

Texas Coop Power

OCTOBER 2022



2022 Annual Meeting A Return to Tradition

A white utility truck with a yellow crane arm is parked behind a chain-link fence. The truck has "CECA" and the number "22" on its side. The background shows a clear blue sky with some clouds and a utility pole on the left.

Saturday, October 8, 2022
Comanche Electric Cooperative
Association Headquarters

COMANCHE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING OF MEMBERS

To the member addressed:

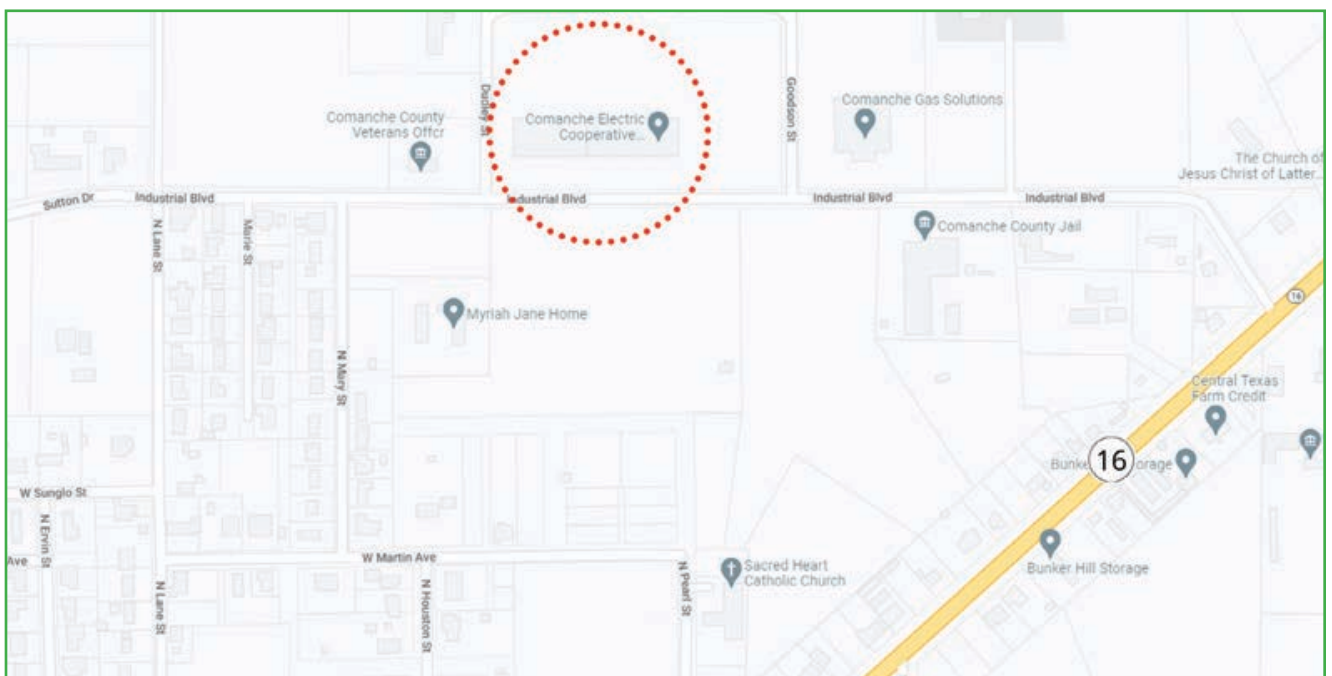
You are hereby given official notice that the annual meeting of Comanche Electric Cooperative will be held at the cooperative's headquarters in Comanche at 10 a.m. Saturday, October 8, 2022.

At the meeting, one member is to be elected as director for a three-year term, along with other business that might come before the meeting.

We urge you to be present for this meeting Saturday, October 8, 2022, at 10 a.m. at CECA's headquarters.

Registration begins at 9 a.m. and will close when the call for the vote is made.

Ruby Solomon
Secretary-Treasurer



Annual Meeting Schedule

9 a.m.

Registration

Health fair closes promptly at 10 a.m.

Refreshments

Entertainment

Jerrod Hicks

Presentation of colors

Boy Scout Troop 67

National anthem

Brooklynn Richmond

10 a.m.

Call to order

Invocation

Introduction of directors and special guest

Report of officers

Report on quorum

Reading of notice, proof of publication

Election of directors

Manager's report

Election judge's report

Unfinished business

Drawing for door prizes

Adjourn

11 a.m.

Catered lunch

Accommodations for people with disabilities are available upon request.



**TEAR OFF THIS CARD AND BRING IT WITH YOU TO YOUR ANNUAL MEETING.
THIS IS YOUR REGISTRATION CARD AND TICKET FOR DOOR PRIZES.**

(CANNOT BE DUPLICATED)

COMANCHE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE
NOMINATIONS FOR DIRECTORS

DISTRICT MEETINGS FOR NOMINATING CANDIDATES FOR THE BOARD WERE HELD AS FOLLOWS:

The meeting for **DISTRICT 3** was held July 18 at the De Leon High School Cafeteria. A quorum was present, and members nominated incumbent Ruby Solomon. Solomon will continue to serve on the board of directors.

The meeting for **DISTRICT 5** was held July 19 at the May High School cafeteria. A quorum was present, and members nominated Troy Stewart and Russell Davis. The membership at large will decide who will represent District 5 at the annual meeting.

The meeting for **DISTRICT 6** was held July 20 at the Scranton Community Center. A quorum was present, and members nominated incumbent Loren Stroebel. Stroebel will continue to serve on the board of directors.

ABOUT YOUR NOMINEES FOR DISTRICT 5



TROY STEWART

Troy Stewart resides 5 miles south of May and has been a member of CECA all of his life. Along with farming and ranching, he raises horses and has done some auctioneering. He is a member of the First Baptist Church of May.



RUSSELL DAVIS

Russell Davis and his wife, Nancy, reside in May and have been CECA members for about 17 years. Davis is a member and associate pastor of Pleasant Grove Baptist Church. He enjoys spending time with his family.

METER READERS STILL
MAKE THE ROUNDS

CHET GETS CHARMED
BY POLKA MUSIC

CUERO SHARES ITS TIES
TO TURKEYS

Texas Coop Power

FOR CECA MEMBERS

OCTOBER 2022

Monarch Matriarch

One woman's quest to protect
the butterfly's future



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October 2022



12

08 Funnel Vision

How one woman is earnestly spreading the word about monarch migrations through Texas.

By Laura Tolley
Photos by Julia Robinson

Reading Between the Lines

Decades after new tech started taking over, meter readers are still a valued part of co-op connections.

By Chris Burrows
Illustration by Michael Koelsch

ON THE COVER
Monika Maeckle in her pollinator-friendly backyard in San Antonio.
Photo by Julia Robinson

ABOVE
Meter readers have ready friends in Co-op Country. Ready enemies, too.
Illustration by Michael Koelsch

04

Currents
The latest buzz

06

TCP Talk
Readers respond

18

Co-op News
Information plus energy and safety tips from your cooperative

29

Footnotes in Texas History
Bison at the Brink
By W.F. Strong

30

TCP Kitchen
Nuts About Nuts
By Megan Myers

34

Hit the Road
Oodles of Oompahs
By Chet Garner

37

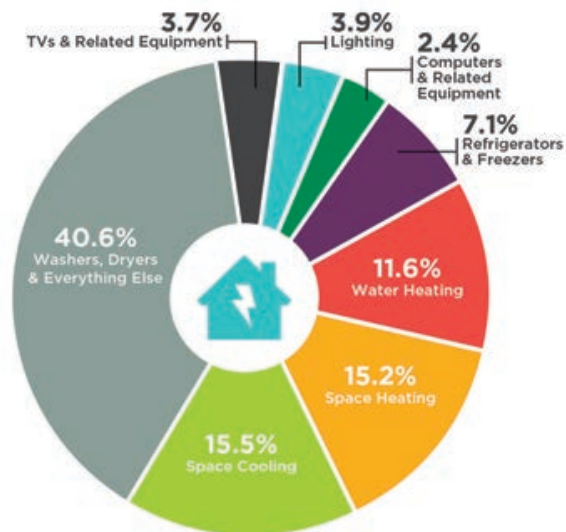
Focus on Texas
Photo Contest: Hometown Pride

38

Observations
Not for the Birds
By Caytlyn Phillips

Extra Credit

WILEY COLLEGE graduates learned at commencement in May that their student debt was paid for. An anonymous donor bestowed the gift upon the 100-plus members of the class of 2022 at the historically Black college in Marshall, erasing some \$300,000 from the books.



