

# TEXAS CO-OP POWER

## CRAWFISH, Y'ALL

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Crawfish and good times at Repka's in Brookshire.

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Story and photos by Eric W. Pohl

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**Soul Music of South Texas** Conjunto coaxes a unique sound and subculture from accordions and 12-string guitars.



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CRAWFISH: ERIC W. POHL. CONJUNTO ARTIST: COURTESY TEXAS FOLK LIFE



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**ON THE COVER** For many Texans, a crawfish boil marks more than the arrival of spring. Photo by Eric W. Pohl

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## Keeping in Touch

I am 84 and rely on good reading material to keep in touch with “all.”

Seldom have I enjoyed such fine articles as your November issue. I began with interesting Letters, then the woman behind Wreaths Across America and the magnificent photos accompanying the one-of-a-kind artists. Then comes my favorite subject—history.

**BRENNA QUEBBEMANN | BLANCO PEDERNALES EC AND CECA**

## Startling Conclusion

The star on the coin looks nothing like the lone star on the flag [*A Star Is Born*, December 2019]. There were stars for centuries on flags, shields and emblems of nations. Our Texas founding fathers . . . considered Texas a “lone star”—alone as a region fighting the tyrannical dictatorship of Santa Anna.

To try to stretch so far to connect these patriots to an insignificant star on a coin minted in 1817 is a thin presumption and certainly not clear. The Long Expedition in 1819, usually given credibility for being the first image of the lone star, is proven history.

**COY PRATHER | MONTALBA TRINITY VALLEY EC**

## Made in Texas

It is great that you are celebrating the makers in our areas [*In the Making*, November 2019]. Nice photos and nice story.

**TRAVIS FROELICH | BASTROP BLUEBONNET EC**

So many of us artisans here in Texas! . . . My husband and I have been making soap for

## Clip-and-Save Recipes

Being in my 20s, I know that I am in the minority of your readership, but that also makes me the future of your readership. I read your articles monthly, but I only ever save the recipes, just like my mother and my mother’s mother before her. I clip them out and keep them in my homemade recipe book/binder/scrapbook.

**KASEY MENN | BRYAN | BRYAN TEXAS UTILITIES**



the past 17 years using the milk from our award-winning Nubian dairy goats.

**CAROLINE LAWSON | VIA FACEBOOK NAVASOTA VALLEY EC**

Ryan Drapela [above] is an awesome young man. He works hard to be the best craftsman he can be.

**MARK WOODS | VIA FACEBOOK**

## Hamil to the Rescue

President Richard Nixon’s failure to thwart REA was a huge

success for rural electrification nationwide [*Nixon’s Attack on Co-ops*, December 2019]. Pictured behind Nixon was REA administrator Dave Hamil, a dear friend of mine.

Hamil almost single-handedly organized national leadership to save co-ops. Nixon was forced to sign legislation that restored federally funded loans and even greater financial health to co-ops.

**BILL MULDOON | KERRVILLE CENTRAL TEXAS EC**

## Co-ops and VFDs

I applaud your recognition of the critical importance and needs of volunteer fire departments in the communities they serve [*Putting Others First*, October 2019]. There are several volunteer fire departments served by our local co-op, Guadalupe Valley Electric Cooperative, including the McQueeney Volunteer Fire Department.

In October, the McQueeney VFD was the recipient of a Power-Up Grant of \$20,000 for the purchase of lifesaving extrication equipment. This is one of the many ways in which GVEC has helped our department to better serve our community.

**MARILYN MARSHALL | NEW BRAUNFELS GUADALUPE VALLEY EC**

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

   **Texas Co-op Power**

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## HAPPENINGS

# Chopin and Friends

Classical music lovers are in for a treat when distinguished Canadian pianist Ryo Yanagitani performs **CHOPIN AND FRIENDS: ROMANTIC GENIUS** at the Cailloux Theater in **KERRVILLE** on **FEBRUARY 27**.

Frédéric Chopin was a 19th-century Polish composer and virtuoso pianist who was close friends with French composer Hector Berlioz and sometimes friend, sometimes rival of Franz Liszt. The concert will feature pieces by all three and one by Johann Sebastian Bach, one of Chopin's greatest influences.

"This concert is all about showmanship," says Eugene Dowdy, conductor and artistic director for Symphony of the Hills, host of the event. "Ryo is a wonderful showman as a performer, super energetic. And even Chopin, himself a famous piano performer, also hung out with other showy composers like Hector Berlioz—composer of a piece named *Symphony Fantastique*, by the way. Who writes a symphony and names it that?"

**INFO** ▶ (830) 792-7469, [symphonyofthehills.org](http://symphonyofthehills.org)

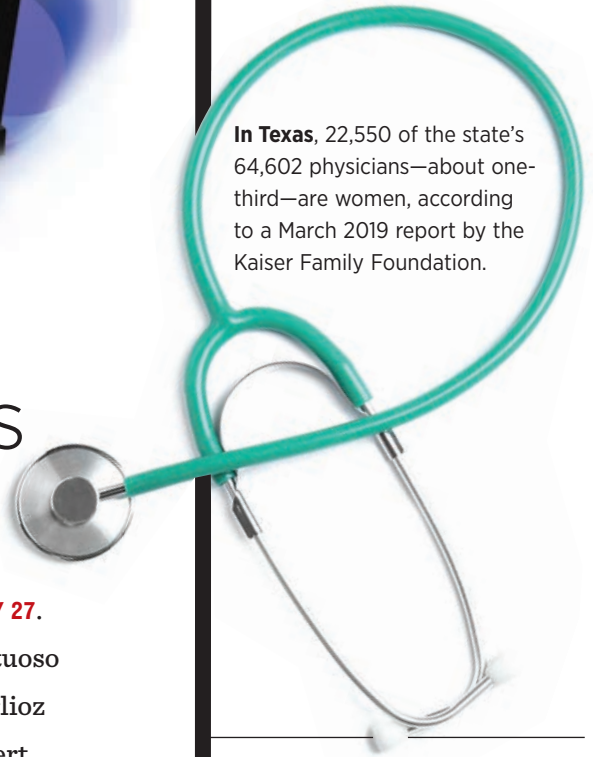
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## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

### PIONEERING M.D.

**National Women Physicians Day** is February 3. The date marks the birthday of Elizabeth Blackwell in 1821. When Blackwell graduated from New York's Geneva Medical College in 1849, she became the first woman to receive a medical degree in the United States.

**In Texas**, 22,550 of the state's 64,602 physicians—about one-third—are women, according to a March 2019 report by the Kaiser Family Foundation.



## LIFESTYLE

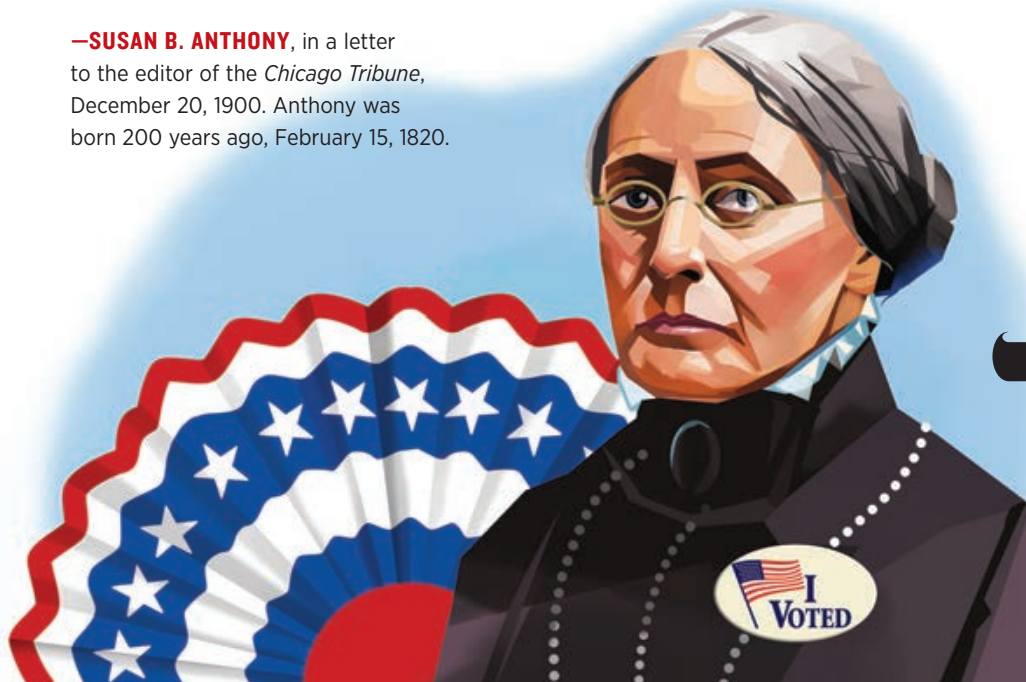
### Cut It Out!

