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ENDURANCE CHALLENGES

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September 2021



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Texas Tech University's long-awaited veterinary school begins mission of bolstering rural communities.

*By Chris Burrows
Photos by Dave Shafer*

Current Events His Way

When West Hansen needs an escape from society, he just goes with the flow.

*By Pam LeBlanc
Photos by Erich Schlegel*

ON THE COVER

Paris veterinarian Wally Kraft with his sons—Jack, left, who is in veterinary school at Oklahoma State University, and Trey, also a vet.

Photo by Dave Shafer

ABOVE

West Hansen negotiates boulders in the Rio Gashan in Peru.

Photo by Erich Schlegel

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Ocean Currents

UNDERWATER VOLCANOES generate so much energy that they could power entire continents. But there's a catch, say the British scientists researching such eruptions.

"I would say there is effectively zero chance of capturing the energy for all sorts of reasons, such as we don't know when or where the eruptions will happen, very tricky to access, etc.," volcanologist David Ferguson, of the University of Leeds, told Vice. "The point of the comparison was really just to illustrate how powerful/energetic these things are."



"I never think of the future. It comes soon enough."

—ALBERT EINSTEIN

FINISH THIS SENTENCE

THE SWEETEST SOUND IN THE WORLD IS ...

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. Below are some of the responses to our July prompt: **I should have paid more attention ...**

To my mother's way of preparing hearty and flavorful meals with simple ingredients on a shoestring budget for our family of seven.

DEBORA MARINO
UNITED COOPERATIVE SERVICES
KOPPERL

To my retirement 30 years beforehand.

THOMAS ALAN MOORE
VIA FACEBOOK

To my parents telling me to enjoy childhood because once you're an adult, you're an adult FOREVER.

KAY RAY
VIA FACEBOOK

To the fine print.

GARY L. GALLOWAY
TRI-COUNTY EC
WEATHERFORD

When he said "sign here" at the draft board.

ED FAHSOLTZ
VIA FACEBOOK

To see more responses, read Currents online.



STEP UP TO SAFETY

Aluminum ladders can conduct electricity and so can nonmetallic fiberglass ladders when they're dirty or wet. When working outdoors with a ladder, keep it at least 10 feet away from power lines and always carry it horizontally to avoid hitting a line.



Earliest Inconvenience

ON HIS PREGNANT WIFE'S BIRTHDAY last year, Casey Walls wasn't celebrating. Instead, the Wood County Electric Cooperative lineworker was packing his bags August 28, preparing for long days of hard work after Hurricane Laura left tens of thousands of East Texas electric cooperative members in the dark.

Walls wasn't worried either because Shea wasn't due until November.

But around 5 a.m. about four days into his trip, Walls was awakened by his cellphone, which showed dozens of missed calls. His father was on the line. Shea had gone into labor hours earlier. Walls rushed to Tyler, where Shea gave birth just 20 minutes after he arrived.

Twins Braxten, above left, and Casen celebrate their first birthdays September 1.



TCP Contests and More

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Fungi to the Rescue

Don't ever underestimate the power of a fungus, the extraordinarily versatile life-form that produces mushrooms. Fungi can be trained to eat cigarette butts, used diapers, oil spills and even radiation.



More About McVea

Groundbreaking Cougar [Currents, July 2021] reminded me of a game Warren McVea played in 1963. San Antonio Brackenridge faced crosstown Robert E. Lee in one of the most entertaining high school football games ever played. My dad and I watched it together at Alamo Stadium.

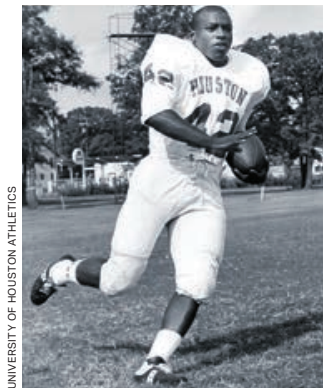
It had two of the most explosive running backs in the country, McVea and Lee's Linus Baer. Each team scored just about every time they got the football—McVea dancing and speeding around Lee defenders, and Baer running through and over Brackenridge defenders. Lee won, 55-48.

Rick Covington
Pedernales EC
Cedar Park



I loved the story and the illustration [Parent Imperfect, June 2021]. Martha Deeringer wrote a wonderful tribute to her father while also reminding us to forgive ourselves for having once been teenagers embarrassed by a parent or grandparent.

LINDA PIAZZA
VIA FACEBOOK



UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON ATHLETICS

An Unlikely Blueprint

“Your story of John S. Chase is about the kind of man whose can-do spirit is so lacking in society today.”

DANIEL SVETLIK
PEDERNALES EC
VICTORIA

Slice of Heaven

We agree Dala Burk's Tangy Tomato Slices [June 2021] are a winner.

We used Big Beef tomatoes, Texas 1015 onions, fresh basil and parsley—all grown in our garden.

We read *Texas Co-op Power's* recipes enthusiastically every issue and have for the past 25 years. However, we had never made any of them. But with a counter full of tomatoes from the garden this year, we couldn't resist.

We could not wait for the dish to marinate in the refrigerator and had to try it once done. OMG!

Marilynn Schmidt
Bluebonnet EC
Somerville

Minor Typo, Major Figure

Chet Garner's article about the funeral museum was interesting, but I need to correct one thing [A *Serious Undertaking*, July 2021]. The millions of Catholics in Texas will know that we buried our beloved Pope John Paul II. We haven't had a III yet.

Theresa Phinney
Bryan Texas Utilities
College Station

TCP WRITE TO US

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

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Paris veterinarian Wally Kraft, with help from his son Jack, wraps a quick-set cast on a horse. OPPOSITE As Texas Tech University graduates new vets, relief from long workdays could be on the horizon for rural vets like the Krafts.

Texas Tech University's long-awaited veterinary school begins mission of bolstering rural communities

Second to *None*



BY CHRIS BURROWS • PHOTOS BY DAVE SHAFER

Bethany Solomon Schilling still cringes when she hears the ring tone. The ring tone that years ago interrupted dinners, events and sleep to let her know there was an emergency at one of the Central Texas clinics where she worked as a veterinarian.

She grew up surrounded by animals on a ranch and earned a scholarship to help pay for her veterinary schooling. The field combined everything she loved: science, medicine and agriculture.

But then Solomon Schilling went to work caring for animals at those clinics in Lockhart and Luling, where workweeks ran into weekends and that ring tone stretched workdays into nights. Gone were the “referral zebras” of her university’s teaching hospital, she said, replaced by the everyday rigors of mixed-animal veterinary medicine, where demand far outpaces supply in many parts of Texas, leading to burnout among vets.

