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Making History

For more than 50 years, artists have been drawn to a quiet, tucked-away studio row in Edom.

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Students and community leaders collaborate to build tiny homes that help veterans become whole again.

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ON THE COVER

TJ Phillips at a tiny home at Langetree Retreat and Eco Center near Liberty.
Photo by Laura Jenkins

ABOVE

Joe Hopps works on a bird-house at his studio in Edom.
Photo by R.J. Hinkle



Brimming With Wisdom

NATIONAL HAT DAY is January 15, as if Texans ever needed another reason to don a cowboy hat.

Certainly, everyday wearers know this truism, shared with us by Alice M. Wolf, a member of Navasota Valley Electric Cooperative, as she “finished this sentence” back in November 2021:

“A Texan would never ... set his hat down brim down.”

Read more about hats in *Cowboy Hatters*, April 2016, on our website.

Class Is Not Dismissed

In honor of National Classy Day—January 17—*Texas Co-op Power* writers and editors note these esteemed Texans:

Luke Savage, a former Texas Christian University pitcher, started the nonprofit Blessed Feet, which has collected thousands of pairs of used baseball cleats for budding baseballers in the U.S. and Dominican Republic.

—Chris Burrows

Simone Biles, who owns the most gymnastics medals, exhibits poise in her willingness to speak out against sexual abuse and advocate for mental health awareness.

—Jéden Clark

The late singer **Selena Quintanilla Pérez**'s career was brief but impactful, redefining Latin music for a new generation and an expanded audience. Even at her young age, she was involved with charities and humanitarian causes, especially those benefiting Texas children.

—Alex Dal Santo

Mary Kay Ash said about her cosmetics company's beauty consultants: “Here's a woman who's never had any praise at all for anything she's ever done. Maybe the only applause she's ever had was when she graduated from high school.

She wants recognition. So we praise her for everything good that she does.” The company does good, too—supporting cancer research and survivors of violence.

—Jessica Ridge

Ima Hogg, born in the 19th century, turned her family's oil money to philanthropy, including the arts and mental health programs.

—Tom Widlowski

FINISH THIS SENTENCE

If I could turn back the clock ...

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 November prompt: **Why doesn't somebody invent ... ?**

A washing machine that dries the clothes, folds them and puts them up.

NANCY BECKER
CONCHO VALLEY EC
PAINT ROCK

A canoe-shaped hotdog bun to hold all the condiments and chili.

MIKE WEBER
UNITED COOPERATIVE SERVICES
GRANBURY

A key fob that could roll up the windows on your vehicle when it starts raining and you are inside at work.

LARENDA BRADSHAW
JASPER-NEWTON EC
JASPER

A smoke alarm that can be serviced at ground level or without a ladder.

FRANK M. WAGNON
FORT BELKNAP EC
SOUTHLAKE

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RECOMMENDED RECIPES

You'll need something special for National Pie Day, January 23. Pick a pie recipe from among the dozens on our website. It's as easy as (searching) "pie."

Too Much Latitude?

Look at a map too long and weird details emerge.

For example, Portland, Texas, is nearly equidistant from Portland, Maine (1,852 miles), and Portland, Oregon (1,845 miles).

And this: A giant triangle of these Portlands captures more than 30 other states.



A Passing Notion

AS DRIVERS faced gas shortages and long lines at the pump 50 years ago, President Richard M. Nixon signed an act January 2, 1974, lowering the national speed limit to 55 mph.

That went off the books in 1995, and today Texas boasts the highest speed limit in the country: 85 mph on a stretch of State Highway 130, a toll road between San Antonio and Austin.



JULIA ROBINSON

OCTOBER 2023 Still in the Saddle Again

“After reading about the senior rodeo, my husband and I went to an event. It was wonderful seeing performers from 40 to 80-plus still enjoying what they love to do.”

CARLANNE HICKMAN
TRI-COUNTY EC
HASLET

A Signature Moment

On the reading list for a Texas literature class at Tarleton State University was *The Time It Never Rained [It Still Reigns, October 2023]*. We were told there would be a guest speaker to discuss writing—none other than Elmer Kelton himself.

He was soft-spoken, generous, patient and happy to be with us. I walked away with fond memories and his signature in my own copy, which I still have to this day.

Cole Hooper
Pedernales EC
Wimberley

I don't recognize Elmer Kelton without his hat [*It Still Reigns, October 2023!*] Have read many of his books, including this gem. He had a way of capturing a time and place and bringing it to life through many characters. An excellent writer and storyteller.

ERNIE BATTLE
VIA FACEBOOK



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A Stunning Memory

I was an elementary student near Austin [*A School Day Like No Other, November 2023*]. I think most schools were getting out early so parents could take children to see the motorcade. My mother was coming to get me.

Someone came to our room and whispered something to our teacher. Mrs. Griffin put her head down on the desk and began to cry. When she looked up, she said, “President Kennedy has been shot, and he won’t be coming to Austin.” We were stunned.

When my mother came to pick me up, she was crying too. I will never forget that day.

Susie McCalla
Central Texas EC
Kerrville

Family Ties

Frederick Law Olmsted is an ancestor on my mother’s side [*Appraising the Texas Landscape, November 2023*]. I am from Connecticut and worked my entire career at Hartford Hospital. In nice weather we would often go for walks on its approximately 10-acre beautiful campus, which was designed by Olmsted.

Virginia W. Smith
Nueces EC
Corpus Christi

TCP WRITE TO US
letters@TexasCoopPower.com

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

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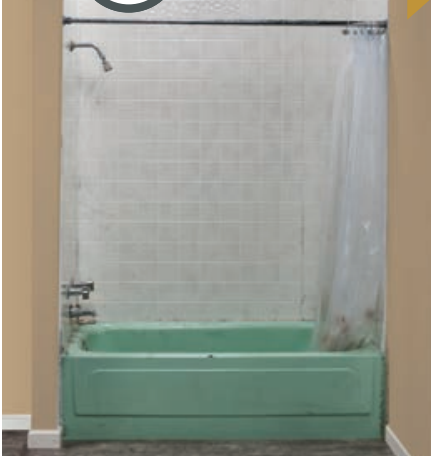
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Making History

For more than 50 years, artists have been drawn to this quiet, tucked-away studio row

BY PATTI PFEIFFER • PHOTOS BY R.J. HINKLE

THE SIGN SAYS Arbor Castle Birdhouses, but within lies an array of fanciful castles that seem perfectly inviting to gnomes and pixies if not birds. Crafted from hollow cedar logs; topped with tall, curvy conical roofs; and adorned in whimsical metal touches, these are more pieces of art than avian abodes.

Creator Joe Hopps has been carving birdhouses for 25 years and started quite simply.

“I saw a hollow log, had an idea, created one, entered it into a birdhouse competition in Oklahoma where I was living, and it won first place,” he explains.

Hopps recently added brushes to his repertoire, returning to another of his passions, acrylic abstract painting. “I began painting in the early ’70s and began again recently because of a saw accident, which nearly cut off several fingers.”

His canvases were showcased at the grand opening of a new art gallery, O3 Collective, just down the road from his shop in the small community of Edom, west of Tyler.



With a population of fewer than 400, what Edom (pronounced “E-dum”) lacks in size, it more than makes up for in gifted artists. From one-of-a-kind jewelry to high-end art and unique pottery, the small town’s main drag, FM 279, is a treasure trove of rare items and artisans eager to share their stories.

It all started a couple of doors down from Arbor Castle, at Potters Brown Collective. Once a grocery store, the wooden structure was for five decades the studio of Doug Brown, a California transplant who moved to Edom in 1970 and founded this artisan community.

A cluster of artists' studios continues Brown's vision. His widow, Beth Brown, a potter herself, lives next door to the studio today.

“Doug was a very humble man and wanted somewhere he and his friends could create and sell their goods and felt if he opened a place, others would follow,” Beth says. “Immedi-

ately upon seeing Edom, he knew this was where he wanted to set up shop, start an artists' community—and he wanted it to be a true community.”

Brown wasted no time turning his dream into reality—buying buildings, setting up his pottery studio and pitching his vision to artisan friends. And they did follow.

In 1972, Brown organized the first Edom Art Festival, which drew more than 3,000 attendees. Since then, every second weekend in October, a sprawling meadow behind studio row is transformed into a bustling venue. Crafters, musicians and festivalgoers from near and far gather to enjoy the sights, sounds, food and festivities of the two-day

OPPOSITE Beth Brown is the director of the Edom Art Festival. ABOVE Arbor Castle Birdhouses along the main drag.



Zeke Zewick, right, creates jewelry using uncommon materials, above. "Not all jewelry has to be gold, diamonds and sparkly," he says.



event that includes a wine-tasting garden featuring local vineyards, musicians and crafting for kids. The festival has grown in content and count, attracting some 15,000 visitors in 2023.