How We Use Electricity

This National Co-op Month, your electric cooperative and trusted energy adviser wants to show you where your money goes—and where you might focus on cutting back.

Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration

FINISH THIS SENTENCE

THE BEST CHRISTMAS GIFT I EVER GAVE WAS ...

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 August prompt: **The song that takes me back to high school is ...**

1999 by Prince. I graduated high school in 1999, and we played the song all year.

JENNIFER MAYFIELD OKERE
VIA FACEBOOK

Before the Next Teardrop Falls by Freddy Fender.

PEGGY DARSEY
VIA FACEBOOK

Bohemian Rhapsody by Queen. Every time I hear the song, I have to sing along and let my mind wander back to those glorious high school days.

JACINDA MOORE
TRI-COUNTY EC
GRANBURY

Don't Bring Me Down by Electric Light Orchestra. It was playing every day at lunch on our cafeteria jukebox.

LESLIE CHATHAM JAMES
WISE EC
PARADISE

To see more responses, read Currents online.

TCP *Contests and More*

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First Responders

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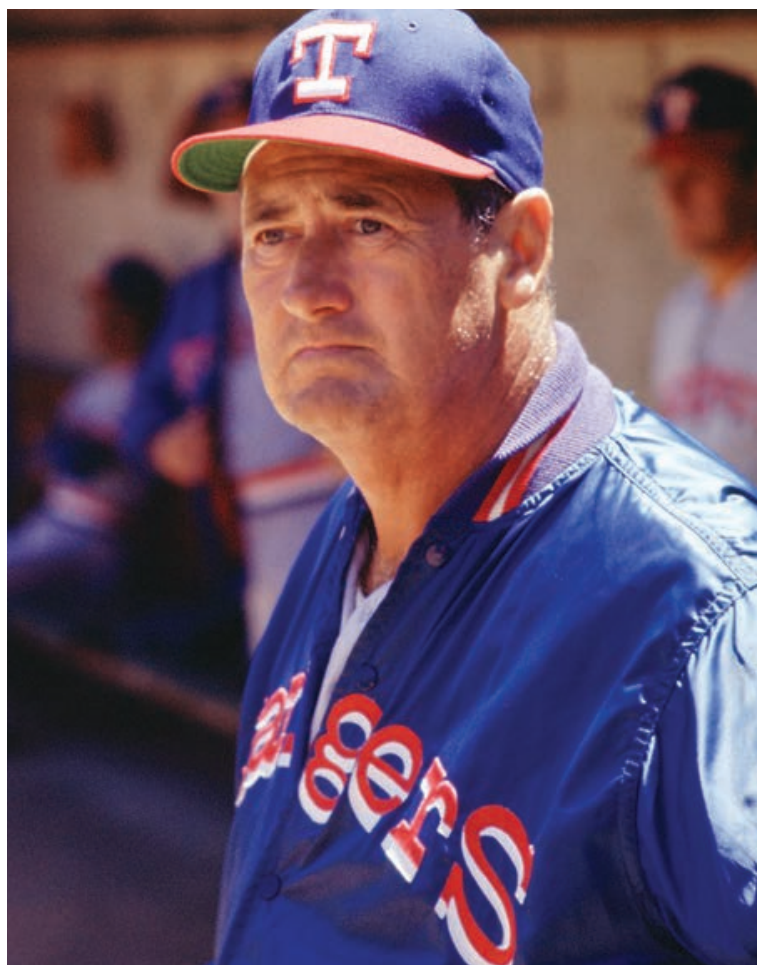


Gourd as Gold

When Sherry Nelson attended a Texas Gourd Society show in 2017, she was stunned by the gourds she saw. "It's just amazing what people can do with them," she said. "But I thought I could never do that."

She was hooked. The Kerrville native and Central Texas Electric Cooperative member joined TGS and took classes. After a *Texas Co-op Power* illustration by David Danz in March 2021 caught her eye, she reached out to *TCP* for permission before spending three weeks burning it into a gourd for a Kerr Arts and Cultural Center contest in May.

It won—beating out 151 other gourds. "I'm going to enjoy this win for a while," she said.



Rangers Flashback

HALL OF FAME outfielder Ted Williams was a phenomenal baseball player, but he met little success as a manager.

His four-year managerial career started with the Washington Senators in 1969 and ended 50 years ago this month, in 1972, when the Senators relocated to Arlington and became the Texas Rangers.

Williams went out with a whimper, losing the season finale 4-0 on October 4 and finishing with a 273-364 record as manager.

Did You Know?

That Rangers team played in Arlington Stadium, a converted minor-league ballpark originally called Turnpike Stadium. Whatever the name, the summer heat plagued players and fans alike. One writer called the outfield stands "the world's largest open-air roaster."



Why'd the Chicken Cross the Pit?

"I have tried barbecued chicken at Kreuz Market and around the state. Most (including Kreuz) do a great job, but the best is at Mumphord's Place BBQ in Victoria."

JOHN GEORGE
VICTORIA EC
VICTORIA

Raving and Squawking

If you haven't tried the Kreuz Market barbecued chicken, you need to [*Why'd the Chicken Cross the Pit?*, July 2022]. It's great.

Tom Faulkner
Pedernales EC
Leander

We were motivated to visit Kreuz after reading your glowing endorsement. What a disappointment. The chicken did not taste any better than a \$5 deli chicken from Sam's Club.

Gary and Gaye Kriegel
Pedernales EC
Williamson County

Walked a few yards onto it once and crawled back [*Colorado's Texas Bridge*, July 2022].

MARTHA BEIMER
VIA FACEBOOK

The Coach's Coach

The story about Tom Landry and his senior football season at Mission High School does not identify who his coach was [*The Most Glorious Autumn*, August 2022]. I believe it was my uncle, Robert Martin, as he was a lifelong friend of Landry and took Landry's father to many Cowboys games.

Ralph E. Martin Jr.
Medina EC
New Braunfels

EDITOR'S NOTE Landry's coach at Mission was indeed Robert L. "Bob" Martin.

The Cotton Patch

My family farmed west of Krum [*Prized Fibers*, July 2022]. Many days I was in the cotton patch hoeing weeds. I "missed" out on the picking as Dad hired a crew of pickers.

Ken Fairman
Wise EC
Krum



FOCUS ON SPORT | GETTY IMAGES

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.

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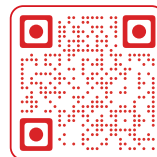
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A woman wearing a wide-brimmed straw hat, glasses, a white long-sleeved shirt, and blue patterned shorts stands in a natural setting. A German Shepherd dog sits on the ground next to her. They are positioned under the shade of a large, leafy tree. In the background, there are rocky hills and more trees. The overall scene is bright and sunny.

Funnel Vision

How one woman is earnestly spreading the word about monarch migrations through Texas



M

onika Maeckle found her passion in a dry streambed of the San Saba River.

It was October 2004 when she and her husband drove from their ranch, a Hill Country getaway on the Llano River, over to a friend's place near tiny Hext for a "tagging event." She didn't know what that was really, but Maeckle likes an adventure and loves the outdoors.

At sunset, monarch butterflies started cascading from the sky. The group caught them in long nets, carefully plucking the bright orange marvels out to tag their wings with coded stickers. They tagged a couple hundred monarchs that evening, then set them free. Maeckle was completely smitten.

"It was a passion play from the beginning," says Maeckle, a member of Pedernales Electric Cooperative. "It was this magical thing. I was entranced."

The San Antonio-based communications and marketing pro spent the following months reading and researching everything she could find about the monarchs' annual migration to Mexico. A year later, on a Saturday in October, Maeckle climbed into her kayak and ventured out on the clear-running Llano near Mason. She was equipped with tags, each about as big around as a pencil eraser.

"I figured they had to be at our place, too, because everything they needed was here: water, tall trees, nectar up against a limestone escarpment that shielded them from wind and held the heat during the cool nights," she says.

She guided the kayak to a spot near three pecan trees, and as she stepped out, there they were.

"I started tagging and ripped through a sheet of 25 tags in about 15 minutes, went back and got another sheet and tagged 25 more," she says. "They weren't dropping from the sky that day; they were already fluttering around, finding a spot to spend the night."

What captured Maeckle's heart, and a lot of her time, is the splendid monarch butterfly and its remarkable migration—up to 3,000 miles—from the northeastern United

States and southeastern Canada to the mountain forests of central Mexico, where they hibernate during the winter. The Central and South Texas region, called the Texas funnel, is part of the path south for all monarchs east of the Rocky Mountains.

