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JUNE 2022

Eating Wild

Texans are turning
to foraging
for fun and food





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June 2022



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Pushed along by the pandemic and prices, foraging for wild edibles is a growing trend.

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Meet the South Texas educator on a mission to instill a love of language in bilingual readers.

*By Carlos Sanchez
Illustration by John Jay Cabuay*

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Flowers from elderberry trees can be eaten right off the branch.

Photo by Enciero | stock.adobe.com

ABOVE

Zapata County author María Alma González Pérez.

Illustration by John Jay Cabuay

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First in a String



LEGENDARY FIDDLER Alexander “Eck” Robertson, left, who was raised on a farm in the Panhandle, made musical history 100 years ago this month.

Robertson and Henry C. Gilliland recorded four fiddle duets June 30, 1922, at the Victor Talking Machine Co. in New York City. The tracks are regarded as the first commercial recordings of country music.



FINISH THIS SENTENCE MY SINGING IS SO BAD ...

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 April prompt: **I remember when a dollar could buy ...**

A large soda, large French fries order and a hamburger big as a hubcap.

JOE TREVIÑO JR.
 BARTLETT EC
 KILLEEN

A day at the State Fair of Texas.

BRENDA WEBB
 GRAYSON-COLLIN EC
 GUNTER

Three watermelons on the side of Highway 281 south of San Antonio.

DARREL MILLER
 PEDERNALES EC
 LAGO VISTA

To see more responses, read Currents online.

GAMBUSIA IS GONE

A tiny Texas fish is among 23 species that federal wildlife officials want to declare extinct.

The San Marcos gambusia, an inch-long fish found only in the San Marcos River in Hays County, was last collected in the wild in 1983. The Fish and Wildlife Service has recommended that it join 21 other animals and one plant in being removed from the endangered species list and declared extinct.



Co-ops Rule

Electric cooperatives dominated the 2021 J.D. Power rankings for customer satisfaction, with 14 co-ops—including Texas' Magic Valley EC and CoServ—finishing among the top 20 U.S. residential power providers in the annual survey of electric customers.



Gov. Jordan

AMONG BARBARA JORDAN'S many accomplishments was becoming Texas governor for a day 50 years ago this month.

Months before her election to the U.S. House, her colleagues in the Texas Senate unanimously elected Jordan president pro tem. Gov. Preston Smith and Lt. Gov. Ben Barnes both made plans to be out of state June 10, 1972, enabling Jordan to step in as acting governor, making her the first Black woman in the U.S. to preside over a legislative body.



June 17

National Eat Your Vegetables Day

We know gardens across Co-op Country produce bounties of amazing crops. But this month we spotlight folks who look beyond cultivated patches for wild edibles. See *The Grazing Craze* on Page 8.



TRACI DABERKO

The Inside Track

“Many West Texas towns like Hamlin have no tracks left, and we could sure use some commerce that stops here today.”

JEFF CLATERBAUGH
BIG COUNTRY EC
HAMLIN

Enduring Cookware

I inherited my grandmother’s cast iron, which she inherited from her mother [*Cast-Iron Comeback*, March 2022]. It makes the best cornbread and fried eggs. To imagine how many meals were cooked in these pans just blows my mind.

David Krabbe
Hamilton County EC
Kempner

I have to say, besides the original chocolate Texas sheet cake, this is the best, most decadent cake I have EVER had [*Texas Praline Sheet Cake*, March 2022]. I’ve literally been thinking about it all week.

NICOLE PARKER
VIA FACEBOOK

Using the cast-iron skillet my mother got for a wedding gift in 1943.

Larry Artz
Via Facebook



RUSSELL A. GRAVES

Blessed Comfort

I want to participate in the Blessing Box Project when I retire [*Hope in a Box*, March 2022]. Such a hard time for a woman.

Jacky Manchester
Grayson-Collin EC
Van Alstyne

Well Put

I love that section in the magazine [*Finish This Sentence*]. It awakens the thought process in a lot of people.

Inocencia S. Martinez
Magic Valley EC
Mercedes

Threads of Truth

When I was 10, we visited cousins in Ingram [*Just Add Adventure*, March 2022].

We went to a river to play, and it had a smooth concrete small dam with water pouring over it. I had a blast sliding down it time after time until I realized that the seat of my favorite pair of shorts was in shreds.

Roberta McLaughlin
Heart of Texas EC
Lorena

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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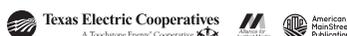
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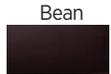
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The Grazing Craze

BY SHERYL SMITH-RODGERS

I've yanked henbit and chickweed for years from my native-plant gardens, nearly eradicating the weeds that pop up every winter.

If only I'd known that the European species make tasty additions to salads. So I decided in December to let them stay put. Then I'd have some fresh leaves and flowers to toss with spinach, tomatoes and dressing.

Many of the native plants are edible too, like turk's cap, dayflower, wood sorrel and spiderwort. Hold on—eat my natives? The concept boggles my mind. As a Texas master naturalist, I'm familiar with most of the ones that grow in my region. On the other hand, since childhood I've been conditioned to eat foods only bought at grocery stores or intentionally grown in gardens, not picked from a lawn or some wild place.

Then I recall our ancestors foraged to survive. Their hard-

Pushed along by the pandemic and prices, foraging for wild edibles is a growing trend

scrabble lifestyles make me determined to loosen up. And I am. In March I picked blossoms from our eastern redbud tree and added them to salads. This summer I've been nibbling on turk's cap berries and pink evening primrose leaves. As I learn more about wild edibles, the plants that grow around my yard have taken on a different meaning.

I'm not alone in my new outlook. For a number of reasons, more and more people are hunting for edible plants.

"It used to be just adventurer eaters, foodies and cooks who mainly foraged," says Mark Vorderbruggen, author of an *Idiot's Guides* book on foraging. "Then the pandemic came, and people got scared about getting food if the markets closed. It made them go outside in search of alternative food sources. Now with inflation, food has become more expensive. People want to know where they can get free nutrition."



Cut With Care

So what makes a wild plant edible? In a nutshell, it's nonpoisonous, palatable and digestible. Many have health benefits too. "In vitamins, minerals and protein, wild food can match and even surpass the nutritional content of our common foods," writes Delena Tull in *Edible and Useful Plants of Texas and the Southwest*. "Dandelion greens are more nutritious than spinach."

Foragers must always ask for permission before scouring private property. On public lands, it's illegal to take plant materials. Steer clear of toxic areas, like highway roadsides and places frequented by pets.

And some final words of caution: Before eating any wild plant, be absolutely certain of its identity. Read books on the subject, learn some basic botany, take foraging classes and go out with an experienced forager to gain an understanding of what you should and shouldn't eat.

Then start with easy plants, like turk's cap and pecans. As you gain knowledge, add species that you can readily identify. Also, eat wild edibles in moderation and be mindful of possible reactions. For example, if you're allergic to cashews and mangoes, avoid their cousins: evergreen and flameleaf sumacs.

"Nature is a mishmash of greens and browns," says foraging expert Courtney Taylor of Weston, north of Dallas. "To most people, plants all look the same. It takes time, patience and consistency to learn the nuances between them. Wood clover and clover, which are both edible, look similar but have subtle differences."

Taylor, a Grayson-Collin Electric Cooperative member, teaches basic foraging classes and compiled a 60-page e-book on North Texas edibles. In every class, she stresses foraging etiquette.

"Leave an environment better than you found it," she says. "Only harvest what you're going to use. Only take a leaf or two from a small plant. If you take all the leaves, that plant won't go to flower. As a forager you want that plant to be there next year. I believe that conscientious foragers can actually increase an environment's health and wild food populations."

Depending on the month, Taylor harvests mulberries, persimmons, dewberries, pecans, black walnuts, hackberries and beautyberries among many others—often foraging in her rural neighborhood and along country roads. "The tastiest greens to me are lamb's-quarters and chickweed," she says. "I also eat a lot of dandelion leaves for their health benefits. I like to make smoothies with them."

Educating others about useful plants is a top priority for Vorderbruggen, who produces videos, podcasts and presentations on the subject. "Most people assume all

Foraging Do's & Don'ts

Know what you're picking before you eat it.

Stay off private land unless you have permission.

Don't take plant materials from public lands; it's illegal.

Steer clear of toxic areas, like highway roadsides and places frequented by pets.

Pick up any litter you find.



WATCH YOUR STEP

Look out for poison ivy when you get the itch to forage.

OPPOSITE Wild mulberries can be found all over Texas. Take a foraging class to learn to identify edible plants. LEFT Courtney Taylor is a 20-year foraging expert, especially on North Texas edibles.



COURTESY COURTNEY TAYLOR

plants are poisonous,” says the Houston resident, who holds a master’s in medicinal chemistry and a doctorate in physical organic chemistry. “Even people who want to forage and have read the books still have a fear of misidentifying something and dying as a result. My goal is to help them to trust themselves and eat a plant that they’ve properly identified.”