After Brown's death in 2020, his building was eventually sold, but it still bears his name and remains a pottery center that sells ceramics from local makers.

And the community is still going strong.

Stepping outside, my eyes were drawn to a jewelry store of a different sort: Zeke & Marty. Even the door handles are distinctive, custom-made from sika deer antlers from Japan and carved by the owner, Zeke Zewick.

I marveled at the array of custom jewelry of every material, size and sort—even dyed bone pieces inlaid with unique gems, dispelling the adage that diamonds are a girl's best friend.

Using woolly mammoth teeth from Siberia, Turkish agates, shells from the Sea of Cortez, antlers and bones, Zewick prides himself in creating one-of-a-kind pieces.

"Not all jewelry has to be gold, diamonds and sparkly," he says. "Different material provides for different thoughts for pieces. Oxide steel is what some throw away as trash,

but I like the contrast of it with sterling."

He especially likes working with bone, which is malleable and easy to grind and polish, dyeing it with alcohol inks. The materials are uncommon, and so are his pieces.

Zewick, one of the original Edom artists, has been creating since 1969, first with leather but spending the past half-century as a jeweler. He knew Brown and received one of his original invites.

"He knew I was looking for a place to move after graduating art school," Zewick says. "This place had trees and water, and being from Lubbock, I felt we were in heaven."

Prompted by a desire to "get out of the city and move back home to a simpler, less stressful way of life," Shanna Wiggins relocated here from Austin three years ago.



She used to own a succulents shop on FM 279, and like other residents, she was eager to share her story.

“Originally, the locals were hesitant, feeling hippies didn’t belong here,” she says, “but we all love each other, so it doesn’t matter.”

For the traveler looking for a slower slice of life, Edom has a couple of restaurants serving home-cooked meals. Sips offers hand-crafted coffees, sodas and other nonalcoholic drinks.

Edom is eccentric and inviting and a true “poke-n-plumb” place: By the time you poke your head out of the vehicle, you’re plumb outta town, which adds to its charm. It’s a place where strangers don’t exist. ■

ABOVE Whimsy is a dominant feature of Joe Hopps’ birdhouses. RIGHT A signpost helps visitors to the East Texas town find their way.

East of Edom

Other attractions along FM 279.

Green Goat Winery A cozy tasting room and covered patio overlook 7 acres of vines.

Blue Moon Gardens This 6-acre gardener’s paradise sells plants, tools and supplies.

Coltharp-Beall House The 175-year-old home has housed itinerant preachers and stagecoach travelers.



DREAMING

BIG

Students and community leaders collaborate to build tiny homes that help veterans become whole again





W

hat the heck are you doing?”

The sharp sound of his girlfriend’s voice jolted TJ Phillips awake. But the bigger shock came when he opened his eyes.

“I had my knee on her neck,” says Phillips, shaking his head. “And I was going through the motions of putting flex cuffs on her. She laughed it off after I explained that I’d been dreaming about being on active duty again. But I wasn’t laughing. I knew I needed help.”

Phillips, an Army sergeant who served 1991–99 and was honorably discharged, says he made an appointment with Veterans Affairs to address his post-traumatic stress disorder. But he felt like he was too young to be on all the medications they prescribed.

Instead, as many do, he turned to alcohol. And he eventually decided to live in his truck so he could save money. Ten years and five DWIs later, he was in the Montgomery County jail, awaiting a trial that was certain to yield an extended prison sentence, when he got the news that his arresting officer had suddenly died. He was free to go.

“And that’s when Miss Barbara took me in,” he says after an emotional pause. “Now I’m safe. I’m sober. And everything I need to get healthy again is right here.”

OPPOSITE Langetree Retreat and Eco Center’s community of tiny homes and assistance has helped change TJ Phillips’ life. “Everything I need to get healthy again is right here.” ABOVE Instructor James Gaylord and his Humble students in front of a tiny home they built.

Barbara Lange gave Phillips, 54, the key to a tiny home at the Langetree Retreat and Eco Center near Liberty, between Houston and Beaumont. But she’ll be the first to tell you that she’s only one of many who are making Phillips’ recovery possible.

“Somehow we all got the memo independently of one another,” Lange says. “And then somehow we all found each other. What are the odds?”

There was no actual memo, of course. But indeed, several people in the same corner of Texas had a similar idea around the same time.

At the outset, none of them knew each other—or even about each other. They were simply focused on the same goal: to support veterans by providing them with tiny homes. Their collaboration has no name. There’s no one in charge. But it has yielded something much greater than the sum of its parts.

Allen Segura, who recently retired as assistant principal and director of career and technology education for Summer Creek High School, says the idea to integrate building tiny homes into the Humble school district’s curriculum came from a bout of insomnia in 2018.

“Late one night I was scrolling through Facebook and saw some people in St. Louis who were building tiny homes for homeless veterans,” Segura remembers. “And the simple thought came: ‘I wonder if our students could do that?’”

He bounced the idea off James Gaylord and Missi Taylor, who teach CTE classes in construction, architecture and design at high schools in Humble, a Houston suburb whose name is pronounced “Umble.” They were in.

“We had been teaching these classes for years, but it was mostly theoretical,” Segura says. “Actually building houses would not only let them put what they’re learning into practice, it would also help them understand the importance of serving others.”

Under the supervision of the three educators, the students developed a presentation and pitched it to Superintendent Elizabeth Fagen, who took it to the school board for approval. Thus, in 2018, Humble ISD’s Big Heroes, Tiny Homes program was born.

Meanwhile, about 40 minutes east of Humble, Lange, a retired social worker, was teaching leadership and environmental sustainability at the retreat center she and her husband built in 2004.

Their doors have always been open to people in crisis. They housed numerous people after Hurricane Katrina’s devastation in 2005. They took in referrals from Tri-County Behavioral Healthcare, a community-based nonprofit serving those living with mental illness and intellectual disabilities. More recently, Lange had begun working with



Kingwood Park High School students work on a tiny home.

less veterans, but they didn't have a sustainable way to source the materials," Carroll says. "By partnering them with Lowe's, we were able to lengthen their runway.

"People have been telling me for years that they wanted to build tiny homes for homeless veterans, but if they're transitional, there has to be some sort of infrastructure to support those living in them. Barbara supplied that missing piece."

Lange's infrastructure is deeply rooted in community. There are currently 10 tiny homes on her property and 27 agencies providing residents with such services as job coaching, counseling, legal aid and palliative care.

But creating a communal environment is one of her highest priorities. When she conveyed that to the people at OFH—who are helping her clear and prepare her land to receive 20 more houses over the next five to seven years—they recommended putting them in pods of six, which will serve as micro communities.

"We now know from a scientific point of view that loneliness can be as harmful to the body as cigarette smoking," Lange says. "When you're in a community of people who've been where you've been, when you're living with others who are going through what you're going through, you're less likely to feel like a freak.

"It advances the healing process."

Humble ISD is expanding Big Heroes, Tiny Homes to five high schools. The program offers students a hands-on building experience with mentoring by professionals—architects, plumbers, electricians, general contractors—giving the teens invaluable work experience and the opportunity to explore various career paths.

Due to its resounding success, other school districts and universities have reached out to Humble ISD to find out how the project works.

"Our instructors are willing to talk to your instructors," Segura says. "We are happy to connect your principals to our principals, your superintendent to our superintendent. Let us tell you how we did this."

Lange estimates that most residents will transition into permanent housing within two years. Phillips, who is approaching that milestone, may stay longer because he's become a strong leader in the community. Though he now has a job as a heating and air conditioning tech, he serves as a liaison and an advocate for the other veterans. He also assists with some of the property's maintenance and administrative needs.

"Veterans aren't homeless because they're not gifted, intelligent or experienced," Lange says. "They are broken. When you connect them with the resources they need and provide a safe place to heal, many will find their way back to the person they were before the trauma. All veterans deserve that chance." ■

several Veterans of Foreign Wars chapters in an effort to address the crisis of homelessness among veterans.

"I had already started converting a shipping container into a tiny home for one of the veterans I was assisting when I came across a newspaper article about Missi," Lange remembers. "A VFW volunteer named Mark Bowen said, 'Barbara, why don't you go to Kingwood Park and tell those people that they can give us the houses?'"

Never one to leave a stone unturned, Lange went to visit the teachers in Humble. Once they saw her vast experience and her devotion to veterans, the district agreed to donate their tiny homes to Lange's effort.

