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‘THAT’S WHAT CO-OPS DO’

Hurricane Harvey sends power of cooperative spirit into action
Mueller steel buildings can be tailored to suit your needs. From small, backyard designs to custom, engineered structures, we have the perfect building to accommodate your lifestyle.
Welcome Home  Gary Sinise Foundation gives a new start to disabled veterans  
Story and photos by Julia Robinson

‘It’s Just What You Do’ Hurricane Harvey spotlights the hope and heart of the co-op family  
Story and photos by Chris Burrows

ON THE COVER  Crews work to repair Victoria EC power lines east of Victoria after Hurricane Harvey.  
Photo by Chris Burrows | TEC

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NEXT MONTH

Christmas in the Parks State parks decorate and celebrate in special ways for the Yuletide.

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Doting Mother

Enjoyed the article on the Rio Grande Valley at night [What Lurks in the Murk, August 2017]. The picture of the people looking at the wolf spider was good, but you cannot see the spider.

It brought back a memory from last August: watching a female wolf carrying her babies on her back on my driveway. Quite a sight to see with her back covered, and if one got off she would pick it up and place it back on her back.

MICHAEL LANTY | ORIENT | CONCHO VALLEY EC

1946: Dad had our 750-square-foot home wired for electricity. The family gathered in the living room when the first wall switch was turned on to see the light from a single bulb in a ceramic fixture in the center of the ceiling. A lifetime-changing event.

It is easy to take for granted the advances in technology we all enjoy today through the success of Bowie-Cass Electric Cooperative powering rural East Texas.

KENNETH ELLIOTT | TEXARKANA

Memories of Fort Hood

The Dawn of Fort Hood [Currents, January 2017] brought back fond memories for my mom. She and my dad married in June 1942 and moved to Killeen, where my dad (Bob Foster) worked at Fort Hood. He was a timekeeper, and because of the size of the property, he was given a horse to ride to ensure that the men who clocked in to work were still working and did not wander off.

SHARON HORINE | BROWN COUNTY

New London Lesson

A very important result of the tragedy [The New London School Explosion, January 2017] was the establishment of the Texas Engineering Practice Act. The act requires those who engineer public projects (roads, bridges, dams, schools, water supply systems, etc.) to be duly licensed by the state as having the education, experience and ability to design such projects in a way that protects the health, safety and welfare of the public.

ERIC RATZMAN | LEANDER

Familiar Face

I loved Outlaw Healers [September 2016], about the Milling brothers. My great-grandfather lived in Cisco about that time, and I am sure that they probably met.

The photo of the man is a dead ringer for (a younger) James Keach!

ANITA KEMPER VIA FACEBOOK | COLEMAN

COLEMAN COUNTY EC

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GRANBURY SANTA HOUSE returns to the Hood County Courthouse, southwest of Fort Worth, this Christmas season, thanks to the efforts of some United Cooperative Services members who wish to remain anonymous, county officials and area businesses. Granbury High School honor roll students help round up elves who assist Santa Claus every weekend NOVEMBER 24–DECEMBER 23.

Mrs. Claus and the elves welcome children—and pets—who want to see Santa. They pass the time in line by playing games and talking about Christmas lists. Then, it’s onto Santa’s lap.

Parents, grandparents and friends are free to take as many pictures as they like. The entire experience is free. The Granbury Santa House Facebook page has more details.

“The main purpose of Santa House is to provide a place to forget even for one minute the craziness Christmas can bring,” Mrs. Claus says.

INFO ▶ (817) 964-7220, facebook.com/granburysanta.house

Dale Earnhardt Jr. and Texas Motor Speedway have a lot of history. It was at the Fort Worth track that the NASCAR driver earned his first Busch Series and Cup Series wins, and in April he placed fifth, one of his best races of the season.

But Junior will take his last Texas laps when the No. 88 Chevrolet returns to the Texas Motor Speedway on November 5 for the AAA Texas 500. The 43-year-old driver announced in April that this would be his final year of driving after concussions haunted him in 2016.

Texas Motor Speedway put out the call for fans who attended Earnhardt’s 2000 Cup Series win in anticipation of this month’s event. If history is any indication, maybe they’ll end up seeing his last win, too.

“‘When I started counting my blessings, my whole life turned around.’”

— WILLIE NELSON
DEPRESSION-ERA DAIRY FARMER John Grimes struggles to make ends meet in Central Texas as World War II looms and cities leave rural areas in the dust of development. When a representative of the Rural Electrification Administration offers federal loans to farmers and ranchers to build electric lines, Grimes rallies his friends and neighbors to support the cause.

That is how the 2015 film *Let There Be Light* portrays the history of Mid-South Synergy, an electric cooperative whose founding is much like other electric co-ops across the country. Andy Conner, former Mid-South multimedia specialist, produced the 25-minute short in honor of the co-op’s 75th anniversary.

“One of the Seven Cooperative Principles is Cooperation Among Cooperatives, and that’s what we wanted out of this short film,” Conner says. “Since co-ops nationwide have a sort of shared history, we wanted to be able to share this to raise awareness to a new generation about what exactly a cooperative is. So, it’s a short film with long-term implications.”

The film premiered at a Navasota movie theater and played at Mid-South’s annual meeting in June 2015. Since then, it has won several awards, including WorldFest-Houston film festival’s Platinum Remi Award for Short Subject and Silver Telly Award for directing, plus two Bronze Telly Awards and the Gold Award for Best Total Communication Program from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

The rest stops on Interstate 27 in Hale County, north of Lubbock, have been renamed in honor of Nelda Laney, considered the First Lady of West Texas and known as the Capitol Ornament Lady. Laney, who died August 24, 2016, was the wife of Pete Laney, a five-term speaker of the Texas House and 17-term state representative. Among the many accomplishments in her life was creating and selling Capitol Christmas ornaments to raise funds for the preservation of Texas’ Capitol, built in 1888. [See The Capitol Ornament Lady, November 2016.]

More than 1 million ornaments have been sold, raising more than $8 million since Laney started the program in 1996.

The Nelda Laney Safety Rest Areas are about 8 miles south of the Laney homestead near Hale Center.
In May 2013, Lucas Cifka almost lost everything. The 6-foot-1-inch Army sniper from Olympia, Washington, stepped on a pressure-plated IED while on foot patrol in eastern Afghanistan.

“I remember the medic running over, and I was helping to put the tourniquet on, and they immediately put them very high up on my legs, and I knew that wasn’t good because you only do that as a last resort,” Cifka says. “I realized very quickly that I was bleeding to death, and the first thought that went through my mind was: I’ve got a 3-month-old baby at home, and I can’t die on this hilltop.”

The blast took both legs, fractured his pelvis, hands and face, and left him with a traumatic brain injury. Cifka, his wife, Kait, and young son, Wyatt, spent more than two years at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Washington, D.C. He endured more than 30 surgeries to restore his ability to perform everyday tasks and walk with prosthetics.

On a hot July day this year, Cifka, now a retired sergeant, and his family had a special homecoming in Canyon Lake, where they moved into a specially adapted smart home built by the Gary Sinise Foundation’s Restoring Independence Supporting Empowerment program.

The Gary Sinise Foundation launched in 2011, when the Academy Award-nominated actor helped build a home on Staten Island, New York, for Brendan Marrocco, the first surviving quadruple amputee from the war in Iraq. After Marrocco, there was another quadruple amputee in need. Then another.

Sinise builds on a long history of special support for veterans. In the 1980s, he reached out to Vietnam vets, offering a night out at the Steppenwolf Theatre, which he co-founded in his native Chicago. During the 1990s, he started work for the Disabled American Veterans organization. His seminal role as double-amputee Lieutenant Dan in the 1994 film Forrest Gump amplified his outreach with USO tours and the creation of the Lt. Dan Band, which performs more than 20 shows every year to raise spirits and money for veterans and first responders.

“We have a whole new generation, Lucas Cifka, above, with his family, and Guillermo Tejada live in specially adapted homes in Canyon Lake. ...
and the benefits of the smart-home enhancements. In September 2010, while returning from foot patrol in Afghanistan, Tejada, a gunnery sergeant in the Marines, suffered an IED blast that took both his legs above the knee, ruptured an eardrum and inflicted devastating injuries to his left arm and hand as well as his brain.