“At some point you think, ‘Is this sustainable?’” Solomon Schilling said. She and her husband were trying to start a

family, but working 50–60 hours a week made that a challenge. “I was like, ‘If we go into rural practice, we are never going to have a life.’”

Solomon Schilling and 31 other faculty members began reshaping that reality in August, when they welcomed the inaugural class to the Texas Tech University School of Veterinary Medicine in Amarillo—Texas’ first new vet school in more than a century. Decades in the making, Tech established

the school with the specific intent of recruiting passionate students from small towns and forming them into career-ready practitioners prepared to help address the shortage of veterinarians, especially in rural Texas.

“There’s a high demand in Texas, but it’s not being met in these rural communities where we need them,” said Clayton Cobb, another professor. “That’s where Tech comes in.”

Texas counts 6,600 practicing veterinarians but needs 1,300 more to reach the national average for the state’s population, according to Tech. Fewer than 200 of those vets work exclusively on livestock in rural parts of the state that has nearly double the number of cattle of any other state and hundreds of thousands more horses and almost a million more goats than any other state.

But many Texas vets say a new veterinary school—especially one focused on rural students and underserved communities—is long overdue.

“If you’re going to select all the kids out of Houston, Dallas and places like that, you’ve got very little hope of getting very many of those to ever go out past those metropolitan areas,” said Kynan Sturgess, a Panhandle veterinarian whose clinic is



served by Deaf Smith Electric Cooperative. “They didn’t grow up around farming and ranching; there’s no guarantee they’re going to stick around. But you’ve got a lot better shot of taking a kid from Dimmitt, Texas, and maybe expecting him to go back to some area like that.”

Sturgess is one of just four veterinarians permanently based in Deaf Smith County, where more than 600,000 cattle outnumber humans about 33 to 1. The Panhandle has the highest density of cattle in the country, but three veterinary schools in three other states are closer than Texas’ only other vet school—at Texas A&M University.

Sturgess has had to advertise openings at his Hereford clinic in other states—one reason he’s advocated for a school like Tech’s for years.

“The whole state, from a rural standpoint, is having problems,” he said. “I have colleagues all over the state that are constantly looking for somebody.”

About 40% of Texas’ working vets earned their degree outside the state; the rest went through Texas A&M University’s College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences—founded in 1916 and one of the best and largest vet schools in the nation.

As the second school in the state, Tech has the advantage of a specialized focus. “We don’t have to cater to everybody,” Cobb said.

Cobb grew up on a ranch in Northeast Texas and as an

‘A slow day is kind of unusual. We pretty much have to take care of everybody who walks in the front door. If you don’t love it, you’re not going to do it.’

undergraduate at Tech about 20 years ago, he advocated for a veterinary program before moving on to vet school at A&M. So when he heard about the Legislature including just that in the state’s 2019 budget, allocating \$17.35 million in operational support for the program (which donors supplemented with \$90 million for construction costs), he was thrilled. Then he got the call to come work there.

“When they said, ‘We’d like to extend you an offer. When do you think you could start?’ I told them, ‘Six hours and 36 minutes. Give me time to get there. We are starting today,’” Cobb said.

With firsthand experience in rural animal care, Cobb has tremendous respect for those who do it—and especially for Wally Kraft, his childhood vet, who still treats animals of all sizes at his Paris clinic.

“A slow day is kind of unusual,” said Kraft, 76, a member of Lamar Electric, who still pulls calves, sews up horses,



LEFT Kraft, assisted by vet tech Emily Odell, removes a benign tumor from a Doberman pinscher. BELOW In August, Texas Tech welcomed the first 64 students to its Amarillo campus—the 33rd veterinary school in the country.



“If you want to go into dairy, we’ll send you to dairies. If you want to go into feedlots, we’ll send you to feedlots,” Cobb said. It’s a way to immerse students in the life and lifestyle of rural animal care, preparing them for the everyday rigors and rewards of the job.

That’s part of what Solomon Schilling was missing from her own vet school experience.

“I felt very prepared intellectually but not for things that I saw day in and day out,” she said. “Communication, training, interpersonal relations, stress management, work-life balance, financial management ... things like that are the reasons people leave the profession or leave practice. It’s not the medicine that runs them off.”

Tech’s model aims to turn out confident, competent vets who are ready for that late-night phone call—because they’ve already experienced it.

“When you’re at a teaching hospital, certain services will only see a handful of patients a day, whereas in a very busy private practice, you can see 25, 30 patients a day per doctor,” Solomon Schilling said. “It’s a lot more volume and a lot more exposure.”

The 64 students who comprise Tech’s first class started their studies in Amarillo at the newly completed School of Veterinary Medicine, which houses 185,000 square feet of labs, offices and classrooms. A large-animal clinical

skills facility is about 2 miles northwest.

Access to the state-of-the-art facility won’t cost the class of 2025 as much as some schools. The average in-state veterinary medicine degree costs more than \$200,000, according to the VIN Foundation, but Tech students will pay \$88,000 for tuition (plus more for books and supplies). The hope is that saddling vets with less debt will allow them to work wherever they’re needed.

“A lot of people think we’re just raising country vets to work cows,” Cobb said. “That is not true at all. We could graduate our first four classes of veterinarians and send them all to El Paso and Laredo, and they would still be underserved communities.

“The people in those clinics and those communities out there are in desperate need. Nobody is really looking at them and trying to help them. That’s exactly the point of what we’re doing.” ■

and vaccinates and treats more and more dogs and cats as the Metroplex creeps toward the country. “We pretty much have to take care of everybody who walks in the front door. If you don’t love it, you’re not going to do it.”

Two of Kraft’s veterinarian sons are on their way to one day taking over his practice, but most of Texas’ aging vets don’t have that kind of security—even while demand swells. Texas added 4 million people since 2010—more than any other state—according to census data, but 41% of vets in rural Texas are older than 60.

“Everything has grown,” Sturgess said. “I’ve taken on more feedlots; I’ve got more horse clients and way more small animal clients.”

Tech is hoping to stem that tide using what it calls a distributed veterinary learning community to turn out well-rounded, practice-ready generalists. Unlike traditional vet schools like A&M, where fourth-year vet students practice at a teaching hospital, Tech students will do 4- to 6-week rotations at private practices across the state in their final year.

TCP WEB EXTRA See a timeline of veterinary education in Texas.

Current Events **His Way**

RIGHT Austin adventurer West Hansen at the San Marcos River. BELOW Hansen, right, and a guide navigate Mantaro River rapids in Peru. OPPOSITE Hansen makes a satellite phone call after his team's raft flipped in white water.