**Have you witnessed** crape murder—the horrific and drastic pruning of innocent crape myrtles? Or seen the gnarled, knotty scars left by previous crimes?

**Read *Crape Murder*** on Page 8, then tell us about your experience by emailing [letters@TexasCoopPower.com](mailto:letters@TexasCoopPower.com) or posting on our Facebook page. Include your name, co-op and city. (We won't turn you in to the pruning police.)

*“There is no history about which there is so much ignorance as this great movement for the establishment of equal political rights for women. I hope the twentieth century will see the triumph of our cause.”*

—**SUSAN B. ANTHONY**, in a letter to the editor of the *Chicago Tribune*, December 20, 1900. Anthony was born 200 years ago, February 15, 1820.



BY THE NUMBERS

5,200

That's the number of choking deaths in the U.S. in 2017, according to the National Safety Council. Surgeon Henry Heimlich, who in the 1970s invented a technique used to help choking victims dislodge an obstruction from their airways, was born 100 years ago—February 3, 1920, in Delaware. The Heimlich maneuver is credited with saving thousands of lives.

➔ *Did you know?*

In 2016, at the age of 96, Heimlich himself used his technique for the first time to save the life of a woman choking at his retirement home in Cincinnati.

NATURE



**Desolate Skies**

**The New York Times**, reporting on an analysis in the journal *Science*, said in September that there are 2.9 billion fewer birds in the United States and Canada than there were in 1970.

**While the study** was not designed to determine the cause of the 29% drop in population, scientists suggest likely culprits are habitat loss and pesticides.

**FINISH THIS SENTENCE**

*My most unforgettable first date was . . .*

**Last month** we asked readers to finish a sentence that we started. Your snappy answers are still coming in, and we'll share them next month. Meanwhile, amid thoughts of romance and Valentine's Day, how would you finish the sentence above?

**Your answers** can be silly, serious, deep or superficial. Post your responses on our Facebook page or email them to [letters@TexasCoopPower.com](mailto:letters@TexasCoopPower.com). Please include your name, city and co-op.

**EVERY FEBRUARY**, horticulturist Greg Grant dreads the sight of tree trunks topped by sawed-off limbs. The annual chain saw massacre generally targets only one kind of tree: crape myrtles. “I’m *never* going to get used to that horrifically wrong way of pruning them,” huffs Grant, a Texas A&M Agri-Life Extension agent for Smith County. “Someone’s *got* to stop the madness.”

That madness is known as “crape murder.” No one’s sure how or why the excessive shearing got started, though Grant, a member of Deep East Texas Electric Cooperative, has some theories. Despite efforts to counter it, the crime against nature continues.

Crape myrtles have long been loved in the South as ornamental shrubs and trees for their peeling bark, prolific blooms and colorful fall foliage. Their tolerance of hot, dry climates makes them especially suited for Texas landscapes.

**AS HEALTHY TREES** are hacked in the prime of their lives, an expert pleads: **“STOP THE MADNESS!”**

# Crape Murder

In part, their name refers to the flowers’ crinkly crepe paper appearance. However, crape myrtles, which are native to India and southeast Asia, are not true myrtle trees, which bear white, star-shaped flowers. Instead, crape myrtle blooms—which range from white to pink, red and lavender—look more like lilacs, hence its nickname, “Lilac of the South.” Today, more than 110 crape myrtle varieties range in size from 3 feet tall to more than 30 feet.

Their earliest cultivation traces back to the Chinese gardens of the Tang dynasty, which ruled from 618 to 907 A.D. In 1786, French botanist André Michaux planted crape myrtles in his gardens in Charleston, South Carolina. In 1799, the ship *George Berkeley* ferried plants and seeds from India, including crape myrtles, to George Washington for his Mount Vernon plantation in Virginia. Thomas Jefferson also planted them at Monticello, his home in Virginia. The tree’s popularity spread across the South.

Marilda Maxey, wife of Confederate Gen. Samuel Bell Maxey, is believed to have brought the first crape myrtles to Texas in 1857, when the couple moved from Kentucky to Lamar County.

A decade later, she tended a formal garden, which showcased crape myrtles, at their new Italian villa-style home in Paris, Texas, now the Sam Bell Maxey House State Historic Site. Paris residents planted crape myrtles after fire destroyed almost half the town in 1916. They planted more for the state’s centennial, in 1936.

In 1997, the 75th Texas Legislature declared the crape myrtle as the official state shrub. (Texas purple sage was deemed the official state native shrub in 2005.) It also designated Paris as the state’s official Crape Myrtle City and Lamar County as Crape Myrtle County Capital. Not to leave anyone out, the Legislature also named Waxahachie as the Crape Myrtle Capital of Texas and Brazos County as an official Crape Myrtle County. McKinney, billed as America’s Crape Myrtle City, boasts some 65,000 crape myrtles across the city and in its 7-acre World Collection Park.

Despite its official standing, not even Paris is immune to crape murder. “It’s an ongoing issue here,” sighs Billie Paskin, former president of the Lamar County Master Gardeners and a Lamar Electric member. “We talk to people, and they still cut







off their crape myrtles.”

Likewise, Grant—who’s introduced 49 plants, including two crape myrtle hybrids, to the nursery trade—regularly writes about the foibles of crape murder. “I’m not the crape myrtle police,” Grant says. “People can do whatever they want with their trees. But it’s the No. 1 horticultural phenomenon that you see, and there’s not a single word in any horticultural publication that condones the practice.”

Grant theorizes that the severe style of pruning originated in Europe, where upper branches of some trees were pollarded—cut back to the trunk—to provide fuel. “Perhaps the practice came with the Spanish, who brought it with them to Mexico,” he says. “From Mexico, it spread across the South.”

These days, motives for crape murder vary, depending on who’s wielding the saw. “Homeowners tell me they cut off their crape myrtles because they’re too tall,” Grant says. “So it’s important that people know what size crape myrtle they want and then buy the right one for the site. Don’t plant one that can

grow 30 feet high under a utility line.”

Crape murder disfigures the shrubs, spurs growth of more suckers (new shoots) at a tree’s base and decreases a tree’s cold hardiness. Grant also suspects that pruning wounds and new growth attract crape myrtle bark scale, an introduced pest that’s spread across most of the Southeast. Sooty black mold and white, feltlike encrustations on higher limbs indicate a likely infestation. Though not a death sentence, the scale can turn healthy trees into eyesores and reduce their vigor by about one-third.

Bottom line: Crape murder costs money, wastes time and adds debris to landfills. It’s dangerous, too—chain saws and ladders don’t mix. Left alone, crape myrtles grow into graceful sculptures worthy of admiration.

“The only pruning they need is removal of dead wood, branches that cross and suckers from the base,” Grant says. “The prettiest ones I’ve seen have never been touched. And I mean *never*.”

**Sheryl Smith-Rodgers** of Blanco blogs about her gardening adventures at [sherylsmithroddgers.blogspot.com](http://sherylsmithroddgers.blogspot.com).

A top-down view of a large platter of boiled crawfish. The crawfish are bright red and glistening, scattered across the platter. Interspersed among them are several ears of yellow corn on the cob and several halved red potatoes. The entire dish is served on a bed of newspaper with faint, illegible text. A yellow dashed circle is drawn around the central text.

# A TALE OF TEXAS CRAWFISH

# TASTY CRUSTACEANS

## CREATE A FEASTING FRENZY EVERY SPRING

**CRAWFISH. CRAWDADS. MUDBUGS.** Whatever you call them, they swim at the heart of a Southern tradition that's as much about eating the tasty freshwater crustaceans in a messy jubilee of divine spiciness as it is about bringing friends, family—and even strangers—together.

From out-of-the-way eateries and exuberant festivals to backyard shindigs and community celebrations, mudbug-loving Texans happily pull up a seat at a communal table and peel tails. Steam and aromatic spices fill the air as piping hot, bright-red crawfish tumble from giant pots onto paper-covered tables.

Then it's on! Time to twist off the tails and pull out the sweet, tender lobsterlike tail meat. The more adventurous devourers, keeping with time-honored crawfish tradition, suck the rich, flavorful yellow "fat" (it's actually a digestive organ called the hepatopancreas) from the head. Aficionados insist this is the best part.

Crawfish season varies depending on whom you ask, but it is usually in full swing by the start of Lent in late February, with the peak for size and quality covering March, April and May. Seasonal specialty restaurants like the Crawfish Shack in Crosby attract crawfish-crazed patrons by the dozens.

"The first day we open up for the year, we'll have 60 cars in line just to get to-go food," says owner Dan Meaux. "Some people are waiting two hours." The Crawfish Shack has erupted in popularity in the past few years, making it one of the top crawfish spots in the country.



**A crawfish boil encourages friends and family to dig in and eat from a shared plate or right off the table.**

"As of the last two years, we cook more crawfish than anyone in the country," Meaux says. He credits the explosive growth to the backyard party atmosphere and never compromising on quality.

