

JON WALK'S ENDLESS
RUNNING LIST

PORT MANSFIELD'S
SUNKEN TREASURE

TASTY GLUTEN-FREE
RECIPES

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January 2023



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Jon Walk can't help himself. He runs—all over the state—and keeps lists of his expansive exploits.

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Salye Coles and Joshua,
a mustang in her care.
Photo by Dave Shafer

ABOVE

Jon Walk is on a quest to run
a mile in every Texas county.
Illustration by John Kachik

Startling Fact

LEAVE YOUR FRIENDS star-struck with your smarts.

Polaris, the North Star, sits directly above the North Pole along Earth's rotational axis. That's the imaginary line that extends through the planet and out of the North and South poles.

But here's the dazzling part: Polaris hasn't always been the North Star. Because Earth wobbles, that rotational axis sometimes points to a different star. That's why, about 14,000 years ago, Vega was the North Star. And it will be again in about 12,000 years.

“Keep your eyes on the stars but remember to keep your feet on the ground.”

—THEODORE ROOSEVELT



Turning Your Stomach?

Michigan State University researchers say a newly developed material for making wind turbines could later be recycled into objects ranging from car parts to gummy bears.

TCP Contests and More

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**FINISH THIS
SENTENCE**
THE GREATEST
TEXAN EVER IS ...

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

Below are some of the responses to our November prompt: **It's been so long since I ...**

Listened to the red wolves howl in answer to a sawmill steam whistle.

WAYMON VEST
HOUSTON COUNTY EC
CROCKETT

Caught fireflies in a jar.

WANDA LOVELACE
TRI-COUNTY EC
WEATHERFORD

Hopped across the sun-warmed, deep furrows of a freshly plowed cotton field.

DIANN STOVALL
CECA
ZEPHYR

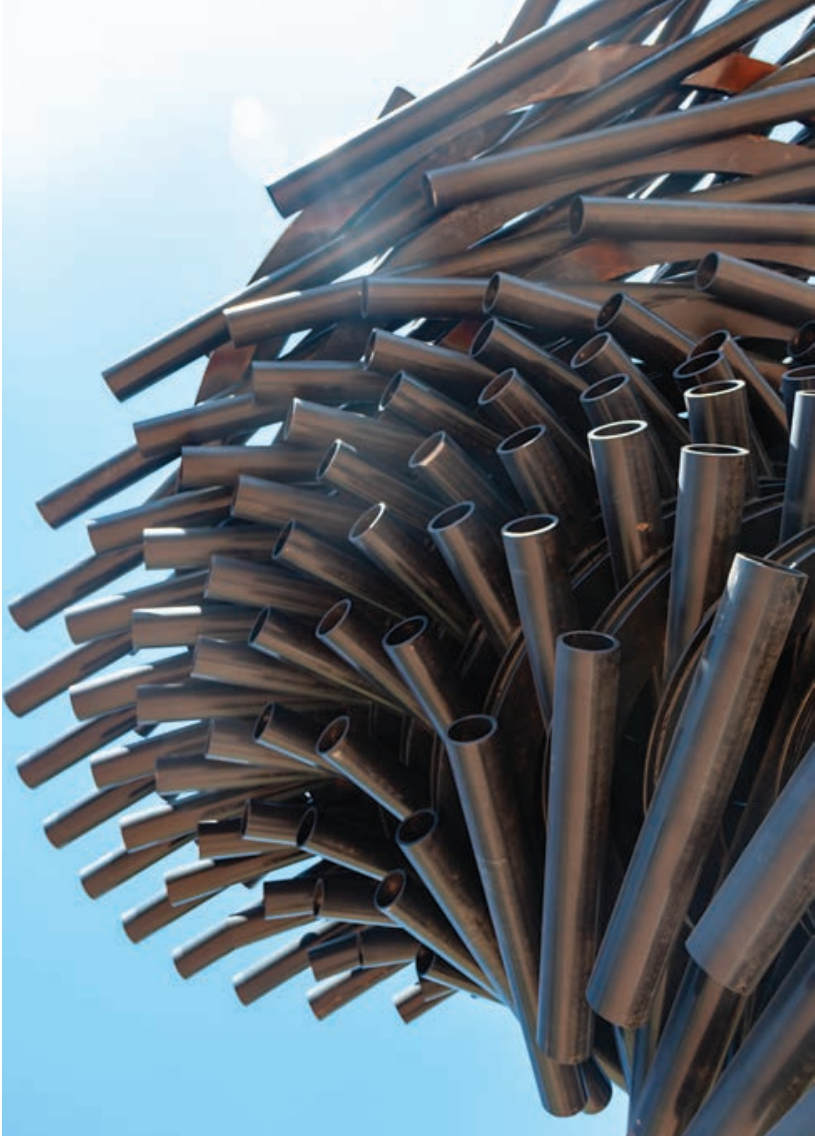
Dialed a rotary telephone.

REBECCA VANCE
WOOD COUNTY EC
MINEOLA

Drank from a garden hose.

DUWAYNE ALBRECHT
COSERV
MCKINNEY

Visit our website to see more responses.



**It Sounded
Like a ...**

ABILENE HAS A NEW sculpture little more than a buffalo chip's toss away from the eight giant steel bison twisting in the wind 35 feet above Frontier Texas. Singing Ringing Tree, above, installed in July 2022, takes advantage of the West Texas town's bluster, turning 27 tons of pipes into giant flutes that create music audible up to 400 feet away, depending on the prevailing gusts.

The 22-foot-tall stack of pipes is arranged in a way that reminds knowing residents of a tornado and takes advantage of the winds that blow through town at an average of 12 mph.

**Guess
what?**
January 4
is National
Trivia Day.



The Arable Twos

“We should be grateful for every 2-year-old out there who loves the land like he does. Thank you, farmers. We don’t say that enough.”

BARBARA MACHA
COSERV
HIGHLAND VILLAGE

Newcomer Nuance?

I’ve noticed a pattern developing of a decrease in articles featuring long-established country folk and an increase in showcasing new arrivals to the state [*Connecting With the Land*, September 2022].

From the content that’s been featured over the past few years, I can only deduce that our co-op magazine seems to be trying to placate readers with an appetite for citified country life.

Buzz Payne
Wood County EC
Big Sandy

I love her [Watch *Grandma Cook*, November 2022].
I am addicted to her on TikTok.