When **West Hansen** needs an escape from society, he just goes with the flow

BY PAM LEBLANC • PHOTOS BY ERICH SCHLEGEL



n a warm fall afternoon,

West Hansen glides a sleek, narrow racing canoe beneath a row of towering cypress trees on the San Marcos River.

He dips in a paddle, steers nimbly around a partially submerged log, then rides a riffle of blue-green water over a natural rock spillway as he makes his way from the tiny town of Martindale to the even tinier community of Staples, downstream from San Marcos.

The 6-mile, leisurely cruise takes less than two hours—barely a blip on the odometer for Hansen, 59, an endurance paddler who led an expedition 4,200 miles down the entire Amazon River in 2012 and paddled 2,100 miles down the Volga River in Russia two years later. As he pulls ashore, he tips back his cowboy hat—a trademark piece of attire for the leader of the Arctic Cowboys, who next year plan to become the first paddlers to kayak 1,900 miles through the Northwest Passage in the Arctic Archipelago.

“As our world has gotten busier and technology has evolved and we have 24/7 news cycles, it’s nice to get away,” he says.

Hansen, a social worker who helps seniors navigate the ins and outs of health care through his family’s home health care business in Port Arthur, is opinionated and bull-headed, traits that serve him well as an expedition leader. He tucks a notepad and pen in his front pocket, scribbling thoughts wherever he goes. In 2018 he ran unsuccessfully for U.S. Congress in the 25th district of Texas and won’t rule out the possibility of running again.

Hansen started paddling in the early 1980s when he took a whitewater kayaking class at what was then Southwest Texas State University. A few years later, he learned about the Texas Water Safari, a 260-mile paddling race from San Marcos to Seadrift on the Texas coast. Since then he’s finished the event—during which sleep-deprived paddlers navigate rapids, drag their boats over bobbing logjams, endure heat and exhaustion, and dodge alligators—21 times. He is also a

four-time winner of a 340-mile paddling race down the swift Missouri River. He endures miseries like chafing, sucking mud, nausea and biting insects, he says, because he enjoys the camaraderie and the escape from modern life.

“In every race, I think about quitting, even the ones I’ve won,” he says. “But I know how bad it’ll feel to pull out.”

Hansen funds his trips through donations and hard work, taking on odd carpentry jobs on weekends and raising money through his nonprofit organization, Worldwide Waterways.

In 2008, Hansen, who lives in Austin with his wife, Lizet, traveled to Iquitos, Peru, for the Great River Amazon Raft Race, where teams use eight 16-foot balsa logs to build a raft and sprint nearly 100 miles. Until that year, competitors lined all their logs side by side to make a wide raft. Hansen’s team instead spliced two rows of logs end to end. They won and set an overall record of 12 hours and 19 minutes.

More importantly, Hansen was hooked.

“The [Amazon] river really is the biggest river on the planet. It’s shocking to see that amount of anything in motion,” he says. “It was just so powerful, and it really moved me.”

On the flight home, one of his race partners lent him Joe Kane’s book, *Running the Amazon*. “Before I got back to Houston, I had pretty much read the entire thing,” he says. “By the time I landed in Austin, I thought, ‘OK, I can do this. I can paddle the entire Amazon River.’”

Hansen spent the next few years researching the river and lining up sponsors. He made a scouting trip to Peru in 2011. In 2012 he launched his expedition—the first to paddle the Amazon from a newly determined source high in the Andes Mountains to the sea. His wife and daughter, Isabella, who graduated from Georgetown University last spring, traveled there to watch for a few days.

“It’s very shallow, just a stream [at the start],” he said. “A lot of times we had to get out and drag our boats. A lot of times we were in whiteout snow conditions.”

Hansen wrote a book about the experience, *The Amazon From Source to Sea: The Farthest Journey Down the World’s Longest River*, which details the 111-day adventure, including the day they spotted a sloth swimming across the river and other days when they saw frolicking pink dolphins. They were held at gunpoint five times, discovered floating bales of marijuana and dodged boulders as big as refrigerators that rained from canyon walls where crews were building a dam.

Longtime friend Jeff Wueste was part of the Amazon team and Hansen’s only partner on the Volga trek. They met in 1992 and have teamed up for the Texas Water Safari several times. Wueste, who will paddle the Northwest Passage with the Arctic Cowboys, describes Hansen as determined and well prepared, someone who does the due diligence needed to accomplish big things.

'I love to be far away from everybody and the stimulus that's constantly coming at us.'



"He's good to the core," Wueste says. "Ultimately, he's driven to an end goal. But as many expedition leaders are, they're as egotistical as they can be. You're not going to find any wallflowers leading expeditions."

When the originally planned trip through the Northwest Passage in 2020 was postponed because of the pandemic, Hansen and four others set out to paddle 420 miles up the Texas coast instead.

They started at the state's sandy tail on South Padre Island and chugged to its refinery-studded tip at the Louisiana border, enduring tent-wrecking storms, campsites covered in enough ooze to host a mud-wrestling competition and swells so big they lost sight of one another. Their fingernails grew soggy and loose, and they labored to find a proper rhythm,



but they also paddled alongside pods of dolphins; pitched tents on small barrier islands covered in lush, lime-colored grass; and watched serene sunrises and sunsets.

When they finally pulled their 18-foot Epic sea kayaks ashore at Walter Umphrey State Park in Port Arthur, Hansen announced: "Well, that's done."

Underwater explorer and filmmaker Nancy McGee, who knows Hansen through the Explorers Club, a global organization whose members include astronauts, mountain climbers and aviators, describes him as the epitome of the 21st-century explorer.

"His goals are the stuff of dreams," she says, adding that he "has helped create a deeper understanding of the cultures he has encountered and the physical geography he has mastered."

For Hansen, who is already working on a second book, which will detail a history of Amazon expeditions, those accomplishments are only part of the motivation to explore.

"I love to be far away from everybody and the stimulus that's constantly coming at us," Hansen says. "I like doing things that haven't been done before, and that list is getting smaller and smaller." ■

ABOVE Hansen paddles down the Mantaro River. LEFT Hansen cruises the San Marcos River with author Pam LeBlanc.

TCP WEB EXTRA Check out more photos from West Hansen's 2012 Amazon River expedition.

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MESSAGE
FROM
GENERAL
MANAGER

ALAN
LESLEY

A Labor of Love

EACH SEPTEMBER we celebrate Labor Day, a national tribute to the contributions American workers make to the strength and prosperity of our country.