Mudbug-themed festivals feature live music, parades, pageants, carnival rides and literal tons of crawfish. In 2017, Guinness World Records recognized the Bigass Crawfish Bash in La Marque for the most crawfish prepared in eight hours: more than 58,000 pounds.

Across Texas, every crawfish chef and backyard boiler has a

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14





## THE TAIL TRAIL: WHERE TO FIND

# THE BEST CRAWFISH

### **BROOKSHIRE REPKA'S GROCERY**

What started as a 1940s icehouse and convenience store, Repka's, a member of San Bernard Electric Cooperative, serves Cajun-style cuisine year-round. If you blink, you'll miss the nondescript building even though it is packed during crawfish season. Wood-paneled walls boast bar swag and autographed headshots of famous diners, including country music star Tim McGraw. Pool tables, vintage arcade games

and a jukebox add to the dive bar vibe, and patron-inscribed dollar bills adorn the ceiling. Plan on trying fried gator, crawfish étouffée and home-made pork cracklings.

### **CROSBY CRAWFISH SHACK**

One could argue the Crawfish Shack is Texas' most popular BYOB boiling pot restaurant. During peak season, loyal patrons lug beer-filled coolers and happily endure 200-person lines to get their hands on Dan Meaux's

savory mudbugs. During the season (typically January–June), the Crawfish Shack serves more than 6,000 pounds of crawfish daily. The open-air, red steel building exudes a garage-party-meets-sports-bar energy characterized by football memorabilia on the walls and sports on big-screen TVs. Get ready for boiled crawfish, shrimp, snow crab and sausage with corn, potatoes and mushrooms.

### **EL CAMPO PINCHERS BOIL'N POT RESTAURANT**

With lakeside dining on a large deck and fresh-daily crawfish from their farm, Pinchers is a cut above your average crawfish shack. Just off U.S. Highway 59 South, the restaurant's conspicuous yellow facade and



**Left: Carl Kokemor and Isabell Cavazos dig in at a crawfish boil at Repka's in Brookshire.**

BYOB. For those who like to get saucy, JuJu's offers three dipping options: red sauce (ketchup and spices), pink sauce (ketchup, mayo and spices) and melted butter.

#### **GALVESTON BENNO'S ON THE BEACH**

On the island's far east end, Benno's serves fresh Cajun seafood on an outdoor patio with unencumbered postcard views of the Gulf of Mexico. Sea gulls and pelicans soar on the briny breeze while diners enjoy crawfish, shrimp po'boys, grilled oysters and deep-fried Cajun crabs.

#### **GROVES LARRY'S FRENCH MARKET & CAJUN RESTAURANT**

There's nothing like Cajun food and live Cajun music to spice up an evening in the Golden Triangle—an area known for its Cajun influence and anchored by Beaumont, Port Arthur and Orange. Tables covered by checkered cloth define the front half of Larry's. Walls are clad with vintage photos of local fishermen and mounted trophy fish. The restaurant's back half enshrines a dance floor featuring live music under a neon glow. Reserve a table on the dance floor and order crawfish in season or step up to the year-round Cajun seafood buffet groaning with fried seafood, frog legs, boudin, étouffée and barbecued crab.

#### **PORT ARANSAS CRAZY CAJUN**

This no-frills hot spot for Cajun cuisine has been a favorite among locals and tourists since 1987. Stepping inside the unassuming teal and pink hut reveals a boisterous atmosphere as patrons enjoy heaping mounds of steaming seafood on white butcher-papered tables. The menu is mostly à la carte but features the Hungry Cajun—a spicy sampler

of boiled crab legs, crawfish, shrimp, corn, potatoes and sausage. It's also known for gumbo, shrimp Creole and fresh sourdough bread.

#### **ROCKPORT THE BOILING POT**

Strings of colored lights, neon beer logos and loads of kitsch create a partylike setting in this lively establishment celebrating 35 years. Every surface, from the corrugated steel exterior to the inside walls and ceilings, is adorned with graffiti, art and caricatures. Hungry diners don white plastic bibs, smash open crab legs with wooden mallets and polish off loads of Cajun seafood, family-style. It has a sizable beer cooler offering more selections than typical seafood joints. One block from the beach, the fishing pier and marina are also within walking distance.

#### **SANTA FE POOK'S CRAWFISH HOLE**

In addition to boiled crawfish, this BYOB shack, about 20 miles west of Galveston, offers deep-fried boudin balls, crawfish pie and gumbo. Expect Pook's to be packed with patrons at wooden octagonal tables peeling crawfish or cracking open huge snow crab legs while listening to live music.

sparkling blue lake beckon passersby to a trifecta eatery, fuel station and RV park. Visitors are greeted by a life-size shark and a large sign inviting them to "EAT TAIL." The novelty lake, complete with ducks, geese and light-up palm trees, sprawls across the restaurant's front. Patrons can walk the adjacent pier, feed the catfish and koi, or watch as the staff bags the purged crawfish.

#### **FANNETT JUJU'S CAJUN CRAWFISH SHAK**

JuJu's does one thing and does it right. Along a pastoral stretch of FM 365, 15 miles southwest of Beaumont, JuJu's serves boiled crawfish, corn, potatoes and sausage. Ambiance of the modest red building is defined by exposed plywood walls and a blackboard menu. And it's





CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

recipe. Most popular is the Cajun style, which calls for infusing boiled crawfish with peppery spices and serving them with boiled corn and potatoes. Another popular offshoot is the Vietnamese-Cajun style, in which the boiled crustaceans are sautéed with butter, garlic and aromatic ingredients such as lemongrass and citrus.

**GETTING THE MUDBUGS** The first chapters of crawfish scripture were written in Louisiana's Atchafalaya Basin, where wild harvests began in the 1880s. By the 1950s, cold storage and the introduction of wire crawfish traps boosted harvest volume. Crawfish farmers found they could raise an excellent crop in flooded rice fields and produce consistently larger crops year over year.

**WEB EXTRAS**

► **Crawfish watch the weather.** Read this story on our website to learn more.

That farming tradition continues with folks like Craig Radley, who converted 50 acres of rice fields near El Campo, in Wharton County Electric Cooperative's service area, into a swampy crawfish heaven.

Radley calls his operation Pinchers Crawfish Farm, and on one sunny afternoon, he readied his flat-bottomed aluminum boat for harvesting mudbugs. He navigated the specially designed craft through the muddy water with help from a hydraulic, cleat-studded wheel that pushed along the slushy bottom.

Radley hoisted each pyramid-shaped, crawfish-filled trap from the water and emptied the catch into a sorting area in front of his cockpit. As he went, he rebaited each trap with commercial crawfish pellets and put it back into the water to capture more.

As he sorted and cleaned his harvest, Radley removed debris and tossed the smaller mudbugs back so they could grow larger. With a full load, he motored back to his nearby seafood restaurant, Pinchers Boil'n Pot. The crawfish are submerged in fresh water for 24 hours to purge them of internal impurities. After that, they get weighed and are ready for their starring role in the restaurant.

Writer and photographer **Eric W. Pohl**, a member of Pedernales EC, lives in Dripping Springs.

**Craig Radley of Pinchers Crawfish Farm empties a crawfish trap into a boat's sorting area.**

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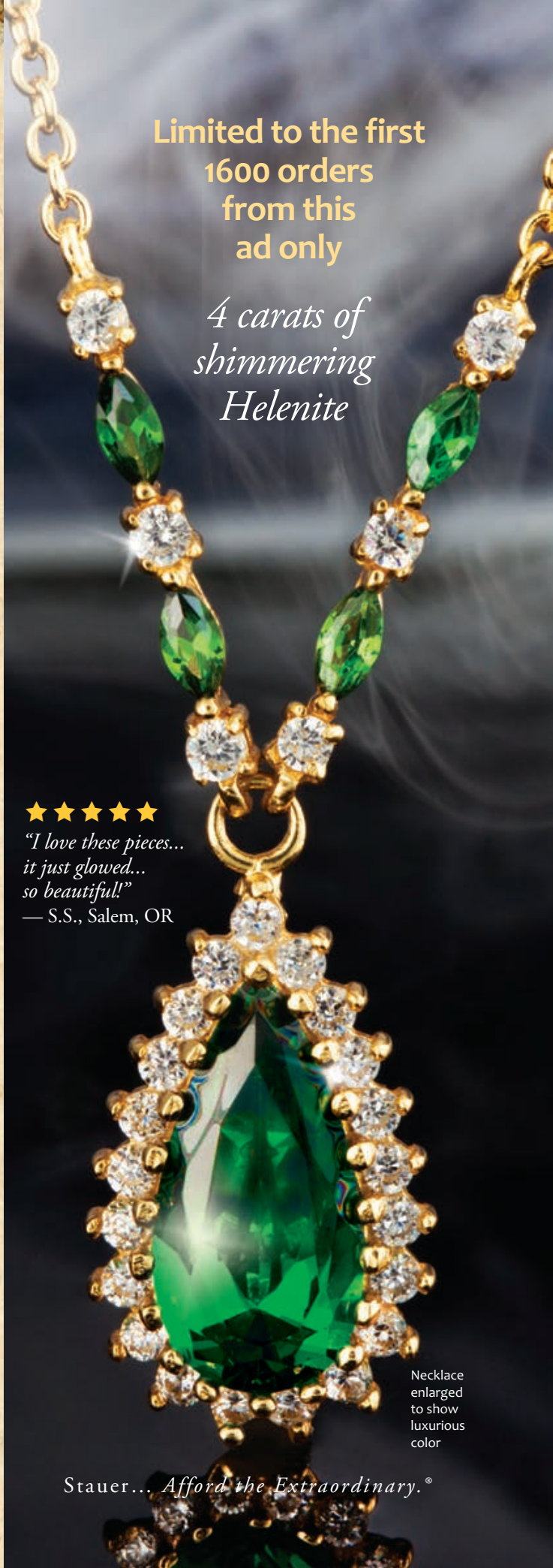
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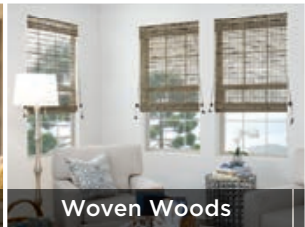
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# A New Energy



