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20 YEARS AFTER KATRINA

# Texas Coop Power

FOR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE MEMBERS

AUGUST 2025

## Give It a Whirl

Why so many people  
are flipping out  
over disc golf





State of Texas

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# August 2025



10

## 06 Disc Jockeys

Texas has become a destination for a sport that just about anybody can play.

By Margaret Buranen  
Photos by Kenny Braun

## 'Every Part of Texas Is at Risk'

Prepare now for wildfires that can strike anywhere and almost anytime.

By Chris Burrows

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ON THE COVER  
Marty Ford tees off at the Flying Armadillo Disc Golf Club in San Marcos as Kenny Roycroft looks on.  
Photo by Kenny Braun

ABOVE  
A firefighter works the 2024 Smokehouse Creek Fire in the Panhandle.  
Photo by Sam Craft | Courtesy Texas A&M AgriLife Marketing and Communications

# Kaufman: The Next Frontier



**Maybe you've noticed** all the moving vans east of Dallas, heading into Co-op Country?

Many are drawn to Kaufman County, the second-fastest-growing county in the country between July 1, 2023, and July 1, 2024, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

Trinity Valley Electric Cooperative is headquartered in Kaufman, the county seat.

"I do think a lot of people are attracted to that small-town vibe," Mayor Jeff Jordan said.

"It's really the next frontier," said Anne Glasscock, Kaufman Chamber of Commerce CEO.

"Education is what remains after you have forgotten everything you learned in school."

—ANONYMOUS



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## FINISH THIS SENTENCE

Another day, another ...

TCP Tell us how you would finish that sentence. Email your short responses to [letters@TexasCoopPower.com](mailto:letters@TexasCoopPower.com) or comment on our Facebook post. Include your co-op and town.

Here are some of the responses to our June prompt: **It's summer, and I'm ready for ...**

Homemade peach ice cream.

HARRY POWER  
FARMERS EC  
FORNEY

Sleeping in—I'm a teacher.

STU BERKOWITZ  
PEDERNALES EC  
MANCHACA

Garden-fresh tomatoes.

JAMES SELF  
DEAF SMITH EC  
HEREFORD

Watermelon, corn on the cob and potato salad.

STACEY MCINTOSH  
TRINITY VALLEY EC  
FORNEY

Cheves (beer), trips and vacation.

SYLVIA ARMENDARIZ  
MAGIC VALLEY EC  
EDINBURG

Visit our website to see more responses.



## JUNE 2025 Gorging a Path

“We came from Massachusetts, where we had a dairy goat farm. What a blast these little guys are!”

PAT HOFFMAN  
CENTRAL TEXAS EC  
LLANO



## Goats Galore

I found it ironic to read about goats “buzz sawing their way through a thicket of brambles” in the cover story [*Gorging a Path*, June 2025], followed by the last piece describing a man using a chain saw to cut through thorns and brush on his newly purchased property [*Cutting Through*, June 2025].

Seems that goats for hire may have been the perfect helpers for his situation.

Peggy Rhea  
Pedernales EC  
Austin

My dad moved his wife and four young daughters in 1959 from Chicago for a new job at LSS as a mining engineer working on the open pit mines. I remember the Saturday mornings when I would ride with my dad while he drove around the mines. I had my own hard hat.

I also remember the fun we had at the lake playing on the enormous inner tubes from the huge tires off the mining equipment.

Jane Sykes  
CoServ  
Denton

## Memories From the Mill

My daddy, James W. Rich Jr., worked as a millwright at Lone Star Steel [*Steel to the Stars*, June 2025]. He was part of the crew shown in the picture in front of the large piece of equipment.

We lost him six years ago, so to see him in this picture gave us such joy.

Stephanie Lowe  
Pedernales EC  
Liberty Hill

## Slivers of Ice

When Mr. Hessee would deliver ice for the icebox, I remember what a big, muscular man he was [*Texas Chilly*, June 2025]. While he was putting the 50-pound block of ice in the icebox, all the neighborhood kids would wait and then lift the tarp to get a sliver of ice because it was 100-plus degrees outside.

Sterling Hartman  
Pedernales EC  
Cedar Park

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letters@TexasCoopPower.com

Editor, Texas Co-op Power  
1122 Colorado St., 24th Floor  
Austin, TX 78701

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

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COURTESY LADIES OF LONE STAR







# DISC

*Texas has become  
a destination for a  
sport that just about  
anybody can play*



# JOCKEYS

BY MARGARET BURANEN • PHOTOS BY KENNY BRAUN

A downturn in the oil industry in 2018 made for slow days at Lone Star Molding, a family-owned business in Conroe. But as injection molding orders for gaskets and seals from oil field companies dried up, brothers Travis and Synjin Dillard and their sister, Britney Ochoa, had an idea.

They begged their father, Terry, to try making some golf discs, thinking that would be fun, if nothing else. The brothers had been playing disc golf since they were in middle school.

"Things were slow, so my dad said, 'We'll try it,'" Ochoa says. It soon soared.

Ochoa, who started playing the sport two years ago, says Lone Star Disc now uses about 60 molds and nine types of plastic to make discs in just about every color combination that range from "stiffer to softer, more flexible and heavier to lighter." LSD says it's the only company supplying the world with discs made, stamped and shipped in Texas—selling thousands annually.

The family had tapped into something big. Even decades after it first came to Texas, disc golf—one of the most inexpensive and easiest sports to learn—is still landing new players, from kids to older adults.

Among more than 16,200 disc golf courses in 91 countries, Texas has more than any other state—720—according to UDisc, a mobile scoring app popular among players. The

courses are in state and city parks and on private land. Some are owned by churches, breweries and universities. Worldwide, 89% of disc golf courses are free to play.

The sport is a great way to get outdoors, move around and get those steps. That's one of the appeals for pro player Emily Weatherman of Abilene.

"Disc golf is for everyone," she says. "It's a good source of exercise. Get outside, grab a disc, and have fun and always believe in yourself."

Weatherman has good reason to believe in herself. She won her first Disc Golf Pro Tour event at age 18 and was named the tour's female rookie of the year in 2024. She says that honor "means so much to me, to be recognized like that."

Now in her second year as a touring pro, one of the sport's brightest young stars has played in tournaments all over the U.S. and in New Zealand.

OPPOSITE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT The Flying Armadillo Disc Golf Club in San Marcos features an observation tower and shaded picnic tables. Micah Caldwell, front, and Derek Forrest mimic Leonardo da Vinci's *Vitruvian Man* drawing. Discs made by Lone Star Disc in Conroe. Synjin Dillard takes a shot on the company's private nine-hole course. An obstacle on the minicourse at Flying Armadillo. Craig Foster rests with a new disc.



She got started when her parents put a disc in her hand when she was about 5. By 2018, when she was 12, she started playing competitively.

“My dad had played for a long time. He started teaching my brother, my mother and me to play. It was a family activity we did together,” Weatherman says. “I like the competitive aspect of it. I’ve always been competitive. It’s not a team sport, so I didn’t have to depend on anyone else.”

