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OCTOBER 2025

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October 2025



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Growers continue to refine and expand the distinctive character of Texas wines.

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Harvesting at Uplift Vineyard in July begins at dusk.

Photo by Erich Schlegel

ABOVE

For decades, Jerry Nichols was the unofficial first lady at Wood County Electric Cooperative.

Photo by Jay Patrick



FINISH THIS SENTENCE

The best food I've ever had at a fair is ...



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

Here are some of the responses to our August prompt: **Another day, another ...**

Texas scorcher.

BENNY CALVIT
BOWIE-CASS EC
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Book read.

EMMA MACHALICA, AGE 12
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Barbecue Sides

FOCUS ON TEXAS PHOTOS

From the Oil Fields

RECOMMENDED READING

October is National Co-op Month. In October 2015 we looked at some of the terrific work co-ops do—in Texas and worldwide. Read the story at TexasCoopPower.com.

Taco Timing

NATIONAL TACO DAY moved to the first Tuesday in October in 2024. Marketers liked the idea of Taco Tuesday.

Of course, in Texas, every day is taco day. Still, mark your 2025 calendars for October 7. And remember that we had the best reader recipes for tacos in March 2021—available online any day of the week.

Get Over It

Sugar Land wants to rise above all the snarling traffic around Houston.

The southwest suburb is looking at two solutions that could have commuters whizzing around overhead. Electric, self-flying taxis using vertical takeoff and landing is one possibility. Another is a system of on-demand, electric gondolas, left, that would glide on cables above city streets.

"We're told to be trailblazers and not be afraid to take risks," says Melanie Beaman, the city's transportation and mobility manager.



AUGUST 2025 Disc Jockeys

“Some think it’s just for college kids, slackers and stoners when, in fact, it’s a great sport for people of all ages (I’m 68).”

GREG MCCARTY
PEDERNALES EC
BUDA



WYATT MCCSPADDEN

Before There Was Golf

My husband’s family is proud of the fact that his uncle, Fred Morrison, invented the Frisbee, first called the Pluto Platter [*Disc Jockeys*, August 2025]. Several family members, including my then-teenage future husband, demonstrated the invention at state fairs before it was finally bought by Wham-O.

Kathleen Warr
San Bernard EC
Hockley

Fire Prevention

I could add another tip: During holidays that normally have fireworks involved or during an extended dry spell, at each outdoor faucet I will stage a water hose with an attached nozzle [*Every Part of Texas Is at Risk*, August 2025]. If a fire starts that could affect our house, I can fight it till the fire department arrives.

Ted Pasche
CoServ
Argyle



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Learned Our Lesson

The quote from “Anonymous” was an insult to every educator in this state [*Currents*, August 2025].

The quote means, “After you’ve forgotten how to read, forgotten mathematics, forgotten EVERYTHING that you learned in school ... then you’re truly educated.”

Preposterous! As a retired educator, I can assure you that dedicated educators are teaching Texas students what they need to continue in life—in college, on-the-job training or life experiences—which they wouldn’t even be able to comprehend without those “useless things” they learned in school.

Susie McCalla
Central Texas EC
Kerrville

One Rare Sight

A little over 40 years ago, I lived in north-east Arkansas for a while, and I kept a tiny carved agate armadillo on my desk [*Dillo Dirt*, July 2025]. One day a woman in the office finally picked it up and said, “What is this?”

She had never seen one.

Mona Tucker
Rusk County EC
Carthage

TCP WRITE TO US
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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Growers continue to refine and expand the distinctive character of Texas wines

PUTTING GRAPES ON THE MAP

BY AMANDA OGLE • PHOTOS BY ERICH SCHLEGEL

Drive across Texas and you expect to see cattle, oil pump jacks, and cotton or corn.

But grapes?

They're more Texan and more common than you might think—increasingly so. And they've been here far longer than those pump jacks.

In fact, more than 14,000 acres of grapevines provide for some 600 winemaking facilities in Texas, according to the Texas Wine and Grape Growers Association. That's way up from 3,000 acres and 200 wineries just a decade ago, a reflection of the rapidly expanding \$24 billion Texas wine industry.

Spanish missionaries brought grapevines with them to Texas in the 17th century, and attempts at winemaking with wild mustang and muscadine grapes occurred until Prohibition.

Modern winemaking picked up in the 1960s as researchers at Texas Tech University planted grapes in the High Plains of the southern Panhandle, and producers are still refining what grows best where.

The state has eight American Viticultural Areas, distinct appellations of origin used on wine labels. AVAs define grape-growing regions and identify specific geographic or climatic features that affect the characteristics of grapes.

The Texas High Plains AVA is the most productive in the state, with more than 8,000 acres of vineyards, followed by

ABOVE Claire Richardson is a winemaker at Burnet-based Uplift Vineyard near Lake Buchanan.

OPPOSITE Drew Tallent with a handful of iron-rich Hickory Sands soil at Tallent Vineyards, north of Mason.





ABOVE From left, Bob Young, Bending Branch Winery CEO; Tallent; and Jen Cernosek, Bending Branch general manager, at Tallent Vineyards.

OPPOSITE Ron Yates of Spicewood Vineyards. He sources grapes from the proposed Dell Valley American Viticultural Area in the Chihuahuan Desert of far West Texas.

the Texas Hill Country AVA with about 2,500 acres. The oldest, the Mesilla Valley AVA, established in 1985, straddles Texas and New Mexico in the El Paso area.

As the Texas wine scene continues to expand, more oenophiles are learning about what they taste in the state's specific terroirs, nailing down hyperlocal characteristics that help them understand exactly what types of wines they like from each region.

"The entire country of France has more than 360 different appellations," says Valerie Elkins, managing director of membership operations for William Chris Wine Co., based in Hye, between Fredericksburg and Johnson City. "Yet Texas is larger than France, and we only have eight defined AVAs. These AVAs help the consumer to identify regions and regional expectations, so establishing more AVAs helps get more national and international understanding.

"If you were to go to a restaurant today and order a chardonnay, you'd look for a California Russian River Valley chardonnay because that's one of the regions where those grapes grow the best. We don't really have that in Texas yet."

Grape and wine producers await the approval of three viticultural areas by the U.S. Treasury's Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau. The process for establishing an AVA is tedious and slow. If approved, these new appellations would be Texas' first since 2005.

LLANO UPLIFT AVA

Located entirely within the Texas Hill Country AVA, the Llano Uplift AVA would cover 1.3 million acres. The greater Hill Country region sits over an ancient limestone seabed, meaning the soils are more alkaline compared with the slightly acidic soils of the uplift, which is marked by a geological formation made primarily of granite rather than limestone.

According to Justin Scheiner, associate professor and viticulture specialist at Texas A&M University and the petitioner behind this AVA proposal, the Llano Uplift has its own aquifer system, which impacts nutrient availability and water quality and allows for different rootstocks to be planted. The uplift gets less rain than surrounding areas, which contributes to the distinct character of wines made from the vineyards here.

"Aromatically, the wines in the Llano Uplift AVA exhibit more floral, delicate and perfumed characteristics," says Claire Richardson, winemaker at Burnet-based Uplift Vineyard, which is within the proposed Llano Uplift AVA and a member of Pedernales Electric Cooperative.

"The wines are typically medium in body and have a distinct tannin structure that could be described as dusty or powdery," she says, noting that depending on the vintage and variety, herbal characteristics can be present in the wines, including mint, eucalyptus and subtle green pepper.

HICKORY SANDS DISTRICT AVA

This proposed viticultural area is located entirely within the western part of the proposed Llano Uplift AVA and on the edge of the Edwards Plateau in Mason County. Soils here are rich in iron, with granite and sandstone. Water from the Hickory Aquifer is important for irrigation.