Since 2005, Operation Finally Home has been improving and constructing mortgage-free homes for wounded veterans, first responders and their families. But it wasn't until spring 2020 that Lee Kirgan, vice president of project management for OFH, learned about Humble ISD's big idea and suggested to President Rusty Carroll that they consider getting involved.

Six months later, Carroll surprised Segura with the news that OFH, based in New Braunfels, had secured a grant from big-box retailer Lowe's, which would provide all the building materials for Big Heroes, Tiny Homes for the foreseeable future.

"Humble ISD had a vision to build tiny homes for home-



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A close-up photograph of a dog's head and front paws resting on a textured, light-colored rug. The dog has black, white, and tan fur. To the right, a white space heater with a glowing orange mesh is visible, casting a warm light on the dog and the rug. The background is dark, making the dog and the heater stand out.

Be Cool With Space Heaters

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Story by Pam LeBlanc • Photos by Laura Skelding

IF A SNOT-SLINGING, 1,500-pound hunk of muscle and rage hurtled across an arena in your direction, would you run toward it or beat a hasty escape?

Your answer could determine whether you'd make a good bullfighter, the term now used in the U.S. and Canada to describe the rodeo athletes who distract bulls and protect riders during bull-riding competitions.

They used to be called rodeo clowns, but there's not much that's funny about working under such dangerous circumstances.

"The Secret Service protects the president. We're there to take the bullet instead of the cowboy," said Wesley McManus, a former bullfighter who now owns Diamond Cross Rodeo Company, a Lexington-based contractor that provides bucking horses for rodeos across Texas. "In the moment, you just go in there and step in between the cowboy and the bull."

McManus, 50, spent 20 years tangling with the angry Volkswagen Beetle-sized beasts.

"It's like jumping out of a plane," he said. "A lot of people don't see the reason for it. But there's that rush, that feeling — there's nothing like it. It starts a fire inside you, and then it turns into a passion for the sport of rodeo and the whole Western way of life."

Learning the ropes of bullfighting

McManus grew up in Lexington in Lee County and did some bull riding in high school. He eventually decided he was better at helping cowboys get away from snorting bulls than trying to ride

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“The Secret Service protects the president. We’re there to take the bullet instead of the cowboy.”

— **WESLEY McMANUS,**

former rodeo bullfighter
and owner of Diamond Cross Rodeo Company

A rider gets a secure grip before the bull he’s atop bolts out of a chute during the rodeo at the Washington County Fair in Brenham in September.

Below, Dylan McManus, left, and Dakotah Teague work together to protect a bull rider who has just been bucked off at the Lexington Homecoming Rodeo last spring.





Dylan McManus plays to the crowd, above, at the Lee County Sheriff's Posse Rodeo Arena in Giddings, above. Below right, McManus is fast and focused while dodging an angry bull during the event last spring.

Continued from page 18

them. Plus, the paycheck was steadier: Bullfighters typically earn between \$200 and \$2,000 per show, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. He started learning when he was just 18.

"I told my mom and dad when I was 5 that I wanted to go to rodeo clown school. They thought it was cute until 12 years later when I was still saying it," McManus says.

Some who do the job still wear greasepaint and bright clothes, but many don't. Instead, they wear technical jerseys and often belong to the International Professional Rodeo Association.

Skills essential to the job are "reading cattle and anticipating where the rider is going to come off," McManus said.

McManus got his start as a bullfighter at a small Sunday afternoon rodeo in Lexington and eventually worked his way into bigger gigs. Mark Goodson, now chairman of the Lee County Sheriff's Posse Rodeo, gave McManus his first big bullfighting job at a Youth Rodeo Association event at the arena in Giddings.

"You see the 'want to' in guys like Wesley," Goodson said. "He was a natural."

Some people enroll in bullfighting training classes, such as those offered around the country by famed bullfighter Cody Webster, who this year offered classes in San Antonio, Fort Worth, Cleburne and Arlington. Webster is considered one of the greatest bullfighters of this generation. Clinics are also offered in New Caney, near Houston. Others just practice skills on their own or at places like





At left, a rider gets ready in the chute during the rodeo at the Washington County Fair.



Above, bullfighters Dylan McManus, left, and Dakotah Teague sidestep a bull that has just bucked off its rider, who moved to safety at the Elgin Rodeo last July.

At left, Dylan McManus and his father, Wesley McManus, at the Lexington Homecoming Rodeo last year. Dylan is following in his father's footsteps as a bullfighter. Wesley eventually moved to a less risky job, providing livestock for rodeos.



Bad Dog Rodeo in Belton, which offers a practice pen for up-and-coming bullfighters.

McManus is mostly self-taught.

He started by sorting calves and paying attention to which hoof an animal leads with while running. That "lead" telegraphs which direction the bull is likely to pivot, tipping off bullfighters which direction to move.

"A lot of it is natural reaction," McManus said. "You can't teach anybody how to be cattle savvy, and you can't teach heart, but you can sharpen skills."

Typically, two or three bullfighters and one barrel man (the athlete who hops into a padded barrel at which an angry bull charges) position themselves on either side of the bull when it bursts out of the chute and into the arena.

The rider has to stay on the bull for at least 8 seconds to earn points. They sometimes get a hand caught in the rope they hold to stay in the saddle. When that happens, the bullfighter works the rider's hand loose, then draws the animal away from the rider when

“ My dad was really good when he did it and I looked up to him and his buddies as role models. ... I guess it's always been in my heart to do it.

— DYLAN McMANUS,

Rodeo bullfighter and son of Wesley McManus

Continued on page 20B



Bullfighters and other rodeo pros are popular with the crowds. After the Elgin Rodeo, Dakota Teague, left, autographed photos of himself for fans, including Hunter Brown, 5, with his mother, Brittney Brown. Also signing autographs at the table are rodeo entertainer Chase Nolen, in traditional clown makeup, and steer wrestler Terry Meadows, in the black shirt.



Continued from page 20A

he finally lands on the ground.

"When that rider gets hung up, they're depending on you to get them out of a jam," said Goodson, the rodeo chairman. "You're going to get hit and hurt. It's a matter of how bad."

And it can get bad.

"When you get run over, you've got four feet coming at you. You've got to worry about getting back up, because he's probably coming back for you," McManus said.

McManus recites a list of injuries he has suffered during his career: a blown-out knee, broken ankle, cracked ribs, dislocated fingers and plenty of stitches.

One memorable day, a rampaging bull stepped on his face and broke his teeth. After that, he said he prayed: "If I'm not supposed to do this, take the want away." But the desire to be a bullfighter didn't fade. "When I came back, I was on fire," he said.

Eventually McManus retired, shifting his focus to the business of providing livestock to rodeos.

Like father, like son

A generation later, McManus' son is following in his father's footsteps. Like his dad, Dylan McManus knew early on he wanted to become a bullfighter.

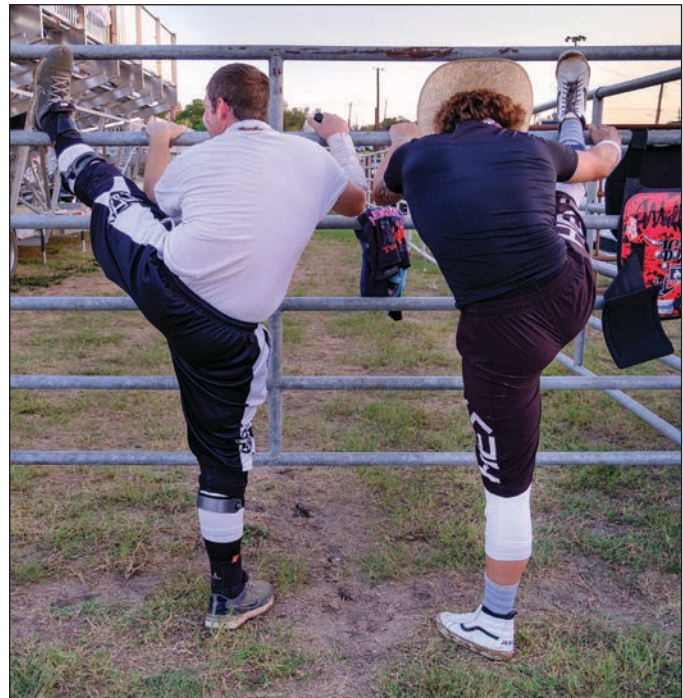
"We tried to keep him away from it as long as we could," Wesley McManus said.

The fear he now feels as a parent watching his son in the ring far exceeds the fear he endured in the arena while facing a bull, he said.

"I love it when young guys come in, but you've got to be really serious," Wesley McManus said. "You can get hurt. We've lost a few. If you're out here for the girls, you're in it for the wrong reason."

Dylan, 18, started bullfighting almost three years ago.