Adult monarchs are easily identifiable, with two pairs of deep orange wings that have black veins and white spots along the edges. On average they weigh about as much as half of a dollar bill, with a wingspan of about 4 inches. Tagging doesn't harm the delicate creatures.

Maeckle is part of a groundswell of advocates who are tagging and tracking the monarchs' migration as well as planting and sustaining habitat that will help attract and protect them and other important pollinators, including bees.

But she's an overachiever when it comes to monarchs. The citizen scientist launched an educational website called the Texas Butterfly Ranch, writes and gives talks about monarchs, and is the founding director of the Monarch Butterfly and Pollinator Festival, the seventh of which will be held October 8 at San Antonio's Brackenridge Park.

The free one-day festival offers children and adults opportunities to learn about the monarch migration and the importance of other wildlife pollinators to our own food sources. The festival also features arts and crafts activities and other entertainment, as well as monarch butterfly tagging demonstrations. An estimated 2,500 people attended last year's festival, and more than 550 butterflies were tagged.

Monarchs Matter

The monarch population has been in decline in recent years, but there is hope for this fall's migration despite the continuing drought and its detrimental effect on native habitat.

The World Wildlife Fund announced in May that a survey found that the number of monarch butterflies in Mexico's forests last winter actually increased 35% from the previous year. The rise "marks a sign of recovery—albeit a fragile one—and gives some reason for hope against a backdrop of several decades of decline for the iconic species," the organization said in a release.

"The increase in monarch butterflies is good news and indicates that we should continue working to maintain and reinforce conservation measures by Mexico, the United States and Canada," says Jorge Rickards, general manager of WWF's Mexico office. "Monarchs are important pollinators, and their migratory journey helps promote greater diversity of flowering plants, which benefits other species

OPPOSITE Monika Maeckle launched the website Texas Butterfly Ranch and is the founding director of the Monarch Butterfly and Pollinator Festival in San Antonio. ABOVE A monarch feeds on a blue mistflower.



in natural ecosystems and contributes to the production of food for human consumption.”

Butterflies are pretty, fanciful things that don’t bite or sting, and that makes them interesting to humans, prompting a willingness to help them, which can help all pollinators, says Judit Green, urban wildlife biologist for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. She calls the monarch an “ambassador for all pollinators.”

“Our beautiful rural Texas landscapes are in existence because pollinators helped pollinate it, producing the various native plants from wildflowers, bunchgrasses, vines, shrubs, small trees to canopy trees,” Green says. “These plants make up habitat for a host of wildlife. Therefore all wildlife benefit from actions we take to support our pollinators.”

These insects also support crop production, which the scientific world is quick to remind not to take for granted. “They say, ‘Thank a pollinator with every third bite you take,’ since about 33% of the food we eat is pollinated by pollinators,” Green says.

How To Help

There are simple steps Texans can take to attract monarchs and other pollinators: Grow and cultivate native plants, and don’t use pesticides, Green says. In addition, you can plant native milkweed, the host plant for monarch caterpillars, which feed on the leaves. Migrating monarchs lay their eggs on these plants.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP Monika Maeckle paddles the Llano River. Yellow cestrum planted beside the San Antonio River Walk. Queen butterflies fuel up on frostweed at the Llano River. Bees collect pollen from a coneflower plant. ABOVE A child holds a monarch at the San Antonio festival.

FESTIVAL: COURTESY DRAKE WHITE. BUTTERFLIES: COURTESY MONIKA MAECKLE



Maeckle is part of a groundswell of advocates who are tagging and tracking the monarchs' migration as well as planting and sustaining habitat that will help attract and protect them and other important pollinators, including bees.

There are larger endeavors underway as well. The city of San Antonio's advocacy for monarchs dates back to 2015, when then-Mayor Ivy Taylor signed the National Wildlife Federation's Mayors' Monarch Pledge, a commitment to creating better habitats for pollinators and educating the public about them. Today 42 Texas mayors have active pledges through NWF, including those from small towns like Cuero, Liberty and Nolanville.

NWF named San Antonio the first Monarch Champion City, and current Mayor Ron Nirenberg has continued those efforts. The city's pledge consisted of 24 specific actions, including holding or supporting a butterfly festival to raise awareness about pollinators. Not surprisingly, Maeckle took on that challenge.

"When I say I'm going to do something, I do it," says Maeckle, who, with her husband, Robert Rivard, founded a nonprofit digital news website now called the San Antonio Report.

Green says the Monarch Butterfly and Pollinator Festival has been important to raising awareness about the problems pollinators face and how the public can help.

"Getting the public to support our pollinators, like the monarch, is crucial," Green says.

Cheri Tondre, an instructional specialist for San Antonio Independent School District, participated in a 2017 festival workshop that led to the creation of a pollinator

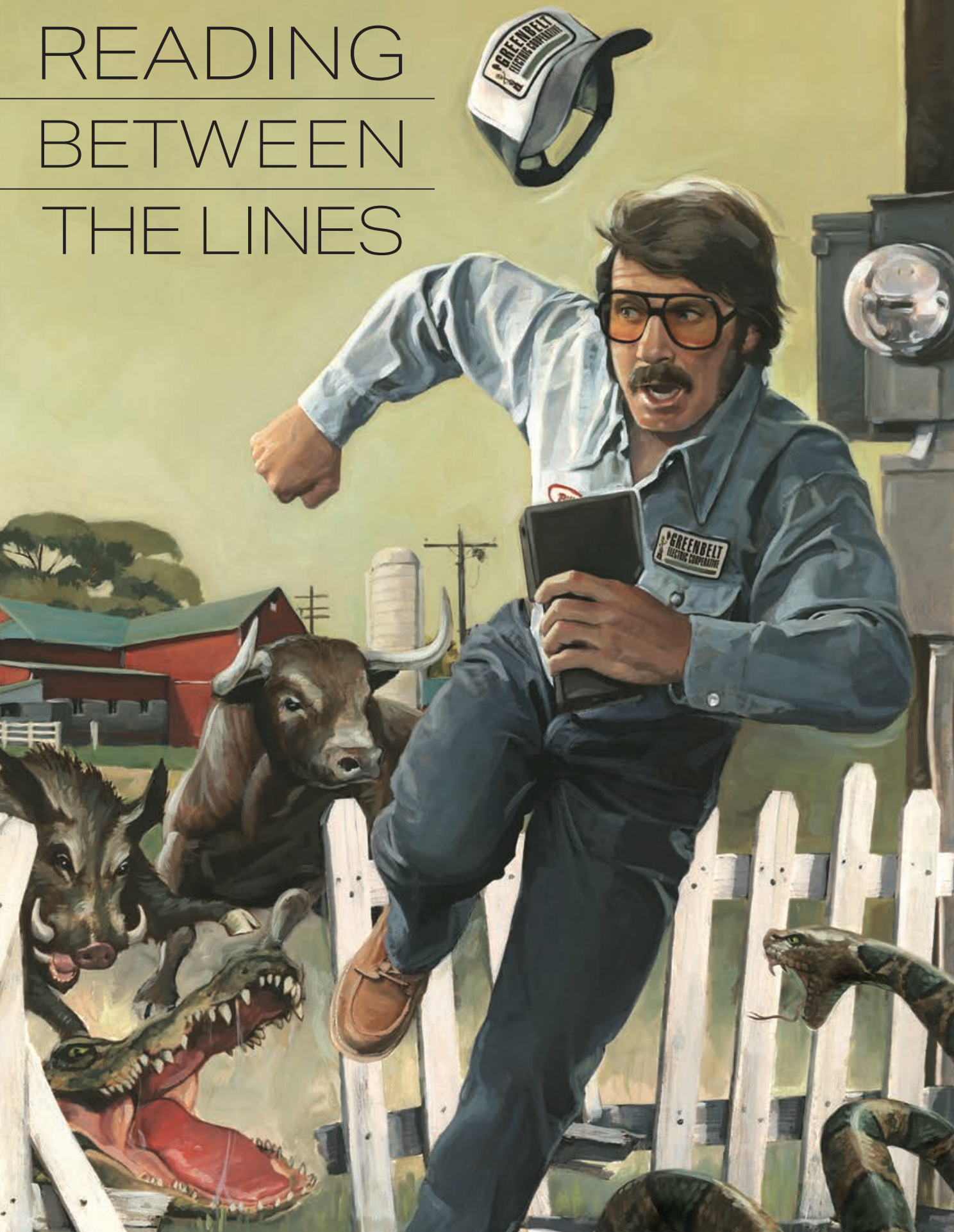
garden at Collins Garden Elementary. She says the festival offers children the chance to explore the natural world.

