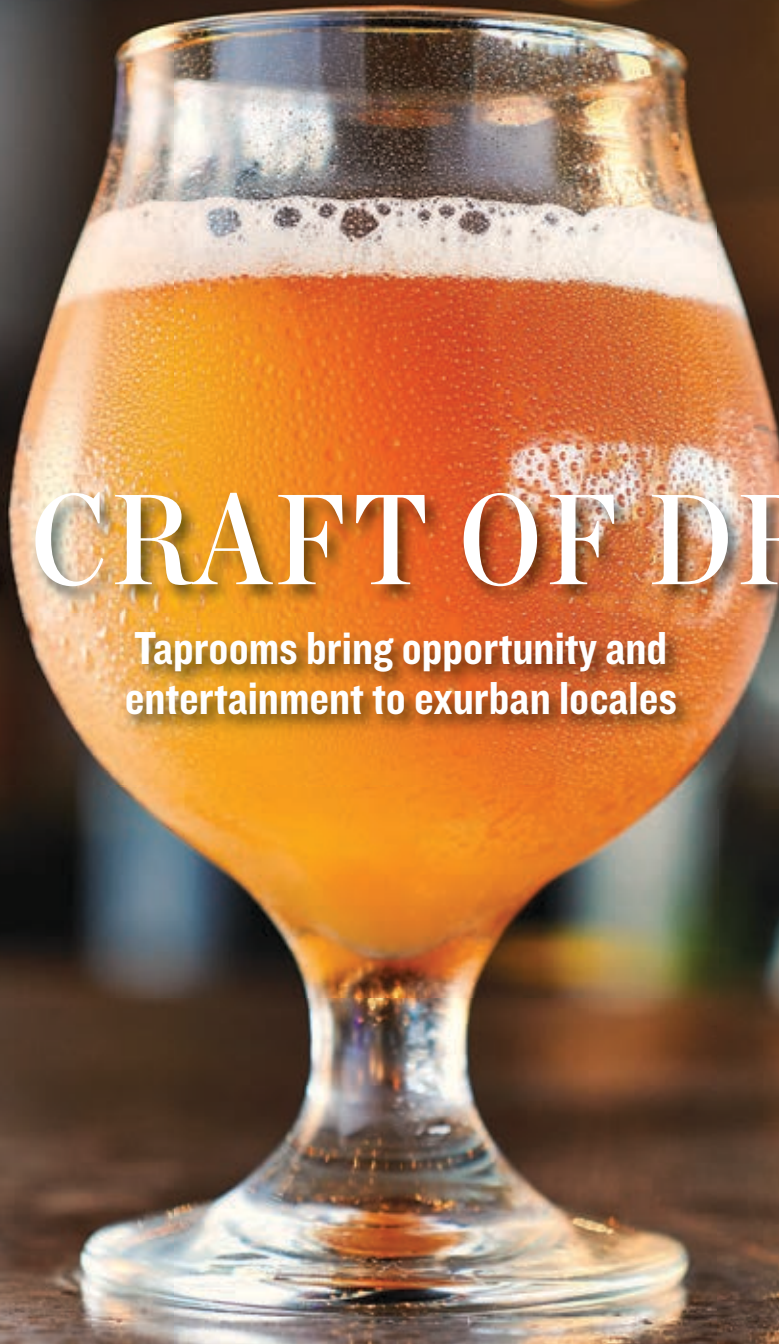


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Liz Cox pours a Mexican lager at Bandera Ale Project.

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Craft breweries bring entertainment and economic opportunity to exurban communities.

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ON THE COVER Nearly 300 craft breweries operate in Texas, representing a \$5.3 billion industry. Photo by Dave Shafer

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— Sherri H., Granville, NY



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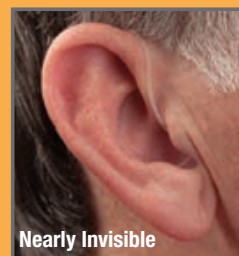
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Not 10 and 2?

Great nostalgic writing [*Ranch Hands on the Wheel*, October 2019]. I can go further back when there were NO seatbelts and hands on steering wheel position was 3 and 9.

VIVIAN WILLIS | VIA FACEBOOK

Honor Our Vets

Wreaths Across America [November 2018] prompted me to donate wreaths for this nationwide organization. This is a fantastic opportunity to honor our vets, and I will be donating again this year. I am hoping the follow-up article [*Leader of Kind Strangers*, November 2019] about Ellen Fuller, co-chair of this statewide effort in Texas, will encourage more people to donate.

JOYCE HISER | CRANDALL TRINITY VALLEY EC

Stagecoach Secrets

I was once afforded access to areas off-limits to the general public, including the rooms and attic of the original Stagecoach Inn building [*Stopping by the Stagecoach*, November 2019]. That was neat enough, but the real treat was a hidden cave that was originally used for vegetable storage back in the 1800s. It was where Sam Bass hid out before leaving the next day for Round Rock, where he met his demise.

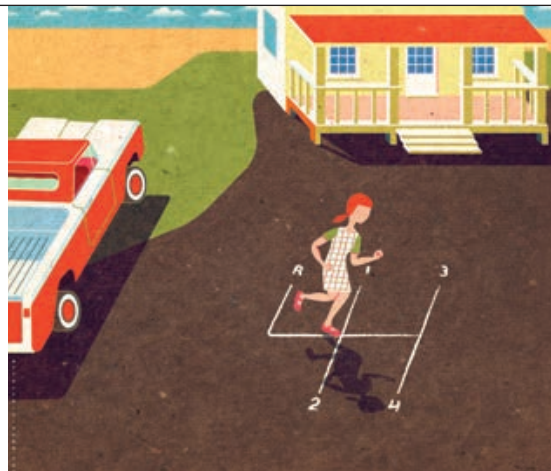
I treated myself to a scrumptious meal of fried catfish, which included the wonderful cornbread fingers that the inn is still famous for serving. Looks like a trip down Interstate 35 is in order.

BILL PEAKE | FRISCO COSERV

Fair Is Fair

Not only did my dad teach me how to drive a standard pickup but also to change a flat tire before I took driver's ed [*Ranch Hands on the Wheel*, October 2019]. But when the high school instructor said only us girls had to change one, I stated I knew how and felt the boys should also. I wasn't giving in (it was a requisite to take the written test), so in the end all the boys had to also. Even my cousin was mad at me, but I felt fair was fair.

PAMELA JONES MAASS | VIA FACEBOOK



Banner Day for Co-ops

Last year, I lost my husband, Bill Casey, and have been learning how to do so many things on my own. We had a strong windstorm last spring, and my flagpole got dislodged from its concrete mooring. Pedernales EC decided to take this on as a public service, and on October 8, workers came out in their trucks and reset and welded the flagpole back into position.

Before they left, we put up the Texas flag, and it was wonderful to see it flying in front of the house again.

KAREN CASEY | CYPRESS MILL PEDERNALES EC

Value of VFDs

My wife and I own our home and a 5-acre horse farm in rural Collin County. We also own a small cabin in Arkansas. Both houses are served by electric co-ops. Fire protection for both dwellings is provided by volunteer fire departments [*Putting Others First*, October 2019].

