago this month near Grand Saline, east of Dallas.

Post, credited with discovering the jet stream, twice set speed records for circling the globe. The celebrated adventurer, born November 22, 1898, perished with close friend Will Rogers in a plane crash in Alaska in 1935.



Glorious Overtones

Pamela Dawson, choir director at DeSoto High School, south of Dallas, won a Grammy Music Educator Award in February—a lofty honor for a teacher whose students have performed at Carnegie Hall in New York City and have landed on Broadway.

“I am this lady from Detroit, Michigan, who just loves music and wants to impart that into my students,” says Dawson, who began at DeSoto in 2006.



“Happiness is having a large, loving, caring, close-knit family in another city.”

—GEORGE BURNS

TCP Contests and More

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FINISH THIS SENTENCE

Why doesn't somebody invent ...

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 September prompt: **My favorite swimming hole is ...**

As a teen it was Menard Creek, but at 83 it is my bathtub.

PAUL PAGE
JASPER-NEWTON EC
KIRBYVILLE

The creek in my backyard.

RAY WOLBRECHT
PEDERNALES EC
BLANCO

The next one. I have always been a sucker for swimming holes, ever since childhood. They always have a "Huck Finn" feel to me—very nostalgic—so if I see one, and I have shorts nearby, I jump in.

DAVE BOHN
PEDERNALES EC
CANYON LAKE

Balmerhea State Park pool—nothing better.

LISA HOLLOWAY FITZSIMMONS
VIA FACEBOOK

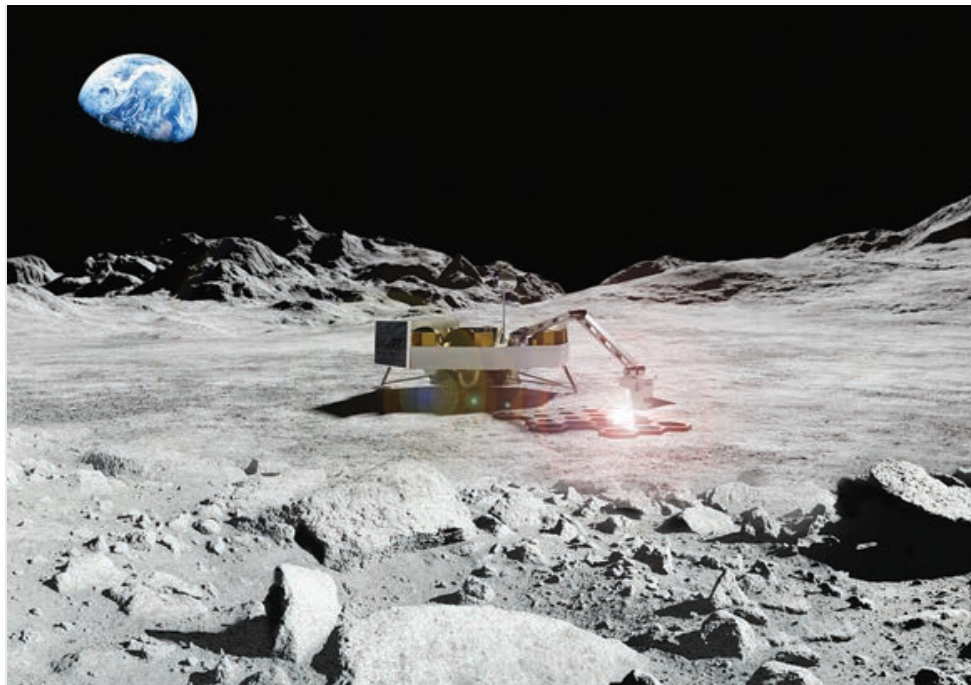
Hamilton Pool.

ALAN ARROWOOD
VIA FACEBOOK

Visit our website to see more responses.

In Favor of Heat Pumps

Heat pumps are gaining popularity in the U.S, outselling gas furnaces by a wide margin in 2022. They're more energy-efficient, using much less electricity than traditional heating and air conditioning units.



There Goes the Neighborhood

TEXAS' STRONG TIES to the moon are indisputable. After all, the world listened in as Neil Armstrong uttered these words during the Apollo 11 mission July 20, 1969: "Houston, Tranquility Base here. The Eagle has landed."

Now, as NASA prepares to send astronauts back to the moon and establish a long-term presence there, the agency has contracted Austin 3D printing firm Icon to launch construction technologies for lunar landing pads, habitats and roads.

Closer to home, Icon has been creating 3D-printed houses and military barracks using gigantic robotic printers that layer the company's proprietary concrete mix.



ERICH SCHLEGEL

SEPTEMBER 2023 Dance Hall Darlings

“The Triumphs played at our Somerville High School prom, and we went to most of the dance halls mentioned. Brought back many great memories.”

JULIE PAZDRAL FULLER
COSERV
FRISCO

Labyrinth Love

My son built a labyrinth in Denton for his Eagle Scout project in 2006 [*Circles of Life*, August 2023]. It’s at First Christian Church, 1203 Fulton St., in the grassy area adjacent to the parking lot.

Betsy Deiterman
Sam Houston EC
Livingston

It was always a good day when the Triumphs came to town.

BRUCE GOODWYN
VIA FACEBOOK

Prize of the Pasture

About the only time my mom would submit to bouncing around the pasture in the pickup with my dad and me on our ranch at Big Lake was when she was on her annual quest for agarita berries [*Make Your Shelf Useful*, August 2023].

We would find the plants here and there and pick off the little berries. When she had enough, Mom would make the most succulent pale red agarita jelly that would complement our breakfast table for months.

Jim McCoy
Southwest Texas EC
Big Lake



WYATT MCGSPADDEN

Massive Mums

I attended San Marcos High School 1968–71. We had Texas-sized mums back then—real mums [*Bigger and Better—Together*, September 2023]. Most had masses of ribbons, buttons, charms and bells attached. It was a big deal to have one.

Paula T. Phillips
Pedernales EC
San Marcos

Literary Great

Lonesome Dove may be the best book I’ve ever read [*A Page of the Past*, August 2023]. Since I’m 92, I’ve read a lot of books.

If he had never written anything other than *Lonesome Dove*, Larry McMurtry would still be known among any of the prior great writers.

Jerry Pentecost
Jackson EC
Port Lavaca

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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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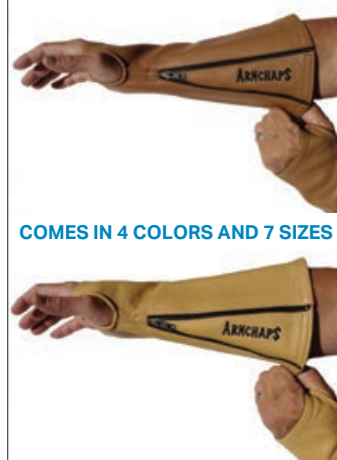
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COWBOY POETRY devotees ensure a Western tradition continues to find rapt audiences

A pint-size poet steps up to a microphone stand that towers over her. It's a February morning in far West Texas as Bethia Baize, 5, recites *The Well-Used Cayuse*, inspired by her horse. Emcee Karen McGuire holds the mic at the kindergartener's height. Bethia speaks softly, from memory, to a rapt audience in a Sul Ross State University lecture hall, her voice and words kicking off a youth poetry contest. When she's finished, the

room thunders with applause, and Bethia claims the first-place plaque for her age group.