"Opportunities to engage with science, nature and community are important to engage students in the type of learning we need," Tondre says. "They need to know they are part of the problem and solution."

Maeckle sees the monarch as an access point for viewing a number of complex issues—migration, climate change, sustainability. And she still takes joy in recalling how that evening in Hext ignited a lasting passion.

"They had always been there; I just hadn't realized," Maeckle says. "And it underscores the connectedness of us all." ■

READING BETWEEN THE LINES



Decades after new tech started taking over,

METER READERS are still a valued part of co-op connections

BY CHRIS BURROWS • ILLUSTRATION BY MICHAEL KOELSCH

Connie Turner can tell you all about the time she cracked three ribs battling a gate over a cattle guard, slipping on ice in the process. Or about the time an electric meter exploded in her hands, knocking her unconscious. Or the time she injured her foot jumping from a fence.

“And since then, I’ve had shoulder surgery,” she says. “I really think that that injury came from the repetition of pushing on gates.”

But in the last week of her 40-year career at Coleman County Electric Cooperative, Turner can also tell you that she misses working as a country meter reader, despite the toll it took on her body. Seventeen years into that career, she was able to move into an office role, but her injuries weren’t the only factor in that move.

Another was the folks on her route. They were like family to her—and aging.

“I could hardly stand to go out there, and they wouldn’t be there anymore,” she says. “A lot of them kind of adopted me. I used to load furniture; I’d get the lawn mower started for them and help them pick their garden. I just did everything that you wouldn’t really think that a meter reader would be out there doing.”

Turner was part of a group like no other—one accustomed to outsmarting dogs, boars, snakes, and the odd alligator or goose; to knowing the roads, power grid and land better than anyone; and to dealing with the occasional unhappy member, flat tires and whatever else came their way as they scoured the countryside, read dials and displays, and relayed kilowatt-hour usage to co-op accounting departments for accurate billing.

But ever since co-ops started installing automated meter reading systems in the 1990s, these neighborly, workaday men and women seemed doomed to be replaced by the very devices they regularly visited.

However, many still haven’t been. Sure, there aren’t as many meter readers working today, but Texas co-ops still employ dozens. And now many of them are armed with more technical skills than ever.

A GOOD READ

John Gross is one of them. For 19 years he’s been reading meters on his rural routes in Parker County, west of Fort Worth, for Tri-County Electric Cooperative.

“People didn’t know that we still walked around,” he says.

As others in his line of work do, he has plenty of stories. Like the time he tore his ACL climbing a fence to get to a meter—“I actually read about three more meters until I said I can’t keep doing this because I was hopping on the one good leg,” he says—or the time a bull chased him around a meter pole (he still got the reading).

“You don’t know what you’re going to walk into: coyotes, cows, deer, bulls,” he says. “A lot of times you have to run. Otherwise you’re going to have to tangle with some of the dogs.”

Gross says he drives hundreds of miles daily and gets plenty of walking in, but since TCEC started to deploy smart meters across its system in 2019, he’s part of a shrinking team.

Gross, co-worker Bobby Collins and a handful of others at TCEC no longer read all the co-op’s 125,000 meters. Collins has read meters for 23 years in an upscale area closer to Fort Worth, where he’s met celebrities Terry Bradshaw, Sandra Bullock and Josh Hamilton in the course of his work, but it’s the everyday folks who he especially appreciates.

“They’ll start a story, and you’ll end up leaving; and then next month, they’ll pick up right where they left off,” Collins says.

THE FUTURE IS HERE

Economist David Autor famously pointed out that the invention of the ATM in the 1970s seemed sure to spell the end for bank tellers. But a funny thing happened: As ATMs quadrupled between 1995 and 2010, the number of tellers actually increased over that period.

“The last 200 years, we’ve had an incredible amount of automation,” Autor said in a 2017 interview with CBS News. “We have tractors that do the work that horses and people used to do on farms. We don’t do bookkeeping with books. But this has not, in net, reduced the amount of employment.”

Since the 1990s, when electric utilities began to implement AMR systems, jobs for electric meter readers in the U.S. fell by more than half, from a peak of 55,000 in 1996 to 24,000 in 2021, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Today, nearly all co-ops in Texas have deployed some form of advanced metering infrastructure—a further revolution in metering technology that unleashed myriad benefits for co-ops and their members. But like any complex system, even AMI needs humans to watch over it and fix it when it falters.

When that happens, a worker still has to drive out, find the meter, get a reading and make a fix.

“We generally troubleshoot,” says Kevin Gray, one of two meter readers at Fort Belknap Electric Cooperative. “If we have a meter not sending a reading in, you go out to see: Is the transformer fuse blown? Is the AMR itself dead and not sending a reading? We check transformer connections, look for trees burning on the line.”

As meters have become more complex, so too have the jobs of meter readers like Gray, who has developed new skills to troubleshoot issues in the field.

“I can remember back when the technology began to get a good foothold in the market, obviously the meter readers got very nervous,” says Mike Cleveland, manager of meter products at Texas Electric Cooperatives, the statewide association for co-ops. He says a lot of co-op leaders initially used that as an excuse to delay upgrading to the new meters.

“It took a while for people to understand the benefits and understand that you can take meter readers and turn them into more advanced technicians for running the AMR system,” Cleveland says. “You’re implementing something that has to be babysat all the time. It’s a complex piece of technology that doesn’t just run on autopilot in the background. Somebody has to monitor and manage it.”

MORE THAN METERS

In the 1970s and ’80s, many electric cooperatives started meter reading departments, some citing frustrations with the self-reporting postcards that most utilities of the era relied on.

At Southwest Texas Electric Cooperative, that meant closing the office for about a week every month. Each of the co-op’s employees would grab a pickup, take a meter route and gather readings from rural West Texas. General Manager Buff Whitten did his part when he started at the co-op in 1977.

“You don’t get to see the system like we once did,” he says. “You’re looking at poles, you’re looking at crossarms, you’re able to see the system and recognize problems that you take back, keep track of and correct. And there’s always an opportunity, when you’re out there, to meet the members.”

AMI won’t spot a broken crossarm or start a lawn mower for a member, but these systems of smart meters, communications networks and data management systems can do so much more. The granular data they capture increases

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Binoculars for reading meters from the road.

Extra meters and meter seals for making repairs in the field.

Nontoxic dog repellent.

Sunglasses, hat and sunscreen.

Fiberglass hot stick for adjusting lines and transformers.

Four-wheel-drive pickup.

Keys for Co-op Country gates.

Car jack, for fixing flats.

Fence stretcher for slinking through barbed wire.

reliability by enabling advanced outage management systems and troubleshooting and provides cost savings for co-ops and their members.

“The old mechanical meter, as good as it was, it was pretty dumb,” Cleveland says. “All it could sit there and do was just count revolutions, but these new meters, they just have so much horsepower under the hood. They’re very powerful instruments.”

Meter readers Mario Manriquez and Donald Priesmeyer keep Wharton County Electric Cooperative’s powerful instruments humming.

“My main thing right now is helping with the AMI system,” says Manriquez from the side of a South Texas road where he and Priesmeyer are installing a communications relay for WCEC’s AMI system.

Over 23 years at WCEC, Manriquez’s work has changed a lot, but the dangers of the job haven’t. “I almost stepped on a snake once,” he says. “They say good snake, bad snake. I say all bad snakes.”

But Scott Thomas, who was the last full-time meter reader at PenTex Energy in North Texas, will tell you that it’s still the folks at the end of the line who make his job so gratifying.

“The best part is going out into the community and visiting with the customers because every one of them liked to talk and visit,” he says, in between greeting folks by name at the co-op’s annual meeting in April. “You had a schedule, and you tried to stay on schedule, but you had to visit.” ■



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01-29311-001-E54801



MESSAGE
FROM
GENERAL
MANAGER/
CEO

ALAN
LESLEY

It's a Matter of (Co-op) Principles

ALL COOPERATIVES, INCLUDING Comanche Electric Cooperative, adhere to the same set of seven principles that reflect our core values of honesty, transparency, equity, inclusiveness and service to the greater community good.

October is National Co-op Month, so this is the perfect time to reflect on these principles that have stood the test of time and provide a framework for the future. Let's take a look at the first three cooperative principles.

Voluntary and Open Membership

CECA was created out of necessity—to meet a need that would have been otherwise unmet in our community. A group of neighbors banded together and organized our electric co-op. They worked together for the benefit of the whole community and the newly established electric lines helped power economic opportunity in our community.

Key parts of that heritage remain—the focus on our mission and serving the greater good. In this, we include everyone to improve the quality of life and economic opportunity for the entire community. Membership is open to everyone in our service territory.