Bending Branch Winery, based in Comfort and a member of Bandera Electric Cooperative, sources Hickory Sands grapes from Drew Tallent of Tallent Vineyards, one of the catalysts behind the application for this AVA proposal.

“Vines are able to root deeply into the soils of the Hickory Sands,” says Jennifer Cernosek, general manager of Bending Branch. “The Hickory Sands aquifer gives great water content to the soil, and the well-drained soil contributes to the fruit-forward nature of the wines from these grapes.”

Cernosek says that the wines Bending Branch makes from Tallent’s grapes tend to be softer in tannins, have a deeper mineral profile and are earthier.

“There’s a vanilla note in the wines that comes through across various grape varieties,” she says.

DELL VALLEY AVA

In the Chihuahuan Desert of far West Texas, the proposed Dell Valley AVA is in Hudspeth County, west of the Guadalupe Mountains and east of El Paso.

The higher elevation here, 3,640–4,200 feet, provides diurnal shifts, which means it’s hot during the day and cold in the mornings, so that grapes can produce sugars in the heat and acids as they cool.

Ron Yates of Spicewood Vineyards, a member of Pedernales EC, sources grapes from Dell Valley. He says the distinctive altitude, soil and farming techniques come through in the grapes.

“For me, it’s probably the best-value fruit we have in the



state,” he says. “Not a lot of folks are getting it, and it makes great wine. That mountain air up there is almost no humidity, so disease pressure for the grapes is less. Plus, deer aren’t roaming and eating your grapes.

“It’s probably one of the only places in the state that I have found where we can make lower-alcohol wine, and it’s still really jumping out with flavors and fruit.”

ABOUT TIME

Establishing a new AVA involves filing a petition that takes time to be “perfected” to meet TTB regulation requirements, a period for public comment and then rulemaking finalization. It can take years.

But the Llano Uplift AVA, filed with the government in 2022, is close to becoming official; it’s third in line to enter a public comment period, followed by Hickory Sands, filed in 2023, which is 10th in line.

However, while the AVAs aren’t yet official, you can still enjoy wines from each of these areas at wineries and vineyards across Texas and beyond.

“Texas is becoming known as a world-class wine region,” says Elkins of William Chris Wine. “Breaking down our grow regions to show the unique characteristics of the soil and growing conditions will help raise awareness for the variety of terroir Texas has and continue to make Texas-grown wine more prominent in the national and international wine world.” ■



Worth the Squeeze

Grapes to sample from each of the proposed AVAs

LLANO UPLIFT

Montepulciano and sangiovese, both used in Italian red wines

HICKORY SANDS

Red grapes merlot, mourvèdre, touriga nacional, tannat and tempranillo, and white grape viognier

DELL VALLEY

Cabernet franc, cabernet sauvignon, chenin blanc, petit verdot, tempranillo, muscat, riesling, chardonnay and sémillon



Managing an
electric cooperative
was a job too big
for one man

Her Life *of* Service

BY D'ANN NICHOLS DRENNAN
PHOTO BY JAY PATRICK

When Jerry Jordan said “I do” to Juan D. Nichols in 1951, she didn’t realize all she was saying yes to.

Jerry, born in 1933, was 3 or 4 when electricity came to her family’s farm near Newsome in East Texas.

“My grandparents’ and my parents’ houses were on the highway, so we were fortunate,” she says. “We were one of the first to get power.” While she doesn’t remember her own home before electric lights, she recalls visiting family and friends who didn’t have such luxuries. “It made me feel very lucky.”

She never dreamed she’d devote herself to the electric industry. She says that her first husband was a sailor in Korea, her second a college student, her third a fertilizer salesman and her fourth the general manager of Wood County Electric Cooperative. With a twinkle in her clear, green eyes, the 92-year-old whispers conspiratorially, “They were all the same man.”

In 1961, Jerry was happily settled with Juan and their three small children in Woodway, just outside of Waco.

“But Juan D. didn’t want to live anywhere other than Wood County,” where he grew up, she says. A family friend who served on the board of directors at Wood County EC told Juan about a new position opening up at the East Texas co-op: power use adviser.

Juan met Virgil Shaw, the co-op’s founding general manager, at his farm just east of Quitman on a Saturday in late fall. Jerry remembers that Juan rushed back to where she and the children were visiting with her in-laws and said, “Jerry, come on, he wants to meet you too.”

Jerry purses her lips. “Juan D. told me I didn’t have time to change, so I hopped in the car and off we went.” She must have made a good impression because Shaw hired Juan that day.

Jerry Nichols, at her Quitman home, holds a portrait from her wedding to Juan D.



“It wasn’t unusual,” Jerry explains, “for an employer to expect the wife to help the man—without compensation, of course.”

She knits her still-dark brows. “Back then, I signed everything as Mrs. J.D. Nichols, never my name. When my daddy died, the clerk sent me out of the room so Juan D. could sign the papers to inherit my property. I couldn’t get a credit card, couldn’t take out a bank loan without my husband’s signature.” Jerry smirks. “Even though I managed our money better than he did!”

When Juan and Jerry moved to Quitman, about 35 miles north of Tyler, there were no houses available to purchase. They rented a little green house in town. Jerry remembers it snowed that winter, and flakes drifted in around the closed window and piled up on the dining table next to it.

They soon bought a lot on Meadowbrook Lane and built a modest ranch-style home. It was the first all-electric residence in Quitman. Juan installed extra meters to measure how much electricity it took to run the range, water heater, and central heating and air. Jerry didn’t get along with the electric stove. “Not to start with!” she exclaims. “I hated that

electric stove. Boy, when it boiled over, it made a mess!”

Not long after they moved in, there was a gas outage in town, and a gas company employee showed up at the door. Jerry told him, “I don’t have any gas.”

“Everybody has gas,” he answered. “For your stove, your heating and your hot water.”

Jerry’s voice is still smug as she repeats what she told him: “Not in my house.”

A college graduate with an English degree, Jerry didn’t want to leave behind her young children to teach school. At that time, public school began in first grade. So Jerry started the first kindergarten in Quitman in the garage of their new home. She operated Kiddie Kollege until 1970, when she and Juan were expecting their fourth and last child.

On January 1, 1968, Juan was promoted, becoming the second general manager of Wood County EC. At age 37, he was one of the youngest managers in the state.

Not long after Juan began working for the co-op, Jerry noticed that several wives of members of the board of directors would drive their husbands to the monthly meetings and wait in their cars outside. With a laugh, she explains that the men were “too old to drive—they were in their 60s and 70s!”

Jerry invited these ladies to her home. For more than three decades, she served coffee and dessert and visited

National Cooperative Month

October is when the more than 30,000 co-ops in the U.S. celebrate their unique business model and the cohesive communities they create and support. Included in that number are 894 electric distribution and generation and transmission cooperatives with some 42 million members. That includes 77 co-ops that power the lives of some 3 million Texans with 363,000 miles of line across the state.



OPPOSITE, CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT Jerry at the Nichols' house on Meadowbrook Lane, the first all-electric residence in Quitman. A moment from Juan D.'s roast when he retired from Wood County Electric Cooperative. The family gathered to celebrate Jerry and Juan D.'s 70th wedding anniversary.

ABOVE The Nicholsons in 1973.

RIGHT Jerry when she served as president of the Sabine River Authority of Texas.



with the wives one Monday a month while their husbands conducted business.