Each property owner in Arkansas served by a VFD is a member of the VFD and is assessed dues annually by state law. Payment of the dues is not mandatory, but if not paid by the member and a fire occurs, the member will be billed for the cost of responding to the fire.

I have contacted our state representative about having a similar dues requirement in Texas for VFDs but have not seen or heard of any action being taken on this matter.

JAMES TRUEMPER | FARMERSVILLE FANNIN COUNTY EC

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   Texas Co-op Power

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Dinner With the Arts

Since 1980, the Greater New Braunfels Arts Council has supported artists in New Braunfels and Comal County with events like last month's Caroling on the Plaza and annual Cinco de Mayo presentations in area schools. Another of the organization's signature events is Dinner With the Arts, which in recent years has become a fundraiser.

DINNER WITH THE ARTS, on **JANUARY 18** at the McKenna Events Center in **NEW BRAUNFELS**, will include a live band, visual arts, interactive exhibits and opportunities for patrons to sustain the organization through silent auctions, raffles and art sales.

Lisa Heymann, president of the council, says as many as 400 people attend the dinner each year in support of programs such as the Fall Into Art Festival and art and poetry contests.

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WEB EXTRAS
► Find more happenings online.

“Courage, after all, is not being unafraid but doing what needs to be done in spite of fear.”

— **JAMES L. FARMER JR.**, civil rights leader born January 12, 1920, in Marshall

2020 VISION



2020 doesn't look exactly like some people predicted it would many years ago.

Prediction: In 1967, *The Futurist*, then a newsletter, said humans would breed apes to be chauffeurs and perform other household chores.

Reality: Apes are struggling just to be apes. Close to 60% of the world's 504 primate species are threatened with extinction, and 75% of those species are in severe population decline, according to earthday.org.

Prediction: In 2020, humans arrive on Mars. So said *Wired* magazine in 1997.

Reality: NASA says it hopes to send astronauts to Mars, which is an average of 140 million miles from Earth, in the 2030s.

Prediction: “There will be no C, X, or Q in our everyday alphabet. They will be abandoned because unnecessary.” That's what engineer John Elfreth Watkins Jr. wrote in *Ladies' Home Journal* in 1900.

Reality: An exciting idea but quite incorrect.



POWER OF OUR PEOPLE

A Close-Knit Couple

ALTHEA AND JOHN CONRADO, Pedernales Electric Cooperative members since 1975, are in their seventh decade of marriage, have seven children and have together explored all seven continents. But Althea's luck seemed less certain in 1944, when the then 11-year-old raised the eyebrows and ire of a Red Cross worker.

The relief agency was at that time distributing yarn to volunteers to knit specialized gloves—with an open trigger finger—for Allied machine gunners overseas. Althea, who began knitting at age 5, wanted to contribute. But the aid worker she encountered pronounced her too young, to Althea's deep disappointment. A phone call from her mother to the agency sorted it, and she returned. "I can still see her face," Althea said. "She was so mad. And I came home with two big bags full of yarn!" She knitted the gloves, turned them in, then got some more yarn and kept knitting.

Though the product of Althea's knitting has today changed to blankets for Austin hospice patients, her pace hasn't slackened. She averages 1½ to two blankets

per week, each taking about 40 hours to make. Again last year, Althea was recognized by Travis County with a Spirit of Service Award, which honors volunteers for 2,000 hours of work—though she racks up more than 3,000 hours knitting annually.

John marvels at his wife's prolific output. "Some days it seems like they crank out of there faster, she's doing pink and next thing you know it's purple. What happened to the pink? It's purple!"

POWER OF OUR PEOPLE recognizes co-op members who improve their community's quality of life. Nominate someone by emailing people@texascooppower.com.

FINISH THIS SENTENCE

I knew I was grown up when . . .

We think it will be fun to show a little bit of our readers' personalities by asking you to finish a sentence that we start. As we collect your thoughts, we'll share them in the magazine and online.

We tried this ourselves, and here's what the writers and editors on our staff came up with:

Chris Burrows: ...I got socks for Christmas and was glad for it.

Travis Hill: ...my student loan servicer told me I'd be 60 before I paid off my debt.

Jessica Ridge: ...I couldn't move away from my college apartment without taking the heavily pregnant community cat with me.

Tom Widlowski: ...I bought my parents dinner for the first time.



► Now it's your turn.

How would you finish that sentence? Post your responses on the *Texas Co-op Power* Facebook page or email them to letters@texas-ec.org. Please include your city and co-op. We'll share what you send us.

MILESTONE BIRTHDAY

Everybody Look What's Going Down

For what it's worth, musician Stephen Stills of Buffalo Springfield and Crosby, Stills & Nash turns 75 this month. He wrote three hit songs decades ago that can still get stuck in your head today: *For What It's Worth*, *Suite: Judy Blue Eyes* and *Love the One You're With*.

He was born January 3, 1945, in Dallas.



Texas
= FEELS A =
Draft

STORY BY MELISSA GASKILL
PHOTOS BY DAVE SHAFER

Craft Breweries

BRING ENTERTAINMENT AND ECONOMIC
OPPORTUNITY TO COMMUNITIES

On a sunny fall afternoon, large overhead fans supplement a light breeze blowing through open doors. Several couples perch at a long bar, dogs sprawled on the concrete floor nearby. People group around tables, deep into spirited board games. Out the back door, others dig into plates of barbecue at shaded picnic tables.

Bandera Ale Project is one of a new breed of community gathering spots. All around Texas, craft breweries have become destinations where folks bring the family and the dog, and play games or listen to music or comedy acts. The adults taste new flavors and types of beers, observe the brewing process and even meet the brewmaster.

Nearly 300 craft breweries now operate in Texas, representing a \$5.3 billion slice of the state's economy. Texas produces more craft beer than all but seven other states but ranks 46th in breweries per capita.

Josh Hare of Hops & Grain Brewing in Austin and chairman of the Texas Craft Brewers Guild board says several challenges have hampered the Texas industry. "When we opened Hops & Grain in 2011, it was not legal to operate a tasting room," he says. "The beer you poured had to be free." Brewers got around that by selling the glasses into which they poured beer. Then legislation passed in 2013 allowed brewers to sell beer on-site.

"From 2013 forward, we went from a dozen or so breweries to more than 70 just in Austin," Hare says.

The 2019 Legislature allowed manufacturing breweries to sell beer to go. Before that, Texas had been the only state that prohibited sales of six-packs or growlers (reusable bottles) for customers to take home. Other limits remain, though, in-

Opposite: John Oliver, brewmaster at Bandera Ale Project. Above: After a day of preparing their hunting camp, Jezire and Brent Akin treat themselves to Bandera Ale Project beers.



cluding how much product a brewery can distribute, Hare explains.

The Texas brewing industry comprises three tiers—manufacturing, distribution and retail—with specific rules for each. A manufacturing brewery that produces fewer than 225,000 barrels annually can operate a tasting room and sell on-site only. A brewpub, considered retail, can make and sell beer for

consumption on-site or off-site but only up to 10,000 barrels per year. Hops & Grain is about to reach that size, Hare says. "Do we give up the ability to sell beer to go in order to make more?"