"My dad was really good when he did it and I looked up to him and his buddies as role models," Dylan said. "I guess it's always been in my heart to do it."



Bullfighters Derick White, left, and Blake Miller warm up before they hit the rodeo arena at the Washington County Fair in Brenham.

He started at age 9, working with his father to sort calves in pens at his home. "We'd go to the sale barn and buy something little that was pretty mean," he said. "I would learn the fundamentals with something that wasn't big enough to hurt me too bad."

That evolved into bullfighting at small events, which led to working at larger events like the Cowboys Professional Rodeo Association



At left, bullfighters Dylan McManus, far left, and Dakotah Teague work in tandem to keep a rider safe during the Elgin Rodeo.

A high-flying bull tries to shake its determined rider at the Elgin Rodeo, below. Participating in rodeos 'starts a fire inside you, and then it turns into a passion for the sport of rodeo and the whole Western way of life,' said Wesley McManus, who spent 20 years as a bullfighter.



Father and son during the national anthem at the Lexington Homecoming Rodeo: Dylan McManus, above left, hopes to follow in the footsteps of his dad, Wesley McManus, above right. Dylan started learning the ropes as a child, sorting calves in pens at home.



Finals in Angleton, near the Texas Gulf Coast, and the San Antonio High School scholarship finals at the San Antonio Stock Show & Rodeo.

Now Dylan wants to make a career of it. "There's nothing like making a good (cowboy) save and they get up and shake your hand and they say thank you," he said. "There's nothing like knowing you've got somebody's back." The hard part is pushing fear aside. "You've got to take control over your mind and not be afraid of what's going to happen," he said. "It's really hard to make yourself go up to a big animal that's trying to hurt you."

When done right, though, it's a rush like no other. "You've got to have three (extra) sets of eyes. You've got to know

Continued on page 20D

Want to watch the bullfighters?

Catch all major rodeo action across the Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative service area in 2024.

RODEO AUSTIN

March 8-23
Rodeo Austin Fairgrounds, 9100 Decker Lake Road, Austin
rodeoaustin.com
email: info@RodeoAustin.com

FAYETTE COUNTY SHERIFF'S POSSE RAM RODEO

April 19-20
Fayette County Sheriff's Posse Arena, 2141 Blankenburg Lane, La Grange
Fayette County Sheriff's Posse Facebook page
email: fcaspowell@verizon.net

LEE COUNTY SHERIFF'S POSSE RODEO

April 18-20
Lee County Sheriff's Posse Arena, 2591 U.S. 290, Giddings
lcspgiddings.com
email: lcspgiddings@gmail.com

CHISHOLM TRAIL ROUNDUP RODEO

June 12-15
Lockhart City Park, 504 E. City Park Road, Lockhart
lockhartchamber.com/chisholm-trail-roundup
email: staff@lockhartchamber.com

BASTROP HOMECOMING & RODEO

July 30-August 3
Mayfest Hill Park, 25 American Legion Drive, Bastrop
bastrophomecomingrodeo.org
email: generalinfo.bhr@gmail.com

WASHINGTON COUNTY FAIR RODEO

Sept. 10-23
Washington County Fairgrounds, 1305 E. Blue Bell Road, Brenham
washingtoncofair.com
email: dean@washingtoncofair.com

COLORADO COUNTY FAIR & RODEO

Sept. 12-14
Colorado County Fairgrounds, 1146 Crossroads Blvd., Columbus
coloradocountyfair.org
email: info@coloradocountyfair.org

AUSTIN COUNTY FAIR & RODEO

Oct. 10-12
Austin County Fairgrounds, 1076 E. Hill St., Bellville
austincountyfair.com/prca-rodeo
email: ACfair@austincountyfair.com

GUADALUPE COUNTY FAIR & RODEO

Oct. 10-13
Guadalupe County Fairgrounds, 728 Midway, Seguin
gcfair.org
email: office@gcfair.org

ROCKDALE FAIR & RODEO

Oct. 18-20
Fair Park, 200 Walnut St., Rockdale
rockdalefairassociation.com; Rockdale Fair & Rodeo Facebook page and rockdaletx.gov/343/Rockdale-Fair-Rodeo
email: rdalefair@gmail.com

WILLIAMSON COUNTY FAIR AND RODEO

Oct. 23-26
Williamson County Expo Center, 5350 Bill Pickett Trail, Taylor
wilcofair.com/events
email: info@wilcofair.com



Protecting riders from angry bulls is exhausting work. Dylan McManus takes a break after a long night of work in the arena.

Continued from page 20C

when (the cowboy's) going to fall, where the bull's going to go, where your partner's going to go and where you're going to go," he says. "That's a lot of timing and calculation, and it happens so fast. It's basically fight or flight."

That's why a good partner matters, and for Dylan McManus, that person is Dakotah Teague. The two team up often, and worked the Cowboys Professional Rodeo Association Finals this summer, where both bullfighters got up close with thrashing animals. McManus had to grab a bull's head to distract it from a bullrider, and Teague took a couple of hits. He described the experience as similar to what it might feel like standing in front of a car going 15 mph.

"It helps a lot more when you trust someone on the other side of the bull to save not only the bull rider, but yourself if you get down. It's a brotherhood, that's what it is," said Teague, 31, who started bullfighting when he was in high school.

Teague honed his skills at a bullfighting clinic with well-known bullfighter Cody Webster, then started working rodeos a decade ago.

Because injuries are common, the bullfighters wear vests plated with thick plastic that can make an errant hoof slide off and help distribute the impact of a kick over a wider area. They also wear knee and ankle braces. Dylan McManus doesn't wear a helmet — "Just my old black felt cowboy hat" — but he does lace up basketball shoes before he heads to the arena.

"It's hard to run in boots," he said.

The camaraderie and connection among athletes keeps them coming back. It's a family, they say.

"Oh, we love the sport," Teague said. "We love what it's all about and we love protecting cowboys. We always say we want the cowboys to go home safe to their families before we do." ■



Top: Bluebonnet employee Leta Dell Witte at work on member accounts in 1958.

Above: Member service representative Celina Flores works with member Marcos Cobos in Manor. Cobos has been a member for about five years.

THAT was then

Since 1939, the employees of Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative have worked to serve cooperative members. In the early days, member account information was processed on cumbersome business equipment. Members spoke to representatives on operator-assisted phone calls or visited Bluebonnet's headquarters, then in Giddings.

THIS is now

Today, Bluebonnet members can choose to take care of business by computer, mobile app or on our automated phone system. The cooperative's member service representatives are here for you, ready to answer questions about billing, payments or other Bluebonnet business, in person at our five member service centers or by phone.



This year, Bluebonnet celebrates its 85th anniversary by looking back at our rich history of providing Bluebonnet members with safe, reliable and affordable electric service, and showcasing our ongoing, always-evolving commitment to top-quality member service.

POWERING
PROGRESS

SINCE 1939

SPEND A DAY IN Chappell Hill

By Camille Wheeler

FROM ITS LONE spotlight where U.S. 290 meets FM 1155, Chappell Hill opens like a history book. The two-lane road serves as both Main Street and a stretch of the Texas Independence Trail reaching into the Washington County countryside. On this general path, Stephen F. Austin established his first colony in 1821. A small community with an estimated population of 1,000, Chappell Hill has numerous homes and businesses with national and state historic designations. The unincorporated town traces its beginnings to a time when riverboats on the Brazos River carried cotton to market. In 1838, Tennessee native Robert Wooding Chappell arrived in the area, building a cotton plantation on an original piece of Austin's colony. Chappell's granddaughter, Mary Hargrove Haller, bought 100 acres there in 1847, and two years later began selling lots to Chappell Hill's first residents. Today, the community welcomes thousands of visitors annually for its Bluebonnet and Scarecrow festivals, and Independence Day Parade. With its backdrop of rolling hills and the alluring historic Main Street area, Chappell Hill is a popular weekend getaway. After soaking up the town's history, shopping and dining, head 20 miles northeast on FM 1155 to the birthplace of the Republic of Texas in Washington.

WHAT TO DO

Visit the **Chappell Hill Historical Society Museum**, 9220 Poplar St., from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Wednesday-Saturday. Built in 1927 as the Chappell Hill Public School, the building is home to the nation's largest collection of paintings by renowned Black folk artist Johnnie Swearingen. Call 979-836-6033 to take a society-sponsored tour of the Main Street Historic District — where some restored structures date to the mid-to-late 1800s. Other stops on the tour include historical society-preserved sites **Providence Baptist Church**, built in 1873; the **Circulating Library**, with its original book collection dating to the 1850s; and the **Rock Store**, originally a general store built in 1869 from locally quarried sandstone and hand-hewn timbers. Wall tapestries there depict the town's history. Another historic stop is **Chappell Hill Bank**, 5060 Main St., circa 1897; the original teller stations and vault are still in use; 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Monday-Thursday, 8:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Friday, 8:30 a.m.-noon Saturday. Some renovations are underway at the 293-acre **Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historic Site**, where 59 delegates signed the Texas Declaration of Independence in 1836. The Star of the Republic Museum and the Visitor Center are scheduled to reopen in 2025, but visitors can stroll the rest of the complex to see how settlers of that era lived. 23400 Park Road 12, Washington. Get more information at www.thc.texas.gov/historic-sites (scroll to the bottom of the page and click on Washington-on-the-Brazos.)

