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12

06 Calling an Audible

Texas School for the Deaf fights preconceptions and a pandemic with gridiron grit.

*By Mark Wangrin
Photos by Scott Van Osdol*

The Ramp Champs

Volunteers and wood corralled by the Texas Ramp Project lift neighbors statewide.

By Bob McCullough

04

Currents

The latest buzz

05

TCP Talk

Readers respond

16

Co-op News

Information plus energy and safety tips from your cooperative

25

Footnotes in Texas History

Invading Dallas
By Lori Grossman

26

TCP Kitchen

Football Favorites
By Vianney Rodriguez

30

Hit the Road

Creeping Back in Time
By Chet Garner

33

Focus on Texas

Photo Contest: Parenthood

34

Observations

The Farmer's Regret
By John Terry Wende

ON THE COVER

Texas School for the Deaf players burst onto the field through smoke and confetti.
Photo by Scott Van Osdol

ABOVE

Cooperative volunteers from CoServ help build a ramp for a North Texas resident with mobility limitations.
Photo by CoServ

Boosting Rural Texas

A STATEWIDE NONPROFIT wants to make sure rural communities don't miss out on their share of the billions in federal dollars available for broadband, water and energy upgrades; transportation infrastructure; and other projects.

Texas Rural Funders works to connect communities with grant opportunities and grant writers to work through a process that is often overwhelming.

Our state is expected to receive about \$2.5 billion for water infrastructure. As the state with the largest rural population, it also will receive billions in federal dollars in broadband infrastructure grants. In more than half of Texas counties, a majority of residents lacks access to high-speed internet.

To see if TRF can help your town or organization, visit texasruralfunders.org.



365 The length, in feet, of an aircraft in development called the WindRunner, which is intended to deliver wind turbine blades too large for transport on public roads. Its proposed record-breaking length would be three times the distance of the Wright brothers' first powered flight, in 1903.



FINISH THIS SENTENCE

My first job was ...

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

Here are some of the responses to our July prompt: **I'd like to be famous for ...**

Designing a health care system for all.

DORIS REDMAN
BLUEBONNET EC
BRENHAM

A little while.

VERA FIELDS
VIA FACEBOOK

Being a quiet listener instead of a loud talker.

JOE BABIN
BLUEBONNET EC
BASTROP

Making sweet potato pie.

ELENORA RICKETTS
VIA FACEBOOK

Visit our website to see more responses.

TCP Contests and More

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TEXASCOOPPOWER.COM



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Easy Breads

FOCUS ON TEXAS PHOTOS
Parks

RECOMMENDED READING
National Kids Take Over the Kitchen Day is September 13. We have the perfect recipes. Check out *Kids Cooking* from August 2021.



JULY 2024 Vegan Panhandlers

“Here in Kerr County we enjoy calling ourselves Center Pointers, Kerrvillians, Ingramites, Hunters and Mountain Homies.”

LYNETTE WALDREP
CENTRAL TEXAS EC
MOUNTAIN HOME



SHAW NIELSEN

One Town's Social Glue

What are folks in my town called [*Vegan Panhandlers*, July 2024]? Little Elmites? Little Elmians? A quick search lends the most validity to Little Elmers. Whimsical and a bit silly. I think Mr. Strong would approve.

Carrie Binns
CoServ
Little Elm

I live in Fischer and my name is Peter, so I like to call myself a Fischerman.

Peter Locke
Pedernales EC
Fischer

You omitted one obvious city that doesn't fit your demonym paradigm: Mesquite. People from Mesquite are referred to as Skeeters.

Ed Girard
HILCO EC
Hillsboro

One night during dinner when I lived in Oklahoma, the local weatherman referred to the people of Moore as Morons. I'll never forget it. I choked and spit food everywhere.

We never saw that young man on TV again.

Donna Allon
Bluebonnet EC
"A Bastropian"

Literary Menu

We stumbled across the Cactus Book Shop while looking for a restaurant 20 years ago [*Texas Book Man*, July 2024]. We found books by Paul Patterson, John Erickson, Elmer Kelton and others. Forgot about lunch and bought a first edition of *Crazy Women in the Rafters*, which I loaned to a friend and never saw again.

Now I'm going to call Felton Cochran and see if I can get another copy of that lost masterpiece.

J. Phil Dering
Pedernales EC
San Marcos

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DAVE SHAFER

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

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Calling an Audible

Texas School for the Deaf fights preconceptions and a pandemic with gridiron grit

BY MARK WANGRIN • PHOTOS BY SCOTT VAN OSDOL

ENERGIZED AND RAUCOUS, it was largely a pep rally like any other. Teams introduced. Cheerleaders cheering. Students screaming. The sound was deafening, even if in fact nearly all the attendees were already deaf.

The differences in the packed Austin gym on the Thursday before the Texas School for the Deaf's homecoming game were subtle but noticeable. No band. No chanting.

Sign language more than made up for that.

That's the rule at TSD, the only Deaf high school in Texas. Although there's a wide range of hearing loss among the students and staff, American Sign Language is the only allowed means of communication.

Except on the football field. There, anything goes.

Pad-popping hits are a universal language. Players who can talk, talk loudly and emphatically—the Rangers even got flagged in a recent season for “cussing.” Music blares in the weight room, the more bass the better. But communication is mostly by sign language, the intense looks on coach's faces and the use of other senses sharpened by hearing loss.

Players can't watch their opponent and coaches simultaneously, so signing from the sidelines isn't an option on the field. They can't hear opponents changing plays to better counter or attack, or teammates shouting adjustments. Paul Hubbard, a player at Gallaudet College, a Deaf school in Washington, D.C., invented the football huddle in the early 1890s to prevent opponents from stealing signs.

TSD's Kenneth Montanez, who shared head coaching duties with Archie Savannah Jr. in 2023, played multiple sports growing up but always loved football. He played five years at what is now Gallaudet University and kept feeding his passion by playing semipro football and rugby.

“It's more than physical for them,” writes Montanez, who lost his hearing as a baby in New York City. “It teaches self-discipline and how to achieve things as a community.”

The Rangers' annual 10-game schedule includes at least two games against other Deaf state schools, one home and one away. The host school puts on a dinner and dance for the visitors, with the idea of forming a nationwide network of peers who face similar obstacles.

Ursa Rewolinski's network was closer to home. Her godfather is former TSD head coach Andy Bonheyo, and she grew up in Austin as a fan of the football team. By age 3, she could identify NFL teams playing on TV by their helmets. After



OPPOSITE AND TOP: Quarterback Xiovan Tomlinson is aware of preconceptions in the hearing world. “They think that we have low IQs or we can't drive,” he says. “But really, deaf people can do anything.” ABOVE: Ball carrier Daniel Sweet looks for an opening during a scrimmage.

graduating from the Maryland School for the Deaf, she returned to teach at TSD in 2019, her football passion evident but unfulfilled.

“Everybody’s like, ‘Why are you not a coach?’ You know what, the door hadn’t really opened up for me,” she says through an ASL interpreter. “And so, long story short, I came back here, became a teacher and the door opened, and now I’m here.”

She became the team’s first female coach last season.

Great and Small

TSD began playing sports with a baseball team in 1887. Since then its teams have won 69 national championships in 12 sports, including 16 in football. And while those titles were meaningful, they weren’t statement-making the way a 2020 championship was. All it took was a pandemic and remarkable adaptability.