Meanwhile, beer tourism has grown across the state, Hare points out, and that growth means more manufacturing jobs. "This is a manufacturing industry that employs a lot of folks," he says. "The retail components of craft breweries, from live entertainment to food trucks and tour groups, create additional jobs."

Bandera Ale Project, a member of Bandera Electric Cooperative, stages music every Saturday and prefers to hire local artists, says co-owner and brewmaster John Oliver. "We have music, comedy, open mic, karaoke. And we're family friendly," he says. "We cultivate that atmosphere; we're not your typical bar."

The brewery, about 50 miles northwest of San Antonio, offers free Wi-Fi, too, using Bandera EC's high-speed fiber internet. Communication specialist Samantha Gleason says BEC Fiber launched about the time the brewery opened. "Bandera Brewery added more of a community space to the area," she says. "And they contribute to support of local businesses, instead of buying from a bar that gets its product from outside the community."

Some craft breweries also play a role in revitalization efforts by restoring old, abandoned buildings. In downtown Lockhart, Caracara Brewing Company occupies a formerly empty historic building. In the North Texas town of Nocona, Nocona Beer & Brewery took over a former boot factory.



Craft brewing could bring jobs to the agriculture industry in Texas as well. Four basic ingredients go into making beer: hops, barley, water and yeast. Craft brewers use more hops than mass-produced beers, according to Neil Reid, the “beer professor” at the University of Toledo. For example, an imperial India pale ale style of beer uses 4 pounds of hops per keg, while a traditional pilsner uses less than half a pound. Small brewers also use hops to create unique flavors, while mass-produced beers focus on hop varieties that provide consistency of taste.

Even though most barley comes from outside Texas, Quentin Hart of the National Agricultural Statistics Service says that between 2012 and 2017, the number of acres of barley harvested in Texas increased nearly 93%.

Barley used in beer is malted, which involves steeping the grain in water under controlled conditions, allowing it to sprout, then drying it.

WEB EXTRAS

► Read this story on our website to see a map of small-town craft breweries in Texas.

Cory Artho is co-owner of Maverick Malt House, 20 miles west of Amarillo, one of several malting houses operating in the state. Price is his biggest challenge. Malt from Canada, which produces millions of tons, sells for 40 or 50 cents a pound. “We have a 5-ton

Above: The old Nocona Boots factory is now home to Nocona Beer & Brewery. Right: Jody Jones serves conviviality by the pint at Nocona.





*“We have music, comedy,
open mic, karaoke.
And we’re family-friendly.”*

**WE CULTIVATE THAT ATMOSPHERE;
WE’RE NOT YOUR TYPICAL BAR.”**

machine, and if we ran it year-round, we might make 400,000 pounds,” he says. That smaller volume means Maverick must charge 80 cents a pound.

Still, the idea of local ingredients appeals to Texas brewers. Southerleigh Fine Food and Brewery in San Antonio makes the only all-Texas beer, Artho says. Texas Born and Bred, a pale ale, contains his barley, hops from Hank’s Hops in San Antonio, which grows the flowers hydroponically in a greenhouse, and yeast from Texas Yeast Lab in New Braunfels.

Beyond hops and barley, going local becomes easier. Oliver says that for its honey brown ale, Bandera Ale Project uses Doyle’s Honey, produced by Kent Doyle, a member of Medina Electric Cooperative. Its coffee porter uses coffee beans from Texas.

Jim and Carly Baroffio opened the Bandera brewery in November 2017, and Oliver joined shortly thereafter. “This location was the perfect place to put a brewery because we had access to the property behind for a beer garden,” Oliver says. “You couldn’t find a property big enough for the garden in San Antonio or even on Main Street in Bandera.”

Bandera Ale Project offers barbecue from Busbee’s Bar-B-Que on Main Street. “We wanted someone from Bandera, to make it like a small second location,” Oliver says. “They cook all the food at the main location and bring it here.”

All the fun aside, craft brewing is, bottom line, about the beer. Texas beers snapped up 29—including 11 gold—of the more than 400 medals awarded at the 2019 U.S. Open Beer Championship, where Fredericksburg’s Altstadt Brewery ranked as one of the top 10 breweries overall.

Bandera Ale Project attended its first competition, the Great American Beer Festival, in Denver in October. “Back when we started, we had just two beers on tap, a blonde ale and a honey brown ale, and sometimes we ran out of one because we only had one fermenter,” Oliver says. “After a few months, we got two more fermenters and had four beers on tap, then eight. We bought two more and now have 14 beers on tap. It’s been a learning process. People still come by just for those first two beers, though.”

That hard work has made beer a good reason for people to visit craft brewing establishments across the state. But certainly not the only one.

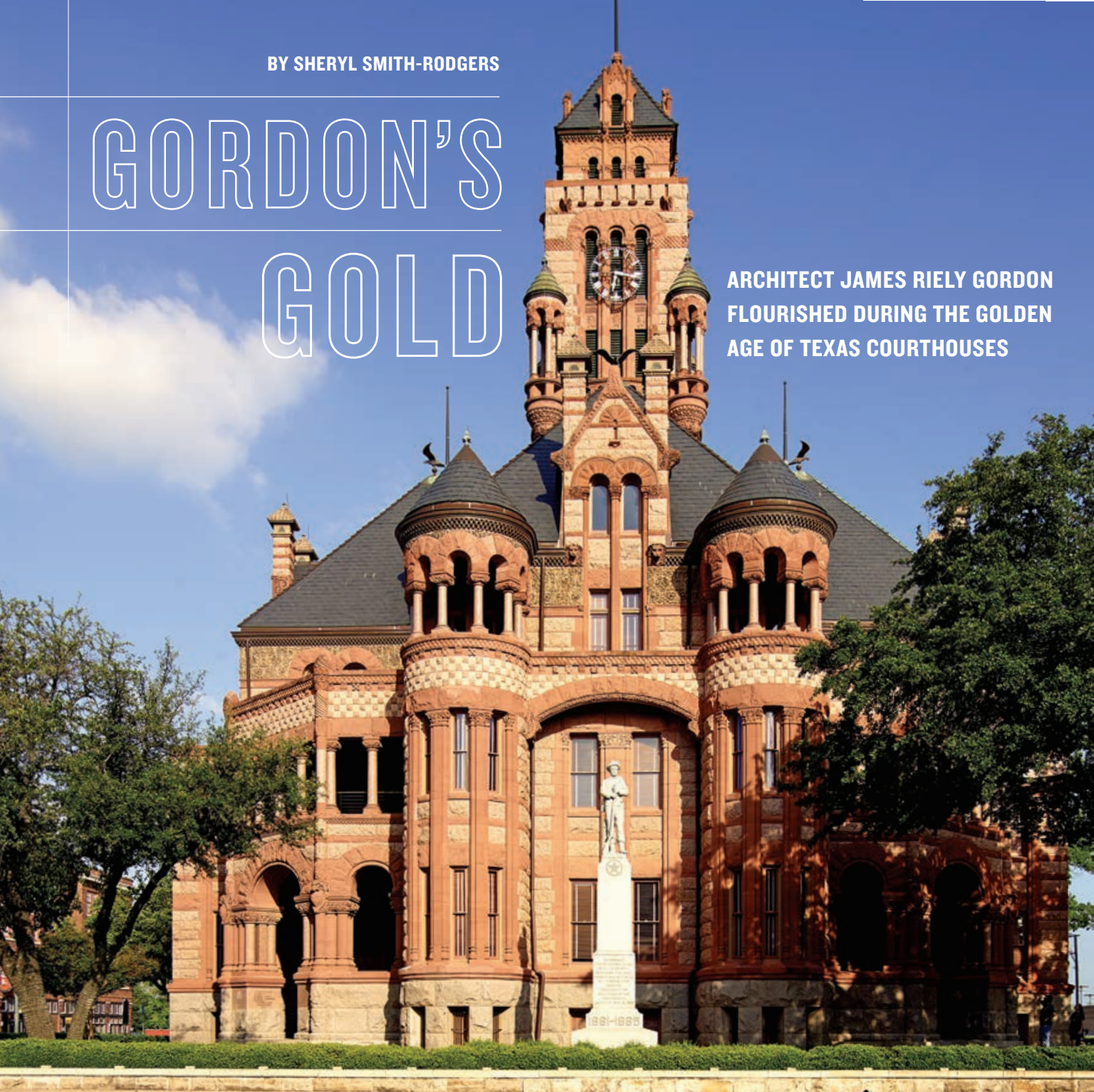
See more of **Melissa Gaskill’s** work at melissagaskill.blogspot.com.