Like the other golf, disc golf involves players moving from hole to hole on a course. But instead of hitting a ball with various clubs, advancing it closer to and into a hole, players throw discs. And the hole is actually an elevated basket of hanging chains. The player with the fewest total throws in a round, generally nine or 18 holes, wins.

Putting—throwing the disc into the basket from about 10 yards or less—is the most challenging part for Weatherman. Even expert players can be challenged by the wind, she says. “You can never stop learning in disc golf.”



One of Weatherman’s favorite courses is at Will Hair Park in her hometown. She says she enjoys encountering kids on the course and helping them or giving them some encouragement. “I love watching kids get excited about learning a new skill,” she says.

Disc golf has relatively little history, much of which can be traced to the Frisbee, a toy patented by “Steady” Ed Headrick in 1967. He opened the first official disc golf course, in Pasadena, California, in 1975 and patented the “pole hole,” which has become a course standard, in 1977. Texas’ oldest known surviving course, at Bartholomew Park in East Austin, was built in 1982.

LEFT Kenny Roycroft with his cart and array of discs needed to navigate a course’s obstacles and challenges.

ABOVE At Flying Armadillo, Marty Ford goes for the opening in a grain hopper on a hole.





# GIVE IT A SPIN

Among the most popular and picturesque Texas courses are:

- **Rocky Hills Disc Golf Course** in Ovalo, one of the top 100 courses in the world, boasts 21 holes for advanced players.
- **The Hideaway Disc Golf Ranch** in Terrell has a 19-hole course around a scenic lake.
- **Will Hair Park** in Abilene and **Roy G. Guerrero Colorado River Park** in Austin offer fun, technical courses in city parks.
- **Dino Hills Disc Golf Farm** in Glen Rose has three courses.
- **Sprinkle Valley Disc Golf Course** in Austin is a new course with a taproom.
- **The Zip Disc Golf Course** in Helotes is in a valley with zip lines running overhead.
- **Shawshank Disc Golf Penitentiary** in Huntsville, **Tom McCutcheon Disc Golf Course** in Lewisville, **Brushy Creek Municipal Utility District** in Round Rock and **Brazos Park East** in Waco are among the most scenic.
- **Lindsey Park** and **South Springs Disc Golf Course**, both in Tyler, offer courses tucked in among beautiful East Texas pines.

UDisc says its 1.26 million global users logged more than 20 million rounds in 2024—a tally that can't account for untold numbers of casual players. College students are a big part of the sport's growth.

Texas A&M University's men's and women's disc golf teams consistently rank among the top 25 U.S. collegiate teams, 285 of which compete through College Disc Golf, founded in 2007. There are 13 other Texas schools with disc golf teams or club programs, including the universities of Texas and North Texas, and Texas Tech and Texas State universities.

But almost no one is too young or old or far from a course to give it a throw.

Michael Lambert and his family, members of Pedernales Electric Cooperative, own the Flying Armadillo Disc Golf Club in San Marcos. The club has an 18-hole course and a shorter minicourse for kids and beginners that was once ranked No. 34 in the world on UDisc.

On a regular course, the holes are 100 yards apart, he says. The shorter course is a third of that distance.

"There's an obstacle or a whimsical something on every hole, so the course is shorter and more engaging," he says. "It's huge with youth and kids."

Lambert started playing disc golf with family as a teenager, about 20 years ago. About 11 years ago, he bought 25 acres flush with woods, cactuses and three plywood deer stands. The family spent two years turning the property into the disc golf club.

His favorite part of owning Flying Armadillo is seeing kids having fun. He says church groups, scout troops and other youth groups come to play. For many kids, such outings are their introduction to the game.

UDisc reports 1,165 disc golf courses were built in 2024—the fifth straight year with more than 1,000 new courses, perhaps helped along by the pandemic, when a lot of folks were looking for more socially distanced outdoor activities.

Lambert says the challenging parts of disc golf are "getting your form correct and learning to throw

the different types of discs." There are three main types—drivers, midrange and putters. An experienced player might carry 15–20 discs.

He thinks that people who've never played a round of disc golf would be surprised "at how beneficial it can be, physically and mentally." And really, all you need to start is one disc, but as the family in Conroe has learned over the years, golfers like to have options.

"We learned that everyone is different," Ochoa says. "People like different colors or different pictures or designs. That was our biggest hurdle."

The family business' discs run \$8–\$30, but any disc will do if you're just looking for a relaxing round on the links.

"I don't typically enjoy lifting weights or jogging, but I can go all day playing disc golf," Lambert says. "It's a great leisure exercise. You can enjoy spending time with friends and family. It's a mental break if you're playing by yourself." ■





# ‘Every Part of

**Prepare now for wildfires that can strike anywhere and almost anytime**

BY CHRIS BURROWS

**The** National Weather Service’s Central Texas office didn’t mince words: “Dangerous, potentially historic, extreme fire weather conditions are forecast Tuesday across our area. Very strong winds and low humidity will support the rapid spread and difficult suppression of any wildfires that may ignite.”

Responding to that warning, earlier this year, an Austin meteorologist quickly posted on Facebook an evacuation checklist.

Keyboard cranks came for her in the comments.

“Quick everyone panic!”

“Talk about causing unnecessary panic.”

“It was raining this morning, so, thanks.”

And it did rain. A frontal system swept across Central Texas early that next morning, March 4, bringing with it 40–50 mph gusts. The wind facilitated a rapid drop in humidity and the wicking of moisture from vegetation—creating ideal conditions for wildfires.

“Those critical jokers must not have been here during the 2011 fires,” one commenter countered on Facebook. “Wildfires are not a joke, something to be laughed at.”

By 7:30 p.m. that day—despite the brief rains—there were nine active wildfires across Texas and four in the Austin-San Antonio area, according to the Texas A&M Forest Service.

In a state as big and geographically diverse as Texas, it’s always wildfire season. And no area of the state is immune. Fires can happen anywhere and almost anytime.

One of the first wildfires of 2025 scorched nearly 4,000 acres in Moore County in the Panhandle. The fire was detected February 1 and burned for four days.



ANDREW MCGUIRE | COURTESY TEXAS A&M FOREST SERVICE





# Texas Is at Risk'





SAM CRAFT | COURTESY TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

Firefighters battle the Smokehouse Creek Fire in March 2024. The blaze, the largest wildfire in Texas history, raged for nearly three weeks and burned more than 1 million acres in the Panhandle.

## In a state as big and geographically diverse as Texas, it's always wildfire season.

“Under certain weather conditions and fuel conditions, every part of Texas is at risk for wildfires,” says Heather Gonzales, a fire information and education program specialist with the forest service. “Any region that’s had a period of extended drying or little precipitation and then also has increased winds or low relative humidity values has increased wildfire risk.

“The region with the greatest risk can vary week to week or even day to day.”

