

THE JOYS OF
PASS-ALONG PLANTS

QUICK BREADS
AND MUFFINS

THE URGENCY OF
BLACK HISTORY MONTH

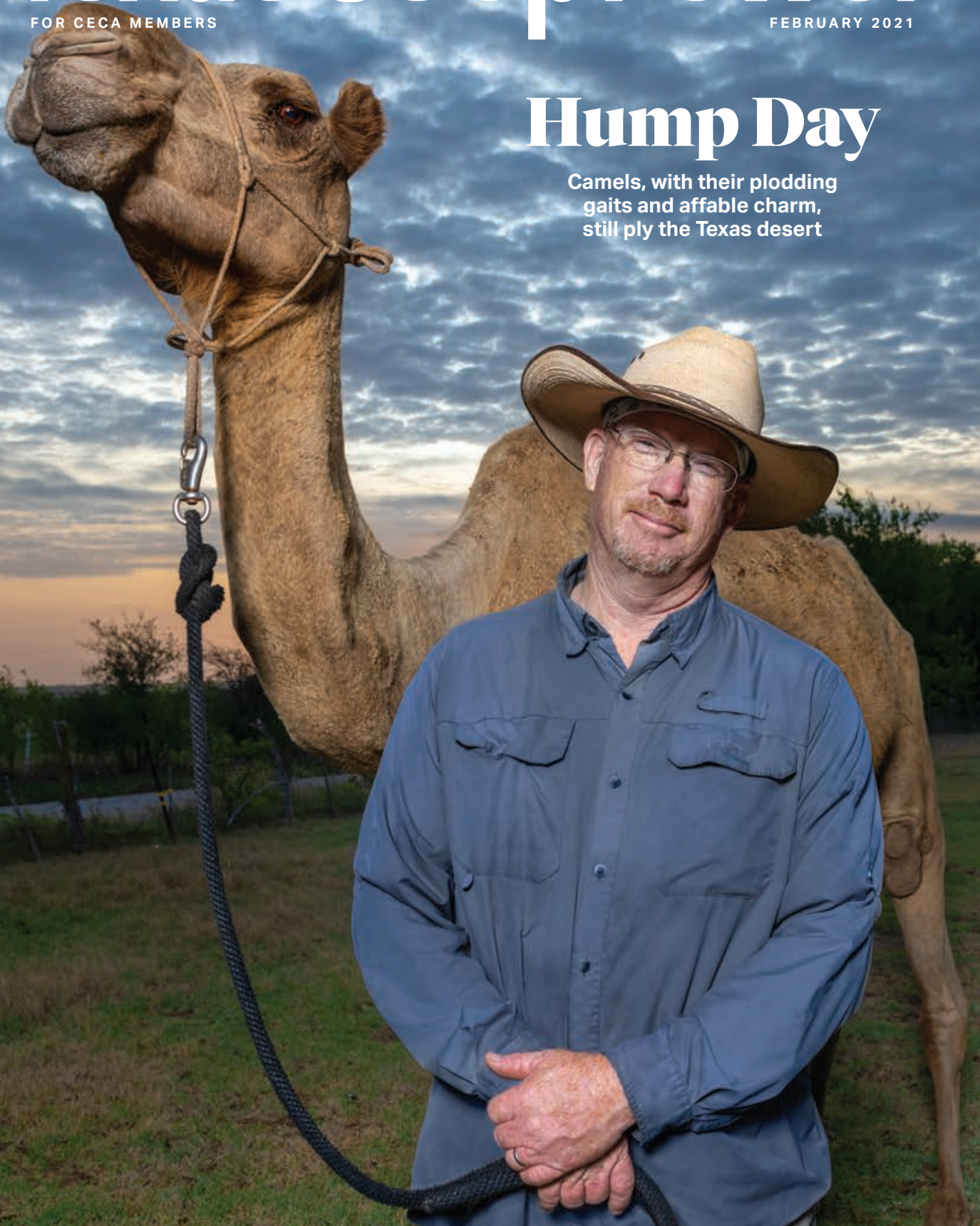
Texas Coop Power

FOR CECA MEMBERS

FEBRUARY 2021

Hump Day

Camels, with their plodding
gaits and affable charm,
still ply the Texas desert



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February 2021



08

Every Day Is Hump Day

Camels add unique silhouettes and affable charm to West Texas expeditions.

*By Pam LeBlanc
Photos by Scott Van Osdol*

12 Putting Down Roots

Pass-along plants spread joy, friendship and legacies among gardeners.

*By Sheryl Smith-Rodgers
Illustrations by Chiara Vercesi*

ON THE COVER

Doug Baum and Richard, one of his camels.

ABOVE

A face that only a ... no, that anybody could love.

Photos by Scott Van Osdol

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By Michael Hurd

No Crapees of Wrath

JUST A FRIENDLY REMINDER to resist all temptation to commit crape murder this month. Prune crape myrtles gently—or not at all.

Our February 2020 story *Crape Murder* explains it all. Many gardeners drastically saw off the trees' limbs, thinking it the proper treatment for beautiful blooms later in the summer. Not so.

"The prettiest ones I've seen have never been touched," says horticulturist Greg Grant. "And I mean *never*."



“In recognizing the humanity of our fellow beings, we pay ourselves the highest tribute.”

—THURGOOD MARSHALL

End of the Republic

This month marks 175 years since the formal transfer of authority in Texas from the republic to the state.

The U.S. Congress accepted the Texas Constitution on December 29, 1845, which marked Texas' legal entry into the union. On February 19, 1846, the last president of Texas, Anson Jones, turned over the reins of government to Gov. James Pinckney Henderson.

"The final act in this great drama is now performed," Jones declared. "The Republic of Texas is no more."

LIVING LARGE Last July, Austin became the 11th American city and fourth in Texas — joining Houston, San Antonio and Dallas—with a population exceeding 1 million. The last U.S. city to hit 1 million people was San Jose, California, in 2015.



February 18
**NATIONAL
DRINK
WINE DAY**

Texas has more than 500 wineries, according to the National Association of American Wineries. Only four states have more.



**FINISH THIS
SENTENCE**

YOU'RE NEVER
TOO OLD TO ...

TCP Tell us how you would finish that sentence. Email your short responses to letters@TexasCoopPower.com or comment on our Facebook post. Include your co-op and town. Here are some of the responses to our December prompt:

I wish I could ...

Find a cure for COVID-19.

SHERRYION LANE
MIDSOUTH EC
HUNTSVILLE

Have just one more day with my dad, Dixie Wheeler. I have so many questions I'd like to ask him.

RODNEY WHEELER
BLUEBONNET EC
LYTTON SPRINGS

Fit into the pants I wore before quarantine.

CARYL ZIMMERMAN
CENTRAL TEXAS EC
KINGSLAND

Figure out what my cats are thinking when they stare at me.

LAURIE L. REAGAN
BANDERA EC
LEAKEY

Give everyone a hug.

MARGARET FONTENOT
BLUEBONNET EC
SOMERVILLE

To see more responses, read Currents online.

Valor Carries On

THE NAME OF DORIS MILLER, a U.S. Navy mess attendant from Willow Grove, near Waco, who became a hero during the Pearl Harbor attack in 1941, lives on in schools, roads and community centers around the country.