From top: Bandera Ale Project’s beer garden. Dave Young, Nocona’s head brewer, keeps a watchful eye on his 6,100-gallon tanks. Cans await beer at Fredonia Brewery in Nogadoches.

BY SHERYL SMITH-RODGERS

GORDON'S GOLD

ARCHITECT JAMES RIELY GORDON
FLOURISHED DURING THE GOLDEN
AGE OF TEXAS COURTHOUSES



Cramped and outdated, the 1892 Victoria County Courthouse faced demolition in 1961 to make way for a new building in downtown Victoria. When historical preservationists got wind of the plan, they rallied support and presented a 13-foot-long petition to county commissioners. Unfurling the scroll, they read aloud the names of 661 county residents who wanted the courthouse's exterior to remain intact. Following this citizens' directive, commissioners voted to make no outside changes to the three-story edifice, adorned with turrets, arched windows and a clock tower.

Today, the former Victoria County Courthouse houses county offices and stands among 12 surviving Texas courthouses designed

and built by James Riely Gordon. From 1889 to 1902, the prolific architect designed 18 "temples of justice"—plus commercial, religious, residential and other civic buildings—across the state.

Ranked among Gordon's outstanding work is the Ellis County Courthouse, heralded as a "masterpiece" by author James Michener. In his 1985 historical novel *Texas*, Michener likens the pink-and-gray granite building in Waxahachie to a "... fairy-tale palace 10 stories high, replete with battlements and turrets and spires and soaring clock towers and miniature castles high in the air. It was a bejeweled treasure,

Clockwise from above: The Ellis County Courthouse in Waxahachie and exterior details; the Gonzales County Courthouse in Gonzales; architect James Riely Gordon.



ASIDE FROM THEIR RESPLENDENT FACADES, GORDON'S COURTHOUSES HAD ANOTHER MAJOR SELLING POINT: IN BROILING SUMMER MONTHS, THEY FELT COOLER INSIDE.



structures that he adapted to the specific needs of anyone he could interest,” writes Chris Meister in *James Riely Gordon: His Courthouses and Other Public Architecture*. “A study of the architect’s known work finds most of his early structures in communities along rail lines connecting with San Antonio.”

Gordon’s start as an architect couldn’t have had better timing. In 1881, the 17th Texas Legislature passed a bill that allowed counties to borrow funds to build public buildings. The earliest courthouses in Texas were tents, dugouts or simple log structures, according to *The Courthouses of Texas*, by Mavis P. Kelsey Sr. and Donald H. Dyal. Because these primitive affairs were often unsafe, the 1881 bill empowered county commissioners to build spacious, fireproof buildings that inspired awe and attracted commerce.

The golden age of grandiose Texas courthouses had begun.

In those days, counties often staged competitions to attract designs for courthouse projects. In 1888, Gordon entered an Aransas County contest in Rockport. His exotic Moorish concept, graced with horseshoe arches and onion domes, stood out among plans submitted by other architects, including the esteemed Alfred Giles and Otto Kramer. Gordon’s first courthouse served citizens for 65 years before it was torn down.

For the next decade, Gordon embraced an architectural trend called Richardsonian Romanesque. The massive, masonry style—developed by Boston architect Henry Hobson Richardson—features short columns; wide, rounded arches; conical or pyramidal towers; and sculpted ornaments. Gordon melded those elements to create customized courthouses for Fayette, Bexar, Erath and Victoria counties.

Gordon’s professional reputation soared in 1893, when his Texas State Building wowed visitors at the World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago. One newspaper writer proclaimed the building as “one of the most attractive at the Fair,” and it would

yet it was also a sturdy, massive court of judgments, one of the finest buildings in Texas.”

Born August 2, 1863, in Winchester, Virginia, Gordon moved with his mother and civil engineer father to San Antonio in the early 1870s. He joined the civil engineer corps of the International-Great Northern Railroad at age 14. In 1881, Gordon worked under architect William K. Dobson and then as a draftsman with J.N. Preston & Son. In late 1884, he opened his own San Antonio office with established architect Frederick Shelton. In the coming years, Gordon would go in and out of partnerships and would also run an office in Dallas.

Gordon traveled the state by train and buggy in search of clients. “On these trips, he carried generic plans for a variety of



WEB EXTRAS

► Read this story on our website to see vintage postcards of Gordon's Texas courthouses.

become the most widely publicized design of Gordon's lifetime. By fall 1896, the fair's buildings had been razed or burned.

Aside from their resplendent facades, Gordon's courthouses had another major selling point: In broiling summer months, they felt cooler inside. To maximize comfort, the architect created a cross-shaped layout with a center atrium, a combined shaft and tower, and corner entrance porches. The plan, which Gordon copyrighted and improved with subsequent projects, worked like a chimney, drawing cool air from the porches while venting hot air upward through the tower. Eleven courthouses followed Gordon's "Signature Plan," according to a list in Meister's book.

After the 1893 fair, Gordon continued his work in Texas, designing 13 more courthouses. Brazoria (demolished), Hopkins, Gon-

Clockwise from left: The McLennan County Courthouse dome in Waco and window detail; an archive photo of the Bexar County Courthouse in San Antonio.

zales, San Patricio (demolished), Ellis, Van Zandt (demolished), Wise, Comal and Lee reflect his Richardsonian Romanesque style. With Harrison (now a museum), McLennan and Angelina (demolished), Gordon transitioned to the Beaux-

Arts style that uses grand entrances and towering pillars. A low budget kept Callahan (demolished) sparse in architectural detail.