KRISTIN SPRINKLE
VIA FACEBOOK

Birds of a Feather

I am a transplanted Minnesotan from the rival Turkey capital, Worthington [*Not for the Birds*, October 2022]. The article brought me back to the September “turkey days” of my youth. Thank you for highlighting the friendly atmosphere and camaraderie of the festivals.

Marcia Opsata-Sparks
Pedernales EC
Dripping Springs

Summer Pursuit

I was a summer employee for a South Texas power company [*Reading Between the Lines*, October 2022]. Once a month we had to read meters. One time a smart dog hit his gate, the gate opened, and he escaped. I ran for blocks to capture the dog and return it to its yard.

Ken Steed
Pedernales EC
Georgetown

I have inherited an interest in a farm that belonged to our parents and grandparents. At age 70, I suddenly became the caretaker of the houses and land—as your writer said, a blessing and a curse. I’ve loved learning how to care for it, but I worry who will do this after me.

Patricia Ricks
Fayette EC
Round Top



COURTESY: CUERO TURKEYFEST

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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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A Running List

Jon Walk can't help himself. He runs—all over the state—and keeps lists of his expansive exploits.

BY CARLTON STOWERS

ILLUSTRATION BY JOHN KACHIK

WHEN JON WALK stared down at the scale that morning in 2003 and saw that his weight had gone several pounds beyond the 300 mark, he determined that it was hardly a good look for someone in the health care consulting business. He vowed to make changes and decided to start running.

Early on, he could jog only a few hundred yards through his neighborhood in Spring, north of Houston, before stopping to catch his breath and massage aching calves.

That was long before he finished a marathon in Austin in a personal best time of four hours and 48 minutes; before he had run the grueling 26-mile race 53 times in 48 states; before he set a goal of running at least 1 mile in every county in Texas; and before he had run the streets and back roads of 375 towns and cities across the nation.

And before the 55-year-old native Pennsylvanian, now a well-conditioned 205 pounds, became a list-making wanderer in pursuit of better health and a unique hobby he can't fully explain.

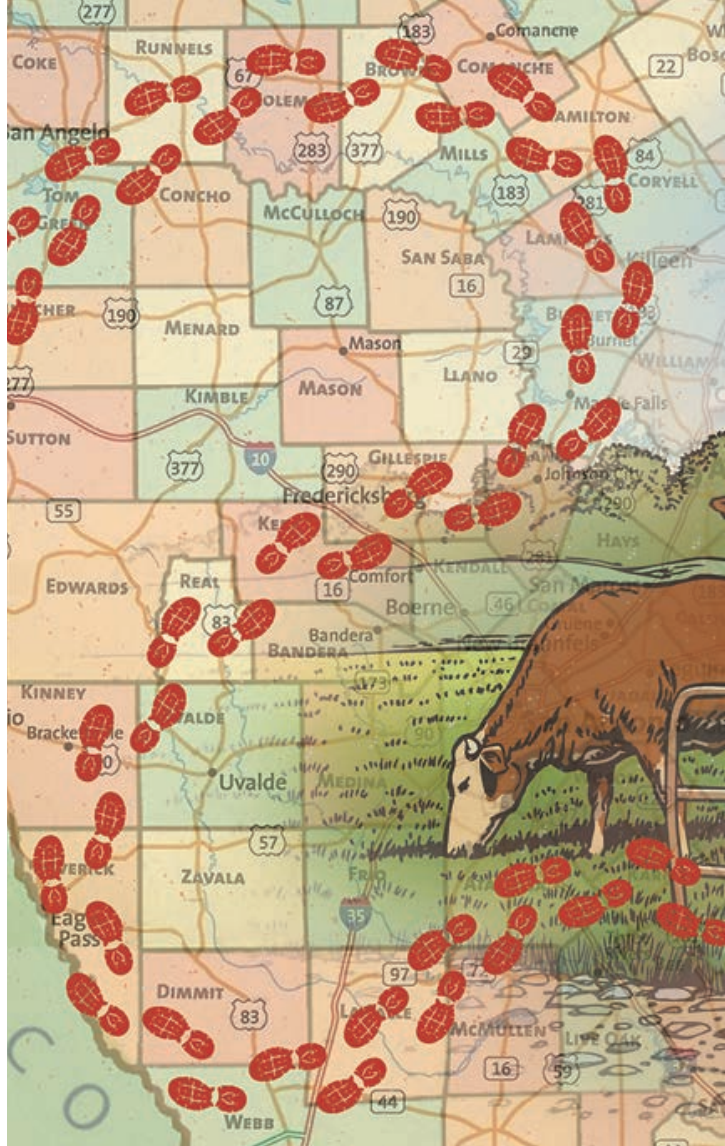
Jon Walk makes lists, many tied to his newfound love for running.

He offers no psychobabble explanation, no Zen-like reasoning. "It just keeps me active and motivated," he says. "I like to think of it as a healthy addiction."

Walk's inspiration came from an old *Runner's World* magazine article about a man who had run at least a mile in every city and township in the state of Massachusetts. Walk borrowed the idea and made all 254 Texas counties his goal. He's getting there, having run in 196 thus far.

"When I'm planning my weekend trips," says the empty-nest parent, "I make an effort to get to as many counties as possible."

Recently he tied his personal record when he flew to Amarillo, rented a car and visited seven Panhandle county seats in a day. He'd achieved the same number in East Texas a year earlier. "I love seeing the architecture of some of the older courthouses, reading the historical markers and meeting new people," he says. Once his downtown sightseeing and local history lessons are recorded in his notebook, he goes on a 15-minute run to assure that he's run at least a mile.



Then it's back in the car and off to the next county.

He's run in triple-digit heat and below-freezing temperatures, pouring rain and West Texas dust storms. Early on, he learned to precheck his route for loose and unfriendly dogs.

On an early evening run in Archer City, a local sheriff's deputy watched him closely as he ran past native son Larry McMurtry's famed bookstore. After flying into the Midland-Odessa airport, he recalls snow and ice making it difficult to keep his rental car on the road.

"The unexpected," he says, "is part of the fun."