MESSAGE FROM  
**GENERAL MANAGER ALAN LESLEY**

**WE LIVE IN A DEVICE-DRIVEN WORLD. OUR SMARTPHONES,** tablets and laptops help us communicate and connect. All the while, companies spend billions of dollars pushing out messages and information to those devices, constantly bombarding us with one-way communications. But is anyone listening on the other end?

At CECA, we are not only listening, we are eager to hear from you. Whether you text us, respond to a survey or social media post, send an email or simply stop by to chat in person, we thrive on your feedback. Connecting with you helps us keep pace with the priorities of our members and the communities we serve.

Because we are a co-op, we have a different way of operating. CECA exists to provide safe, reliable and affordable energy to you, the members of the co-op. Equally important is our mission to improve the quality of life of the members we serve. We hope you consider us more than just your energy provider. We're also a trusted partner that supports this community and empowers economic development and prosperity.

That's why we create opportunities for you and other community members to give us feedback throughout the year. These include our annual meeting as well as other activities and events.

Our focus is directed by local members just like you who understand the needs of our area and are looking out for the long-term interests of the larger community.

Such feedback is especially important now, when we are in the midst of significant changes in the energy sector. Technology and the drive for more renewables and a more balanced energy mix are affecting long-term planning. These are com-

plex issues that we will navigate in the coming months and years and one reason it's so important that we hear from you as we plot our course for the future.

CECA works continually to learn from our members about their priorities so that we can better serve you—because your electric co-op was built by the community for the community. We can only improve, adapt and effectively plan for the future if communication works both ways.

For our co-op and community to thrive now and in the future, we depend on hearing from you. I hope you will connect with us and let us know your perspective. You can always reach me at 1-800-915-2533. I'm listening.



ATTENTION STUDENTS:

# \$14,000 in Scholarships Available

**CECA WILL AWARD SEVEN \$2,000 SCHOLARSHIPS TO LOCAL STUDENTS TO ASSIST WITH college expenses.** Applicants must be a member or dependent of a member of the cooperative and must be a graduating high school senior or currently enrolled at a qualifying university. Scholarship recipients will receive four payments of \$500, paid over four semesters.

Five of the scholarships will come from escheated funds through CECA's Scholarship for Excellence program. Two scholarships will be funded by Operation Round-Up.

To apply for a scholarship, visit [ceca.coop/content/scholarships](http://ceca.coop/content/scholarships). Be sure to fill out the application for each scholarship to increase your chances of receiving an award. The deadline for applications is March 24. For more information, contact Shirley at 1-800-915-2533.



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## EASTLAND OFFICE

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Eastland, TX 76448

## OFFICE HOURS

**Comanche Office:** Monday–Friday, 7:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.,

**Early Office:** Monday, Wednesday and Friday, 7:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.; closed 1–2 p.m.

**Eastland Office:** Tuesday and Thursday, 8 a.m.–4 p.m.

## General Manager

Alan Lesley

## Board of Directors

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Pete McDougal, District 2  
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## Report an Outage

CECA crews are available 24/7 in the event of a power quality issue by calling 1-800-915-2533.

## Contact Us

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# Classroom Grants Awarded to Educators



LeaAnn Hill of Baird Junior High School received a \$750 grant for her sixth and seventh grade language arts class. The class has been studying the Holocaust. The grant will be used to cover the costs of a field trip to the Dallas Holocaust and Human Rights Museum.



Angela Askew, assistant principal at Comanche High School, received a \$1,000 grant for Shattered Dreams. The Shattered Dreams program dramatizes a crash scene at and near high school campuses to show students just how dangerous driving while texting or under the influence of alcohol can be.



Alaina Thompson, 12th grade British literature teacher at Eastland High School, was awarded a \$1,000 grant to take her students on a trip to Scarborough Renaissance Festival, where they will interact with performers portraying historical characters and have a chance to practice English speech patterns and accents. The students also will get to participate in an educational court game from the late Middle Ages that demonstrates a learning technique from that period.

# Local Organizations Receive Grants Thanks to CECA Members



Students from Bangs High School attended the CECA Student Leadership Conference along with their school counselor in November. The students wanted to continue the CECA tradition of spreading Christmas cheer and also make a generous donation to the community. Santa visited all three Bangs Independent School District campuses December 9–13. Students of all ages, along with faculty and staff, participated in this fun project. Even the school superintendent and his wife, Tony and Bobbie Truelove, paid Santa a visit. Students gave up their lunchtime all week and arrived very early each morning to prepare for pictures with elementary students. CECA made a \$250 donation through Operation Round-Up to assist with their endeavor.



Congratulations to Chuck Miller of De Leon ISD. Miller was awarded a \$500 Operation Round-Up grant for organizing a drive to place to-go supply kits in each classroom in the De Leon ISD system. Each kit will contain safety materials to be utilized in the event of a natural disaster or other catastrophe. Good job, Mr. Miller!



Toys for Kids in Brownwood is a charitable organization dedicated to helping less fortunate families in Brown County. CECA was glad to help with a \$250 donation through Operation Round-Up. Volunteer Kelli Blackwell accepted the check on behalf of Toys for Kids. Thank you to CECA members who round up their bills to make these grants happen.

Santa's Helpers is a local organization that helps less fortunate families and seniors in Comanche County. On average, they assist 120–150 families each year. Pictured at right is Kerry Dudley, founder and chair of the organization, with a \$250 contribution from CECA's Operation Round-Up.





SHERYL WATSON | ISTOCK.COM

# How CECA Manages Threats to the Electric Grid

**WHILE THE THREAT OF CYBERSECURITY ATTACKS ON THE** electric grid gets a lot of attention these days, physical damage from storms or critters is still much more likely to disrupt power.

In fact, there are many physical threats to our power delivery system that CECA works hard to deflect on a daily basis. From weather events (such as ice storms, high winds and flooding) to criminal activity (including copper theft and transformers taking gunfire), it takes a proactive approach to consistently deliver reliable service to our members. Even something as small as a squirrel can damage our system's infrastructure and cause power outages.

If the lights do go out, we are ready to restore power as quickly and as safely as possible. Here are three key ways CECA works to keep your power as reliable as possible:

**1. Being part of the community.** CECA knows our communities. We live and work in the neighborhoods and towns we serve, and you know many of your co-op's board members and employees.

We know that emergencies can happen at any time, and relationships are important in urgently responding to unplanned events or in preparing for more predictable events, including winter storms or summer flooding. In the rare event of a major outage, our network of sister co-ops are ready to pitch in quickly and help us get power restored. That's because we're part of one large cooperative community, and Cooperation Among Cooperatives is a guiding principle for co-ops everywhere.

**2. Planning, preparing and practicing.** We test disaster and business continuity plans regularly and take pride in being prepared at all times. Plans not only focus on how to prevent

outages but also how to respond and recover in the event of an incident. Maintenance work such as vegetation management and pole inspections may seem routine but is strategically performed to proactively reduce power disruptions. Trees that are too close to power lines can cause major damage and outages during a storm.

**3. Coordinating with stakeholders.** CECA prizes collaboration with fellow cooperatives, industry partners and government agencies. We work closely with the rest of the electric utility industry, our regional grid operator, the departments of Homeland Security and Energy, and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission on matters of critical infrastructure protection, which include sharing information about potential threats and working together to avoid disruptions.

You can help us in this endeavor to keep electricity flowing by:

- ▶ Reporting suspicious activity. Be mindful of unusual situations and immediately report them to CECA or local authorities. For example, if you see noncooperative personnel near a substation, please report it. If you see something that doesn't seem right, say something so that it can be investigated.