In 11 years the USS Doris Miller will take to the seas as the first supercarrier named for an African American and the first named for an enlisted sailor.

Miller fired an anti-aircraft gun at attacking Japanese aircraft and then pulled shipmates out of the burning water. He perished in 1943 aboard an escort carrier torpedoed in the Pacific Ocean.



TCP *Contests and More*

ON TEXASCOOPPOWER.COM

\$500 RECIPE CONTEST

Ice Creams and Sorbets

FOCUS ON TEXAS PHOTOS

Manmade vs. Nature

WEB EXTRA

See writer Sheryl Smith-Rodgers divide lilies and prepare plants to pass along.



COLLAGE SOURCE PHOTOS: COURTESY MCDONALD OBSERVATORY

He Gave Us the Stars

“The generosity and vision of William McDonald and Violet Locke McIvor is a great story. Wouldn’t we all welcome an opportunity to go ‘mountain shopping?’”

GERALD BENNETT
COSERV
FRISCO

Alabama’s Role

While primary control of the International Space Station is in Houston, Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, Alabama, also plays a vital role in its operation [*Out of This World*, November 2020].

Flight controllers in Huntsville schedule the astronauts’ daily activities and provide technical assistance as the astronauts do experiments and perform maintenance or handle emergencies related to the equipment inside the space station.

Linda Brower
Tri-County EC
Keller



Yep! And brought over some delicious food [*Burgs in a New Land*, December 2020].

KAYLA WALKER
VIA FACEBOOK



NASA.GOV

The Pinnacle

My husband and I took a week to explore the beaches and fishing villages of South Texas one year. We had heard about the Matagorda Island ferry and rented bicycles for the day [*Matagorda Island Lighthouse*, October 2020].

There were several others on the ferry, but we had all day exploring the island—hardly seeing a soul until returning to the dock. The view of the lighthouse was the pinnacle of that day.

Thank you for bringing that long-lost memory to life.

Joy Connery
Wood County EC
Lindale

Classic Cover

Huge kudos to photographer Kristin Tyler for the photo of the farrier on the October 2020 cover. It is a classic, reminiscent of the Dorothea Lange Depression photographs.

Merry Langlinais
Bandera EC
Medina

TCP WRITE TO US

letters@TexasCoopPower.com

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Austin, TX 78701

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

Texas Co-op Power

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TEXAS MINT

We are excited to announce the release of the 2021 Texas Silver Round – Revolution Series. This is the second release of a four-year series commemorating the battles of the Texas Revolution. Each Texas Silver Round is one troy ounce .9999 fine silver.

The obverse of the high-quality mint strike features Texas' iconic lone star in the foreground. The smooth engraving of the star is framed by a textured topographical outline of the state of Texas. "TEXAS" arches proudly over the top of the round's obverse in large capital letters, with "Precious Metals" presented inversely along the opposite side. The round's mintage year is engraved in the bottom left of the round, just southwest of what would be the Rio Grande bordering Texas and Mexico.

The reverse of the 2021 release displays a scene from the famous Battle of the Alamo. It depicts two Texian soldiers including the American icon, Davy Crockett, attempting to fend off Mexican soldiers attempting to breach the walls of the Alamo.



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BATTLE OF GONZALES

first in the series ● ● ● ●

The stunning 2020 Texas Silver Round depicts a scene from the Battle of Gonzales, with three Texian revolutionaries defending the famous Gonzales cannon, while brandishing the Come And Take It Flag.

The Texas Silver Round can be purchased in a monster box produced exclusively for the Texas Mint. Packaged in 20 protective tubes of 25 rounds each, the monster box holds 500 1-ounce Texas Silver Rounds. Built from durable cold-rolled steel and finished with a matte black powder coat, the monster box lid features an orange cutout of the state of Texas. Each sealed monster box is secured with a unique serial number and a holographic seal to ensure maximum product protection.

The Texas Silver Round is also available to purchase in a similarly designed and secured mini-monster box, which contains 10 protective tubes of 25 rounds each for a total of 250 silver rounds.



BATTLE OF THE ALAMO

second in the series ● ● ● ●

The events of this famous battle took place on the days of February 23rd - March 6th, 1836. At the end of a 13-day siege, President General Antonio López de Santa Anna and his Mexican troops reclaimed the Alamo Mission, killing the Texian and immigrant occupiers.





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Doug Baum strides through the prickly Chihuahuan Desert of West Texas, a straw cowboy hat shading his face from the sun and a string of five camels sauntering behind him.

I'm perched high atop one of those camels, listening intently as Baum, owner of Texas Camel Corps, points out a canyon wren's nest, stops to inspect a rust-colored millipede marching across our path and then explains the role camels played in the Lone Star State's history.

"Texas is perfect for camels," says Baum, born in the West Texas town of Big Spring. "That point was not lost on the Army when they decided to use camels out here in the 1850s."

That's when the U.S. military imported 75 camels from Egypt, Turkey and Tunisia for use as pack animals. For nearly a decade, the heat-resistant creatures carried water and hauled supplies for the U.S. cavalry at Camp Verde, south of Kerrville.

When the program ended in 1866, the army sold the animals. Some wound up in California; others hauled freight between Texas and Mexico; a few ended up in traveling shows; and some made their way to Austin, where they were kept along Congress Avenue near the river and then sold off a few at a time.

Today Baum, who lives with his menagerie on a farm near Valley Mills, where he is a member of Heart of Texas Electric Cooperative, keeps the camels' history alive by introducing his cartoonish but affectionate creatures at events around the state. I've joined him at Cibolo Creek Ranch, south of Marfa, for an overnight camel-riding trek to learn more about the role they once played in the Big Bend.

I feel like I'm riding a rocking chair strapped to a stepladder that's being dragged down a gravel road. It's both rough and rolling, with the bonus that my camel, Cinco, swings his neck around to give me a big goofy smile now and then.

ABOVE Texas Camel Corps owner Doug Baum throws a saddle on Richard at his farm near Valley Mills.
RIGHT Richard greets the sunrise.



every
day is
hump
day



He leads treks each spring and fall at Cibolo Creek and delivers members of his eight-camel herd to museums, parks, schools and libraries. He also leads treks in Egypt, where he has a second home, and if you need a camel for a church Nativity, he's the guy to call.



Baum first fell in love with camels while working as a professional musician in Nashville in the 1990s, when he played drums for country music star Trace Adkins. He took a day job working at the Nashville Zoo.

"I had zero experience with camels," he says. "Within a week I was absolutely smitten. They're sweet, affectionate, playful and so, so gentle."

They've also got leathery, pie-sized feet; spindly, stiltlike legs; nostrils that squeeze shut to keep out blowing sand; and peach-sized eyes fringed in lush, 3-inch lashes.

Baum stuck with music for a while, but eventually "the camel thing just won," he says. "It was an obvious choice to me."

He moved back to Texas and in 1998 bought four camels, with the idea of using them for educational programs. Two of those camels—Richard and Cinco—are with us on this cool September afternoon, slowing periodically to munch on creosote bushes.

"They teach me what I should be—patient, observant, methodical," Baum says of his camels. "These are things I recognize I lack in myself."

He leads treks each spring and fall at Cibolo Creek and delivers members of his eight-camel herd to museums, parks, schools and libraries. He also leads treks in Egypt, where he has a second home, and if you need a camel for a church Nativity, he's the guy to call.