The word labor is defined as an expenditure of physical or mental effort, especially when difficult or compulsory. That definition is not lost on the employees of CECA. When the lights go off—whether due to thunderstorms, wildfires, hurricanes or ice storms—our lineworkers leave their families to work tirelessly in harsh and dangerous conditions to restore your power. Other employees handle your phone calls and dispatch crews to get electricity flowing to your home as quickly and safely as possible.

But that doesn't mean the job is a laborious punishment. It's a labor of love.

When the weather goes awry and the calls come in, employees who were safe at home often call in to see if there's anything they can do to help. We've had customer service representatives simply show up to help answer members' calls during a crisis. This is because they care about what they do. They care about the membership. And nothing is more important than making sure that every member is safe and sound—with the power humming—even during inclement weather.

And it's not just when the lights are off that our employees are working hard. Their dedication is evident every day.

Our lineworkers go through extensive training to ensure their safety and that of their fellow crew members. Our office staff is also trained to stay safe around electricity, and this, in turn, helps ensure your safety. CECA is always here to educate you about the dangers of electricity, and, through *Texas Co-op Power* and other avenues, we pass along tips to help keep you safe and save you money by making energy-conscious decisions.

We don't do this because it's our job. We do it because we care about you, our members, who are our friends, family and neighbors.

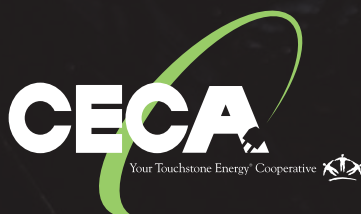
Today I want to ask you, our member-owners, to thank a co-op employee if you see one. Thank them for their commitment, their talent, their hard work and their service to the membership of this cooperative. After all, even though our offices will be closed for Labor Day on September 6, if your power goes out, we'll be on our way to fix it, holiday or no holiday. ■

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Granting Wishes

BY MAEGAN CAFFEY

*BILLIONPHOTOS/SHUTTERSTOCK

MANY OF US FREQUENTED a public library in our younger days and knew the routine—walk in, find your books and leave. You knew you had to return your haul in two weeks, and the cycle would continue. If you had to do a school project, maybe you threw in some computer time as well. It was the perfect resource for all your needs back then, but as time has passed, perhaps your days of library patronage have, too.

Eastland Centennial Memorial Library has spent 120 years working to remain a valuable resource for the residents of Eastland and surrounding areas. The library was founded in 1901 by the Thursday Afternoon Club, a civic league made up of some 200 local women, according to Kathy Druesedow, an ECML librarian. After creating and building a hospital in Eastland, the group turned its focus to education. The library was formed to serve the community, becoming incorporated, or an official library, by 1916.

The library first operated out of the home of Mrs. J.H. Johnson, later known as the mother of the library. Over the years, the library moved to several other locations, including

one spot that I couldn't wrap my mind around: Eastland Centennial Memorial Library is perhaps the only known library to have been housed in a restroom, at Eastland City Hall in the 1920s.

Fortunately for everyone, that situation didn't last too long. After subsequent moves, the Thursday Afternoon Club raised enough money to purchase the library's current building in the 1970s. After many years of hard work and

fundraising, the group paid off the building's mortgage.

The library is still owned by the Thursday Afternoon Club, which is now known as the Library Club. Most libraries in Texas are owned by a city or county. In fact, the only way for a library to receive accreditation is through the fiscal support of its community. In other words, a city or county must financially contribute to a library for it to be accredited.

From an outsider's perspective, that might not seem like an important distinction, but for a rural community, it can be a matter of survival. A library must be accredited to qualify for grants.



The Thursday Afternoon Club purchased this building in the 1970s. The Eastland Centennial Memorial Library has resided here ever since.



Grants can only be used to purchase new library resources. The money cannot be used toward a library's operating budget. When the time came to become accredited and apply for grants, the city of Eastland began making a monthly contribution toward the library's operating budget. The library is still owned and operated by the Library Club, but it's able to do much more with the city's help. Since February 2019, the library has been awarded \$44,905 in grants.

As Druesedow and the president of the library's board, Clint Coffee, put it, the library operates on a shoestring budget. While the grants Druesedow has worked so hard to secure might make it appear otherwise, the amount garnered so far doesn't hold a candle to what the library needs to continue to be a trusted resource for the community.

The original mission of the library was to provide a safe haven for education in the community its founders loved so dearly. They wanted to see the library grow into what it is now becoming, but that growth requires money—meaning more grant applications and greater dependence on community support.

When thinking about how many kids in our communities are without basic necessities, much less books and other educational tools, it puts in perspective how important a library really is.

"I grew up as a kid in the library mainly because our house didn't have air conditioning and the library did. So that was a big part of it," Coffee said. "But after a while, it's like as long as I'm here, I might as well read."

Druesedow attended an academy to learn how to success-

fully write grant proposals. With that knowledge, she secured a \$25,000 grant through the Institute of Museum and Library Services and the Texas State Library and Archives Commission. Those funds went toward new computers for the library's computer lab, robots, laptops, digital arts programs and a printer.

The robots and digital arts programs often steal the show.



The Institute of Museum and Library Services and Texas State Library Archives Commission awarded a \$25,000 grant to Eastland Centennial Memorial Library in 2019.



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The library now has nearly 50 robots that students can learn to program through special classes that are six weeks long. Depending on the robot, digital arts and robotics students may work together.

“The robotics [group] built a car out of cardboard, and then put [the robotics] together to make the car go,” Druesedow said. “The art students designed the decoration for the cars, so they put the skin on the cars. So that was their work together thing. So by the time they got the car built, they had all the stuff to decorate the car.”

Not only are students learning how to build, code and design robots at the library, they’re learning to work together. Snafus with technology and mechanics present opportunities for class participants to navigate solutions. For example, the cardboard car only had two wheels, so students had to collaborate to figure out how to position all parts to ensure the car would drive. They were able to successfully build a remote-controlled car by working together.



Laney Scitern, front, and Brooke Scott program the Dash robot to play a song on a xylophone.

Participating students acquire skills that might put them in a more competitive position when they begin to look for jobs—skills that aren’t always taught in school or at home.

Athletics, band and theater are offered in most schools, but there are a lot of kids whose interests don’t fall into those categories. Druesedow wanted to bring something into Eastland to bridge that gap. She thought about herself and what her own family would have been interested in. From there, the idea for the robotics and digital arts classes formed.