When the COVID-19 pandemic began in spring 2020, it hit TSD hard. Some 40% of the 500 students live on campus—they come from all over the state—and many concerned parents kept their children home. Other players fell ill.

Football is a physical sport that requires numbers—11 players per team on the field at any one time. It began looking like the Rangers might not have the numbers to field a team, much less compete, as the pandemic tore through its roster.

TSD belongs to the Texas Association of Private and Parochial Schools, which also sponsors six-man football, with smaller teams that play on shortened fields. To keep playing, the Rangers downsized.

“To continue to have a football program, it was the best decision that we ever made,” says athletic director Chris Hamilton, a member of Pedernales Electric Cooperative. “However, we had to deal with some very upset community



“It’s more than physical for them. It teaches self-discipline and how to achieve things as a community.”



OPPOSITE, FROM LEFT: Family members escort Lev Shayman, a member of the homecoming court, onto the field. Jeremiah Garcia played most of his life in the hearing world but didn't feel he got the proper support, academically or socially. He transferred to TSD in 2022. ABOVE: Cheerleaders keep school spirit front and center for the fans.

members and explain to people that we just couldn't make it as a full team.

"So it took time. The community kind of went through a grieving process."

And the team went through, well, a shrinking process. An 80-yard field was marked at their on-campus stadium, even as the goalposts remained in place for a 100-yard field. Illness and injury occasionally limited the 20-person roster to seven players.

But they won. And kept winning, through a 63-32 state championship victory over crosstown power Veritas Academy, which had routed them in a preseason scrimmage.

"Winning the state title as a Deaf school is way more challenging than winning the national title," writes Kylar Sicoli, a senior wide receiver on that team, in an email. "A Deaf school will always win the [Deaf] national title. We never won a football state title, so we made history."

Sound of Success

Winning the state title was another step in dismissing preconceptions hearing people might have.

"They think that we have low IQs or we can't drive. Things like that," says quarterback Xiovan Tomlinson, a third-generation deaf player at TSD. "But really, deaf people can

Sign of Their Times

American Sign Language has thousands of signs, from "aah" to "zucchini," but sometimes they just don't seem to be enough.

For example, there are two signs for Ranger, the TSD mascot. One is for park ranger. One is for forest ranger. Phil Mauro, a former TSD athletic director, didn't think either evoked the courage, resourcefulness and independence of the name-sake legendary Texas lawmen.

"Texas A&M had Gig 'Em, Miami had the 'U,'" recalls Mauro, 79, who is still coaching football in Ohio. "The biggest thing was to make the kids feel they were on the same level as everyone else."

Mauro borrowed the Hook 'em Horns sign from that school 3 miles up Congress Avenue in Austin, the University of Texas, and customized it by wrapping the middle finger over the index finger—the ASL sign for "R."

Almost 40 years later, it still represents what it means to be a Ranger.

"I'm really glad they still use it," Mauro says. "It was and is our Rangers No. 1 sign."



ABOVE: Players come together after a pregame pep talk. RIGHT: Theo Savannah with his father, Archie, who shared head coaching duties last season.

do anything.”

Montanez points out that he’s seen studies that deaf drivers are safer because they aren’t easily distracted and “have a lifetime’s learning on using their peripheral vision. It’s the same in football.”

AD Hamilton, who joined the school in 2001, says this is nothing new.

“Historically, Deaf teams have been oppressed just as deaf people have been oppressed, but hey, we’re here,” he says. “We’re doing this. We can do it. We’re just like you, and we’re better than you in some cases.”

Jermiah Garcia played most of his life in the hearing world and was a budding standout as a freshman at Shoemaker High School in Killeen, but he didn’t feel he got the proper support, academically or socially. So, encouraged by his interpreter, a TSD alumnus, Garcia transferred to TSD for his sophomore season in 2022.

“I was really lost trying to communicate with my teammates. I couldn’t have my interpreter on the field,” Garcia says. “My interpreter would tell me, some of the students are saying that you can’t do this, you can’t do that, you can’t play.”

Teammate Niven Zhang is more succinct. “I just feel like going to a public school would be really a waste of time because there’s a lot of logistical things that we have to work



“When coaches like me are able to communicate clearly, in depth and spatially, I can see the ‘aha’ moment in their eyes and faces.”



Ursa Rewolinski grew up with strong connections to the TSD football team. She became a teacher at the school in 2019 and last season became an assistant coach, the first woman to do so in the team’s history.



out with interpreters,” he says. “Here at Texas School for the Deaf, everything works just like it should.”

Montanez knows his players are in the right place for success.

“Too often, when they’re being coached by someone who doesn’t understand them (tends to be hearing), things fly over their head,” he writes. “When coaches like me are able to communicate clearly, in depth and spatially, I can see the ‘aha’ moment in their eyes and faces.

“I love seeing that.”

Help Ahead

One of the main challenges of a football player not being able to hear is, not surprisingly, communication.

Whistles. Audibles. Referee warnings. In-game coaching. Fans. Trash talk.

“Oh yeah, every opponent we go against has a lot of trash talk,” junior Theo Savannah says. “Then we show them we can play.”

Midway through the 2023 season, AT&T introduced a field-leveling technology, equipping helmets with 5G-augmented reality lenses that can display text.

NCAA rules, which many high school associations, including TAPPS, follow, prohibit electronic devices in hel-

metts, but Gallaudet was granted a one-game waiver to use the technology. The Bison promptly ended a four-game losing streak.

Sicoli, one of several TSD alums playing for the Bison, writes that the technology could help them avoid late hit penalties caused by not being able to hear the ref’s whistle.

“That could be a game changer for some deaf players,” Sicoli writes. “Also the helmet would help the coach and players communicate during the game. The coach always has difficulty getting the player’s attention.”

David Goodnight, a referee from Somerville who is a member of Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative, doesn’t know ASL—few who officiate TSD games do—but officiating deaf teams’ games is an ongoing education.

“I just learned two words last week,” he says. He points just above his temple for “heads” and puts the palm of his right hand over the top of left hand and wags his left index finger for “tails.”

Goodnight says deaf players do a good job avoiding late hits. “Coaches say you play to the whistle,” he says. “Deaf players understand you play till the end of the play.” ■



THE RAMP CHAMPS

Volunteers and wood corralled by the Texas Ramp Project lift neighbors statewide

BY BOB MCCULLOUGH

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Patsy Beasley with her late husband, ramp recipient Oral Beasley. Cooperative volunteers from CoServ with a ramp they built in Denton, and Wood County EC volunteers with one of their finished projects. OPPOSITE: CoServ volunteers have built dozens of ramps, and the CoServ Charitable Foundation has awarded more than \$70,000 to the Texas Ramp Project.

Texans love the ability to go and do as they desire—freedom that a lot of folks can take for granted. For some, leaving home is a struggle.

But Texans also care about their neighbors, so it's not surprising that a statewide army of 3,500 volunteers works year-round to give life-changing mobility to those dependent on wheelchairs.

The nonprofit Texas Ramp Project has coordinated the construction of more than 27,500 ramps that, if placed end to end, would stretch 142 miles. Recipients of the simple but durable wooden ramps are low-income older adults and others with disabilities identified by health care providers.