"It was a consuming job for both of us," Jerry says. In those days, when an ice storm hit, Juan went to the office until the lines were cleared. Jerry cooked huge pots of chili or stew so the lineworkers could have a hot meal when they came in.

The co-op didn't have 24-hour dispatching until 1981. Before that, people called the Nichols' home phone whenever their power went out. Jerry recalls one night when the harsh ring woke Juan from a deep sleep. She heard him ask three times for the caller's last name, then finally inquire, "How do you spell that?" Jerry laughs as she remembers hearing Juan repeat back, "J-O-N-E-S."

In the '80s, the co-op hired lawyers from Washington, D.C., and consultants from Georgia to help with wholesale power purchases and other national issues affecting rural cooperatives. "There weren't many options for hotels near us in those days, so I always hosted whoever was in town at our home," Jerry remembers. "At first, I was intimidated, but I discovered these men were grateful to have a home-

cooked meal and spend time with our family."

Even though Jerry was a supportive wife, she wasn't content merely to serve stews and sip coffee. She took a leadership role in her community and in statewide organizations.

Jerry was active in the Quitman PTA, donating her time to the schools her children attended, and she was the editor of the Texas Rural Electric Women's Association newsletter.

Her proudest accomplishment came in October 1991, when Gov. Ann Richards appointed Jerry as the first female director of the Sabine River Authority of Texas. Initially, a staffer was assigned to be Jerry's "chaperone" at every board function. After the second encounter, Jerry decided, "Enough is enough."

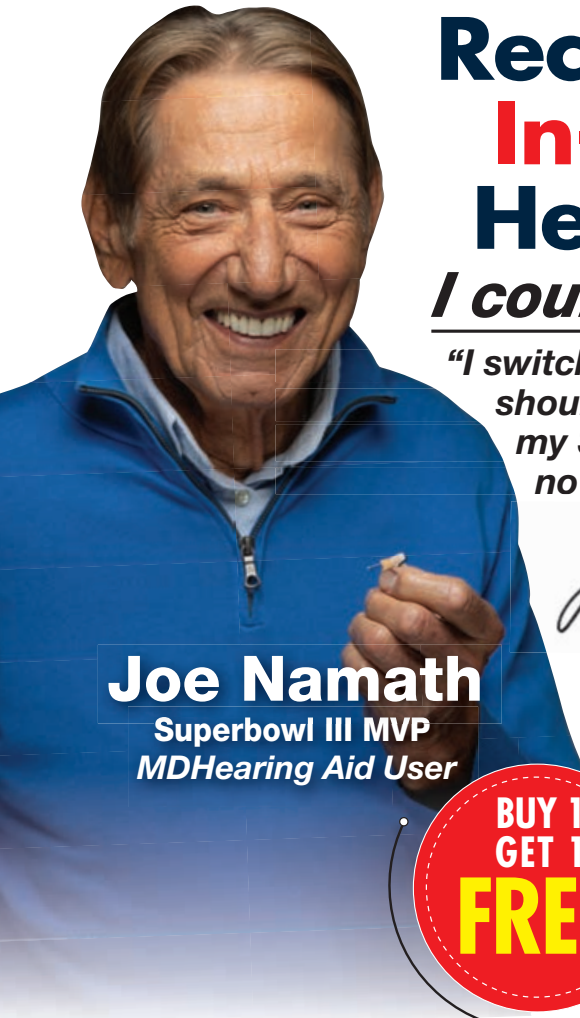
At the next meeting, she walked up to the huddle of male directors.

"They didn't have anything to say that would shock me," she exclaims, tapping a red-polished nail on the arm of her chair. "I shared these experiences with Juan D. Hopefully, I helped make it easier for women to become leaders in our co-op."

Jerry encouraged Juan to recruit women for executive positions and the board. In 1991, Cathy Roberts was chosen to fill an unexpired term, becoming the first female board member of Wood County EC. When Juan retired in 1997, he recommended Debbie Robinson to succeed him as general manager. She was one of the first women in the nation to lead an electric cooperative.

Juan died the day after Christmas in 2021, but Jerry continues to live in the house they shared. She has four children, eight grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren, who she says are the center of her world.

Jerry rocks gently in her recliner, a smile lighting her face. "I don't know how I got so blessed," she says. "Juan D.'s and my work with the co-op provided us with opportunities I never could have imagined." ■



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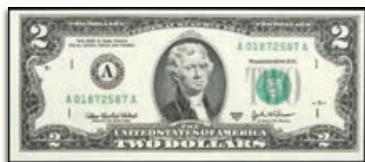
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MESSAGE FROM
CEO/
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MANAGER
RHETT REID

Co-ops Power Communities With Purpose

COMMUNITIES COME IN all shapes and sizes. Some are based on geographical proximity, some are based on shared interests or hobbies, and some can even be found in virtual spaces like social media groups. Regardless of where they are or how they're formed, communities bring people together and create a sense of belonging.

Rusk County Electric Cooperative is deeply committed to our members, and we're glad you're part of the electric cooperative community.

This October, more than 30,000 cooperatives across the U.S. are celebrating National Cooperative Month. It's a time to reflect on all the aspects that set co-ops apart from other types of businesses, but more importantly, it's a time to celebrate the power of co-op membership.

Electric cooperatives are not-for-profit utilities built by the communities they serve. For Rusk County EC, our mission has always been to provide

ble giving initiatives, and additional programs that make our community a better place to call home.

All co-ops, including Rusk County EC, are guided by seven principles that embody the values and spirit of the cooperative movement and form a framework for navigating challenges and opportunities while remaining true to our purpose.

1. Open and Voluntary Membership: Co-op membership is open to anyone who can use the co-op's services.

2. Democratic Member Control: Members make decisions that shape the cooperative because co-ops are created by the members, for the members.

3. Members' Economic Participation: Members contribute money to the co-op to make sure it runs smoothly now and in the future. At Rusk County EC, this happens through paying your energy bills.

4. Autonomy and Independence: Co-ops are independent and can operate on their own, which ultimately benefits the members.

5. Education, Training and Information: Co-ops continuously focus on education to ensure employees have the training and information they need to make the co-op successful.

6. Cooperation Among Cooperatives: Co-ops share with and learn from other cooperatives. We help each other out in times of need because we want other co-ops to thrive.

7. Concern for Community: All cooperatives work for the greater good of the local communities they serve. Co-ops give back to their communities to help them flourish and grow.

This October, as we celebrate National Co-op Month and the power of membership, we hope you'll recognize the many aspects that set electric cooperatives apart. Our mission is safe, reliable power. Our purpose is people—the local communities we're proud to serve. ■



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you with reliable power. We care about your quality of life, and because we're locally operated, we're uniquely suited to meet our members' evolving energy needs.

Beyond the business of electricity, our employees and directors are equally invested in our local community—because we live here too. That's why we work hard to support local economic development projects, youth programs and scholarships, charita-



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Saving Energy During Peak Times Helps Your Neighbors

CONSERVING ELECTRICITY during peak energy use times not only lowers your monthly bill—it can benefit our entire community.

Peak times are periods of the day when demand for electricity is highest. Think early mornings, when people are getting ready for work or school, and evenings, when families cook dinner and unwind with electronics. When everyone uses energy at once, it puts pressure on the electric grid.

Rusk County Electric Cooperative works around the clock to ensure that electricity flows to your home whenever you need it. Behind the scenes, an enormous and intricate system is at work—one of the most complex machines in the world—the power grid, a complex system of generation plants, distribution utilities, substations and power lines.

Electricity comes from a diverse mix of sources—hydropower, natural gas, coal, solar, wind and more. Some power plants can respond quickly to spikes in demand, and others are less flexible. Once energy is generated, it travels through high-voltage transmission lines to local utilities, like Rusk County EC, which then deliver it to your home or business through distribution power lines.