Part of Baum's mission is to dispel myths about camels. They're not, he says, ornery, smelly beasts that spit at people. Their humps aren't filled with water, either, though a camel can go 10 days or more without a drink. Camel humps—one for dromedaries, two for Bactrians—are filled with fat. (If you're riding a single-humper, you'll sit on a padded seat behind the hump. For a two-humper, you ride between the bumps.) Camels can be downright cuddly, and they don't spit—although llamas, which are closely related, do.

I learn, when Cinco exhales on me, that the stinky part of the stereotype rings true. Camels' awful breath is both



sweet and pungent, like grass clippings mixed with syrup—in part because they chew their cud. They are ruminants and employ three stomachs to process their food. Stand next to one for a few minutes, and you’ll hear that digestive system in action, gurgling and glugging like a clogged drain. Also, they fart—loudly and potently.

Two other guests on the trek, Sue and Randy Howerter, Guadalupe Valley EC members, are equally taken by the animals. Randy, who makes musical instruments, met Baum at a festival in New Braunfels. Sue, a blacksmith, was intrigued, too, and the Seguin couple visited Baum’s farm, where he lives with his family, the camels, five miniature donkeys, a pair of dogs, a flock of chickens, assorted sheep and goats, one horse, and “too many” kittens.

After that the Howerters needed no convincing. They headed to Cibolo Creek Ranch, where we all loaded sleeping bags and pajamas into large canvas saddlebags; climbed aboard our kneeling, straw-colored steeds; and hung on as the animals rose to full height.

ABOVE Doug Baum, walking behind the first camel, leads a trek through the desert at Cibolo Creek Ranch, south of Marfa. OPPOSITE Author Pam LeBlanc perched atop Richard.

“Sometimes you get an attachment to animals,” Sue Howerter says. “It’s the same with camels. They have so much personality and character.”

Before our two-day trip ends, we’ve lumbered a dozen miles across a stark landscape that looks like the backdrop of a John Wayne movie, soaked in a spring-fed creek, eaten a traditional Moroccan meal, sung around the campfire, watched shooting stars streak across the sky and listened to coyotes yip as we snuggled in our tents.

But it’s the camels that get top billing. And that’s just how Baum likes it. ■

Putting Down Roots

PASS-ALONG PLANTS SPREAD JOY, FRIENDSHIP AND LEGACIES AMONG GARDENERS

Paige Eaton faced a bare yard when she and her family moved into their rural home in Wood County in 2006. After hand-prepping her first garden bed, she planted several varieties of daylilies dug up from her sister-in-law's yard down the road. Today those daylilies and many other pass-along plants are the foundation of Eaton's diversified gardens that support pollinators and other wildlife. Now she passes along plants from her yard, too.

"I love to give daylilies to friends and co-workers," says Eaton, an employee and member of Wood County Electric Cooperative. "I've even mailed them to Mississippi and Georgia. I feel good about sharing daylilies because they're hardy and can make anyone a successful gardener."

Sharing plants also saves lives—of the green kind, that is. In a yard or garden, plants multiply, often where they're not wanted. Instead of tossing extras, most gardeners prefer to give away what they've thinned out. Are those pass-along plants? Maybe. Maybe not. Definitions vary, depending on the gardener you ask. Traditionally, the term refers to plants that are easy to grow, propagate and pass on as seeds, transplants, divisions, bulbs or cuttings. They're often fragrant and rarely sold in commercial nurseries. They may also bring back fond memories of the giver or places tied to the past.

"Without pass-along plants, most of us would have lost touch with our childhoods," says Neil Sperry, a Texas gardening expert and Grayson-Collin EC member. "There's something special about being given a cutting, division or seed from your grandmother's favorite plant and then sharing it with a young person who's important to you. Some of my favorite pass-alongs are tulips, oxblood lilies, autumn daffodils, resurrection lilies and hardy amaryllis."

According to many sources, the phrase "pass-along plants" was coined by the late Allen Lacy, a gardening columnist and author. However, Lacy, who grew up around Dallas, declined the credit when he wrote in a foreword to *Passalong Plants* that the expression



"is not by any means my creation. I have heard it most of my life, possibly at my grandmother's knee."

Another custom among some Southern gardeners also goes back for generations. "When you receive a pass-along, you're not supposed to say thank you or it won't grow," says Marcia Coffman, president of the Mountain Laurel Garden Club in Bracketville and a Rio Grande EC member. "I've actually found the custom to be true. Instead, you should tell the giver, 'Oh, this makes me so happy.'"

If one pass-along can bring happiness, imagine being surrounded by them. Tables covered with pass-alongs can be found at plant sales and swaps, such as seasonal fundraisers jointly hosted by the Denton County Master Gardener Association and the Native Plant Society of Texas in Denton.



“We pot up extra plants from our gardens, like white avens, mealy blue sage and fall asters, and label them,” says Liz Moyer, a member of both organizations. “When I go to plant sales, I always look for pass-alongs because I know they’ll do well in our climate and soils.”

In the Rio Grande Valley, members of the Driftwood Garden Club in Port Isabel give away small potted plants in exchange for donations at a monthly market. Their pass-alongs usually include palms, plumerias and succulents.

“We have a lot of winter Texans who like to take home something unique from Texas that they can show their friends,” says Mary Gorbell, club president and an NEC Co-op Energy member. “One Iowa couple had a Washingtonia palm they got from us. Every summer after they

arrived here, they’d set it under their motor home’s awning. Then they’d take it back home and keep it in their garage over winter.”

Roses also rank among beloved pass-along plants. Becky Smith of Hungerford and fellow members of the Texas Rose Rustlers preserve and share old garden roses that were planted by Anglo settlers at their homesteads and cemeteries. “We host a cutting exchange three times a year,” says Smith, the group’s chairperson. “Our mission is to encourage others to grow these old roses, which have been time-tested to survive and require no spraying or fertilizers.”

Unlike old garden roses, not all plants make suitable pass-alongs. “Years ago someone gave me a Chinese tallow,” recalls Greg Grant, a Smith County extension agent with

“Later I divided the cacti into 15 pots and passed them along to my children and my sister’s children. It was all we had left of the land that our family had owned since 1889.”

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension in Tyler. “It had lovely fall color, but then I learned how invasive it is. Fortunately, the tree later froze and died. So be careful when people pass along something to you. Check it out before you plant it. Mexican petunias can choke out other plants, but they don’t take over an ecosystem and spread ad nauseam like Chinese privets do.”

Grant, a Deep East Texas EC member, also cautions against scooping up plants from public parks and private property. “If you don’t own the land, then you shouldn’t dig up a plant unless you have the owner’s permission,” he says. “In my hunts for plants, I’ve been known to knock on doors and offer cash.”

When is the best time to plant pass-alongs? “Most are forgiving about being dug up or divided,” Grant says. “So even if you do it at the wrong time of year, they don’t mind because pass-alongs are tough.”

Occasional losses in her gardens motivate Lin Grado, a Wood County master gardener and Wood County EC member, to share some of her plants. “For instance, if something destroys my fall obedient plant, I know I can go to a friend that I gave some to and get more,” she explains. “I know that’s a little selfish, but it’s nice to know I’ve got backups.”