Before receiving his new smart home, Tejada struggled with the everyday tasks required of a young father. “When I can’t do something or I have a limitation because of my disabilities, it takes [me] back to that day that it happened,” he says. “After something catastrophic like this happens, it’s the small things that act as a constant reminder that your life is not the same anymore. That can play some pretty bad tricks with your mind.”

Tejada moved into his smart home with wife, Veronica, and their four children in September 2016. He offers a glimpse of the life Cifka and his family can look forward to. “The best thing is being able to get everywhere with no obstacles. Being able to take care of myself without the worry of injuring myself, that’s a big plus. The house has given me back a lot of things because of 9/11, of real-life Lieutenant Dans out there,” Sinise says. “My foundation is sort of the umbrella to bring people together. I wanted to create a foundation that would offer the American people this way forward if they wanted to help veterans.”

In Cifka’s new home, every room is wheelchair-accessible, including the shower. “I can sit right here, take a shower, controls are all right here,” he says, gesturing at a panel. “I can turn around and roll through doorways and not hit my hands all the time.”

Moving to the kitchen, Cifka demonstrates the oven, stove, microwave and cabinet pull-downs that he can operate from his chair. “The biggest point of contention for me and my wife was not putting dishes away,” he says. “Now I don’t have any excuse to do that.”

He wheels into his son’s room and watches him play with the green army men, colored blocks and Hot Wheels cars provided by the foundation’s design team. “From day one with this injury, I wanted to be able to take care of my son,” Cifka says. “With this house, I can watch him on my own because I can go everywhere and do everything.”

Next door, Guillermo Tejada knows the hardships of injury and the benefits of the smart-home enhancements. In September 2010, while returning from foot patrol in Afghanistan, Tejada, a gunnery sergeant in the Marines, suffered an IED blast that took both his legs above the knee, ruptured an eardrum and inflicted devastating injuries to his left arm and hand as well as his brain.

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that were taken away from me. I’m fully independent.”

A third veteran, Travis Green, also a Marines gunnery sergeant, lives down the street with his four daughters. Green enlisted in 1999 and deployed to Kuwait, Iraq and finally Afghanistan. In September 2011, shortly before the completion of his tour, Green came under fire and lost both legs above the knee to an IED.

His home, completed in 2015, made space for his girls and a base of operations for his business, Stump Armour, which makes affordable, durable prosthetic feet for amputees.

All three veterans in the Canyon Lake area are members of Pedernales Electric Cooperative.

Cifka is appreciative of his new neighbors. “Already knowing two people in the neighborhood who are both in similar circumstances, who have kids who are used to seeing combat-wounded people, there’s a lot of camaraderie right there.”

“It’s a million little things that all add up to a brand-new life. The Gary Sinise Foundation is part of our extended family, and we’ll never be able to put into words what this means for our family,” says Cifka.

Brad Morris, senior project manager for the RISE program, oversees the construction of many of these homes. Morris is a former Marine and owner of G. Morris Homes, a custom homebuilder in Bulverde, just north of San Antonio. “Being a combat veteran myself, I found the opportunity to merge two passions, homebuilding and veterans’ causes, into … one of the most rewarding experiences of my life,” says Morris.

The list of adaptations is long, explains Morris: wider hallways and doorways, zero-height thresholds, large showers with benches and handheld shower heads, bathrooms with expanded turning areas, grab bars, lighting controls, video-enabled security and intercom systems, along with home-automation features controlled with an iPad or iPhone. Some veterans need motorized lifts to get in and out of bed, special accessible bathtubs, or voice and motion activation.

“These homes are designed and built specifically to meet the needs of the veteran and his family and to restore their independence,” says Morris. “These homes remove all physical barriers that many of us may not realize even exist.”

The foundation has plans for three more homes in Texas this year—in Lakeway, Southlake and McKinney.

“Many years ago, when I began this journey, it became abundantly clear that we can never do enough for those who serve and sacrifice while defending and providing our precious freedom and liberty,” says Sinise, “but I also learned we can always do a little more.”

Learn more about Julia Robinson at juliarobinsonphoto.com.

Working with more than a dozen charitable organizations and corporations, the Gary Sinise Foundation has completed 38 homes, with another 22 under construction across the country by the end of 2017. The families move into their fully furnished homes without a mortgage to pay.
Ashley Hadley and her mother, Shelia Dierschke, pulled out a white folding table and chairs because the dining room table didn’t have enough space. They set out piles of fried shrimp, hush puppies and all the fixings on Dierschke’s Port Lavaca kitchen counter—all the makings of a family Labor Day feast.

Their guests were hundreds of miles from their own homes, a dozen worn, weary and mud-caked linemen at the end of another in a string of 15-plus-hour days of restoring power in the wake of Hurricane Harvey. They are family, all the same.

“We had them all line up and get food, and we were just kind of serving them,” said Hadley, whose husband, Michael, a Victoria Electric Cooperative lineman, invited the men, his co-workers since the storm hit August 25. Hadley and her parents had for days taken turns providing warm meals in the field for the linemen, who were there from Trinity Valley and Grayson-Collin electric cooperatives, east and north of Dallas, respectively.

“Everybody just kind of pitched in,” Hadley said. Other families provided laundry services and meals, on top of the three meals VEC provided daily for the more than 300 linemen who rushed in to help. “We did whatever we could.”

After the strongest hurricane to make landfall in Texas in decades wrought destruction along the coastal bend and in East Texas, the co-op family did whatever it could to help restore power to some 179,000 and hope to many more. Stories of hope and heart reveal the awesome power of the cooperative spirit.

“That’s what co-ops do,” said David Nerada, service foreman for Victoria EC, which lost power to all 22,467 of its meters dur-
ing the storm’s 130 mph winds. “We’re a family. You need help? We drop everything and go help.”

**HOPE**

One day before the storm’s landfall, Randy Mahannah, general manager for North Plains EC, anticipated the destruction and asked his linemen stationed in Canadian, in the Texas Panhandle, if they were interested in helping with restoration efforts.

They were prepped and ready the next day. “They sat there all weekend, bothering the line superintendent, wondering when they were leaving,” Mahannah said of his crew that months earlier battled ice storm and wildfire damage on its own system with the help of other co-ops.

Along the coast, San Patricio, Victoria and Jackson ECs mobilized quickly as the storm approached, strengthened and made landfall as a Category 4 hurricane.

Mike Myers, manager of corporate services at Jackson EC, collected satellite radios and reviewed his co-op’s emergency response plan as Harvey moved into the Gulf. “Before we knew it, we were on Page 5,” he said.

Many employees spent nights on cots or air mattresses in their own co-op offices, fielding phone calls and Facebook comments from members and waiting for more help to arrive.

As the storm’s eye passed through Rockport and Refugio, it entered San Patricio EC’s service territory. Operations Manager Albert Gaitan’s Beeville home survived, but “it was devastating to see that some people weren’t so lucky,” he said.

More than 600 outside personnel, from co-ops around the state and private companies, arrived to help the three coastal
co-ops, as did supplies from still other co-ops and donations of food and water from grateful members. The storm eventually would affect 15 co-ops with wind and flood damage.

On Monday, August 28, North Plains EC’s Canadian crew finally got the call it hoped for and made the 10-hour drive to San Patricio EC in two parts—the linemen’s chance to pay it forward.

“I can’t tell you how many of them [co-ops] have reached out to us: ‘What do you need? What can we do? We’re sending people. How can we help?’” said Nina Campos, manager of human resources and communications at VEC.

For David McGinnis, general manager at Grayson-Collin EC, who made the trip with his linemen, it was just another in a long line of co-ops helping co-ops.

“It’s just what you do,” McGinnis said, “and, like I say, it doesn’t matter if it’s our members here at Grayson . . . or whoever it is, they’re still members of a co-op, and that’s what we do—help each other out.”

Keith Stapleton always will remember how great and how eerie it sounded when the rain finally stopped.

“With a hurricane, usually six hours or so and it’s through—it’s gone—but this lasted for six days,” said Sam Houston EC’s chief communications officer.