For the rest of the session, which is one of dozens at the annual Lone Star Cowboy Poetry Gathering in Alpine, the energy in the room is electric. Parents, grandparents and other supporters fill every seat and line the walls as 16 young poets recite their award-winning works about cattle and coyotes, cowboys and cowgirls, and the rhythms of




Montana brother-sister duo Brigid and Johnny Reedy rehearse before one of their sessions at the Lone Star Cowboy Poetry Gathering in Alpine. Their stirring vocal harmonies left audiences spellbound that weekend in February.

'Its Own Sweet, Sound'

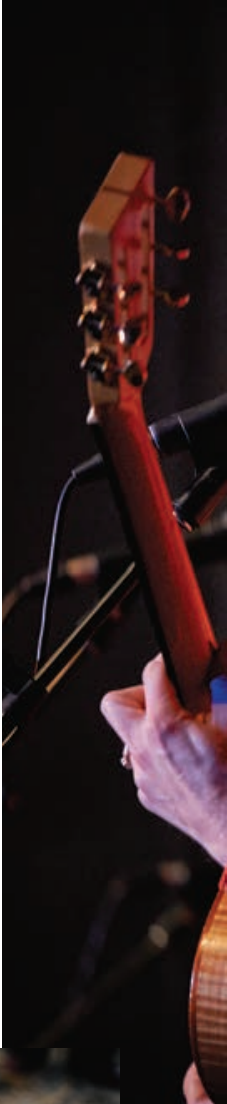
BY JESSICA RIDGE • PHOTOS BY DAVE SHAFER

ranch life. The room pulses with pride, love and nerves—like a spelling bee, but giddier and more exuberant.

Bethia's aunt, Elizabeth Baize, a member of the poetry gathering's board of directors, co-hosted the youth poetry contest with McGuire, also a board member. In the weeks before the event, Baize visits area schools to spur students to enter. She encourages them to talk with older relatives who might have ranch life experience and to look at photographs or paintings that might inspire them to write a story in the form of a poem.



*“Poetry is
a language
of the heart.
It’s a language
of emotion.
Prose is language,
but poetry is
what sears it
into our being.”*



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT
Andy Wilkinson of Lubbock
reviews his notes back-
stage. Kristyn Harris calls
the gathering a place for
“sharing your art, sharing
yourself.” Mornings begin
outside with cowboy coffee
over a fire.

It’s no mean feat winnowing down the annual crop of entries to the winners. As the judges read the entries, “there are giggles and good belly laughs, tears and sniffles, and ‘Oh my, listen to this!’” McGuire says.

The future of cowboy poetry is in good hands.

McGuire and Baize—and scores of organizers and volunteers—work hard to ensure that future. They helped stage this year’s gathering, which drew north of 2,200 attendees and featured 40-plus performers of cowboy poetry, which encompasses music, spoken-word poetry and storytelling by ranch hands, cowboys and cowgirls and has been enshrined as an oral tradition by Library of Congress folklorists.

In North America, the Texas gathering is second in size only to the National Cowboy Poetry Gathering in Elko, Nevada, according to Bob Saul, the gathering’s volunteer event producer. This year’s event delivered at least five times as many free performances and sessions as ticketed





ones. That's by design, Saul says.

"We want people to come. Some of the cowboy poetry gatherings have gone to all paid; there's nothing free you can go to," Saul, 79, says. "But our board has decided that we're going to carry on the tradition and the mission, that we will do our best to provide cowboy poetry, as much of it as possible, free of charge.

"In other words, it's for ranching families."

In 2019, Saul was in the audience at the Texas Cowboy Poetry Gathering (the original iteration of the event in Alpine) when it was announced that that year's gathering would be the last. Saul immediately began canvassing for volunteers to keep the event, or some semblance of it, alive.

"I just started talking to people and asking if they would be willing to help, if we could get it restarted, would they volunteer," Saul says. "And I came back to Fort Worth after two days with 142 email addresses in my pocket."

Over several months, Bob and his wife, Nancy Saul, a graphic designer who creates the gathering's annual programs, made more than a dozen 15-hour round trips

between their North Texas home and Alpine to help the new gathering find its footing. Those pilgrimages were rooted in a deep affinity.

"Poetry is a language of the heart," Saul says. "It's a language of emotion. Prose is language, but poetry is what sears it into our being. And today poetry is mostly academic. You don't hear, like you used to, people going to hear people quote poetry; except when you go hear the fishermen and the miners and the loggers and the cowboys.

"Those kinds of industries, where people are working long hours and they are more alone, they've got time to think. And they've got time to sing. And they've got time to recite to themselves."

That reverence reverberates across the gathering, which takes place the third weekend in February. At sessions with names like Western Harmony, Ranch Women and Working Ranch Families, audiences are focused and present, bearers of a quietude

punctuated only by bursts of applause or laughter. Almost every cellphone is out of sight, every eye on the performers. Those wearing cowboy hats are kindly asked to remove them so as not to obstruct the view for others.

Kay Nowell, co-chair of the gathering, describes the genre as a celebration of a tradition and a way of life. “What cowboy poetry is is real,” she says. “People get taken into rural people’s life, and they get to experience it through their poems and their songs. It’s a culture that adheres to a code.”



The Mellard brothers from outside Marfa found success during the youth poetry contest. From left, Travis and Thomas earned honorable mentions, and Aiden claimed second place in his age group.

Nowell has conformed to that code for decades. She was a featured poet at the National Cowboy Poetry Gathering in 1989, which led to an appearance on *The Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson*, where she recited her poem *A What?!!!*

A chuck wagon breakfast kicks off each day of the Alpine gathering. This year temperatures stay below freezing as Alpine Lions Club members serve scrambled eggs and biscuits and gravy in the peaceful Poet’s Grove at Kokernot Park. Cups of coffee skate across iced-over tables as the sun crests a hill, and a blazing firepit and easy conversation counter the chill.

The spirit of camaraderie and mindful attention extends to the gathering’s open mic sessions, another free daily offering open to the public. Musicians and spoken-word performers sign up in advance, wait for their names to be called and then amble down to speak, sing or play their piece. Jan Hartman is up first Friday and plays *Amazing Grace* and taps on her fife.

The instrument “has its own sweet sound, I think,” Hartman says. “It has more of a country sound than an orchestra sound.” Hartman, who lives in Alpine and has participated in the open mic for the past five years, says she still gets nervous before she plays. It’s worth it, though.

“It makes you stand out a little bit, just to be able to play before some people, and be able to tell a testimony or a story or, there again, a poem that you’ve heard,” Hartman says. “So it just makes you feel a little special.”

One of the musicians Hartman most looks forward to each year is Kristyn Harris, who first appeared at the gathering’s open mic more than a decade ago. The singer and yodeler, songwriter, swing rhythm guitarist, and winner of multiple International Western Music Association awards performed in several sessions at this year’s event.

“The audiences here are really here to soak it up, and you really connect with them,” says Harris, a Burleson resident and member of United Cooperative Services, an electric cooperative in the Metroplex. “Rather than just performing for people, it’s like sharing your art, sharing yourself

PLAN FOR
Poetry

The next Lone Star
Cowboy Poetry
Gathering is set
for February 15–17,
2024, in Alpine.