“Ramps change lives,” says Keith R. Henderson, TRP president. “They bring safety, independence and improved quality of life. They also ease the burden on family and caregivers. With safe access, older adults can age in place at home in their own environment. Where else can you show up on a Saturday morning and go home four hours later having transformed a person’s life?”

Such transformations originated in 1985, when members of the Richardson Kiwanis Club built a wheelchair ramp. One build after another led to the creation of the Dallas Ramp Project, which led to the construction of 1,400 ramps and showed a clear statewide need.

In 2006, TRP was incorporated to build ramps on a much

"Where else can you show up on a Saturday morning and go home four hours later having transformed a person's life?"

broader scale. John Laine, who had served as volunteer director of the Dallas Ramp Project, founded TRP and became its executive director. He continued in that capacity until late last year.

"Personally, I believe God gave each of us skills, and our job is to learn what those skills are and to use them to help others," Laine says. "I was given certain skills that seem to have blended well with TRP. It has been a blessing for me to have had this work put into my path."

TRP doesn't accept direct requests from clients or families seeking ramps. Referrals must come from a third-party health care provider via the TRP website, [texasramps.org](https://www.texasramps.org). That's also the web address for volunteering and making donations.

After an eligible ramp request is processed, TRP directs a trained surveyor to visit the prospective ramp recipient and design a structure that meets the client's needs. A volunteer construction crew then implements the design, typically in a few hours, with the help of precut wood delivered by TRP.

"Two hours of preparation probably saves three hours at the build site," says Tom Canfield of Fredericksburg, a surveyor and construction coordinator. Canfield has had a hand in more than 100 ramps.

Shortly after daybreak in July 2023, he and four friends converged on the rural home of Oral Beasley, who used a motorized wheelchair because of a stroke. Thanks to Canfield's prep work and his team's carpentry skills, Beasley was cruising smoothly on his new ramp by midday.

Beasley died just three months after the build, but his wife, Patsy, says the ramp drastically improved his well-being. She praises Canfield and his crew "for doing such a beautiful thing, the first time anyone helped us like that. It took away my husband's fear about tumbling over."

Regaining freedom and no longer feeling trapped at home are common experiences relayed by ramp recipients.

To make mobility miracles happen, TRP partners with churches, civic clubs, businesses, military units, youth groups and other organizations, says Sandy Knutson, TRP executive director. Among the most active are electric cooperatives, which are guided by the co-op principle of Concern for Community.

Co-op employees live up to that principle by performing community service for members who are also their neighbors and friends.

CoServ, an electric co-op based in Denton, became actively involved in TRP in 2016, and since then CoServ employees have built more than three dozen ramps. The CoServ Charitable Foundation has awarded \$71,000 in grants to the nonprofit.

"For people facing surgery or who have other mobility issues, traversing even a few steps can be dangerous," says Conan Tearney, CoServ client services manager. "It's a great feeling knowing you helped build something with your hands that means so much to a co-op member."

Another ardent TRP supporter, Wood County Electric Cooperative, has donated \$25,000 through its member-funded charitable foundation that helps nonprofits in its nine-county service area in northeast Texas. Employee volunteers are also involved in builds.

"Our mission statement is: Providing safe and reliable electric service while improving our communities where we live and serve," says Paige Eaton, communications director. "Caring for the communities we serve is embedded in what we do every day. Our members are our neighbors, and in Co-op Country, you look out for one another. TRP is just one of the ways we can do that." ■





MESSAGE FROM GENERAL MANAGER/CEO
JEFF LANE

Watch the Clock To Lock in Energy Savings

NO MATTER THE SEASON, a reliable flow of electricity is essential to ensuring Trinity Valley Electric Cooperative members stay comfortable and connected.

Here in Texas, we all know that summer temperatures often last well into fall, which means people spend more time indoors to avoid the heat and that air conditioners have to work overtime. This extra electricity causes spikes in demand, also known as energy peaks.

The electric grid is essentially a giant network of power lines that connects power plants and substations to homes and businesses throughout our state. All parts of the network must work together to make sure the flow of electricity stays balanced 24/7.

When the demand for electricity is higher than usual, power providers must ramp up production—



FLY VIEW PRODUCTIONS | ISTOCK.COM

whether from coal, natural gas, wind, the sun or other energy sources—and utilities pay more for electricity produced during the peak. These higher prices, along with the general increase in electricity use, are why you typically see higher bills during the hottest months.

In extreme cases, demand could overburden the available supply, causing electricity shortages. During these times utilities could be required to implement rolling power outages to reduce the demand for power and rebalance the grid.

But you can help ensure that we don't get to that point.

When our area experiences extreme heat and higher demand for electricity, conserve power to keep costs lower. It's easy—just watch the clock and avoid energy-intensive activities and chores during peak hours. TVEC's peak hours this time of year are 4–8 p.m.

When we all work together to reduce energy use during peak times, TVEC can lock in lower electricity rates so everyone in our community saves. Conserving during peak times also eases pressure on the grid and helps balance the supply and demand of power.

There are many ways to lower your home energy use. Here are a few recommendations to help you save energy (and money) during the summer peak:

Set your thermostat a few degrees higher. If you have a smart or programmable thermostat, adjust the settings so your cooling system syncs with the off-peak hours.

Speaking of raising the thermostat, did you know ceiling fans can make you feel 4 degrees cooler? Switch on ceiling or oscillating fans in occupied rooms to supplement your AC. Be sure to raise the thermostat a smidge while fans are running for maximum energy savings. Remember, fans cool people (not rooms), so turn them off when you leave the room.

Plan energy-intensive activities like laundry and running the dishwasher for off-peak hours. Use automatic timers to run hot tubs, pool pumps, water heaters and other appliances in the same way.

Unplug electronics when they're not in use, or use power strips to manage devices.

Close drapes and blinds during the afternoon to keep out unnecessary heat from sunlight.

When we all work together to beat the peak, our entire community benefits. Saving energy during peak times reduces your bills, keeps electric rates lower for all and relieves pressure on the grid. ■



Trinity Valley Electric Cooperative

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CHRIS WALKER

Save Electricity in Your Mobile Home

WHEN YOU LIVE in a mobile home, saving energy is different from that of a traditional house, primarily because of the different types of construction materials used. Depending on the age of your mobile home, you could

face a number of issues that cause your utility bills to be higher; the older a mobile home is, the more inefficient it's likely to be.

While you may not be able to change the structure of your mobile home, you can make small changes to help you save a little money. 14568001

Step 1: Prevent air leaks around the home.

- ▶ Install efficient windows and doors or add weatherstripping around the edges so your heated or cooled air does not escape through cracks in the sides.
- ▶ Use caulk to close up any air leaks around pipes, plumbing fixtures, air ducts, window-mounted air conditioners and other openings.
- ▶ Check for leaks in the walls.

Step 2: Ensure your mobile home is properly insulated to prevent heat loss—particularly in older models.

- ▶ If your home design allows it, add insulation to the walls and to the bottom of the mobile home. You can also add insulated, energy-efficient skirting around the base of the home.
- ▶ To keep heat from getting out through the ceiling, add a roof cap, which is easier than taking off the roof to add insulation.