Over the past 10 years, more than 84,000 wildfires across the state have scorched more than 4.5 million acres. They’re no longer strictly a concern for rural folks. About 85% of wildfires, on average, ignite within 2 miles of a community—a rising trend as Texas continues to grow and more people live in what the forest service calls the wildland urban interface.

The WUI is where developed and undeveloped land come together—where lives and structures are at greater risk from fires. That’s where the forest service focuses its community outreach and support.

Since its inception in 1915, the forest service has been tasked with wildfire suppression, defending the property and lives of Texans through a network of strategically placed firefighters and equipment supported by the state’s more than 1,800 municipal and volunteer fire departments.

But more and more, as Smokey Bear will tell you, the forest service depends on everyday Texans to prevent wildfires from starting in the first place and protect themselves when fires spread.

### 10 Tips To Stay Ready

1. Clear your roof, gutters and eaves of leaves and pine needles.
2. Space out trees and plants, and plant away from structures.
3. Install or repair metal screens on attic and foundation vents.
4. Check fire extinguishers and make sure everyone in your house knows how to use them.
5. Create and discuss an evacuation plan with your family.
6. Talk to your children about fire safety and not playing with matches.
7. Compost leaves and organic waste instead of burning.
8. Clear dead wood and dense flammable vegetation from around your home.
9. Clear vegetation around the base of trees, and prune trees away from your home.
10. Stay informed of weather conditions, area wildfires and burn bans.

Source: Texas A&M Forest Service



SMOKEY BEAR: COURTESY NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE FORESTERS



“The best way to mitigate your wildfire risk is to prepare for it well before a wildfire happens,” Gonzales says. “Now is a good time to address any vulnerabilities you might have around your home or any structures on your property, reducing excessive vegetation and removing dead vegetation from the little nooks and crannies around your house and gutters.”

Wildfires can move quickly, up to 14 mph, depending on the wind. That means they can jump from the horizon to your home within minutes.

“A lot of times, it’s not the flame front itself coming directly to your property, it’s embers created from the wildfire that can blow 1–2 miles away,” Gonzales says. “If enough of those embers collect, or if whatever they’re collecting on is dry enough, it could potentially ignite a fire on your home.”

Over the past several years, new technologies have been helping in the battle against wildfires.

In Austin, for example, the city has deployed an artificial intelligence-driven wildfire detection system that employs 13 high-definition, 360-degree cameras.

Texas A&M University researchers partnered with Mid-South Electric Cooperative in 2017 to test special sensors, which the university spent more than a decade developing. While 90% of wildfires are human-caused, these sensors have helped to lessen the risk of fire sparked by electric infrastructure.

Worldwide, a consortium of engineers competed in 2024 for a \$750,000 prize by developing plans for the next generation in AI detection and autonomous wildfire response.

But for homeowners and landowners across Texas, the guidance hasn’t changed: Be aware of the dangers, mitigate the risks to your property and avoid sparking a fire.

“The biggest thing is just to be very situationally aware,” Gonzales says.

That part is easier than ever.

The Texas A&M Forest Service website offers several resources—including a live wildfire risk map and a live map of known fires—at [texaswildfirerisk.com](https://texaswildfirerisk.com). There’s also the free Watch Duty mobile app, launched in 2021, which draws on various data sources to provide live updates on wildfires nationwide. Your local emergency management office also is a great resource and can fill you in on local burn bans and restrictions.

For large plots of land, prescribed burns can be a great tool for mitigating risk, and the forest service awards grants every year to support these efforts—\$951,000 this year alone for 168 landowners to burn 35,138 acres.

When it comes to mitigating the risk to smaller plots, homes and businesses, start with your landscaping. (Don’t set it on fire; prescribed burns are for professionals only.) Keep grass short, but don’t mow during the heat of the day or anytime wildfire risks are high, and check for spark risks, like rocks or metal objects, lurking in your yard.

“Keep the lawn lean, clean and green,” Gonzales says.

# Prepare Your Farm or Ranch

## Help wildfire first responders by staying ready.

- Maintain a 30-foot barrier free of burnable materials around fields and structures.
- Inform your local fire department about access roads, water sources, fence lines and preferred wildfire suppression tactics.
- Establish contingency plans for feeding livestock, and create a plan to relocate livestock if fire is imminent and time permits.
- Plan evacuation routes, as fire may make your usual routes unsafe.
- Create wide fuel breaks along roads: Prune large trees to 10 feet from the ground, remove ladder fuels such as tall brush and small trees, thin trees to create crown spacing of 25–30 feet, and break up thick brush.
- Maintain fuel breaks with regular maintenance.

Source: Texas A&M Forest Service



COURTESY TEXAS A&M FOREST SERVICE

Prune trees at least 6 feet up, and remove taller bushes or anything underneath trees that can serve as ladder fuel, allowing fire to climb into the tree canopy. Clear flammable materials from the immediate area around your home, storing firewood at least 30 feet away. Finally, create an evacuation kit and have a plan and route ready for quick escapes.

While Texas doesn’t have fire seasons but rather a “fire year,” Gonzales says August can be a particularly risky time.

“You have high temperatures, low relative humidity values, lack of precipitation and winds also come together to increase fire potential,” she says.

Start planning now. ■



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36	8.77	7.93	10.35	9.44	14	13	22	18	59	30.37	23.51	55.50	38.76	98	67	186	126
37	8.77	8.15	10.52	9.81	15	13	22	20	60	33.49	24.28	60.76	41.71	109	73	206	136
38	8.77	8.16	11.19	10.18	16	14	24	21	61	36.49	25.09	66.43	47.10	122	83	236	154
39	9.13	8.31	11.62	10.55	17	15	25	22	62	39.88	27.91	73.90	51.32	136	92	262	166
40	9.55	8.48	12.04	10.98	18	16	27	24	63	43.69	34.01	81.54	57.25	153	102	287	187
41	10.05	8.72	13.10	11.58	20	17	30	26	64	47.91	38.28	90.20	62.32	170	112	323	200
42	10.48	9.01	14.21	12.30	22	19	33	29	65	52.81	40.88	100.33	68.23	191	125	361	223
43	10.98	9.36	14.72	13.18	23	20	38	31	66	58.71	44.61	114.29	75.40	211	135	392	242
44	11.58	9.73	15.67	14.10	25	22	41	34	67	64.59	49.08	125.27	83.64	234	146	436	261
45	12.17	10.15	16.86	15.16	28	24	45	38	68	72.24	59.65	143.07	105.55	254	173	485	322
46	12.84	10.64	17.85	15.83	30	25	49	40	69	79.34	64.22	158.23	129.28	288	188	547	352
47	13.43	11.16	19.03	16.68	32	27	54	44	70	86.85	68.11	177.24	147.66	318	203	595	375
48	13.48	11.88	20.27	17.37	35	29	58	47	71	102.45	82.60	203.10	159.34	374	235	702	443
49	13.69	12.33	21.73	18.32	37	31	63	52	72	113.68	93.16	232.46	172.23	427	272	807	512
50	14.36	12.98	23.00	19.82	40	33	69	57	73	127.55	106.68	267.15	188.15	493	319	937	596
51	15.37	13.75	25.30	20.65	45	35	78	62	74	142.08	119.36	303.50	204.84	562	367	1074	685
52	16.36	14.87	27.63	22.13	49	38	87	67	75	159.25	140.48	346.45	224.56	644	424	1235	789
53	17.46	15.88	30.95	24.81	54	42	98	73	76	200.03	168.51	418.29	276.67	785	530	1489	982
54	18.68	16.72	33.99	26.20	60	46	110	81	77	249.54	216.74	505.52	339.94	956	658	1797	1215
55	20.70	17.50	37.13	27.85	67	50	121	90	78	310.70	268.40	613.27	418.11	1167	817	2179	1504
56	22.69	19.48	42.01	31.07	74	53	138	96	79	374.78	322.52	726.16	500.00	1389	983	2578	1807
57	24.69	20.63	45.81	33.43	81	58	150	107	80	450.50	386.47	816.15	596.78	1625	1180	3050	2164