- ▶ Checking for damage. If you see tree branches or other vegetation growing too closely to power lines or utility poles, please contact us so we can keep the lines clear to provide the most reliable service.

Although the electric grid is incredibly resilient and can withstand many physical impacts, it's also a dynamic infrastructure that requires constant attention. To power your lives, CECA is vigilant in ensuring grid protection from physical and cyber threats.

# Command, Control and Energy Savings for Co-op Members

**ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IS CHANGING THE** way we live and has the potential to bring major changes to the way we use energy.

The number of Wi-Fi-enabled devices is projected to reach 75.44 billion worldwide by 2025, a fivefold increase in 10 years. That pace keeps designers and manufacturers of consumer products looking for new ways to add value to their products with Wi-Fi-enabled features.

As artificial intelligence devices create opportunities for home automation, consumers will play larger roles in deciding how and when systems in their homes are controlled.

Smart thermostats have been around for a while, and models that interconnect with home automation systems, like Amazon's Echo and Google Home, get a lot of attention. Apps developed for those products are also available for Android and iOS devices.

As the energy sources we use to generate power evolve and management of the electric grid becomes more agile and sophisticated, the true potential of energy load control provides opportunities for more savings through wholesale power supply. That's challenging electric co-ops to find additional ways to strengthen partnerships with members who are interested in actively managing their energy use. Two-way, real-time communications and artificial intelligence offer opportunities to learn consumer preferences and how best to reduce energy during peak demand periods.

It seems like virtual (or "voice") assistants and smartphone apps are able to manage more and more aspects of our homes with each passing day, and while many may not work seamlessly, they are likely to continue to improve.

With this ever-expanding technology, your heating, ven-



tilating and air conditioning system can learn your schedule and regulate heating and cooling for your comfort based upon when you are home. Instead of maintaining a steady supply of hot water when no one is home to use it, water could be heated during periods when demand is lowest and electricity costs less and then boosted to ideal temperatures to meet specific needs like bathing, laundry and washing dishes.

New induction stovetops, energy-efficient convection ovens and some countertop appliances offer more opportunities for efficiency in the kitchen—and the common trait of these efficient products is that they are all electric.



Happy Valentine's Day February 14

# Save Energy by Cooking With Pressure Cookers and Slow Cookers

**PRESSURE COOKERS (ALSO KNOWN BY** the brand name Instant Pots) have made a huge comeback lately and are giving slow cookers a run for their money—and with good reason.

While both appliances are more energy efficient than ovens or stoves, pressure cookers are more versatile and cook more efficiently—especially today's versions. When comparing appliances, you'll find that the pressure cooker beats even the most energy-efficient slow cooker in terms of using less power and adding less heat into your home.

Pressure cookers consume much less power than a standard electric oven, which uses around 2,000 watts of electricity on medium heat. If you cooked a pot roast in an electric oven for more than three hours, you would use at least 6 kilowatt-hours of energy. If you cooked that same pot roast in a pressure cooker,

you may only use 1–2 kWh.

Pressure cookers cut energy use in two ways. First, they cook food faster than a slow cooker, slashing cooking time by as much as 70%. Secondly, they are well insulated, retaining heat that is transferred to cooking so you don't waste energy radiating heat into your kitchen.

The device also can track the temperature of the food inside during cooking, and when a preselected temperature is reached, the heating element automatically turns off. Because it is insulated, it maintains that optimal cooking temperature while consuming electricity only 60% of the cooking time. Even the most efficient slow cooker requires constant energy while it's cooking.

With your pressure cooker, this chili is ready to serve in 25 minutes and will taste like it's been simmering for hours.

## Pressure Cooker Chili

1 pound lean ground beef  
1 medium onion, finely chopped  
1 can (14 ounces) diced tomatoes (use kind with green chiles for extra spice)  
½ cup water  
1 can (14 ounces) chili beans  
1 packet chili seasoning

1. Brown the ground beef and onions on the sauté setting. Salt and pepper generously.
  2. When the beef is brown and the onions translucent, pour in the tomatoes, water, chili beans and seasoning.
  3. Stir everything together and set the vent to sealing.
  4. Cook on high pressure 8 minutes. Allow the pot to natural release 5 minutes. Release the rest of the steam and serve.
- Serves 4–6.





# Understanding the EnergyGuide Label

## ENERGYGUIDE LABELS HAVE BEEN

around for four decades and are just as important today to help you buy energy-efficient appliances as they were when they were first introduced. You'll find these useful tags on air conditioners, clothes washers, dishwashers, freezers, furnaces, heat pumps, pool heaters, refrigerators, TVs, water heaters and window AC units.

You'll also often see a second, blue-and-white Energy Star label applied to a much broader range of products that identifies its bearer as being more efficient than most of its peers. For appliances, the standard a product must reach varies. An Energy Star dishwasher, for example, must be 10% more efficient than the least efficient unit, while washing machines must be 37% more efficient.

When you're shopping for appliances, consider items as having two price tags. The first one covers the purchase price—think of it as a down payment. The second price tag is the cost of operating the appliance during its lifetime. You'll be paying the second price every month with your utility bill for the next 10–20 years, depending on the appliance. Refrigerators last an average of 12 years; clothes washers last about 11 years; and room air conditioners last about nine years.

When shopping, consider labels and features that can help ensure that you purchase appliances with a low operating cost.

The EnergyGuide label is a great tool that helps consumers compare the energy use and costs of new appliances. The list below details information the label includes and offers tips on interpreting it.

- ▶ Key features of the appliance and the similar models that make up the cost range below the top section of the label.
- ▶ The cost range helps you compare the energy use of different models by showing you the range of operating costs for models with similar features.
- ▶ An estimate of how much electricity the appliance uses in a year based on typical use. Multiply this by the electricity rate on your utility bill to better judge what your actual operating



The ENERGYGUIDE label is a great tool that helps consumers compare the energy use and costs of new appliances. Use the sample below to better understand how to use the information found on the label.

Lists key features of the appliance and the similar models that make up the cost range below.

The cost range helps you compare the energy use of different models by showing you the range of operating costs for models with similar features.

An estimate of how much electricity the appliance uses in a year based on typical use. Multiply this by your local electricity rate on your utility bill to better judge what your actual operating cost might be.

Source: Federal Trade Commission

The make, model and size tell you exactly what product this label describes.

What you might pay to run the appliance for one year, based on its electricity use and the national average cost of energy. The cost appears on labels for all models and brands so you can compare energy use.

If you see the ENERGY STAR logo, it means the product is better for the environment because it uses less electricity than standard models.

cost might be.

- ▶ The make, model and size tell you exactly what product this label describes.
- ▶ What you might pay to run the appliance for one year, based on its electricity use and the national average cost of energy. The cost appears on labels for all models and brands so you can compare energy use.
- ▶ If you see the Energy Star logo, it means the product is better for the environment because it uses less electricity than standard models.

# Pain and Aging?



**Just Ask  
Christina.**

Christina Walker  
Chief Science Researcher

## STABBING FOOT PAIN?

Do you suffer from burning, tingling, or stabbing foot pain? You should know help is available. 20 million Americans suffer from these symptoms and put up with the pain, because they are not aware of this proven treatment.

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MagniLife® Pain Relieving Foot Cream is **available at Walgreens, CVS/pharmacy, Rite Aid, Target, Walmart and Amazon**, located in the footcare and diabetes sections. Order risk free for \$19.99 +\$5.95 S&H for a 4 oz jar. **Get a FREE jar** when you order two for \$39.98 +\$5.95 S&H. Send payment to: MagniLife NC-TC2, PO Box 6789, McKinney, TX 75071 or call **1-800-428-1890**. Money back guarantee. Order now at [www.MDFootCream.com](http://www.MDFootCream.com)

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pain. Although this product is not intended to treat fibromyalgia, it can help with the pain and fatigue caused by fibromyalgia. *"These tablets have just been WONDERFUL. I'd recommend them to anyone and everyone!"* - Debra, WV.

MagniLife® Pain & Fatigue Relief is **sold at CVS/pharmacy, Rite Aid Pharmacy and Amazon**. Order risk free for \$19.99 +\$5.95 S&H for 125 tablets per bottle. **Get a FREE bottle** when you order two for \$39.98 +\$5.95 S&H. Send payment to: MagniLife F-TC2, PO Box 6789, McKinney, TX 75071 or call **1-800-428-1890**. Satisfaction guaranteed. Order now at [www.PainFatigue.com](http://www.PainFatigue.com)

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83863

# Meat and Greet

Two of Texas' legendary pitmasters meet for the first time

STORY AND PHOTO BY WYATT MCSPADDEN

ON AN OVERHEATED SATURDAY IN EARLY October, I drove Roy Perez, the venerable pitmaster at Kreuz Market in Lockhart, and Kreuz Market owner Keith Schmidt to Snow's BBQ in Lexington. Snow's, a tiny barbecue joint in a tiny town, is often mentioned as one of the best barbecue destinations in the state. Of course, Kreuz Market vies for the same title and has been a legendary barbecue purveyor for more than a century.