Whenever possible, he likes to visit a new locale when an organized race has been scheduled. To date, he has competed in races—10Ks, half-marathons and marathons—in 96 counties. "To do so isn't always possible," he points out. "For instance, Loving County out in West Texas doesn't have but 34 people, so it's a little unreasonable to expect them to organize any kind of race. So, when I went there, I picked a route on a caliche road and waved at the cows as I ran by."

Then, there's the other quests.

Though his own athletic career ended with Little League baseball back in Tyrone, Pennsylvania, Walk has enjoyed sports for as long as he can remember. He's got an impressive collection of back issues of *Sports Illustrated* and *Sporting News* to prove it.

A lifelong basketball fan, Walk has been in high school,



college and professional venues from El Paso to Amarillo to the Gulf Coast. With new arenas and gymnasiums opening regularly throughout the state, it's unrealistic to think he might achieve a onetime goal of visiting them all. "I just want to keep seeing as many places and things as I can until I run out of time or money," he says.

While Walk focuses his travel plans on basketball, baseball and football stadiums, he occasionally finds time for soccer and rugby venues and last spring watched his first Premier Lacrosse League game.

Walk's lists also spawn new lists.

He has stopped for coffee and a quick snack at 20 of the 34 Buc-ee's gas stations in Texas. He need only check his notebook to tell you every bowling alley and movie theater he's visited in the past few decades.

When the COVID-19 pandemic interrupted his travels, Walk turned to reading and, yes, began listing each book he finished. He focuses primarily on—what else?—nonfiction books about sports, recently finishing a biography of Hall of Fame pitcher Nolan Ryan.

In addition to his traveling pursuits, he annually serves as an announcer and official at numerous Houston-area running competitions, including The Woodlands Marathon and the Houston Half Marathon.

He's also a storehouse of historical knowledge about run-

ning. "If I need something like a list of everyone who has ever competed in all seven Texas Ironman competitions, I go straight to Jon," says Lance Phegley, a longtime friend and former editor of *Texas Runner and Triathlete* magazine. "In addition to his personal pursuits, he's constantly promoting others and their accomplishments. He's always alerting me to something noteworthy that a young runner in some small Texas town has done or some forgotten but fascinating moment in sports history."

Willie Fowlkes, director of The Woodlands Marathon who has known Walk for over a decade, agrees. "He's a great friend and asset to the local running community," he says. "His hobbies are just another cool part of his personality."

In the summer lull before high school and collegiate teams return to competition, Walk stays busy adding baseball stadiums to his list. On consecutive weekends, he traveled to Birmingham, Alabama, and Pearl, Mississippi, to visit minor-league ballparks. Meanwhile, he was checking schedules to find when and where the upcoming 7-on-7 football tournaments would be held.

As stadiums and gymnasiums begin filling with cheering fans in the fall and winter months, Walk's calendar quickly fills.

And he'll be off and running. ■

STABLE



FUTURES

Texas-based organizations help find homes for needy steeds of different stripes



ABOVE It took 10 days before Joshua, once a wild mustang, allowed Salye Coles to touch his neck. RIGHT Coles says she almost cried when she first saw the haggard horse.

AN EXCITED SALYE COLES and her husband were driving six hours from their West Texas ranch to a Bureau of Land Management facility in Oklahoma. They were headed north last May to pick up a bay mustang gelding, tag No. 3345—a wild horse that had been collected by the BLM as part of an emergency gathering of the animals in the Jackson Mountains of northern Nevada.

In a random drawing, the horse was assigned to Coles, who lives in Sterling City, northwest of San Angelo. She was to train him and make him fit for adoption.

When Coles saw the horse, she almost cried.

“He was at least 250 pounds underweight, so skinny that his ribs were showing,” she says. “His coat was dull, and his mane was matted in knots.”

The listless mustang’s demeanor worried her even more. “He was so dejected, so withdrawn. He didn’t look at me or show interest in anything.”

Droughts in the 10 Western states where mustangs roam free have caused a shortage of not just water but also the grass that sustains them. As conditions worsen, the BLM gathers horses to be cared for and eventually adopted.

Most of these wild animals have been under the protection of the federal agency since 1971. More than 20,000 wild horses have been adopted since then, but 50,000 under BLM protection still need homes.

The Mustang Heritage Foundation, based in Round Rock, has partnered with the BLM since 2006 to train and home thousands of these animals. The nonprofit works with horse trainers like Coles in 40 states.





Coles, a retired schoolteacher, is an experienced horse-woman. She trail rides on her two other mustangs and two quarter horses. Still she wondered if she could give the poor mustang in Oklahoma all the care and training he needed. She had only 100 days to get him ready for a Fort Worth adoption event in August.

After seeing its grim condition, Glenn Coles asked his wife if she still wanted to take the horse home.

Coles had prayed that she would get the right mustang for her. So she told her husband yes, that she felt at peace with the decision.

On their drive home, Ann Souders of the MHF called. She had already found an adopter: Dale Long wanted him as an equine therapy horse at his Western Cross Ranch in Azle.

A biblical name for the horse seemed appropriate to both women. When Souders suggested Joshua, Coles knew that was the right name. The mustang would have a battle to overcome his poor physical and mental state.

Back home, Coles started earning Joshua's trust. It took 10 days before he allowed her to touch his neck. Another week before she could untie the BLM tag around his neck.

Still more days until he let her put on his halter.

Gradually Joshua started nickering to Coles, indicating he was glad to see her. In the third week of July, she was finally able to saddle and ride him.

What does it mean to bond with a horse that once ran wild and free? Salye Coles says that she most enjoys gaining a mustang's trust. "To watch them willingly give up that wildness, to trust you, is amazing," she says.

"A mustang is a clean slate, no pretenses," Coles says. "They're the most honest animals I've ever been around. They're smart, and they analyze every single thing."

What does it mean to bond with a horse that once ran wild and free? Coles says that she most enjoys gaining a mustang's trust. "To watch them willingly give up that wildness, to trust you, is amazing," she says.

When people ask how she can bear to give up this mustang she has nursed back to health and grown to love, Coles tells them she knows Joshua is going to a wonderful home.

"His purpose is to help people who are struggling and fighting back," she says. "He has had to fight a battle too."



SEE FOR YOURSELF

The next Roses to Ribbons adoption event will be held in March at Sam Houston Race Park in Houston. The Mustang Heritage Foundation's Mustang Magic showcase is January 19–21, during the Fort Worth Stock Show & Rodeo.