Harvey made its second and third landfalls in East Texas, dumping unprecedented rainfall measured in feet, not inches. Sam Houston and Jasper-Newton ECs battled hard-to-reach outages that moved with the floodwaters amid wind-weary trees and rain-soaked ground.

One night, around 2 a.m., 18 hours after a Sam Houston EC crew had won the fight to bring a substation back online: heartbreak.

“Fourteen minutes later, a tree falls near that substation on the transmission line and takes power out again,” Stapleton said. “That was what the whole week was like. . . . You just drop your head, take a breath and say, ‘OK, we’ll keep working.’ ”

Rivers swelled elsewhere, too, taking Jackson EC lineman Jimmie Scott’s Bayside home, which his father built on family land decades ago.

“Everything’s gone,” Scott said. “My roof caved in. Everything was just destroyed.”

But Scott never missed a day of work.

“How can you not stand in awe of someone who is so dedicated to their profession that they will, regardless of their personal tragedy, continue to do their job in a professional manner?” said Jim Coleman, Jackson EC general manager.

On September 10, Hurricane Irma struck Florida, knocking out power to 65 percent of the state before hitting Georgia and the Carolinas. With 99 percent of Harvey-affected co-op meters back up, Texas co-ops answered the call, including Jackson EC, whose weary linemen had just finished restoring their own power.

“The biggest thanks I could give some of my best linemen for working so hard here after Harvey was to let them rush off to Florida to answer the call of another cooperative in need,” Coleman said. “It’s our way.”

Chris Burrows is a Texas Electric Cooperatives senior communications specialist.
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Bonus offer: Get 2 posters shipped to the same address for just $30.

From the publishers of Texas Co-op Power.
I love the feeling of being able to walk into my favorite locally-owned shop, restaurant or store knowing that the profit, product and labor can make positive impacts on my community. The spirit of Main Street is embodied in these local businesses, just like it is at Magic Valley Electric Cooperative.

Electric cooperatives are as local and community centered as they come. Founded as a way to bring electricity to communities that didn’t interest investor-owned utilities (or IOUs), electric cooperatives have been a cornerstone of community and economic development in rural America and beyond for decades.

That feeling I get when I frequent local businesses in our community is the same feeling I get when I walk into work at the Co-op every day. It is a feeling of pride. I am proud to be a part of an organization that serves the community in which we live, instead of a group of shareholders who may never have set foot in our service territory.

Living on co-op lines is more than just knowing there are people out there working to bring you safe, reliable and affordable electric service. Living on co-op lines is an investment in our community and its members.

You see, Magic Valley is a not-for-profit business. When we make more money than we need to keep the lights on safely, affordably and reliably, we return it back to our members (that's you!) in the form of capital credits. This means after all co-op expenses are paid, any additional money we earn goes back into our community, instead of going into a shareholder's pocket, which is pretty great!

And because we are owned by you, our members, we have a vested interest in making sure our community is prosperous. We do this by investing in economic development, community service projects and non-profit organizations such as the Ronald McDonald House Charities RGV, Renaissance Cancer Foundation, Safe Haven for Kids and the Fallen Lineman Organization.

I hope that you view Magic Valley not just as your electric utility provider, but as a local business that brings pride and prosperity to our community. If you are interested in learning more about how we keep the lights on and beyond, please stop by the co-op or give us a call. We love being a part of this community, and we hope you feel the same way too!

Respectfully,

John W. Herrera
General Manager

MESSAGE FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER

Cooperative History, Cooperative Future
The appeal of electric vehicles (EV) is gaining momentum. The push for greater mileage in terms of MPG that began in the second half of the last century has been joined by the push for greater miles per charge. But before getting too far into this transportation evolution, a quick history lesson about EVs is in order.

The first known electric car was developed in 1837 in Aberdeen, Scotland. Early variants were powered by galvanic cells rather than rechargeable batteries. The lead-acid battery was invented in France in 1859 with further French development leading to manufacturing of these batteries on an industrial scale in the early 1880s. This allowed a rechargeable battery to be installed on the vehicle.

Soon manufacturers were selling a wide array of EVs ranging from trams to trolleys, to cars and even locomotives. Interest in electric cars blossomed in the late 1890s and early 1900s. As roads improved and became more extensive, demand for greater range emerged. A variety of solutions were put forth including the first battery exchanges by an electric utility in Connecticut in 1910 and the first hybrid automobile in 1911. It would not be long until America led the world in number of EVs on the roads.

But the rapid expansion of the country and the limitation of electricity to major cities and towns spelled the end of the electric car. The world wanted to be mobile and EVs simply did not have the range required. Enter Henry Ford and the mass-produced, affordable internal combustion engine, and the EV’s fate was sealed.

Fast forward to modern times and EVs are dominating the automotive news. Thanks to the electric cooperative movement, electricity is available everywhere in the U.S., the majority of roads are paved and environmental concerns are increasing awareness.

While many drawbacks of EVs are gone, there is still a major concern limiting EV growth dubbed “range anxiety.” This stems from the persistent limited range of all EVs. While the Tesla offering provides 270 miles for their all-wheel drive model and 355 miles on their standard models, that pales in comparison to most internal combustion cars. And, the lack of a rapid charging infrastructure is an ongoing impediment. Just like their 20th century predecessors, pure EVs are great “city cars.”

Fortunately, advances in battery technology are hammering away at the range issue. Range is steadily expanding and battery management systems are squeezing out more miles. At the same time, more companies and utilities are installing efficient charging stations at their places of business and in popular public locations.

Range anxiety notwithstanding, EVs have a bright future. Prices are dropping and range is expanding so owners can confidently drive nearly everywhere with a little bit of planning. On top of this, the cars are just plain cool. The Tesla Model 3 promises a minimalist interior with all the necessary controls and information presented on a large touchscreen in the center of the console as opposed to using the traditional instrument cluster.

Further, if you’ve never driven an electric vehicle, you are in for a treat. While an internal combustion engine must rev up to speed, an EV has full power at its disposal instantly. Of course, there are limits on this 0-60 mph capability to prevent inexperienced and over-eager drivers from launching themselves into accidents and speeding tickets. They are quiet, well appointed inside and allow you to forever bypass the lines at the gas station—unless you are in need of some snacks and a slushy.

One final word, if you do purchase an EV, be sure to let your electric cooperative know. The service to your home is sized to meet the demands of your house as they existed when service was connected. Adding the EV charger creates a risk of overloading the wires and transformers powering your home. Overloaded services can fail and leave you in the dark with an uncharged EV.

Someday, we’ll all be gliding silently—and cleanly—on our travels.
For a winter staycation, drive east on Brownsville’s Boca Chica Blvd and Highway 4 for glimpses of the past and the future as well as a shell-covered, secluded beach. The 22-mile drive from the Valley’s largest city across coastal plains ends along with the pavement at Boca Chica Beach, a few yards from Gulf waters. Like most trips, part of the fun is getting here.

About 10 miles east of International Blvd., a sign invites you to tune to 1610 AM for a 10-minute podcast about Palmito Ranch National Historic Landmark. The last battle of the Civil War was fought here, even though both Union and Confederate troops knew the war had ended. Turn right down Palmito Ranch Road and get surrounded by the coastal plains, prickly pears and spot chestnut-brown Harris hawks perched on poles. On the right, below the loma and almost hidden, an observation deck overlooks the area. Back on Highway 4, pull over to read the informational markers about Palmito Ranch and Boca Chica with a useful map. Down the road, you will spot the UTRGV Center for Advanced Radio Astronomy under construction. Nearby, a white space-age array with a huge dish, protected by a high fence and prickly pears, is labeled Space X South Texas Ground Tracking Station.

Farther down, a stone historical marker nestles between agaves. Stubby palmetto pilings are remnants of a railroad that Gen. Phil Sheridan completed across Boca Chica Inlet after the Civil War. With binoculars, you can spot cypress pilings about 1,000 feet away, left from a floating bridge built by Gen. Zachary Taylor to move supplies during the Mexican-American War. To the south, a security fence encloses SpaceX property, but no structures are visible, although the first launch is slated for late 2018.