Step 3: Take steps to save money on lighting.

- ▶ Switch to sheer curtains to take advantage of the sunlight in cooler months, particularly if you have smaller windows.
- ▶ Replace your existing lights with energy-efficient LED bulbs, which use up to 75% less energy and last longer.
- ▶ You can also install lighting timers to automatically turn off lights and use motion sensors or solar lights for outdoor illumination.

Step 4: Manage the amount of water you use.

- ▶ Fix leaks around faucets and in pipes, especially those in uninsulated spaces in your home.
- ▶ To check for leaks, pour food coloring in the toilet tank but don't flush. If there's a problem, the water in the bowl will turn that color in less than an hour.
- ▶ Install aerators in faucets to reduce water use by up to 30%.
- ▶ Replace the showerhead with a low-flow model.

Step 5: Reduce the energy you use for heating water.

- ▶ Insulate your water pipes to prevent energy loss, particularly where they run outdoors or through an unheated crawl space.
- ▶ Wrap your water heater in an insulated blanket. Kits make installation quick and easy.
- ▶ Use cold water for laundry whenever possible. Not only will you save on hot water use, your clothes will last longer.
- ▶ Switch to a more efficient water heater, particularly if you have an older model that came with the mobile home, and turn it down to 120 degrees. ■



Charitable Foundation



Year-To-Date Grant Totals by Purpose

Animal Rescue	\$11,250
Children's Advocacy	\$13,500
Community Outreach	\$9,000
Community Projects	\$4,000
Continuing Education	\$4,000
Emergency Services	\$2,250
Environmental/Beautification	\$5,000
Family Resource	\$19,500
Fine Arts	\$4,000
Food Pantry	\$16,000
Health Resource	\$7,500
Mental Health	\$4,000
Public Library	\$4,000
Public School Education	\$13,500
School Supplies	\$7,000
Special Needs	\$5,500
Veterans	\$9,500
Youth Programs	\$3,000

**As of July 3, 2024*

What is Operation Round Up?

Operation Round Up is a voluntary program. Participating members have their electric bills rounded up each month to the next whole dollar amount. The portion that is rounded up goes to the TVEC Charitable Foundation.

For example, a bill of \$75.68 would be rounded up to \$76. Then a 32 cent contribution is made to the TVEC Charitable Foundation.

July 2024 Operation Round Up Awards

Grants

Liberty Baptist Church	\$3,500
Lone Star CASA	\$6,000
Mabank ISD Edu. Foundation	\$3,000
Sarah Maples Chapter D.A.R.	\$3,500

Bill Assistance

Henderson County Help Center	\$5,000
St. Charles Borromeo Church	\$5,000
Salvation Army - Malakoff	\$5,000

The combined giving of thousands of co-op members adds up to making a big difference for charitable organizations that work in the service area. Thank you for rounding up, TVEC members!



DON JOHNSON | TVEC

Nana and Papa's Bluebird Cafe

Another home cooking favorite keeps TVEC crews coming back

THERE IS A PRETTY GOOD CHANCE YOU WILL have to wait a few minutes for a passing train, but just north of the tracks in downtown Wills Point you will find Nana and Papa's Bluebird Cafe, a classic diner that is known both for its tasty home cooking and sweet treats for the end of your meal.

"The desserts are there waiting in the refrigerator case and so that is good," said Andrew Smith, Trinity Valley Electric Cooperative operations superintendent. "There are daily lunch specials, but also burgers and a wide variety of things that would be for just about any appetite."

Outside, the pink-ish brick storefront stands out from the surrounding downtown buildings, but stepping inside is a bit like time travel. With hand lettered menu boards, the chatter of neighbors in conversation and no distracting big screen televisions, you could quickly slip into nostalgia.

"It is a very comfortable atmosphere to just go in and sit down and enjoy a meal," Smith said. "The hometown feel when you walk in the door is matched by the people who run it, which is just great."

Smith recommended the grilled chicken Cobb salad, which comes with generous portions and is just healthy enough to justify one of the aforementioned desserts.

Find the Bluebird at 124 W. North Commerce St. and online at facebook.com/bluebirdwillspoint. ■



Win \$100 Just for Reading

Somewhere, hidden on pages 16–23 is a TVEC account number. Read closely. If the account number is yours, contact the member services department by September 30 to receive a \$100 credit on your electric bill. Don't miss out—you could be our winner.



Make Room for Roadside Crews

When the power goes out, so do Trinity Valley Electric Cooperative's crews.

Lineworkers are the first to respond after an outage occurs, and they work tirelessly to restore power to the communities we serve. If you see one of our line crews on the side of the road, we kindly ask that you move over if possible and give them a little extra space to work.

If you approach a crew on a road with multiple lanes, and if safety and traffic conditions allow, move over into the far lane. Or, if moving over is not an option, we ask that you slow down when approaching roadside crews. We care deeply about everyone's safety, and this extra precaution ensures just that.

Emergency responders, including those in utility vehicles, often find themselves working near busy roadways. Texas law requires drivers to either vacate the lane closest to a stopped emergency vehicle or slow down 20 mph below the speed limit. If the speed limit is below 25 mph, the driver must slow down to 5 mph.

There's plenty of room on the road for everyone. Let's work together to keep our roadways safe. ■



TVEC | DON JOHNSON



Texas Lineman's Rodeo Brings Trophies and Appreciation for Crews' Family Support



MEDIA & CONTENT SPECIALIST
LEIGH DENNEY

AS A RELATIVELY NEW co-op employee, the 2024 Texas Lineman's Rodeo offered an exciting opportunity to learn more about the competition and the job that line crews do every day. Little did I know I would get even more insight into the families of the lineworkers, and how the family bonds give them the strength and support to pursue the

career that keeps the power on for all of us.

Each July, co-op and municipal lineworkers from across the state gather at Nolte Island Park in Seguin, TX. Competitors race the clock in a series of events using the same skills they use in the field, and other more seasoned lineworkers serve as judges and coaches.

The rodeo also offers linemen an opportunity to showcase their skills for friends and family who attend, providing a peek into the real day-to-day challenges that they face. This year's event brought a lot of success for the TVEC team, with individual and team wins in the pole speed climb competition.

"I wish others knew the sacrifices that linemen make. Sometimes, they don't know what sort of situation they are going into, and neither do we back home," said Morgan Lathem, wife of Trinity Valley Electric Cooperative Operations Superintendent Josh Lathem.

She recalled the weeks before the rodeo event, when TVEC crews volunteered to assist in restoring damage caused by Hurricane Beryl. "They helped down in swamp bottoms full of

snakes and no telling what else, but at the end of the day I know that's what these guys love to do," she said.

Surrounded by pecan and oak trees, the open grassy area of Nolte Island is transformed to a competition field with rows of wooden utility poles stretching into the distance. The island is notorious for flooding, so the competition is held in July, which means scorching Texas heat.

By 9 a.m., everyone is sweating as they watch the linemen climb up and down the poles competing in events like hurt man rescue, where they save a life-size mannequin from the top of a pole.

By midday, I was cheering on our team while standing beside the wives, children in wagons, and other co-workers. I had to remind myself to capture photos of the guys performing because I was so captivated at the support they had from the sidelines. I could see the excitement in the wives' eyes, but I

could also feel the worry as they watched, knowing that at any moment, they could be hurt.