Democratic Member Control

Our co-op is well-suited to meet the needs of our members because we are locally governed. Each

member gets a voice and a vote in how the co-op is run, and each voice and vote are equal. CECA's leadership team and employees live right here in the community. Our board members also live locally on co-op lines, and they have been elected by neighbors just like you.

Members' Economic Participation

As a utility, our mission is to provide safe, reliable and affordable energy to our members. But as a co-op we are also motivated by service to the community rather than profits. Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of CECA. At least part of that capital remains the common property of the cooperative. Members allocate surpluses for co-op programs, initiatives, capital investments and supporting other activities.

Because we are guided by the Seven Cooperative Principles, it's not just about dollars—it's about opportunity for all and being fair when engaging with our members.

CECA is a reflection of our local community and its evolving needs. We view our role as a catalyst for good and making our corner of the world a better place. And that, by the way, sums up the seventh co-op principle, Concern for Community. ■



**Community born.
Community led.
Focused on YOU.**

October is
National Co-op Month!

84th CECA Annual Meeting A Return to Tradition

ON OCTOBER 8, Comanche Electric Cooperative will host our annual meeting in person for the first time in three years. The event will be held at the CEC headquarters at 349 Industrial Blvd. in Comanche as it was in 2019.

The annual meeting is important because it gives member-owners the opportunity to vote for a member to represent them on the co-op's board of directors for a three-year term.

In July, CECA held three district meetings to give member-owners insight into the state of the cooperative and for them to nominate director candidates from their respective districts. Once nominated, the candidates are

placed on the ballot at the annual meeting, where members vote to decide who will represent each district.

With a quorum present at the District 3 meeting, incumbent director Ruby Solomon was nominated to represent her constituents on the board of directors without any opposition.

With a quorum present at the District 5 meeting, member-owners nominated Troy Stewart and Russell Davis. Stewart and Davis will advance to the annual meeting, where the membership at large will exercise their democratic voice to select one of the nominees as director for District 5.

With a quorum present at the District 6 meeting, member-owners nominated incumbent Loren Stroebel. Facing no opposition, Stroebel will continue to represent District 6.

CECA invites all members to participate in this year's annual meeting. Festivities include a meal, music, vendors and a health fair. We cannot wait to get together in person with all of you! ■



WILLIE WIREDHAND | NRECA

Willie Wirehand



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Farmers Day
Wednesday,
October 12

Boss's Day
Monday,
October 17

**National First
Responders Day**
Friday,
October 28



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Your Board of Directors



Randy Denning, District 1



Pete McDougal, District 2



Ruby Solomon, District 3



Monty Carlisle, District 4



Troy Stewart, District 5



Loren Stroebel, District 6



Phil Taylor, District 7

Annual Meeting Schedule

Saturday, October 8

CECA Headquarters, 349 Industrial Blvd.

9 a.m.

Registration

Health fair closes promptly at 10 a.m.

Refreshments

Entertainment

Jerrod Hicks

Presentation of colors

Boy Scout Troop 67

National anthem

Brooklynn Richmond

10 a.m.

Call to order

Invocation

Introduction of directors and special guest

Report of officers

Report on quorum

Reading of notice, proof of publication

Election of directors

Manager's report

Election judge's report

Unfinished business

Drawing for door prizes

Adjourn

11 a.m.

Catered lunch

*Accommodations for people with disabilities
are available upon request.*

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CONTACT US

349 Industrial Blvd.

Comanche, TX 76442

Toll-Free 1-800-915-2533

Web ceca.coop

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Alan Lesley

Board of Directors

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Pete McDougal, District 2

Ruby Solomon, District 3

Monty Carlisle, District 4

Troy Stewart, District 5

Loren Stroebel, District 6

Phil Taylor, District 7

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ABOUT COMANCHE EC

CECA operates in Brown, Callahan,
Comanche, Eastland, Mills, Shackelford
and Stephens counties.

OFFICE LOCATIONS

Headquarters

349 Industrial Blvd.

Comanche, TX 76442

Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Early

1801 CR 338

Early, TX 76801

Monday, Wednesday and Friday,

7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., closed from 1 to 2 p.m.

Eastland

1311 W. Main St.

Eastland, TX 76448

Tuesday and Thursday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

VISIT US ONLINE

ceca.coop



Youth Tour



Aryn Lesley, left, and Harrison Sides participated in the 2022 Government-in-Action Youth Tour trip to Washington, D.C., June 12–21.

EACH YEAR COMANCHE ELECTRIC Cooperative sponsors up to two students on the Government-in-Action Youth Tour to Washington, D.C.

The weeklong trip includes visits to the National Cathedral, Lincoln Memorial, Mount Vernon and Smithsonian museums as well as a host of other national sites. The students also get the opportunity to meet with their congressional representatives and to have some down time and fun. They eat dinner at places such as the Hard Rock Cafe, cool off at Pentagon City Mall, dance and dine on a Potomac River cruise, and more.

CECA's Youth Tour contest is open to any high school student, sophomore and above, who is homeschooled or attends a school where CECA has facilities or whose parents or legal guardians live on the lines full-time. Qualifying schools are Albany, Blanket, Breckenridge, Cisco, Comanche, Cross Plains, De Leon, Early, Eastland, Goldthwaite, Gorman, Gustine, May, Moran, Mullin, Priddy, Ranger, Rising Star, Sidney and Zephyr.

This is an all-expense-paid trip, and the winning students will receive air fare, transportation, lodging, meals, insurance and admission charges associated with the tour.

The 2023 Government-in-Action Youth Tour will be held June 11–19. Students can apply on CECA's website. If you have any questions, please call our office at 1-800-915-2533 or email us at memberservices@ceca.coop ■

THE TRIP OF A LIFETIME



GOVERNMENT-IN-ACTION YOUTH TOUR

JUNE 11-19, 2023

Are you a smart high school student who dreams of traveling, meeting people and seeing historic sites—all without spending a dime of your own money? Then the Youth Tour to Washington, D.C., is your tour. Apply now!

For more information, visit ceca.coop.

Scholarships

2023 Scholarship Applications Now Being Accepted

COMANCHE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE takes the education of local youths very seriously, and we strive to encourage them to pursue higher education. It is to this end that we offer \$2,000 Scholarships for Excellence and \$2,000 Operation Round-Up scholarships to be paid over four semesters. In addition, the Operation Round-Up program has added \$1,000 technical scholarships, the number to be determined by number of applicants, to be paid out over two semesters.

To qualify for the scholarships, students must be claimed as a dependent of parents or legal guardians who are active CECA members. They must maintain at least a 2.5 GPA on a 4.0 scale and must meet general entrance requirements at an accredited school. Applicants can be graduating high school seniors or currently enrolled in a qualifying college or university.

Applications for 2023 scholarships must be received by March 1.

For questions, please contact the CECA member services department at 1-800-915-2533 or memberservices@ceca.coop.



2022 Scholarship for Excellence Recipients



Harrison Sides
Comanche



Mike Lindique
Sidney



Neeley Gooden
De Leon



Sidney Beckett
Early



Rylah Morgan
Brownwood

2022 Operation Round-Up Scholarship Recipients



Haley Reed
De Leon



Brian Kunkel
May



Get Your Home Ready for Cooler Weather

HEATING SEASON WILL be here before you know it. Here are a few ways to keep your energy use—and your utility bills—in check as the weather gets cooler.

Check for gaps in your walls around windows, doors and holes in exterior walls where cords and cables enter the house. Cool air that leaks into the house through those gaps can compete with the warm air your heating system pumps. Keeping cool air outside where it belongs will mean your heating system doesn't have to work as hard to keep your family comfortable.

Set the thermostat to 68 degrees. At bedtime and before everyone leaves the house for the day, dial it down between 7 and 10 degrees. Lowering the temperature by that amount for eight hours a day can save up to 10% on heating costs, according to the U.S. Department of Energy.

Install a programmable thermostat. The easiest way to ensure that the thermostat rises and lowers depending on whether anyone is in the house is to program it ahead of time to automatically change temperatures.

Reverse the direction that your ceiling fan blades spin. A clockwise movement pushes warm air back down into the room, which can make people in the room feel warmer.

Replace or clean the filters in your heating and air conditioning systems. A clogged filter blocks air from flowing through, which makes your HVAC system work harder and use more energy.