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## Consider the Energy Efficiency of Room Air Conditioners

**IF YOU'RE BUILDING** a home or considering revamping your home cooling system, room air conditioners might suit your needs better than a whole-home air conditioning system.

Room units cool individual spaces rather than the entire home, making them less expensive to operate than central units. While their efficiency is generally lower, they are ideal for cooling smaller spaces. **Here's some information to help you make the best decision on how to cool your home.**

**Efficiency measurement:** The efficiency of a room air conditioner is measured by the energy efficiency ratio, which is the ratio of the cooling capacity to the power input. The higher the EER, the more efficient the air conditioner.

**Cooling capacity:** The required cooling capacity depends on the room size. Room air conditioners generally range from 5,500 to 14,000 British thermal units (a measure of cooling power) per hour. Typically, you need 20 Btu for each square foot of living space. Consider room height, local climate, shading and window size when selecting an air conditioner.

**Proper sizing:** Choose a unit that fits the room. An oversized unit will cool the room too quickly without dehumidifying it properly, leading to discomfort. A smaller, appropriately sized unit running for a longer period operates more efficiently and effectively.

**Power needs:** Consider the power requirements. Smaller units (less than 7.5 amps) can plug into any 15- or 20-amp, 120-volt household circuit not shared with major appliances. Larger units (more than 7.5 amps) require a dedicated 115-volt circuit, and the largest models need a 240-volt circuit.

**Directional airflow:** For corner installations, select a unit that can direct airflow as needed. For long rooms, look for fan controls with "power thrust" or "super thrust" features.

**Ease of maintenance:** Choose a unit with a filter that slides out easily for cleaning.

**User-friendly controls:** Look for logically arranged controls, a digital thermostat readout, a built-in timer and mobile app control.

**Installation tips:** Ensure the unit is level for efficient drainage and operation, and avoid placing lamps, TVs or appliances near the thermostat.

**Thermostat settings:** Set the thermostat as high as comfortably possible to reduce energy use. Don't set the thermostat colder than necessary; it won't cool the room any faster and will waste energy.

**Fan speed:** Use medium or high speed, except on very humid days, when low speed improves comfort and dehumidification.

**Additional cooling:** Use an interior fan with your window air conditioner to spread cool air without significantly increasing electricity use.

**Home insulation:** Make sure your home is well insulated and sealed. Efficient operation of any AC system relies on a properly insulated and air-sealed home to minimize cooling loss and lower your electric bill. ■



# Not Everyone Can Stand the Heat

**HEAT IS THE** leading weather-related killer in the U.S., resulting in more than 1,000 fatalities each year. Heat can be very taxing on the body and can worsen preexisting health conditions.

In the intense heat of Texas' summer, remember that everyone can be vulnerable to heat, but some more so than others.

**The following groups are particularly vulnerable.**

**Young children and infants.** Their bodies are less able to adapt to heat.

**Older adults,** particularly those who have preexisting diseases, take certain medications, are living alone or have limited mobility can experience multiple adverse effects when exposed to extreme heat.

**People with chronic medical conditions** are more likely to have a serious health problem during a heat wave.

**Pregnant women** are also at higher risk. Extreme heat events have been associated with adverse birth outcomes such as low birth weight, preterm birth and infant mortality as well as congenital cataracts.

You can help by checking in with friends and relatives who fall into these populations, especially if they don't have air conditioning at home.

It's never safe to leave a child, disabled person or pet locked in a car, even in the winter. If you have a toddler in your household, lock your unoccupied vehicles, even in your own driveway. Kids can wander outside and get into a car and can die in as little as 10 minutes.

Thirty-nine children died in hot cars in 2024. Deaths routinely are reported as early as April, and tragedies continue into December in southern states. ■



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## Round Up Resource Efficiency

**DOES IT FEEL LIKE** your home's utility expenses are a runaway horse? Here are three ways to rein in your family's habits and improve your energy efficiency.

First, check your utility bills from the past year and determine exactly how much energy you used each month. Knowing that—and whether it spikes during certain months—can help you address any wasteful habits.

Second, get an energy audit. The auditor will uncover places in your house—like in the attic and around windows and doors—where gaps, cracks and other holes are letting your heated or cooled air escape and inviting the outdoor air indoors. Once you know that, you'll know where you need to seal those leaks with caulk and weatherstripping.

Third, are any appliances more than 10 years old? If so, they're far less efficient than newer models. Are your appliances Energy Star-rated? Make sure the new ones you buy are. Likewise, are your faucets, showerheads and toilets low-flow? Replacing them with water-conserving models will reduce your water bill and your family's consumption. ■





# IT'S THE LAW: MOVE OVER OR SLOW DOWN

Lineworkers dedicate long hours to ensuring affordable and reliable electric power.

The "move over/slow down" law reminds us to do our part to keep our utility workers safe.

## **Look for flashing lights.**

When you see a utility vehicle on the side of the road with its amber lights flashing, move over a lane. When you move over, you're giving workers the room they need to safely complete their work.

## **Slower is safer.**

If you do not have an extra lane to move into, the law requires you to slow down 20 mph below the posted speed limit. A slower-moving vehicle is a safer vehicle. And keep in mind, significant fines give this law teeth.

**Your electric cooperative encourages you to always practice safety.**





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## Beachcombing at home.

**Texas Co-op Power** presents an illustrated *Seashells of Texas* poster by artist Aletha St. Romain, 20x16 inches, suitable for framing.

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# Making a Stink

Settlers may have been on to something when they brought asafetida to Texas

BY CLAY COPPEDGE

IF YOU'RE LUCKY, you don't remember the asafetida bags of days gone by. If you're one of the unfortunate few who had firsthand experience with the "assifity" bags, as they were sometimes pronounced, the first thing you remember is the smell—and not in a good way.