To wrap up the day, everyone gathers to play corn hole, make dinner of the leftovers from the Barbecue Cook-off, and talk with one another about recent storms or upcoming birthday party plans. The kids run around laughing and playing, decked out in "future lineman" shirts and bows that say, "my daddy is a lineman."

Seeing the faces behind the men that risk their lives working the lines brought a tear to my eye. Now, when I think about their safety while performing a job, I will also think about their wives, children and parents. I also learned that it was true what they told me—You should make sure to wear comfortable shoes. ■



Blake Pollett, daughter of Zach Pollett and Madeline Jenkins, shows off the trophies Zach won at the Texas Lineman's Rodeo July 19.



TVEC | DON JOHNSON

Know What To Do in an Electrical Emergency

YOU KNOW THE electrical safety basics such as: Don't use appliances near water. But safety isn't just about prevention. It requires knowing what to do if you or someone nearby comes into contact with electricity. **Review this list now, before your next emergency:**


If someone nearby comes into contact with electricity, do not touch that person or anything the person is touching. Instead, call 911. If the source of electricity is an appliance, grab the plug—not the cord—and pull it out of the outlet. If you cannot safely remove the plug, turn off the power at the fuse or circuit breaker.

If an electrical wire falls on your car, do not get out of the car. You're generally safer inside your vehicle. Your tires protect you because electricity seeks the quickest path to the ground—through the outside of the car, through the tires and into the ground. Call 911 and Trinity Valley Electric Cooperative and stay in your car until help arrives and the electricity is shut off.

Most power lines are not insulated, so they're never safe to touch. When a wire falls to the ground, it may still be live, even if you don't see sparks. Call 911 and TVEC if you see a downed wire. Warn others to keep their distance.

Wood is a poor conductor of electricity, but it's still a conductor, especially when wet. Don't use a wooden ladder near a power line. If a ladder begins to fall into a power line, don't grab it. Let it fall and call your co-op so we can safely address the problem.

Only pure rubber is an insulator, and most household products don't contain pure rubber. Don't try to handle electrical emergencies at home, even if you're wearing rubber gloves or shoes. ■



TVEC
TRINITY VALLEY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE



Energy Quiz

How much of the United States is served by electric cooperatives?

electric.coop/electric-cooperative-fact-sheet

A • 22%
B • 56%
C • 40%

Win \$100!

Send your answer and contact information to contest@tvec.coop or contact TVEC Member Services by September 30. One \$100 bill credit winner will be chosen from all correct replies. Look for the correct answer in a future *Texas Co-op Power*.

August Energy Quiz: Average U.S. Annual Usage

GIANT WINDMILLS DOT THE landscape in many parts of the globe these days, but turning wind power into electric power is not new at all.

Starting with Josef Friedlander's demonstration piece at the Vienna International Electrical Exhibition in 1883, the late 1800s proved to be a time of great innovation in the field of electric power.

As of the end of 2023, more than 341,000 turbines generate power around the world with more than 1,000 gigawatts of wind power capacity.

Congratulations to our July Energy Quiz winner, Mark Simon of Athens.

Look for the winner of this month's contest in the November issue of *Texas Co-op Power*. ■

TEXAS DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Hurricane Preparedness Guidelines

Hurricane Season Is June 1–November 30

Preparedness Checklist

- ▶ **Make an evacuation plan.** Find activated evacuation routes at [DriveTexas.org](https://www.drivetexas.org) or by dialing 1-800-452-9292. Call 211 to find out if you live in an evacuation zone.
- ▶ **Sign up for emergency alerts.** Make sure your mobile device is enabled to receive Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEAs).
- ▶ **Prepare an emergency supply kit.** Learn how to build an emergency kit at [ready.gov/build-a-kit](https://www.ready.gov/build-a-kit).
- ▶ **Review your home insurance policy.**
- ▶ **Register with the State of Texas Emergency Assistance Registry (STEAR)** at [stear.tdem.texas.gov](https://www.stear.tdem.texas.gov) or by dialing 211 if you live in an evacuation zone and:
 - Have a disability or medical needs and do not have a car or other vehicle to use in an evacuation.
 - Have a disability or medical needs and do not have friends or family to help in an evacuation.

Information collected for STEAR is confidential.

Hurricane Preparedness Online Resources

Texas Division of Emergency Management: [tdem.texas.gov](https://www.tdem.texas.gov)

Texas Department of State Health Services: [texasready.gov](https://www.texasready.gov)

American Red Cross: [redcross.org](https://www.redcross.org)

U.S. Department of Homeland Security: [ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov)

Office of Texas Gov. Greg Abbott: [gov.texas.gov](https://www.gov.texas.gov)

DIVISIÓN DE ADMINISTRACIÓN DE EMERGENCIAS DE TEXAS

Preparación para huracanes

La temporada de huracanes es del 1 de junio al 30 de noviembre

Lista de verificación de preparación:

- ▶ **Haga un plan de evacuación.** Encuentre rutas de evacuación activadas en [DriveTexas.org](https://www.drivetexas.org) o marcando 1-800-452-9292. Llame al 211 para averiguar si usted vive en una zona de evacuación.
- ▶ **Regístrese para recibir alertas de emergencia.** Asegúrese de que su dispositivo móvil esté habilitado para recibir Alertas de emergencia inalámbricas (WEAs).
- ▶ **Prepare un kit de emergencia.** Aprenda como construir un kit de emergencia en [ready.gov/build-a-kit](https://www.ready.gov/build-a-kit).
- ▶ **Revise su póliza de seguro de hogar.**
- ▶ **Regístrese con el Registro de Asistencia de Emergencia del Estado de Texas (STEAR)** en [stear.tdem.texas.gov](https://www.stear.tdem.texas.gov) o marcando el 211 si vive en una zona de evacuación y:
 - Tiene una discapacidad o necesidades médicas y no tiene un auto u otro vehículo para usar en una evacuación.
 - Tiene una discapacidad o necesidades médicas y no tiene amigos o familiares para ayudar en una evacuación.

La información recolectada para STEAR es confidencial.

Recursos en línea para la preparación para huracanes

División de Administración de Emergencias de Texas: [tdem.texas.gov](https://www.tdem.texas.gov)

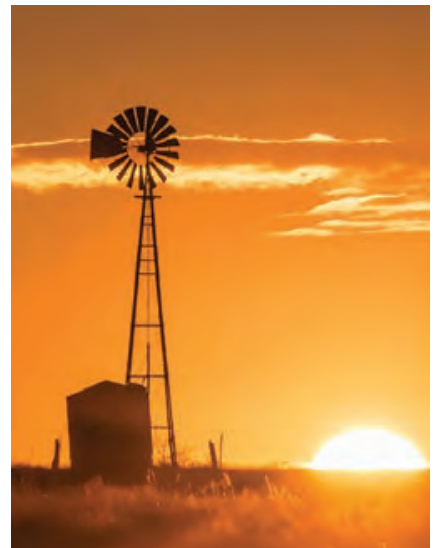
Departamento de Servicios de Salud del Estado: [texasready.gov](https://www.texasready.gov)

Cruz Roja Americana: [redcross.org](https://www.redcross.org)

Departamento de Seguridad Nacional de los Estados Unidos: [ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov)

Oficina del Gobernador de Texas Greg Abbott: [gov.texas.gov](https://www.gov.texas.gov)

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A Load of Toads

Destined for gardening heroics one minute, hosed the next

BY SHANE TORNO • ILLUSTRATION BY JOHN KACHIK

I MUST HAVE BEEN 8 or 9 years old one summer when I commented to my grandmother that recent rains at our house in Corpus Christi had created a population explosion of toads in our backyard.