Nevada rancher Waddie Mitchell has been a performing poet for decades.

of Juni Fisher's spare, moving rendition of Simon and Garfunkel's folk classic *The Boxer*. The talent on display is dizzying, the audience enraptured, and the trio onstage—with poet Amy Hale emceeding—exude a sisterhood in their banter and backing of each other.

"I've played festivals that are *festivals*, and then the gathering is different," Harris says. "There are performers here that I really look up to, that I could see as celebrities, but here no one is a big celebrity."

Loren Schooley, a musician from Marfa who works in information technology and performs at Friday's open mic, echoes that sentiment. "Usually you go to a gig, and then you see the band or two, and then that's it," Schooley says. "But here it's almost like a conference. You never know what you're going to step into if you go into some of these rooms. And when you find the sweet spot—I've shed more tears here and laughter. You just can't get that anywhere else."

The gathering's performers are similarly compelled. "The best way I can describe it is it's family," Harris says.

and sharing your history."

In a Saturday afternoon show, Harris covers the jazz standard *All of Me* in a Western Swing style on the heels

"There's a big, big, big Texas spirit about this gathering that's also different from some other poetry gatherings that are in other parts of the country. Everyone is just so Texan: friendly, wants to give you a big hug and just gives you that warm feeling."

The sweet spots and Texas spirit alchemize into what Nowell calls magic sessions. "They're intoxicating," she says. "A lot of times when I've been in one you just throw away your setlist and feed off the last guy's stuff. And it's all one piece. A lot's going on up there on that stage, and the audience feels it, and they're taken along on the ride. But the performers are having a blast."

Community investment helps sustain that improvisation. "Volunteers are critical to this," Nowell says. "We can't put this on without support from members and support from sponsors."

Tradition and fortitude are woven into the gathering's rough-hewn fabric. "The Lone Star is bound and determined to keep it cowboy," Nowell says. "Weather, government, markets; it's a hard life. But it's something people want to raise their children in." ■

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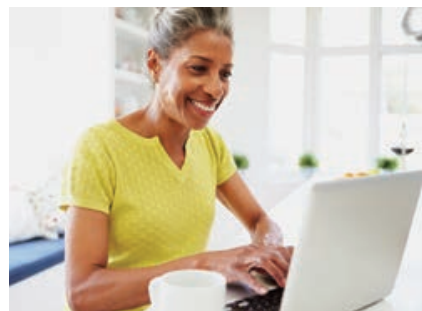
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Where the cool campers roam

Call it hip camping or just a new way to enjoy nature on someone else's beautiful land. Fueled by websites that connect lovers of the outdoors with landowners, the industry has taken off in the Bluebonnet region.



NATURE LOVERS HAVE FOUND a new way to sleep under the big, bright stars of Central Texas by camping on privately owned land discovered through the use of websites such as Hipcamp, The Dyr, Tentrr and even Airbnb.

Hipcamp.com, the largest of the sites, started 10 years ago and expanded into Texas about seven years ago. Campers can browse diverse listings ranging from primitive sites without so much as a fire ring to glamping tents complete with electricity and running water.

Other sites, like thedyrt.com, let campers browse public and private campgrounds, and some public locations can be booked directly on the site. Even airbnb.com has expanded into the camping space in recent years.

Campgrounds have long been overseen by federal, state, county or regional park systems, or they've been privately operated. Many are in beautiful spots around the state, from riverfronts to canyons, the Gulf Coast to Big Bend. Now private landowners who may want to host only a couple of campers a night have found the websites can provide them with some supplemental income.

There are more than 50 small, private campgrounds in the Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative region listed on these websites. We talked with five landowners about how this industry has diversified their income stream, what they've learned about being good hosts and what it takes to let campers experience their slices of the Lone Star State, from the lush shores of the San Marcos River to an animal sanctuary in Dime Box to the fields of Bleiberville.

▶ THE BEST DAM SPOT

Near Staples, on the San Marcos River, four tent sites, three acres, from \$50 per night for two guests, on hipcamp.com; amenities include river access, outdoor shower, use of kayaks and paddleboards, portable toilet

As a child, Laura Grumbles spent long days on the San Marcos River. She never imagined that she'd spend her retirement hosting campers who flock to the emerald green river that keeps this northern pocket of Guadalupe County so lush.

The former preschool teacher grew up in Staples, between Martindale and Fentress, not far from the slow-moving water that, for many years, powered a cotton gin next to the small bridge that leads into town.

In the late 1980s, when Grumbles was in college, her dad bought that gin, including the dam that controlled the water powering it, as well as a couple of acres along the river.

Her parents eventually moved into the small house next to the old gin, and Grumbles, her siblings and their growing families would often gather at this little slice of heaven to skip rocks, float down the small rapids and gaze up into towering trees.

The family knew that people with privately owned riverside properties like theirs had monetized their land by creating campsites, but their dad wasn't keen on the idea.

"Dad was so afraid of lawsuits," Grumbles said. But when he died in 2019, at 92, "I looked at my sister and I said, 'What are we going to do with this place?' People say, 'What a beautiful spot,' but how can we share it without overloading it?"

The camping websites, following the Airbnb model, have provided enough income to allow some landowners to retain ownership of family property. "Hipcamp has given the third generation a way to keep the family legacy intact," Grumbles said.

At their handful of small campsites on the river's gravel bar, there aren't picnic



A family-owned old dam and cotton gin on the banks of the San Marcos River is the setting for one of the most popular camping locations in Texas on hipcamp.com.

tables or fire rings, because the river floods every few years. One of the sites, on higher ground near the gin, has a hammock and a picnic table. There's also a portable toilet and a trash dumpster, which cuts into the profits but makes hosting guests less of a headache. "If I could get the forecast of flooding from the good Lord, I'd have a bubblegum machine down there."

With more than 300 reviews, Grumbles' "The Best Dam Spot" is one of the most popular privately owned Texas campsites listed on Hipcamp. "Our venture into all this was born when outdoor life came back into everyone's life," she said.

Although she sometimes deals with rowdy campers and tossed cigarette butts, being a host for up to four groups of campers is a joy.

"I camped on that gravel bar with my son and his friends many times," Grumbles

said. "My campers bring my childhood and my home life back alive. When we hear children laughing down at the gravel bar, it brings back fond family memories because we were able to have that with our children."

Guests have told her that overcrowded public campsites with paved roads jammed with vehicles make camping on private land alluring. Some folks driving cross-country can more easily find camping locations along their routes. For others, being on private land brings a sense of security and an escape from crowds.

"We've met the most wonderful people — people who've become friends — and I feel bad charging," she said. "It pays some of the property tax, and it's fun to share." ■

More unique camping locations in the Bluebonnet region, Pages 18-21

Want campers on your land? Here are tips

- Decide how many campsites and campers your land — and you — can reasonably handle.
- Start slowly, and think about creating a destination for people; give them something they want to see or do. Don't just offer a piece of dirt. Even a shady creek or pond to fish in can be attractive.
- Give campers ideas for things to do in the area: where to eat, towns to visit, sites to see on their drive.
- Consider getting additional liability insurance. Many websites, including Hipcamp, Tentrr and Airbnb, offer insurance, but hosts who have numerous campers say they prefer extra protection.
- Learn about the Texas Agritourism Act. It can offer information and some liability protection for landowners who want to use part of their land as a tourism destination.
- Listen to your campers. Get their feedback about how to improve your listing or the campsite.
- Be a good host. Opening a campsite means you are in the hospitality business. Respond to campers' messages quickly; greet them when they arrive.