Mention pass-alongs, and potted plants may come up. “I treasure my peperomia, a tropical houseplant that was given to me by the late Ralph Pinkus,” Sperry says. “He’s one of my heroes and was the founder of North Haven Gardens in Dallas. I’ve had that plant for 35 years.”

Though small, a potted cactus matters greatly to Moyer, a member of CoServ, an electric cooperative in Corinth. “Before my grandfather’s farm sold near East Sweden, I dug up some barrel cacti,” she recalls. “Later I divided the cacti into 15 pots and passed them along to my children and my sister’s children. It was all we had left of the land that our family had owned since 1889.

“Sometimes,” she adds, “a pass-along plant is the only thing you have left of someone or something that you held dear.” ■

TCP WEB EXTRA Our video shows writer Sheryl Smith-Rodgers dividing lilies and preparing plants to pass along.



SHARING CACTUSES, SUCCULENTS AND NATIVES

YEARS AGO, a friend gave my husband, James, and me a variegated agave with green and gold leaves. I planted it in our adjoining vacant lot that we call the Meadow, and it produced dozens of pups. Along the way many other pass-alongs, including Texas natives, have found homes in our gardens.

Because they’re easy to grow and share, succulents, cactuses and most native plants make ideal pass-alongs. Sedums, succulents also called stonecrops, flourish and spread in gardens. Just break off a stem and stick it in a pot or in the ground. Voilà! You’ve got a new plant. Aloe veras also make good pass-alongs.

Through the years we’ve received a Texas buckeye, Lindheimer’s crownbeard, heartleaf hibiscus, pink mint and bracted passionflower, to name only a few pass-along natives. In turn we’ve gifted Gregg’s mistflower, fragrant mistflower, flame acanthus, Turk’s cap and pearl milkweed vine. I’ve also shared seeds with friends.

As for that agave and its *many* pups, those aggressive spreaders are gone. Lesson learned: Always read up on your pass-along’s growing habits. —SSR



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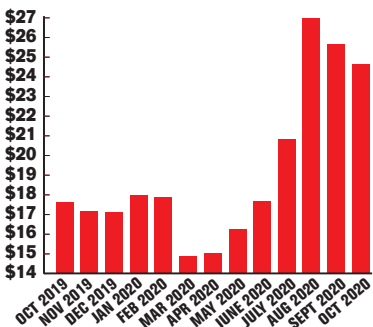
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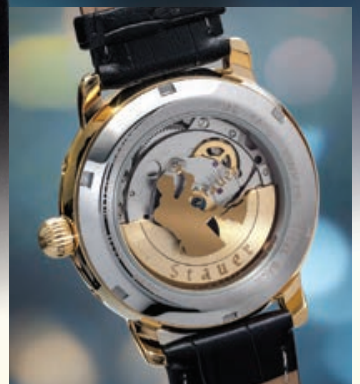
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349 Industrial Blvd.
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MESSAGE
FROM
GENERAL
MANAGER

ALAN
LESLEY

6 Reasons To Love Your Co-op

HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY, members of CECA!

As we celebrate love this month, I want to tell you about some of the reasons to love your electric cooperative.

1. We're member owned. That means you, the consumer, are an owner of this business. And as a member-owner, you have a say in how the organization operates, can run for the board of directors and are eligible to receive capital credits when the co-op retires them.

2. We're local. You don't have to call a faraway customer service representative to receive help. When you call us, you call a local office. You might even speak with someone you know because we employ people who live right here.

3. We have a strong foundation. We have been providing affordable, reliable electric service since our founding in 1938. We formed with a mission of serving our rural area with a commodity that would ensure we could keep up with our urban neighbors. How we deliver service might look a little different today, but we still aim to improve the quality of our members' lives.

4. We provide energy-saving tips. We routinely help you save money by offering tips and information on how to reduce your electricity consumption. You can find articles about energy conservation in *Texas Co-op Power* and on the magazine's website, our website and social media.

5. We support our community. Our employees volunteer for meaningful causes around town.

6. We're innovative. We consistently implement new technologies and tools to ensure that we provide electric service in the most efficient and cost-effective way.

Thanks for being part of the electric cooperative family. We hope that as a member-owner you feel the love from CECA. ■



CURRENT NEWS

Create Positive Change With Pocket Change

Let your change be the change you see in the world



WE'RE OFTEN TOLD it's the little things in life that count: being kind to neighbors, returning a lost wallet, picking up after ourselves while enjoying the great outdoors. Although each action might not amount to much on its own, if everyone does a little, we can see a big impact in our community.

2020 was a trying year for all of us, and being a good neighbor has had its challenges, too. It can be hard to feel like a good neighbor when you're quarantined—which is a paradox, since staying home to avoid spreading illness at the expense of one's own family and social connections is among the most neighborly things someone can do. We want to do good in other meaningful ways, too, but where and how do we start?

That's why CECA is a proud supporter of Operation Round-Up. Members who opt in to the Operation Round-Up program have their monthly electric bill automatically rounded up to the next dollar, and the difference is deposited into a fund that assists local service organizations and individuals in need.

The Operation Round-Up board of directors oversees contri-

butions, evaluates funding applications and distributes funds to recipients such as local volunteer fire departments, community service organizations and other organizations that assist residents in need.

How does it work for a member? If your bill for one month is \$82.70, that amount would be rounded up to \$83, with 30 cents going to Operation Round-Up. Most members don't even notice the extra money they contribute. Over a year, the average amount of spare change contributed by a member is about \$6.

Six dollars a year doesn't sound like much, but when you put together those small, monthly contributions from all the program's members—that's when things start to get exciting.

A significant portion of the CECA membership chips in to support Operation Round-Up, and that number grows each month. That momentum is something we can all be proud of. Our assistance is changing lives for the better in our community.

If you are a member who makes Operation Round-Up possible, thank you. If you would like to participate, call us at 1-800-915-2533. Together we can use a little pocket change to effect change in our community. And that's especially good news when our members and their communities are working through a daunting set of challenges brought on by the pandemic.

So why not join today? Let your change spur the change you wish to see in the world.

Your contribution can:

- Help a family with medical emergencies.
- Rebuild a family's life after a fire or flood.
- Fund scholarships.
- Help those in need through nonprofit organizations.
- Assist local volunteer fire departments.
- Fund donations to schools for safety programs.

Operation Round-Up board members:

- Kirk Knight, Stephens County
- Bud West, Mills County
- Lewis Locker, Brown County
- Jim Baker, Eastland County
- Kori Sides, Comanche County



BY SHIRLEY DUKES

PHOTOS BY VOLLEMAN'S DAIRY

Frank and Annette Volleman are living their version of the American dream. Born and raised in Europe, both come from families that have been in the dairy business for more than five generations.

HOW THEY CAME TO TEXAS

FRANK VOLLEMAN'S FAMILY emigrated from Holland to Luxembourg in the early 1960s. There he met Annette Mersch, a Luxembourg native. In 1987 they married and soon after started their own dairy in the small European country. In 1989 Annette gave birth to a baby boy, Benjamin, followed by David in 1990.