Well-meaning mothers used to put asafetida, a pungent root product, in a sachet and tie it around their children's necks, thus ensuring social distancing more than a century before the term was in use. The bags were rumored to ward off everything from the sniffles to spinal meningitis.

Asafetida, unlike many of the early settlers' cures that came from the land, came from drug stores.

The resin is extracted from an herb called asafetida that grows primarily in Iran and Afghanistan and belongs to the same general family as carrots, parsnips, parsley and anise. The resin's common nickname—devil's dung—doesn't help its reputation. The scientific name, *Ferula assa-foetida*, translates to stinking resin. That doesn't help either.

Before there was a market for asafetida, there was silphium, an ancient spice that was so popular people couldn't get enough of it. As a result, it went extinct. Alexander the Great apparently mistook asafetida for silphium during his invasion of Asia in 334 B.C., and this new herb caught on as a substitute and eventually made its odorous way to Africa and Europe.

Asafetida most likely came to America with enslaved Africans who had multiple medicinal, magical and apotropaic uses for it. They developed a tradition of wearing a red flannel bag containing the plant's roots and additives like red pepper, sassafras and snakeroot. That became the preferred use for asafetida in this country, where the asafetida bag became a staple of health care in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Lewis and Clark even took along a pound of asafetida on their expedition of discovery in 1803. We don't know why and there's no record of them using it during the journey, but receipts show Lewis bought a pound for \$1.

By the early 20th century, Americans would turn to the asafetida bag whenever a new health scare hit the news.

In Texas, the January 11, 1912, edition of the *San Angelo Evening Standard* reported that locals "have

resorted to the use of asafetida bags as a precaution against Spinal Meningitis. They are wearing little bags of it around their necks, and hope to thus destroy any germs that come near them. Mothers for the past 50 years have made their children wear an asafetida bag when an epidemic of any sort of sickness prevailed."

Dallas columnist Paul Crume, who grew up in the Panhandle, wrote in 1970 that he had no direct experience with asafetida bags because his family "leaned instead to the mustard plaster school of advanced family medicine. We preferred to hurt rather than stink." But Crume expressed sympathy for those forced to wear the foul-smelling bags around their necks. "They felt," he wrote, tongue slightly in cheek, "that humanity generally was turning up its noses at them."

In 1918, the United States Pharmacopeia recommended asafetida to stave off the Spanish flu pandemic.

Today, it's "used in modern herbalism in the treatment of hysteria, some nervous conditions, bronchitis, asthma and whooping cough," the National Library of Medicine notes. "The volatile oil in the gum is eliminated through the lungs, making this an excellent treatment for asthma."

According to the NLM, it's also used as a sedative, thins the blood and lowers blood pressure.

What's more, rumor has it that asafetida is, or at least used to be, the secret ingredient in Worcestershire sauce. Heinz, which owns Lea & Perrins, doesn't confirm this, but they don't exactly deny it either.

Just before the ferula plants flower, in March and April, producers lay bare the upper part of the roots and cut off the stem close to the ground. They make a dome-shaped structure of twigs and dirt to cover the exposed surface and let it simmer that way for a month or so. Then they slice it and let the juice bleed out of the cut surfaces. This juice is then condensed into asafetida and shipped primarily to India, where it's a staple of Indian cuisine and called hing.

We have turned up our collective noses at asafetida for centuries and saddled it with all manner of unflattering nicknames, but the plant continues to make itself useful (and even tasty) in a number of ways. Best of all, none of those ways include an asafetida bag. ■

*Peucedaneae.*



*Ferula Asa foetida*, L.  
Stinkasant.



# The future of hearing aids has arrived

**NEW! HORIZON IX HEARING AIDS**

**FOX NEWS**

**NEWSMAX**

**BUSINESS INSIDER**

**Forbes**

**Alarming fact: More than 48 million Americans hear so poorly that their quality of life significantly suffers as a result.**

The problem: Most wait too long to act, hoping their hearing will improve on its own. Sadly, it never does. But now, a game-changing device is making waves across the industry, and experts say it's the biggest breakthrough they've seen in over a decade.

## It's the new Horizon IX hearing aid.

Horizon IX is currently the best-selling device at renowned U.S. company, hear.com, developed by top audio engineers from Signia. Their goal was to combine the best possible speech clarity with a comfortable, invisible design using cutting-edge German technology.

"It's a hearing aid people actually want to wear," says hear.com co-founder Dr. Marco Vietor. "It offers amazing speech clarity and smartphone connectivity in a virtually invisible design — and all that for a reasonable price!"



## What makes them so special?

It's one of the world's first hearing aids with dual processing. This is special because it's the first time engineers have been able to pack not one, but two state-of-the-art computer chips into a device this small. And with double the power comes double the clarity.

## What do Horizon IX hearing aids have to offer?

- **Amazing Speech Clarity™**  
Effortlessly understand every word, thanks to dual-processing
- **Bluetooth connectivity**  
Stream music and phone calls directly to your hearing aids
- **Rechargeable lithium-ion batteries**  
28+ hours of battery life and a portable case for on-the-go charging
- **Easy, comfortable fit**  
All-day wearing comfort, easy to combine with glasses
- **Free smartphone app**  
Adjust settings for every listening situation easily via smartphone

This means that Horizon IX hearing aids offer all of the usual benefits of modern hearing aids with the added bonus of something completely new: they can process speech and background noise independently, then combine them for unparalleled, crystal clear sound.

## Where can I get Horizon IX?

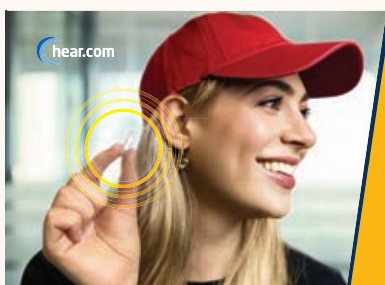
So far, hear.com has helped more than 540,000 Americans enjoy life with better hearing, thanks to Horizon IX. **Now, it's your turn!**

Check if you qualify for a **45-day no-risk trial today**, and have a brand new pair of Horizon IX hearing aids on your doorstep in as little as 48 hours.

**START HERE!**



**Scan the QR code** or visit **hear.com/tx** to check if you qualify for a 45-day no-risk trial.







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



# History in a Box

Before it housed kittens, it was packed with a tea you may have heard about

BY W.F. STRONG • ILLUSTRATION BY JAMES WESTON LEWIS

**THE GOODMAN KIDS** in Laredo pulled out an old wooden box anytime they had show-and-tell at school. It was always sure to gather interest. The box, they claimed—with some good evidence backing them up—played an important role in the American Revolution.

Of course there were skeptics.

How could a box make it thousands of miles and two centuries from 18th century New England to 20th century South Texas? And how could a simple, old box have played a role in the Revolution?

The Goodmans brought the receipts, as is often said today.

Helen Ford Waring, the Goodman children's great-aunt, had tracked the box across generations of her family tree to determine who willed it to whom,

where, when and how—even what they used it for.