Roy is the first pitmaster I photographed nearly 25 years ago. Since then, as I created images for two photography books on Texas barbecue, I've had the honor to make more pictures of Roy along with photographs of dozens more folks who do the hot, hard work of making Texas barbecue the best in the world.

Even though Roy remains one of my favorite subjects, I will admit that in the past six years, a rival for my lens's attention has charmed me through several sessions. She is a grand woman named

Tootsie Tomanetz, who handles much of the cooking in the early hours of every Saturday in Lexington. Now in her 80s, Tootsie's fame rivals that of Roy. But

#### WEB EXTRAS

► Win a copy of Wyatt McSpadden's photography book *Texas BBQ*. Go to [TexasCoopPower.com/contests](https://TexasCoopPower.com/contests).



neither one lets the acclaim go to their head.

Tootsie arrives at Snow's well before sunup each Saturday and works through lunchtime, exhibiting her natural work ethic as well as a genuine love of people and the pit skills she has honed over decades.

I had set the goal to deliver Roy to Snow's for lunch, so he could meet his fellow barbecue icon, Miss Tootsie. Roy is not widely traveled but agreed to go along.

Once Roy, Keith and I arrived in Lexington, we were greeted by Snow's owner, Kerry Bexley. We enjoyed a brilliant sampling of Snow's smoked goodies.

After lunch, we took a few minutes to capture this image of two barbecue legends who will live forever in the barbecue museum that exists only in my mind.

Wyatt McSpadden's two photography books on Texas barbecue are *Texas BBQ* and *Texas BBQ: Small Town to Downtown*.

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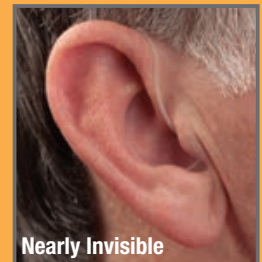
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# Forget Chocolate, My Sweetie Likes...



I MOVED TO TEXAS 14 YEARS AGO AND was surprised at first by the amount of fresh, local produce available. Eager to expand my cooking horizons, I embraced all of it in my cooking. On my recipe blog, Stetted, I look to everything that Texas has to offer each season, from summer peaches to winter citrus.

When it comes to desserts, my family gravitates toward anything with fruit—my kids are especially fond of strawberry shortcake any time of year. But when strawberries aren't in season, I look to other ingredients.

Meyer lemons are perfect for celebratory desserts because they are sweeter and less acidic than standard lemons. This Meyer Lemon Meringue Pie is suitable for all tastes, including the littlest valentines in your house. Gingersnaps are used in the crust for a contrasting kick, but you can swap in graham crackers.

**MEGAN MYERS**, FOOD EDITOR

## Meyer Lemon Meringue Pie

- 1¾ cups crushed gingersnap cookies
- ¼ cup (½ stick) melted butter
- 1⅓ cups plus ¼ cup sugar, divided use
- 2 tablespoons flour
- 3 tablespoons cornstarch
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1 cup water
- ½ cup Meyer lemon juice
- 4 eggs, separated

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Mix together gingersnaps, melted butter and ¼ cup sugar until well combined. Press mixture into a 9-inch pie dish, using the bottom of a measuring cup or glass to press down, making sure to keep the crust even. Bake crust 10 minutes, then set aside.
3. In a small saucepan over medium

CONTINUED ON PAGE 32



## Forget Chocolate, My Sweetie Likes...



THIS MONTH'S RECIPE CONTEST WINNER

LAMONT PETERSEN | NAVARRO COUNTY EC

Our testers enjoyed the winning pie so much that one said it was her new favorite dessert (and she loves chocolate!). It's got everything you want in a coconut pie: rich filling with plenty of coconut flavor, a lightly sweet whipped cream topping and the added kick of freshly toasted coconut on top. Petersen makes it for the senior citizen residents at Brookdale Corsicana. "They rave about this pie," Petersen says, "and the facility administrator thinks it is over the moon!"

### Oma's Dreamy Coconut Pie

- 1 9-inch pie crust, premade or homemade
  - 2 cups sweetened coconut flakes, divided use
  - 1½ cups coconut milk (not low-fat)
  - 1½ cups half-and-half
  - 5 egg yolks
  - ¾ cup sugar
  - 4 tablespoons cornstarch
  - ¼ teaspoon salt
  - ⅛ cup (¼ stick) butter
  - 1½ teaspoons vanilla extract
  - 2 teaspoons coconut extract, divided use
  - 2 cups heavy whipping cream
  - ⅛ cup powdered sugar
1. Prebake pie crust and set aside. Pre-heat oven to 350 degrees.
  2. Spread ½ cup coconut flakes evenly on a baking sheet. Place sheet in oven 8–10 minutes or until coconut begins to toast. Remove from oven to cool and set aside.

3. Pour coconut milk and half-and-half into a medium-size bowl. Add egg yolks and whisk together. Set aside.
  4. Combine sugar, cornstarch and salt in a medium-size saucepan. Whisk egg mixture into pan and cook over medium heat, stirring constantly, until the custard thickens and boils, about 15 minutes. Boil 1 minute. Remove from heat and stir in remaining untoasted coconut flakes, butter, vanilla and 1 teaspoon coconut extract.
  5. Pour filling into pie crust and refrigerate until cool.
  6. Whip cream in a stand mixer on high speed. Once it begins to thicken, add powdered sugar and remaining coconut extract. Mound whipped cream on top of cooled pie. Sprinkle with reserved toasted coconut. Refrigerate until ready to serve.
- Serves 8.

**COOK'S TIP** A graham cracker pie crust works well, too.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 31

heat, whisk together 1 cup sugar, flour, cornstarch, salt, water and lemon juice, and cook until dissolved.

4. Beat egg yolks in a small bowl, then slowly whisk in ¼ cup of the warm sugar mixture. Once combined, slowly whisk egg mixture into the saucepan.
5. Reduce heat to medium-low and cook about 5 minutes, whisking constantly, until mixture is thick and coats the back of a spoon. Pour filling into prepared crust.
6. In the bowl of a stand mixer, beat egg whites until frothy. Turn mixer to high and pour in remaining ⅓ cup of sugar. Beat until stiff peaks form.
7. Spoon meringue onto pie filling, spreading to the edges of the crust to prevent shrinkage. Return the pie to the oven and bake 10–15 minutes, until meringue is lightly browned. Let cool completely before serving. ► Serves 8.

**COOK'S TIP** Meringue pie is best served as soon as it has cooled but can be stored in the refrigerator. Meringue may release moisture (weep) after being exposed to humidity.

Follow along with **Megan Myers** and her adventures in the kitchen at [stetted.com](http://stetted.com).

### Pecan Pie Muffins

SHARI MCWILLIAMS | UNITED COOPERATIVE SERVICES

- 1 cup chopped pecans
- 1 cup brown sugar
- ½ cup flour
- ½ teaspoon baking powder
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ½ cup (1 stick) butter, melted
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In a medium-size bowl, stir together pecans, brown sugar, flour, baking powder and salt.
2. Add melted butter, eggs and vanilla to bowl and stir to mix well.
3. Spoon batter into a foil-lined muffin pan. (Batter will stick to regular paper muffin cups.) Fill each cup about ¾ full. Bake 20–25 minutes. ► Makes 12 muffins.

**COOK'S TIP** These will not rise much and the finished product will be flat on top.

### \$100 Recipe Contest

July's recipe contest topic is **Hot Off the Grill**. Tell us your favorite way to fire up a dinner of shrimp, steak, ribs, chicken thighs or fish. The deadline is **February 10**. Readers whose recipes are featured will receive a special *Texas Co-op Power* apron.

ENTER ONLINE at [TexasCoopPower.com/contests](http://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.





## Valentine Stack

MARION EVONIUK | PEDERNALES EC

### FILLING

- 8 ounces mascarpone cheese, softened
- 4 ounces cream cheese, softened
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 cup plus 2 tablespoons heavy whipping cream, divided use
- 2 ounces white chocolate, coarsely chopped
- 1 cup powdered sugar
- ½ cups raspberries, plus 5 for garnish

### PANCAKES

- 2 cups flour
- 3 tablespoons sugar
- 4 teaspoons baking powder
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 2 eggs
- 1½ cups milk
- ¼ cup plus 1 tablespoon vegetable oil, divided use
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract

**1. FILLING:** Add the mascarpone, cream cheese and vanilla into a medium-size glass mixing bowl. Beat with a hand mixer on medium speed until soft and creamy, about 1–2 minutes.