Rooted to the Spot

In far North Texas, Kimberly Clark, a member of Fannin County EC, learned to forage by watching YouTube videos and joining foraging groups on Facebook. “Now my two kids like to forage with me on our acreage and in our area,” she says. “We harvest elderberry, cattails, water violets, peppergrass and sorrel. My son’s favorite is wild carrot, also known as Queen Anne’s lace.” (Caution: Queen Anne’s lace looks similar to two extremely toxic plants: poison hemlock and water hemlock.)

Come midsummer, Tom Mitchell Jr. of Cleburne steers a golf cart around his neighborhood, looking for clusters of ripe flameleaf sumac berries. “They make a great mock lemonade,” says Mitchell, a commercial pilot and United Cooperative Services member. “I put the berries in a pot of water and let them sit overnight. Then I strain the pink liquid and add some honey. The lemony flavor comes from the berries’ malic acid. I also dry sumac berries, then grind them up to use as a spice.”

Last year, forager Racheal Balliu—a Pedernales EC member and registered nurse who lives near Canyon Lake—took some “yard butter” to a party. At first her friends hesitated to sample the creamy condiment, mixed with chickweed, peppergrass, henbit and wild onions. “I’ve found that people are sometimes nervous to try foraged foods,” Balliu says. “But after trying my butter, they loved it. They also love the pesto that I make with chickweed, basil, parmesan and pecans.”

Her interest in wild foods has since morphed into a business called Forest Girl Wild American Tea. Her green and roasted yaupon teas are available online and sometimes at farmers markets. “Yaupon holly is the only natural caffeine in North America,” she explains. “I hand-pick



COURTESY MARK VORDERBRUGGEN

yaupon leaves on family land, wash and air-dry them, and then package the leaves as both tea bags and loose leaf.”

In the Rio Grande Valley, wild edibles aren’t as easy to find. That’s because more than 90% of native habitats have been cleared through the years for agriculture and urbanization. “The nature we see here is more sterilized,” says Jackelin Treviño of McAllen. “Buffalo grass and oaks are lovely, but they’re not forageable. I see that gradually changing as cities plant more native plants.

“Foragers here are basically limited to private property with permission and conserved areas, where foraging is discouraged,” she continues. “When I’m able to forage, my favorite wild edible in the Valley are berries from brasilwood. They look like blueberries, are shiny like grapes and taste like blackberries.”

Out west in El Paso, the Chihuahuan Desert would seemingly offer even fewer finds. But outdoorsman James Harris

Sheryl's Top 5 Wild Edibles for Beginners



CHICKWEED

DANDELION

knows better. For nearly a decade, he's researched the vegetation and wildlife that inhabit the arid region that he's called home all his life. Now he shares his knowledge about wild foods and other survival skills through videos.

"Out here, one of our most plentiful wild edibles are honey mesquite pods and beans," he says. "They're very versatile. You can use them to make small cakes, teas, jellies, jams and energy bars. They also make a good coffee substitute, even though they don't have caffeine."

Prickly pear cacti are also very common, Harris says, and their pads and fruit are edible. "They're a pain to gather because of the thorns, so I always carry tweezers," he says. "Another edible is the banana yucca, which I call the 'super-market of the desert.' The young flower stalks can be cut and cooked like asparagus. The white flowers are edible. You can also cook the green fruits."

From yuccas to chickweed, I noted a common interest in my conversations with foragers from across the state: They all love getting outside and exploring wild places. As Harris explains, "Being outdoors grounds you closer to the earth. You have a higher appreciation for the seasons and the plants when you interact with nature."

I couldn't agree more. ■

Texas' Most Toxic Plants

Castor bean

Jimsonweed
(angel trumpet,
moonflower,
thornapple)

Nuttall's death camas

Poison hemlock

Poison ivy

Texas mountain
laurel (mescal bean)

Water hemlock



CHECK BEFORE YOU PICK

Toxic hemlocks look similar to the edible Queen Anne's lace, above.



OPPOSITE Mark Vorderbruggen, left, leads a foraging class at Spoke Hollow Outfitters near Wimberley in the Hill Country. RIGHT James Harris uses the fruit of prickly pear cactus, called tunas, to make refreshing juice.

COURTESY JAMES HARRIS



HENBIT



PINK EVENING PRIMROSE

TURK'S CAP





Speaking to Children

Meet the South Texas educator who isn't slowing down in her mission to instill a love of language in bilingual readers

To understand what drives María Alma González Pérez, one must understand her love of language. Because her mother had only a grade school education, González Pérez mostly spoke Spanish—the only language she knew until enrolling in school—with clarity and precision.

“She did not want us mispronouncing words,” González Pérez says. “She would say that the proper use of the language was something that defined you as an educated person.”

Upon that principle, González Pérez earned a doctorate in education, then became a professor, college administrator, children's book author and, most recently, an entrepreneur—all while advocating for the importance of language. González Pérez, 70, is now a decade into her latest career—a publisher on a quest to bring more Hispanic culture into children's books.

The native of Zapata County, on the border in South Texas, won a prestigious International Latino Book Award in 2021 for her book *¡Todos al rodeo! A Vaquero Alphabet Book*. The children's picture book is the third in her series of what she calls “ABC books,” which tell a story through the letters of the alphabet. She uses the genre to infuse Hispanic culture into children's literature to foster bilingual literacy.

It's the kind of book she wishes she had as a young student.

“I was always trying to unravel this mystery called English,” González Pérez says. “It was a sink-or-swim approach to learning.” Her moment of awakening, she says, came in the eighth grade, when she first enrolled in a Spanish course and received a textbook for that class. “This is the book they should have given me in the first grade,” she says. “They did it backwards.”

González Pérez's vaquero book teaches children that the American cowboy and the cattle industry itself emerged from the arrival of Spaniards who introduced the horse to North America. Words like “rodeo” and “lasso,” the book points out, are Spanish in origin.

The book also draws from the author's own life; González Pérez, a member of Medina Electric Cooperative, comes from a land-grant family whose large property holdings were bestowed on early Texas settlers by the Spanish crown. She grew up on a 1,000-acre ranch that touched the banks of the Rio Grande, so she's familiar with the vaquero way of life. Her Texas roots reach back so many generations that she calls herself a Tejana instead of a Mexicana.

González Pérez frequently uses the Spanish word for courage—*coraje*—as she speaks. Her cultural awareness in a part of the state where Hispanic culture is the norm gave her the *coraje* to excel in school even though she had to learn English while she was learning other subjects. And her mother's insistence on excelling gave González Pérez a sense of self, she says. “I never felt that I needed to be anybody else other than who I was.”

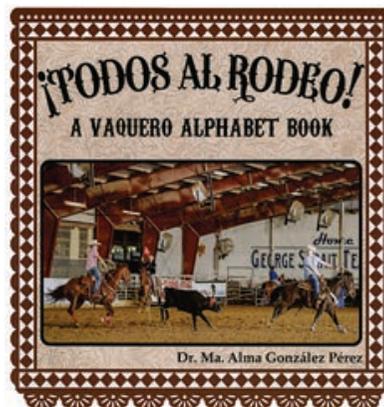
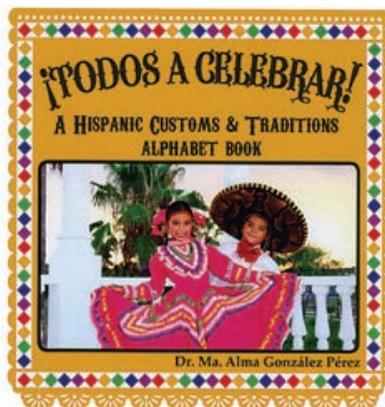
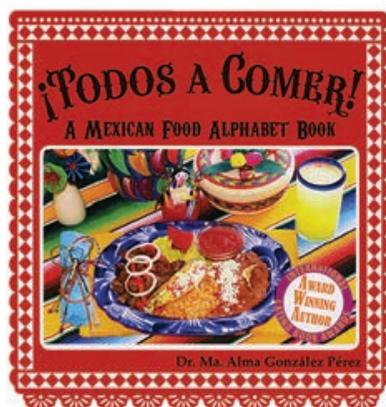
So with a sense of *coraje*, González Pérez left the cultural comfort of South Texas to master English by immersion. She attended Texas Woman's University in Denton in the 1970s, then “relatively devoid” of Hispanic people, she says.

After securing undergraduate and master's degrees, González Pérez returned to South Texas, where she taught, raised a family and eventually attended Texas A&M International University in Laredo for her doctorate. Her dissertation on the relationship between Spanish proficiency and academic achievement among high school graduates in South Texas fueled what would become a lifelong pursuit.

Literacy, her study showed her, extends beyond the pages of books into cultural understanding. It's the context on which idioms are built and understood, and it's the antitoxin of cultural misunderstanding and outright xenophobia.

González Pérez frequently uses the Spanish word for courage—*coraje*—as she speaks.

“I never felt that I needed to be anybody else other than who I was.”



Literature, she believes, immerses readers in the experiences of others—puts them in the shoes of protagonists. But as a professor at the University of Texas-Pan American (now UT Rio Grande Valley), González Pérez was frustrated by a lack of culturally relevant Hispanic literature available for her students. They were studying to become bilingual teachers using a curriculum based in English.