In June 1902, Gordon moved his practice and family to New York. Shortly before his 1937 death, he designed a building for the 1939 New York World's Fair. The honor ended the 53-year career of the architect who signed his work J. Riely Gordon and got his start in Texas.

Sheryl Smith-Rodgers of Blanco blogs about her gardening adventures at sherylsmithrodders.blogspot.com.

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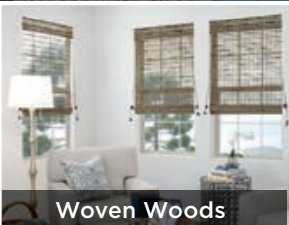
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A Fresh Start



MESSAGE FROM
GENERAL MANAGER ALAN LESLEY

THERE'S A CERTAIN POETRY TO OPENING A PRISTINE CALENDAR each January. The clean slate, absent scribbled-in appointments and obligations, encourages reflection and a bit of personal accounting. Rather than lack, the calendar's empty grid represents promise—the potential for a fresh start in a new year.

Of course, this month, that sense of possibility is accentuated as we embark on not just a new year but a new decade. It's an especially opportune moment to think about

As you know, the co-op's most fundamental mission is to provide you the best possible electric service at the lowest possible cost. That's what our staff members—from employees at the front desk to warehouse personnel and from the engineering department to our human resources team and everyone in between—dedicate themselves to, year in and year out. For their dedication, I'd like to express my gratitude. All of them come to work each day with the safe provision of service to our members foremost in mind.

Our board of directors deserves a big thank-you, too. The members of CECA's board have taken on the weighty responsibility of running a multimillion-dollar utility. The commitment they display in keeping up with the changing regulatory, technological and legislative landscapes that affect our industry is laudable. Decisions made by the board aren't undertaken lightly, as directors know that the outcomes of those choices affect thousands of their fellow members. Their diligence is appreciated, and I strive every day to emulate their conscientiousness.

A final thank-you goes to you, our members, who make all our jobs possible. Your support and understanding when things don't go right, and your

input, whether as suggestion, compliment or complaint, helps us do a better job for you.

Without you, there would be no cooperative. For you, for this co-op and for ourselves, you can count on us at CECA to do our best to be worthy beneficiaries of 2020's bounty and promise.



habits and practices that we may want to change, maintain or cultivate.

At CECA, we like to take stock in the same way. Each year presents 365 (or 366 this leap year) new opportunities to earn our members' trust and business, and January 1 is a good time for all of us here to think about the best ways to do that.



WE RESOLVE TO

Provide you with the most reliable electric service possible.

Keep our rates as low as possible.

Provide friendly and efficient customer service at all times.

Never forget that you are a member-owner of this cooperative.

Happy new year from the
directors and employees of
CECA.

Our offices will be closed Wednesday, January 1, for the holiday.



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Training Tomorrow's Leaders

"The mission of your leadership should be to serve others always. You cannot simultaneously be a selfish person and a great leader."

Conner Faught, student at Howard Payne University

THE DAY KICKED OFF WHEN CONNER FAUGHT, A PRELAW AND Bible major at Howard Payne University, presented a discourse on leadership. Faught gave a compelling talk on being selfless in leadership, a topic that was right on target with what students would learn during a conference hosted by CECA at the Texas 4-H Conference Center on Lake Brownwood this past fall.

That precept hung in the minds of local high school students, along with other lessons on leadership, during the one-day conference.

The first activity of the event required each of the eight teams of students to assemble a youth bicycle. Rules and challenges were built into the activity as obstacles to the bike's construction and to demonstrate to the students that, often, things aren't quite as simple as life's instruction book seems to indicate. Because of the obstacles thrown their way, not all

teams were able to complete the challenge.

In addition to the bicycle project, conference attendees participated in other activities designed to promote leadership, exercises that encouraged them to think outside the box, make difficult decisions and learn the vital skill of compromise. The second half of the conference, dedicated to community service, expanded on those lessons.

The first order of the afternoon was for participants to give back something tangible to their communities. Representatives from Santa's Helpers in Comanche County and Good Samaritan Ministries in Brown County were on hand. Students had the privilege of presenting them with the bikes from the day's earlier challenge, to be given to children who might otherwise not have much of a Christmas. Judging by the students' reactions as they presented the bikes, this moment was a touching time for many of them.



Above: Students present bicycles to representatives from Good Samaritan Ministries and Santa's Helpers.

Left and below: Students work as teams through challenges and obstacles to complete a timed project.





Left: Conner Faught, a Howard Payne University student, explains to the students the importance of selflessness in leadership.

Below: Riding a bike to the front of the room was a fun addition to the challenge.



The final and most crucial activity of the day was one the students had unknowingly been working up to all day: community service. Each school group was challenged to come up with a worthy and achievable project for their school or community. Once a project was agreed upon, students were tasked with preparing a plan for completion of their project. The plan had to include the project's cost and how the group would raise the necessary funds, a list of labor and materials needed and how to obtain them, whether a school or city entity must be involved in the plan's implementation—e.g., school board or city council—and, if so, who



would speak to them.

Students representing each school in attendance presented their ideas to the entire conference and were given feedback to aid in their planning and implementation.

It is our hope at CECA that you, our members, not only will support and encourage these students but also might become active participants in their projects. A community is only as strong as the bonds between its members, and we know that the rural communities of CECA's service territory are filled with caring and supportive individuals.

When our communities come together, we can grow and make a difference. Together, we can demonstrate the power of giving back.

Community Service Projects

Bangs

Layaway Drive: One of the students who represented Bangs High School donned a Santa suit and sat with younger students for photos with Santa. Photos were sold for \$1 each, with proceeds used to pay off layaway accounts at Walmart for families in need.

Blanket

Student Parking Lot: Students will work toward paving their parking lot by hosting fundraisers and accepting donations. They hope to partner with the school to assist with funding.

Comanche

Project 1, Restroom Affirmation Project: Students will paint murals with positive messages on the walls and doors of the restrooms in the high school and junior high to lift students' spirits.

Project 2, Fruit Orchard: Students will plant fruit trees on school property. Fruit from the trees can be used by home economics classes and for the 4-H Food Challenge. Students plan to work with the Arbor Day Foundation and make personal donations to fund the project. They are also hoping to raise interest in a horticulture club to continue the maintenance of the orchard.

De Leon

Coat Drive: Students organized and funded a coat drive, with drop boxes for new and gently used coats placed throughout the community. The drive was held December 1-14, with school staff distributing the coats to students who need them.

Early

Military Drive: Students will host a military appreciation day for military families. The event will be funded through T-shirt sales and various other fundraising initiatives. The day will feature a family meal and fun and games for the little ones. Care packages will be put together for family members who are deployed and unable to attend the event.

Gorman

Basketball Court Renovation: Students will spruce up the community basketball court with new court lines and murals featuring a Gorman community timeline.

May

Project Cheer for Nursing Home: Students provided some holiday cheer for residents of the local nursing home with gift bags at Christmas. Gift bags included pictures colored by kindergarten through second grade students, homemade Christmas cards created by third through fifth grade students, pipe cleaner ornaments made by junior high students and glass Christmas balls decorated by high school students.