It once was a nursery for a litter of kittens and was a cat box for some years. In another family, the box was used by a young girl as a doll house of sorts. The Goodmans had stored it under the dining room table for the primary purpose of being at the ready for show-and-tell.

The box had traveled across Texas, by inheritance, from Corpus Christi to San Antonio to Laredo.

Ford Waring did such a good job proving provenance that in 1976, the U.S. bi-centennial, the Smithsonian Institution came calling. It sought artifacts to display during that significant anniversary of the Revolution and had heard about the box. Experts there did their own research,

of course, decided the claims were legitimate and put it on display at the museum that year. They called it the Robinson Half Chest.

What is this box's backstory? Ford Waring was able to prove that a great-great-great-ancestor of hers was up early one morning in December 1773, walking along the shore near Boston. His name was John Robinson.

He found a nice box made of half-inch-thick wood. Robinson had the reaction we all have, even in modern times, when we come across a well-made sturdy box: a shame to let that box go to waste. Ought to be good for something.

Besides, he knew it was a remnant from the night before, when patriots had sneaked aboard three ships and dumped some 340 boxes of tea from Britain's East India Tea Company into the harbor—the Boston Tea Party. So he stashed it.

Many of the boxes floated out to sea or were destroyed on purpose. But this box survived and was passed down from generation to generation, state to state, until it resided for years near another shore, the Rio Grande.

In 2004, Andre Goodman heard that a Tea Party museum was being built in Boston. He felt that the Robinson Half Chest should have a proper home where more people could see it. He approached them and a deal was struck.

Today the box—the only one known from that famous tea party—has a place of honor in the Boston Tea Party Ships & Museum. It has made a round-trip journey of thousands of miles over 250 years. It is now on the same docks where it was tossed into the sea so long ago—the place its journey began. ■



# Beefy Burgers

Flavorful ingredients and fun twists are sure to add sizzle

BY VIANNEY RODRIGUEZ, FOOD EDITOR

Burger night is about to get *mucho más* tastier. I whipped up the most mouthwatering burgers packed with chiles and seasonings. No need to fire up the grill—these babies are made indoors. Tonight we're spicing up our burgers while staying out of that Texas summer heat.

## Green Chile Burger

**1 pound ground beef**  
**1 teaspoon garlic powder**  
**1 teaspoon onion powder**  
**½ teaspoon ground cumin**  
**1 teaspoon salt**  
**1 teaspoon ground black pepper**  
**1 can diced green chiles (4 ounces), drained**  
**8 slices uncooked bacon**  
**4 slices Monterey Jack cheese**  
**Mayonnaise**  
**4 hamburger buns**  
**8 leaves romaine lettuce**  
**1 large tomato, sliced**

1. In a bowl, combine ground beef, garlic powder, onion powder, cumin, salt, pepper and chiles.
2. Divide the mixture into 4 equal portions, and form into 4 patties. Place patties on a baking sheet, cover with plastic wrap and chill in fridge 15 minutes.
3. In a skillet over medium-high heat, cook bacon until fully cooked. Set aside.
4. In the same skillet, cook patties 3–5 minutes on each side or until the burgers are browned and cooked through. Top each patty with a slice of cheese.
5. Spread mayonnaise on the bottom buns. Add 2 lettuce leaves and tomato slice to each.
6. Place patty on top, add 2 slices bacon and top with bun.

**MAKES 4 BURGERS**

**TCP** Follow Vianney Rodriguez as she cooks in *Cocina Gris* at [sweetlifebake.com](http://sweetlifebake.com), where she features a recipe for a Poblano Gordita Burger.





## Italian Stallion Burgers

BEVERLY NUBER  
COSERV

Imagine the cheesy goodness of pizza sandwiched in a burger bun, creating a mouthwatering combination that satisfies both pizza and burger cravings.

- 1 pound 80/20 ground chuck**
- 3 teaspoons ground oregano**
- 2 teaspoons garlic powder**
- 3 tablespoons tomato purée**
- 2 tablespoons mayonnaise**
- 2 hamburger buns**
- 1 teaspoon salt**
- 1 teaspoon ground black pepper**
- 4 slices mozzarella cheese**
- 16 slices pepperoni**
- 4 tablespoons pizza sauce**
- 1 bunch fresh basil**

1. Combine ground chuck, oregano, garlic powder and tomato purée. Form into 4 patties, about 5–6 inches across.
2. Spread mayonnaise evenly on buns.
3. Heat a griddle or cast-iron skillet on medium-high heat. Place buns on griddle and lightly toast. Remove from griddle and set aside. Reduce heat to medium.
4. Lightly grease griddle with cooking spray, place patties on griddle and season with salt and pepper.
5. Cook 3–4 minutes, flip over and place mozzarella slice and 4 pepperoni slices on top of each patty. Cook an additional 3–4 minutes.
6. Spread 1 tablespoon pizza sauce on each bottom bun. Stack 2 patties on each bun and spread additional 1 tablespoon pizza sauce over top patty. Add a handful fresh basil leaves and top with bun.

**MAKES 2 BURGERS**

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28 >

**\$500 WINNER**

## Juicy Stuffed Grilled Beef Burgers

MONICA ANDREWS  
PEDERNALES EC



Get ready to sink your teeth into the juiciest stuffed burger. Not your average cheeseburger, this burger is stuffed with bacon, jalapeños and plenty of buttery Swiss cheese.



**COOK'S TIP** We kept the toppings simple with a bit of lettuce for crunch, but Andrews says grilled onions, avocado slices, mushrooms and coleslaw can all be excellent additions.

- 4 slices uncooked bacon, diced**
- 1 medium jalapeño pepper, seeds removed, diced**
- 2 pounds 80/20 ground beef**
- 1 small onion, diced**
- 2 cloves garlic, minced**
- 1 tablespoon olive oil**
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce**
- 1 tablespoon Dash garlic and herb seasoning blend**
- 2 teaspoons ground black pepper**
- 4 slices Swiss cheese, diced**
- 4 slices cheddar cheese**
- 4 onion hamburger buns, toasted**
- Additional toppings and condiments, as desired**

1. In a skillet over medium-high heat, cook bacon and jalapeño until bacon is cooked but not crispy. Remove from heat and set aside.
2. In a large bowl, combine ground beef, onion, garlic, olive oil, Worcestershire sauce, herb seasoning and black pepper. Try not to overwork the meat.
3. Divide ground beef mixture into 8 equal portions and form into 8 patties, each a little larger than the bun. Top 4 patties with equal amounts of bacon and jalapeño mix and diced Swiss cheese. Top each of those with remaining 4 patties, pinching the edges to seal patty. With a small spoon, make an indentation on the top of each burger so that juices will puddle.
4. Cover and chill in fridge 30 minutes. Preheat grill to medium-high.
5. Grill burgers about 7–8 minutes on each side. Internal temperature should be at least 160 degrees. Top each patty with a slice of cheddar about 1 minute before removing from grill.
6. Allow burgers to rest 5 minutes before serving. Assemble the burgers with toppings of your choice.