Dairy farming in Europe has its challenges, so the couple decided to look at other options. After much research, they decided on the U.S. as their best bet, and after reading about opportunities for dairy farmers in Texas, they booked a flight

and headed over to check out their options. A location in Gustine stood out, and in 1993 the growing family made their transition stateside.

In 1995 Frank and Annette had another son, Andrew, followed by Daniel in 1997. Growing up, the boys always had a hand in the work of the dairy farm. They learned about the responsibilities of dairy farming by doing chores and bottle-raising calves. As their boys grew, Frank and Annette realized that to sustain the venture for future generations of their family, they would have to expand their operation.

To their delight, they soon grew their 100-cow dairy into a 5,000-cow operation. Each cow is milked twice daily, producing about 8 gallons each—seemingly proof that when cows are cared for, they thrive.

As the Volleman boys grew, they took on more responsibility. Each also ultimately found his own niche within the business, making the division of labor at the dairy a simple task. Benjamin graduated from Tarleton State University and



VOLLEMAN'S

FAMILY FARM



demonstrated expertise in farming. He oversees the watering systems, cropland and farming. His primary focus is the production of a quality, nutrient-rich feed for the herd.

David grew up with a passion for cows. He graduated from Texas A&M University in 2012 with a degree in ag business, preparing him to take part in running the family business. Today David manages the dairy and is instrumental in milk production. Daniel, the couple's fourth son, recently graduated and is in charge of the baby calves, assuring a strong and healthy new crop of cows.

A LEGACY BEGINS

While the business continued to grow and expand, Frank and Annette realized that if they were going to support their family for generations to come, they would need to grow still more. From the beginning, they had a dream to take their product directly to consumers. Their third son, Andrew, received a masters degree in dairy products technology from California

Polytechnic State University. He became interested in the processing side of the business, and the entire family began brainstorming: What would a plant look like? What products would consumers in the area most like to see on shelves?

GLASS IS CLASS

While doing research at a trade show, a company reached out to the Volleman family to suggest that they should package their milk in glass bottles. At that time, very few other Texas dairies, if any, sold milk in glass vessels, and it was a marketing tactic that did well in other states. At first Frank and Annette shrugged off the idea due to transportation challenges, but when stores began to signal interest in the product, they began running feasibility studies and looking more seriously into the possibility of bottling their product in glass.

When Martijn, a family member from Europe, came over to do an internship in processing, the idea took root and began to grow in earnest. Martijn's expertise in technology and



Top: Annette and Frank Volleman began Volleman's Family Farm in Gustine in 1993. Their legacy should live on for many years to come.

Middle: The Volleman family. From left: front, Pax, Annette and Frank; back, Anna, Emma, David, Ben, Holly, Andrew, Hayes, Shelby and Daniel.

Bottom: Sustainability and renewables are important to the Volleman family. Benjamin Volleman works long hours on the farm, focusing on the dairy's environmental footprint and being a good steward of our planet.



research helped with the plans for construction, processing, copacking and marketing.

"It's been an exciting journey so far," Andrew said. "We've been pushing time as much as we can so we can get our facility up and running here. We were extremely pleased with our launch. We did very well."

The Volleman family's emphasis has always been on renewable energy sources and sustainability. For instance, in their farming practices, Benjamin focuses on runoff and erosion reduction, no-tillage practices to protect soil structure, grazing wheat pasture in the winter, and water recycling and irrigation. So when the opportunity arose to use a recyclable glass bottle and thereby reduce plastic waste, it just seemed to fit in with the family's ideals.

"We really love our glass bottles," Andrew said. "It's a unique, nostalgic product, but at the same time it fits into today's ideology in trying to reduce waste and provide a better future." He said the milk also tends to stay colder and fresher in glass and has a better flavor than plastic.

GOT MILK?

The Vollemans' cows spend their days lounging in the shade, cooling off under sprinklers and eating from an all-you-can-eat buffet formulated by a nutritionist. The family's love for their cows is evident and is the





foundation for the highest-quality milk.

Growing the highest-quality feed for the cows right here in Texas means being able to trace back all the forages that go into making the milk that ends up on a table. Sustainable farming practices support the cows getting the nutrients they need to produce a high-quality product for a family to enjoy.

Volleman's Family Farm hopes to share their passion and love for their cows with families through their farm-fresh products. Their milk can be found in 97 stores across Texas, from McKinney to El Paso to Houston and everywhere in between. Volleman's milk is fresh and local and always will be, according to the family. With the exception of a very small area in New Mexico, the family does not currently plan to expand beyond Texas.

Production at Volleman's Family Farm began in June 2020 with whole and 2% milk, followed by chocolate and strawberry milk. In November they introduced eggnog into the lineup for the holiday season, and the family hopes to launch new products in the future to diversify the product line. Some possibi-

ties include grab-and-go bottles at convenience stores, cream, half-and-half, flavored butters and some of Annette's European recipes. The family's main goal, though, is to connect with consumers more directly through sustainable, nutritious dairy products, and so far the venture has been extremely successful.

"We weren't sure how long it would take us, especially with the local customers with the price point," Andrew said. "The local community has really rallied behind us."

To find a store near you, or to request Volleman's milk in a store near you, visit the Volleman's Family Farm website, vollemansdairy.com, where Volleman's merchandise is also available.

Like the Volleman's Facebook page at [facebook.com/vollemansdairy](https://www.facebook.com/vollemansdairy) for dairy updates, tours and videos about all things dairy-related, or contact the dairy at (325) 667-7420 or info@vollemansdairy.com. ■



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ABOUT THE SCHOLARSHIPS

- 5 \$2,000 Scholarships for Excellence are awarded to students whose legal guardians receive service from CECA.
- 2 \$2,000 Operation Round-Up Scholarships are awarded to students whose legal guardians receive service from CECA and participate in the Operation Round-Up program.
- 1 \$1,000 Technical Scholarship is awarded to a student attending a technical school and whose legal guardians receive service from CECA and participate in the Operation Round-Up program.

APPLY TODAY AT [CECA.COOP/SCHOLARSHIPS](https://ceca.coop/scholarships)

Deadline for all scholarships is March 26.

For questions or additional information, please contact:

Shirley Dukes
sdukes@ceca.coop
1-800-915-2533



KATARZYNA BIALASIEWICZ | ISTOCK.COM

Stay Warm, Save Energy

YOU MIGHT ALREADY KNOW that turning the thermostat down a few degrees and throwing an extra blanket on the bed can stave off high winter energy bills.

Here are a few simple but lesser-known energy savers that you might consider trying this season:

Turn on the ceiling fan. If you switch the direction that the fan's blades rotate, so they slowly spin clockwise, the room could feel a bit warmer. This creates an updraft and pushes warm air back into the room. Other fans carefully placed around the house and set on low can help distribute warmth.

Retire your wood-burning fireplace. An open fire requires an open flue, and that can suck the warmth right out of your house. Consider replacing it with an electrical insert with realistic flames or a fun light show. If you get rid of it entirely but miss the ambiance, try a screensaver on your TV of a cozy fireplace.

Open the drapes during the day; close them at night. The sun is nature's furnace, so let it shine in through south-facing windows during the day. The greenhouse effect helps warm the home without having to adjust the thermostat.

Cover windows with plastic film. It's easy to install and will reduce the amount of heat that escapes through uncovered windows.

Use portable space heaters in the rooms you use most often so you can turn the thermostat down a bit and avoid heating unused spaces.