OPPOSITE Coles and Joshua at the Extreme Mustang Makeover event in Fort Worth. LEFT Tracy Sheffield and Eliot, a former racehorse, have found success in dressage competitions.

O Beyond the Finish Line

F COURSE, mustangs aren't the only horses in need of homes.

Tracy Sheffield's passion is thoroughbreds—her own and those that need help finding a life outside of racing.

Like the MHF, the Paddock Foundation, a charitable arm of the Texas Thoroughbred Association, advocates for these majestic animals. The nonprofit has placed hundreds of former and failed racehorses since March 2015—whether they raced for several years or didn't go to post even once, so-called off-track thoroughbreds.

"Since our first event, we have helped almost 200 thoroughbreds find new homes," says Sheffield, the Paddock Foundation's president who lives in Wimberley, southwest of Austin.

Some thoroughbreds, even if they descend from top racing bloodlines, don't do well in racing. Others have successful track careers cut short by injury. If the injury takes months to heal, the owner may decide it makes more financial sense to move the horse to a new owner and career.

To help new owners connect with these thoroughbreds, Sheffield, a Pedernales Electric Cooperative member who works as a business consultant for veterinary practices,

established horse fairs called Roses to Ribbons. The roses represent racing, like those awarded at the Kentucky Derby, and the ribbons represent the awards given at shows and competitions—an analogy for these horses' transitions.

The events are held at Lone Star Park in Grand Prairie, Sam Houston Race Park in Houston and Retama Park near San Antonio. Two weeks before a meet ends, Sheffield visits with trainers to get details and photos of horses that need new homes. "Through social media—I belong to over 20 horse groups online—I post photos of the available thoroughbreds," she says.

Each fair is held before the day's racing starts and always draws a crowd. Trainers bring their horses to the paddock and talk directly with prospective adopters. Each adoption fee is a private sale by the trainer to the new owner.

"The horses have been well cared for," she says. "The trainers are very picky about who gets to adopt their horses [and can] refuse any sale. I have heard them tell prospective adopters, 'This horse isn't right for you.'"

Sheffield herself has adopted two thoroughbreds. Eliot, a 12-year-old bay, showed no talent for racing. Now he competes in dressage and does trail riding. Sheffield says that Eliot isn't high-strung, as many thoroughbreds are.

"He is so trustworthy," she says. "He takes such good



care of his rider. I've taught people who have never ridden to ride on Eliot."

Gus is 7 years old, has a dark coat and is like a friendly, curious puppy. He was training well for racing when he fractured a sesamoid bone near one foot. The bone healed after surgery, but because of his height, the trainer decided not to risk a second injury from racing that might have left him unsound for other riding. Now he does trail riding.

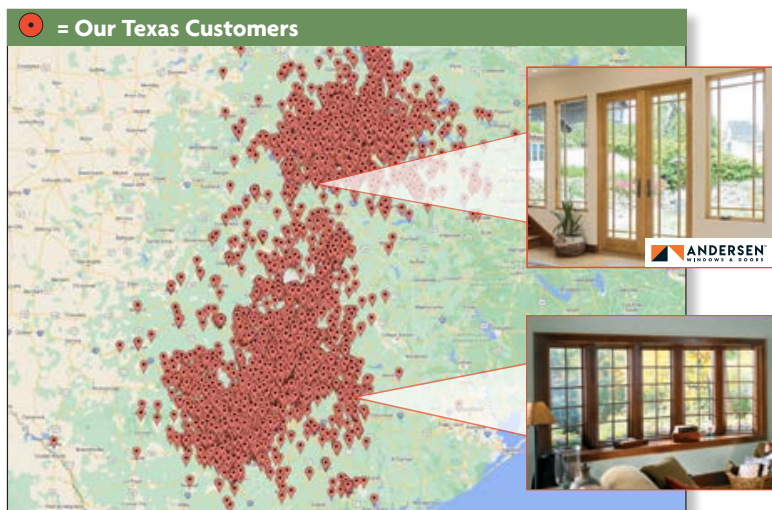
Thoroughbreds' speed makes them suitable for competitions. They do well in jumping, dressage and trail riding. Sheffield advises potential adopters to "think outside of the box with thoroughbreds.

"They can do well in the Western sports world, too, in Western dressage or barrel racing," she says. "The most sure-footed trail horse I've ever had was a thoroughbred." ■

ABOVE Eliot needed little coaxing from Sheffield to perform a bow.
RIGHT Watch Eliot and Sheffield interact in a video with this story online.



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30	8.87	7.69	9.93	8.80	14	11	18	16
36	9.05	7.98	10.56	9.43	15	13	22	19
37	9.17	8.21	11.07	9.74	15	13	23	20
38	9.31	8.48	11.69	10.13	16	14	24	22
39	9.46	8.78	12.35	10.53	17	15	26	23
40	9.63	9.12	13.13	11.01	18	16	28	25
41	10.00	9.27	13.66	11.60	20	17	30	26
42	10.44	9.46	14.30	12.31	21	18	33	29
43	10.99	9.68	15.09	13.19	24	20	37	31
44	11.57	9.92	15.92	14.11	26	22	41	34
45	12.25	10.20	16.90	15.20	28	24	46	38
46	12.56	10.67	17.87	15.91	30	26	49	40
47	12.94	11.23	19.04	16.76	32	27	53	44
48	13.40	11.93	20.50	17.82	35	29	58	48
49	13.89	12.66	22.02	18.92	37	31	63	52
50	14.46	13.52	23.82	20.23	41	34	69	57
51	15.33	14.15	25.81	21.48	44	36	77	62
52	16.38	14.92	28.22	22.99	49	39	86	67
53	17.69	15.86	31.20	24.87	54	42	97	74
54	19.05	16.85	34.33	26.83	60	46	108	82
55	20.66	18.02	38.02	29.15	67	50	122	90
56	22.28	19.04	41.28	31.10	73	54	134	98
57	24.24	20.27	45.24	33.46	80	58	148	107