Great blue herons pose for pictures on Boca Chica dunes, framed by sea oats and long runners of flowering railroad vines. Although Boca Chica was once a tidal pass, it became choked with sand after the Brownsville Ship Channel opened in 1936. Few people come to Boca Chica’s tranquil shoreline on weekdays, at least, so you start to feel like a castaway or Gilligan on a private island. The Rio Grande is about five miles south and Brazos Santiago Pass is about six miles north.

While you can drive down the beach if the sand has packed hard (check first), the most satisfying way to enjoy this secluded beach is by walking near the surf,
stopping to explore the mysteries tossed ashore. Beachcombers find more shells in the winter than the summer for a reason. Tropical sea creatures—hydras, urchins, mollusks—that live in waters south of us die—off when the water cools in winter. Their shells wash on to the beach December through March.

Besides shells, some living creatures make landfall, like the gorgeous Blue button we found. (Use caution because some critters can sting or irritate your skin.) Water-polished driftwood washes in covered in goose barnacles: white shells trimmed in orange. Sea beans, which fell off trees and vines along the Amazon or Central American rivers, drift north with currents and wash up at your feet. Named for their appearance, sea bean finds can include brain fruit, hamburger beans, crucifix bean and sea heart. Other flotsam and jetsam—debris washed ashore—are buoys, bottles and ropes.

The peacefulness found on a practically private beach is hard to beat. Bring a full picnic basket, fishing gear and whatever you need. Boca Chica is not a state or county park and has zero amenities.

Heading home, after the CBP check point, turn left onto Oklahoma Ave (FM 14910) to reach Sabal Palms Sanctuary. The Valley's last stand of native sabal palms dot this wildlife preserve, which has a bird feeding station thronged with green jays, chachalacas plus butterfly gardens. Among the several walking trails, one short trail leads to an observation platform above the Rio Grande.

Thousands come to the Valley to enjoy our semi-tropical winter. Pack up the family and take a day trip to Boca Chica.
$15K SCHOLARSHIP

Do you want to go to college?
Every year we award scholarships to aspiring young men and women to help make their college dreams a reality.

Are you a Magic Valley member?
If you’re a graduating high school senior, you’re eligible for our $15,000 scholarship!

DEADLINE:
DEC. 7, 2017

For more information visit our website www.magicvalley.coop & download an application.

For more information about our Scholarship opportunity, contact us at:
Email: info@magicvalley.coop Phone: 866-225-5683
Baked Mashed Sweet Potatoes

- 1 ³/₄ pounds russet potatoes
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 1/2 teaspoons salt
- 1 can (14.5 ounces) sweet potatoes, drained and mashed
- 4 ounces cream cheese, softened
- 3 slices bacon, cooked and crumbled
- ½ cup light sour cream
- 1/4 cup chicken broth
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease a 9-inch square baking dish.
2. Boil potatoes with garlic until tender, then drain.
3. Add remaining ingredients and beat with mixer until blended.
4. Pour into baking dish. Bake uncovered for 20 minutes.

This recipe was a winner in the January 2011 All Eyes on Potatoes recipe contest. Submit your best pastry recipes to Texas Co-op Power by November 10 for a chance to win the Breakfast Pastries recipe contest. Visit texascooppower.com/contests for rules and details.
Discuss evacuation plans with your family before hurricane season June 1 – Nov. 30. Make a checklist of what you need to do before you leave town and review it.

Monitor NOAA weather radio and local TV and radio broadcasts during storm season.

Prepare an emergency supply kit including: radio, flashlight, extra batteries, extra eye glasses, bottled water, non-perishable food, dry clothes, bedding, insurance information, important documents, medications, copies of prescriptions and special products for babies, seniors, medically fragile family members, and pets.

Learn evacuation routes before storm season. When there’s a hurricane in the Gulf, keep your gas tank as full as possible. Expect traffic delays in an evacuation.

Register in the State of Texas Emergency Assistance Registry (STEAR) online at https://STEAR.dps.texas.gov or Dial 2-1-1 to register if you have a disability or medical needs or if you simply do not have transportation: Gulf coast residents in evacuation zones with a disability or medical needs – who do not have friends or family to help – or do not have transportation should register in STEAR in advance.
La Sensación Cooperativista

MENSAJE DEL DIRECTOR GENERAL

Me gusta la sensación de poder entrar a mi tienda o restaurante local preferido y saber que la ganancia, el producto y la mano de obra pueden tener un impacto positivo en mi comunidad. El espíritu de la Calle Principal también conocida como “Main Street” se personifica en estas empresas locales, al igual que sucede en Magic Valley Electric Cooperative.

Las cooperativas eléctricas son locales y se concentran en apoyar a la comunidad. Creadas para llevar electricidad a las comunidades ignoradas por las empresas privadas, las cooperativas eléctricas han sido pilares de la comunidad y del desarrollo económico en las zonas rurales de Estados Unidos desde hace mucho tiempo.

La sensación que tengo al frecuentar empresas locales en nuestra comunidad es la misma que tengo cuando llego a mi trabajo en la cooperativa cada día. Es un sentimiento de orgullo. Estoy orgulloso de ser parte de una organización que apoya a la comunidad en la que vivimos, en lugar de un grupo de accionistas que quizás nunca han puesto pie en nuestro territorio de servicio.

Vivir en el frente de servicio de la cooperativa es algo más que el simple conocimiento de que hay gente trabajando para traerte energía segura, confiable y accesible. Vivir en el frente de servicio de la cooperativa es una inversión en nuestra comunidad y en los miembros.

Magic Valley es una organización sin fines de lucro. Cuando la cooperativa genera más dinero del que es necesario para mantener las luces encendidas de forma segura, confiable y accesible, regresamos el dinero a los miembros en forma de créditos de capital. Esto significa que después de todos los gastos de la cooperativa son pagados, cualquier dinero restante que se haya generado se regresa a nuestra comunidad, en lugar de regresarse a los bolsillos de accionistas, ¡Esto está muy bien!

Ya que los dueños son nuestros miembros, tenemos un gran interés en asegurarnos que nuestra comunidad prospere. Lo hacemos a través de apoyar el desarrollo económico, proyectos de servicio comunitario y organizaciones como el Ronald McDonald House Charities RGV, Renaissance Cancer Foundation, Safe Have for Kids y Fallen Lineman Organization.

Ojalá que puedas ver a Magic Valley no solo como tu proveedor de servicios eléctrico, sino también como un negocio local que aporta orgullo y prosperidad a nuestra comunidad. Si estás interesado en tener más información sobre cómo mantenemos las luces encendidas y más, por favor visitanos en cualquiera de nuestras oficinas o llámanos. Nos encanta ser parte de esta comunidad y esperamos que tú también los disfrutes.

Respetuosamente,

John W. Herrera
General Manager
El interés en los vehículos eléctricos está ganando impulso. La exigencia de mayor millaje en términos de MPH (millas por hora) que empezó en la segunda mitad del siglo pasado se ha sumado a la exigencia de generar más millas por carga. Pero antes de profundizar en la evolución del transporte, hace falta un recuento de historia sobre los vehículos eléctricos.

El primer carro eléctrico fue desarrollado en 1837 en Aberdeen, Escocia. Los primeros modelos fueron alimentados por celdas galvánicas en lugar de pilas recargables. La batería de ácido sólido fue inventada en Francia en 1859 y después desarrollada por franceses que lo cual permitió su fabricación y producción en escala. En principio, aun cuando la mayoría de las carreteras estaban pavimentadas y la electricidad estaba disponible en todas de América, desde tranvías hasta carros, automóviles e incluso locomotoras. El amplio espectro de vehículos eléctricos, desde tranvías, hasta los precios están disminuyendo y el alcance se está ampliando, por lo que los propietarios pueden conducir confiadamente en casi todas las partes con un poco de planificación. Además de esto, los coches son simplemente fantásticos. El Tesla Model 3 cuenta un interior minimalista con todos los controles necesarios y la información que se presenta en una pantalla táctil de gran tamaño en el centro de la consola, en contraste con el uso de los instrumentos tradicionales.

Desafortunadamente, los avances en la tecnología de baterías están mejorando el asunto del alcance. El alcance está aumentando constantemente y los sistemas de administración de la batería están dando más millas. Al mismo tiempo, cada vez más compañías y empresas eléctricas están instalando estaciones de carga eficientes en sus instalaciones y en lugares públicos populares.