Rising Star

Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony: Students hosted a Christmas tree lighting funded by candy cane grams in December, with sales of cookies and hot chocolate on the night of the event.



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Of course, if an app isn't your style, you can always print a deal from the Co-op Connections website and take it with you to get a discount at a local merchant. You can stop by one of our offices for a card or even print out a Co-op Connections card from the website if you prefer to have something tangible in your wallet.

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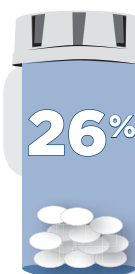
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Ghost Dogs of Orozimbo

The tale of a trio of dogs ‘guarding’ Santa Anna continues long past turning point in history

BY MARTHA DEERINGER

OROZIMBO PLANTATION, A SPRAWLING cotton farm in west central Brazoria County, was home to Dr. James Aeneas Phelps and his wife, who both arrived in Texas with Stephen F. Austin’s original colonists in 1822. In 1836, their mansion would serve as a prison for Antonio López de Santa Anna.

Phelps had served as a surgeon for the Texian Army at San Jacinto and observed the capture of Santa Anna, whose ruthless executions of Texans at the Alamo and Goliad prompted demands for the Mexican general’s death. But Sam Houston recognized that the notorious prisoner was worth more to Texas alive, so Santa Anna was taken to Orozimbo, where Phelps managed his care after an attempted suicide.

One wintry night, an officer of the Mexican military organized a group of riders to free Santa Anna. Everyone at the plantation was asleep, except the general, who had ostensibly received word of the plan. Just before dawn, as the riders approached the plantation, a frantic baying of hounds disrupted the early morning silence and roused the guards. The riders withdrew, abandoning the rescue.

But Orozimbo Plantation kept no dogs, and for miles around, there were no neighbors who had dogs. A servant had purportedly seen the creatures and described them as strange, wild-looking animals with frightening eyes. There were three of them, all a dingy white. Two had shaggy coats and one appeared hairless.

Months later, a passing traveler was



told the description of the canines and claimed that the dogs had been the much-loved companions of a man who lived near Washington-on-the-Brazos. When the dogs’ owner left to join the fight for independence, his dogs refused to eat or return to the house. When the animals disappeared, neighbors told the story that they were looking for their master, who had been killed at Goliad.

For the next decade, settlers occasionally spotted the dogs in the forest near Orozimbo. Except for the night of Santa Anna’s attempted escape, they were always silent. The legend of the ghost dogs and their desperate search for their master added an aura of mystery to the story of Santa Anna’s imprisonment.

Residents of West Columbia caught

glimpses of the dogs as they wandered silently in the woods near Orozimbo. Three ghostly dogs fitting the same description reportedly were seen by a man and his wife as recently as 1974 near the cemetery and ancient oak tree that are the last remnants of the fabled plantation.

Nearly 150 years after the event, Catherine Munson Foster wrote of the canine apparitions in the spring 1984 edition of *Texas Heritage* magazine. “There are those who believe, or say they believe, that the ghost dogs of Orozimbo are the same animals still standing guard, alert to give the alarm should the specter of a long-dead Santa Anna make another attempt to escape.”

Read more of Martha Deeringer’s writing at marthadeeringer.com.

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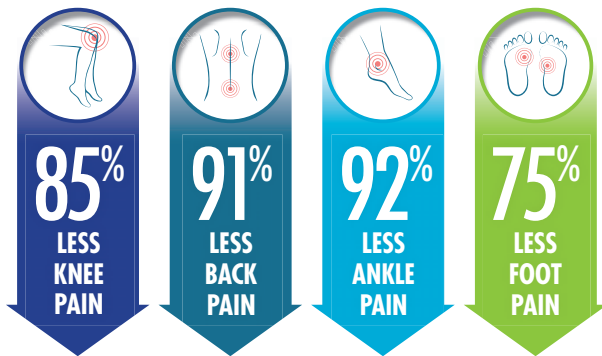
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New Year's Resolution

A NEW YEAR BRINGS PROMISES FROM most of our lips to make healthier choices. Food is an obvious place to start, and it can be an easy place, too, if you make just a few small changes. One of those can be simply adding more fresh vegetables to every meal.

Megan Myers, a Texas foodie who will take over as *Texas Co-op Power* food editor next month, writes Stetted (stetted.com), a food blog. "I focus on fresh ingredients and uncomplicated flavors, with spins that keep mealtime interesting," Myers says. "Real food is possible, even for busy moms like me."

For her, learning to cook healthier meals "was the evolution of figuring out the best flavors from the ingredients we have here in Texas. I also want to make sure my kids are experiencing a wide range of foods, and cooking healthier at home helps balance out those post-soccer and party meals."

Myers' Roasted Sweet Potato Salad With Chickpeas and Kale, served warm, makes a light, healthy meal or a flavorful side for a lean protein. Her Spicy Glazed Brussels Sprouts are another great way to add more fresh winter vegetables to your diet.

SHANNON OELRICH, FOOD EDITOR

Roasted Sweet Potato Salad With Chickpeas and Kale

- 2 medium sweet potatoes, diced
- 2 tablespoons plus 1 teaspoon olive oil, divided use
- ¼ teaspoon salt, divided use
- ⅛ teaspoon paprika
- 1 can (15 ounces) chickpeas
- 2 cups packed torn kale
- 2 tablespoons minced red onion
- 2 teaspoons Champagne vinegar or white wine vinegar

CONTINUED ON PAGE 32

Recipes

New Year's Resolutions



THIS MONTH'S RECIPE CONTEST WINNER

HALEY FEUERBACHER | COSERV

Spiralized noodles have been all the rage lately. If you haven't tried them, you can use this month's winning recipe as a great starting point. If you already use them, you can add this recipe to your repertoire. Easy and quick, this veggie noodle bowl is great for a healthy weeknight meal and especially satisfying when topped with your choice of protein.

Quick & Healthy Garlic-Parmesan Veggie Noodle Bowl

- 2 tablespoons olive oil, divided use
- 1 white onion, diced
- 2 packages (10.7 ounces each) spiralized butternut squash noodles
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1-2 teaspoons salt, divided use
- 1½-2 cups chopped kale
- ¼ cup chopped fresh basil
- ½ cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese

1. In an extra-large nonstick pan or wok, heat 1 tablespoon oil over medium-high heat. Cook the diced onion in oil until it starts to brown.
2. Add noodles, garlic, ½ teaspoon salt

and remainder of olive oil. Cook, stirring occasionally, for approximately 6 minutes or until noodles are thoroughly cooked. The texture should be soft with some crispy browned noodles.

3. In the last 2-3 minutes of cooking, add kale, basil and another ½ teaspoon salt, stirring thoroughly for even cooking. Taste for seasoning and add more salt if desired.

4. Once the noodles are thoroughly sautéed, remove pan from heat and stir in Parmesan.

► Serves 4.