Tips for campers going off the beaten path

- Read listings closely. If you must have a bathroom, make sure the listing with the beautiful photos has one. If you want to bring your dog, confirm that is allowed.
- Glass is rarely a good idea when camping, even if it is allowed.
- Always read the reviews. Your fellow campers will have lots to say about these campsites, but take reviews with a grain of salt. Leave your own review after your stay.
- Pack in, pack out. Camping on people's private land does not mean they will clean up your mess. Bring trash bags, and unless told otherwise, take your refuse with you.

Shop the sites for unique area campsites

There are several popular websites to check out if you are looking for privately owned places to camp in the Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative region. They include:

- **Hipcamp** (hipcamp.com)
- **The Dyrt** (thedyrt.com)
- **Tentrr** (tentrr.com)
- **Airbnb** (airbnb.com)
- **iOverlander** (ioverlander.com)
- **FreeRoam** (freeroam.app)

► FIREFLY RANCH

Bleiberville, Austin County, four tent sites, 22 acres, from \$30 per night for four guests, listed on hipcamp.com; amenities include hike-and-bike, horse and off-road vehicle trails, and a portable toilet

Aaron Barnett grew up in the California mountains near Yosemite. He had traveled the world, working in the oil and gas industry, and ended up in Houston with a career in biotechnology. Then he started looking for a piece of land where he could spend the next chapter of his life. A single dad with a teenage son, Barnett settled on 60 acres of rolling hayfields with a farmhouse and an old barn in east Austin County near Bleiberville.

He thought about making the steel-roofed barn into a second dwelling, but instead decided to remodel the “rust bucket” into something he could share with people who come to the property via his listing on hipcamp.com.

Barnett wondered if his property could prove attractive to campers who prefer a primitive approach: no shower, no bathroom, no paved road to the campsite. “I learned that I’m not going to get hundreds of visitors, but there are a lot of folks who don’t have \$500 for a camping trip,” he said.

Campers have come to his property while attending the Bellville knife show in April or competing in a local bike race. Some are “overlanding”: driving long distances and camping along the way, often in a camper van built for that purpose.

Even though the RV market has slowed since its peak during the pandemic, Barnett believes it will grow again. People still

want to live on the road, work remotely or travel during their retirement years.

Barnett plans to make the barn a free, air-conditioned communal space — complete with Wi-Fi — for anyone who stays on the property. It can be used as an office, or a place to relax in comfortable chairs with a glass of wine to watch the sunset. He even plans to add a small stage so he can host live music and weddings, and guests can camp or stay in an RV, starting next year.

“The pandemic changed how a lot of us think about our future,” he said. “We spent all that time staring at the same four walls, and now lots of folks are thinking, ‘Maybe it’s time to go.’”

Even though Barnett has traveled the world, he likes the rolling hills of this part of Austin County best. “It’s way too pretty of a place for me to have it by myself and not share it,” he said.

“I searched for a year for this place,” Barnett said of his land, which is five minutes from a paved road. “Rush hour here is five John Deeres and three F-150s,” he said.

Barnett nicknamed the place Firefly Ranch because of the countless lightning bugs that give it a special glow at night. “It feels like a million miles from anywhere,” he said.

“The campers I’ve met are lovely people, and every one of them reacts the same way: ‘Oh wow, you’ve got this private park. How did you pull that off?’” ■



Aaron Barnett's 60 acres of rolling fields in eastern Austin County is listed on hipcamp.com. It has a farmhouse and an old barn Barnett is fixing up, with hopes of providing seating space for campers or for events.



Hollie and Davey Schacherl live on Starlove Ranch in Lee County, a regenerative animal sanctuary that is also a Hipcamp location with six tent or RV campsites. Their twin 5-year-olds, Oslo, left, and Ivan, play near their most popular campsite.

▶ STARLOVE RANCH and SANCTUARY

Near Dime Box, Lee County, 102 acres, six RV and tent sites, from \$35 per night for four guests, on hipcamp.com and thedyr.com; amenities include biking and hiking trails, farm tours, rescue animals including cows and a potbellied pig, and a portable toilet

In Lee County, Hollie and Davey Schacherl are looking beyond corn, cotton and cattle to bring life to a little over 100 acres that have been in Davey's family for more than 150 years.

Since 2017, they've operated Starlove Ranch and Sanctuary about 7 miles south of Dime Box, as a regenerative farm with more than 30 rescue cows, a potbellied pig named Norman and a hike-and-bike trail around the edge of the property.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the Schacherls hosted events at Starlove, but in 2020, when millions of Americans took to the road for camping and RV trips, the couple opened their property to campers through several websites, including Hipcamp and The Dyr.

"We didn't consider ourselves ready to open to the public, but the next day, we got a notification that a camper was coming," Hollie said. "We scrambled to get things ready, and ever since, we've been further

developing the space." Today Starlove has six campsites suited for either tents or RVs, and a new biodigester bathhouse that harnesses methane gas to fuel a kitchen range.

The couple had been living in Austin for about five years when they had twins, who are now 5 years old. They started to feel constrained by city life. Moving back to his family's land was not something he'd ever considered, Davey said, until Hollie came into his life.

"I knew the line of succession was eventually going to pass to me, but it was never anything I had considered," he said. "I have a lot of pride in being a Texan, and I like to be a Texan that breaks people's preconceived notions of what Texans are. I feel prideful to still be here and still holding onto this property."

As vegans, they wanted to shift away from raising cattle for beef production, which is how the family had paid property taxes in the past. "We knew we needed to

monetize it in a new way," he said. They formed a nonprofit so people could donate to help cover the costs of feed to keep the cows on the ranch. They hosted events and set aside a portion of the property for paid campers.

"It's been really cool that the people who have come out seem to be, typically, in alignment with what we're doing," she said. "We've had families and couples, van-life travelers, and small groups of youngsters, people in their 20s, coming out. I fight the urge to mother them. We walk the line of being helpful and available, and giving them space."

Hollie, who grew up camping on public land in Oregon, said the private campground option is "really cool because there's such individuality across the board. Every place has its own flavor, and you can see the landowner pour a bit of themselves into the space. There's a bit of something for everybody." ■

▶ ARDOR WOOD FARM

Red Rock, Bastrop County, two tent sites, one glamping tent, \$40 and \$90 per night for two guests, listed on [hipcamp.com](https://www.hipcamp.com), with more information at [ardorwoodfarm.com](https://www.ardorwoodfarm.com); amenities include a new cedar outhouse with composting toilet, hiking trails, Nigerian dwarf goats, and a brick-and-stone labyrinth

Married retirees Graham Pierce and Karen Knight don't spend much time resting on their 67-acre Ardor Wood Farm in southern Bastrop County.