Aunque nunca has conducido un vehículo eléctrico, te va a encantar. Mientras que un motor de combustión interna aumenta la velocidad poco a poco, un vehículo eléctrico tiene pleno poder a su disposición al instante. Por supuesto, existen limitaciones a esta capacidad que pueden conducir a accidentes y para prevenir infracciones por exceso de velocidad. Son muy silenciosos, con interiores bien equipados y te permiten brincarte la fila de carros en las gasolineras, a menos que necesites comprar bocadillos o una raspa.

Una última recomendación, si compras un vehículo eléctrico, asegúrate de informar a tu cooperativa eléctrica. El servicio de tu casa está diseñado para satisfacer las demandas de energía. Los servicios sobrecargados pueden fallar y dejarle en la oscuridad, con un vehículo eléctrico descargado.

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**RECETA DEL MES**

**Puré de Papas Horneadas**

- 1 ¾ libras de papas, de preferencia “russet”
- 1 diente de ajo picado
- 1 ½ cucharadita de sal
- 1 lata (14.5 onzas) de puré de camote (sweet potato), escurrida
- 4 onzas de queso crema suavizado
- 3 rebanadas de tocino, cocido y desmenuzado
- ½ taza de crema agria (sour cream)
- ½ taza de caldo de pollo
- ¼ de cucharadita de pimienta negra

1. Precalienta el horno a 350 grados. Engrasa un recipiente cuadrado para hornear de 9-pulgadas.
2. Hierve las papas con el ajo hasta que estén suaves, luego escúrrelas.
3. Agrega los ingredientes restantes y bate con la batidora hasta que todo esté mezclado.

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**Feliz Día de Acción de Gracias**

Les desea Magic Valley Electric Cooperative

Nuestras oficinas estarán cerradas jueves y viernes, 23 y 24 de noviembre, para celebrar las fiestas.
La Playa Boca Chica: 
Donde la Carretera Termina

Por Eileen Mattei | Fotografías por: Anita Westervelt

Para unas vacaciones locales de invierno, dirígete hacia el este en el Boca Chica Blvd. de Brownsville y Highway 4 para vislumbrar el pasado y el futuro y aparte descubrir una playa aislada, repleta de conchas marinas. El trayecto de 22 millas desde la ciudad más grande del Valle a través del paisaje costero termina junto con el pavimento en la playa Boca Chica, a poco metros de las aguas del Golfo de México. Como la mayoría de los viajes, parte de la diversión es llegar allí.

Unas 10 millas al este del International Blvd., un anuncio te invita a sintonizar 1610 AM para escuchar un podcast de 10 minutos acerca del Palmito Ranch National Historic Landmark. La última batalla de la Guerra Civil se peleó aquí, aunque tanto las tropas confederadas como las de la unión sabían que la guerra había terminado. Voltea a la derecha hacia Palmito Ranch Road y te encontrarás rodeado de llanuras costeras, de tunas y de halcones posados en postes. A la derecha, al bajar la loma y casi escondido, hay un mirador para apreciar la vista. De regreso por el Highway 4, estacionante para poder leer más de cerca los anuncios informativos acerca de Palmito Ranch y Boca Chica, con un práctico mapa.

Al seguir por el camino, podrás ver el centro de UTRGV Center of Advanced Radio Astronomy (Centro de Astronomía Radial Avanzada) en construcción. Cerca, una enorme parabólica blanca, protegida por una cerca de gran altura y tunas, tiene un anuncio que dice Space X South Texas Ground Tracking Station, que significa estación de rastreo de tierra del sur de Texas.

Más adelante, un marcador histórico de piedra se encuentra entre los agaves. Algunas cuantas palmeras bajas son restos de una vía de ferrocarril que el Gral. Phil Sheridan construyó en Boca Chica después de la Guerra Civil. Con binoculares, alcanzarás a ver unos pilotes de ciprés a 1,000 pies de distancia, restos del puente flotante construido por el General Zachary Taylor para transportar suministros durante la guerra Mexicano-Americana. Al sur, una cerca de seguridad rodea la propiedad de SpaceX, pero no hay estructuras visibles, aunque el primer lanzamiento está previsto para finales de 2018.

Grandes garzas azules posan para fotos en las dunas de Boca Chica, enmarcadas por las plantas conocidas como avena de mar y flores de ipomea. Aunque Boca Chica fue una vez un pase de marea, fue invadida de arena después que se abriera el canal para barcos de Brownsville en 1936. Al menos entre semana, pocas personas vienen a tranquilidad de Boca Chica, así que puedes empezarte a sentir como náufrago o Gilligan en una isla privada. El Río Grande se encuentra aproximadamente cinco millas hacia el sur y el Paso Brazos Santiago está unas 6 millas hacia el norte.
Aunque puedes conducir por la playa si la arena se encuentra compactada (primero verifica), la manera más agradable de disfrutar de este lugar solitario es caminar por la playa, detenerte para explorar los misterios que ha traído la corriente. Las y los buscadores de conchas pueden encontrar más ejemplares en el invierno que en el verano por una razón. Las criaturas de los mares tropicales – como las hidras, erizos, moluscos – que viven en las aguas del sur mueren cuando el agua se enfría en el invierno. El agua arroja las conchas a la playa de diciembre a marzo.

Además de conchas, algunas criaturas vivientes llegan a la playa, como la magnífica medusa botón azul que encontramos. (Ten cuidado, porque algunos bichos pueden picar o irritar tu piel.) Troncos secos pulidos por el agua llegan a la playa cubiertos de percebes: conchas blancas enmarcadas en color naranja. Las semillas “ojos de venado” que cayeron de las ramas de los árboles del Amazonas o ríos de América Central, son arrojadas a la playa por las corrientes ecuatoriales hacia el norte. Llamados así por su apariencia, los “frijoles marinos” pueden incluir diversas semillas interesantes de árboles del sur de México y otros países tropicales. Puedes encontrar semillas con forma de corazón, de crucifijo y de cerebro, entre otros. La corriente también trae escombros y basuras que fueron arrojados a la costa como boyas, botellas y cuerdas.

La tranquilidad que hay en lo que es prácticamente una playa privada es difícil de superar. Lleva contigo una canasta de picnic con comida, equipo de pesca y cualquier otra cosa que necesites. La Playa Boca Chica no es parque estatal ni del condado, así que cuenta con cero comodidades. Al dirigirte de regreso casa, después del punto de revisión del CBP, voltea a la izquierda en Oklahoma Ave (FM 14910) y llegarás al santuario de palmas sabal (Sabal Palms Sanctuary). Una muestra de las últimas palmas sabal nativas del Valle salpica esta reserva de fauna silvestre, que cuenta con una estación de alimentación para aves atestada de chara verdes (green jays), chachalacas además de jardines con mariposas. Entre los varios senderos para elegir, una corta vereda te lleva a una plataforma de observación sobre el Río Grande.

Miles de personas viajan al Valle para disfrutar de nuestro clima semi-tropical durante el invierno. Lleva a tu familia y dedica un día para visitar la playa Boca Chica.
A tantalizing aroma floats through Victoria Cappadona’s kitchen, where mesquite bean pods are simering. She offers me a taste of the warm Cappadona Ranch mesquite jelly she creates from an infusion of mesquite pods mixed with lemon, sugar and pectin. The silky, amber jelly melts on my tongue and makes me want to eat it by the spoonful. Imagine honey collected from hives in a sun-drenched grove of flowering mesquites.

When city girl Victoria Barrera from McAllen married into a Hidalgo County ranching family (members of Magic Valley Electric Cooperative), she asked her father-in-law about uses for all the mesquite beans. Fred Cappadona told her that cattle and wildlife eat them. Years ago, he explained, he heard stories about Native Americans and early settlers making flour from the pods and medicinal remedies from the tree’s leaves, sap and bark.

In 2012, while researching traditional uses of mesquite, Victoria Cappadona found that mesquite concoctions, lotions and teas had long been used for fevers, burns, wounds, headaches, eye inflammations and digestive problems. The potential use of mesquite beans in recipes captured her attention.