When electricity demand surges during peak times, it's more expensive to generate or purchase power. If supply can't keep up, the risk of outages increases. That's why using less energy during peak hours is important. It not only eases strain on the grid but also helps you save money.

So how can you beat the peak? Start by adjusting your thermostat by a few degrees during peak hours. Smart thermostats can automate this for you. Delay using energy-hungry appliances like ovens, clothes washers and dishwashers until later in the evening.

Small actions taken by many households can lead to big results. When we all work together to reduce energy use during peak times, we protect our power grid, help control costs and ensure reliable electricity for our communities. ■

Rusk County Electric Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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Outage Hotline Numbers

For information and to report outages, please call us.

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TOLL-FREE

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Henderson

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Hours: Monday–Thursday, 7 a.m.–12:30 p.m. and 1–5 p.m.

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- By phone at 1-855-945-3520. Please have your RCEC account number available.

VISIT US ONLINE

rcelectric.org



Check us out at
TexasCoopPower.com/rcec



RCEC Competes at Lineman's Rodeo

EVERY JULY, the heart of Texas beats a little louder in Seguin, where the Texas Lineman's Rodeo transforms a quiet patch of countryside into a high-voltage celebration of grit, skill and brotherhood. For lineworkers across the state, it's more than a competition—it's a homecoming.

And for Rusk County Electric Cooperative, it's a chance to show Texas what teamwork, talent and tenacity look like.

Imagine a rodeo where the horses are bucket trucks, the ropes are climbing gear and the cowboys wear hard hats. The Texas Lineman's Rodeo is a one-of-a-kind event that honors those who keep our lights on. Lineworkers compete in timed events like pole climbing, hurt man rescue and equipment installation, all judged on speed, safety and precision.

It's a showcase of the skills lineworkers use every day in the field, often under the most challenging conditions. But it's also a celebration of the trade, with families, friends, retirees and future lineworkers cheering from the sidelines.

This year, RCEC brought the heat—and not just the kind that comes from a Texas summer. Jacob Costlow, Bradley Henderson and Dolton Seale competed in the apprentice division, and Costlow won first place in the three-phase transformer bank event.

Hunter Bundrick, Spencer Liles, Trace Smith, Scout Puckett, Clay Long and David Bouchard represented RCEC in the journeyman division. Collin Castle, Garrett Combs and Keaton Mims participated as judges.

The team showed unmatched energy, camaraderie and a deep sense of pride in their work. Every member of the crew gave it their all. RCEC's lineworkers reminded everyone why East Texas lineworkers are some of the best in the business.

For RCEC, the rodeo isn't just about trophies and rankings. It's about honoring the lineworker legacy, building bonds across generations and connecting families with the trade as they watch their loved ones perform with pride and precision.

RCEC is already looking forward to next year. With apprentices training, seasoned pros mentoring and our creative team dreaming up even bolder ways to celebrate, one thing is sure: RCEC will be back—louder, prouder and even more electrifying.

To our lineworkers: Thank you for your courage, craftsmanship and commitment. You make us proud every day. ■

Energy Education for the Family

CELEBRATE NATIONAL ENERGY AWARENESS MONTH by teaching children about energy and the role it plays in everyday life.

As President George H.W. Bush wrote in a 1991 proclamation, “America’s utility companies and other energy providers supply the light, heat and power that are needed to operate our factories and farms, our schools and defense installations, and other places of work.”

Fostering strong connections with energy and technology can create appreciation for the ways energy is a part of their lives. Here are a few ideas to get you started.

Discover what energy is. Explain sources of energy and how they’re used. Understanding the importance of energy can promote understanding the need to conserve it.

Conduct science experiments to have fun while demonstrating energy. You and your kids can create a solar oven or a rain machine.

Explore your house for ways to conserve energy. Unplug unused appliances and turn off lights. See who can remember to practice these efforts in the future.

Turn an energy audit into a family challenge—a competition where family members hunt for energy issues or solutions around the house. See who can make the longest list or come up with the most unusual or creative idea. You might be surprised at how energy aware your kids can be.

Illustrate energy use or renewable energy sources like solar, wind or hydropower with arts and crafts or activity books.

Read about energy in books or online.

Visit eia.gov/kids for games, riddles and puzzles about energy.

Burn calories by playing outside, and promote a connection between your children and the environment. Remember to turn the lights off before heading outdoors.

Developing energy awareness in your family members allows them to be actively involved in maintaining your family’s energy use and budget.

National Energy Awareness Month reminds us that energy choices affect future generations, not just our budgets. ■



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Silky Caramels

1 cup (2 sticks) butter, plus more for pan if desired

2¼ cups packed brown sugar

Dash salt

1 cup light corn syrup

1 can sweetened condensed milk (14 ounces)

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Milk chocolate or dark chocolate morsels (optional)

1. Line a 9-by-9-inch pan with non-stick foil, or butter it very well.
2. Melt butter in a heavy two-quart saucepan. Add brown sugar and salt, stirring until completely mixed. Stir in corn syrup. Slowly add condensed milk, stirring constantly.
3. Cook, stirring constantly, over medium heat until candy thermometer reads 245 degrees (firm ball stage).
4. Remove saucepan from heat and stir in vanilla. Pour mixture into square pan and allow to cool completely.
5. Cut caramels into squares using kitchen scissors or a sharp knife.
6. If desired, melt chocolate according to package directions and dip each caramel piece in chocolate. Allow to set completely before wrapping.
7. Wrap in wax paper squares.

MAKES 42 CARAMELS

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



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Keep Halloween More Treat Than Trick

YOU KNOW WHAT HAPPENS AROUND here October 31: Small, strange creatures dot our roads at night. They creep up to homes with large bags and dash from one place to another, often forgetting about the vehicles passing them on the road.

Halloween is one of the most fun nights of the year for kids. But in their excitement, they don't always think about safety—which means grown-ups need to do some thinking for them.

Trick-or-Treating

Outfit your trick-or-treater with a glow stick or flashlight with fresh batteries, but make it clear to never shine the beam into the eyes of drivers. Instruct children to stay on sidewalks whenever possible and to look both ways before crossing streets.

Make sure that little revelers (and you) cross streets only at corners and never from between parked vehicles.

Choose bright, reflective costumes or add reflective tape to dark outfits. Avoid masks that obstruct vision—face paint is often a safer alternative. Ensure costumes fit properly to prevent tripping, and consider flame-resistant materials.

Children under 12 should always trick-or-treat with an adult. Older children should travel in groups and stick to familiar neighborhoods. Set specific time limits and boundaries, and make sure everyone knows the planned route. Consider having adults stationed at key intersections in busy neighborhoods.

Keep youngsters from indulging until after a trusted adult has inspected their trove of treats carefully.

Haunting the House

Never use electrical products outdoors that are marked for indoor use. You could get shocked—or worse.

Dried flowers, cornstalks, hay and crepe paper are highly flammable. Keep them away from open flames and other heat sources, including light bulbs and heaters. Always inspect each decoration before use and discard any with cracked, frayed or bare wires.

Always turn off electrical decorations and extinguish any open flames before leaving home or going to bed. Use a flashlight or battery-operated candles in jack-o'-lanterns.

Check weather forecasts and secure lightweight decorations that could become projectiles in windy conditions. Have backup indoor activities ready in case of severe weather. Keep walkways clear of wet leaves that could create slippery

conditions, and consider placing nonslip mats near entrances.