**MAKES 4 BURGERS**

## TCP \$500 Recipe Contest

**OODLES OF NOODLES** DUE AUGUST 10

Twirl, toss and slurp your way to some major dough with your best noodle recipe. Our favorites will noodle their way into the January issue, and the best will win \$500. Enter by August 10.

**UPCOMING: CHEESECAKE** DUE SEPTEMBER 10







## Mediterranean Mushroom Burger

GAIL NUBER  
COSERV

Color me surprised—this meatless burger was a delight! It's big and juicy with earthy umami flavor that even my meat-loving husband enjoyed. The grilled portobellos are meaty and delicious and cook quickly.

- 4 portobello mushrooms, stems removed
  - 4 ciabatta rolls, sliced in half
  - 1 tablespoon olive oil, divided use
  - 1 cup crumbled feta cheese
  - 1 small red bell pepper, diced
  - ½ cup tzatziki
  - 1 cup shredded lettuce
  - 1 large tomato, sliced
  - 1 teaspoon salt
  - 1 teaspoon ground black pepper
  - 1 small bunch fresh dill, chopped
1. Preheat grill to high.
  2. Gently wipe portobellos with a damp paper towel to clean.
  3. Brush the rolls with olive oil. Grill rolls 1 minute, then move them to the warming rack. Brush the grates with the remaining oil. Grill mushrooms, gills down, 3 minutes.
  4. Flip mushrooms and evenly fill each with ¼ cup feta and ¼ of the bell pepper. Grill an additional 3 minutes and remove from grill.
  5. Spread 2 tablespoons tzatziki over each bottom bun. Top with lettuce and

### Pro Burger Moves

**Don't overwork the meat.** This leads to dry and tough burgers.

**Chill the patties before they hit the grill.** This helps them hold their shape and prevents them from falling apart.

**Toast those buns.** They taste better crispy and are less likely to turn soggy.




**Top to your heart's delight.** Pile on, be creative, experiment—have fun!

—Vianney Rodriguez

sliced tomato. Season each mushroom with salt and pepper. Place mushroom on top of tomato, add chopped dill and top with bun.

**MAKES 4 BURGERS**

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# SACRED STONE OF THE SOUTHWEST IS ON THE BRINK OF EXTINCTION



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

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

We found a limited supply of turquoise from Arizona and purchased it for our **Sedona Turquoise Collection**. Inspired by the work of those ancient craftsmen and designed to showcase the exceptional blue stone, each stabilized vibrant cabochon features a unique, one-of-a-kind matrix surrounded in Bali metalwork. You could drop over \$1,200 on a turquoise pendant, or you

could secure 26 carats of genuine Arizona turquoise for **just \$99**.

**Your satisfaction is 100% guaranteed.** If you aren't completely happy with your purchase, send it back within 30 days for a complete refund of the item price.

The supply of Arizona turquoise is limited, don't miss your chance to own the Southwest's brilliant blue treasure. Call today!

## Jewelry Specifications:

• Arizona turquoise • Silver-finished settings

### Sedona Turquoise Collection

A. Pendant (26 cts)	<del>\$299*</del>	\$99	+s&p	<b>Save \$200</b>
B. 18" Bali Naga woven sterling silver chain		\$149	+s&p	
C. 1 1/2" Earrings (10 ctw)	<del>\$299*</del>	\$99	+s&p	<b>Save \$200</b>
<b>Complete Set**</b>	<del>\$747*</del>	<b>\$249</b>	+s&p	<b>Save \$498</b>

\*\*Complete set includes pendant, chain and earrings.

Call now and mention the offer code to receive your collection.

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to show  
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COURTESY CHET GARNER

## Ale as Old as Time

A relic of Austin's distant past still serves up brews and camaraderie

BY CHET GARNER

IF YOU COULD travel back in time to 1866 Austin, our capital city would be almost unrecognizable. There would be just 4,000 residents, no bridges across the Colorado River and a Capitol the size of a county courthouse. The only familiar comfort would be a small boardinghouse at the edge of downtown where a German immigrant named August Scholz could serve you a schnitzel and a pint of beer.

To this day, Austinites still gather at this beloved establishment: Scholz Garten—Texas' oldest restaurant and the oldest beer garden in America.

I love stopping in because it feels like stepping back in time. The walls are covered in old mementos and paintings of bearded German gentlemen, recounting 160 years of history. It isn't hard to imagine cowboys or fellows in lederhosen standing at the wooden bar, which looks like it came over on an old ship from the fatherland.

While the beer is abundant, the food is equally plentiful, with classics like sausage and spaetzle. On a sunny day, it doesn't get much better than sitting outside under the giant oaks with a cold beer, a huge pretzel and good friends.

Downtown Austin wouldn't be the same without Scholz Garten. Given its proximity to the Capitol and the University of Texas, it's been a popular place for politicians and students alike to kick back and enjoy a bit of *gemütlichkeit* (warmth and friendliness). Gov. Ann Richards was known for saying that more legislating went on at Scholz than at the Capitol. The Legislature even recognized the establishment with an official resolution in 1966, calling it a place for Texans of "discernment, taste, culture [and] erudition."

In a changing town like Austin, where nostalgia is getting harder to find, Scholz Garten feels like slipping on a worn-in pair of boots. Nothing new can match it. ■

ABOVE Chet at Scholz Garten, which serves up German food and nostalgia that spans 160 years.

**TCP** Watch the video on our website and see all his Explorations on *The Daytripper* on PBS.



## Know Before You Go

Call ahead or check an event's website for scheduling details, and check our website for many more upcoming events.