“I started gauging them, and that’s when I learned that they had not been exposed to any literature written by Hispanic authors,” González Pérez says. That sparked something in the professor.

Lino Garcia Jr., a retired UTRGV professor, sees the need for Hispanic stories from Hispanic authors.

“We should be doing that at the pre-K level,” he says. “Instead of talking about the Taj Mahal, we should be talking about Spanish missions, about the Camino Real—about things that Hispanic students can relate to. This gives them a sense of identity. This gives them a sense of worth.”

González Pérez’s first book was *¡Todos a Comer! A Mexican Food Alphabet Book*—the best-selling of her series for children. The second book, *¡Todos a Celebrar!*, spotlighted Hispanic customs and traditions.

Of course, writing culturally inclusive books is one thing; getting them distributed, González Pérez discovered, was a big, new challenge. So with the help of her three daughters, she launched Del Alma Publications (*del alma* means “of the soul”). An attorney, a business major, and an engineer and graphic designer, Anita Pérez, Maricia Rodriguez and Teresa Estrada, respectively, helped their mother get the

business going in 2008.

“I have a dream team in my daughters,” González Pérez says. “I told my daughters, ‘Let’s play with it for five years. If it flies, great. If it doesn’t, nothing was lost but a lot was learned.’”

It flew.

González Pérez’s initial goal was to target South Texas. But her first bulk order of more than 25 books came, instead, from Redondo Beach, California. Next came an order from Philadelphia for several hundred books. The demand was nationwide. Del Alma Publications has shipped thousands of books over the past 14 years—to individuals, schools, libraries, book donors and nationwide book distributors.

But she isn’t done yet.

“We’ve made great strides in meeting the biliteracy challenges of the Hispanic learner,” González Pérez says. “However, we still need to write many more books about stories that our children need to read.

“Not only to inform and educate but to help them develop a greater sense of cultural identity and pride.” ■

TCP Enter online to win González Pérez’s three bilingual alphabet books, above.





Good afternoon,

As a local business, we understand the importance of conserving energy and saving money, particularly in a world of **more frequent ice storms** and wildfires. The past couple years of winter storms have impacted us all. The challenge of keeping our homes warm and secure is always on our minds. And then there is the pain of **skyrocketing fuel prices...**

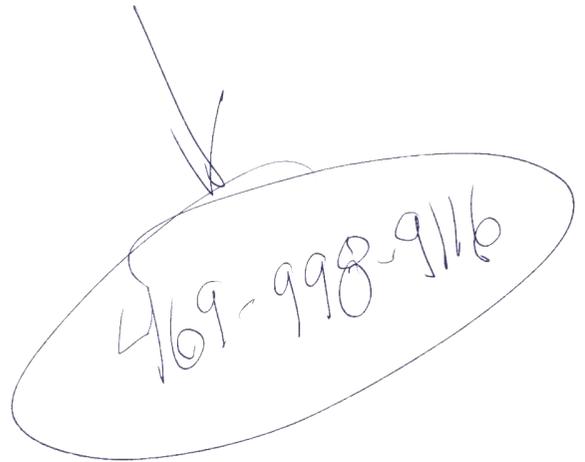
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Clogged, Backed—up Septic System...Can anything Restore It?

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



Dear Darryl

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

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

Clogged and Smelly – Lubbock, TX

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

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

SeptiCleanse® Shock and Maintenance Programs are designed to work on any septic system regardless of design or age. From modern day systems to sand mounds, and systems installed generations ago, I have personally seen SeptiCleanse unplug and restore these systems in a matter of weeks. I highly recommend that you try it before spending any money on repairs. SeptiCleanse products are available online at www.septicleanse.com or you can order or learn more by calling toll free at 1-888-899-8345. If you use the promo code "TXS16", you can get a free shock treatment, added to your order, which normally costs \$169. So, make sure you use that code when you call or buy online.

Beachcombing at home.

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

Order online at TexasCoopPower.com for only \$20 (price includes tax, shipping and handling).

Bonus offer: Get 2 posters shipped to the same address for just \$30.

\$20 or 2 for \$30

From the publishers of **TexasCoopPower**

Please allow 4-6 weeks for delivery.

**Struck in 99.9%
Fine Silver!**
For the First Time EVER!

**First Legal-Tender
Morgans in a Century!**

**VERY LIMITED!
Sold Out at the Mint!**



O PRIVY MARK



*Actual size
is 38.1 mm*

The U.S. Mint Just Struck Morgan Silver Dollars for the First Time in 100 Years!

It's been more than 100 years since the last Morgan Silver Dollar was struck for circulation. Morgans were the preferred currency of cowboys, ranchers and outlaws and earned a reputation as the coin that helped build the Wild West. Struck in 90% silver from 1878 to 1904, then again in 1921, these silver dollars came to be known by the name of their designer, George T. Morgan. They are one of the most revered, most-collected, vintage U.S. Silver Dollars ever.

Celebrating the 100th Anniversary with Legal-Tender Morgans

Honoring the 100th anniversary of the last year they were minted, the U.S. Mint struck five different versions of the Morgan in 2021, paying tribute to each of the mints that struck the coin. The coins here honor the historic New Orleans Mint, a U.S. Mint branch from 1838–1861 and again from 1879–1909. These coins, featuring an "O" privy mark, a small differentiating mark, were struck in Philadelphia since the New Orleans Mint no longer exists. These beautiful

coins are different than the originals because they're struck in 99.9% fine silver instead of 90% silver/10% copper, and they were struck using modern technology, serving to enhance the details of the iconic design.

Very Limited. Sold Out at the Mint!

The U.S. Mint limited the production of these gorgeous coins to just 175,000, a ridiculously low number. Not surprisingly, they sold out almost instantly! That means you need to hurry to add these bright, shiny, new legal-tender Morgan Silver Dollars with the New Orleans privy mark, struck in 99.9% PURE Silver, to your collection. Call 1-888-395-3219 to secure yours now. PLUS, you'll receive a BONUS American Collectors Pack, valued at \$25, FREE with your order. Call now. These will not last!

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CEO

HERBERT "TREY"
GREBE III

Changing Seasons and Hard Decisions

SPRING HAS SPRUNG and summer is right around the corner. It's nice to be welcomed by fresh buds on trees, greener grass and warmer days. For the cooperative, this spring season brought the return of many community and school events. Medina EC employees have been supporting our community with career day presentations, Little League sponsorships, school concession water donations and many other presentations throughout our service area. The fifth cooperative principle is Education, Training and Information and the seventh cooperative principle is Concern for Community. Being out in the public is a great way to fulfill those principles and we have been happy to be back participating in various community events.

Late spring to early summer brings graduations and the excitement that comes with them. Whether your child is graduating kindergarten, eighth grade, high school or college, this is an important milestone in life. You are probably reflecting on accomplishments they've made during school and obstacles they've overcome and now looking forward to future goals. It's a season of change, and sometimes a season of the unknown.

I imagine many of those students graduating high school and college are having to make some hard decisions. What is next for them? Will they continue school or go to work? Will they enlist in the military? What is their housing plan? How will they pay for it? What is the most beneficial option for them?

Medina EC has also had to make a decision recently about our services beyond our initial goal to provide safe, reliable and affordable electricity to our rural service area. That additional service would be broadband.

Since early 2021, Medina EC staff has been researching the possibility of offering broadband service to our members. Unfortunately, over the course of the year as the broadband team worked with experts to evaluate multiple options, it became clear that the size and rural nature of our service territory, combined with the existing coverage from established internet providers, would make it extremely difficult to provide that service to members.

The board voted at its February 2022 meeting to not enter the broadband industry at this time.

This decision did not come lightly. Our goal to *exceed member expectations in everything we do* was and continues to be a driving factor in the decisions made by staff and the board of directors. The results from the research proved that a broadband service would create an unacceptable risk to our members' assets, electric service and rates. Ultimately, the addition of broadband would not positively contribute to the reliable, safe and affordable electricity service we were established to provide. You can learn more about our broadband research and decision on Page 20 or at MedinaEC.org/Broadband.

From one season to the next, we will continue to evaluate and study future programs and services for our members.

Until next time,
Trey Grebe

Do You Have a Medical Need for Electricity?

IF SOMEONE IN YOUR HOME depends on an electrically operated health aid, your account should be listed on Medina EC's Critical Care Registry. To be added, fill out the form at MedinaEC.org/Registry and attach a physician's directive or prescription.

Accounts on this list are notified before planned outages and are flagged as a priority for restoration during unplanned outages. It does not guarantee uninterrupted electrical service, will not prevent you from losing power during forced statewide outages and will not keep your meter from being disconnected for nonpayment. Outages are unavoidable and occur for reasons outside the cooperative's control.

Individuals who rely on life-support equipment should have an emergency plan, including a place to go in the event of an extended power outage, and should consider obtaining backup equipment, such as a generator and any necessary fuel or a battery backup system.

Medina EC offers GenerLink, a device installed by our employees, as an option for members to safely operate their generators should they own one. You can learn more about the requirements to connect a generator to our system at MedinaEC.org/Generators.