Turn on your outdoor lights. Be sure paths and sidewalks are well lit. Remove obstacles from the front yard. Restrain dogs and other animals.

Offer individually wrapped pieces of candy or hand out non-food treats like colorful stickers.

While Driving

Slow down in residential neighborhoods to at least 5 mph below the posted speed limit to give yourself extra time to react to children who may dart into the street.

Watch for children walking on roadways, medians and curbs. Look for children crossing the street; they may not be paying attention to traffic and cross the street midblock or between parked cars. Turn on your headlights to make yourself more visible—even before the sun has set.

Avoid distractions like cellphones completely during Halloween hours. Be especially cautious when backing out of driveways and parking spaces. Consider postponing nonessential trips during peak trick-or-treating hours.

Rusk County Electric Cooperative reminds you to take even greater care than usual to keep Halloween a special treat for all of our small, strange creatures. ■

Hurricane Preparedness Guidelines

Hurricane season is June 1–November 30

If you're under a hurricane warning, find safe shelter right away.

When a hurricane is 36 hours from arriving:

- ▶ Turn on your TV or radio to get the latest weather updates and emergency instructions.
- ▶ Restock your emergency preparedness kit. Include food and water sufficient for at least three days, medications, a flashlight, batteries, cash, and first-aid supplies. Learn how to build an emergency kit at [ready.gov/build-a-kit](https://www.ready.gov/build-a-kit).

When a hurricane is 18–36 hours from arriving:

- ▶ Bookmark your city or county website for quick access to storm updates and emergency instructions.
- ▶ Bring indoors any loose, lightweight objects that could become projectiles in high winds (e.g., patio furniture and garbage cans); anchor objects that are unsafe to bring in (e.g., propane tanks); and trim or remove trees close enough to fall on a building.

When a hurricane is six to 18 hours from arriving:

- ▶ Turn on your TV or radio or check your city or county website every 30 minutes for the latest weather updates and emergency instructions.
- ▶ Charge your cellphone so you will have a full battery in case you lose power.

When a hurricane is six hours from arriving:

- ▶ If you're not in an area that is recommended for evacuation, plan to stay at home or where you are, and let friends and family know where you are.
- ▶ Close storm shutters and stay away from windows. Flying glass from broken windows could injure you.
- ▶ Turn your refrigerator or freezer to the coldest setting and open only when necessary. If you lose power, food will last longer. Keep a thermometer in the refrigerator to be able to check the food temperature when power is restored.

To stay safe during a hurricane:

- ▶ If told to evacuate, do so immediately. Do not drive around barricades.
- ▶ If sheltering during high winds, go to a Federal Emergency Management Agency safe room; International Code Council 500 storm shelter; or a small, interior, windowless room or hallway on the lowest floor that is not subject to flooding.
- ▶ If trapped in a building by flooding, go to the highest level of the building. Do not climb into a closed attic; you may become trapped by rising floodwaters.

To stay safe after a hurricane:

- ▶ Listen to authorities for information and special instructions.
- ▶ Do not touch electrical equipment if it is wet or if you are standing in water. If it is safe to do so, turn off electricity at the main breaker or fuse box to prevent electric shock.
- ▶ Avoid wading in floodwaters, which can contain dangerous debris. Underground or downed power lines can also electrically charge the water.

Preparación para huracanes

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

Cuando un huracán está a 36 horas de llegar:

- ▶ Prenda su televisor o radio para obtener las últimas actualizaciones meteorológicas e instrucciones de emergencia.
- ▶ Reponga su kit de emergencias. Incluya alimentos y agua suficientes para al menos tres días, medicamentos, una linterna, pilas, dinero en efectivo y suministros de primeros auxilios. Aprenda como construir un kit de emergencia en [ready.gov/build-a-kit](https://www.ready.gov/build-a-kit).

Cuando un huracán está a 18–36 horas de llegar:

- ▶ Marque como favorito el sitio web de su ciudad o condado para el acceso rápido de las actualizaciones de tormentas e instrucciones de emergencia.
- ▶ Traiga adentro objetos sueltos y ligeros que puedan convertirse en proyectiles con vientos fuertes (por ejemplo, muebles de patio y botes de basura); sujete objetos que no serían seguros para llevar adentro (por ejemplo, tanques de propano); y recorte o retire los árboles que están lo suficientemente cerca como para caer en un edificio.

Cuando un huracán está a 6–18 horas de llegar:

- ▶ Encienda su televisor o radio, o visite el sitio web de su ciudad o condado cada 30 minutos para obtener las últimas actualizaciones meteorológicas e instrucciones de emergencia.
- ▶ Cargue su teléfono celular para que tenga una batería llena en caso de que pierda energía.

Cuando un huracán está a seis horas de llegar:

- ▶ Si no se encuentra en un área recomendada para la evacuación, planifique quedarse en su casa o donde se encuentra y avise a sus amigos y familiares donde se encuentra.
- ▶ Cierre las contraventanas y aléjese de las ventanas. Los vidrios que vuelan de las ventanas rotas podrían dañarle.
- ▶ Ajuste la temperatura de su refrigerador o congelador a la posición más fría y ábralos solo cuando sea necesario. Si pierde la energía, la comida durará por más tiempo. Mantenga un termómetro en el refrigerador para poder verificar la temperatura de los alimentos cuando se restablezca la energía.

Para mantenerse a salvo durante un huracán:

- ▶ Si se le indica que evacue, hágalo inmediatamente. No maneje alrededor de las barricadas.
- ▶ Si se refugia durante vientos fuertes, vaya a una habitación segura de la Federal Emergency Management Agency, refugio contra tormentas del International Code Council 500 o una habitación o pasillo pequeña e interior sin ventanas en el piso más bajo que no esté sujeto a inundaciones.
- ▶ Si queda atrapado en un edificio por inundación, vaya al nivel más alto del edificio. No suba a un ático cerrado porque usted puede quedar atrapado por las crecientes inundaciones.

Para mantenerse a salvo después de un huracán:

- ▶ Escuche a las autoridades para obtener información e instrucciones especiales.
- ▶ No toque el equipo eléctrico si está mojado o si está parado en el agua. Si es seguro hacerlo, apague la electricidad en el interruptor principal o en la caja de fusibles para evitar una descarga eléctrica.
- ▶ Evite vadear en el agua de la inundación, que puede contener desechos peligrosos. Las líneas eléctricas subterráneas o caídas también pueden cargar el agua eléctricamente.



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Test Your Savvy on Home Appliances

WE ALL LOVE TO relax on the couch and watch a great movie, but hours of gaming, streaming video binges and Facebook chatting can add up. Plus, vampire appliances continue to drain energy even when they're not in use.

How much electricity are you wasting in your living room? Take this quiz to find out. Many answers may surprise you.

Q. What percentage of the average electric bill comes from vampire devices?

A. 5%–10%. The average American has 20–40 devices and appliances continuously plugged in and sucking power, even when they're not in use.

Q. Which type of television uses more energy: plasma or LED?

A. Plasma TVs consume about twice as much power as LEDs. In fact, plasma models consume more than 1,400 kilowatt-hours each year, on average, which can add more than \$200 to your electricity bill.

Q. True or False: Video game consoles cost Americans a combined \$400 million annually in utility bills just from sitting idle.

A. True. Of the total \$1 billion that American gamers pay in gaming-related utility bills, \$400 million comes from consoles on standby. A National Resources Defense Council report translates that number into a staggering 10 billion–11 billion kilowatt-hours of usage each year.

Q. True or False: Your best bet for saving energy after using your gaming console is to turn it off with the power button or controller.