Run exhaust fans sparingly. Turn on the bathroom fan before you take a shower and turn it off as soon as the steam clears so it won't suck warm air out of your home. The same goes for using a ventilation fan over the kitchen range: Leaving it on too long takes all the conditioned air out of the living space. ■



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Fresh Peach Loaf

CAKE

- 2 cups flour**
- 1½ cups sugar**
- 2 eggs**
- 1½ teaspoons baking soda**
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract**
- 1 teaspoon salt**
- 2 cups peaches, mashed**
- ⅓ cup peach juice, reserved from mashed peaches**

TOPPING

- ¼ cup light brown sugar**
- ¼ cup chopped pecans**

- 1.** Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Butter and flour a tube pan or a 9-by-13-inch baking pan.
- 2. CAKE** Combine all cake ingredients in a large mixing bowl and beat thoroughly to combine. Pour the batter into the prepared pan.
- 3. TOPPING** In a small bowl, combine the brown sugar and chopped pecans. Sprinkle the topping onto the cake.
- 4.** Bake about 40 minutes, until the cake is springy to the touch and a toothpick inserted in the middle comes out clean.

TCP Find this and more delicious recipes online at TexasCoopPower.com.

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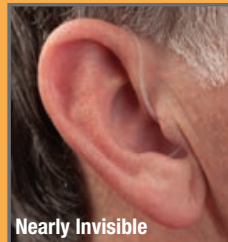
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TCP WEB EXTRA

Listen to W.F. Strong read this story.



A Name That Sticks

Falfurrias—the butter and the town—emerged from South Texas' King Ranch

BY W.F. STRONG

TEXAS IS HOME TO MANY famous brands. Unlike Southwest Airlines, Lone Star Beer and Whataburger, the King Ranch is the only one that evolved from an actual brand. And that ranch helped launch another famous brand, Falfurrias Butter.

In 1895, Richard King's ranching partner, Mifflin Kenedy, sold 7,000 cows to South Texas neighbor Ed Lasater. Dairy cows, Lasater knew, would deliver five times the return on investment as beef cattle. He started with Durham short-horns because that breed could support either a beef or dairy operation. It would be more than a dozen years before he raised the herd of Jersey cattle with

which he created the dairy that launched Falfurrias Butter.

Falfurrias butter was first made in Falfurrias, southwest of Corpus Christi, in 1909, five years after Lasater founded the town. People have wondered whether the butter is named for the town or the town for the butter, but they were both named after Lasater's ranch, which was named for a grove of trees called *La Mota de Falfurrias*. Lasater claimed Falfurrias came from the Lipan Apache language and, loosely translated, meant "land of heart's delight." The truth of the word's origin could not be confirmed, or absolutely refuted, by a Lipan Apache linguist.

The butter was the town's best-known export in those early days, and likely remains so today. Even the town's high school mascot, the Jerseys, was named after the butter's real creators. Indeed, at one point, Falfurrias was home to the largest Jersey cattle herd in the world.

That gave special meaning to the once-popular bumper sticker there: "Watch Your Step, You're in Jersey Country." I'm not sure the author intended the double meaning, but it certainly provided a good deal of local levity until it was discontinued.

Falfurrias remains a popular niche brand of butter. In Texas it is sold at all major grocery stores and some smaller ones, too. It has been quite popular in northern Mexico for generations.

A friend tells me that as a child in Saltillo, he remembers his mother bringing back the *mantequilla dulce de Falfurrias*—sweet butter from Falfurrias—as a special treat for the kids anytime she traveled to Texas.

A Texas Marine in World War II recalled that as he was wading ashore in the battle for Okinawa, a Falfurrias Butter crate bumped up against his leg in the surf, a comforting reminder of home.

Falfurrias Butter outgrew Falfurrias. It became so popular that it was eventually bought by the Dairy Farmers of America, but it is still made in Texas, and sales over the past year have grown 20%. It is made by Keller's Creamery in Winnsboro and has grown at a Texas-sized pace of 40% in recent years.

When you drive through Falfurrias today, on state Highway 285, you can still see the vintage Falfurrias Butter sign on the side of the old creamery. The town newspaper, *Falfurrias Facts*, occupies the building today.

In the interest of full disclosure and ethical transparency, I have to reveal that I am also an export of Falfurrias, and even though I know on which side my bread is buttered, I assure you that it does not affect the veracity of this commentary. ■

Quick Breads and Muffins

Fruit and chocolate together reward a baking itch

BY MEGAN MYERS, FOOD EDITOR

Some of the first recipes I learned how to make as a child were quick breads and muffins, sourced from a splattered red Betty Crocker cookbook. Their simple preparation makes them easy enough for a baking novice, but they're also dependable, making them a food I turn to again and again whenever I get a baking itch. These muffins are of the big, bakery-size variety, but you can make them in a standard muffin tin if you like.

Strawberry Cheesecake Muffins

2 cups flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
½ teaspoon baking soda
¼ teaspoon salt
½ cup sugar
2 eggs
¼ cup (½ stick) butter, melted and cooled, plus more for the pan
¾ cup milk
1 cup diced strawberries
3 ounces cream cheese, cut into chunks
1 cup milk chocolate chunks

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Coat a jumbo (Texas-size) muffin tin with butter and set aside.
2. In a small bowl, stir together flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt.
3. In a large bowl, whisk together sugar and eggs until blended. Whisk in melted butter, then add milk.
4. Stir in flour mixture until just mixed. Gently fold in strawberries, cream cheese and chocolate chunks.
5. Fill muffin cups ¾ full and bake 20–24 minutes.

MAKES 6 JUMBO MUFFINS

TCP WEB EXTRA Follow along with Megan Myers and her adventures in the kitchen at stetted.com, where she features a recipe for Cardamom Tea Loaf With Earl Grey Glaze.





Blackberry Muffins

JANET STEPHENS
BOWIE-CASS EC

Sour cream makes these blackberry muffins wonderfully tender. Fresh or frozen fruit works equally well, but Stephens recommends letting frozen berries thaw and drain overnight to remove excess moisture.

- 2½ cups flour**
- 1 cup sugar**
- 1 tablespoon baking powder**
- ½ teaspoon baking soda**
- ½ teaspoon salt**
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon**
- 2 eggs**
- 1 cup sour cream**
- ½ cup (1 stick) butter, melted and cooled**
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract**
- 1 teaspoon milk**
- 1½ cups (5–6 ounces) blackberries, fresh or frozen**

COOK'S TIP If using fresh berries, cut them in half vertically. If using frozen berries, thaw, drain excess liquid and pat dry, then toss in 1 tablespoon flour before adding to batter.

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Line 18 muffin cups with paper liners or coat with nonstick spray and set aside.
2. In a small bowl, whisk together flour, sugar, baking powder, baking soda, salt and cinnamon. In a large bowl, combine eggs, sour cream, butter, vanilla and milk and stir until smooth. Mix in flour mixture until just combined. Fold in blackberries, taking care not to crush the fruit.
3. Divide batter among muffin cups and bake 17–20 minutes. Let cool in pan 5 minutes, then remove to a wire rack to cool completely or enjoy warm.