“A who would have thought mesquite would be so amazing a food? The shell is what has the natural sugar and flavor of the mesquite,” she explains. “The natural fructose means it doesn’t initially require insulin to break it down. And since it takes hours to metabolize, you don’t get sugar spikes.” Nutritional studies have revealed that mesquite beans have a low glycemic index and are high in fiber, calcium and iron.

Victoria Cappadona perfected a mesquite bean jelly recipe and made jars for family and friends. As demand soared, she developed another mesquite jelly with chile pequin that balances sweet and hot. She designed the Cappadona Ranch Mesquite Bean Jelly logo and began selling both varieties at livestock shows, festivals and online.

“Many older people say, ‘Oh, my gosh, that jelly reminds me of when I was a kid chewing on a mesquite bean,’” said Cappadona’s husband, Justin. And her father, a retired physician, recalled eating mesquite pods as candy. That’s no surprise, since the pods’ sugar content can reach 30 percent.

During June and July, the Cappadonas and their three sons—Cayetano, 15; Federico, 13; and Vicente, 10—harvest mesquite beans on the 2,500-acre ranch. “A good mesquite looks like a Christmas tree covered in golden pods,” she said. Justin Cappadona drives the front-end loader fitted with a railed platform where the boys stand and harvest the beans. In 2016, they picked enough to fill sixteen 55-gallon drums. That supplies enough for all the flour, tea, coffee and jelly they produce in a year. About 2 pounds of beans can be simmered into enough jelly for more than 100 eight-ounce jars.

“The kids are learning re-
sponsibility and the value of a dollar,” Victoria Cappadona said. “We have a limited window for picking, so when there is work to be done, they need to help out. When they are involved, they appreciate the results more.”

Victoria Cappadona sun-dries the pods and stores them to make jelly year-round. “Heaven knows we have enough mesquite trees to do that.” Previously, even after doubling production every year, she ran out of jelly before Christmas. She has moved the operation to a commercial kitchen in McAllen to accommodate growth.

The website, cappadonaranch.com, offers Victoria’s video recipes, including mesquite flour pancakes. “The nut-flavored flour, ground from the whole bean, is great for baking and gluten-free,” she said. “You replace one cup of wheat flour with one-quarter to one-half cup of mesquite flour. The pancakes taste so nutty and sweet, they don’t need syrup.”

An accident led to another tasty product. “The boys were squabbling, a delivery man was at the door and beans were drying in the oven. When I got back to the beans, they were roasted,” Victoria Cappadona said. Recalling a story that Civil War soldiers made camp coffee from roasted mesquite beans, she decided to grind the pods in a coffee grinder and brew them. The result was a savory, high-protein coffee substitute. She also ground roasted mesquite seeds for tea. “With their natural sugar, the tea and coffee provide an energy rush without caffeine.

“We suspected mesquite’s nutritional value was remarkable, but we wanted proof—and got it,” she said, thanks to a McAllen Chamber of Commerce Innovation Grant. It enabled Cappadona Ranch to order nutritional studies that cost $1,000 per product. A USDA Value-Added Producer Grant helped buy ingredients and packaging. The brand participates in the Texas Department of Agriculture’s Go Texan program, which promotes the state’s products.

While cattlemen might have a love-hate relationship with the mesquite tree itself, Cappadona Ranch has transformed the tree’s beans into delectable native Texan foods.

Eileen Mattei, a member of Nueces and Magic Valley ECs, lives in Harlingen.
Incredibly rare find is now available to the public for ONLY $59!

For centuries, the “Big Four”—diamonds, rubies, emeralds and sapphires—ruled the gem world. When tanzanite debuted in 1967, it was a sensation. Unlike those other stones, which are mined all over the world, tanzanite can be found in only one place on Earth: in the remote Merelani Hills in the shadow of Mt. Kilimanjaro in Tanzania, Africa.

Gem of the century meets deal of the century. With its remarkable rarity and unique gemstone qualities, it’s no wonder that experts have dubbed it, “the gemstone of the 20th century.” In recent years, top-quality tanzanite gems have fetched higher prices at auction than rubies, emeralds or diamonds! But because we buy direct and use our own designers, we are able to offer you this rare beauty for ONLY $59!

What makes tanzanite so irresistible to jewelers and gem experts? Part of its appeal is the beautiful violet blue color. Tanzanite is also trichroic—which means that three different colors are visible when the stone is viewed from different angles. A gemstone found only one place on earth, means supply is extremely limited. Get your hands on the Karatu Tanzanite Ring before they’re gone!

Your satisfaction is 100% guaranteed. Experience the rare beauty of the Karatu Tanzanite Ring for two months. If you’re not completely awestruck, simply send it back within 30 days for a complete refund of the sale price. We want you to feel like you got the deal of the century!

With over 4,000 sold, we currently have less than 2,000 in stock!

Karatu Tanzanite Ring $399*
Offer Code Price Only $59 + S&P Save $340!

You must use the insider offer code to get our special price.

1-800-333-2045

Your Offer Code: KTR316-02
Please use this code when you order to receive your discount.

Henry Platt, past president and chairman of Tiffany & Company, called Tanzanite “The most important gemstone discovery in over 2,000 years.”

A gemstone found only one place on earth, means supply is extremely limited. Get your hands on the Karatu Tanzanite Ring before they’re gone!

Your satisfaction is 100% guaranteed. Experience the rare beauty of the Karatu Tanzanite Ring for two months. If you’re not completely awestruck, simply send it back within 30 days for a complete refund of the sale price. We want you to feel like you got the deal of the century!

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Beauty from the beast. Also known as “America’s Emerald,” helenite is not an emerald at all, but a brighter and clearer green stone that gem cutters can facet into spectacular large carat weight jewelry. “It’s just recently that luxury jewelers have fallen in love with helenite,” says James Fent, GIA certified gemologist. “Clear green color in a stone this size is rarely found in emeralds but helenite has come to the rescue.”

Your satisfaction is 100% guaranteed. Bring home the Spirit Lake Helenite Ring and see for yourself. If you are not completely blown away by the exceptional beauty of this rare American stone, simply return the ring within 30 days for a full refund of your purchase price. It’s that simple. But we’re betting that once you slide this gorgeous green beauty on your finger, it will take a force of nature to get you two apart!

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Steel of Approval

At $49, this blade of Damascus steel is a real steal

Damascus steel is legendary. Tales of its unmatched strength, sharpness and durability ring through the ages. There are stories of gun rifles being sliced in two by Damascus steel swords and individual strands of hair being sliced in half, even if they gently floated down on to the edge of the blade.

Now, you can be a part of the legend. The Legend Knife boasts nearly 4” of famed Damascus steel with its signature, wavy pattern. Damascus steel blade knives can cost thousands. So, at $49, the price itself is almost legendary.

Cast Damascus steel, known as wootz, was popular in the East and it’s an exacting process that’s part metalwork, part chemistry. It’s produced by melting pieces of iron and steel with charcoal in a low oxygen environment. During the process, the metals absorb carbon from the charcoal and the resulting alloy is cooled at a very slow rate. The outcome is a beautiful one-of-a-kind pattern of banding and mottling reminiscent of flowing water.

Once a lost art, we sought out a knifemaker who has resurrected the craftsmanship of Damascus steel to create the Legend Knife. The genuine Damascus steel blade folds into a tri-colored pakkawood handle that’s prepared to resist the ravages of the great outdoors. When not in use or on display, The Legend Knife stays protected in the included genuine leather sheath.

“If you have a Damascus steel blade knife, you have a knife blade with unique beauty. With its historical reputation as the metal used for the best swords over hundreds of years, and its distinctive wavy design, Damascus steel is a beauty to behold.”

— knifeart.com

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When King Carlos III took the Spanish throne in 1759, he vowed to increase Spain’s influence in the European scientific community and diversify the Spanish economy. With these ideas in mind, Carlos ordered officials to ship him foreign creatures from all over the world so he could display them in his personal zoos. According to Bradley Folsom’s article *An Interesting and Odd Present* in *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* [July 2016], Carlos acquired alligators, monkeys, anteaters, leopard cubs, iguanas and a hermaphroditic horse. But he longed to possess a herd of American bison, which he planned to domesticate for their wool and “tasty meat” and for use as draft animals.