COOK'S TIP You can make your own butternut squash noodles by using a spiralizer.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 31

- 2 teaspoons lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon coarse mustard
- 1 teaspoon honey
- ½ teaspoon ground black pepper

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees.
2. Toss diced sweet potatoes in 1 teaspoon olive oil, then spread on a rimmed baking sheet. Sprinkle with ⅛ teaspoon salt and paprika. Roast 18 minutes, stirring halfway through.
3. Meanwhile, pour chickpeas into a colander over the sink and let drain. Put the kale into a large bowl and set aside.
4. In a small saucepan, combine red onion, vinegar, lemon juice, mustard, honey, black pepper and remaining ⅛ teaspoon salt, and heat over low. Once warmed, slowly whisk in remaining olive oil until dressing is emulsified. Keep over very low heat until potatoes are done.
5. Pour cooked potatoes on top of kale, then add drained chickpeas. Whisk dressing one more time, then pour over the chickpeas.
6. Stir salad to coat evenly, taking care to not mash the potatoes. Serve once the kale has softened a bit. ► Serves 2-4.

Spicy Glazed Brussels Sprouts

- 1 pound Brussels sprouts
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoons gochujang (red chile paste)
- 1 tablespoon honey
- 2 teaspoons soy sauce

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Trim ends from Brussels sprouts and halve or quarter.
 2. Toss Brussels sprouts with olive oil and spread on a baking sheet. Roast 20 minutes, stirring halfway through.
 3. In a small bowl, whisk together gochujang, honey and soy sauce. Pour over roasted sprouts and stir to coat. Return pan to the oven 5 more minutes, until sauce is sticky and caramelized.
- Serves 4.

COOK'S TIP You can find gochujang in the Asian foods section of most grocery stores, and it can be easily ordered online.

**IF YOUR RECIPE IS FEATURED,
YOU'LL WIN A TCP APRON!**

\$100 Recipe Contest

June's recipe contest topic is **Texas Wine Harvest**. Send us your best pairings or dishes cooked with wine. The deadline is **January 10**.

ENTER ONLINE at TexasCoopPower.com/contests; **MAIL** to 1122 Colorado St., 24th Floor, Austin, TX 78701; **FAX** to (512) 763-3401. Include your name, address and phone number, plus your co-op and the name of the contest you are entering.

My Favorite Carrot Soup

MOIRA CAHILL | CENTRAL TEXAS EC


- 3-4 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 3 pounds carrots, peeled and chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 7 cups chicken or vegetable stock, divided use
- ½ teaspoon dried thyme
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- Greek yogurt (optional)

1. Heat olive oil in a stockpot over medium heat. Add onion and cook until soft. Add carrots and cook another 5 minutes. Add garlic and cook 1 minute.

2. Add 6 cups of stock and the thyme, salt and pepper and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer 20 minutes or until carrots are soft.

3. Purée the soup in a blender. Add additional stock for desired consistency. Simmer an additional 30 minutes. Serve hot with a dollop of Greek yogurt.

► Serves 8-10.



Top Tips for a Healthy New Year

Resolve to make small changes, which are easier to maintain than sweeping changes. For example, if you're not already a runner, don't sign up for a marathon, but do resolve to go for a walk three times a week.

It's easier to add things than take them away. Want to make your diet healthier? Resolve to have at least two types of vegetables at lunch and dinner.

Reward yourself for progress. If you get to the end of January and have kept

your resolution 90% of the time, make your reward something related to it. Healthier diet? Get yourself a cool new piece of cooking equipment. Went on more walks? Buy new athletic shoes.

Don't beat yourself up if you stumble. If you break your resolution, try to start it again as soon as you can. If you slip up on a weekend, start again on Monday. If your blunder is midweek, use the weekend as your reset.

SHANNON OELRICH

TEXAS CO-OP POWER

NEXT MONTH

A TALE OF TEXAS CRAWFISH

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A photograph of a woman and a man jogging together on a dirt path. The woman is on the left, wearing a light-colored tank top and dark leggings. The man is on the right, wearing a light-colored t-shirt and dark shorts. They are both smiling and holding water bottles. The background is a blurred natural setting.

A man in a dark t-shirt and plaid shorts is captured mid-swing on a golf course. He is wearing a white visor and dark shoes. The background shows a line of trees under a clear sky.

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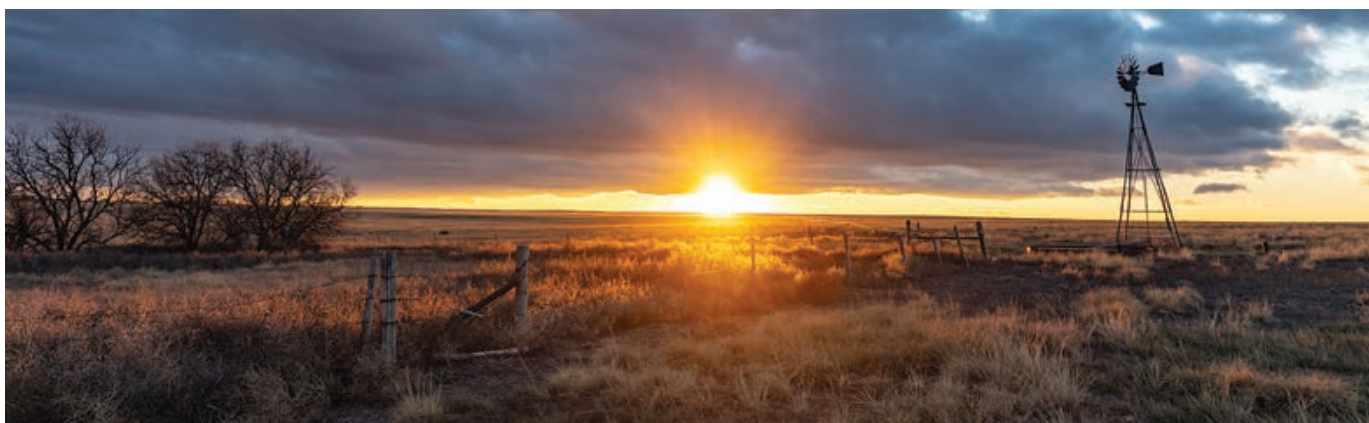
Fences

WHETHER YOU'RE BUSY SWINGING for the fences or mending them, one thing's for sure—the grass is greener on the Texas side. **GRACE FULTZ**

WEB EXTRAS ▶ See Focus on Texas on our website for more photos from readers.

◀ **JESSIKA MORRIS**, Navasota Valley EC: "This photo was captured while my daughter Dixie was leaning over a barbed wire fence so that she could get to know one of the newest horses on the farm."

▼ **TRAVIS LACOSS**, Peder-nales EC: The Rita Blanca National Grasslands in the Panhandle.



▼ **ASHLEY ZIMMERMAN**, Trinity Valley EC: "I go for many walks on our property and I always take my camera. This bobcat came out to pose for me one lucky afternoon."

▶ **TERRI CARTER**, Rita Blanca EC: "The sunrise colors are really multiplied by the ice that coated this fence. It melted some and slid down a bit, then it froze again."



◀ **RICK ROBERSON**, United Cooperative Services: "The setting summer sun in Big Bend casts its warm glow on this old gate that, in spite of some hard knocks, is still getting the job done."