Chappell Hill Lavender Farm, 8 miles north of town, offers events,

Continued on next page



Thomas Manthei demonstrates the art of steel nail-making, using a reproduction of a portable forge with bellows, during a Living History Saturday event at the Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historic Site. The exhibitions, usually the third weekend of the month, document Texas pioneer life from 1835 to 1846.



The leather goods are all made by hand at Chupacabra Leather Co. on Main Street, where founders and owners Steve Moreland and Stefan Akers produce specialty items such as gun belts and holsters.

Below, a replica of a 1950 classroom is among the exhibits in what was the Chappell Hill Public School, built in 1927. Today, the building is the Chappell Hill Historical Society Museum, the jewel of the city's historic district.



At wine bistro Grapevine on Main, employees retrieve bottles behind the bar by climbing a wooden ladder made in the late 1800s. Camille Wheeler photos

Deadline soon!

Continued from previous page

classes and a gift shop; check chappellhilllavender.com for information, blooming season updates, plant availability and days/hours of operation; 2250 Dillard Road, Brenham; 979-251-8114.

GRAB A BITE

Dining options ranked in Tripadvisor's top restaurants are:

Bever's Kitchen & Gifts, 5162 Main St., popular for its chicken-fried steak and rich assortment of pies; 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Tuesday-Thursday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Friday-Saturday, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Sunday.

Chappell Hill Bakery & Deli, 8900 U.S. 290 E., has its own butcher shop and serves up barbecue and pastries; 6 a.m.-8 p.m. Sunday-Thursday, 6 a.m.-9 p.m. Friday-Saturday.

Chappell Hill Sausage Company, 4255 Sausage Lane, makes its own smokehouse meats; restaurant open 8 a.m.-4 p.m. Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-3 p.m. Saturday; retail shop open 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturday.

While in town, you can sample the 59 Delegates wine, plus other handcrafted selections, at **Texas Star Winery**, 10587 Old Chappell Hill Road, 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Friday-Saturday, noon-5 p.m. Sunday. Also get a glass at the **Grapevine on Main** wine bistro, 5120 Main St., open daily, live music Friday and Saturday evenings; call 979-777-3112 for lunch and dinner hours.

STOP AND SHOP

The Brazos Star, 5101 Main St. Handmade items galore, vintage kitchenware and homemade pickles — ask owner Mary Louise Young about her professional bowling career, too, 10 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Saturday-Sunday.

Bluebonnet House & Garden Center, 5095 Main St. Native and tropical plants, collectibles, locally made gifts and more, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Wednesday-Sunday.

Chupacabra Leather Co., 5088 Main St. Gun holsters, knife scabbards and belts are made in the shop, 1-5 p.m. Tuesday-Friday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday, 1-4 p.m. Sunday.

Cotton Pickin's Boutique & Market, 5145 Main St. Women's linen clothing, home decor, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Wednesday-Saturday, noon-4 p.m. Sunday.

Other shops worth a stop: **Kippers Kountry Store**, 5084 Main St., noon-4 p.m. Thursday and Sunday, noon-5 p.m. Friday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday, and **DLS Interiors**, 5075 Main St., 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Wednesday-Saturday.

A TIP FROM LOCALS

Relax with friends at **Carol's Ice House**, 5090 Main St., where owner Carol Salah is always behind the bar; noon-10 p.m. Wednesday-Saturday, noon-5 p.m. Sunday.

This is part of an ongoing series featuring communities in the Bluebonnet region.

HIGH SCHOOL JUNIORS & SENIORS

See history. Make history.

The Government-in-Action Youth Tour includes a multiday, all-expenses paid trip to Washington, D.C., and a \$1,000 scholarship.

Application deadline: **Jan. 19, 2024**

Tour dates: **June 16-23, 2024**



For more information, go to bluebonnet.coop/scholarships

PREPARE

at home for

EXTREME

WINTER WEATHER

EVERYONE KNOWS about Texas' unpredictable winter weather. Ice, winds and flooding all have the potential to strand you at home, possibly without power. Preparedness is essential for ensuring your safety and peace of mind during the coldest months.

■ **Make a family communications plan.** You may not all be together, so come up with a plan for how you'll stay in touch, how you will get back together and what you'll do in case of an emergency. Do not rely on cellphones alone — their networks could go down.

■ **Download smartphone apps and bookmark websites.**

- ✓ **Federal Emergency Management Agency, [fema.gov](https://www.fema.gov), and American Red Cross, [redcross.org](https://www.redcross.org):** Emergency notifications and information about shelter, first aid, recovery assistance
- ✓ **National Weather Service, [weather.gov/ewx](https://www.weather.gov/ewx):** Regional forecasts. and helpful safety links.
- ✓ **Weather news and apps:** Local news station weather apps, the Weather Channel, AccuWeather and WeatherBug
- ✓ **Texas Department of Emergency Management, [tdem.texas.gov](https://www.tdem.texas.gov):** Useful information, eight regional maps
- ✓ **Drivetexas.org:** Road closure information

■ **Get information from Bluebonnet.** At bluebonnet.coop/winter-tips, get winter weather safety and energy-saving tips; go to bluebonnet.coop/storms for a guide to storm and outage preparation. Those pages have links to other resources, including how to sign up for outage text alerts, report outages, view our outage map and get to our social media pages.

■ **Get a battery-powered emergency weather radio** to receive broadcast alerts and warnings directly from the National Weather Service. One top-rated consumer review website recommends:

- ✓ Midland ER310 (\$60-\$70 from Amazon, Best Buy)
- ✓ Midland ER210 (about \$50)
- ✓ RunningSnail MD-090P (\$36)
- ✓ Eton Sidekick (\$100)
- ✓ Midland WR400 (\$70).

■ **Maintain a three-day supply of nonperishable foods and drinking water.** Consider having a way to heat water that does not require electricity. Camping gear can be a solution for cooking during power outage emergencies. Some preparedness guides suggest a seven-day or more supply of water, planning for 1 gallon per person, per day.

■ **Clear rain gutters, repair roof leaks and cut away tree branches** that could fall on your home in high winds.

■ **Insulate pipes and allow indoor faucets to drip during below-freezing temperatures** to avoid damage to pipes. Locate your home's water valve and learn how to shut it off, just in case a pipe bursts. Protect in-ground irrigation systems as well.

■ **Keep fire extinguishers handy, especially if you're using alternate heating sources,** and make sure everyone in your house knows how to use them. If you plan to use a portable generator, follow our safety tips at bluebonnet.coop/stay-safe-when-using-generator.

■ **Add to your winter weather kit:**

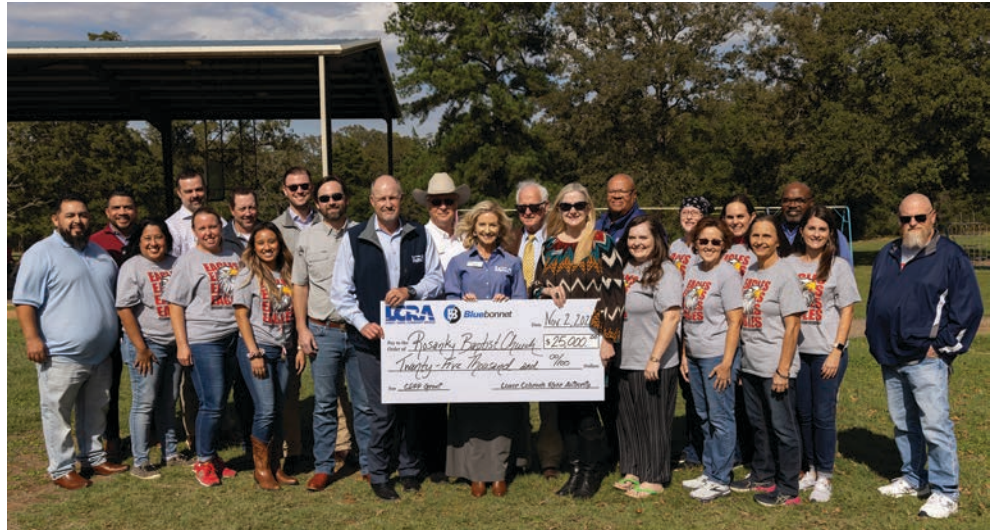
- ✓ Blankets
- ✓ Extra warm clothes
- ✓ First-aid kit
- ✓ Portable lights and extra batteries
- ✓ In your vehicle: sleeping bags, booster cables, sand or kitty litter for tire traction.