In 2019 the library received a \$25,000 grant for four six-week classes. The staff would host a program for six weeks, take a month or two off to learn another robot, then offer another six-week class. “We got three rounds of four in before COVID hit,” Druesedow said. All plans then came to a halt. COVID-19 safety protocols implemented by the library made it nearly impossible to operate.

While the state does not dictate what this particular library has to do, the library’s leadership tries to operate according to what the state recommends. The guidance at the time was not only for people to quarantine but for books and other library resources to as well. The ECML had to let books and anything else people touched quarantine for a week before another person could access them.

“You could come in and just see the tops of our shelves

covered with open books airing,” Druesedow said, pointing to the shelves. The library’s robots would have been subject to the same precautions. Not to mention, the library’s educational programs required close contact, teamwork and multiple students sharing a multitude of items, so there was no way to safely conduct the classes without going against recommended protocols.

The pandemic not only changed the daily procedures of the library, it also presented a safety and health concern for members of the Library Club. “They’re all in their 70s, 80s, 90s,” Druesedow said. “So in October, they decided to let other people from the city be on the board.”

Times have changed since the Thursday Afternoon Club was established. Two incomes are now typically required to make ends meet, leaving less free time for most people to join social clubs or organizations. In October 2020 the Library Club opened up its board to the citizens of Eastland. Members of the community have since stepped up to fill all but one of the spots. The club still owns the library, but it is now run by the community board.

As pandemic restrictions are loosening in Texas, the board and Druesedow are looking at reinstating the programs that were paused. The team will choose a robot to focus on, learn about it and then announce the opening of a class. There are limited spots available depending on each robot, so interested participants should be sure to lock in a spot for their child by signing up for the program. At any point before then, robots are accessible by library patrons individually, as long as a parent or guardian is present.

Druesedow has applied for a \$10,000 technology grant that will hopefully materialize in September. The library put out a survey asking the community to rank five or six priori-



Digital arts students work on a claymation project.

ties for the library. All the current seating is outdated, unin-
viting and downright uncomfortable, so not surprisingly,
new chairs were the No. 1 requested item.

If all goes according to plan, they will be adding all the
most requested items to the library. Druesedow has found
comfortable chairs with charging ports so visitors to the
library can read and work in a safe environment while stay-
ing connected. The second-most requested item was a new
copy machine. The current one is severely lacking in capabil-
ity, so it will be replaced
with a copier that can
print different sizes and
in color. The third-most
requested item was a 3D
printer.

Some might won-
der why a small-town
library needs a 3D
printer. It's simple: It's
another resource for
the community. Just
like in the days when
computers weren't in
every household, it
didn't mean that most
households wouldn't
benefit from one. As
technology advances,
school projects and
requirements will too.
By getting ahead of the
curve, the citizens of Eastland will be
better equipped for the future.

Druesedow wants the best for her community and isn't
alone in prioritizing its children and residents. The Eastland
Independent School District has become a resource for the

library, with high school art students decorating the chil-
dren's area and teachers loaning the library their own class-
room resources when Druesedow and her staff needed help.
Educators have also volunteered to be guest speakers and
teach when needed.

With the help of the community, the Eastland Centennial
Memorial Library might soon become a resource beyond the
city's boundaries. All that it's been able to accomplish, on
a shoestring budget, is a testament to the community as a

whole. "It's just neighbors
helping neighbors" is a
common refrain in Co-op
Country—a refrain that
Eastland embodies. Druese-
dow has likely eclipsed the
Thursday Afternoon Club's
hopes and dreams for the
library—outside of the
restroom at that!

Be sure to stop by East-
land Centennial Memorial
Library to see all they have
to offer. Library cards are
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physical books inside the
library, as well as e-books
and audiobooks offered
through a smartphone app.
If you would like to learn
more about how you can
make a donation or get

involved with any upcoming programs,
contact Kathy Druesedow at (254) 629-

2281 or visit the library in person at 210 S. Lamar St. in East-
land. It is open 10 a.m.–6 p.m. Tuesday–Thursday. ■



A 3D printer similar to one Eastland Centennial
Memorial Library will acquire.



A few of the robotics materials offered at the library.

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Labor Day

Monday, September 6
Our offices will be closed in observance of the holiday.

Patriot Day

Saturday, September 11

National Hunting and Fishing Day

Saturday, September 25



Classroom Teacher Grants Available

CECA's Operation Round-Up board is offering grants to help teachers with classroom projects and educational field trips. The program is sponsored by the membership of CECA through Operation Round-Up.

Any K-12 teacher whose school or community is served by CECA or whose students' homes are served by CECA can apply. An eligible project, educational tool or field trip should offer students an expanded learning opportunity that complements and reinforces classroom study.

Qualifying school districts are Albany, Baird, Bangs, Blanket, Breckenridge, Brownwood, Cisco, Comanche, Cross Plains, De Leon, Early, Eastland, Goldthwaite, Gorman, Gustine, Hamilton, May, Moran, Mullin, Priddy, Ranger, Rising Star, Sidney and Zephyr.

Applications and program details can be found on our website, cecacoop, under the Youth Opportunities tab. The deadline for entries is December 31. If you have questions, call 1-800-915-2533 or email memberservices@cecacoop.

**Deadline to apply is
December 31.**



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Student Leadership Conference

CECA is looking for high school juniors with strong leadership skills to attend the 2021 Student Leadership Conference, November 17 at the Texas 4-H Conference Center in Lake Brownwood.

The purpose of the conference is to introduce high school students to aspects of leadership and strategies that will propel them to greater leadership roles and to enhance those skills through hands-on activities, speaking opportunities and fun-filled events. Participants are mentored by local leaders.

Students from the following schools are eligible to apply:

Albany, Baird, Bangs, Blanket, Breckenridge, Brownwood, Cisco, Comanche, Cross Plains, De Leon, Dublin, Early, Eastland, Goldthwaite, Gorman, Gustine, May, Moran, Mullin, Priddy, Ranger, Rising Star, Sidney and Zephyr.

For more information visit our website at www.ceca.coop, or contact Maegan at 1-800-915-2533 or memberservices@ceca.coop.

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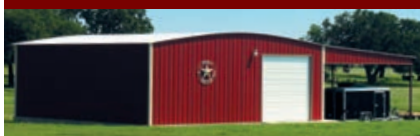
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France's Beef? Pigs

Ill-mannered hogs ruin France's attempt at a relationship with the newly independent Texas

BY W.F. STRONG • ILLUSTRATION BY MOLLOY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

AFTER SECURING independence at San Jacinto, Texas was an independent country but one with no money and a shaky government. With no military force to secure its vast territory, Texas needed friends on the international stage and needed them quickly.