MONTHLY RATES

Issue Age	\$100,000		\$250,000		\$500,000*		\$1,000,000*	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
58	26.66	21.79	50.12	36.39	89	64	166	118
59	29.20	23.39	55.24	39.45	98	70	185	130
60	32.20	25.28	61.29	43.07	109	77	207	144
61	35.24	28.02	67.54	47.42	120	86	228	159
62	38.92	31.35	75.14	52.70	134	97	253	177
63	43.48	35.46	84.52	59.23	150	111	284	199
64	48.24	39.77	94.35	66.07	168	125	317	223
65	53.88	44.87	105.96	74.15	188	142	356	251
66	59.39	48.85	116.50	84.59	208	150	392	270
67	66.07	53.68	129.30	97.26	232	161	437	293
68	74.33	59.65	145.11	112.92	262	174	491	322
69	82.98	65.91	161.68	129.33	293	188	548	352
70	93.20	73.30	181.25	148.72	330	204	615	387
71	102.45	82.71	204.38	159.34	374	235	702	443
72	113.68	94.13	232.46	172.23	427	272	807	512
73	127.55	108.24	267.15	188.15	493	319	937	596
74	142.08	123.01	303.50	204.84	562	367	1074	685
75	159.25	140.48	346.45	224.56	644	424	1235	789
76	200.03	174.92	418.29	276.67	785	530	1489	982
77	249.54	216.74	505.52	339.94	956	658	1797	1215
78	310.70	268.40	613.27	418.11	1167	817	2179	1504
79	374.78	322.52	726.16	500.00	1389	983	2578	1807
80	450.51	386.48	859.57	596.78	1651	1180	3050	2164

* \$500,000 and \$1,000,000 monthly rates are rounded up to the nearest dollar. Therefore, actual monthly rates at \$500,000 and \$1,000,000 may be slightly less.

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Premiums illustrated represent 10 year level term insurance with guaranteed level premiums for 10 years. \$100,000 - \$1,000,000 rates are Select-A-Term [policy form no. 07007] Preferred Plus Non-tobacco. This coverage features a level death benefit with fully guaranteed level premiums for the first 10 years with coverage to expire at age 95. The policy may be continued on Annual Renewable Term at the end of the level premium period without evidence of insurability until the anniversary nearest the insured's 95th birthday. The underwriting risks, financial and contractual obligations and support functions associated with products issued by **American General Life Insurance Company (AGL)** Houston, TX are its responsibility. **AGL** does not solicit business in the state of New York. All terms, conditions and limitations of any policy issued shall govern. American General Life Companies is the marketing name for a group of domestic life insurers including American General Life Insurance Company and The United States Life Insurance Company in the City of New York. Policies and riders not available in all states. Premium rates current as of November 2022; rates may vary by state. Premiums available for other rate classes, ages and payment plans. Premium charges depend on evidence of insurability. Premiums increase at the end of the guaranteed term if policy is renewed. Death benefit remains level. The policy may be contested for two years from the date of issue for material misstatements or omissions on the application. Death benefit is limited to return of premium paid in the event of suicide within first two years. Rates subject to change. Standard Marketing Services represents AGL and other fine insurance companies.



CEO

HERBERT "TREY"
GREBE III

We'll Be There

THIS TIME LAST YEAR, I was just starting to settle back into my Texas roots and getting ready to start serving members of Medina Electric Cooperative. It's been a great first year at Medina EC, and I was quick to see that the team behind your power is ready to be there for you, our members, with a team dedicated to making sure the lights turn on—safely, efficiently and affordably.

As a member of an electric cooperative, when you pay your bill each month, you're not just paying for reliable service—you're investing in the company you own. You share in the cooperative's margins and any money left over after the co-op pays all operating costs for the fiscal year through the allocation of capital credits. When the co-op's financial condition allows, the board can retire—or return—capital credits back to the members. In December, many members received their part of the \$2.085 million the board of directors approved to return in 2022. Capital credits are just one of the elements that makes the cooperative business model so unique.

Medina EC is also in the process of developing a new 24/7 dispatch center. If you've driven by our general office in Hondo, you may have noticed construction in the back of the property. This new building will house the system operations department and the equipment required for our new dispatch center, as well as our data equipment. This building will be storm hardened, provide redundant sources of power and on-site backup generation and is designed to operate in all weather conditions.

Last year, we added about 900 new meters to our system, and we expect continued growth in many of our communities. To prepare for the increase in electric load, you'll see members of our team, including contractors, helping with various load conversions to reliably serve the increase in needed power. You will also see our team maintaining the infrastructure that is already in place, including inspecting and replacing old or damaged poles and updating various types of equipment. Our vegetation management department will also continue to clear tree lines that can potentially cause outages.

Medina EC will continue to support our members and local communities through donations, sponsorships, presentations and volunteering. This summer, we'll send three high school students to Washington, D.C. on Youth Tour, the trip of a lifetime. We will help members seeking to further their education by awarding 25 scholarships in March. The Operation Round Up committee will meet four times this year to help award funds to community members in need, thanks to our members who choose to round up their bills to the next whole dollar. And our Community Empowerment Program will award up to \$5,500 in grants to nonprofits this summer.

As we look forward to a new year, I'm excited for how we can be there to **exceed our members' expectations**, and to be a part of the communities we serve.

Until next time,
Trey Grebe

Community Empowerment Grants Available

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Up to \$5,500 will be awarded in 2023.
Application deadline: April 3, 11:59 p.m.*
Emphasis will be placed on projects that:

- >> Encourage economic diversity.
- >> Contribute to community health and development.
- >> Improve the quality or quantity of services essential for the development of viable communities.

**Technical support will not be available outside of normal business hours. Encountering technical issues turning in the application on the last day will not be grounds for an extension.*

COUNTIES WHERE GRANTS CAN BE AWARDED

Atascosa	Frio	Medina	Zapata
Brooks	Jim Hogg	Real	Zavala
Dimmit	Kinney	Starr	
Duval	La Salle	Uvalde	
Edwards	McMullen	Webb	

LAST YEAR'S RECIPIENTS

Children's Advocacy Center of Laredo

\$500 to purchase a state-of-the-art tactile sensory panel for the center's waiting room to help children develop fine motor skills and hand-eye coordination.

Knights of Columbus Council 2810, Hebbronville

\$500 to create a museum inside the Scotus College building to highlight the history of the first Franciscan friars and seminarians that came to Hebbronville.

Medina Regional Hospital, Hondo

\$1,000 to purchase a stand assist lift for rehabilitation patients.