Protecting Your Privacy

MANAGING YOUR ELECTRIC ACCOUNT gives us access to personal and confidential information and protecting that information is an integral part of the service we provide. We use your name and Social Security number to verify your identity when you sign up for service and when you call with questions on your account.

Your information is kept in encrypted files behind protected firewalls. Only qualified Medina EC employees who have a need to know can access the information. Our IT department ensures that firewalls and antivirus applications prevent unauthorized access.

Printed documents containing member information are kept in locked shredding containers and destroyed.

Your information is never sold or given to anyone for the purpose of selling you something. Some information might be provided to third parties acting on behalf of Medina EC and can be disclosed as required by law.

We take the responsibility to protect your personal and confidential information very seriously. Failure of an employee to comply with Medina EC's privacy policy results in punishment and can include termination.

You can also take steps to ensure that your private information stays private and that you don't unknowingly fall victim to a utility scam.

If you get an email that you aren't expecting, don't click on links or reply to it, and don't give out personal information (name, Social Security number, etc.). If the email appears to come from someone you do business with, call them to verify.

Never allow anyone into your home to check electrical wiring, natural gas pipes or appliances unless you scheduled the appointment or reported a problem. Don't be afraid to ask a utility employee for proper identification. If they are on your property, you have every right to verify that they are who they say they are.

Medina Electric
Cooperative



CONTACT US

Toll-Free 1-866-MEC-ELEC (632-3532)

Email Info@MedinaEC.org

Web MedinaEC.org - Chat Feature Available

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Voting District 1

Larry Huesser, (830) 363-7651

Wayne W. Scholtz, (830) 426-1328

Ken Weynand, (830) 426-0762

Voting District 2

Jimmie Raines, (830) 591-8437

Chris Surlles, (830) 965-5538

Kenneth White, (830) 232-6541

Voting District 3

Annette Sorrells, (361) 231-0173

J. L. Gonzalez, (956) 286-1863

Rodolfo H. Rodriguez, (210) 846-1092

CEO

Trey Grebe, 1-866-MEC-ELEC, ext. 1045

Outage? Call us.

TOLL-FREE

1-866-MEC-ELEC (632-3532)

Option 2: Report an outage

Option 3: Pay bill, get account balance

Option 5: Speak to a representative

OFFICE LOCATIONS

Bruni 1300 FM 2050 N., Bruni 78344

Dilley 1718 W. FM 117, Dilley 78017

Hondo 237 Highway 173 N., Hondo 78861

Rio Grande City 601 N. FM 3167,
Rio Grande City 78582

Uvalde 2604 Highway 90 E., Uvalde 78801

Corporate Office 2308 18th St., Hondo 78861

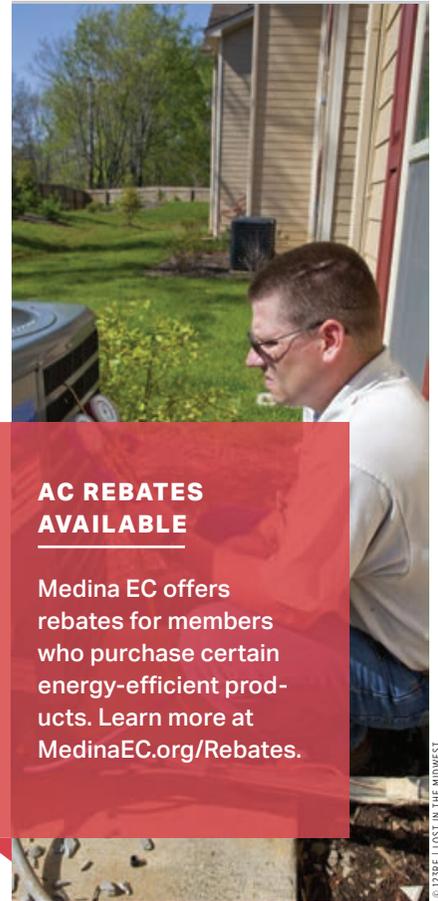
VISIT US ONLINE

MedinaEC.org



This institution is an equal-opportunity provider and employer.

Información sobre todos los programas y servicios que ofrece Medina Electric Cooperative están disponibles en español al llamarnos al 1-866-MEC-ELEC o visitando una de nuestras oficinas.



Board Votes on Broadband

The board of directors voted at its February 2022 meeting to not enter the broadband industry at this time.

THE RURAL NATURE of our service area offers many benefits—wide-open spaces, starry nights away from the city lights, miles of wildflowers and a more peaceful way of living are just a few things many folks appreciate about country living. Although quiet and peaceful, country life has its challenges. In 1938, Medina Electric Cooperative was created to provide safe, reliable and affordable electricity to our rural service area when big investor-owned utilities would not. We continue to provide dependable and affordable power across 17 counties in South Texas as we grow rapidly.

As that growth continues, new challenges arise. Cooperatives across the nation are looking at broadband service for their members. Medina EC understands our members want the same reliable and affordable access to internet as our neighbors in the city. That's why, at the beginning of 2021, Medina EC established a broadband feasibility team to research the possibility of offering broadband service to our members. Unfortunately, over the course of the year as that team worked with experts to evaluate multiple options, it became evident that due to the size of our service area and how spread out the population is, combined with already established providers in our area, there wasn't an affordable and fair way to offer broadband service to members.

The broadband team studied many options, including offering broadband to all members or limiting service to densely populated areas of the co-op's territory. Financial considerations included looking at combinations of federal grant money and debt. Ultimately, the addition of a broadband service would not positively contribute to the reliable, safe and affordable electricity service that Medina EC was established to provide.

Medina EC will continue to evaluate and study future programs and services that are beneficial to members and continue to prioritize providing reliable and affordable energy while protecting cooperative assets and maintaining strong financial health. Any updates to future broadband decisions will be available at MedinaEC.org/Broadband.

AC REBATES AVAILABLE

Medina EC offers rebates for members who purchase certain energy-efficient products. Learn more at MedinaEC.org/Rebates.



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Father's Day
Sunday, June 19

VFD Truck Giveaway Applications Due
Friday, July 1



Co-op Connections Corner: Home Improvement

As you prepare for summer, these participating local business partners have offers for improvements inside and outside of your home.

A/C Technical Services, LTD—Castroville

(210) 677-0001 | AC-Technical-Svcs.com
5% discount on complete AC equipment system replacement; cannot be used in conjunction with other discounts or programs

Comfort Commander Air Conditioning and Heating—Devine

(210) 509-4653 | ComfortCommander.com
10% discount on AC and heating repairs

Integrated Communications Technologies, LP—San Antonio

(830) 931-9898 | rschott@go-ict.com
10% discount on all new alarm system installs

Legacy Irrigation—Hondo

(210) 854-5059
Free controller with purchase of a full system

Lonestar Comfort Services—Castroville

(830) 538-9450 | LSComfort.com
10% discount on parts or labor; present Co-op Connections card before services are provided

Lopez Ready Mix—Rio Grande City

(956) 487-3366
\$2 off per cubic yard after 10 cubic yards purchased

Muennink Fencing and Land Services—Hondo

(830) 426-6289
Two free hours of certain services with a minimum purchase of eight hours; must mention discount before quote is established

P&C Air Conditioning and Heating—Castroville

(210) 487-0048
\$100 spring AC check up for \$75

Ranch Equipment and Hardware (Ace Hardware)—Cotulla

(830) 879-2223 | SouthTexasAce.com
5% discount on all cash purchases except sale, feed, STIHL power equipment and fencing. 10% off cash paint sales.

Rio Grande Farm and Ranch—Rio Grande City

(956) 716-8236 or (956) 605-4112
10% off items (merchandise only)

Sanford Irrigation and Landscaping—Uvalde

(830) 278-6820 | SanfordLandscapes.com
10% off retail purchases in-store

W/C Dump LLC—Devine

(210) 882-9219 | WCDump.com
10% off any size roll-off dumpster (10-, 20-, 30- or 40-yard), veteran-owned and operated

Capital Credits Allocations on Your June Bill: What It Means for You

MEDINA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE MEMBERS WILL SEE their 2021 capital credits allocations printed on their June bill. These totals represent the 2021 margins that are being assigned to you, and you may be wondering exactly what that means.

At the end of each fiscal year, the funds remaining after expenses have been paid—or net margins—are allocated to members' accounts based on the amount of electricity they used in that year. The allocation totals do not represent cash owed to you at this time nor can they be applied to your current bill. You may be asking why you can't have the money that is allocated to your account.

As a member of Medina EC, you reinvest in the cooperative through your capital credits allocations. These funds are used to repay long-term debt, make system improvements, repair storm damage and take care of other capital needs to provide safe, reliable electricity at the lowest possible cost.

At the end of each year, the board of directors determines if any portion of capital credits allocations can be retired based on the financial condition of the cooperative, its bylaws and policy provisions, and lender requirements. The amount retired, if any, can change from year to year depending on the financial needs of the cooperative.

Once capital credits are retired, members receive them as either a credit on their bill or a check. Each retirement is a portion of the total allocation that has been assigned to your account.