Texas turned first to the United States. Just months earlier, Stephen F. Austin had written, "We ought to get united to the United States as soon as possible."

Though the U.S. was not ready to pursue annexation, it was the first country to formally recognize the new sovereign nation. Congress made that move because it feared Britain or France might gain an inside track to the wealth of Texas.

The next country to recognize Texas

was France. A commercial treaty was signed September 25, 182 years ago, and it established import duties on Texas cotton in France and reduced import duties on French wines, brandies and silks in Texas ports. The French Legation was opened in Austin, and the Texas Legation was opened in Paris.

This recognition from France was of enormous significance because most European countries saw the Texas Revolution as internal unrest within Mexico and believed that Santa Anna might crush the rebellion and reclaim the wayward state.

Once recognized internationally, Texas needed support for its banking system. In 1841, Gen. James Hamilton, the Texas commissioner of loans, walked

into a French minister's office in Paris and asked for a \$5 million loan. The minister asked if he had any collateral, and the Texan said, "a territory as big as the kingdom of France."

At the time Texas was actually about 50% larger than France. It looked like this loan would sail through the French bureaucracy. Then some Texas pigs caused an international incident.

Back in Austin, hogs owned by the innkeeper Richard Bullock wandered onto the grounds of the French Legation and ate corn in the stable, tore up gardens and invaded the house. Dubois de Saligny, the chargé d'affaires of the legation, ordered his servant to shoot the pigs. An outraged Bullock wanted Saligny arrested, but Saligny claimed diplomatic immunity.

Bullock caught the servant outside the legation, beat him up and threatened to do the same to Saligny. The Frenchman cut off diplomatic relations with Texas before traveling to New Orleans. A year later, he returned to his post, but the pig war had effectively killed the loan.

Even so, Saligny's glowing reports of the unfathomable wealth and prosperity for which Texas was destined fueled France's interest in the nation.

By keeping close ties with Texas, France wanted to make a grab at the last foothold available for it in North America. Negotiations for a French colonization and stationing of 30,000 French troops along the Texas frontier continued unconsummated until Texas was annexed by the U.S. in 1845.

France sacked Saligny for his ineptitude, and the trouble was all traced back to those pigs. As one French minister said of Saligny, "We can make mistakes, but we can't afford to look ridiculous." ■

Sweet Potatoes

Traditional holiday staple proves plenty versatile—from waffles to brownies

BY MEGAN MYERS, FOOD EDITOR

Sweet potatoes are an ingredient that doesn't often get much love outside of the holidays, but these versatile spuds deserve a spot in your regular rotation. I try to make them at least once a week, changing up the preparation to keep my family from having dish fatigue. Mashed sweet potatoes are a great preparation, but we tend to have lots of leftovers each time. Enter sweet potato waffles, a lightly spiced way to brighten up any weekend breakfast.

Sweet Potato Waffles

2 cups flour
¼ cup packed dark brown sugar
2 teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon cinnamon
½ teaspoon ground ginger
¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg
1½ cups milk
1 cup mashed sweet potatoes
¼ cup vegetable oil
2 eggs
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
Spray oil, as needed

COOK'S TIP If you don't have a waffle maker, this recipe works beautifully for pancakes too.

1. In a large bowl, combine flour, brown sugar, baking powder, baking soda, salt, cinnamon, ginger and nutmeg.
2. In another bowl, whisk together milk, sweet potatoes, oil, eggs and vanilla until smooth.
3. Pour wet mixture into dry and stir until completely incorporated and no dry bits remain.
4. Preheat your waffle maker. Once hot, spray cooking plates with oil if needed, then scoop batter onto plates, close and cook according to the manufacturer's instructions. Keep waffles warm on a sheet pan in an oven set to low heat while you repeat with remaining batter.

SERVES 4

TCP WEB EXTRA Follow along with Megan Myers and her adventures in the kitchen at stetted.com, where she features a recipe for Persimmon Sweet Potato Soup.





Oven-Roasted Sweet Potato Medley

BECKY POE
WOOD COUNTY EC

This easy side dish is excellent served with grilled proteins such as sausage or fish. Fresh cherry tomatoes added just before serving lend a pop of juicy sweetness, while the fresh jalapeño layers in heat.

- 1 pound sweet potatoes, cubed**
- 1 large poblano pepper, diced**
- 1 small red onion, cut into slivers**
- 1 cup cubed fresh pineapple, or 1 can (8 ounces) pineapple tidbits, drained**
- 2 tablespoons olive or avocado oil**
- Salt and pepper, to taste**
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh cilantro**
- 1 jalapeño pepper, seeded and minced**
- Juice of half a lime**
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes, quartered**

1. Place a 12-by-18-inch rimmed baking sheet in the oven and preheat to 425 degrees.
2. In a large bowl, combine sweet potatoes, poblano, onion and pineapple. Add oil, salt and pepper and stir well to coat. Remove baking sheet from oven. Spread sweet potato medley onto heated baking sheet and roast 25 minutes, stirring halfway through.
3. Remove pan from oven and stir in cilantro and jalapeño. Drizzle with lime juice, then add cherry tomatoes and season to taste.

SERVES 4

MORE RECIPES >



\$500 WINNER

Texas Turkey Hash

HEATHER CARPENTER
TAYLOR EC



Spicy with a bit of sweetness, this hash makes an excellent breakfast, brunch or even dinner. Carpenter created the dish based on a favorite at an Abilene restaurant, making a few healthy substitutions along the way. Serve with a poached or fried egg for a more complete meal.

SERVES 4

- 2 cups cubed sweet potatoes, or 20 ounces frozen sweet potato cubes**
- 1 onion, chopped**
- 2 cloves garlic, chopped**
- 2 jalapeño peppers, sliced**
- 1 teaspoon garlic salt**
- 4 tablespoons grapeseed or olive oil, divided use**
- 1 pound turkey breakfast sausage**
- 2 pinches crushed red pepper flakes (optional)**
- 2 tablespoons pure maple syrup**

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees.
2. Toss sweet potatoes, onion, garlic, jalapeños and garlic salt together with 2 tablespoons oil and spread onto a rimmed baking sheet. Roast in the oven 25–35 minutes or until fork-tender.
3. In a large skillet over medium heat, brown turkey sausage with red pepper flakes, if using. Transfer sausage to a bowl and set aside.
4. Using the same skillet, increase heat to medium high and add remaining oil and roasted vegetables. Add the maple syrup and stir once. Let potatoes cook, undisturbed, for a few minutes. Turn over a few pieces to check for browning; you want a crispy, brown potato.
5. Once potatoes are browned, stir in sausage and serve.