Make an appointment with an HVAC technician to inspect your heating system and repair any problems before it gets cold outside. Spending a little on maintenance now could head off a more costly problem later. ■



STEPHANIE FREY | ISTOCK.COM

Butterfinger Crunch Dessert

- 1½ cups milk**
- 1 package (3.4 ounces) instant vanilla pudding mix**
- 2 cartons (8 ounces each) nondairy whipped topping, thawed**
- 1 large angel food cake, cubed**
- 4 Butterfinger candy bars (2.1 ounces each), crushed**

1. Apply cooking spray to a 9-by-13-inch baking dish.
2. In a large mixing bowl, whisk together milk and pudding mix. Let stand 2 minutes until soft set. Stir in 2 cups whipped topping until well mixed, then fold in remaining whipped topping.
3. Layer half the cake cubes in baking dish, then top with pudding mixture and crushed candy bars. Repeat layers.
4. Cover and chill at least 2 hours before serving.

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

Shoo Away Vampires This Halloween



GPETRIC | ISTOCK.COM

LITTLE GHOSTS, GOBLINS and princesses are a welcome sight outside your door for trick-or-treating on Halloween night. But beware of the vampire lurking inside your home.

You could be paying for vampire energy—electricity that leaks from your appliances, computers and entertainment systems—if you leave them plugged in even when they’re turned off

Any cord that’s plugged into an electrical outlet draws electricity. So if you leave your mobile phone charger plugged in after you’ve removed the phone or you leave your computer and scanner plugged in after you shut down for the evening, you could be wasting—and paying for—unused energy.

Most people leave electronics plugged in all the time because it’s convenient to be able to turn them on without having to plug them in again and again, day after day. The worst offenders are “remote-ready” appliances like computers, cable boxes, stereos, TVs, microwave ovens, garage door openers and video game consoles. As long as they’re plugged in, they remain in a ready state so they don’t have to wake up or warm up when you turn them on.

That can cost you between \$165 and \$440 per year in wasted electricity, depending on how many devices you have.

A tip: Invest in a high-quality power strip—one that will sacrifice itself during a power surge rather than letting the surge ruin the appliance. Plug multiple items into the power strip and unplug the strip before bedtime. That’s easier than unplugging and replugging lots of appliances.

A caution: Don’t overload your home’s electrical circuits by plugging too many appliances into a single power strip. Especially if you live in an older home, consult an electrician about how much of an electrical load your single outlets can handle. ■



DID YOU KNOW?

The inventor of the microwave oven received only \$2 for his discovery.

GCSHUTTER | ISTOCK.COM



POWER TIP

An average household dedicates 5% of its electricity budget to lighting. Switching to energy-efficient LED lighting is a fast way to conserve.

ANDRES | ISTOCK.COM

For the Man Who Gives Everything and Expects Nothing



If you're anything like my dad, you give your family everything. Your name, your time, your values — the people in your life know they can depend on you for practically anything. In exchange for imparting all of this energy and experience, you expect nothing in return.

The point? You deserve to treat yourself once in a while. You do so much for the people you care about. Now it's time to focus on you for just a few minutes. That's where the Men's Due Volta Watch comes in. This astonishing innovation provides a digital readout that's powered by a precise quartz engine, combining both analog and digital timekeeping.

Outfitted with a stopwatch, alarm, a.m./p.m. settings, and day, date and month complications, this timepiece stands out from the crowd. With its large face and handsome, masculine design, this watch is perfect for the back nine and the happy hour afterwards. Water-resistant up to 3 ATM, this timepiece won't wimp out if you have a run-in with a water hazard.

Other hybrid watches can sell for thousands of dollars, but because we've built more than 1 million watches, we know how to create real value. That's why we can offer this timepiece for just \$59! If you're not completely satisfied with this watch, return it for a full refund.

Act quickly! This one-of-a-kind watch has been one of our fastest sellers this year. Of our original run of 2,872, we only have 389 left for this ad! In the last couple of years there's been a watch shortage, but Stauer has got you covered. If you're the kind of man who gives everything and expects nothing in return, it's time to treat yourself.

Watch Specifications:

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Clogged, Backed—up Septic System...Can anything Restore It?

DEAR DARRYL: My home is about 10 years old, and so is my septic system. I have always taken pride in keeping my home and property in top shape. In fact, my neighbors and I are always kidding each other about who keeps their home and yard nicest. Lately, however, I have had a horrible smell in my yard, and also in one of my bathrooms, coming from the shower drain. My grass is muddy and all the drains in my home are very slow.



My wife is on my back to make the bathroom stop smelling and as you can imagine, my neighbors are having a field day, kidding me about the mud pit and sewage stench in my yard. It's humiliating. I called a plumber buddy of mine, who recommended pumping (and maybe even replacing) my septic system. But at the potential cost of thousands of dollars, I hate to explore that option.

I tried the store bought, so called, Septic treatments out there, and they did Nothing to clear up my problem. Is there anything on the market I can pour or flush into my system that will restore it to normal, and keep it maintained?

Clogged and Smelly – Austin, TX

DEAR CLOGGED AND SMELLY: As a reader of my column, I am sure you are aware that I have a great deal of experience in this particular field. You will be glad to know that there IS a septic solution that will solve your back-up and effectively restore your entire system from interior piping throughout the septic system and even unclog the drain field as well. **SeptiCleanse® Shock and Maintenance Programs** deliver your system the fast active bacteria and enzymes needed to liquefy solid waste and free the clogs causing your back-up.

This fast-acting bacteria multiplies within minutes of application and is specifically designed to withstand many of today's anti-bacterial cleaners, soaps and detergents. It comes in dissolvable plastic packs, that you just flush down your toilets. It's so cool. Plus, they actually Guarantee that it restores ANY system, no matter how bad the problem is.

SeptiCleanse® Shock and Maintenance Programs are designed to work on any septic system regardless of design or age. From modern day systems to sand mounds, and systems installed generations ago, I have personally seen SeptiCleanse unclog and restore these systems in a matter of weeks. I highly recommend that you try it before spending any money on repairs. SeptiCleanse products are available online at www.septicleanse.com or you can order or learn more by calling toll free at 1-888-899-8345. If you use the promo code "TXS17", you can get a free shock treatment, added to your order, which normally costs \$169. So, make sure you use that code when you call or buy online.

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Now, THIS is a Knife!

This 16" full tang stainless steel blade is not for the faint of heart —now **ONLY \$99!**

In the blockbuster film, when a strapping Australian crocodile hunter and a lovely American journalist were getting robbed at knife point by a couple of young thugs in New York, the tough Aussie pulls out his dagger and says "That's not a knife, THIS is a knife!" Of course, the thugs scattered and he continued on to win the reporter's heart.

Our Aussie friend would approve of our rendition of his "knife." Forged of high grade 420 surgical stainless steel, this knife is an impressive 16" from pommel to point. And, the blade is full tang, meaning it runs the entirety of the knife, even though part of it is under wraps in the natural bone and wood handle.

Secured in a tooled leather sheath, this is one impressive knife, with an equally impressive price.

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

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

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

Limited Reserves. A deal like this won't last long. We have only 1120 *Down Under Bowie Knives* for this ad only. Don't let this beauty slip through your fingers at a price that won't drag you under. Call today!

Down Under Bowie Knife \$249*

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Rating of A+



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— J., La Crescent, MN



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is unbelievable...this
is an incredibly fine
instrument."*

— H., Arvada, CO



BONUS! Call today and you'll also receive this genuine leather sheath!





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



Bison at the Brink

When just 23 were left in Yellowstone National Park, a Texan revived the herd

BY W.F. STRONG • PHOTO BY JULIA ROBINSON

IF IT WEREN'T FOR TEXAS, there would likely be no bison in Yellowstone National Park. This is a large claim, but it's not without merit.

To be honest, Texas had considerable liability in driving the poor bison to near extinction in the first place. However, once people finally realized the range just wouldn't be as happy a home if the buffalo didn't roam, Texas took a leading role in saving these magnificent creatures. Here's how it came about.

In the early 1900s, the U.S. Army, which patrolled the park in those days, estimated that there were just 23 bison left in Yellowstone. They believed that

those might be all the bison that remained in the whole of the wild, wild West. Imagine—just 23 bison left when, 100 years before, there had been some 30 million of them on the American plains. At one time, there were 10 bison for every American, but by 1900, they were nearly gone.

Despite efforts to protect the Yellowstone herd, the poachers poached away. After all, one impressive bison head could fetch \$2,000 to forever gaze across a bar in someplace like Chicago. That's \$60,000 in today's money. Profit was high, and the risk was low. This was the reality that nearly doomed the creatures.

After the Army managed to intimidate and scare off most of the poachers, Yellowstone needed some good, purebred bulls to rebuild the meager herd. And it needed them fast.