She was an avid gardener and always liked finding ways to use natural approaches to improve her yields.

For example, she actively brewed and used something she called “barnyard tea” to water her garden. She created the concoction by pouring water over cow manure to fill 50-gallon drums. After the “tea” had steeped for days in the summer sun, she applied it to her produce and flowers.

She was very interested in my story of the ongoing toad extravaganza and asked if I would be willing to catch the surplus amphibians for delivery to her garden in Sinton, up the road from Corpus Christi. She explained that toads eat lots of garden pests and could help her grow better vegetables and flowers (in fact, the U.S. Department of Agriculture estimates that a single adult toad can slurp up 10,000 insects in a single summer).

I was happy to have a way to help my grandmother out. My sister and cousin were just as enthusiastic to help once they heard the plan.

The next day we started early and collected toads of varying sizes all day long.

We used the garden hose in our overgrown flower beds to flush them out, and we sorted them according to size, placing them in 5-gallon buckets. By midafternoon we had a bucket for large toads and a bucket for small toads.

My mom got us loaded into the dark green—toad-colored—family van, and we set off for the 40-minute drive to my grandmother’s house.

We hadn’t even made it out of the neighborhood when my mom had to swerve abruptly to avoid an accident. This was before seat belt laws, and none of us kids were buckled in. In fact, my cousin and I rarely sat in the seats at all. We often laid on the seats or in the back cargo area.

And that’s where we were, the back cargo area, when the ride came to a sudden and unsettling stop. Mom avoided a collision, but the evasive maneuver sent the buckets of toads rolling around in the back with Keith and me in the mix.

It wasn’t until that moment that I realized just how many tiny toads fit into a 5-gallon bucket. The big

toads were easy to catch, but there seemed no end to the task of rounding up the little ones. Mom had to pull over so everyone could help wrangle the amphibians.

It turns out that a 1980s full-size van had many nooks and crannies that could hide tiny toads (some of those little guys evaded us for days). After several minutes of frantic work, we were satisfied that we had most of the toads back in the buckets and continued our journey.

When we arrived at our grandmother’s house, we told her the story of the hard-earned amphibians. She was very thankful for our labors and took the buckets out to the garden to release the toads into her neatly groomed rows.

To avoid handling the stressed little guys, she turned on the garden hose and rinsed all the little ones out of the bucket. As they came out of the bucket and washed into the straw, they acted strangely.

Instead of jumping about with all their might, as they had done in the van, they turned over on their backs and made no attempt to hop away at all. They just piled up on top of each other in an ugly heap. They were dead.

We didn’t understand what had happened until we felt the water coming from the hose. It was burning hot.

The late afternoon Texas sun had heated the hose water to almost boiling.

The toads had made it so far—only to die at the cusp of freedom. We were devastated at the loss, but there is no use crying over killed milk, or something like that.

To this day, I never turn on the garden hose for any reason without testing the water temperature and sadly thinking of those tiny toads. ■



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Exp. Date: **CVV #:** _____

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TOTAL	



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The Beatles perform at Dallas Memorial Auditorium in September 1964.

Invading Dallas

Frenzied fans saw—but barely heard—music history when the Beatles came to Texas

BY LORI GROSSMAN

IT HAS BEEN MORE than 60 years since what some people call the world's first boy band appeared on a Sunday night TV show and changed everything. And this month marks exactly 60 years since the Beatles first came to Texas.

The British pop band's first U.S. tour brought them to Dallas Memorial Auditorium on September 18, 1964. The band touched down at Love Field just after midnight that day, greeted by thousands of screaming fans. North Texas was abuzz with anticipation, including 10-year-old Pud (short for Puddin') Kearns of suburban Greenville.

In early 1964, Kearns was a fourth grader when word spread that the Beatles would be on the *Ed Sullivan Show* on February 9. That night, she was watching.

"I was just blown away," she remem-

bers. "I'd never heard anything like that before. And I immediately fell in love."

Kearns and her friends acquired the band's records and read about them in fan magazines. Later that year, North Texas Beatles fans got some thrilling news: John, Paul, George and Ringo were coming to Dallas for one of 32 shows in 25 cities over 33 days.

"There was a lot of excitement when it was announced," Kearns says. "At that time, I didn't think there was any possibility that I would get to go."

But Eliza, the 10-year-old granddaughter of a family friend, had tickets and invited Kearns.

"I couldn't believe my luck!" Kearns says. The girls had no idea that a big surprise awaited them before the concert. They showed up early to have a

picnic behind the auditorium (now part of the Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center).

"All of a sudden, an ambulance drives down the ramp past us towards the auditorium. This was an old-fashioned station wagon," Kearns says. "The Beatles were in it! They looked out of the window and waved, and then they were gone. I remember seeing Paul and Ringo. They were only 20 or 30 feet from us."

A sellout crowd of 10,000 fans packed the venue and waited through three opening acts—Clarence "Frogman" Henry, the Exciters and Jackie DeShannon, all backed by Bill Black's Combo. Pud and Eliza's \$5.50 tickets earned them balcony seats, where they eagerly waited for Dallas DJ Irving Harrigan (aka Ron Chapman) to introduce the main act.

"All the girls were screaming. Eliza and I did, too," Kearns says with a laugh. "George was my favorite. I remember *All My Loving* and the first chord of *A Hard Day's Night*. You could hear opening notes but not much more because of the screaming."

The Beatles' 30-minute set list included 12 songs. The band returned to Texas in August 1965 for two sold-out shows at Houston's Sam Houston Coliseum.

An editorial in *The Dallas Times Herald* that day in Dallas took a dim view of the band: "While some others may be able to recall who or what they were in ... five years, most people will not."

Kearns knew better.

"I was a rock star in fifth grade for a while before and after the concert. I knew that I had seen something very, very special," she says. "And 60 years later, it's still a big deal." ■

Football Favorites

We've recruited proven winners for your game day lineup

BY VIANNEY RODRIGUEZ, FOOD EDITOR

I first made my slow cooker bean dip for a Super Bowl fiesta, and boy was it a hit. It was soon requested for every family gathering and was one of the first recipes added to my slow cooker cookbook. This elevates canned beans to a whole new tasty level.

Slow Cooker Bean Dip

1 teaspoon olive oil
 ½ onion, diced
 2 cloves garlic, minced
 2 cans pinto beans (15 ounces each), drained and rinsed
 2 cans red beans (15 ounces each), drained and rinsed
 2 cans black beans (15 ounces each), drained and rinsed
 2 cans kidney beans (15 ounces each), drained and rinsed
 2 cans Mexican-style diced tomatoes (15 ounces each), undrained
 ½ cup chopped cilantro, plus more for garnish (optional)
 2 teaspoons cumin
 2 teaspoons chili powder
 1 teaspoon salt
 1 teaspoon ground black pepper
 Shredded cheddar cheese, for garnish
 Mexican crema or sour cream, for garnish

1. Heat oil in a skillet over medium-high heat. Add onion and sauté 3 minutes, or until light and translucent. Add garlic and cook, stirring often, for 2 minutes. Remove from heat.