TCP \$500 Recipe Contest

PASTA DUE SEPTEMBER 10

From angel hair to ziti and manicotti to macaroni, pasta is a pantry staple. What's your prized dish? Enter at [TexasCoopPower.com/contests](https://www.texascooppower.com/contests) by September 10 for a chance to win \$500.



Volcanic Sweet Potato Brownies

KANINA HADEL
PENTEX ENERGY

These brownies will surprise everyone at the dessert table. Supremely fudgy and rich, they're excellent topped with a dollop of whipped cream. This recipe makes a large batch but can easily be halved.

3 pounds sweet potatoes
Butter, for the pan
2¾ cups (about 24 ounces) smooth almond butter
¾–¾ cup molasses or pure maple syrup
1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 cup cocoa powder
½ cup almond flour
1 tablespoon baking soda
1 teaspoon salt

COOK'S TIP For a less gooey brownie, refrigerate overnight before serving.

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees and place sweet potatoes on a rimmed baking sheet. Bake 50 minutes or until sweet potatoes are soft when pressed. Let cool.
2. Lower oven temperature to 350 degrees and butter a 9-by-13-inch pan.
3. In a large-capacity blender or food processor, purée sweet potatoes until smooth. Add almond butter and blend to mix well. Add molasses or maple syrup and vanilla and blend to mix.

4. In a medium bowl, stir together cocoa powder, almond flour, baking soda and salt. Add dry ingredients into sweet potato mixture and blend until uniform.

5. Pour batter into prepared pan and bake 40–45 minutes. Let cool completely before serving.

MAKES 32 BROWNIES

TCP WEB EXTRA We have more than 900 searchable recipes at TexasCoopPower.com, including a salad, casserole and stew that feature sweet potatoes. Just search for "sweet potatoes."

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COURTESY CHET GARNER

La Grange's Tribute

Monument Hill tomb honors Texans killed in two notable clashes

BY CHET GARNER

WE CELEBRATE THE Battle of San Jacinto as the grand finale of the Texas Revolution. In reality, the struggle was far from over in 1836. Mexico never officially ratified Gen. Antonio López de Santa Anna's treaty of surrender and made numerous attempts to retake Texas.

I tripped to the Central Texas town of La Grange to learn more about a group of men who gave their lives in the name of Texas sovereignty.

La Grange is a charming town with an impressive 19th-century courthouse and plenty of places to grab an authentic Czech kolach. I discovered the best views just south of the square, on a bluff overlooking the Colorado River. At this scenic spot sits the Monument Hill State Historic Site along with the ruins of the Kreische Brewery, one of the state's first commercial beer producers. I wasn't looking for a historic pint; I wanted to learn more about the stories that had intrigued me since childhood.

Just past the visitors center, I found an above-ground tomb and a 48-foot-tall shellstone obelisk engraved with the story of the men laid to rest here. Many were killed outside San Antonio in the 1842 Dawson Massacre, after Mexican forces had successfully retaken control of the city. Others were from the 1843 Mier expedition in Mexico. Known as the Black Bean episode, 176 captured Texans had to draw beans to determine their fates. Those who drew one of the 17 black beans immediately faced a firing squad.

In 1848 residents of La Grange exhumed the remains of the fallen men from both sites and reinterred them in a tomb on this bluff. Even Sam Houston attended the ceremony. I paused for a solemn moment. Looking out over the Texas landscape, I pondered the lives lost to claim Texas. ■

ABOVE Chet at the Kreische Brewery State Historic Site.

TCP WEB EXTRA Join Chet in his latest video, which takes in this site overlooking the Colorado River. See all his Texplorations on *The Daytripper* on PBS.

Know Before You Go

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

SEPTEMBER 09

Addison Vitruvian Nights Live: Bidi Bidi Banda, (972) 590-8866, udr.com/vitruvian-park/vitruvian-park-events

10

Fredericksburg [10-12] Fall Planting Days Kick-Off, 1-800-848-0078, wildseedfarms.com

11

Conroe American Cancer Society Relay For Life/Bark For Life, (936) 520-0718, relayforlife.org/mocotx

Luckenbach LuckenRod Car Show & Music Festival, (830) 997-3224, luckenbachtexas.com

New Braunfels Gruene 10K/5K, 1-877-806-3987, athleteguild.com

New Braunfels Lady A: What A Song Can Do Tour 2021, (830) 964-3800, whitewaterrocks.com

Gainesville [11-19] Gainesville Area Visual Arts Fall Art Exhibition, (940) 613-6939, gainesvilleareavisualarts.org

Palestine [11, 17-18, 24-25] Texas State Railroad Diesel Roundtrip, 1-855-632-7729, texasstaterailroad.net

16

New Braunfels Come and Taste It, (830) 606-0093, grapevineingruene.com

Grapevine [16-19] GrapeFest, 1-800-457-6338, grapevinetexasusa.com/grapefest

17

Grandview [17-19] Antique Alley Texas, (817) 666-5024, antiquealleytexas.com

Amarillo [17-25] Tri-State Fair and Rodeo, (806) 376-7767, tristatefair.com

18

Bay City Jason Anderson Memorial Golf Tournament, (979) 240-4575, jamgt.com

Blanco Classic Car Show, (512) 632-0648, blancoclassiccarshow.com

Bullard Wine on Main, (903) 894-4238, m6winery.com

Flower Mound Christ Child Fiesta, (972) 816-3862, christchildsfestdfw.org

Ponder Labor Day Roping, (940) 479-2043, dentoncountycowboychurch.org

Huntsville [18-19] Antique Show, (936) 661-2545, facebook.com/huntsvilleantiqueshow

New Braunfels [18-19] Old Gruene Market Days, (830) 832-1721, playinnewbraunfels.com

21

Kerrville [21-25] Paint Kerrville, (830) 895-2911, kacckerrville.com

24

Brenham Aaron Barker and Allen Shamblin, (979) 337-7240, thebarnhillcenter.com

Austin [24-25] Capital of Texas Vintage Postcard & Paper Show and Sale, (512) 775-6796, ctxpc.org

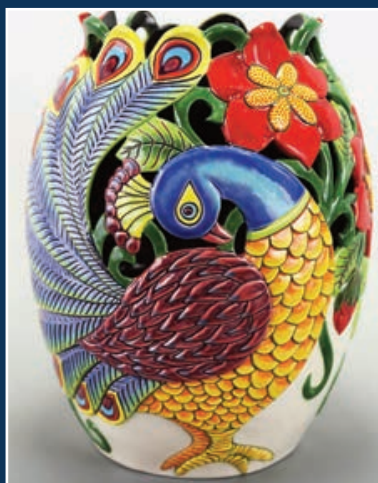
MORE EVENTS >

TCP Submit Your Event

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

Retreat... Relax in Kerrville

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txartsandcraftsfair.com



Kerrville Outdoor Painters Event
Sept 22-26
kacckerrville.com

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Event Calendar

Fairs, festivals, food and family fun! Pick your region. Pick your month. Pick your event.