The problem was that most of the bison then in captivity were cattalo—a mixture of bison, or buffalo, and cattle. But in Texas the famous Charles Goodnight—perhaps the most omnipresent figure in Texas history—had his own herd of bison. His herd had been gathered and nurtured by his wife, Mary Ann Goodnight, who personally saw to it that the orphans found wandering the ranch were saved and protected. And so Goodnight, at his own expense, sent three fine, purebred bulls up to Yellowstone to help rebuild that herd.

It worked. Today there are some 5,500 bison in Yellowstone, thanks in part to Goodnight. True, Congress created Yellowstone, and the U.S. Army did its part to help protect the herd from poachers in that enormous park. But it was Goodnight's gift that truly saved the majestic creatures.

In fact, Yellowstone now says it has too many bison, and the herd needs culling. If you add those to the herd that Goodnight donated to Caprock Canyons State Park in Texas, you can say that Texas is largely responsible for bringing bison back from the brink of absolute extinction. And that's no bull. ■

Nuts About Nuts

These tasty treats draw unique flavors out of their shell

BY MEGAN MYERS, FOOD EDITOR

While walnuts are traditional in Greece, and Turkey uses pistachios, in Texas our thoughts naturally turn to pecans for baklava. This sticky, nutty dessert is easier than it seems—it's simply a matter of layering. Use a basting or pastry brush to lightly apply the butter to each layer, taking care to not rip the delicate phyllo dough.



Pecan Baklava

1 cup water
1½ cups sugar, divided use
½ cup honey
1 tablespoon lemon juice
4 cups pecan halves, finely chopped in a food processor
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
¼ teaspoon ground cloves
1 pound (1 box) phyllo dough, thawed according to package instructions
¾ cup (1½ sticks) butter, melted

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In a small saucepan, combine water, 1 cup sugar and honey, and bring to a boil over medium heat, whisking to dissolve sugar. Once boiling, reduce heat to low and simmer 5–7 minutes. Remove from heat, stir in lemon juice and let syrup cool.
2. In a bowl, combine pecans, remaining ½ cup sugar, cinnamon and cloves.
3. Unroll phyllo dough and trim as necessary to fit a 9-by-13-inch pan. Brush a thin layer of melted butter on the bottom and sides of the pan, then begin building the baklava.
4. Lay down a sheet of phyllo and brush butter over it. Repeat until you have 15 layers. Spread 1 cup of pecan mixture on top. Add 5 layers of phyllo, brushing on butter between each layer, then add 1 cup of pecans. Repeat twice until all pecans are used, then place on remaining phyllo layers, buttering between each.
5. Using a very sharp knife, cut baklava into squares or diamonds, making sure to cut through each layer. Hold the phyllo in place as you cut. Pour over any remaining butter.
6. Bake 40–50 minutes, turning the pan halfway through. Remove from oven and immediately pour the cooled syrup over the top; you should hear it sizzle. Let cool completely before serving.

SERVES 24

TCP Follow along with Megan Myers and her adventures in the kitchen at stetted.com, where she features a recipe for Honey Pistachio Shortbread.



Bostock (Almond Toast)

MELISSA TIDWELL
PEDERNALES EC

If you're a fan of bakery almond croissants, you'll love this easy bostock (BOH-stock) recipe. It's perfect for serving at brunch, and you can also freeze the unbaked slices and simply bake one or two as desired.

1 loaf challah or brioche
1 cup sliced almonds, divided use
6 tablespoons (¾ stick) butter
⅔ cup sugar
2 teaspoons flour
1 teaspoon cornstarch
1 egg
½ teaspoon almond extract
Powdered sugar, for serving

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees and line a baking sheet with parchment. Slice the bread into ½-inch slices and arrange on the baking sheet.
2. In a food processor, pulse ¾ cup almonds until finely chopped. Add butter, sugar, flour, cornstarch, egg and almond extract. Purée until a smooth almond cream is formed.
3. Spread 2–3 tablespoons of the almond cream onto each slice of bread, leaving a small border around the edge to allow for spreading. Sprinkle each piece with a few of the reserved sliced almonds.
4. Bake 15–20 minutes, until almond cream is puffed and browned. Let cool 5–10 minutes, then serve with powdered sugar sprinkled on top.

SERVES 6

[MORE RECIPES >](#)

\$500 WINNER

Spaghetti Squash With Cashew Pesto

RHAE BROWN
SAM HOUSTON EC



Fresh and flavorful, this dish uses cashews to create a dairy-free pesto you'll love. Depending on the size of the squash you use, you might have leftover sauce. Use it as a zesty vegetable dip or spread on crusty bread.

SERVES 2–4



1 spaghetti squash
¼ cup plus 1–2 teaspoons olive oil, divided use
¾ cup raw cashews, divided use
2 lemons
2 cups fresh basil
1 avocado, pitted
3 tablespoons water
1 clove garlic
1 teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon pepper

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Line a baking sheet with parchment. Halve the spaghetti squash and scoop out the seeds. Rub the insides of the squash with 1–2 teaspoons olive oil, then place cut-side down on the baking sheet. Bake 40 minutes or until tender.
2. Meanwhile, chop ¼ cup cashews, then toast in a dry pan over medium heat until golden brown. Set aside for topping.
3. Zest 1 lemon for topping if desired, then juice both. Measure out ¼ cup juice and set aside the rest.
4. In a food processor, combine basil, remaining cashews, avocado, ¼ cup lemon juice, remaining olive oil, water, garlic, salt and pepper. Blend until a smooth pesto forms. Taste and add more lemon juice, salt or pepper if desired.
5. Once the squash is done, use a fork to shred the inside to make "noodles" and scoop into a bowl. Add pesto and mix well. Serve topped with toasted cashews and lemon zest.

TCP \$500 Recipe Contest

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Walnut Surprise

GALE HEEP
TRI-COUNTY EC

This simple dessert is a cross between a cookie, a bar and a candy. Heep recommends it warm with ice cream, but it's just as good enjoyed simply with a cup of tea.

½ cup flour
⅓ teaspoon baking soda
½ teaspoon salt
1 egg

1 cup brown sugar
½ teaspoon vanilla extract
1 cup chopped walnuts

1. Preheat oven to 325 degrees and coat an 8-inch square pan with nonstick spray.
2. In a small bowl, combine flour, baking soda and salt. In another bowl, beat egg until foamy, then stir in brown sugar and vanilla. Add flour mixture and stir until completely incorporated. Stir in walnuts; the batter will be thick.
3. Spread the batter into the prepared pan, using a greased spatula or spoon to spread to the edges, if needed.
4. Bake 18–25 minutes, until golden brown.

SERVES 9

TCP Find more recipes on our website that make the most of nuts—as the featured or accompanying ingredient. They're perfect heading into the holidays, and most come from the kitchens of *Texas Co-op Power* readers.

Tips for Toasting Nuts

BY MEGAN MYERS

Many recipes call for toasting nuts, which enhances their flavor and makes them deliciously crunchy.

Stovetop method: Set a dry skillet over medium heat and add nuts in a single layer. Cook 3–5 minutes, stirring, until fragrant and starting to darken.

Oven method: Place nuts in a single layer on a rimmed baking sheet. Bake at 350 degrees until fragrant and starting to darken, 5–8 minutes depending on the nut.

To prevent burning, remove nuts from heat as soon as they are toasted.



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HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE

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COURTESY CHET GARNER

Oodles of Oompahs

A Schulenburg museum preserves polka's enduring power

BY CHET GARNER

IF YOU PASS THROUGH the rolling prairies northeast of San Antonio and listen carefully to the wind, chances are you'll hear the faint sound of a tuba and an accordion floating along. Follow the sound to its source and you could end up in any of dozens of old German and Czech dance halls as polka bands play the music of their ancestors.

Since the late 1800s, polka has been the soundtrack of life for many residents of Fayette County. To learn more about how this unique musical style keeps the beat, I headed to the Texas Polka Music Museum in downtown Schulenburg.

I stepped into the small repository on Lyons Avenue and immediately felt my feet bouncing to the signature "oompah-oompah" playing on the speakers. I was helpless to repel the power of the polka. The walls are covered in pictures, records and stories of the numerous polka artists who have hailed from the Lone Star State—bands like Vrazel's Polka Band, which toured Texas for more than 50 years.

There are also dozens of cases and displays filled with instruments and mementos going back well over 100 years, including booths from local radio DJs that kept the polka power going around the clock. Of course, any proper polka band needs an accordion, tuba and saxophone. But just as important are the matching outfits. This museum has some that would give Elton John a run for his money.

Like most folks, I don't listen to a lot of polka music, but after visiting this museum, I discovered a newfound appreciation for the art and culture of polka. I even bought a CD so I could oom-pah-pah all the way home. ■

ABOVE Chet takes in the polka grooves that resonate in Fayette County.