About six years ago, Hipcamp was expanding and reaching out to landowners about becoming hosts. "I said, 'Nobody wants to camp on a farm,'" said Pierce, who was raised on a farm in Ireland before moving to the United States for a career in medicine.

Knight talked him into creating a listing for the farm they bought in 2015. The first afternoon it was listed, a guest booked for the next day. "I ran out with the tractor and mowed a place between some trees and created a campsite," he said.

Over the next eight years, they added a second campsite and built a cedar outhouse with a composting toilet. They hung signs around the property, like the ones you might see at a public park, educating visitors about different species of plants and animals on the land.

While building the couple's farmhouse, Pierce lived in a safari-style tent that is now the farm's "glamping" tent, complete with a bed, tables, chairs, a private fireplace and an outdoor shower.

"I'm not an extreme tree hugger, but I do know we need to find a balance, so we're trying to bring a lot of life back to the farm."

The couple maintains four miles of trails through the forests and meadows, a small herd of Nigerian dwarf dairy goats in an enclosure near the farmhouse and a handful of Texas longhorns in one of the fenced-in fields.

They insist on meeting every guest to foster connection and talk about safety on rural land. "There are lots of ways for people to hurt themselves out here," Pierce said.

One of his keys to private campground success is to offer add-ons for guests, such as bottle-feeding the baby goats or touring the property with Pierce, who is nicknamed "the Celtic Cowboy." On the tour, Pierce explains the importance of reducing invasive species and creating habitats to repopulate native

ones, such as bobwhite quail and wild turkey.

Pierce and Knight host classes and events for both campers and small groups that visit the farm but don't stay overnight. Those sessions align with the couple's vision for the farm, including dinners, cheesemaking, and what Pierce calls "difficult conversations around the fire."

"Karen and I are complete opposites in everything. We do see eye-to-eye on some things, but we are just different, and that's what America is supposed to be."

Pierce and Knight say their goal isn't simply to host campers; they want to educate people about revitalizing the land through these conversations and hands-on activities.

The most amazing thing about becoming unexpected campground hosts has been meeting kids who, after two days, "are holding my hands saying they don't want to leave," he said. "When you take kids and people and you put them in nature, you disconnect to reconnect, with yourself or your spouse or your kids or anything. We think that's the best therapy you can get." ■



Graham Pierce prepares Ardor Wood Farm's glamping tent for the next visitor. He and Karen Knight, his wife and co-owner, offer other traditional camping sites, 4 miles of trails, longhorn cattle and exotic goats on their 67 acres.



▶ CAMP IDLE WILD

Near Caldwell, Burleson County, one glamping tent, \$75 per night for six campers, listed on [airbnb.com](https://www.airbnb.com) and [tentrr.com](https://www.tentrr.com); amenities include a queen-sized bed, camping gear, portable heater, portable toilet, sun shower, hiking trails

Lauren and Kendall Sawyers bought some land in Burleson County a few years ago and were content to do the “ag-life” thing.

“I jumped into raising Angora goats, and he’s raising cattle, but we have this land with a wooded area in the back with a pond and didn’t want to keep it to ourselves,” Lauren said.

She found out about the all-in-one camping company Tentrr, which started in the Northeast. The company ships kits that start at \$4,900, which include a glamping tent, a wooden platform to set it up on and tables, to landowners like her. The kit makes setting up an attractive campsite easier. “I loved the idea of people not having to haul all their camping stuff to come

out here,” she said.

“Here we are on a country road with miles of ranches in between you and another camper. It’s primitive, but you don’t have to bring anything,” she said. The one glamping tent includes a camping toilet and a solar-heated outdoor shower.

They provide wood for a fire and s’mores kits, and guests can meet the goats if they want.

Lauren, a landscape architect, and Kendall, an electrical contractor, have two children.

They’ve added bedding and utensils for Camp Idle Wild guests, who need only to pack food and drinks in a cooler and “just show up.” ■

On [tentrr.com](https://www.tentrr.com), Lauren and Kendall Sawyers ordered a kit to build a glamping tent, wood platform and tables on their land. *Photo courtesy Lauren Sawyers*

A few more private camping spots in the Bluebonnet area

Dozens of privately owned campsites are available in the Bluebonnet area. Here are a few listed on [hipcamp.com](https://www.hipcamp.com) or [thedyrt.com](https://www.thedyrt.com) that offer interesting settings and experiences.

● **Sleep high above the ground** at Robin’s Nest Treehouse in Caldwell County south of Lockhart. Campers can stay in a fully outfitted pad nestled among seven oak trees, complete with a cowboy hot tub (heated water in a stock tank) and air conditioning. Chill in a hammock, or borrow a canoe or a kayak to paddle around the on-site pond.

● **On the San Marcos River** is a vintage Shasta RV at Get Along Ranch in Martindale, across the river from the newly revitalized downtown, with its cafe and boutique grocery store. Bring a kayak or stand-up paddleboard and catch live music.

● **In Austin County**, you’ll find Life is Wonderful in New Ulm RV, a 20-by-50-foot place to park your fifth-wheel RV with full hook-ups and a view of a pasture. It’s within walking distance of the town square.

● **In between Shelby and Latium**, 10-acre Lucky Farm has three campsites, two RV sites and two glamping sites on the back five acres. Previous campers have noted how quiet and private the spaces feel, especially after all the hustle and bustle of the nearby Round Top Antiques Fair.

● **In northern Bastrop County**, not far from McDade, you’ll find the intentional homesteading community of Amazing Graze, whose residents invite visitors to stay in a bell-shaped glamping tent that overlooks a stock pond on this 40-acre farm. Guests also have access to a ham-



Amazing Graze near McDade is an intentional homesteading community that hosts campers in this bell-shaped glamping tent. *Photo courtesy The Dyrt*

mock, fire pit and saltwater Jacuzzi.

● **Near the Bastrop and Fayette county line**, Colorado River Camping offers 12 primitive campsites, dispersed across the property, including one spot on an island that is accessible only by kayak, canoe or paddleboard. You can float to the property, too. There are no toilets, so bring your own bathroom bags or make arrangements with the host to rent the

use of the bathrooms in the house.

● **In eastern Travis County**, SHAMBA Farm, short for Sustainable Homestead and Microclimate Based Agriculture, is a 10-acre farm and nature retreat that’s home to animals including goats, chickens, ducks and geese. Campers looking for a primitive site can learn about permaculture and sustainability from the owner, a yoga teacher, herbalist and beekeeper.



Sherry Murphy, a Bluebonnet community and development representative, stands with Caleb See, a Snook High School graduate who received a 2023 Scholarship of Excellence from the cooperative. He is studying animal science at Texas A&M University.

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

**OUR
power
COMES FROM
you**



“The scholarship program shows that Bluebonnet actually cares about its members and students, and that they invest time and money into us, so that we contribute back to our communities. Thank you, Bluebonnet!”

— Caleb See,
2023 Bluebonnet Scholarship of Excellence recipient

Thank you, Caleb.

Sherry Murphy represents Bluebonnet for members in Lee County, and parts of Fayette, Milam and Williamson counties. She oversees the cooperative’s scholarship programs, helping high school students in Bluebonnet’s service area reach their academic and career goals. The program is open to any high school senior whose parent or legal guardian is a Bluebonnet member. High school juniors and seniors can also apply for the annual government youth tour to Washington, D.C. Go to bluebonnet.coop/scholarships for applications.