"One of the many great things about being a cooperative member is receiving capital credits when they are retired," noted CEO Trey Grebe, "that's just part of the cooperative difference."

To learn more about capital credits and see a list of unclaimed credits, visit MedinaEC.org/CapitalCredits.

It's important to keep your address up to date, even after you're no longer a member, so we can return capital credits to you. In the event of the death of a member, contact us to see if the account is eligible for early retirement. You can update your account by calling 1-866-MEC-ELEC (632-3532) or logging in to your SmartHub account.



"One of the many great things about being a cooperative member is receiving capital credits when they are retired."

—CEO TREY GREBE



SYED F. HASHEMI | UPSLASH

2022 Youth Tour Winners

Three students from the Medina Electric Cooperative service area will join 1,500 others from across the country on the trip of a lifetime June 12–21 as part of the Government-in-Action Youth Tour. In addition to the trip, the contest winners will each receive a \$500 scholarship toward their educational expenses after they graduate high school. The students will first visit the state Capitol in Austin and then head to Washington, D.C., where they will visit major landmarks, meet their elected officials, and learn about the U.S. and electric cooperative history.

Youth Tour has a long record of educating young people about our government. Senator Lyndon Baines Johnson inspired the trip when he address the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association Annual Meeting in Chicago in 1957. The senator declared, “If one thing goes out of this meeting, it will be sending youngsters to the national capital where they can actually see what the flag stands for and represents.”

Since then, more than 50,000 students from across America have participated in this educational program. Medina EC has sent 39 students on the trip since 2007. More information about Medina EC’s Youth Tour program can be found at MedinaEC.org/YouthTour.

And the Winners Are...



GENESIS PILKINGTON
KNIPPA



JACKSON LOWELL
CASTROVILLE



TRINITY BLACK
DEVINE

Prepare for Summer Storms

THE SUMMER MONTHS ahead make conditions right for dangerous storms, and hurricane season kicks off June 1.

These weather events can cause destruction to Medina Electric Cooperative’s system, but co-op crews are standing by to respond should power outages occur.

When major storms knock out power, line crews take all necessary precautions before they get to work on any downed lines. You should also practice safety and preparedness to protect your family during major storms and outages.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency recommends preparing for storms and other disasters with these basic steps:

Stock your pantry with a three-day supply of nonperishable food, water, and other essentials like medications, diapers and toiletries.

Organize emergency supplies so they are easily accessible in one location.

In the event of a prolonged power outage, turn off major appliances, TVs, computers and other sensitive electronics. This will help avert damage from a power surge and will also help prevent overloading the circuits during power restoration.

If you plan to use a small generator during an outage, make sure it’s rated to handle the amount of power you will need, and always review the manufacturer’s instructions to operate it safely. Medina EC’s requirements for non-commercial emergency and standby generators can be found at MedinaEC.org/Generators.

Listen to local news or a weather radio for storm and emergency information, and check Medina EC’s website for power restoration updates.

After the storm, allow ample room for utility crews to safely perform their jobs, including on your property.

Planning for severe storms or other emergencies can reduce stress and anxiety caused by the weather event and can lessen the impact of the storm.

EVGENIYQW | ADOBE STOCK

Medina EC Awards \$25,000 in Scholarships

TWENTY-FIVE AREA STUDENTS have an extra \$1,000 to help with their education expenses next school year.

Medina EC awarded \$25,000 in scholarships to area students this May. The scholarship program is an important part of the cooperative's commitment to community and to education. Since it began in 2000, the co-op has awarded more than \$652,000 in scholarships to 469 students from our service

area.

Learn more about the scholarship program requirements and eligibility at MedinaEC.org/Scholarships. The scholarship applications generally open up and have a deadline in the first few months of each year. If you have applied in the past and not won, watch for information on next year's scholarship program in January or February 2023.



ALEXA GOMEZ
DEVINE



ALYSSA HERNANDEZ
UVALDE



ALYSSA YERE
ROMA



ASHLYN PERSYN
HONDO



BAYLEE ROGGE
HONDO



CAELEIGH MUENNINK
HONDO



DAXTON FILLINGER
CASTROVILLE



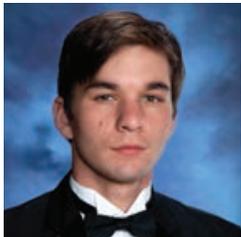
EMILY HECKER
CASTROVILLE



FAITH GARZA
RIO GRANDE CITY



FELIPE CUELLAR
HONDO



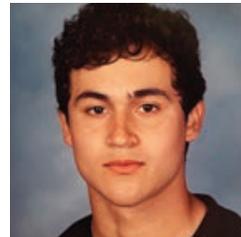
FILIP LANGE
MOORE



HAILYN SEABOLT
HONDO



JENNA DIAZ
NATALIA



JOSEPH TAPIA
HONDO



KAITLYN ALEJANDRO
UVALDE



KATHERINE SELF
D'HANIS



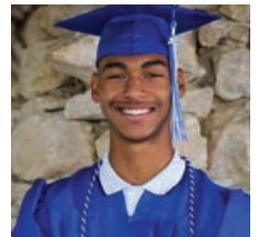
LOBO GARCIA
ZAPATA



LUKE BARRIENTES
SAN ANTONIO



MARINA ESCH
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DEVINE



ROMAN GUERRA
ZAPATA



RYAN LEWIS
D'HANIS



SOPHIA MONTEMAYOR
LAREDO



THOMAS RAIFORD
HONDO



YULISSA RODRIGUEZ
LAREDO

VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENTS: WE HAVE A TRUCK FOR YOU!

MEDINA EC IS DONATING A RETIRED
SERVICE TRUCK TO AN AREA VFD.



DEADLINE: FRIDAY, JULY 1
ELIGIBILITY AND APPLICATION:

MEDINAEC.ORG/VEHDONATION

Photo of 2018 recipient Sabinal VFD, after completing their modifications to the donated truck.



BRENDA CARSON | ADOBE STOCK

Summer Energy Conservation

MEDINA EC'S LOAD MANAGEMENT PROGRAM begins this month and runs through September.

Load Management is a program for irrigators. Those who choose to sign up allow Medina EC to shut off their pivots during hot summer days, which helps reduce energy demand at key times and helps the co-op save on power costs in the following year.

But irrigators aren't the only ones who can help!

Any member can opt in to receive conservation tips by text alert on days energy demand is high. The only difference between you and members on the irrigation program is that we won't shut your power off: You're responsible for doing your part to conserve energy when we share conservation tips. You get to decide what to do at those times to save energy.

**You can do your part!
Conserve electricity from
3 to 7 p.m. during
June, July, August and
September.**

**Text ENERGY to (855)
429-1119 to sign up for
conservation alerts.**

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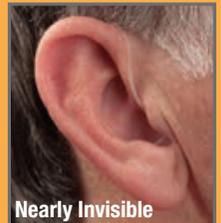
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*Building prices are before freight and taxes.