■ **Bring pets and companion animals inside during very cold weather.** Move other animals or livestock to sheltered areas with drinking water that is not frozen.



Grants support community groups' playscape, center improvements

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 is one of LCRA's wholesale electric customers and is proud to partner with LCRA to support its members and communities. Applications for the upcoming round of grants will be accepted through Jan. 31. The next round of applications will be accepted in July of this year. Get more information about this program and a link to an application, when it is available, at lcra.org/cdpp.



ABOVE, RIGHT: A \$25,000 grant from Bluebonnet and the LCRA will help Rosanky Christian Academy improve its outdoor community playscape and basketball court with a new shade, lighting and other upgrades. The grant, awarded to Rosanky Baptist Church, along with nearly \$8,500 in matching funds, will pay for upgrades at the school grounds. Pictured, from left, are J.R. Regalado, Rosanky Christian Academy principal; Josh Coy, Bluebonnet Bastrop-area community representative; Elaine Fawcett, Rosanky Christian Academy teacher; Wesley Brinkmeyer, Bluebonnet manager of community and development services; Rhonda Lock, Rosanky Christian Academy teacher; Matt Arthur, LCRA board member; Haley Muniz, Rosanky Christian Academy teacher; Fisher Reynolds, LCRA chief of staff; Stan Gerdes, District 17 State Representative; Phil Wilson, LCRA general manager; Mike Allen, LCRA board member; Meg Voelter, LCRA board member; Bobby Lewis, LCRA board member; Debbi Goertz, Bluebonnet Board member; Roderick Emanuel, Bluebonnet Board vice president/vice chairman; Samantha Medina, Rosanky Christian Academy marketing and fundraising chair; Nicole Fondulis, Rosanky Christian Academy teacher's aide; Jeanette Cowan, Rosanky Christian Academy assistant principal and teacher; Tori Rizk, Rosanky Christian Academy teacher's aide; Annelisa Briggs, Rosanky Christian Academy physical education instructor; Rick Arnic, LCRA regional representative; Sarah Voigt, Rosanky Christian Academy director of enrollment and records; and Daniel Bellamy, Rosanky Christian Academy teacher.



ABOVE: A \$24,238 grant from Bluebonnet and the LCRA will help Red Rock Community Center get two new air-conditioning units and other needed improvements. The grant and \$14,150 in matching funds from the community center will cover the costs to replace the aging units, refinish the building's floors and paint its exterior. Pictured, in the front row, from left, are Melodie Dobie and Betty Foreman, Red Rock Community Center board members; Mike Allen, LCRA board member; Meg Voelter, LCRA board member; Stephanie Wood, Red Rock Community Center board member; Mabel Alexander, Red Rock Community Center board member; Ashley Hayes, Red Rock Community Center president; Stan Gerdes, District 17 State Representative; Phil Wilson, LCRA general manager; and Bobby Lewis, LCRA board member. In the second row, from left, are Kolony Petty, Red Rock Community Center secretary; Gary Morkovsky, Red Rock Community Center head of maintenance; Debbie Morkovsky, Red Rock Community Center treasurer; Jim Russell, Red Rock Community Center vice president; Rick Arnic, LCRA regional affairs representative; Debbi Goertz, Bluebonnet Board member; and Roderick Emanuel, Bluebonnet Board vice president/vice chairman. In the third row, from left, are DeeAnna Petty, Red Rock Community Center board member; Matt Arthur, LCRA board member; Mark Meuth, Bastrop County commissioner, Precinct 3; Gregory Klaus, Bastrop County judge; Josh Coy, Bluebonnet Bastrop-area community representative; Fisher Reynolds, LCRA chief of staff; and Wesley Brinkmeyer, Bluebonnet manager of community and development services.

OFFICE CLOSINGS

Bluebonnet offices will be closed Jan. 1 for New Year's Day, Jan. 15 for Martin Luther King Jr. Day and Jan. 19 for a companywide meeting. If you have a power outage, you can report it online at bluebonnet.coop,

via our 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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<input type="checkbox"/> Single unit - \$19.99 per unit	\$19.99
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TOTAL	

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Throw Yourself a Bone

Full tang stainless steel blade with natural bone handle —now **ONLY \$79!**

The very best hunting knives possess a perfect balance of form and function. They're carefully constructed from fine materials, but also have that little something extra to connect the owner with nature.

If you're on the hunt for a knife that combines impeccable craftsmanship with a sense of wonder, the **\$79 Huntsman Blade** is the trophy you're looking for.

The blade is full tang, meaning it doesn't stop at the handle but extends to the length of the grip for the ultimate in strength. The blade is made from 420 surgical steel, famed for its sharpness and its resistance to corrosion.

The handle is made from genuine natural bone, and features decorative wood spacers and a hand-carved motif of two overlapping feathers—a reminder for you to respect and connect with the natural world.

This fusion of substance and style can garner a high price tag out in the marketplace. In fact, we found full tang, stainless steel blades with bone handles in excess of \$2,000. Well, that won't cut it around here. We have mastered the hunt for the best deal, and in turn pass the spoils on to our customers.

But we don't stop there. While supplies last, we'll include a pair of \$99 8x21 power compact binoculars *and* a genuine leather sheath **FREE** when you purchase the *Huntsman Blade*.

Your satisfaction is 100% guaranteed. Feel the knife in your hands, wear it on your hip, inspect the impeccable craftsmanship. If you don't feel like we cut you a fair deal, send it back within 30 days for a complete refund of the item price.

Limited Reserves. A deal like this won't last long. We have only 1120 *Huntsman Blades* for this ad only. Don't let this beauty slip through your fingers. Call today!

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The Green Carpet

The grand opening of Houston's lavish and large—
but short-lived—Shamrock Hotel

BY W.F. STRONG

THERE'S A SCENE in the 1956 movie *Giant* when Jett Rink, played by James Dean, tells the characters played by Rock Hudson and Elizabeth Taylor that he's struck oil. And not only that, he insinuates, it's payback time.

Rink is a hard-drinkin', fierce-brawlin', tough-talkin', uncultured Texas oil well driller who strikes it rich. But everybody in Texas knew that Dean was really playing Glenn McCarthy, a Houston wildcatter who struck it rich—cover of *Time* magazine rich.

The fictional Rink spent millions of dollars building the Emperor, the biggest hotel in Texas. The real-life McCarthy did the same. But McCarthy

called his the Shamrock Hotel.

The Shamrock, nicknamed the Houston Riviera, was the grandest hotel in Texas when it was built in 1947 and the largest outside of New York or Los Angeles.

It was 20 stories tall, counting the two-story emerald Shamrock sign on top, and it towered over southwest Houston. The hotel cost \$21 million to build in the 1940s—or about \$300 million in today's money. It had the biggest hotel pool on the planet—so large that people water-skied in it. There were 1,100 rooms, all air-conditioned and each with a TV and radio, which was remarkably high-tech luxury back then.

McCarthy planned a grand opening for

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



St. Patrick's Day 1949 for his monolithic hotel. He wanted Hollywood stars but was told that the only way Hollywood would come was if there was a movie opening to attend. But no big studio would launch a film in Texas in those days.

So McCarthy decided to fund his own film—*The Green Promise*, starring Walter Brennan and a young Natalie Wood. In so doing, he had the premiere and hotel grand opening at the same time. Brilliant.

And Hollywood came. Howard Hughes gave McCarthy a good deal on one of his planes so he could fly stars to Houston. McCarthy also chartered a party train that brought in hundreds of celebrities for the opening.

The evening was regarded as the most prestigious event in Houston's social history. And it likely remains so. Everyone who was anyone was there. Ginger Rogers was there. So was Errol Flynn. It was partially broadcast live on national radio by NBC and hosted by actress, singer and World War II pinup girl Dorothy Lamour—until the hotel crowd got out of hand.

Many loved the Shamrock for its sheer size and art deco style: the Emerald Room, where Frank Sinatra sang; the Cork Club that overlooked Houston; and the hotel's grand devotion to its Irish theme.

But not everyone was impressed. Renowned architect Frank Lloyd Wright called the Shamrock's 63 shades of Irish green an "architectural venereal disease."

The Shamrock was sold to Conrad Hilton in 1955 and was known as the Shamrock Hilton until it was demolished in 1987. Today, the Texas A&M Health Science Center sits on the site.