A. False. Unplugging the console is a sure way to make sure it's not sucking any energy, as some power buttons go straight into standby mode and continue to use electricity. Go into settings to turn off standby mode completely, and set the device to turn off automatically when it's idle.

Q. What is the most energy-efficient mode in which to leave your computer: power off, sleep mode, screensaver or log out?

A. Power off. The most energy-smart way to leave a computer for several hours is to turn it off completely. But if you must leave your computer on, put it in sleep mode.

Q. True or False: When connected to the charger, laptops use just as much energy as desktop computers.

A. False. While the CPU and monitor of a desktop computer can use more than 200 watts, laptops typically use less than 70 watts. But beware: Laptops continue to drain power if you keep them plugged in when they're fully charged, so remember to unplug them once they reach 100%.

Q. True or False: It's not good to turn the computer off and on too many times.

A. False. Most PCs reach the end of their useful life due to advances in technology long before the effects of being switched on and off multiple times have a negative impact on their service life. The less time a PC is on, the longer it will last.

Q. Which type of printer is more energy-efficient: inkjet or laser?

A. Inkjet printers, by a wide margin. Inkjets use an average of 30–50 watts while they're in use and continue to draw 3–5 watts in standby mode. Laser printers, on the other hand, can use more than 600 watts per hour.

Q. Which TV device uses the most electricity when turned off: satellite or digital cable?

A. Digital cable boxes consume more than 17 watts when they're turned off, whereas satellite set-top boxes use just over 15 watts. Remarkably, these boxes use almost as much energy when they're off as when they're on and active. ■

Stop the Vampire Invasion

WHEN ELECTRONIC GADGETS are in standby mode, they use a small amount of energy even when you're not using them, and this "vampire power" adds up. Entertainment centers are full of these energy-sucking devices.

Most TVs slowly sip electricity while waiting for someone to press the on button. They use energy to remember channel lineups and keep time. Cable and satellite boxes also consume energy when we think they're off. Voice-activated devices draw a small amount of electricity as they continuously listen for your voice commands.

Although these products typically use less than 0.5 watts in standby, it adds up. A typical American home has a vampire load that adds up to 5%–10% of electricity use. The Department of Energy estimates that one home's energy vampires can add up to \$100 in wasted energy costs each year.

Identify Plug Parasites

Microwave ovens and alarm clocks, which use relatively small amounts of standby power, are acceptable to leave plugged in. Gaming consoles, TVs and other entertainment components use fairly significant amounts of power when turned off. Consider unplugging the TV in the guest room or audio equipment that you rarely use.

You don't have to worry about unplugging items with mechanical on/off switches, such as lamps, hair dryers or many small kitchen appliances—they don't draw any power when turned off.

Power Strips Save

Try plugging household electronics such as computers, monitors, printers, cellphone chargers and game systems into power strips with switches. Not only do power strips protect from power surges, they also allow you to turn off several items at once.

Consider switching to smart power strips, which help reduce energy use by automatically shutting off power to devices in standby mode. Payback for power strips can generally be achieved in less than a year. ■



BYMURATDENZ | ISTOCK.COM



POWER TIP

Avoid heating up the fridge by inserting hot food. Let it cool to as close to room temperature as is safe for the food or recipe before putting it in the fridge.

JOSÉ ARAÚJO | ISTOCK.COM

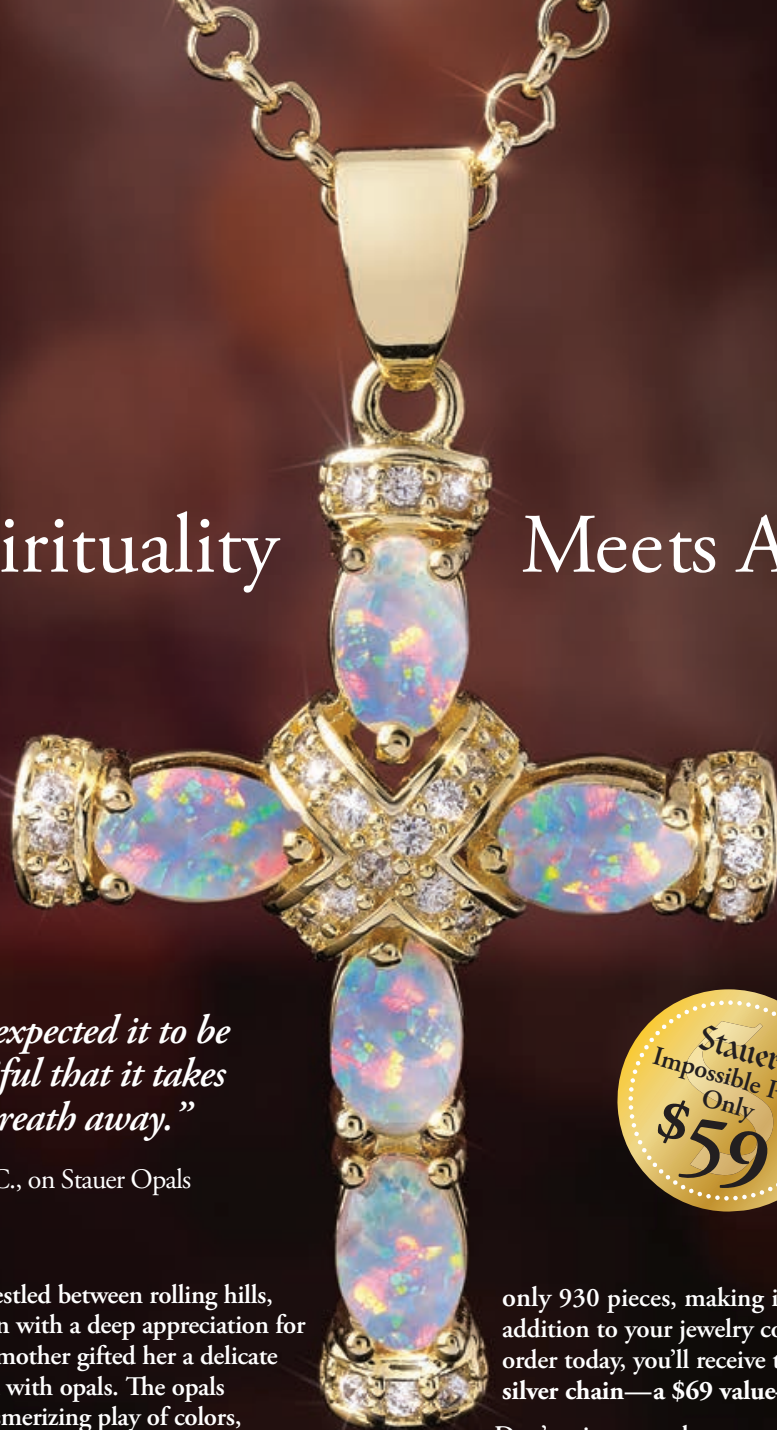


DID YOU KNOW?

Electric cooperatives return over \$1 billion to their members annually as not-for-profit organizations.

KUZMIK_A | ISTOCK.COM

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!

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Funny Business

Rodeo clown Red Sublett traveled the world wrangling laughs

BY CHUCK LYONS

IT WAS CLAIMED, journalist Jerry Armstrong once wrote, that rodeo clown Red Sublett would ride anything that “a saddle, a riggin’ or a rope could be used on”—horses, mules and bulls, of course, but also cows, buffaloes, zebras and at least one ostrich. Sometimes he rode them straight, sometimes backwards but always with zany antics that left the crowd laughing.

Sublett was “the greatest and the highest-paid arena comic of his day,” Armstrong wrote.