Celebrate Veterans Day with us

THIS VETERANS DAY, November 11, we are united in gratitude for all who have selflessly served in the United States armed forces. At Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative, we are proud to employ 18 military veterans. We thank them for their service and honor their commitment to our nation's security and freedom. Bluebonnet employees who are military veterans are:

Sara Abrego
Jeffrey Bolding
Eric Cobb

Thomas Ellis
Izaac Estrada
Michael Guajardo
John Horton

Brandon Johnson
Keith Knobloch
Stanley Lillian
Matthew McGarr

Ray Meyer Jr.
George Miller
Harvey Schnell
Dior Smith

Jorge Varillas
Matthew Waltzer
Jeffrey Williams

We thank them for their service and the freedom it secures for us all.

Join us as we recognize and honor our veterans. Keep an eye on Bluebonnet's social media channels on Nov. 11 as we continue to pay tribute to the nation's military veterans.

GOVERNMENT-IN-ACTION YOUTH TOUR

Your high school junior or senior on a trip of a lifetime

Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative is offering an all-expenses-paid trip to Washington, D.C., in June 2024 for two students from the cooperative's service area. From museums and memorials to the U.S. Capitol and Supreme Court, every teen will have the chance to learn about the nation's past and present on the tour.

High school juniors or seniors can apply to attend the Government-in-Action Youth Tour, June 16-23, next summer, alongside more than 1,800 other students from across the country. In addition to the multiday trip to Washington, recipients will receive a \$1,000 scholarship.

For more information and the application, go to bluebonnet.coop/scholarships. Deadline for applications is Jan. 19, 2024.

OFFICE CLOSINGS

Bluebonnet offices will be closed Nov. 10 in observance of Veterans Day and Nov. 23-24 for the Thanksgiving holiday. If you have a power outage, you can report it by texting OUT to 85700 (to register, text BBOUTAGE to that number), on-line at bluebonnet.coop, via the MyBluebonnet mobile app or by calling 800-949-4414. You can pay bills any time online, on our mobile app or by calling 800-842-7708 (select option 2 when prompted).

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



and recreation grounds.

But before all that, Olmsted arrived in Nacogdoches in December 1853 and then meandered the state. He explored the Piney Woods, Hill Country, coastal plains, Southwest Texas and even some of northern Mexico.

When he arrived in Austin, population 3,000 back then, Olmsted found his hotel dirty and the food inedible. He was also dismayed that there was not one bookstore in town.

But he loved New Braunfels. The German communities and natural magnificence of the lands along the Guadalupe River were so impressive to Olmsted that he almost stayed. He was enchanted by the springtime wildflowers in the Hill Country, and he affirmed the German saying that “the sky is nearer in Texas.”

Riding out west to Eagle Pass, Olmsted killed an enormous 5½-foot rattlesnake. Olmsted worried in the daytime that his horse would get bitten, and at night he worried that a rattler would snuggle up with him in his bedroll. He also saw his first horny toads and so loved the little creatures that he shipped some back home to New York to be kept as pets.

In San Antonio he fell in love with the river. “We are so struck by its beauty,” he wrote. “It is of a rich blue and pure as crystal, flowing rapidly but noiselessly over pebbles and between reedy banks.”

But Texas was still the Wild West, and gunfights were common in the plaza. “As the actors are under ... excitement, their aim is not apt to be of the most careful and sure, consequently, it is, not seldom, the passers-by who suffer,” he wrote.

Maybe time travel is best done at the library after all. ■

Appraising the Texas Landscape

When Frederick Law Olmsted, designer of New York’s Central Park, first laid eyes on a new state

BY W. F. STRONG

SOME SAY TIME TRAVEL will be possible one day, and some say it’s the stuff of fairy tales.

For now, books are the next best thing. They can help us understand how people lived, thought and talked long ago, especially when they’re written for the express purpose of cataloging such things.

Frederick Law Olmsted did exactly that when he toured Texas in the 1850s.

With his brother, he traveled a couple thousand miles around Texas on horseback, chronicling his experiences for the *New-York Daily Times*, a predecessor of

The New York Times. His book, *A Journey Through Texas: Or a Saddle-Trip on the Southwestern Frontier*, is an absolute treasure—a priceless, time-sensitive ethnography that includes observations about and objections to slavery.

And it’s more than a snapshot. It’s an intricate mural of Texas around a decade after it became a state and as the U.S. headed toward civil war.

Many know Olmsted as the father of American landscape architecture. He designed New York’s Central Park, the U.S. Capitol grounds and some 100 parks

Holiday Desserts

Fruity flavors rise to the occasion during the season of sharing

BY VIANNEY RODRIGUEZ, FOOD EDITOR

This delicious cake makes for a sweet ending to a holiday meal. Cranberry sauce baked into a vanilla-scented batter balances tart and sweet flavors to please palates that like a bit of both.

Cranberry Cake

3 eggs
2 cups sugar
¾ cup (1½ sticks) unsalted butter,
room temperature
1½ teaspoons vanilla extract
2 tablespoons milk
1 teaspoon salt
2 cups flour
1 can whole berry cranberry sauce
(14 ounces)
¼ cup powdered sugar
1 cup cranberry jam, optional

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Liberally coat a 9-by-13-inch baking pan with non-stick cooking spray.
2. In a large bowl, beat eggs and sugar for 5 minutes, until eggs have increased in volume.
3. Add butter and vanilla and continue beating for an additional 2 minutes. Beat in milk and salt.
4. Stir in flour and then fold in cranberry sauce. Spoon into baking pan.
5. Bake 40 minutes or until a toothpick inserted comes out clean.
6. Let cool, slice and serve dusted with powdered sugar. Top with cranberry jam, if desired.

SERVES 12

TCP Follow Vianney Rodriguez while she cooks in Cocina Gris at sweetlifebake.com, where she features a recipe for Cranberry Punch.





Mini Cherry Muffins

ANN BASHARA
GRAYSON-COLLIN EC

Mini muffins sweetened with maraschino cherries are the tastiest little holiday bites. Bashara's mother made these tiny treats every year for Christmas parties, and they soon became a family tradition.

4 tablespoons (½ stick) butter, room temperature, plus 2 tablespoons for buttering muffin pans

½ cup brown sugar

½ cup sugar

2 eggs, separated

1 cup flour

¼ teaspoon baking powder

1 jar maraschino cherries (10 ounces), drained, juice reserved

½ cup finely chopped pecans

1 cup powdered sugar, for dusting muffins

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Grease mini muffin pans with butter.
2. In a medium bowl, cream butter and sugars until light and creamy. Slightly beat egg yolks and add to mixture along with flour, baking powder and 3 tablespoons of reserved cherry juice and blend.
3. Beat egg whites until light and fluffy. Gently fold into batter.
4. Sprinkle ¼ teaspoon of pecans into the bottom of each muffin tin. Spoon 1 teaspoon of batter over pecans, then place one cherry in center of batter. Top with an additional teaspoon of batter to cover cherries.
5. Bake 10–12 minutes.
6. Dust with powdered sugar and serve warm.