## AUGUST

8

**Anna Carried Miranda: Carrie & Miranda Tribute Duo**, (972) 560-4101, barnhillvineyards.com

**Alpine [8-9] Big Bend Ranch Rodeo**, (432) 294-1640, bigbendranchrodeo.com

**Fort Worth [8-10] The Book of Mormon**, (817) 212-4280, basshall.com

9

**Chappell Hill Wine & Cheese Stroll**, (979) 337-9910, chappellhilltx.com

**Henderson [9-10] East Texas Sacred Harp Convention**, (903) 392-8232, easttexasfasola.weebly.com

14

**Corsicana [14-17, 19, 21-24] A Monster Calls**, (903) 872-5421, thewllac.com

15

**Rowlett Luau on the Lawn**, (972) 412-6100, rowletttx.gov

**El Campo [15-17] Texas Chrome Hero's Foundation BBQ Cook-Off**, (979) 275-1600, eclostlagoon.com

**Winnsboro [15-17, 22-24] Romeo and Juliet**, (903) 342-0686, winnsborocenterforthearts.com

16

**Brenham Bee Gees Gold**, (979) 337-7240, thebarnhillcenter.com

21

**Fredericksburg [21-24] Gillespie County Fair**, (830) 997-2359, gillespiefair.com



22

**McKinney [22-23] Mark Clearview**, (214) 769-0645, thecomedyarena.com

23

**Lufkin Balloon Fest**, (936) 632-0490, facebook.com/jaangelinacounty

**Perryton Pioneer Day**, (806) 435-6400, museumofthepains.com

**Castroville [23-24] St. Louis Day**, (830) 931-2826, saintlouisday.com

29

**Granbury [29-Sept. 1] Granbury Square Labor Day Festival**, (682) 936-4550, granburysquare.com

30

**Winnsboro Texas Songwriters Showcase**, (903) 342-0686, winnsborocenterforthearts.com

SEPTEMBER

5

**Brenham First Fridays Farmer & Artisan Market**, (979) 337-7239, facebook.com/brenhamfarmersmarket

**Fort Worth [5-6] Erica Rhodes**, (512) 817-9535, fortworth.blcomedy.com

**El Campo [5-7] Freedom Fest**, (979) 275-1600, eclostagoon.com

6

**Fairfield Show of Wheels**, (903) 389-5792, fairfieldtexaschamber.com

**Grapevine ItalianCarFest**, (817) 410-3185, grapevinetexasusa.com

## TCP Submit Your Event

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

## Discover the Rich History of the Old Indianola Trail



**Yorktown Historical Museum**  
144 W. Main, Yorktown, Texas

Friday 11:00-2:00 • Saturday 1:00-4:00  
And by Appointment

361-935-5243 (please leave a message)  
bcburns47@gmail.com  
Available for reunions or small parties



## Hit the Road Event Calendar

**TCP Plan now**  
TexasCoopPower.com/events



## TCP E-news

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TexasCoopPower.com/join

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# Spirituality Meets Artistry

*"I never expected it to be so beautiful that it takes your breath away."*

— Kaya C., on Stauer Opals



In a quaint village, nestled between rolling hills, lived a young woman with a deep appreciation for gemstones. Her grandmother gifted her a delicate cross pendant adorned with opals. The opals shimmered with a mesmerizing play of colors, reflecting hues of blues, greens, and fiery oranges. Her grandmother shared the legend of the opals, believed to bring hope, purity, and luck to those who wore them.

Using this story as inspiration, Stauer brings you the **Opal Spirit Cross Pendant**. With over 2 total carats of Kyocera lab-created opals set in .925 sterling silver encased in yellow gold, this pendant is a radiant celebration of beauty and craftsmanship. Each opal captivates with a kaleidoscopic dance of fiery oranges blending into oceanic blues, streaked with flashes of vibrant green that seem to come alive with every movement. The shimmering opals are skillfully arranged to create an enchanting, otherworldly glow, embodying the spirit of hope and harmony.

This breathtaking combination of color and craftsmanship is available as a limited availability of

only 930 pieces, making it a rare and treasured addition to your jewelry collection. Plus, when you order today, you'll receive the gold-finished sterling silver chain—a \$69 value—absolutely free!

Don't miss your chance to own this exclusive tribute to timeless elegance and meaningful symbolism.

#### Necklace Specifications:

- 2 ½ ctw. Kyocera lab opals and Diamond Aura® accents
- Yellow gold-finished .925 sterling silver setting
- 18" gold-clad .925 sterling silver chain

#### Opal Spirit Cross Pendant *plus* FREE Chain

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\*Special price only for customers using the offer code.

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# College Life

Not to tell tales out of school, but these readers give it the old college try and move to the head of the class. School's in session, and there's no place in Texas they'd rather be.

CURATED BY GRACE FULTZ



1

**1 CASSIE RAPPOLEE**  
NAVASOTA VALLEY EC

"Freshmen don't get the best seats, but they have the most spirit. Gig 'em Aggies!"

**2 MARY BORDEN**  
VICTORIA EC

The University of Texas marching band heads to the stadium in Austin.

**3 NANCY JANE MCMILLAN**  
NAVASOTA VALLEY EC

"Five-year-old Charlie visits his daddy's alma mater and gets in the spirit of cheering on the Texas Longhorns."

**4 KATY JAMESON**  
LAMAR EC

"Caleb Jameson's first win on the mound with Baylor. Living out his childhood dreams."



3



2



4

## Upcoming Contests

**DUE AUG 10** Country Life  
**DUE SEP 10** Snakes Alive!  
**DUE OCT 10** From the Oil Fields



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

**TCP** See Focus on Texas on our website for many more College Life photos from readers.





## A Muddy Path to Texas

20 years ago, Hurricane Katrina sent Louisianans into the open arms of Texans

BY PAIGE EATON  
ILLUSTRATION BY TARA JACOBY

**STANDING INSIDE OUR** Slidell, Louisiana, house, feet buried in slick gray bottom mud from the marshy waters of the Pontchartrain Basin, my husband, Jim, and I agreed to head for Texas. We knew Vicki, Jim's sister, would welcome us if we could get there.

A few days before, on August 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina had devastated coastal Mississippi and Louisiana, with us in the midst. It had been hard, yet we knew we were lucky. We eventually learned that 1,833 people died in the storm.

Uninhabitable, except by the minnows swimming in the bathtub, our house was sludgy. But it was still standing, and so were we. A tree had smashed our truck, but it worked. Gas, distressfully, was scarce. The 482-mile journey to Alba, Texas, 80 miles east of Dallas, would be

iffy if we couldn't find more fuel. We chanced it.

After tense highway miles, Lady Luck met us at fume level, and we refilled. Once in Alba, Vicki offered electricity, hot food, warm showers and clean sheets—luxuries I've never taken for granted since. Her home became our command center to rally insurance adjusters and source supplies.

Our truck entered an East Texas body shop. Meanwhile, Vicki loaned us hers for our drive back to Slidell to rebuild. Galahad, our German shepherd, stayed behind. We lived in limbo for months, back and forth, rebuilding in Louisiana and resupplying in Texas.

In St. Tammany Parish, it was disheartening. Goods and services were absent, and friends and neighbors were scattered across the country. Whenever we crossed the Texas threshold, peace and calm enfolded us. On the trips home, we bolstered for hardship.

We burned our candles low as we managed subsistence living along with our jobs and house rebuilding. As able, we'd roll west to visit Vicki and Galahad, and contentment would settle us. That was the balm we needed.

Before Katrina, I was a Louisiana-Mississippi hybrid and glad for it. Living in Texas was never part of my plan. But subtly, Texas burrows under a person's skin to build a cozy den.

In September 2006, we claimed citizenship. Our house is just a pasture away from Vicki's place.

That first night in our new home, I stood in the backyard, listening to crickets and stargazing. I saw lights shimmering at Vicki's, so I phoned her. She grabbed a flashlight and went to her front yard as we talked. There, she winked her light on and off. In turn, I grabbed a flashlight and signaled back. We both giggled.

At that moment, the red Texas dirt felt like solid ground upon which to build a new life. Twenty years later, I wholly confirm that it has been. ■

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Newark, DE**

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Never Have to Clean	✓	✗	✗	✗
No Clog Guarantee	✓	✗	✗	✗



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