The bison had other ideas.

Texas, then a part of New Spain, seemed the most likely place to capture the animals, and the king sent word to acquire and transport as many American bison as possible. The order landed on the desk of Texas Gov. Domingo Cabello y Robles, who sent an experienced hunter, Carlos Rioja, to capture the animals alive, drive them hundreds of miles to Veracruz and launch them on a voyage to Spain. Had he consulted Native Americans, he would have known that a herd of cantankerous bison, when threatened, scatters in every direction.

Europe has bison, but they are smaller and lack the pronounced hump, low-hanging head, short horns and wooly coats of American bison, which had been described by Spanish explorers as “large hump-backed animals with very long beards like goats, tails they carry erect like a scorpion when running and hair rough as a lion’s mane but wooly like a sheep.”

In May 1779, Rioja gathered some assistants from the San Antonio area along with “substantial provisions” provided by the governor and set out on a bison roundup. They were successful in locating and capturing bison; the difficulty came when they tried to drive the animals across the plains. Rioja discovered that the bison were inclined to “kill themselves in anger” when restrained, or succumbed to heat stroke along the way. The herders arrived at their destination with only a single female.

Rioja’s second expedition did slightly better, rounding up 20 animals. But the searing June heat winnowed them out on the trail, and only two 6-month-old calves reached San Antonio. This dismal record prompted a decision to wait for winter to launch a third expedition. In the interim, ranchers in La Bahía sent word that they had captured four bison.

“It is impossible to explain to Your Lordship,” the governor wrote on January 10, 1780, “the pains I am taking to ensure success, sparing no expense or other requirement, for it is my hope to pursue the delight of serving and pleasing Your Lordship.”

Cabello assigned an officer and well-known hunter to escort the six remaining animals to the ship. Four of the six died, leaving a single male and a female for the king. Recognizing the stakes, the officer suspended the animals in leather harnesses in the hold of the ship to keep them from harming themselves, fed them corn and soaked them with water every day to avoid overheating. In spite of these extreme measures, the male bison died upon arrival in the Spanish port of Cádiz.

Carlos developed a great fondness for the remaining animal, moving it to the royal family’s spring residence, where it joined camels, ostriches, an elephant and other exotic animals. A sculpture of the buffalo graced the estate’s entrance. The military officer who escorted the buffalo to Spain remained until the animal died in 1784, whereupon he was promoted to the rank of lieutenant and given a reward of 10,000 reales and return passage to Texas.

“It has always been customary for monarchs to display their greatness by keeping the rarest and most unusual species of animals, plants and fruits from other countries in their palaces and royal houses,” says Carlos Gómez-Centurión in his article *Treasures Fit for a King*, but European courts were hard-pressed to secure America’s largest land mammal for their collections.

Martha Deeringer, a member of Heart of Texas EC, lives near McGregor.
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Thanksgiving Side Dishes

When it comes to Thanksgiving, often you’re either in it for the main event—a gorgeous roasted turkey—or for the side dishes. I dream about giblet gravy, stuffing and mashed potatoes that round out the table. The other essential item on our menu is cranberry relish: I love how the burst of color and tart-sweet flavor brightens a meal that tends to be mostly beige. Best of all, this recipe can be made ahead and refrigerated up to a week in advance, meaning one less thing on the turkey-day to-do list. We wish you a happy and healthy Thanksgiving!

PAULA DISBROWE, FOOD EDITOR

Paula’s Cranberry Relish

1 pound fresh or thawed frozen cranberries
1½ cups dried sour cherries or dried cranberries
1½ cups sugar
½ cup red wine (or pure, unsweetened cranberry juice)
2 pods star anise
1 cinnamon stick
½ cup freshly squeezed Satsuma tangerine juice (or orange juice)
½ teaspoon kosher salt

1. In a heavy medium saucepan, combine all the ingredients and bring to a simmer over medium heat. Cook the sauce about 10–15 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the cranberries burst and the texture becomes thick and jam-like.

2. Use a spatula to transfer the sauce into a heatproof bowl and let cool completely. Season with salt to taste and refrigerate until chilled.

3. Serve the sauce cold or at room temperature. Remove cinnamon stick and star anise just before serving.

COOK’S TIP The sauce will thicken upon standing. Stir in a few tablespoons of water, if desired, for a thinner consistency.
Thanksgiving Side Dishes

THIS MONTH’S RECIPE CONTEST WINNER

BETSY KUEBLER | FARMERS EC

“This ultrarich, incredibly delicious side has all the smooth consistency of silk,” says Kuebler. Texas Co-op Power staff loved the versatility: The custard-like pie could be flavored with sliced scallions and fresh cilantro, cubed ham or crumbled bacon, roasted red peppers or countless other options.

Cornsilk Pudding Pie

Ingredients:
- 3 eggs
- 1 cup heavy cream
- ¼ cup (½ stick) butter, melted
- 1½ teaspoon each black pepper and cayenne pepper, or less, as desired for heat
- 1 pound frozen corn kernels, thawed
- 2 cups shredded sharp cheddar cheese
- 1 cup grated Parmesan cheese

Directions:
1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Lightly mist interior of a 9-inch pie dish with nonstick cooking spray (or lightly coat with olive oil or butter).
2. In a large mixing bowl, beat together the eggs, cream, butter and seasonings. Stir in corn.
3. Pour half of corn mixture into prepared pie dish. Sprinkle cheddar cheese over corn mixture. Pour remaining corn mixture over cheddar layer. Sprinkle with Parmesan.
4. Bake 50 minutes, or until set.
Makes one 9-inch pie.

Sweet Potato Casserole

Ingredients:
- 2–3 medium sweet potatoes (2½–3 pounds)
- 1 cup evaporated milk
- 1 cup sugar
- 6 tablespoons (¾ stick) butter, melted
- 2 eggs, lightly beaten
- ½ teaspoon nutmeg
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon vanilla

Topping:
- 1 cup crushed cornflakes
- ½ cup light brown sugar
- ½ cup chopped pecans
- 6 tablespoons (¾ stick) butter, melted

Directions:
1. Preheat oven to 425 degrees.
2. SWEET POTATOES: Bring a large saucepan of water to a boil. While the water heats, peel the sweet potatoes and slice them into 1½-inch cubes. Add the sweet potatoes and 1 teaspoon salt to the boiling water, reduce heat to a lively simmer and cook until the sweet potatoes are tender when pierced with a knife, about 7–9 minutes. Drain and mash potatoes.
3. Combine the mashed sweet potatoes, evaporated milk, sugar, butter, eggs, nutmeg, cinnamon, vanilla and salt; mix well. Use a spatula to transfer the mixture to a 9-by-12-inch baking dish. Bake about 15 minutes.
4. TOPPING: While the potatoes are baking, combine the cornflakes, brown sugar, pecans and butter in a small bowl and mix well. Use a spatula to transfer the mixture to a 9-by-12-inch baking dish. Bake about 15 minutes more, until the topping is golden brown.
5. Remove sweet potatoes from oven, lower the heat to 400 degrees and add the topping. Bake about 15 minutes more, until the topping is golden brown.
Serves 8–10.

COOK’S TIP To balance the sweet flavors in this casserole, generously season the sweet potatoes with kosher salt when you mash them.
Zucchini Gratin Casserole  
KATHI BURTON | PEDEÑALES EC  
The ingredients in Burton’s casserole come together in a particularly rich, creamy base. Buttery crackers and Gruyere create a delicious, crunchy topping. (Or you can use Parmesan or sharp cheddar.) Mix up the vegetables with yellow crookneck squash or a few sweet red peppers.

| 2 tablespoons olive oil | ½ teaspoon ground black pepper |
| ½ cup chopped onion | ½ teaspoon nutmeg |
| 3 large zucchini, stemmed and cut into 1-inch cubes | ½ teaspoon hot or smoked paprika (optional) |
| 1 teaspoon salt | 1 tablespoon flour |
| ½ cup milk, heated | ½ cup mayonnaise |
| ¼ cup crushed butter crackers | ½ cup grated Gruyere cheese |

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Heat olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat; add onion and sauté until light brown. Add the zucchini and seasonings. Cook until squash is browned and barely tender, about 6–8 minutes.
3. Sprinkle in flour and cook about 2 minutes, stirring constantly, until the vegetables are coated. Pour in the milk and continue stirring until mixture thickens. Remove from heat and stir in mayonnaise. Pour the mixture into a 1½-quart baking dish.
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Focus on Texas

Into the Woods

Over the river and through the woods, our readers love the thrill of adventure—and, boy, do they have an eye for nature! They rooted around and dug up more good stuff than you can shake a stick at.