Mico Volunteer Fire Department

\$750 to purchase 10 Guardian Angel safety lights and seven Fire Ninja safety vests to improve safety and visibility during traffic events.

Pleasanton Fire Department

\$500 to purchase fire prevention supplies to use during fire safety presentations and to raise the level of awareness of fire safety in the community.

South Texas Advancement Resource, Aguilares

\$1,500 to purchase tools and supplies for Laredo College vocational program students.

Webb County Volunteer Fire Department, Laredo

\$750 to purchase four new self-contained breathing apparatuses for the face masks needed while fighting fires.

View eligibility information and apply online at MedinaEC.org/Grant.

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
Jim Gates, (830) 334-7170
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.

Operation Round Up Gives Back During the Holidays

AT MEDINA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, we know how special the holiday season is for all of our members. The cooperative also knows that many in our communities may be struggling. Members who participate in Operation Round Up do their part to help community neighbors, rounding their bills up to make donations to those in need. Because of their generosity, ORU was able to offer both general donations and Operation Grocery Give, a special program offered during the holiday season that gives families a \$150 H-E-B gift card to assist with buying their holiday meals.

In December, Medina EC's ORU committee awarded applicants \$6,500, including \$2,250 in the form of \$150 H-E-B gift cards.

General Donation Recipients

Kristina Gulick, Dilley – \$500

Maria Mejia and Jesus Serna, Laredo – \$1,000

Maria Merino, Laredo – \$250

Patricia and Ben Valdez Jr., Sabinal – \$2,500

Grocery Give Recipients

Amy Fisher, Castroville

Brandy Key, Devine

Cris and Jose Barrera, Roma

Emily Dela Fuentes, Hondo

Esther and David Hernandez, Hondo

Jennifer Stelzig, Hondo

Lucia and Javier Garcia, Rio Grande City

Maria Del Carmen and Romeo Arjona, Rio Grande City

Maribel Correa, Batesville

Martha and Joseph Valero, Hondo

Melinda and Gary Rheinfeldt, Cotulla

Michelle Rodriguez, D'Hanis

Naomi and Tiburcio Medrano, Devine

Rebecca and Randy Martinez, Yancy

Ryan Gonzalez and Liliana Silva, Natalia

If you or someone you know needs financial help, apply for a donation from ORU. Applicants do not need to be Medina EC members but must live in one of the 17 counties served by the co-op. The 2023 deadlines are Feb. 3, May 5, Aug. 4 and Nov. 3.



Learn more and submit an application at MedinaEC.org/ORU. The next application deadline is February 3.

Lower Your Thermostat, Lower Your Bill



ALEKSANDARNAKIC | ISTOCK.COM

Conserve electricity and avoid higher winter energy bills. Setting the thermostat to 68 degrees when home—and lower when away—saves money.

Here are a few more money saving tips.

Turn off and unplug unused lights and appliances.

Close shades and blinds at night to reduce heat loss.

Open them to capture solar heat on sunny days.

Avoid using electric space heaters.

Change furnace filters.

Weatherstrip or caulk around doors and windows.

Visit MedinaEC.org/Cold to save more this winter.

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT: RUNNERS

ONE OF THIS MONTH'S FEATURE STORIES is about Jon Walk's new love of running and the accomplishments he has had on his running journey.

Learn more about some of Medina Electric Cooperative's employees who share his love of running, including why they run and some of their running accomplishments.



KATIE HABY MANAGER OF KEY ACCOUNTS AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

REASON FOR RUNNING: As a busy mom of two, it is my alone time. It gives me time to think and reset and puts things in perspective. I also like the feeling of doing something that an hour before I thought there was no way I could do.

FARTHEST DISTANCE: 13.1 miles
AVERAGE PACE: 10.30 minutes per mile
PERSONAL RECORD: Every run I finish is a PR, and every run I start is an accomplishment! One step at a time!



JOSE MONTALVO SYSTEM ADMINISTRATOR

REASON FOR RUNNING: I started running because of the health benefits and as an active thing to do. Most recently, it's allowed me to grow spiritually in my faith. While running, I am able to praise and worship God through listening to music or the Bible. I am also able to bring anything that is on my mind to Him, whether it's something bothering me or a blessing.

FARTHEST DISTANCE: 26.2 miles
AVERAGE PACE: 10.30 minutes per mile
PERSONAL RECORD: Finishing a full marathon and having my family there at the finish line.



JACKIE MUENNINK COMMUNICATIONS SUPERVISOR

REASON FOR RUNNING: There's a lot of reasons why I run. It's great for exercise, but I also do it to get outdoors, and it's great for my mental health too. Another reason is to show my kids that when you commit and work hard for certain goals, you can do hard things. I also really like the camaraderie in the running community and my running friends.

FARTHEST DISTANCE: 26.2 miles
AVERAGE PACE: 10.30 minutes per mile
PERSONAL RECORD: My best accomplishment is completing a full marathon!!!

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.



\$2.085 Million in Capital Credits Returned to Members

Members saw credit on their December bill

CAPITAL CREDITS are an important part of the cooperative difference.

As a not-for-profit cooperative, Medina Electric Cooperative allocates any margins to members and retires them as the financial position of the cooperative allows. At their November meeting, the board reviewed the cooperative’s financials to determine what money needs to be reinvested in the system and made a decision to approve the retirement of \$2.085 million in capital credits this year.

Current members who had service prior to 2022 were issued a credit on December bills. If you look at the back of your December bill, where charges are broken down, you will see a line item that shows your capital credits return. Members who connected service with the cooperative within the last year may not have a bill credit, but they can look forward to one in future years.

For former members who are due a return, credits were mailed as checks. That is one reason it is important to keep

your mailing address updated with the cooperative if you move out of Medina EC’s service area.

More than \$38 million in capital credits have been returned to members since Medina EC was formed in 1938.

To learn more about capital credits and how they are allocated to members’ accounts and eventually retired, visit MedinaEC.org/CapitalCredits. Sometimes, capital credits checks remain uncashed and unclaimed. To check if you or anyone you know has unclaimed capital credits, search by last name on the MedinaEC.org/CapitalCredits page.

There really is a difference in the cooperative business model: You get reliable, affordable electricity—and money back in the form of capital credits.

Learn more at
MedinaEC.org/CapitalCredits.