MAKES 18 MUFFINS

[MORE RECIPES >](#)

\$500 WINNER

Chocolate Banana Bread

BECKY YOUNG
COSERV



This banana bread variation has a delightful swirl of chocolate running through it. Don't skip the pecans and sugar on top, which caramelize and pair well with the banana flavor. If the nuts brown too quickly during baking, tent the bread with foil during the last 20 minutes to prevent burning.

MAKES 1 LOAF



- 2 cups flour**
- ¾ teaspoon baking soda**
- ½ teaspoon salt**
- 1 cup sugar**
- ¼ cup (½ stick) butter, softened, plus more for the pan**
- 1½ cups mashed banana (about 4 bananas)**
- 2 eggs**
- ⅓ cup plain yogurt**
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract**
- ½ cup semisweet chocolate chips**
- ½ cup chopped pecans**
- 1 tablespoon raw sugar or brown sugar**

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Coat an 8.5-by-4.5-inch loaf pan with butter and set aside.
2. In a small bowl, whisk together flour, baking soda and salt. In a large bowl, beat sugar and butter together until smooth. Mix in mashed banana, eggs, yogurt and vanilla. Add flour mixture to wet ingredients, stirring until just combined.
3. Place chocolate chips in a small bowl and melt in the microwave for 1 minute, then whisk the chocolate smooth. Cool slightly and stir in 1 cup of batter, mixing until no streaks remain.
4. Spoon batters alternately into prepared pan, then swirl with a knife to marble. Top with chopped pecans and sugar.
5. Bake 60–70 minutes, until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean. Cool in pan 10 minutes, then remove from pan to a wire rack to cool completely.

TCP \$500 Recipe Contest

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Almond Poppy Seed Bread

LEAH MERCER
CECA

Fragrant, moist and perfect for teatime, this bread is a cinch to make. It keeps well, so you can enjoy slices throughout the week and freeze the second loaf for later—or wrap it up for a pretty housewarming gift.

COOK'S TIP If you want a topping, whisk together ¼ cup orange juice, ¾ cup powdered sugar, ½ teaspoon vanilla extract, ½ teaspoon butter extract and ½ teaspoon almond extract until smooth. Pour glaze over cooled bread.

Shortening, butter or nonstick spray, for the pans

3 eggs

2½ cups sugar

1½ teaspoons salt

3 cups flour, plus more for the pans

1½ teaspoons baking powder

1½ cups milk

1⅞ cups vegetable oil

1½ tablespoons poppy seeds

1½ tablespoons vanilla extract

1½ tablespoons almond extract

1½ tablespoons butter extract

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease and flour two loaf pans and set aside.

2. In a large bowl, beat eggs lightly, then whisk in sugar and salt. In a small bowl, combine flour and baking powder. Add alternately with milk and oil to egg mixture.

3. Stir in poppy seeds and vanilla, almond and butter extracts. Pour into prepared pans and bake 60 minutes or until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean.

MAKES 2 LOAVES

Great Balls of Fire Cornbread

GINGER CLARDY
BANDERA EC

Cornbread qualifies as a quick bread, and this version adds cheese and jalapeño pepper for the perfect dinner accompaniment.

Butter, for the pan

1 cup cornmeal

¾ cup flour

2 teaspoons baking powder

1 teaspoon baking soda

½ teaspoon salt

2 eggs

1 cup whole kernel corn

1 cup buttermilk

1 cup grated cheddar cheese

¼ cup seeded, chopped jalapeño pepper

3 tablespoons olive oil

1. Butter an 8- or 10-inch cast-iron skillet and place it in the oven as it preheats to 400 degrees.

2. In a large bowl, stir together the cornmeal, flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt. In another bowl, lightly beat eggs, then stir in corn, buttermilk, cheese, jalapeño and oil. Add to dry mixture and stir until just barely combined.

3. Remove hot skillet from oven, pour in batter, then bake cornbread 25 minutes or until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean.

SERVES 8



TCP WEB EXTRA So many options for baking bread—and breaking bread—online. Visit our website for more than 100 bread and muffin recipes.

SACRED STONE OF THE SOUTHWEST IS ON THE BRINK OF EXTINCTION



Centuries ago, Persians, Tibetans and Mayans considered turquoise a gemstone of the heavens, believing the striking blue stones were sacred pieces of sky. Today, the rarest and most valuable turquoise is found in the American Southwest—but the future of the blue beauty is unclear.

On a recent trip to Tucson, we spoke with fourth generation turquoise traders who explained that less than five percent of turquoise mined worldwide can be set into jewelry and only about twenty mines in the Southwest supply gem-quality turquoise. Once a thriving industry, many Southwest mines have run dry and are now closed.

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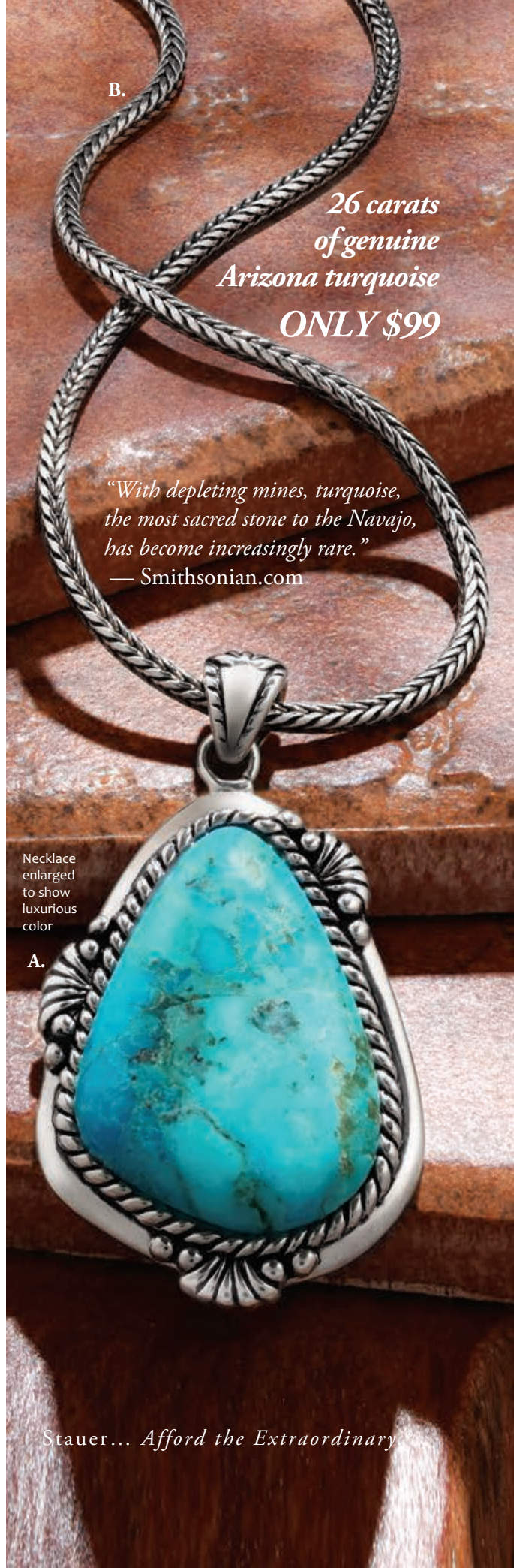
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COURTESY CHET GARNER

Caddo Monuments

Centuries-old sacred mounds remain from a Native American culture that thrived near Nacogdoches

BY CHET GARNER

EVEN THOUGH DETAILS of some events in Texas history are always debated, the origin of the state’s name not so much. Native Americans called the Caddos have a word, *Taysha*, that means friend, which the Spanish translated into *tejas* as the name for the region and the people.