MAKES 3 DOZEN

[MORE RECIPES >](#)



\$500 WINNER

Mom's Pear Cake

GINGER CLARDY
BANDERA EC



A quick and easy Bundt cake is the perfect dessert for the holiday table or feeding a breakfast crowd. Clardy's creation is studded with pears, cinnamon and pecans and drizzled with a sweet glaze.

SERVES 12

CAKE

3 eggs

2 cups sugar

1 tablespoon vanilla extract

1 cup vegetable oil

3 cups flour

½ teaspoon salt

1 teaspoon baking soda

1 tablespoon ground cinnamon

1 cup chopped pecans

4 cups diced pears, plus ½ cup for garnish, if desired

GLAZE

2 tablespoons (¼ stick) butter

2 cups powdered sugar

2 tablespoons milk

1. CAKE Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Liberally coat a Bundt pan with nonstick cooking spray.
2. In a large bowl, whisk together eggs, sugar, vanilla and vegetable oil until smooth.
3. Stir in flour, salt, baking soda and cinnamon. Batter will be thick.
4. Fold in pecans and pears.
5. Spoon batter into Bundt pan. Bake 40–50 minutes or until a toothpick inserted comes out clean.
6. GLAZE Melt butter over low heat. Add powdered sugar and milk, whisk until smooth. Drizzle over warm cake. Garnish with diced pears, if desired.

\$500 Recipe Contest

PERFECT POTLUCK DUE NOVEMBER 10

Everybody looks forward to your contribution. Share your potluck specialty and you might win \$500. Submit your favorite online by November 10.





Holiday Bark

RITA PAUL
UNITED COOPERATIVE SERVICES

If you're searching for a last-minute holiday treat that everyone will love, Paul's holiday bark has you covered. This bark can easily be adapted to include a variety of nuts, dried fruits or candies. It's done in a little over an hour and makes for the ultimate edible gift.

16 ounces chopped white chocolate
1 cup dried cranberries

1 cup shelled, chopped pistachios
1 cup cashew halves

1. Line a baking sheet with parchment.
2. In a double boiler melt white chocolate, stirring occasionally until smooth.
3. Pour melted chocolate onto baking sheet. Using a knife or rubber spatula, spread into a 9-by-12-inch rectangle.
4. Sprinkle chocolate with cranberries, pistachios and cashews.
5. Refrigerate at least 1 hour. Break into pieces before serving.

MAKES ABOUT 1 DOZEN PIECES

TCP Want more dessert options heading into the holidays? We're happy to help with that. With more than 1,000 recipes from Co-op Country in our archives, you're sure to find the perfect sweet treat. You can find them all on our website.

Over the River and Through the Woods

BY VIANNEY RODRIGUEZ

Tips for traveling with holiday treats:

Use muffin tins for deviled eggs, cupcakes and cold appetizers.

Frost and decorate cupcakes and cakes after you arrive to avoid smudges.

Add ice to a cooler before adding a cold dessert.

Wrap the entire cookie tray in plastic wrap to keep it secure.

When stacking frosted cookies, place waxed paper between each layer.

Place four toothpicks into your frosted cake then gently drape foil over the cake to protect frosting.

Use canning jars to transport sauces, fudge, cocoa mix and spiced nuts.



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COURTESY CHET GARNER

Kid Stuff

Legend has it that outlaw Billy the Kid lived out his days in Hico

BY CHET GARNER

I REMEMBER sitting around the campfire telling stories about the Wild West. Specifically, the story of how infamous gunslinger Billy the Kid outsmarted everyone and lived to old age in Hico under a fake name. Was it true? I headed to the small town southwest of Fort Worth to find out.

There are a couple things I do every time I'm in Hico. First I eat a chicken-fried steak at Koffee Kup Family Restaurant, and then I buy pecan toffee from Wiseman House Chocolates. After that, I'm ready to investigate.

Hico's historic downtown is booming these days, and the Billy the Kid Museum is right in the middle of it. The museum archives all the stories of Hico's history and its infamous (alleged) resident.

I walked the displays and dug deep into the legend of Henry McCarty, aka William H. Bonney, aka Billy the Kid. It seems even his real name is up for debate. What is certain is that Billy was a notorious outlaw who stole cattle and gunned down many men across the Southwest.

Many say that lawman Pat Garrett shot and killed Billy in Fort Sumner, New Mexico, in 1881. There's even a grave in that town with his name on it. But some say Garrett granted Billy mercy on the condition that he promise to never kill again.

In the 1940s, a reporter with a hot tip tracked down a man named "Brushy Bill" Roberts in Hico. Brushy claimed he was indeed the outlaw, with the scars and stories to prove it. However, before he could receive an official pardon from the governor of New Mexico, he died of a heart attack. Many questions remain, but the folks in Hico believe it was Billy himself.

Take a trip to Hico, conduct your own investigation and decide for yourself. ■

ABOVE Billy the Kid, in sculpted form, maintains a presence in downtown Hico.

TCP See more of Chet's search into the Billy the Kid mystery 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.

NOVEMBER

10

The Colony [10-11] American Heroes: A Salute to Veterans & First Responders, (972) 625-1106, thecolonytx.gov

11

Brenham The Gatlin Brothers, (979) 337-7240, thebarnhillcenter.com

Fredericksburg St. Martin's Day Celebration, (830) 990-2044, visitfredericksburgtx.com

San Marcos Hangar Dance, (737) 285-0015, hangardance.org

16

Corsicana Holiday Tree Lighting, (903) 654-4850, visitcorsicana.com

Marble Falls Pastel Demo With Dina Gregory, (830) 693-7324, visitmarblefalls.org

18

Bluff Dale Front Porch Christmas Market, (817) 946-0141, facebook.com/thefrontporchbluffdale

Bowie Hanging of the Greens, (940) 872-6246, cityofbowietx.com

Burnet Sip n' Shop, (512) 766-0555, tornalochs.com

Fredericksburg Willow City Quilt Show and Live Auction, (830) 685-3376, willowcityfd.com

Henderson A Very Merry Market, (318) 780-0620, thechurchatlakecherokee.com

Kerrville Holiday Lighted Parade, (830) 257-7300, kerrvilletx.gov

19

Giddings Sip & Shop Christmas Market, (979) 542-3455, giddingstx.com

25

Stonewall Deck the Halls, (830) 644-2252, tpwd.texas.gov

Ingram [25-26, Dec. 1-3, 8-10, 15-16] A Christmas Carol, (830) 367-5121, hcaf.com

28

Columbus Christmas on the Colorado Lighted Parade, (979) 732-8385, columbus.texas.org

29

Tyler [29-Dec. 2] Mistletoe & Magic, (903) 595-5426, juniorleagueoftyler.org

DECEMBER

01

Bowie Sweet Gingerbread Sip and Stroll With Me, (940) 872-6246, cityofbowietx.com

Kerrville [1-2, 8-10, 15-17] One Christmas Eve at Evergreen Mall, (830) 896-9393, caillouxperformingarts.com

02

Lufkin Christmas in the Pines, (936) 633-0359, visitlufkin.com

Post Light Up Post, (806) 495-2811, postcitytexas.com

07

New Braunfels Christmas Market at Historic Old Town, (830) 629-2943, newbraunfelsconservation.org

Submit Your Event

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



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To art nouveau jewelers at the turn of the last century, nothing was more beautiful than the dragonfly. In the dragonfly's long body and outstretched wings, jewelers found the perfect setting for valuable stones. These jewelers' dragonfly designs have become timeless statements of style; a dragonfly pendant designed by French jeweler René Lalique recently sold at auction for \$226,000. Inspired by his stunning artistry, we've crafted our Dragonfly Nouvelle Collection, an elegant jewelry set for JUST \$29!