2. Combine sautéed onion and garlic, beans, diced tomatoes, ½ cup cilantro, cumin, chili powder, salt and pepper in a slow cooker. Stir until combined. Cover and cook on low 2 hours.

3. Serve warm, topped with more cilantro, shredded cheese, and Mexican crema or sour cream.

SERVES 12

TCP Follow Vianney Rodriguez as she cooks in *Cocina Gris* at sweetlifebake.com, where she features a recipe for Tex-Mex Onion Dip.





Dry Rub Baked Chicken Wings

JACKIE MCEATHRON
PEDERNALES EC

These tender, juicy baked chicken wings coated in a mouthwatering homemade dry rub will have football fans raving! And they're so good, you won't miss the deep fryer. Serve with your favorite dipping sauce.

- 2 pounds chicken wings**
- 2 tablespoons baking powder**
- 2 teaspoons salt**
- 3 teaspoons paprika**
- 2 teaspoons garlic powder**

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Line a baking sheet with foil or parchment paper. Coat a baking rack with cooking spray and place on the baking sheet.
2. Dry chicken wings with paper towels. In a medium bowl, combine baking powder, salt, paprika and garlic powder. Add chicken wings to bowl and toss to coat evenly. Shake off each wing and place on the baking rack.
3. Bake 30 minutes, then turn and bake until golden and crispy, about 10–15 minutes longer. Serve warm.

SERVES 4

[MORE RECIPES >](#)



\$500 WINNER

Texas Chili

GWEN JONES
BRYAN TEXAS UTILITIES



This brisket chili is a surefire crowd pleaser—hearty, a little spicy and packed with flavor. Garnish with your favorite toppings to make the perfect meal-in-a-bowl. Double the recipe to ensure tasty lunch leftovers.

SERVES 6–8

- ¼ cup canola oil**
- 1 small red onion, diced**
- 2 cloves garlic, minced**
- 2 red bell peppers, diced**
- ½ tablespoon kosher salt**
- 2 tablespoons chili powder**
- 1 tablespoon chipotle powder**
- 2 tablespoons smoked paprika**
- 1 pound smoked lean beef brisket, diced**
- 2 cans diced fire roasted tomatoes (14.5 ounces each)**
- 4 cups beef broth**
- 1 small bunch cilantro, chopped**
- Sour cream, for garnish**
- Shredded cheddar cheese, for garnish**

1. Heat oil in an 8-quart pot over medium-high heat. Sauté onion, garlic and peppers until tender.
2. Add salt, spices, brisket, tomatoes and beef broth. Reduce heat to simmer, cover and let cook 2 hours. Remove from heat and stir in cilantro.
3. Serve topped with sour cream and shredded cheese.

TCP \$500 Recipe Contest

EASY BREADS DUE SEPTEMBER 10

If you make bread that skips the kneading and hours of rising, we want to know. Send those recipes in for a shot at \$500. Don't loaf around; enter by September 10.





Jalapeño Wontons

SUZANNE HAWKINS
CENTRAL TEXAS EC

The crispy wonton cups and filling can be made pregame. When it's time to nibble, fill the wontons, pop them in the oven and bake until golden.

- 12 wonton or eggroll wrappers**
- Kosher salt**
- 8 slices fully cooked bacon, diced**

- 1 package cream cheese (8 ounces), room temperature**
- 1 cup shredded cheddar cheese**
- ½ cup sour cream**
- ¼ cup mayonnaise**
- 1 jalapeño pepper, finely diced, seeds removed for less heat**
- 3 green onions, chopped**
- ¼ cup chopped cilantro, for garnish**

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Coat a muffin pan with cooking spray.
2. Slice wonton or egg roll wrappers in half and place two strips crisscross in each muffin cup. Sprinkle wontons with kosher salt. Bake wontons 5–8 minutes or until lightly golden brown.
3. In a large bowl, combine bacon, cream cheese, cheddar cheese, sour cream, mayonnaise, jalapeño and green onions. Mix well. Spoon filling into wontons.
4. Bake 10–15 minutes, until bubbly. Serve warm, garnished with cilantro.

MAKES 12

Kick Things Off Right

BY VIANNEY RODRIGUEZ

Team spirit: Add a few drops of food coloring in your team colors to frosting for cupcakes or cake. Sneak team colors into popcorn by stirring in colored candy.

Drinks: Keep plenty of beverages on hand to balance out all the salty snacks you're serving. Include options for those who don't drink alcohol, like sparkling water or soda. Don't forget the ice!

Stay fresh: Keep food at the ideal temperature in a slow cooker or chafing dishes. Cover food with lids or foil if hosting outdoors, and place dips and guacamole over a bowl of ice to keep them chilled.

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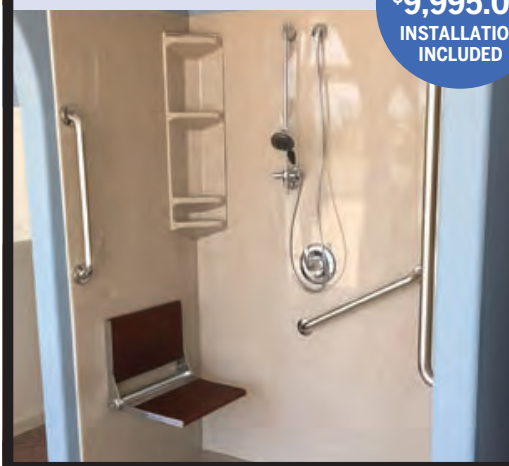
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COURTESY CHET GARNER

Creeping Back in Time

The Munster Mansion in Waxahachie brings 1960s Hollywood to life

BY CHET GARNER

IN MOST CIRCLES, asking someone if they prefer *The Munsters* or *The Addams Family* can make for fun dinner conversation. But in Waxahachie, there's only one right answer. Because even though *The Munsters'* beloved sitcom wrapped in 1966, the family's iconic mansion on 1313 Mockingbird Lane lives on in this growing town south of Dallas.

Pulling up to the house felt like the opening scene to a scary movie, with overgrown trees obscuring the mansion's dark facade. However when I knocked on the door, I was greeted with a kind Texas smile from owner Sandra McKee, who grew up watching the show and dreaming of someday living in the kooky mansion.

When she had a chance to make her dream a reality, she and her husband, Charles, obsessed over all 70 episodes of the show to recreate the exact layout and dimensions of the haunted abode, which, ironically, never existed in real life but was just a collection of soundstages on a Hollywood backlot. But this home feels as real as Spot, the pet dragon under the stairs. The McKees host paid private tours by appointment only.

Not only has Sandra collected a number of authentic props, such as a complete dining room set, she's also found life-size mannequins of all the characters, including a towering Herman Munster and his beautiful bride, Lily. Upstairs I found Eddie holding his famous bat and Grandpa tinkering in his lab. I couldn't believe the details and the true-to-screen secret passages.

Each cobweb-filled room tapped into the dusty vaults of my brain and brought back memories of watching the show from my grandparents' floor.