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Pick of the Month

Leander Educational Excellence Foundation MUDstacle & Family Fun Run

Cedar Park, September 18
 (512) 570-0027
leef.tx.org/mudstacle

The name is a mouthful, and the event itself can be too if you're not careful. Participants pass through seven levels of a mud forest and a sea of swirly noodles and then walk the plank before reaching the finish line.

SEPTEMBER EVENTS CONTINUED

24

Galveston [24-25] Galveston Island Shrimp Festival, (409) 770-0999, galvestonislandshrimpfestival.com

Harper [24-25] Frontier Days Celebration, (830) 864-5048, harpercommunitypark.org

Victoria [24-25] Memories in the Making Quilt Show, (281) 506-8465, quiltguildvictoria.org

25

Lakehills Medina Lake Cajun Festival, (830) 460-0600, cajunfestival-medinalake.com

Mason Old Yeller Day, (325) 347-5758, masontxcoc.com

Paradise Main Street Festival, (940) 389-2654, paradisehistoricalsociety.org

Ingram [25-26] Texas Arts and Crafts Fair, (830) 367-5121, txartsandcraftsfair.com

26

Rosanky St. Mary of the Assumption Homecoming Festival, (512) 359-2448, stmarysp.church

30

New Braunfels [30-Oct. 2] Hollydays Market, (281) 788-4297, homefortheholidaysgiftmarket.com

OCTOBER

01

Arlington [1-3] Ramblin' Roads Music Festival, (817) 303-2800, ramblinroadsfest.com

Fredericksburg [1-3] Lone Star Gourd Festival, (512) 964-5540, texasgourdsociety.org

Fredericksburg [1-3] Oktoberfest, (830) 997-4810, oktoberfestinfbg.com

Georgetown [1-3] Popptoberfest, 1-800-436-8696, popptoberfest.georgetown.org

Kerrville [1-11] Kerrville Folk Festival, (830) 257-3600, kerrvillefolkfestival.org

02

Boerne Book and Arts Festival, (830) 249-3053, boernebookfest.com

DeKalb Oktoberfest, (903) 277-3519, facebook.com/dekalb.oktoberfest

Kerrville Kerr County 4-H Wild Game Dinner, (830) 257-6568, kerr.agrilife.org

Mason Mason County Republican Women's Home Tour, (325) 294-4016, masontxcoc.com

Rust and Decay

Some say it's better to wear out than to rust out. But our readers see more than an old rust bucket. We're nowhere near the Rust Belt, but just look at these beauties, weathered by the elements and taken over by nature.

BY GRACE FULTZ

CLOCKWISE FROM RIGHT

BRITNEY CASTILLO
CENTRAL TEXAS EC
Overgrown.

BETTY ALVARADO
COSERV

An old tractor near a city park in Round Rock.

KAY BELL
NUECES EC

"This car lies where it died,
and the desert is slowly
reclaiming the rusting hulk."

RAY LITTLE
KARNES EC
Granddaddy's Jeep.



Upcoming Contests

DUE SEP 10 Fired Up!

DUE OCT 10 Public Art

DUE NOV 10 The Texas Experience

Enter online at TexasCoopPower.com/contests.

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



Sowing Perspective

Getting outdoors grants long-awaited inner peace

BY BABS RODRIGUEZ
ILLUSTRATION BY MITCH BLUNT

LIKE SO MANY Americans, as I've gotten older and with grown and flown children, I've found myself filling my time with more hours of my "day" job. When the pandemic had me stuck at home, I almost never left my desk. It was as if I came to believe that my industry—manacled nouns to verbs—was needed to keep the world ticking on.

Meanwhile, the backyard I worked so hard to tame when I first bought my house was manicured by a crew of strangers and less and less often enjoyed by loved ones. After winter's brutal last blast, I decided it was time to change all of that. I forced myself to put my phone down, turn off the cable news channel and wander outside.

I found the dandelion digger, es-chewed gardening gloves and, for two hours, stretched my back, legs and

arms pulling and twisting handfuls of weeds from the beds of drought-resistant natives. I was grateful for the gentle surrender the damp, soft soil afforded. I spoke to the pink buds of my Mexican buckeye and welcomed back the desert willow while whispering words of encouragement to the freeze-traumatized American beautyberry.

I did not curse the agave when it stabbed me, and I took the time to salute the bright yellow dandelion blossoms and profusion of purple buds on the henbit. I apologized that they had to go and acknowledged that in another world or age or garden, they might be the stars. Being assigned the status of weed seems subjective, after all. "Clover," I said, "the luck is not yours today." It offered up no four-leaf rebuttal.

And when my labor was done, I sat in my most seasoned lawn chair and listened to the birds. I tilted my head back and, with my eyes closed, I watched the patterns of clouds dart across my inner eyelids. I heard an ambulance siren in the distance and, without thinking, said the prayer the nuns taught me 50 years ago to say for those in need.

I took deep breaths and sat still for a long time, grateful that I have such a spot in which to gather myself. And I followed that mental garden path to plant seeds of gratitude for lessons learned in this past year, corners turned, memories recovered and priorities reorganized.

Now I am vowing to reap daily the harvest fruits of that day's labor, whether for 10 minutes or an hour of outdoor time on my creaky deck, watering my herbs, learning the names of the birds who visit. Sowing perspective has me harvesting an inner peace that had proved elusive while I labored so long without looking up. ■



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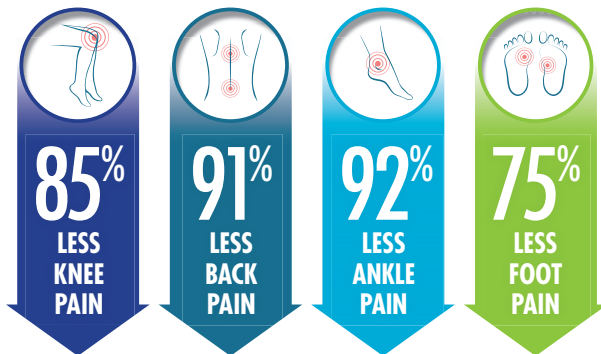


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