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— Jeff from McKinney, TX

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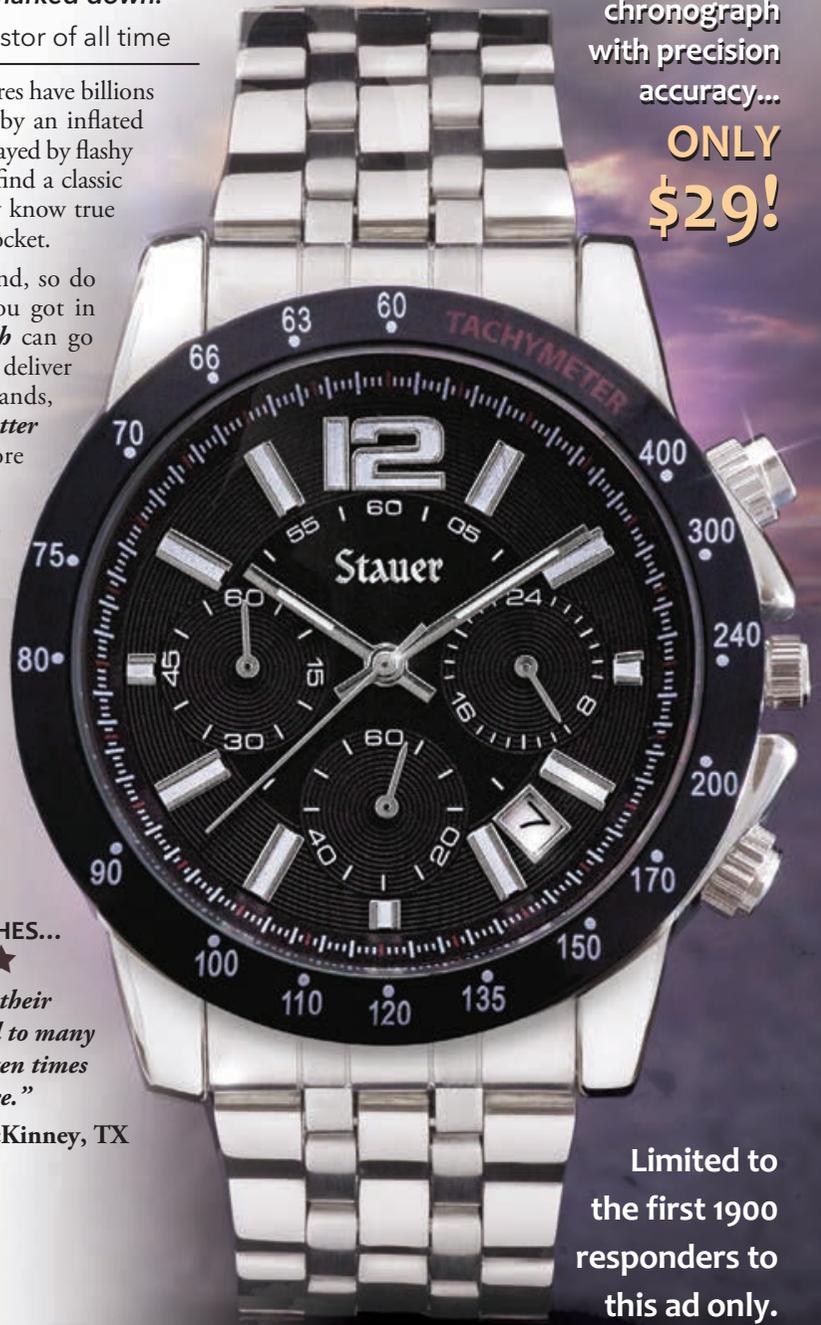
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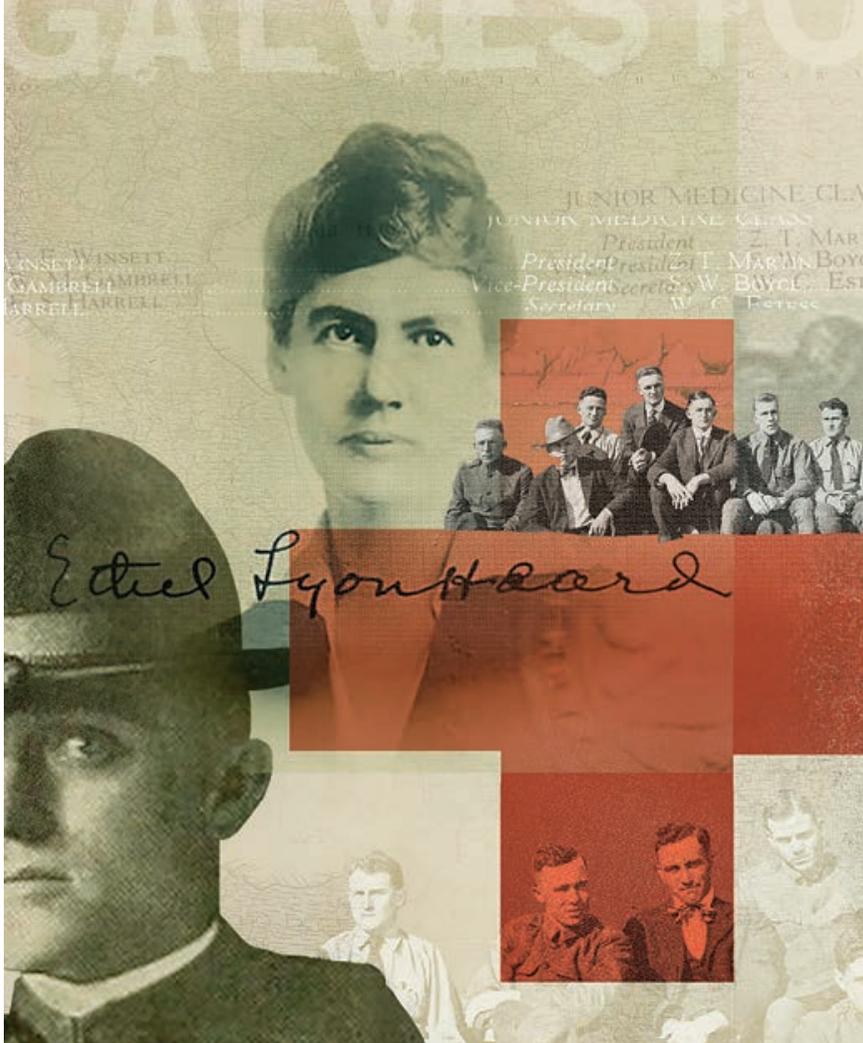
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Doctor's Orders

UT medical school faculty left Galveston to provide aid during World War I

BY MARTHA DEERING • ILLUSTRATION BY DANA SMITH

WHEN DR. ETHEL LYON HEARD returned to Texas after serving overseas with the Red Cross during World War I, she was holding tightly to the hand of a 3-year-old orphan from France named Jean Thibaut. After the child's house was nearly destroyed by a mortar in 1918, he was discovered in a back room the following day and brought to the hospital where Lyon Heard worked.

Before the war, Lyon Heard taught classes in hygiene and child care at the University of Texas' medical school in Galveston. Making space in her life for a child orphaned by war was just one of the countless acts of service and moments of bravery undertaken by UT faculty when the U.S. joined the war effort.

"These men and women sacrificed their lives and future professions by en-

listing in the war effort in Europe," says Dwayne Jones, director of the Galveston Historical Foundation. "The effects of the war redirected each life and altered the direction of health care forever."

Known today as the University of Texas Medical Branch, the school started in October 1891 with 13 instructors, 23 students and one building.

The mettle of the school was tested right away when the devastating 1900 Galveston hurricane struck. Much of the city was destroyed, but Galveston doctors led recovery efforts.

When the U.S. formally entered World War I in 1917, new and catastrophic forms of combat—trench warfare and chemical and biological weapons—required increased medical care for troops. The situation worsened when the Spanish

flu pandemic swept across the battle-grounds of Europe, killing thousands in just a few days. The American Expeditionary Forces sent out an urgent call for physicians, medical faculty and medical students to assist in the war effort.

The Council of National Defense urged medical students to stay in school and faculty to continue their critical teaching duties. But that didn't stop some of UT's medical personnel, who joined personnel from other leading U.S. universities in enlisting.

Lyon Heard's husband, Dr. Allen George Heard, adjunct professor of pediatrics, joined the medical corps and was assigned to British forces in England. Wounded twice, he received two citations for "conspicuous bravery" in action on the battlefields of France.

Dr. Herbert Lee McNeil, an assistant professor of clinical pathology, was assigned to oversee a hospital with 4,000 patients, later serving on the front lines. Dr. Estill Lee Rice was business manager of the school's medical magazine as a student. He served aboard the USS Nicholson, where he led a rescue mission to treat sailors injured in a German U-boat attack. Dr. Jess Autry Flautt was an instructor in obstetrics and gynecology before enlisting in the Navy Medical Corps on the day after the U.S. declared war. He rescued men from a ship loaded with explosives.

In November 2019, UTMB unveiled a Texas Historical Commission marker to honor the extraordinary contributions of eight members of the school's faculty and 11 students who served during the war effort. Some of the physicians sacrificed their hard-earned professional positions, and in some cases their lives, to serve.

Dr. Ben Raimer, UTMB's president, hopes the marker inspires today's physicians. "The physicians honored on the new historical marker represent service before self, which is what we continue to instill in our students today." ■

HEADS: COURTESY GALVESTON HISTORICAL FOUNDATION. CLASS: COURTESY MOODY MEDICAL LIBRARY

Weeknight Dinners

Busy day? No need to sweat it with these stress-free dishes

BY MEGAN MYERS, FOOD EDITOR

Quick and easy dinners are the backbone of our meals. One of my favorites is a stir-fry—you can throw almost anything you have on hand in, and less than 30 minutes later you have a full meal. This beef and green bean stir-fry is a go-to in my family, especially when we have lots of green beans from the garden or tucked away in the freezer. If you like it spicy, add your favorite hot sauce to the dish.

Beef and Green Bean Stir-Fry

1 pound ground beef
1 pound green beans, trimmed
3 tablespoons soy sauce
2–3 cloves garlic, minced
1 tablespoon grated fresh ginger
1–2 teaspoons honey
Crushed red chile flakes (optional)
Cooked rice, to serve

1. In a large sauté pan over medium-high heat, cook the ground beef until browned, breaking into pieces as it cooks. Drain excess grease if desired.
2. Stir in the green beans and cook for about 5 minutes, until beans are bright green and crisp-tender.
3. Whisk together soy sauce, garlic, ginger and honey, then pour into sauté pan. Cook another 2–3 minutes, until heated through, stirring to coat. Finish with chile flakes if desired and serve with rice.

SERVES 4

TCP Follow along with Megan Myers and her adventures in the kitchen at stetted.com, where she features a recipe for Stuffed Shells With Chicken.





Spaghetti Carbonara

LINDA HARDWICK
HOUSTON COUNTY EC

Carbonara is the ultimate comfort food and easier than you might think. This version brings in heat with crushed red chile flakes, so add according to your tastes.