Sandra proudly shared the story of the time actor Al Lewis (aka Grandpa) visited, and his eyes filled with tears of joy and disbelief. It seems this spooky reality is better than fiction. ■

ABOVE Chet cozies up to a likeness of Grandpa from *The Munsters*.

TCP If you dare, join Chet as he checks in on the Munsters. Watch the video 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.

SEPTEMBER

7

Fredericksburg Friends of Pioneer Memorial Library Book Sale, (830) 997-6513, pmlfbg.com

Levelland Cotton and Crude Concert, (806) 894-3157, facebook.com/cottonandcrudefest

Palestine Dogwood Jamboree: All About Classic Country, (903) 724-2556, visitpalestine.com

10

Corsicana [10, 12-15] A Wrinkle in Time, (903) 872-5421, thewlac.com

12

Grapevine [12-15] GrapeFest, (817) 410-3185, grapevinetexasusa.com

13

Kerrville [13-14] Arts & Crafts Show, (830) 895-0100, tbck.org

Brenham [13-21] Washington County Fair, (979) 836-4112, washingtoncofair.com

14

Chappell Hill Airing of the Quilts, (979) 337-9910, chappellhilltx.com

Rosenburg Ride to Rosenberg Car Show, (713) 502-3168, rosenbergartsalliance.com

San Marcos Treasure Sale, (512) 392-4295, heritagesanmarcos.org



Pick of the Month

Xtreme Hummingbird Xtravaganza

Lake Jackson, September 14, 21
(979) 480-0999, gcbo.org

Get a close-up look at ruby-throated hummingbirds as they make their yearly migration. Professionals will band the tiny birds, and you can symbolically adopt a hummingbird to support conservation efforts. The event includes educational booths, activities for kids, a plant sale and nature store.

21

Azle Lord's Acre Harvest Festival & Car Show, (817) 444-1382, facebook.com/silvercreekmc

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

22

Giddings Wendish Fest, (979) 366-2441, facebook.com/texaswendish

25

New Braunfels [25-29] Comal County Fair & Rodeo, (830) 625-1505, comalcountyfair.org

MORE EVENTS >

TCP Submit Your Event

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

Fredericksburg is the Polka Capital of Texas
Downtown Historic Fredericksburg on Marktplatz
www.oktoberfestinfbg.com



Cast-Iron Skillet Giveaway Contest

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OR DELANE CAGLE

DELANEC@GMAIL.COM



SEPTEMBER EVENTS CONTINUED

27

Giddings [27-28]
Texas Word Wrangler Book Festival, (979) 542-2716, giddingspubliclibrary.org

Mason Old Yeller Day, (325) 347-5446, mason.ploud.net

Harper [27-28]
Frontier Days, harpercommunitypark@gmail.com, harpercommunitypark.com

Lewisville [27-28] Western Days, (972) 219-3401, lewisvillewesterndays.com

Winnsboro [27-28]
Cowboy Music and Poetry Gathering, (903) 342-0686, winnsborocenterforthearts.com

28

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

OCTOBER

4

Dripping Springs [4-5] Lone Star Gourd Festival, texasgourdsociety@hotmail.com, texasgourdsociety.org

5

Huntington Catfish Festival, (936) 635-3306, shophuntingtontx.com

New Braunfels Das Fest, (830) 629-2943, newbraunfelsconservation.org

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Parenthood

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CURATED BY GRACE FULTZ



1

1 CHARLES BAXTER
COSERV
"Mother mallard and nine ducklings."

2 SANDRA DRAKE
BLUEBONNET EC
"My daughter, the youngest of four, has waited a long time for her turn at parenting. The joy her newborn baby boy brings can be seen in every fiber of her being."

3 LINDSAY HUMPHREYS
SOUTH PLAINS EC
"Learning to fly fish the rivers of New Mexico with Dad."

4 HELEN FOWLER
PEDERNALES EC
A father's love on his daughter's wedding day.



2



3



4

Upcoming Contests

- DUE SEP 10 **Parks**
- DUE OCT 10 **I Love**
- DUE NOV 10 **Small Spaces**



Enter online at TexasCoopPower.com/contests.

TCP See Focus on Texas on our website for many more Parenthood photos from readers.



The Farmer's Regret

A farm tractor will get you far—if you look after it

BY JOHN TERRY WENDE
ILLUSTRATION BY
DAVID MOORE

THIS WAS SUPPOSED to be a really good deal. Smart too.

We had bought a 15-acre farm south of Austin in 1974 and now, 10 years later, our (new to us) 1940s Farmall B tractor was the perfect choice for our small operation.

Living on an educator's salary and applying my knowledge as a high school economics teacher, I was proud of myself for taking extra-close care of my tractor. I even built a small shed to keep it protected and dry.

I remember that no matter what happened or what the problem was, I always found a way to keep that Farmall in good running condition.

Over the years, I have seen a number of tractors—and pictures of tractors—silently keeping vigil in their temporary-turned-final resting places.

An old Ford tractor, for years on end, sits under the canopy of a large live oak tree, proudly displaying a “for sale” sign. Then there's the tractor sitting near the corner of a fence row with an assortment of brush and vines winding their way through it. I had often wondered: How could a person abandon their machine and leave it out there all by itself?

I would never do that—would I?

Then I started having battery and generator issues and struggled to get the parts I needed to fix my Farmall. The longer that tractor sat outside in the very same spot, the less I thought about hauling it back to the shed, so I could at least get it out of the weather.

Suddenly I had become that farmer who let his machine down.

It's not just the weather you have to watch out for either. A friend told me about his family trying to raise cattle in Arkansas in the 1950s, and when that didn't work, they moved back to Texas and settled in Taylor County. They brought back all their farm equipment, including a Minneapolis-Moline tractor, which they parked between the house and the county road.

He said that, over the years, people would sneak onto his property and help themselves to various tractor parts. It made him really mad because, he said, all they had to do was ask.

Farm tractors are nearly indestructible—if you take care of them. For what I bought it for, my Farmall B gladly did everything I asked it to do. My responsibility was to take good care of it and keep it running.

I didn't hold up my side of the deal, and my Farmall fell victim to the mystic landscape of abandoned tractors, forever stuck in the mud a few feet from my tractor shed. ■

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At the age of 56, a back operation left me dependent on a cane, significantly impacting my daily life. Simple tasks like going to the store or meeting friends became challenging, and I even had to cancel a long-awaited anniversary trip to Italy.

My husband purchased a scooter for me, but it was cumbersome and uncomfortable for everyday use, leaving me feeling more constrained than liberated. However, everything changed when I came across the ATTO SPORT. This remarkable scooter proved to be a game changer. Not only is it robust and reliable, but it also conveniently splits into two pieces, allowing me to effortlessly lift it into my car trunk on my own. I was even able to stow it in the overhead compartment on the plane, enabling us to finally take that trip to Italy! I am now independent once more, able to go wherever I please and do so with a striking sense of style. In fact, I now find that my husband struggles to keep up with me!



CRUISES



ROAD TRIPS



FLIGHTS

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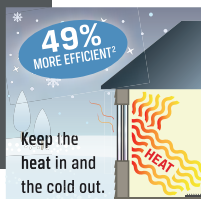
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