He was born John Dixon Sublett in Arlington in November 1893, and he died, by then known to everyone as Red, in Dallas a scant 56 years later.

His family had settled in the countryside when the prairies were still unfenced.

The town of Sublett, now part of Arlington and some 18 miles southeast of Sublett’s modest, pink granite headstone in Mount Olivet Cemetery, bears the family name.

Sublett’s father moved his family from Texas to Oklahoma via horse-drawn covered wagon with two milk cows tied to the tailgate.

Before World War I intervened in 1917, Sublett worked rough stock on ranches, including the 101 Ranch in Oklahoma and later the Four Sixes in Texas. Before that, at just 16, he had ridden broncs and steers for Booger Red’s traveling cowboy show and Lucille Mulhall’s show.

He enlisted in the war effort and saw action in France with the medical corps before returning to his rodeo antics.

At a rodeo in Magdalena, New Mexico,

the story goes, producer Tex Austin and announcer Foghorn Clancy took Sublett aside and told him he was getting plenty of big laughs just being himself and that he should become a rodeo clown.

It paid better, they said.

As rodeo evolved from its beginning in ranch corrals in the early 1900s, promoters realized their audiences drifted away whenever there was a break in the action due to injuries and other delays. So the rodeo clown was created to keep spectators entertained during those breaks.

When bull riding became a regular part of rodeos in the 1920s and ’30s, the clown’s role—and importance—grew as he stepped in to distract the bull and allow its rider to get out of danger. Today’s rodeo protection teams, made up of highly trained athletes, are still a vital part of competitions—work that started with the clowns.

“The early clowns were cowboys who could rope and ride with the best of them ... and they were, above all, showmen,” wrote Jeanne Joy Hartnagle-Taylor in her 1993 book *Greasepaint Matadors*.

Sublett fit that description perfectly.

He picked up a trained mule named Spark Plug that he claimed could be taught to do just about anything, and together the duo performed in rodeos throughout the U.S. and abroad, including shows in London, Paris and Dublin. They also performed in films with actors Wallace Beery, Bob Steele and Pearl White.

Spark Plug died in Fort Worth in 1931, and Red’s career began sliding to an end. He died from a heart condition in the veterans hospital in Dallas on April 14, 1950.

His headstone reads, “World Famous Dean of Rodeo Clowns.” ■

Candies and Fudge

Can't beat these treats—and no baking is involved

BY VIANNEY RODRIGUEZ, FOOD EDITOR

My *mami* has been whipping up these delights every holiday season for as long as I can remember. She had us kids shaping coconut balls by the dozen. She gifted them, served them at family gatherings and even shipped them to relatives.

No-Bake Chocolate Coconut Joys

¼ cup (½ stick) butter, melted
1½ cups sweetened shredded coconut
1 cup powdered sugar
½ cup semisweet chocolate chips
¼ cup chopped pecans

1. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. In a large bowl, stir together butter, coconut and sugar. Shape into 1-inch balls. Place on prepared baking sheet.
3. Gently press your thumb or the back of a teaspoon measuring spoon to make an indentation in the middle of each ball.
4. In a microwave-safe bowl, heat chocolate chips in 30-second increments, stirring each time, until fully melted.
5. Fill each indentation with melted chocolate. Sprinkle with pecans. Refrigerate until firm.

MAKES 24 PIECES

TCP Follow Vianney Rodriguez as she cooks in *Cocina Gris* at sweetlifebake.com, where she features a recipe for Concha Bark.





Aunt Ruth's Candy Cornflakes

TAMMY CARR
SAM HOUSTON EC

It doesn't get much simpler than this. These easy, quick, no-bake peanut butter treats are a perfect mix of sweet and crunchy.

1 cup corn syrup
1 cup sugar
1¼ cups peanut butter
6 cups cornflakes

1. Line 2 baking sheets with wax paper and set aside.
2. Combine corn syrup and sugar in a large saucepan and bring to a boil, stirring continuously until sugar is melted.
3. Remove from heat, add peanut butter and mix well.
4. Add cornflakes and mix to combine. Drop by spoonfuls onto wax paper to create a rounded candy. Cool until set and firm.

MAKES 24 PIECES

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28 >



\$500 WINNER

Pumpkin Fudge

GERI HUPP
DEEP EAST TEXAS EC



Hupp's pumpkin fudge with white chocolate and cinnamon is sure to be a hit with candy lovers. It's creamy, smooth and perfect for the fall. I advise making a triple batch because this rich fudge will go fast!

⅔ cup evaporated milk
2½ cups sugar
¾ cup canned pumpkin purée
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
½ teaspoon salt

1 jar marshmallow crème (7 ounces)
2 tablespoons (¼ stick) butter
1 cup white chocolate chips
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1. Line a 9-by-9-inch baking pan with aluminum foil and set aside.
2. In a large saucepan, heat evaporated milk and sugar over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally. Bring to a boil.
3. Stir in pumpkin purée, cinnamon and salt. Return to a boil.
4. Stir in marshmallow crème and butter. Return to a boil. Cook, stirring occasionally, 18 minutes.
5. Remove from heat. Add chocolate chips and vanilla. Stir until creamy and all chocolate chips are melted.
6. Pour into prepared pan. Cool completely until firm.
7. Remove from pan and cut into squares. Store in a cool, dry place.

MAKES 16 PIECES

TCP \$500 Recipe Contest

BARBECUE SIDES DUE OCTOBER 10

Superior sides can make a good barbecue great. For our March issue, we're serving up your best fixin's, with the top trimming earning \$500.

UPCOMING: FIVE-INGREDIENT DINNERS DUE NOVEMBER 10



Confetti Fudge

LINDA FOREMAN
TRINITY VALLEY EC

This is the prettiest fudge I have ever made. Flecks of dried fruit swirled into a creamy white chocolate marshmallow base really do give the appearance of festive confetti.

- ¾ cup (1 ½ sticks) butter, plus more to grease pan**
- 3 cups sugar**
- ¾ cup sour cream**
- 1 package white chocolate chips (12 ounces)**
- 1 jar marshmallow crème (7 ounces)**
- ¼ cup chopped dried cranberries**
- ½ cup chopped dried apricots**
- ¼ cup chopped golden raisins**

1. Butter a 9-by-13-inch baking pan.
2. In a large saucepan, combine butter, sugar and sour cream over medium-high heat. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat to medium and cook 5 minutes, stirring



constantly to prevent scorching.

3. Remove from heat and stir in white chocolate chips and marshmallow crème until smooth.
4. Stir in cranberries, apricots and raisins. Carefully pour into prepared pan.
5. Cool completely until firm. Cut into individual servings.

MAKES 12 PIECES

Sweet Sentiments

This upcoming holiday season, I'm gifting edible treats wrapped to impress! Here are a few fun ideas that take gifting to the next level.

A candy-filled Mason jar makes for a great reusable gift. Layer with parchment paper, top with a lid and tie a vibrant ribbon.

Make use of spare tins. Embellish with greenery, ribbon, bows or cupcake liners filled with candy.

Wrap candy in cellophane then tuck it in a kitchen towel for two gifts in one. I love this look!

—Vianney Rodriguez

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COURTESY CHET GARNER

Terlingua's Traces

Pay your respects at this ghost town's eerie, ancient cemetery

BY CHET GARNER

IF YOU HEAD TOWARD the Big Bend and then go into the region between the national park and state park, you'll feel like you're driving onto an alien planet. Sweeping desert views in every direction punctuated by rocky cliffs of tan and red are both beautiful and bizarre.