**2.** Into a small, microwave-safe bowl, add the 2 tablespoons whipping cream and microwave on high 25 seconds. Add the white chocolate and stir until creamy. If necessary, microwave an additional 15–20 seconds to melt chocolate. Immediately add to the cream cheese mixture and beat on medium speed until incorporated, 15–20 seconds.

**3.** Add the powdered sugar and remaining cup of whipping cream and continue beating an additional 1–2 minutes until mixture is thick and creamy. Do not beat on high or overmix—the mascarpone can separate. Gently fold in 1½ cups raspberries and set aside.

**4. PANCAKES:** In a large bowl, whisk together the flour, sugar, baking powder, baking soda and salt. Set aside.

**5.** In a medium-size glass mixing bowl, whisk the eggs slightly, then add the

milk, ¼ cup vegetable oil and vanilla, and whisk to combine. Pour over dry ingredients and, using a large spoon, stir briefly to just incorporate. There will be lumps of dry ingredients. Set aside 10 minutes.

**6.** If using a griddle to prepare pancakes, preheat it to 350 degrees. Gently stir pancake batter just until combined. Pour 1 tablespoon oil onto griddle or into nonstick pan over medium-high heat and spread it evenly, then pour ½-cup portions of the batter onto the griddle or pan and cook until golden brown, about 2 minutes on each side. Remove pancakes onto a large platter and cover with foil to keep warm.

**7.** To serve, place one pancake onto a serving platter and spread it with ⅓–½ cup of the filling. Place another pancake on top and continue layering the filling and pancakes until you've used up the pancakes. Top with remaining filling and garnish with remaining raspberries. Serve immediately. ▶ Serves 4–6.

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#### SHARPENING MY HISTORY

Chet Garner pokes around the Devil's Rope Museum in McLean.

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# Power

WE KNOW THE POWER of a good country song, and rocker Huey Lewis knows the power of love—but we wondered how power moves Texans. Here are some of the ways. **GRACE FULTZ**

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

◀ **DANNY PICKENS**, Cherokee County EC: “A Ferris wheel at the East Texas Fair is powered up for fun.”

▼ **LAUREN MCCLAIN**, PenTex Energy: “Abigail McClain, 6, shows Mom how a pushup is done.”



◀ **JACQUELINE ACUFF**, Nueces EC: “Lightning shows the power of nature right in my backyard.”

▼ **MARK HUSFELD**, Navasota Valley EC: Near a substation in Navasota after a thunderstorm.



## UPCOMING CONTESTS

JUNE STATE PARKS	DUE FEBRUARY 10
JULY EXPLORATION	DUE MARCH 10
AUGUST ON THE WATER	DUE APRIL 10

Enter online at [TexasCoopPower.com/Contests](https://TexasCoopPower.com/Contests).



▼ **JIM BROWDER**, HILCO EC: “A woodpecker inspects a HILCO power line.”



## Pick of the Month

### Michael Carbonaro Magic Show

**Victoria February 15**  
(361) 788-9271, visdfoundation.org

Michael Carbonaro is known for his hidden-camera magic. His illusions, along with his absurd, matter-of-fact explanations, leave audiences bewildered. Proceeds from this show support the Victoria Independent School District.



## February

7

**Alpine [7-9, 14-16] Nat Turner in Jerusalem,** (432) 837-8218, sulross.edu/theatre

**Fredericksburg [7-23] Wine Lovers Celebration,** (872) 216-9463, texaswinetrail.com

8

**Avoca Swedish Smorgasbord,** (325) 668-2796

**Lufkin The Choir of Man,** (936) 633-5454, angelinaarts.org

9

**Bandera St. Stanislaus Church Faith Heritage Dinner,** (830) 460-4712, ststanislausbandera.com

14

**Luckenbach [14-15] Hug-In and Valentine Ball,** (830) 997-3224, luckenbachtexas.com

**Port Lavaca [14-15] South Texas Square & Round Dance Association February Frenzy,** (361) 575-2665, stsrda.org

February 21-23  
New Braunfels  
Troutfest Texas



15

**Fredericksburg Cave Creek School Open House,** (830) 990-1017, historicsschools.org

**Richardson Mu Delta Alpha Changemaker Award Dinner,** (469) 712-7716, mudeltaalpha.org/events

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# 16

**Harlingen** Ms. South Texas Senior America Pageant, (956) 357-1636

# 20

**Edinburg** [20-23] Fiesta Edinburg, (956) 383-4974, edinburg.com/events

**Nocona** [20-23] Mardi Gras Nocona Style, (940) 825-3526, nocona.org

# 21

**Alpine** [21-22] Lone Star Cowboy Poetry Gathering, (432) 216-2167, lonestarcowboypetry.com

**Brenham** [21-22] Nature's Blessings Quilt Show, (979) 525-1128, friendshipquiltguild.weebly.com

**New Braunfels** [21-23] Troutfest Texas 2020, (830) 964-3455, grtu.org/troutfest

# 22

**Crockett** *One Night in Memphis*, (936) 544-4276, pwfaa.org

**Boerne** [22-23] Spring Antiques Show, (830) 329-2870, visitboerne.org

# 27

**Boerne** [27-29] Just Between Friends Sale,

(830) 282-6133, nwsanantonio.jbfsale.com

**Brownsville** [27-29] Sombrero Festival, (956) 550-9682, sombrerofestival.com

# 28

**Luckenbach** Barbara Leatherwood Fight for the Cure Concert for Ovarian Cancer, (254) 833-2444, luckenbachtexas.com



February 27-29  
Brownsville  
Sombrero Festival

**New Braunfels Lone Bellow: Half Moon Light Tour**, (830) 606-1281, gruenehall.com

# 29

**Streetman** Southern Oaks VFD Chili Supper/Cake Auction, (903) 599-6022

**Wichita Falls** Red River Valley Square & Round Dance Association Teen Scholarship Dance, (940) 733-2782, rrvsda.org

# March

# 6

**Marble Falls** [6-7] Austin Square and Round Dance Association Square Thru the Wildflowers, (830) 613-9054, asrda.org

# 7

**Crockett** Jeanne Robertson, (936) 544-4276, pwfaa.org

## Submit Your Event!

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

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# The Height of Deceit

Oil boom scam created world's littlest skyscraper in Wichita Falls

WHETHER IT'S HATS, TRUCKS OR HAIR, WE Texans expect things to be big. So when I saw a building in Wichita Falls advertised as the world's littlest skyscraper, it piqued my interest in a Texas-sized way.

I was amazed at the revitalization in downtown Wichita Falls, which includes a craft brewery, a farmers market and a fancy chocolatier. At the northern edge of downtown, I found my destination: the Newby-McMahon Building.

From the street, the building looked like a well-kept, historic single-story structure. A glance down the alley identified the addition of a thin, four-story tower—like an elevator shaft built for floors never completed. The tower looks strange, but the story of its origin is even stranger.

To unravel the mystery, I walked into the building that now houses Hello Again, a consignment shop whose owner encourages visitors to climb the world's littlest skyscraper. I found the thin staircase with a sign directing me upward. Even though I felt like I had stepped into a large closet, I was actually inside the skyscraper. It measures only 9 feet by 12 feet. I climbed three flights of stairs and arrived at the top floor museum that recounts an epic tale of swindling, greed and manipulation.

The story began in 1918, when the oil boom hit nearby Burkburnett. The town was rocked by overnight success, but most of the deals took shape in Wichita Falls, which was desperate for office space. J.D. McMahon proposed a solution that included what he described as the business



**Chet makes sure you can't miss the world's littlest skyscraper.**

opportunity of a lifetime. McMahon pitched the city's residents on a skyscraper that would be 480 feet high—the tallest in Texas and rivaling the tallest in the world. Investors were eager, and McMahon raised \$200,000 (well over \$3 million in today's money).

Construction started and questions soon followed. The building was not as "Texas-sized" as promised. Instead of the monumental structure the investors expected, they received a skinny tower with no elevator or stairs. The investors were enraged and sued McMahon for fraud.

When the judge reviewed the approved blueprints, he found that everything was in order and that the building was being built exactly according to plan. The final plan was laid out and approved—in inches instead of feet. So, instead of getting the 480-foot skyscraper investors had dreamed of, builders erected a 480-inch embarrassment. McMahon had executed the con of the century by simply adding an apostrophe. Turns out that when people see dollar

signs, they tend to overlook punctuation.

The angry investors wanted to tear the building down immediately, but before the demolition took place, a nationally syndicated newspaper column called Ripley's Believe It or Not dubbed the ill-conceived project the world's littlest skyscraper. That publicity quickly transformed the eyesore into an international tourist attraction.

I stood at the top of the diminutive structure that now sits in the shadow of taller buildings and wondered how this skyscraper, if it had been built to expectations, might have changed the trajectory of Wichita Falls. Would it now sit abandoned? Or would Wichita Falls have become a city more like Dallas?

The world will never know. But what is certain is how much fun it is to climb the world's littlest skyscraper and take in one of the littlest views in Texas.