- 1 pound spaghetti or other pasta**
- 4–6 slices bacon, chopped**
- 5–6 cloves garlic, minced**
- 1 teaspoon crushed red chile flakes, or to taste**
- ½ cup dry white wine**
- 2 eggs**
- ¾ cup grated Parmesan cheese**
- Salt and pepper**
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley (optional)**

1. Bring a large pot of salted water to boil and add pasta, cooking according to package instructions. Reserve ½ cup pasta water and drain pasta, setting aside to keep warm.
2. While the pasta cooks, in a large frying pan over medium heat cook bacon until crisp. Remove bacon and set aside.
3. To the same pan, add garlic and red chile flakes and sauté for 1 minute, then add white wine, scraping up any stuck bits on the bottom of the pan.
4. Whisk together eggs and Parmesan, then add pasta, egg mixture, bacon and reserved pasta water to the frying pan, tossing with tongs to mix together and create a creamy sauce. Add salt and pepper to taste, and serve with parsley.

SERVES 6

[MORE RECIPES >](#)



\$500 WINNER

Eggplant Pizettes

KAY LEUSCHNER
NUECES EC



Quick, easy and filling, this is a twist on standard eggplant Parmesan. Serve it as is for a lighter meal or add to a dish of pasta with extra sauce.

SERVES 4

- ½ cup breadcrumbs**
- ½ teaspoon dried oregano**
- ½ teaspoon dried basil**
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder**
- ¾ cup grated Parmesan cheese**
- ¼ cup mayonnaise**
- 1 eggplant, cut into ½-inch slices**
- 1 jar (26 ounces) spaghetti sauce**
- 1 cup shredded mozzarella or other cheese**

1. Preheat oven to 425 degrees. In a shallow bowl, combine breadcrumbs, spices, garlic powder and Parmesan.
2. Spread a thin layer of mayonnaise on both sides of eggplant slices. Dip each slice into breadcrumb mixture, pressing gently to adhere the coating to both sides.
3. Arrange eggplant on an ungreased rimmed baking sheet and bake 15 minutes or until tender.
4. Remove from oven and reduce temperature to 375 degrees. Spread each eggplant slice with a dollop of spaghetti sauce and top with mozzarella. Return pan to the oven for 10–15 minutes or until cheese is melted.

TCP \$500 Recipe Contest

HOLIDAY SIDES DUE JUNE 10

We know there's pride in the sides at your holiday feast. Submit your recipes on our website by June 10 for a chance to win \$500.





Zuppa di Ceci

SIMONA CUDE
BANDERA EC

This easy dish—the name means chickpea soup—gets a burst of vibrant flavor from lemon juice and capers. Cude recommends mashing some of the chickpeas before serving for a creamier soup.

2 tablespoons olive oil
½ onion, finely chopped
3 cloves garlic, minced

1 medium golden potato, diced
1 can (15 ounces) chickpeas, drained and rinsed
Pinch crushed red chile flakes
3 cups vegetable broth
1 teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon pepper
2 tablespoons lemon juice
2 cups croutons, divided use
2 tablespoons drained capers (optional)
Chopped fresh parsley (optional)

1. In a large soup pot over low heat, heat oil. Add onion and garlic and cook 2 minutes. Add potato and cook another 2 minutes.
2. Stir in chickpeas, chile flakes, broth, salt and pepper. Raise heat to medium-high and bring to a boil, then reduce to low and cook 20 minutes, stirring occasionally.
3. Remove from heat and stir in lemon juice. Taste and adjust seasonings if desired.
4. Add ½ cup croutons to each of 4 bowls and ladle soup over the top. Top with capers and parsley, if using.

SERVES 4

Batching for Busy Days

BY MEGAN MYERS

You can freeze cooked beans and grains, like rice and quinoa, for easy use later.

1. Cook as usual, doubling or tripling the recipe for larger batches.
2. Let cool completely. Cool grains quickly by spreading onto a large sheet pan.
3. Scoop into freezer-safe bags or containers in 1- or 2-cup increments. Remove as much air as possible, then seal, label and store in the freezer.
4. Thaw overnight in the refrigerator or more quickly in a bowl of warm water; or add to your favorite soups while frozen.

SACRED STONE OF THE SOUTHWEST IS ON THE BRINK OF EXTINCTION



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

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

We found a limited supply of turquoise from Arizona and purchased it for our *Sedona Turquoise Collection*. Inspired by the work of those ancient craftsmen and designed to showcase the exceptional blue stone, each stabilized vibrant cabochon features a unique, one-of-a-kind matrix surrounded in Bali metalwork. You could drop over \$1,200 on a turquoise pendant, or you could secure 26 carats of genuine Arizona turquoise for just \$99.

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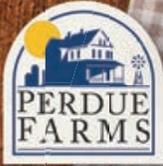


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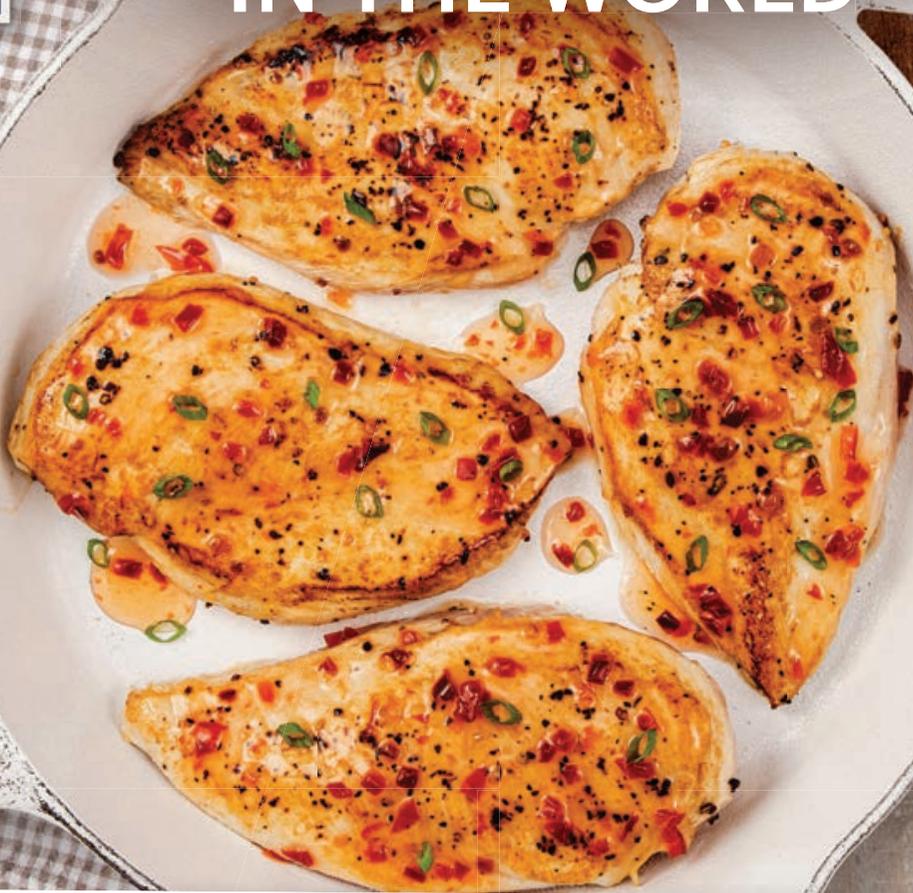
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COURTESY CHET GARNER

Eruption Evidence

Drive into the Paisano Pass Volcano in far West Texas to view prehistory

BY CHET GARNER

IF I CLOSE my eyes to imagine a volcano, I see a Polynesian island with palm trees, beaches and an endless ocean. I definitely don't imagine the cactus-filled landscapes of West Texas.

Yet there I was, standing on the shoulder of U.S. Highway 90, halfway between Alpine and Marfa, staring at the Paisano Pass Volcano, which—fortunately for visitors—has been dormant for about 30 million years.

The drive west from Alpine to the ancient site was impressive. Red cliffs and strange rock spires on each side of the road made me feel like I was traveling back to the Cretaceous Period. Honestly, I wouldn't have been surprised if a T. rex had crossed the road in front of me. I crested a hill and dropped into a valley, where I pulled into a roadside park to read an educational panel about the lava-formed landscape.

All around me were colorful cliffs, knobby boulders and crag-covered mountains that were formed during the Oligocene Epoch, 23–33 million years ago. Dinosaurs were extinct then, but giant mammals walked the earth, including 18-foot-tall beasts that looked like a mix between horses and rhinos. It was during this era that the Paisano Pass Volcano exploded and then collapsed back onto itself, leaving a 3-mile-wide caldera that stretches as far as you can see from the small park.

Geologists come from all over the world to study this volcano because it exposed layers of rock normally hidden miles below the surface of the earth. The Big Bend is still tectonically active and has even experienced violent earthquakes as recently as 1998. While another volcanic eruption is unlikely, I never say never in Texas. And so I promptly got back in my truck and continued down the road. ■

ABOVE Chet studies a roadside panel depicting the history and geology of the Paisano Pass Volcano.

TCP Chet vs. the volcano: It's not a movie, but it is a video on our website. Watch all his Texplorations on *The Daytripper* on PBS.