True artisanship in Austrian crystal and yellow gold. This necklace and earring set features gorgeous multicolored enamel paired with Austrian crystals and a yellow gold finish. Ask any jeweler and they'll tell you it takes true artisanship to properly blend the blues and purples found in this enamel. While art nouveau dragonflies are hard to come by, we're helping to repopulate their numbers with this artfully stylized depiction of some of nature's smallest wonders!

Buy the pendant, get the earrings FREE. If Stauer were a normal company, we'd sell the necklace and earrings for \$199 each, but because we engage the world's best artisans and cut out the middlemen to sell directly to you, we're offering the necklace for JUST \$29! Even better: If you buy within the next few days, we'll throw in the earrings for FREE! That's a nearly \$400 value for JUST \$29!

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- Earrings: 1 1/4" L, french wire



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I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete. I understand that anyone who furnishes false or misleading information on this form or who omits material or information requested on the form may be subject to criminal sanctions (including fines and imprisonment) and/or civil sanctions (including civil penalties).

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4 JOHN TELFORD
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Enter online at TexasCoopPower.com/contests.

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



A School Day Like No Other

60 years ago this month, time stopped for Texans wherever they were

BY KATHLEEN COX RICHARDSON
ILLUSTRATION BY
STEPHANIE SHAFER

ON NOVEMBER 21, 1963, the principal of Dolores School in South Austin told the teachers that President John F. Kennedy and his beautiful wife were coming to visit Austin. We were to take the children downtown from our Catholic school in the old yellow buses, stand along the main drag and wave to them as they drove through the city in an open car.

After lunch the next day, the children lined up in order in the parking lot, first grade up to eighth grade. They stood quietly, but I could sense a wave of controlled excitement rippling through us. This was an opportunity of a lifetime—seeing our hero, our president.

All eyes were on the mother superior, our principal, while we watched for her signal to begin boarding the buses. “Mother, mother!” the school secretary

called as she ran toward us. She whispered to the principal, handing her a transistor radio. Then Mother turned to us and said, “Gov. Connally has been shot. We’re going into the church to pray for him.”

Stunned, we turned around, still in orderly lines, first graders first.

We filed into the pews and knelt, hands clasped, heads bowed. Mother stood in front of us, holding the small radio close to her ear; we heard a muted voice but could not make out the words. Then she moved the radio away from her ear and said to us, her voice steady, “The president has been shot. Pray for the president.”

A universal gasp coursed through the church. The little children squirmed as they knelt. The older girls began crying, softly. The radio continued its secret words. Little candle flames trembled in their blood-red holders, poised for news.

Then we heard the worst: “The president is dead. Pray for our president, John F. Kennedy”—all of this delivered by a calm, tearless woman. Shocked, I mumbled some sort of prayer, tears running down my face.

In orderly lines, we returned to our classrooms. With fearful eyes, my second graders stared at me. They knew something bad had happened but weren’t sure what it was. A few of the girls began crying.

I swiped my face with a tissue and reassured them that I was OK. They returned to their seats. One of the boys raised his hand.

“Miss Cox.”

“Yes, Jimmy.”

“Does this mean we don’t get out of school?”

“Yes, that’s what it means.”

A hushed “aw” came in unison from out of their innocent mouths. What did they know? They were so young; they didn’t comprehend the impact of the horrible news.

Mother stopped by my classroom to tell me the children would be dismissed early.

Thank goodness. I didn’t have to continue the facade. ■

1920s Style for a 1920s Price

It was a warm summer afternoon and my wife and I were mingling with the best of them. The occasion was a 1920s-themed party, and everyone was dressed to the nines. Parked on the manse's circular driveway was a beautiful classic convertible. It was here that I got the idea for our new 1920s Retrograde Watch.

Never ones to miss an opportunity, we carefully steadied our glasses of bubbly and climbed into the car's long front seat. Among the many opulent features on display was a series of dashboard dials that accentuated the car's lavish aura. One of those dials inspired our 1920s Retrograde Watch, a genuinely unique timepiece that marries timeless style with modern technology.

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36	9.04	8.07	10.33	9.43	15	13	22	18	59	30.35	23.38	55.51	38.76	98	68	190	129
37	9.21	8.30	10.52	9.79	15	13	22	20	60	33.50	25.27	59.99	41.71	109	73	207	140
38	9.21	8.42	11.69	10.14	16	14	24	21	61	36.50	27.13	66.44	47.11	122	84	236	155
39	9.39	8.55	12.35	10.48	17	15	25	22	62	40.06	29.18	73.91	51.33	137	92	261	172
40	9.63	8.76	12.94	11.01	18	16	27	24	63	43.47	34.39	84.94	59.61	151	100	284	187
41	10.05	8.97	13.66	11.61	20	17	30	27	64	48.24	38.53	93.16	64.39	168	110	323	206
42	10.44	9.18	14.21	12.41	22	19	33	29	65	52.56	41.15	100.34	69.75	188	122	356	229
43	10.90	9.39	14.73	13.25	24	20	38	31	66	59.15	44.62	115.13	75.41	208	135	392	248
44	11.49	9.73	15.68	14.10	26	22	41	34	67	65.66	49.09	129.28	83.65	231	148	436	272
45	12.17	10.15	16.87	15.16	28	24	46	38	68	74.33	59.65	145.11	112.92	262	174	491	322
46	12.76	10.61	17.85	15.83	30	25	49	41	69	82.98	65.91	161.68	129.33	293	188	548	352
47	13.27	11.09	19.15	16.84	33	27	54	44	70	93.20	73.30	181.25	148.72	330	204	615	387
48	13.39	11.90	20.46	17.78	35	29	58	48	71	102.45	82.71	204.38	159.34	374	235	702	443
49	13.69	12.16	21.78	18.78	38	31	63	52	72	113.68	94.13	232.46	172.23	427	272	807	512
50	14.13	12.83	23.42	20.01	40	34	69	57	73	127.55	108.24	267.15	188.15	493	319	937	596
51	15.38	13.74	25.39	21.19	45	35	78	62	74	142.08	123.01	303.50	204.84	562	367	1074	685
52	16.37	14.89	28.03	22.77	49	38	87	67	75	159.25	140.48	346.45	224.56	644	424	1235	789
53	17.47	15.89	30.97	24.82	55	44	101	77	76	200.03	174.92	418.29	276.67	785	530	1489	982
54	18.69	16.73	34.01	26.22	60	46	112	83	77	249.54	216.74	505.52	339.94	956	658	1797	1215
55	20.64	17.51	37.15	27.87	67	50	122	90	78	310.70	268.40	613.27	418.11	1167	817	2179	1504
56	22.70	19.49	41.68	31.08	74	53	139	97	79	374.78	322.52	726.16	500.00	1389	983	2578	1807
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