The Caddo Nation once stretched from Northeast Texas to Missouri. Roughly 25 miles west of Nacogdoches, the Pineywoods open onto a grassy field marked by three earthen mounds. Twelve hundred years earlier, I might have encountered a Caddo community of up to 150 grass houses and 900 people. Now a visit to Caddo Mounds State Historic Site there allows a glimpse into this ancient and sophisticated community. A tornado destroyed the site’s permanent visitor center in 2019, but a temporary headquarters offers tours.

A tour guide brought the entire site to life. The first mound is the burial mound, where Caddo leaders were interred with supplies for the six-day journey into the afterlife, where they became stars—in the celestial sense. The second mound is a ceremonial, low platform that served originally as a stage. Across Texas Highway 21 is the temple mound, which was the largest and site of religious ceremonies and worship. I felt like I was looking at the Texas version of the pyramids of Giza. These mounds were the ceremonial center of the region.

Archaeologists have excavated parts of the site and learned details about the farming and trading the Caddos practiced centuries ago. The Caddos followed sophisticated social, religious and political systems that helped them thrive for 500 years. The site inspires present-day Caddo people to bring ancient practices back to life and preserve the culture that gave Texas its name. ■

ABOVE Chet at the temple mound, the largest at Caddo Mounds State Historic Site.

TCP WEB EXTRA See Chet’s video from Caddo Mounds State Historic Site and check out his Explorations on *The Daytripper* on PBS.

Know Before You Go

Some events may have been affected by COVID-19. Call or check an event’s website for scheduling details.

FEBRUARY

04

Frisco [4–7] World Olympic Gymnastics Academy Classic and Liukin Invitational, (972) 497-4800, woga.net

San Angelo [4–21] Stock Show, (325) 653-7785, sanangelorodeo.com

05

Kerrville [5–6, 12–14, 19–21] Villainous Company, (830) 896-9393, caillouxperformingarts.com

06

Kerrville [6–March 19] America the Beautiful: Women Artists of the West National Exhibition, (830) 896-2553, museumofwesternart.com

07

San Marcos Half Marathon, 10K and 5K, (210) 722-4548, toursanmarcos.com

11

Nocona [11–13] Mardi Gras Nocona Style, (940) 825-3526, nocona.org

Beaumont [11–14] Mardi Gras of Southeast Texas, (409) 721-8717, mardigrastx.com

12

Lufkin Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus Live!, (936) 633-5454, angelinaarts.org/performing-arts-series

Luckenbach [12–13] Hug-In and Valentine Ball, (830) 997-3224, luckenbachtexas.com

Port Lavaca [12–13] February Frenzy, (361) 726-5126, stsda.org

McKinney [12-14] Third Monday Trade Days, (972) 562-5466, thirdmondaytradedays.com

Fredericksburg [12-14, 19-21, 26-28] 9 to 5, (830) 997-3588, fredericksburgtheater.org

13

Mesquite Be Mine at the Ranch, (972) 216-6468, visitmесquitetx.com

14

El Paso Marathon, (915) 534-0600, elpasomarathon.org

McKinney Krewe of Barkus Virtual Dog Parade, (972) 547-2660, artinstituteofmckinney.com

19

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

20

Houston Creole Heritage Festival, (281) 888-4153, houstoncreolefest.com

Gruene [20-21] Old Gruene Market Days, (830) 832-1721, gruenemarketdays.com

26

Junction [26-27] Freezer Disc Golf Tourney, (512) 557-2482, junctiontexas.com/disc-golf

27

Mesquite [27-28] Texas Fly Fishing and Brew Festival, 1-800-541-2355, txflyfishingfestival.org

MARCH

05

Grapevine First Friday at the Farm, (817) 410-3185, nashfarm.org

TCP *Submit Your Event*

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Event Calendar

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

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

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Saddles

Saddle up, and let's hit the trail. This month our readers show off their well-worn and well-loved riding gear. Made of traditional leather or lighter-weight synthetics, saddles are passed down through families and remind us of hard work and the spirit of the Old West.

GRACE FULTZ



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP

**JODY BRODHECKER
PEDERNALES EC**
Saddles too dear to part with.

**TERRY SUELTMAN
PEDERNALES EC**
"This was the 'little partner' of a cowgirl who rode up to us with her dog in the pouch."

**BEATRICE LUSK
CHEROKEE COUNTY EC**
"Debra riding Freckles."

**ANNE BARCAK
SAN PATRICIO EC**
The Glasscock brothers water their horses while working cattle, circa 1960.



Upcoming Contests

- DUE FEB 10** Manmade vs. Nature
- DUE MAR 10** Night Life
- DUE APR 10** Portraits

Enter online and review submission rules at TexasCoopPower.com/Contests.

TCP WEB EXTRA See Focus on Texas on our website for more photos from readers.



Time To Talk About *That*

Black History Month takes on a sense of urgency this year

BY MICHAEL HURD
ILLUSTRATION BY TRACI DABERKO

BLACK HISTORY MONTH is a singular, isolated observance drawn out through February to recognize African American contributions to America's formation and image. For generations the great majority of those feats were ignored by the writers of history texts, but now the recognition comes through literature and several weeks of ceremonies, seminars, marches, parades and assorted TV programs.

Even so, the prevailing feel can be obligatory and condescending—as though the subject dare not be broached during the other 11 months of the year. “Oh, we can talk about *THAT* in February!”

So, here we are again, time to talk about *THAT*, but Black History Month 2021 has a different feel from its 95 predecessors, even a sense of urgency given the social upheaval of 2020. There is an

increased interest in Black history as a way of understanding how and why we have arrived at this point of social reckoning, as a country, through an examination of the evolution of the African American community.

Historian Carter G. Woodson created Black History Week in 1926 as a natural extension of the cultural and intellectual Harlem Renaissance, with its cast of exceptional creative talents—Alain Locke, Langston Hughes and others—pushing for racial equality by extolling the realities of post-slavery African American life in the U.S. Woodson emphasized a need to recognize the achievements of African Americans.

Woodson chose February because of the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln (February 12) and Frederick Douglass (February 14), two men who were revered and celebrated in Black communities. By the 1970s the annual celebration had gained widespread popularity and was nudged to cover the entire month. Black History Month has been both hailed as an uplifting force and maligned as racially polarizing, a phenomenon that is currently more pronounced than the desegregation efforts of the 1960s.

Woodson never thought the study of Black history should be confined to one week. He established Black history education programs that would cover a full year of study, a “Black History Year.” Further, he welcomed the future when a designation of any kind regarding the study of Black history was no longer necessary.

So it was heartening last year when the Texas Education Agency OK'd high schools providing African American Studies as an elective course, a major positive step.

Welcome to the contemporary “New Negro” movement with more diverse voices and a new iteration of Black History Month for wider, rapt audiences acknowledging that Black history is American history.

Let's talk about *THAT* ... every day. ■

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