Know Before You Go

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

JUNE 09

Lufkin Beautiful: The Carole King Musical, (936) 633-5454, angelinaarts.org

Abilene [9–11] Children's Art and Literacy Festival, (325) 677-1161, abilenecalf.com

Lockhart [9–11] Chisholm Trail Roundup, (512) 398-2818, chisholmtrailroundup.com

Temple [9–11] Texas State Federation Square and Round Dance Festival, (254) 223-2484, squaredancetx.com

10

Levelland Sip & Swirl, (806) 894-9079, downtownlevelland.com

Fredericksburg [10–11] Craft Beer Festival, (830) 997-8515, fbgcrafterbeerfestival.com

Fredericksburg [10–11] Thomas Michael Riley Music Festival, (830) 997-3224, thomasmichaelriley.com

Blanco [10–12] Lavender Festival, (830) 833-5101, blancolavenderfest.com

Elgin [10–11, 19] Juneteenth Festival, (512) 963-2721, elgintx.com/194/juneteenth-festival

San Antonio [10–Aug. 6] Fiesta Noche del Rio, (210) 226-4651, fiestanochesa.com

11

East Bernard Czech Kolache-Klobase Festival, (979) 335-7907, kkfest.com

Fredericksburg Pride in the Pacific, (830) 997-8600, pacificwarmuseum.org

Jacksonville Tomato Fest, (903) 586-2217, jacksonvilletexas.com/tomato-fest

Kyle Market Days, (512) 262-3939, cityofkyle.com

Mesquite Rodeo Road Rally, (972) 284-9411, rodeoroadrally.com

Nacogdoches Texas Blueberry Festival, (936) 564-7351, texasblueberryfestival.com

Lufkin [14-15] Blue Man Group, (936) 633-5454, angelinaarts.org

Stonewall [16-18] Peach JAMboree, (830) 644-2735, stonewalltexas.com

Kyle Ash Pavilion Skate Night, (512) 262-3939, cityofkyle.com

Longview [17-19] Great Texas Balloon Race, (903) 753-3281, greattexasballoonrace.com

Comanche Rodeo Parade, (325) 356-3233, comanchechamber.org

Lake Jackson Bird Banding, (979) 480-0999, gcbo.org

Bowie [18-25] Jim Bowie Days Rodeo and Celebration, (940) 872-1114, jimbowiedays.org

MORE EVENTS >

TCP *Submit Your Event*

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

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Pick of the Month

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Check out the rodeo action, live-stock show, rides, food and other entertainment as Free-stone County's annual fair cele-brates the century mark. Fairfield is about 60 miles east of Waco.

JUNE EVENTS CONTINUED

22 **Levelland [22-25] Golden
Spread Classic Steer
and Heifer Show,**
(806) 759-1102,
goldenspreadclassic.com

23 **Mexia [23-25] Rodeo,**
(254) 562-5569,
mexiachamber.com

25 **Arlington Tommy DeCarlo
With Rudy Cardenas,**
(817) 543-4308,
levittpavilionarlington.org

Brenham Crystal Gayle,
(979) 337-7240,
thebarnhillcenter.com

**Comanche Red Dirt
Dinner and Dancing,**
(325) 325-3233,
comanchechamber.org

Ennis Freedom Fest,
(972) 878-4748,
visitennis.org

**Belton [25, July 1-4]
4th of July Celebration,**
(254) 939-3551,
beltonchamber.com

JULY

01 **Canadian [1-4] Fourth
of July Celebration,**
(806) 323-6234,
canadiantx.com

02 **Boerne Music in the
Cave: American Stories
by Marbrisha Trio,**
(830) 537-4212,
cavewithoutaname.com

**Fredericksburg [2-3,
16-17] Pari-Mutuel Horse
Racing,** (830) 997-2359,
gillespiefair.com

**Granbury [2-4] Hometown
4th of July,** (817) 573-1622,
visitgranbury.com

**The Colony Liberty by
the Lake,** (972) 625-1106,
visitthecolonytx.com/events

03 **Addison Kaboom Town,**
(972) 450-2800,
addisonkaboomtown.com

**Grand Prairie [3-4]
Lone Stars & Stripes
Fireworks Celebration,**
(972) 263-7223,
lonestarpark.com

04 **Cameron 4th of July
Fireworks,** (254) 697-4979,
cameron-tx.com

**Fredericksburg 4th of July
Parade and Fireworks,**
(830) 997-6523,
visitfredericksburgtx.com

Lubbock 4th on Broadway,
(806) 749-2929,
broadwayfestivals.com

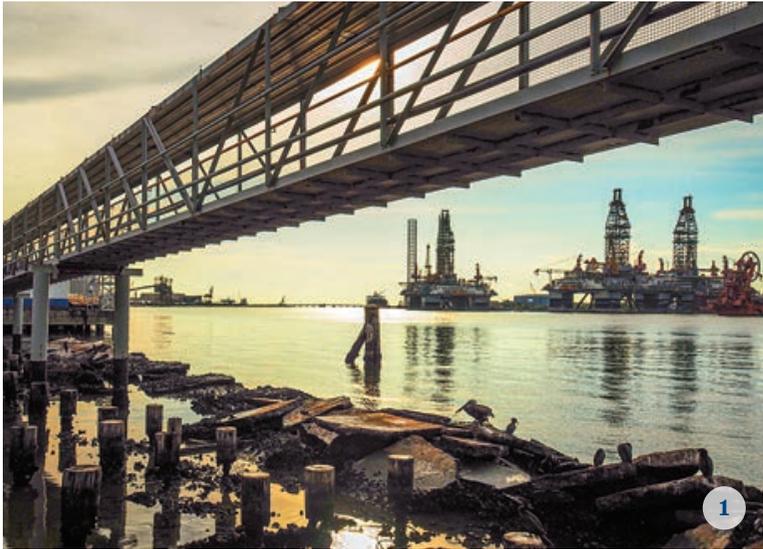
**McKinney Red, White and
Boom,** (972) 547-7480,
mckinneytxas.org

**Tomball July 4th Fire-
works and Street Fest,**
(281) 351-5484,
tomballtx.gov

Industrial

Docks, factories, train yards and mills are all reminders of local industry that dot the Texas landscape—or used to. Rediscover remnants of the past and celebrate innovations that move us into the future.

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1 LISA CORKER
FAYETTE EC

"Beautiful sunset at the Galveston shipyard."

2 REAGAN FERGUSON
CENTRAL TEXAS EC

An abandoned Fort Worth incinerator.

3 STEPHANIE EHLERT
GREENBELT EC

Pastureland in Jericho on what used to be part of Route 66.

4 DANNY PICKENS
CHEROKEE COUNTY EC

"This abandoned factory in Longview seems as though everyone just walked away and left it to decay."



Upcoming Contests

- DUE JUN 10 **Hometown Pride**
- DUE JUL 10 **Aerials**
- DUE AUG 10 **Winter Wildlife**



Enter online at TexasCoopPower.com/contests.

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



Pop's Light Touch

A keepsake reminds a daughter of her father's illuminating ways

BY BABS RODRIGUEZ
ILLUSTRATION BY
NAVINA CHHABRIA

MY FATHER was always telling someone to turn out a light.

Except when he was telling one of his five children to turn one on.

"Time for bed, turn out your light."

"Turn out the light you left on in the bathroom."

"Turn on your desk light, you'll ruin your eyes."

A military man who ran a tight ship at home, Pop had a sixth sense when it came to knowing who had left an unoccupied room without flipping a switch or who was reading in the dark.

I think about him whenever I set up the furnishings in a new household because he taught me the power of light to set a mood. He had strong opinions about which combination of lamps would generate the best conversation

or encourage lingering over dinner or—with a measured flipping of switches—not so subtly end an evening.

For my 13th birthday, I was allowed to host my very first boy-girl fiesta, made yet more festive by the number of string lights he hung in the backyard trees. However, that gesture may have been less about mood setting and more about oversight. That was definitely how he used the porch lights, flashing them on and off during my high school years and sending clear messages to any one of us daughters hovering outside with a date for what he considered too long.

Maybe his time on the air base or studying the lighted dials in a bomber's cockpit made him keenly attuned to messaging via lighting, but he never bought a lamp or a fixture without some research. Except for one.

Once, at an antiques show, he impulsively purchased a tiny brass lamp. He called it a fairy lamp, although it looked nothing like the glass Victorian-era candle lamps of that name. It was charming, with signs of the maker's hand in the unpolished brass base and a thin metal shade that looked like a pointed gnome's cap.

When he bought it, I was sad that the lamp's wiring was so dangerously undone that there was no doubt it was a fire hazard. And while he forbade me from ever actually using it, I kept that lamp in my room, imagining the places it might have illuminated in years past.

Pop had it rewired for me when I left for college, and it's traveled with me around the world. It is the most meaningful gift I ever received, but in case the metaphor eluded my young self, he included a card: "If you get homesick, Daughter, know I've always left a light on for you."

I think of him every time I switch it on, but only after I've turned out all the lights I'm not using. ■



LIVE LIFE PAIN FREE



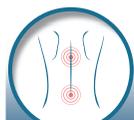
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