\$25,000 in Scholarships

Medina Electric Cooperative is offering five scholarships for adults pursuing higher education and 20 scholarships for high school graduating seniors.

Eligible applicants will be entered in a drawing and scholarship winners will be selected at random during the March board meeting.

For more information and to apply, visit MedinaEC.org/Scholarships or contact us at 1-866-632-3532 or Scholarship@MedinaEC.org.

MedinaEC.org/Scholarships

Applications are due by 11:59 p.m. March 3.*

*Technical support will not be available outside of normal business hours. Encountering technical issues while turning in the application on the last day will not be grounds for an extension.

CAROLINA K SMITH MD | ADOBE STOCK

CO-OP CONNECTIONS UPDATE

Medina Electric Cooperative has made the decision to no longer administer the Co-op Connections program effective January 2023. The program and discounts are still available to all co-op members and businesses through National Rural Electric Cooperative Association at Connections.coop. Medina EC will not be recruiting or organizing business partners moving forward.

We would like to thank all the local businesses that have partnered with Medina EC as part of Co-op Connections. Your support is greatly appreciated by the cooperative and your community.

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Upcoming Nominating Meetings

Any members interested in running for one of the three board positions up for election in the fall should plan to attend the nominating meeting for their voting district. If you are not able to attend your nominating meeting, you can also be placed on the ballot through the petition process. You can download a petition at MedinaEC.org/Nominee. The board of directors represents the interests of members and governs the cooperative.*

Voting District 1 Meeting

Medina County

Tuesday, February 21, 6 p.m.

Medina EC General office, 2308 18th St., Hondo

Voting District 2 Meeting

Edwards, Real, Kinney, Uvalde, Zavala, Frio and Atascosa counties

Thursday, February 23, 6 p.m.

Medina EC Dilley office, 1718 West FM 117, Dilley

Voting District 3 Meeting

Dimmit, La Salle, McMullen, Webb, Duval, Zapata, Jim Hogg, Brooks and Starr counties

Wednesday, February 22, 6 p.m.

Medina EC Rio Grande City office, 601 N. FM 3167, Rio Grande City

*Learn more about nominating meetings at **MedinaEC.org/NomMtg**.*

*Download a petition at **MedinaEC.org/Nominee**.*

In compliance with the United States Department of Agriculture, in reference to assurance of nondiscrimination among beneficiaries of Rural Utilities Service programs, the Medina EC bylaws pertaining to nomination and election procedures for the election of board members can be found at all Medina EC offices and at MedinaEC.org/CorpDoc. The section that primarily pertains to nomination and election procedures is Article 4 - Board of Directors.

*If you have meters in multiple voting districts, you may choose one meeting to attend in any of those voting districts. If you are unsure which voting district your meters are in, visit MedinaEC.org/NomMtg or contact our office.



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Plan Ahead For Winter Storms

WINTER CAN BRING beautiful days for taking brisk walks or the chance at creating snow angels but also icy roads, subzero wind chills and power outages. Unfortunately, high winds and accumulating ice can easily bring tree limbs down on power lines or cause galloping lines—when wind causes lines to swing and slap together, cutting off power to homes and businesses. Even melting ice can be a problem because it can cause power lines to sag from the added weight.

Although you can rest assured Medina Electric Cooperative is working as quickly and safely as possible in the event of any outage, planning for outages brought on by severe winter conditions can make riding out a prolonged power outage safer and a little more comfortable.

How long it takes for your power to be restored depends on several factors: the extent of the storm's destruction, the number of outages in your area and the time it takes to become safe for co-op personnel to get to the affected areas.

Take steps to help keep your family safe and comfortable during a winter storm long before one is forecast. A good way to start is to put an emergency kit together. We suggest starting with these items:


- ▶ **Water:** Stock up on bottled water—at least 1 gallon per person per day.
- ▶ **Food:** Have at least enough food—including nonperishable packaged or canned foods, juices, special foods for infants or older adults, and snack foods—for three to seven days.
- ▶ **Utensils:** Be sure you have a manual can opener, paper plates and plastic utensils.

- ▶ **Layers and added warmth:** Gather blankets, pillows and warm clothing items.
- ▶ **Medicine and other items:** Prepare a first-aid kit, medicine, prescription drugs and any essential medical equipment.
- ▶ **A charged cellphone:** Most people are used to having their phones with them, but you should also have a portable, fully charged power bank on hand.

Also gather:

- ▶ Toiletries, hygiene items and moist towelettes.
- ▶ A flashlight and extra batteries.
- ▶ Battery-operated radio or a NOAA weather radio.
- ▶ List of emergency phone numbers, including your local utilities.
- ▶ Toys, books and games.
- ▶ Pet food and other pet care items.
- ▶ Supplies for alternate heating methods, such as a fireplace or wood-burning stove.
- ▶ Generator fuel if you use a generator. Be sure to practice generator safety to keep you, your family and lineworkers safe.


If there are tree limbs on your property that could fall on power lines if they become covered in ice or snow, contact Medina EC or a tree trimming professional to remove them in advance of any storm. Only certified line clearance tree trimming professionals are authorized and allowed to trim trees near power lines.

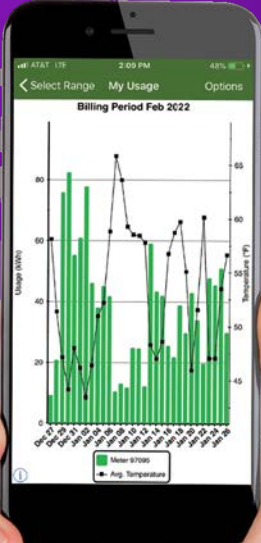


HARD WORK NEVER QUILS

YOUR SOURCE OF POWER. AND INFORMATION.



Day or night, rain or shine, we're here for you. We're not your typical energy company—we're a local, not-for-profit electric cooperative. We live in the communities we serve and work hard to improve quality of life for all.





USE THE SMARTHUB APP TO REPORT OUTAGES AND MONITOR ENERGY USE THIS WINTER!

DOWNLOAD THE APP:





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MARK YOUR CALENDAR

New Year's Day
Sunday, January 1
Our offices will be closed Monday, January 2. As always, crews will be on call.

Youth Tour Applications Due
Friday, January 6
Learn more and apply at MedinaEC.org/YouthTour.