UPCOMING CONTESTS

MAY	FAIRS AND CARNIVALS	DUE JANUARY 10
JUNE	STATE PARKS	DUE FEBRUARY 10
JULY	EXPLORATION	DUE MARCH 10

Enter online at TexasCoopPower.com/Contests.



Pick of the Month

Hill Country Gem & Mineral Show

Fredericksburg January 18-19
(325) 248-1067, fredericksburgrockhounds.org

This annual show by the Fredericksburg Rockhounds, at Lady Bird Johnson Municipal Park, features dealers, demonstrations, rock cutting and activities for children. The Rockhounds' monthly meetings include rock swaps and field trips for rock hunting and to museums.

January

11

Kerrville Out of This World: Music of the Cosmos, (830) 792-7469, symphonyofthehills.org

San Angelo Family Day Mystery at the Museum, (325) 653-3333, samfa.org

16

Corsicana Reflections of Patsy Cline, (903) 874-7792, corsicanapalace.com

Tyler An Evening With Rita Moreno, Legend of Stage and Screen; (903) 566-7424; cowancenter.org

17

Lubbock [17-18] Symphony Masterworks Series: Grieg's Beloved Piano Concerto, (806) 762-1688, visitlubbock.org

18

Brenham Uptown Swirl in Downtown Brenham, (979) 337-7582, downtownbrenham.com

Luckenbach Blues Festival, (830) 997-3224, luckenbachtexas.com

Surfside Beach Dunes Day, (979) 864-1152, brazosport.org

21

Lufkin Ladysmith Black Mambazo, (936) 633-5454, angelinaarts.org

23

Richardson Todd Mosby and the New Horizons Ensemble, (972) 744-4650, eisemanncenter.com



January 24-25
Jefferson
Quilt Show

MINERAL: SEBASTIAN JANICKI | SHUTTERSTOCK.COM. QUILT: MPITZER | SHUTTERSTOCK.COM. WINTER CARNIVAL: EVGENY BAKHAREV | SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

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24

Marshall Farewell Angelina,
(903) 934-7992, memorialcityhall.com

Jefferson [24-25] Quilt Show,
(903) 935-2235, jeffersonquiltshow.com

New Braunfels [24-25] Patty Griffin,
(830) 606-1281, gruenehall.thundertix.com

25

Bandera Grace Lutheran Church
Wild Game Dinner, (830) 796-3091,
gracebandera.weebly.com

Edna Brackenridge Winter Carnival
and Snow Day, (361) 782-5456,
brackenridgepark.com

Fredericksburg Hill Country Indian
Artifact Show, (830) 626-5561,
hillcountryindianartifacts.com

Ozona Permian Basin Square and
Round Dance Association Winterfest,
(432) 685-3266, squaredancetx.com

30

Boerne Voctave, (830) 331-9079,
boerneperformingarts.com

Galveston *We the People*, 1-800-821-1894,
thegrand.com



January 25
Edna
Brackenridge Winter
Carnival and Snow Day

31

Canton [31-Feb. 2] Battle on the Mountain,
(318) 455-4489, facebook.com/9thtexas canton

February

1

Crockett Asleep at the Wheel,
(936) 544-4276, pwfaa.org

San Antonio Asian Festival,
(210) 458-2224, texancultures.com

4

College Station Steep Canyon Rangers,
(979) 845-1234, mscopas.org

5

Laredo [5-8] Birding Festival,
(956) 718-1063, laredobirdingfestival.org

7

Grand Prairie [7-9] *Trolls Live!*,
(972) 854-5050, theatregp.com

Ennis [7-8, 14-15, 21-23] *Forever*,
(972) 878-5126, theaterocks.com

Submit Your Event!

We pick events for the magazine directly from TexasCoopPower.com. Submit your event online for March by January 10, and it just might be featured in this calendar.

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Must See Sequel

Hill Country Arts Foundation makes Ingram's Stonehenge II accessible

I'VE FOUND THAT THE SEQUEL IS RARELY better than the original. Movies like *Jaws: The Revenge* support this conclusion. But sometimes a second act surpasses the first, and this happened when two Texans used a truckload of plaster to construct Stonehenge II, a monument that's better than the original because it's here in Texas.

On a sweltering summer day, I tripped out to the Texas Hill Country, 5 miles west of Kerrville, to visit Ingram. Most visitors come to splash in the Guadalupe River or to relax on its cypress-lined banks. But I was on a mission to see a Texas version of one of the world's iconic stone structures.

The original Stonehenge, in Wiltshire, England, was built around 2500 B.C. It fascinates Americans, and there are two dozen Stonehenge replicas in the United States. I wanted to know what separates Stonehenge II from the rest.

I followed the Guadalupe and arrived at the Hill Country Arts Foundation. There, in a crunchy field of dry grass, stood 30 interlocking arches encircling five free-standing ones. All were between 8 and 12 feet tall.

My first question was "Why in the world is this here?" The answer begins with Al Shepperd, who received a large limestone slab from his buddy Doug Hill. Rather than use the stone as landscaping, Shepperd dug a hole and stood the slab upright as a monolith. Every day



Chet checks out Stonehenge II in Ingram.

he looked at it and thought, "Wow, that looks like Stonehenge." Hill agreed, and soon they constructed the first arch out of plaster and chicken wire. It looked so good that they didn't want to stop. Within a few years, the men had built Stonehenge II, and visitors came from all over the world. The hit TV show *Friday Night Lights* even filmed an episode on-site.

Standing near the arches, I was amazed by how much work went into building these incredible structures. Even though it's only 90% as wide as the original Stonehenge and 60% as tall, all the arches are intact. And unlike the original Stonehenge, there are no barriers restricting access. Anyone can walk among the behemoth "stones" and imagine the real Stonehenge when its builders established it millennia ago.

Stonehenge II was originally constructed on Shepperd's property in Hunt. After his death, the family decided to sell the property and feared that the new owners might not appreciate this quirky art.

The Hill Country Arts Foundation purchased the entire installation and moved it to its present location on the river. To make the site even more curious, it also moved Shepperd's replicas of the Easter Island stone heads, which now stand like guardians protecting Stonehenge II.

Stonehenge I and II remain shrouded in mystery. With England's Stonehenge, we wonder how and why the ancient people built it. With Ingram's Stonehenge II, we know the how but could still spend hours pondering why a couple of buddies would dedicate endless hours toward this project.

It may seem complicated, but for those of us who've spent enough time in Texas, we know the reason. It's simply the Texas heat, which can make our brains do some mighty crazy things. And that's enough explanation for me.

Chet Garner shares his Texplorations as the host of *The Daytripper* on PBS.

 **WEB EXTRAS** ▶ Read this story on our website to see Chet's video of his visit to Stonehenge II in Ingram.

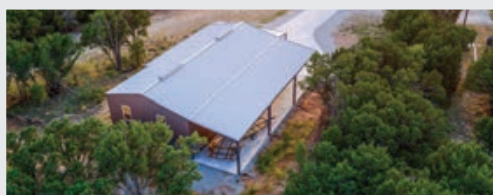
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