GRACE ARSIAGA

WEB EXTRAS » See more photos online.

▲ JACK MILCHANOWSKI, Wise EC: A cougar stalks prey in the woods.

► SARAH ELKINS, Wood County EC: “Sunday afternoon at Tyler State Park.”

▼ STEVE STEGER, Karnes EC: “A lone fisherman out at sunrise in a cypress forest at Caddo Lake.”

▲ LINDA BRANNEN, Pedernales EC: “Seaside to Indian Beach, Oregon, is a portion of the Lewis and Clark trail.”

► BOBBY NORRIS, Pedernales EC: “Small wooden footbridge leading into the woods at Rocky Mountain National Park.”

UPCOMING CONTESTS

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All entries must include name, address, daytime phone and co-op affiliation, plus the contest topic and a brief description of your photo.

ONLINE: Submit highest-resolution digital images at TexasCoopPower.com/contests. MAIL: Focus on Texas, 1122 Colorado St., 24th Floor, Austin, TX 78701. A stamped, self-addressed envelope must be included if you want your entry returned (approximately six weeks). Please do not submit irreplaceable photographs—send a copy or duplicate. We do not accept entries via email. We regret that Texas Co-op Power cannot be responsible for photos that are lost in the mail or not received by the deadline.

See more photos online.

TexasCoopPower.com November 2017 Texas Co-op Power 35
Around Texas

Event Calendar

Pick of the Month
Scottish Gathering & Highland Games
Salado November 10–12
(254) 947-5232, saladoscottishfestival.com
The gathering, which began in 1961 and is said to be the oldest Scottish festival in Texas, includes the skirl of the bagpipes, the wearing of the tartan, tossing the caber, highland dancing and Celtic entertainers. A main feature is the Clan Village, where Scottish clan members speak about history and genealogy.

November

7
Tyler First Tuesday in the Garden/Master Gardeners, (903) 590-2980, txmg.org/smith

8

9

10

11
Lucas Ribs n’ Raptors, (469) 964-9696, bpraptorcenter.org

Scottish Gathering & Highland Games
Salado November 10–12
(254) 947-5232, saladoscottishfestival.com

November 18
Jasper Lakes Area Cruisers Car Show

Schulenburg Freyburg UMC Country Christmas Bazaar, (979) 217-1151, freyburgumc.org/country-christmas-bazaar


16
Bedias Country Market and Baked Potato Supper, (936) 577-0536

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TEXAS Co-op Power November 2017
Submit Your Event!

We pick events for the magazine directly from TexasCoopPower.com. Submit your event for January by November 10, and it just might be featured in this calendar.
Many Texans have long been curious about the large carved heads found near Malakoff, population 2,300, on Texas Highway 31 in Henderson County.

Most visitors drive through Malakoff on their way to Athens or Corsicana. The town dates to the early 1800s and thrived with the arrival of a railroad and the discovery of lignite (brown coal) in 1912. In 1904, Malakoff had nine general stores, three hotels, two grocery stores, three drugstores, a furniture store, two lumberyards, three theaters, a brick company, a butcher shop, six doctors, two barbers, an undertaker and nine builders.

To understand the area’s greatest natural mystery, I check in with Pat Isaacson, director of the Malakoff Historical Society and Museum. The museum occupies a grand house on East Main Street and contains exact casts of the three heads designated as “the Malakoff Man.”

Isaacson explains that in 1929, Thomas Bartlett, owner of Malakoff Pressed Brick Company (now Acme Brick Company), sent a crew to the Trinity River for a load of gravel. The workers knew when they found a 98-pound, 16-inch-long sculpture of a head that “they had something valuable. They brought it back to Mr. Bartlett,” Isaacson says.

Bartlett displayed the head in his store until mining engineer V.C. Doctorman contacted the Texas Memorial Museum in Austin.

According to the Texas State Historical Association, Elias Howard Sellards, geologist and paleontologist, inspected the head and proclaimed it authentic. From 1929 to 1939, “they found three heads and the remains of mastodons, camels and sloths as big as steers,” Isaacson says.

To view the original heads, I drive to Corsicana and visit the Pearce Museum at Navarro College. Ann Zembala, museum director, explains that one of the heads was donated to the museum several years ago by Mary Love Sanders, who had inherited the head from her great uncle, who owned the quarry where it was found.

With the help of state Rep. Byron Cook, the other two heads were moved to Corsicana from the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory at the University of Texas.

The exhibit also features 44,000 prehistoric Native American tools and relics, many used for hunting mammoths, buffalo and other animals.

According to the TSHA, Sellards believed the first head came from an Eocene geological formation dating 50,000–100,000 years ago and predates the first-known occupation of the continent by Paleo-Indians. More recent studies, however, show the deposit is Late Pleistocene and dates the heads to the era of the Paleo-Indians. As noted in the Handbook of Texas, other experts place the finds in the Archaic period, 3,000–4,000 years ago, based on a vague similarity to the colossal heads found along the Gulf and made by craftsmen of the Olmec civilization.

Some authorities ignore the validity of the Malakoff Man, while skeptics believe modern metal tools were used to carve the first head.

Another question arises because no other relics were unearthed with the heads. The excavation stopped in 1939 after discovery of the third head. The excavation site was inundated by Cedar Creek Reservoir, a recreational site north of Malakoff. Because no further excavation or research can take place, there always will be speculation surrounding the Malakoff Man. The mystery will remain.

Marilyn Jones lives in Henderson and writes about travel.
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Now, you can support your Aggies® and show your pride in style with a new jewelry exclusive—the “Texas A&M Aggies® Collector’s Watch” available only from The Bradford Exchange. This striking team watch is hand-crafted in a bold design enhanced with the team colors and logo on the dial. The watch features 3 sub-dials to track seconds, minutes and hours, and a date window. Styled with a brushed silver-tone stainless steel bracelet, bezel, hands and hour markers, the watch’s Precision Quartz Movement provides dependable accuracy while the adjustable “C-clasp” allows for a comfortable fit. Etched on the stainless steel case back is the university logo, name, and the founding year and the side is etched with “12TH MAN®!”. It’s also water resistant up to 3 ATMs.

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An impressive way to show your team loyalty and pride, or a wonderful gift for a Texas A&M Aggies® fan that you know, the watch comes with Certificate of Authenticity in a custom presentation case. An exceptional value at $149*, you can pay for it in 5 easy monthly installments of $29.80.

To reserve your watch, backed by our unconditional, money-back, 120-day guarantee and a full-year limited warranty, send no money now; just fill out and send in the Priority Reservation. But don’t delay... this is a limited-time offer not available in stores!

Comes in a custom-designed case

*For information on sales tax you may owe to your state, go to bradfordexchange.com/use-tax.

www.bradfordexchange.com/20886

PRIORITY RESERVATION SEND NO MONEY NOW

9345 Milwaukee Avenue · Niles, IL 60714-1393

YES. Please reserve the “Texas A&M Aggies® Collector’s Watch” for me as described in this announcement. Please Respond Promptly

Signature

Mrs. Mr. Ms.

Name (Please Print Clearly)

Address

City State Zip

Email (optional)

*Plus a total of $11.98 shipping and service (see bradfordexchange.com). Please allow 4-6 weeks after initial payment for shipment of your jewelry item. Sales subject to product availability and order acceptance.

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An Officially Licensed Custom Jewelry Design

Etched on the back with the team logo, name and the year the university was founded—1876

Etched on the side with 12TH MAN®!
YOU WEREN’T BORN IN A BARN, BUT YOU CAN LIVE IN ONE.

There’s probably nothing more popular right now than barndominiums. Texans have always loved to do things in a unique way and their choice of living spaces is no different.

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