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 the world's littlest skyscraper.

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48 LBS.	WEIGHT	45.6 LBS.	
1.2 GAL.	TANK SIZE	.95 GAL.	
3	OUTLETS	3	
YES	OVERLOAD PROTECTION	YES	
79.7 cc	ENGINE SIZE	90.5 cc	
YES	LOW OIL ALERT	YES	
YES	PARALLEL CAPABLE	YES	
YES	POWER SAVER	YES	



PREDATOR 2000  
SAVE \$559  
NOW \$449.99  
ITEM 62523

COMPARE TO HONDA EU2000i  
\$499.99 PRICE \$1,009  
LIMIT 1 - Coupon valid through 4/1/20\*

HONDA EU2000i  
\*HONDA EU2000i stated specs

## U.S. GENERAL SUPER COUPON

### 30", 4 DRAWER TECH CARTS

- 12,600 cu. in. of storage
- 580 lb. capacity
- Customer Rating ★★★★★
- SAVE \$740



COMPARE TO Snap-on BLUE-POINT \$880  
MODEL: KBC310T8PC  
Item 56387, 64096, 56386, 56392, 56393, 56394  
Side tray sold separately.  
NOW \$179.99  
YOUR CHOICE OF 6 COLORS \$139.99  
ITEM 6270816

LIMIT 1 - Coupon valid through 4/1/20\*

## BRAUN SUPER COUPON

### 5000 LUMEN, 4 FT. LED HANGING SHOP LIGHT

- 30,000 hour LED life
- Customer Rating ★★★★★



SAVE 33%  
NOW \$19.99  
ITEM 64410

LIMIT 3 - Coupon valid through 4/1/20\*

## FREE SUPER COUPON

OVER 5,000 5 STAR REVIEWS  
WITH ANY PURCHASE

### SUPER BRIGHT LED/SMD WORK LIGHT/FLASHLIGHT

- Super-Strong, Ultra-Lightweight Composite Plastic
- Magnetic Base & 360° Swivel Hook for Hands-Free Operation
- 3 - AAA Batteries (Included)
- 144 Lumens

ALL IN A SINGLE SUPER POWERFUL LIGHT

COMPARE TO PERFORMANCE TOOL \$1352  
MODEL: W2384

ITEM 63878/63991 64005/60566 63601/67227 shown

60269897

Cannot be used with other discounts or prior purchases. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 4/1/20 while supplies last. Limit 1 FREE GIFT per customer per day.

## 20% OFF SUPER COUPON

ANY SINGLE ITEM\*

60270055

Limit 1 coupon per customer per day. Save 20% on any 1 item purchased. \*Cannot be used with other discounts, coupons or any of the following items or brands: Inside Truck Club membership, Extended Service Plan, gift card, open box item, 3 day Parking Lot Sale Item, compressors, floor jacks, sales, storage cabinets, chests or carts, Trailers, welders, Admiral, Ames, Atlas, Bauer, Central Machinery, Cobra, CrownPro, Dayton, Diamondback, Eastpak, Fisher, Hercules, Icon, Japhar, Lynx, Posiion, Predator, Tailgator, Viking, Walrus, Zurich. Not valid on prior purchases. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 4/1/20.

## FRANKLIN SUPER COUPON

### 17 FT. TYPE IA MULTI-TASK LADDER

- Versatile - 24 configurations
- Safe + Secure + Stable
- Super Strong - Holds 300 lbs.
- Weights 34 lbs.
- Customer Rating ★★★★★
- SAVE \$189



COMPARE TO LITTLE GIANT \$298.99  
MODEL: XE M17  
ITEM 63419/67646/62514/63418/63417 shown  
NOW \$109.99  
ITEM 60276327

LIMIT 1 - Coupon valid through 4/1/20\*

## PITTSBURGH SUPER COUPON

### 40 PIECE, 1/4" AND 3/8" DRIVE SAE AND METRIC SOCKET SET

- Customer Rating ★★★★★
- LIFETIME WARRANTY
- SAVE 90%



COMPARE TO CRAFTSMAN \$499.8  
MODEL: CMHT12918  
ITEM 47902/975/61328/63015/62843 shown  
NOW \$49.99  
ITEM 60276942

LIMIT 5 - Coupon valid through 4/1/20\*

## GOOD SUPER COUPON

### FLUX 125 WELDER

- HIGH or LOW AC
- CONVENTIONAL TRANSFORMER
- 90 AMP @ 20%
- 32 LBS.



COMPARE TO IRONTON \$179.99  
MODEL: 45433  
ITEM 63583/63582 shown  
NOW \$99.99

LIMIT 1 - Coupon valid through 4/1/20\*

## BETTER SUPER COUPON

### EASY FLUX 125 WELDER

- VARIABLE CONTROL EASY TO USE
- CLEAN WELDS
- ADVANCED INVERTER POWERFUL & EFFICIENT
- 90 AMP @ 30% LONGER RUN TIME
- 15 LBS. LIGHT & COMPACT



COMPARE TO LINCOLN ELECTRIC \$439  
MODEL: K2513-1  
ITEM 56359/56355 shown  
NOW \$179.99

LIMIT 1 - Coupon valid through 4/1/20\*

## HaulMaster SUPER COUPON

### 18" x 12" MOVER'S DOLLY

- 1000 lb. capacity
- Customer Rating ★★★★★
- SAVE 65%



COMPARE TO BUFFALO TOOLS \$22.99  
MODEL: HDFDOLLY  
ITEM 60497/61899/63095/63096/63097/63098 shown  
NOW \$7.99  
ITEM 60280198

LIMIT 5 - Coupon valid through 4/1/20\*

## PITTSBURGH #1 SELLING JACKS SUPER COUPON

### RAPID PUMP® 1.5 TON LIGHTWEIGHT ALUMINUM FLOOR JACK

- Weights 33 lbs.
- Customer Rating ★★★★★
- SAVE \$91



COMPARE TO K TOOL \$151.42  
MODEL: KT163094  
ITEM 64552/64832/64980/64545 shown  
NOW \$59.99  
ITEM 60282349

LIMIT 1 - Coupon valid through 4/1/20\*

## BADLAND SUPER COUPON

### 2500 LB. ELECTRIC WINCH WITH WIRELESS REMOTE CONTROL

- Weights 14.3 lbs.
- 11-1/8" L x 4-1/2" H
- Customer Rating ★★★★★
- SAVE \$140



COMPARE TO SUPERWINCH \$189.99  
MODEL: 1125220  
ITEM 61258/61297/63476/61840 shown  
NOW \$49.99  
ITEM 60283280

LIMIT 3 - Coupon valid through 4/1/20\*

## PREDATOR SUPER COUPON

### 6.5 HP (212 CC) OHV HORIZONTAL SHAFT GAS ENGINE

- Customer Rating ★★★★★
- SAVE \$230



COMPARE TO HONDA \$329.99  
MODEL: 6X200UT20X2  
ITEM 60363/69730 shown  
ITEM 68121/69727 CALIFORNIA ONLY  
NOW \$99.99  
ITEM 60283718

LIMIT 1 - Coupon valid through 4/1/20\*

## 10" PNEUMATIC TIRE SUPER COUPON

### 10" PNEUMATIC TIRE

- Customer Rating ★★★★★
- SAVE 50%



COMPARE TO FARM & RANCH \$8.09  
MODEL: FR1055  
ITEM 69385/62388/62409/62698/30900 shown  
NOW \$3.99  
ITEM 60285777

LIMIT 5 - Coupon valid through 4/1/20\*

## HaulMaster SUPER COUPON

### 3/8" x 14 FT., GRADE 43 TOWING CHAIN

- 5400 lb. capacity
- Customer Rating ★★★★★
- SAVE 69%



COMPARE TO MIBRO \$64.99  
MODEL: 426920  
ITEM 40462/60658/97711 shown  
NOW \$19.99  
ITEM 60286092

LIMIT 3 - Coupon valid through 4/1/20\*

## CENTECH SUPER COUPON

### 3-IN-1 PORTABLE POWER PACK WITH JUMP STARTER

- Customer Rating ★★★★★
- SAVE 44%



COMPARE TO SUPER START \$89.99  
MODEL: 55001  
ITEM 38391/62376/64083/56349/62306 shown  
NOW \$49.99  
ITEM 60286823

LIMIT 3 - Coupon valid through 4/1/20\*

## WARRIOR SUPER COUPON

### 29 PIECE TITANIUM DRILL BIT SET

- Customer Rating ★★★★★
- SAVE 83%



COMPARE TO DEWALT \$68.14  
MODEL: DW1369  
ITEM 5889/62281/61637 shown  
NOW \$10.99  
ITEM 60287254

LIMIT 3 - Coupon valid through 4/1/20\*

\*Original coupon only. No use on prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase or without original receipt. Valid through 4/1/20.

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+

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