TCP Toe-tap with Chet in 2/4 time to this nearly two-century-old music. Our website features his latest video, and watch all his Texplorations on *The Daytripper* on PBS.



Know Before You Go

Call ahead or check an event's website for scheduling details.

OCTOBER

07

Fredericksburg [7–9] Texas Mesquite Arts Festival, (830) 997-8515, texasmesquiteartfestivals.com

08

Lexington Blue Volunteer Fire Department Fund-raiser, (512) 229-8533, facebook.com/bluevfd

Stonewall Fish Fry, (830) 990-8793, stonewallvfd.com

Tyler Rose City Music Festival, (903) 593-6905, therosecitymusicfestival.com

Chappell Hill [8–9] Scarecrow Festival, (979) 836-6033, chappellhillhistoricalsociety.com

Edom [8–9] Art Festival, (903) 258-5192, edomarts.com

Pearland [8–9] Art on the Pavilion, (281) 997-5971, visitpearland.com

13

Collinsville 42 Bed Bash, (903) 465-6041, texomafamilyshester.com

Tyler [13–16] Texas Rose Festival, (903) 593-6905, texasrosefestival.com

14

Kyle Halloween Movie in the Park, (512) 262-3939, cityofkyle.com

Canton [14–15] Texas Star Quilters Guild Quilt Show, (903) 312-5252

Henderson [14–15] Rusk County PRCA Rodeo, (903) 657-3699, visithenderson.tx.com

15

Driftwood [14-16] Austin String Band Festival,
(512) 644-0212, aftm.us

Canyon Lake BBQ Cook Off, (830) 964-2223,
canyonlakechamber.com

Clifton FallFest,
(254) 675-8337,
cityofclifton.org

Conroe Fall Herb/Vegetable and Succulent Sale,
(936) 539-7824, mcmga.com

Frisco The Boho Market at Frisco Square,
(214) 202-2668,
thebohohomemarket.co

Plano International Festival,
planointernationalfestival.org

Waco Oakwood Cemetery's Walking Tales, (254) 717-1763

Brenham [15-16] Texas Arts & Music Festival,
(979) 337-7580,
texasartsandmusicfestival.com

21

Cisco [21-22] Pie Fest,
(254) 334-9621,
ciscotxpiefest.com

Austin [21-23] Gem Capers,
(512) 458-9546,
agms-tx.org

Plano [21-23] Hollydays Market, (972) 941-5840,
visitplano.com

22

Burnet Zombie Color Run,
(512) 756-6182,
burnet.revtrak.net

Fredericksburg Food & Wine Fest, (830) 997-8515,
fbgfoodandwinefest.com

MORE EVENTS >

TCP Submit Your Event

We pick events for the magazine directly from TexasCoopPower.com. Submit your January event by November 1, and it just might be featured in this calendar.

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Event Calendar

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Pick of the Month

Festival of the Wolves

Navasota, October 15
 (936) 894-9653
saintfranciswolvesanctuary.org

Learn about wolves and wolf-dogs, browse booths, dine at food trucks, bid on items at a silent auction, and have a howling good time at the Saint Francis Wolf Sanctuary.

OCTOBER EVENTS CONTINUED

22

Kyle Center Street Trick-or-Treat, (512) 262-3939, cityofkyle.com

Palestine Hot Pepper Festival, (903) 723-3014, visitpalestine.com

Plano Fall Harvest Festival and Outdoor Market, (469) 467-9995, visitplano.com

Round Rock Diwali Festival, info@rrdiwalifest.com, rrdiwalifest.com

Cottonwood Shores [22-23] Legends of the Falls, (830) 693-3830, cottonwoodshores.org

Kerrville [22-23] Mountain Bike Festival, (830) 896-6864, kerrvillemountainbikefestival.com

25

Kenney [25-29] Hodges Farm Antique Show, (979) 865-9077, hodgesfarmtexas@gmail.com

28

Imperial [28-29] Horse-head Crossing Trails of Time, (432) 336-6316, pecoscountyhistoricalcommission.org

Kerrville [28-30] Texas Fleece and Fiber Festival, (361) 537-0503, texasfleeceandfiber.com

29

Copperas Cove Fall-O-Ween Festival, (254) 542-2719, www.copperascovetx.gov

Llano Llano River Pumpkin Float, (325) 247-5354, llanochamber.org

Sanger Sellabration, (940) 458-7702, sangertexas.com

Salado [29-30] Table-rock's Fright Trail, (254) 308-2200, tablerock.org

31

Kerrville Family Fright Night, (830) 257-7300, kerrvilletx.gov

NOVEMBER

04

New Braunfels [4-13] Wurstfest, (830) 625-9167, wurstfest.com

05

Brenham Radney Foster & Darden Smith, (979) 337-7240, thebarnhillcenter.com

Jefferson Fall History Haunts and Legends Event, (903) 601-3375, visitjeffersonstexas.com

07

Georgetown Wurstbraten 50th Sausage Festival, (512) 863-3065, zionwalburg.org

Hometown Pride

Sports, artwork, history and landmarks all make us proud as peacocks to call our town home, no matter the size. These reader offerings just make us beam with Texas pride. So pull up a lawn chair and gather the kids. Here comes the parade.

CURATED BY GRACE FULTZ



**1 JOAN WILSON
BLUEBONNET EC**

Wilson's granddaughter, Maddie Wilson, gets an early start experiencing Friday night lights with the Hendrickson Hawks cheerleaders in Pflugerville.

**2 JONNIE ENGLAND
NUECES EC**

Pecos, in far west Reeves County, shows hometown pride with the Pecos Boot Trail, a public art project.

**3 JULIE TUPY
HILCO EC**

Willie Nelson, painted on a downtown garage in his hometown of Abbott.

**4 KATE MANRRIQUEZ
WHARTON COUNTY EC**

Taylor Manriquez plays first base for the El Campo High School Ricebirds.



Upcoming Contests

- DUE OCT 10** First Responders
- DUE NOV 10** Land, Sea or Sky
- DUE DEC 10** Riding the River



Enter online at TexasCoopPower.com/contests.

TCP See Focus on Texas on our website for more Hometown Pride photos from readers.



Quay Rathbone of Victoria was the first Turkey Trot sultana, in 1913.

TCP Go to our website to see Caytlyn Phillips' documentary, *Because Two Birds Raced*.



turkey capital of the world.

Thus began the Great Gobbler Gallop, with a Cuero turkey perpetually named Ruby Begonia facing Worthington's Paycheck ("nothing goes faster than a paycheck").

Ruby Begonia heads to downtown Worthington for the first leg every year at King Turkey Day, a month before Turkeyfest. Then the birds race again along Main Street in Cuero, a frenzy of feathers spurred on by crowds lining the way. The bird with the best cumulative time claims the Traveling Turkey Trophy of Tumultuous Triumph for its town.

It's no surprise that the gallop is one of my fondest childhood memories. Cuero's peculiar history with gobblers has long been my favorite aspect of my hometown and even became the focus of my master's thesis. It's not every day that you get to see flightless fowl excitedly plod down an ordinarily busy street. Our silly little tradition enthralled me and drew me in every October.

But the birds barely scrape the surface. It's the enriching union of the communities that brings the festival to life.

Turkeyfest organizers are still moved to tears recalling the generosity of their Worthington friends over the years. Five years ago, when Hurricane Harvey's winds whipped through Cuero, Worthington's residents sent a tractor trailer loaded with essentials, including bottled water and cleaning supplies, to our community.

So at Turkeyfest this year, October 7–9, we will again relish gathering with friends, family and visitors. We'll enjoy cool beverages, good food and all kinds of fun activities. And we'll treasure our bond with that faraway town up north.

It's true: Birds of a feather do flock together. ■

Not for the Birds

Trotting turkeys—and so much more—unite towns separated by a thousand miles

BY CAYTLYN PHILLIPS

AMID THE PASTURES on the main road between San Antonio and the Gulf Coast sits the turkey-centric town of Cuero.

Its long history with the fowl dates back to 1908, when its first turkey processing plant opened. Crowds flocked to witness farmers parade their poultry down the streets, and the town seized the opportunity, dubbing it the Turkey Trot. The first one occurred in 1912, and they continued intermittently into the 1970s.

Fifty years ago this month, the Turkey Trot shifted to a four-day festival known as Turkeyfest. No longer did thousands of turkeys march down Main Street. Instead, Cuero partnered with rival turkey town Worthington, Minnesota, and they jointly decided an annual turkey race was the best way to determine the

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