I think McCarthy would like that. He was, after all, an Aggie. ■

Texas Citrus

A variety of dishes come alive with the state's prized produce

BY VIANNEY RODRIGUEZ, FOOD EDITOR

South Texas is home to the delicious ruby red grapefruit. From marinades and salads to cocktails and cakes, ruby reds are so versatile. This grapefruit loaf cake, one of my favorite ways to bake with them, is brimming with the fruit's tart and sweet goodness.



Grapefruit Loaf Cake

CAKE

- 3 eggs
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup plain yogurt
- 1 cup light brown sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup vegetable oil
- 1 tablespoon grapefruit zest
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup grapefruit juice
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups flour
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons baking powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt

GLAZE

- 1 cup powdered sugar
- 2 tablespoons grapefruit juice
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon vanilla extract
- Thinly sliced grapefruit, for garnish

1. **CAKE** Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Coat a 5-by-9-inch loaf pan with nonstick cooking spray.
2. In a bowl, whisk together eggs, yogurt, brown sugar, oil, grapefruit zest, grapefruit juice, cinnamon and vanilla.
3. In another bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder and salt.
4. Pour the wet ingredients into the dry ingredients and mix until just combined. Avoid overmixing.
5. Pour batter into prepared loaf pan. Bake 30–35 minutes or until a toothpick inserted comes out clean.
6. Remove from oven, allow to cool for 10 minutes, and carefully remove cake from pan.
7. **GLAZE** Whisk together powdered sugar, grapefruit juice and vanilla.
8. Place grapefruit slices on cake and drizzle with glaze.

SERVES 8

TCP Follow Vianney Rodriguez while she cooks in *Cocina Gris* at sweetlifebake.com, where she features a recipe for Ruby Red Grapefruit Salsa.



Texas Citrus Ceviche

TANNER FULLMER
BANDERA EC

Fullmer's ceviche is a refreshing no-cook appetizer that will wow your guests. Citrus juices cure the shrimp while jalapeño lends spice and avocado adds a touch of creaminess. Serve this bright and flavorful ceviche chilled and with tortilla chips for a beautiful presentation.

- 1 pound wild-caught Gulf shrimp, peeled and deveined**
- 1 cup lime juice**
- ¼ cup lemon juice**
- 1-inch ginger piece, peeled and minced**
- 1 red onion, diced**
- 3 cloves garlic, minced**
- 1½ oranges, peeled and diced**
- 1 grapefruit, peeled and diced**
- 1 cucumber, peeled and diced**
- 1 large avocado, pitted and diced**
- 1 bunch cilantro, chopped**
- 1 jalapeño, seeds removed and diced**
- 1½ teaspoons salt**
- Tortilla chips**

1. Cut shrimp into desired size and place into a large, nonreactive bowl. Add lime juice, lemon juice and minced ginger. Stir to combine. Cover bowl with plastic wrap and refrigerate 45 minutes.
2. Remove bowl from fridge. Stir in red onion, garlic, oranges, grapefruit, cucumber, avocado, cilantro, jalapeño and salt.
3. Return ceviche to the fridge to chill an additional 15 minutes.
4. Serve with tortilla chips.

SERVES 6

[MORE RECIPES >](#)

\$500 WINNER

Moroccan Chicken Skewers

CARRIE RAY
HEART OF TEXAS EC



Marinated in a blend of citrus juice and spices and broiled to perfection, Ray's Moroccan chicken skewers are a tender, mouthwatering dish that's perfect for a weeknight meal or entertaining. Couscous and yogurt complement the skewers and round out the dish.

SERVES 6



- Zest and juice of 1 lemon**
- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil**
- 2 tablespoons honey, plus more for drizzling**
- 1 tablespoon finely grated fresh ginger**
- 1 tablespoon ground coriander**
- 1 tablespoon ground cumin**
- 2 teaspoons salt**
- 1 teaspoon ground black pepper**
- 2 pounds boneless, skinless chicken thighs or breasts, cut into large pieces**
- 2 lemons, halved**
- Fresh flat-leaf parsley, chopped**
- Couscous (optional)**
- Yogurt (optional)**

1. In a bowl, stir together lemon zest and juice, olive oil, honey, ginger, coriander, cumin, salt, and pepper for the marinade. Set aside 2 tablespoons.
2. Add chicken to marinade, turning to coat evenly.
3. Preheat broiler.
4. Place chicken onto wooden or metal skewers, then place skewers onto a foil-lined sheet pan. Add one lemon half to each corner of the sheet pan.
5. Place baking sheet in oven 4 inches from heating element. Broil until charred, about 12 minutes, turning skewers over halfway through.
6. Remove from oven, spoon the reserved marinade onto the chicken and sprinkle with parsley. Drizzle the lemon halves with honey and serve alongside for squeezing over the chicken.
7. Serve with couscous and yogurt, if desired.

TCP \$500 Recipe Contest

SIMPLY SALADS DUE JANUARY 10

Come summer, we'll all be looking to escape the heat of the kitchen. Your best salad recipe could win a cool \$500. Go online and submit your favorite by January 10.





Texas Meyer Lemon Pie

RHAE BROWN
SAM HOUSTON EC

Lemon lovers, this easy pie is for y'all! It's jam-packed with heavenly tartness and bakes in a store-bought pie crust. Simple and sublime, Brown's lemon pie is sure to impress.

3 eggs, room temperature
1¼ cups sugar
½ cup Meyer lemon juice
4 tablespoons (½ stick) butter, melted
1 deep-dish frozen pie crust, unbaked
Whipped topping (optional)

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Whisk eggs, sugar and lemon juice until smooth. Add melted butter and whisk to combine.
3. Pour mixture into pie crust and place on sheet pan. Bake 30–35 minutes.
4. Cool completely before serving. Serve with whipped topping if desired.

SERVES 8

TCP Find hundreds more recipes that feature citrus fruits and juices in our bountiful archive online.

Citrus With the Assist

BY VIANNEY RODRIGUEZ

Use fresh citrus in marinades for grilling or in dressings for salads.

Brighten baked goods by adding a touch of lemon or orange zest.

Fold orange segments into pancakes, waffles or warm oatmeal.

Add lime zest to salt for a festive salt rim for margaritas.

Add a splash of fresh citrus juice to your water for a refreshing twist.

Tuck lemon slices into the cavity of a chicken for a juicy roast chicken.

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COURTESY CHET GARNER

Moment's Notice

A history museum in Laredo marks a short-lived republic's capital

BY CHET GARNER

TRAVELING TO DOWNTOWN Laredo feels like visiting a different country. Maybe that's because it was at one point in history! I'm not talking about the fact that Laredo was once part of Mexico (all of Texas was). I'm talking about the lesser-known Republic of the Rio Grande that existed for 11 short months in 1840 with Laredo as its capital.

It's a story that reads more like a movie and is best explored at its former capitol-turned-museum.

I started my travels in the San Agustin de Laredo Historic District with a chile relleno smothered in queso from El Mesón de San Agustin, a local favorite, and then set out to explore the 269-year-old neighborhood's adobe buildings surrounding a Spanish-style plaza.

One of the most significant buildings is a simple, single-story structure that was once the capitol of a new nation. Today it's the Republic of the Rio Grande Museum. I ducked my head as I stepped through the low wooden door frame and was immediately transported back in time.

The story of this short-lived nation starts in 1836, after Texas won its independence from Mexico. Residents between the Nueces River and the Rio Grande sought to quell instability along the border and decided to form their own country made up of the Mexican states of Coahuila, Nuevo León and Tamaulipas. The armies of the new nation tried to fend off Mexican President Antonio López de Santa Anna's forces, but after a betrayal, a beheading and 283 days, the republic ended.

The museum showcases memorabilia from that time with displays, pictures, books and furniture. There are three restored rooms: an office and sitting area, a bedroom, and kitchen. The republic is gone, but I could still feel a spirit of independence permeating the museum and entire town. ■

ABOVE Chet waves the Republic of the Rio Grande flag.

TCP Follow along as Chet learns about the nation that was centered in Laredo. See 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.