Eventually you'll reach the notable ghost town of Terlingua (population 130 or so), a few miles from the Mexican border. It's hard to imagine how folks live in such a faraway locale, but a trip to the cemetery confirms that Texans have been living out here for a very long time.

Like every tourist, I started my visit with a bowl of red at the Starlight Theatre, a destination restaurant built inside the stone shell of an old movie theater. After filling my belly, I wandered down the street and stepped onto the hallowed ground of the town's historic cemetery.

This is not your typical green acres of eternal slumber but a dusty patch of desert with uneven stacks of rocks marking graves, along with handmade crosses, rusted metal ornaments, plastic flowers and even a few beer bottles.

The silence was broken only by the wind and the abrupt buzz of a grasshopper that I kept mistaking for a rattlesnake. Most of the graves date back to the early 1900s, when families moved here to seek their fortune in the long-defunct mercury mines. Many of the graves note the same death year: 1918, when the Spanish flu ripped through the community.

As the last bit of sunlight disappeared behind the mountains, the graveyard glowed with a dusty kind of reverence. It's clear the community still feels a great deal of pride and connection to its past. It serves as a reminder that not all who wander to this part of Texas are lost, and some choose to never leave. ■

ABOVE Chet explores the graves at the century-old Terlingua cemetery.

TCP Watch the video on our website and see all Chet's 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.

OCTOBER

9

Groves [9-12] Pecan Festival, (409) 962-3631, grovescofc.com

10

San Marcos [10-11] Aviation Discovery Fest, (512) 396-1943, centraltexaswing.org

11

Corsicana Airsho, (903) 467-7170, coyotesquadron.org

Hillsboro Hill County Master Gardeners Tree Sale, (254) 582-4022, hill.agrilife.org

Luling Night in Old Luling, (830) 875-0123, lulingcc.org

Sanger Car and Motorcycle Show, (940) 395-1306, facebook.com/sangerpost268

Chappell Hill [11-12] Scarecrow Festival, (979) 836-6033, chappellhillhistoricalsociety.com

Edom [11-12] Art Festival, (903) 258-5192, edomarts.com

16

Lufkin Beatles to Bourbon Street: The Fabulous Equinox Orchestra, (936) 633-5454, angelinaarts.org

Mansfield Haunt the Block, (817) 728-3390, visitmansfieldtexas.com

Brenham [16-19] Texas Arts & Music Festival, (979) 337-7580, texasartsandmusicfestival.com

17

Dripping Springs [17-18] Lone Star Gourd Festival, (512) 964-5540, texasgourdsociety.org

18

Calvert Hooves & Heels Historic 5K, (512) 639-7886, historicalcalvert.org

China Spring Oktoberfest, (254) 836-1825, stphilipcs.com

Llano Invitational Bullriding, (303) 912-1646, llanobullriding.com

Waco Oakwood Cemetery's Walking Tales, (254) 717-1763, facebook.com/heartoftexasstorytellingguild

21

Hallettsville St. Peter Lutheran Church Women in Mission's Country Store, (361) 798-2808, stpeterhallettsville.org

24

Palestine [24-25] Hot Pepper Pop-Off and Festival, (903) 729-6066, palestinechamber.org

25

Flower Mound Smoke & Whiskey Fest, (469) 360-7757, fmsmokefest.com

Waxahachie Crossroads of Texas Go Texan Country Festival, (469) 309-4040, waxahachiecvb.com

Granbury [25-26] Harvest Moon Festival of the Arts, (682) 936-4550, granburysquare.com

Grapevine [25-26] Trick 'R Treat Trains, (817) 410-3185, grapevinetexasusa.com

NOVEMBER

6

Round Top [6-9] Film Festival, roundtopfilmfest.org

Submit Your Event

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



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2025 Canada Maple Leaf: A highly sought-after bullion coin since 1988, this 2025 issue was struck in highly pure 99.99% silver at the Royal Canadian Mint.

2025 British Silver Britannia: One of The Royal Mint's flagship coins, this 2025 issue features Lady Britannia, defender of Britain, struck in 99.9% fine silver at The Royal Mint.

2025 Australian Silver Kangaroo: For the first time ever, the kangaroo has rounded out the top 5 in the top 5 coins in the world. This gorgeous coin continues the Australian Kangaroo series' tradition of combining high precious metal purity with stunningly detailed designs. Struck in 99.99% fine silver at the Perth Mint.

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Heroes

They come from all walks of life and are our family, friends and neighbors. This month, please join us as we salute those who make a difference.

CURATED BY GRACE FULTZ

1 TAMRA BOLTON
CHEROKEE COUNTY EC

"My dad, Stuart McAnally (top row, left), and some of his 31st Naval Construction Battalion buddies before they shipped out to the Pacific theater in September 1944. They had no idea they would end up on Iwo Jima."

2 PEGGY MCCALL
CENTRAL TEXAS EC

"Tom Wertman, our neighbor and Sisterdale Volunteer Fire Department volunteer, fights a fire near Comfort."

3 VIRGINIA MURPHY
COSERV

"My daughter, Maureen, gave one of her kidneys to her brother, Sean, who desperately needed a kidney in 2023."

4 LAURA BOEHM
UNITED COOPERATIVE SERVICES

Marines breaching into Australia.



Upcoming Contests

- DUE OCT 10** From the Oil Fields
- DUE NOV 10** Still Life
- DUE DEC 10** Gates



Enter online at TexasCoopPower.com/contests.

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



On the Dots

A little paint can go a long, long way

BY JULIE ROYCE
ILLUSTRATION BY RAUL ARIAS

A SHORT DISTANCE from where State Highway 62 meets U.S. Highway 96 sits a small white house painted with bright blue polka dots. Located in the small town of Buna, about 40 minutes north of Beaumont, this landmark was built by my grandfather, Virgil Newton Davis.

Some say this eccentric piece of history put Buna on the map.

I'm the daughter of Virgil's third son, Jud. I grew up on a family homestead in Buna until I was 14. Although I never had the opportunity to meet my grandfather, as a child I heard all kinds of stories about him.

Family described him as a hardworking man of few words with an odd sense of humor who loved his coffee black and bitter. I soaked up stories about his adventures throughout the Southwest,

busting broncos before settling in Kingfisher, Oklahoma, where he became a rancher and a father of six.

But he's a Texan through and through, and my Texas roots run deep because of Granddaddy. He was born in Newton County, in the Old Laurel community, in 1896. Although he left the state as a teenager, he returned just as the U.S. entered World War II, making his way to Buna with his family in tow.

In 1948, he built the Buna Polka-Dot House, a home that would become a part of my family's legacy. Virgil took inspiration from Native American homes that dotted the stark plains of Oklahoma. Those homes were colorfully embellished with petroglyphs and other designs. He decided to bring some of that color to the area just outside the Golden Triangle.

I often think about this modest structure, made of lath and plaster stucco and covered in blue dots applied with an old cloth attached to a two-by-four. Was he trying to create a bright spot among the dust and gray that was still clouding most of the South in the aftermath of the war and the Great Depression, or was this stoic man really just a jokester at heart? Maybe it was both.

Personally, I like to imagine him as a jokester. I mean, he was building a duplex with plans to paint horseshoes and teardrops on either side when he suddenly passed away in 1950. If that décor didn't make people laugh, what would?

Decades later the Buna Polka-Dot House is as meaningful to this small community as it is to my family. It's the backdrop of many community events, was the home of the chamber of commerce for a period and was the subject of many pieces of folk art.

My only wish is that Granddaddy had lived long enough to see how cherished it has become. ■



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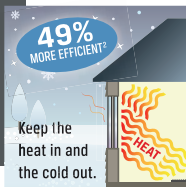


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