JANUARY

09

Orange On Your Feet: The Story of Emilio & Gloria Estefan, (409) 886-5535, lutchter.org

11

Harlingen Sounds of Silence Tribute, (956) 392-9757, harlingenconcert.com

Bandera [11-13] Bandera County Junior Livestock Show, (210) 260-8224, bcjlsa.com

Sweetwater [11-13] Nolan County Stock Show, (325) 235-3484, nolancc.com

12

Fort Worth [12-13] Carter Anderson, (512) 817-9535, blcomedy.com

La Grange [12-13] Ray Wylie Hubbard, (979) 968-9944, thebugleboy.org

Kerrville [12-14] Star Crossed, (210) 492-9519, cameratasora.org

Fort Worth [12-Feb. 3] Stock Show and Rodeo, (817) 877-2400, fwssr.com

13

Abilene Don Juan by the Sea, (325) 677-6710, abiphil.com

Brenham Uptown Swirl Downtown Brenham, (979) 337-7580, cityofbrenham.org

Fredericksburg Hill Country Indian Artifact Show, (830) 329-2636, hillcountryindianartifacts.com

Galveston Yaga's Chili Quest and Beer Fest,
(409) 770-0999,
yagaschiliquest.com

Marfa Star Party in the Badlands, (432) 424-3327,
tpwd.texas.gov

Mesquite Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration,
(972) 216-8132,
mesquiteartscenter.org

Round Top Houston Jazz Orchestra, (979) 249-3129,
festivalhill.org

Houston MLK Grande Parade, mlkgrandeparade.org

New Caney [19-20] Hold 'Em & Hit 'Em Barbecue Cook-Off, hhclub.org

Fredericksburg [19-21] Trade Days, (210) 846-4094,
fbgtradedays.com

Bastrop [19-21, 26-28, Feb. 2-4] Freaky Friday,
(512) 200-3826,
bastropoperahouse.org

Victoria Lyle Lovett and His Large Band, (361) 576-4500,
victoriasymphony.com

Plano [20-21] Dallas Area Train Show, (972) 941-5840,
dfwtrainshows.com

Amarillo Bert Kreischer,
1-800-692-1338,
amarillotheater.com

Richards Guthrie Jones,
(936) 436-9050,
wscwinery.com

Raymondville [24-27] Willacy County Livestock Show & Fair, wclsf.com

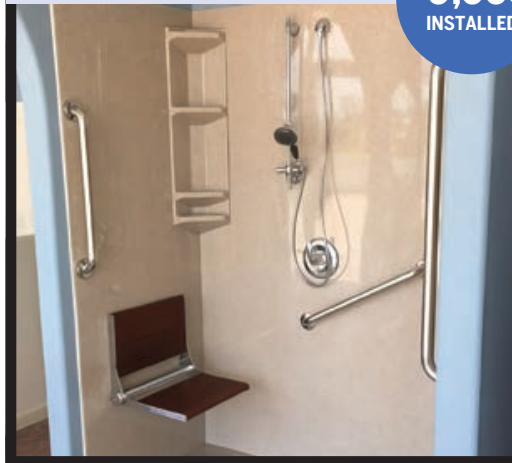
MORE EVENTS >

TCP Submit Your Event

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30

Harlingen Barbara Padilla, (956) 392-9757
harlingenconcert.com

FEBRUARY

01

Frisco East-West Shrine Bowl, (813) 281-8686,
shrinebowl.com

Bandera [1-3] Cowboy Mardi Gras, (830) 796-4849,
11thstcowboybar.com

02

Fredericksburg First Friday Art Walk, (830) 990-8160,
visitfredericksburgtx.com

Granbury Aquatic Wild Workshop, (650) 471-3285,
tpwd.texas.gov

Lake Jackson Colbie Caillat, (979) 230-3658,
brazospport.edu

Temple [2-3] Father Daughter Dance, (254) 298-5690,
templeparks.com

Humble [2-4] Rodeo, (281) 241-7436,
humblerodeo.com

Galveston [2-13] Mardi Gras, (409) 770-0999,
mardigrasgalveston.com

03

North Zulch Volunteer Fire Department Chili Cookoff, (979) 488-9214,
facebook.com/nzvf

Sweetwater Lift Every Voice,
sweetwaterauditorium.org

JANUARY EVENTS CONTINUED

26

La Grange Marcia Ball, (979) 968-9944,
thebugleboy.org

Fulton [26-27] Cruising the Coast Quilt Show,
piecemakersbythebay.org

South Padre Island [26-28] Market Days,
spimarketdays.com

27

Jefferson Mardi Gras Queen Mab Ball, (903) 665-3733,
mardigrasupriver.com

Port Aransas Garden Club Home Tour, (361) 834-4130,
portaransasgardenclub.org

Round Top Asleep at the Wheel, (979) 249-3129,
festivalhill.org

29

Johnson City [29-Feb. 23] Wine Lovers Celebration, (872) 216-9463,
texashillcountrywineries.org

Local Landmarks

They define our landscapes, become guideposts when giving directions, and are a point of pride in communities large and small. Texas landmarks are as full of character and charm as the Texans who create them.

CURATED BY GRACE FULTZ

1 CASE RAMIREZ-MELTON
LAMAR ELECTRIC

Sunset at the Eiffel Tower in Texas' Paris.

2 CARL BURNHAM
PEDERNALES EC

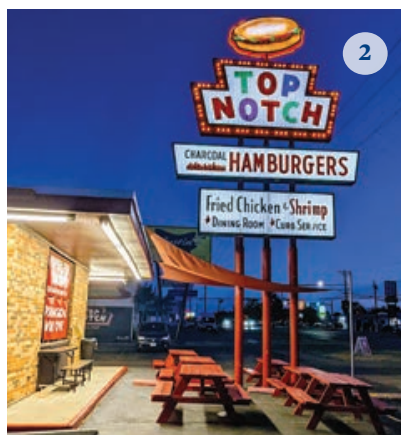
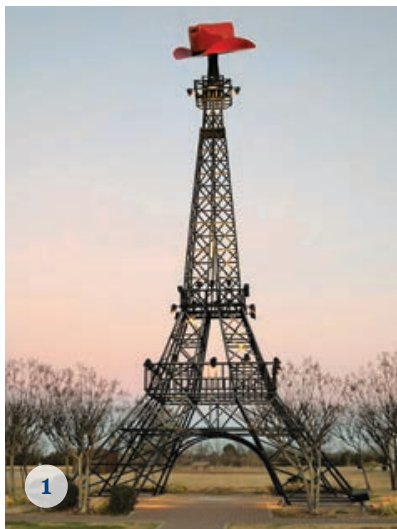
A longtime Austin favorite, Top Notch has been grilling up burgers and other fare since 1971.

3 MARK BONAME
JACKSON EC

You can see these Easter Island statue replicas on the loop in Victoria.

4 DENNIS MURPHY
UNITED COOPERATIVE SERVICES

The blueprints mistakenly had inches instead of feet, and the builder in Wichita Falls made it as it was written.



Upcoming Contests

- DUE JAN 10** Rides
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Touched by an Angel

An unflappable donkey imparts peace on a farm

BY MARTHA DEERINGER
ILLUSTRATION BY JOHN TOMAC

GROWING UP, my family lived on a tree-lined street in Waco but longed for the country life, so my parents bought land in nearby Rosenthal. It was only 24 acres, but we called it “the farm.”

Excitement at the farm escalated when our next-door neighbor—who owned a real farm—came home one day with a trailer load of donkeys. They were a sight to behold—all those impossibly long ears sticking up above the sides of the trailer.

I was smitten. My grandmother had just read Marguerite Henry’s *Brighty of the Grand Canyon* (about a burro that lived in the gorge) aloud to me, and this load of donkeys made my heart ache. I begged my parents to buy one.

Unloaded into a pen, the donkeys were a mixed bag—fat, thin, gentle,

grumpy, young and ancient—but one little brown jenny with shaggy hair and a white nose poked her head through the fence. Her kind brown eyes gazed right into mine. My parents, imagining the word “babysitter” printed in large letters on her forehead, cheerfully handed over \$25. I named her Bright Angel, after the donkey in Henry’s book.

Bright Angel was no Secretariat. She had one speed, a slow walk. She was kind-hearted and quiet and held no animosity toward any living thing. Eventually, she became my best friend.

If I rode her down the gravel road to the little gas station on the corner, she waited patiently outside while I went in to get a Grapette and a Zero candy bar. She won best supporting actress for many a flickery homemade Western after my older brother got an 8 mm movie camera for his birthday.

When Christmas approached, my school, St. Alban’s in Waco, decided to enter a float in the citywide parade. My parents volunteered Angel to ride on the float and carry the Virgin Mary to Bethlehem.

When we loaded her onto the flatbed trailer, she didn’t twitch an ear. I was the Virgin Mary, a most exalted role for a 6-year-old. A large man dressed as the angel Gabriel stood near the front of the float with a tinfoil trumpet in case of unanticipated excitement, but even the bands and the firetruck’s siren left Angel unperturbed.

She got a cinnamon roll for her fine performance.

Eventually my brothers and I graduated to horses and our parents to larger farms, but Angel lived a long and peaceful life as a cherished member of the family, proving that even the most unlikely of best friends can be a lifelong treasure. ■



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