Martin Luther King Jr. Day
Monday, January 16

Operation Round Up Applications Due
Friday, February 3
Learn more and apply at MedinaEC.org/ORU.

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"MDHearing aids are better than expensive clinic hearing aids, which cost thousands more," says retired physician Dr. Robert A.

"I have had five pairs of expensive hearing aids and MDHearing aids are just as good," adds retired neurosurgeon Dr. Brian L.

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



Priceless Passage

The Port Mansfield Channel led to the Gulf—
and a 400-year-old Spanish treasure

BY W.F. STRONG • ILLUSTRATION BY BRAVE UNION

PADRE ISLAND is the longest barrier island in the world, measuring 113 miles from Corpus Christi to Brazos Santiago Pass. Up until the late 1950s, you could drive the length of the island with a decent four-wheel-drive vehicle. That changed in 1957, when the Port Mansfield Channel was dredged. The cut had been a decadeslong dream of the Laguna Madre-locked locals and gave them convenient access to the Gulf of Mexico.

At 4 a.m. on September 23, 1957, a giant dredger dug out the last sand dune, cutting the island in two and creating North and South Padre islands.

A Port Mansfield resident named Bill Rapp was elated. “I was there,” he wrote,

“when the dredge Miami took the final cut out of the old Padre and the waters of the Laguna Madre went rushing into the Gulf of Mexico.”

The Port Mansfield Channel is about 9 miles long, running 7 miles through the bay and through 2 miles of island mud flats and dunes to reach the sea.

During the dredging, the mud and clay being sucked from the channel and spewed onto the banks suddenly brightened with silver coins sparkling in the sunlight. The dredge had crushed an old Spanish galleon buried there for centuries.

The Santa María de Yciar was one of four ill-fated ships that had set sail

together from Veracruz, Mexico, in 1554 on the way back to Spain. The king had ordered the ships to bring back 100,000 coins of gold and silver from Mexico for the Spanish treasury, smartly dividing the loads among the four vessels.

A tropical storm blew the ships off course, and winds pushed them across the entire Gulf and smashed three of them against the sandbars of Padre Island. Their hulls were pried open and their treasures spilled out onto the sandy bottom. The fourth ship, the San Andrés, was battered in the storm but made it to Havana, Cuba. In the centuries ahead, Padre would be known as the “graveyard of the gulf.”

The three wrecked ships—the San Esteban, Espíritu Santo and Santa María de Yciar—sat undiscovered for four centuries. The former two were found years later a few miles north of the Mansfield cut. Treasure hunters descended on them and had collected quite a fortune before the state of Texas took action and forced them to cease operations and turn over their plunder. The state eventually paid them \$313,000 for their efforts and then placed the coins, anchors, cannons and other artifacts from the wrecks in the Corpus Christi Museum of Science and History, where you can see them today.

And if you’re wondering if coins can still be found, the channel was dredged to its greatest depth in the past few years, said Ron Mills, executive director of Port Mansfield. “During those operations, there were no reported discoveries of new coins or other artifacts that may have pertained to the shipwrecks,” he said.

Sorry, treasure hunters. ■

Gluten-Free

Try these special treats that stick to specialized dietary needs

BY MEGAN MYERS, FOOD EDITOR

Gluten-free cooking has become more accessible thanks to the spread of products filling grocery shelves. Gluten-free recipes, required by some for health reasons, are a great way to explore new ingredients. While my family craves sweet crepes, I love using nutty buckwheat flour to make savory versions. Ham and cheese are classic fillings, but feel free to experiment.

Gluten-Free Ham and Cheese Crepes

1½ cups milk

1 cup gluten-free buckwheat flour

3 eggs

**2 tablespoons (¼ stick) butter, melted,
plus more for the pan**

¼ teaspoon salt

1 cup shredded Swiss cheese

10–20 pieces thinly sliced ham

COOK'S TIP Crepes cook quickly, so keep an eye on the heat level and reduce as needed if the crepe is cooking before you can spread the batter around the pan.

1. In a large bowl, whisk together milk, buckwheat flour, eggs, melted butter and salt until smooth. Cover and place in the refrigerator to chill for at least 30 minutes and as long as overnight.

2. When ready to cook, place a nonstick frying pan over medium heat. Add a small amount of butter to the pan.

3. Whisk the crepe batter again and pour a small amount of batter into the pan, just enough to thinly cover the bottom. Quickly swirl the pan to coat the pan with an even layer.

4. Cook 1–2 minutes, then loosen the edge with a thin spatula and carefully flip the crepe over. Cook 1–2 minutes more, then transfer to a plate. Repeat with remaining batter.

5. To fill, return a crepe to the pan. Sprinkle on a small amount of cheese, then place 1–2 slices of ham and sprinkle with more cheese. Cook until warmed through and cheese is melted, then fold over edges toward the middle to form a packet. Serve topped with fresh herbs or a fried egg.

SERVES 10

TCP Follow along with Megan Myers and her adventures in the kitchen at stetted.com, where she features a recipe for Bacon-Wrapped Asparagus.





Flourless Chocolate Cake

CAROL YOUNKIN
SAM HOUSTON EC

With no flour needed, this rich cake is a cinch to prepare. To cut into neat slices, Younkun recommends chilling the cooled cake until firm, then warming in the microwave as desired.

¾ cup (1½ sticks) unsalted butter, cut into small pieces, plus more for greasing the pan
1 cup bittersweet or semisweet chocolate chips
½ cup unsweetened natural cocoa powder
¾ cup sugar
4 eggs
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
Whipped cream or ice cream, for serving

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Generously butter the bottom and sides of an 8-inch springform pan or press a sheet of foil into the bottom and sides of an 8-inch round cake pan, smoothing the sides and buttering the foil.

2. Add a few inches of water to a saucepan and set over medium heat, bringing to a simmer. Set a heatproof bowl over the saucepan to create a double boiler and add the chocolate chips. When the chocolate looks soft and is starting to melt, stir with a spatula until smooth and completely melted.

3. Turn off the heat and add butter to the bowl, stirring until melted. Add cocoa powder and stir again until completely incorporated and smooth. Remove bowl from the saucepan.



\$500 WINNER

Gluten-Free Baked Spinach Fritters

KATHLEEN RUST
PEDERNALES EC



Perfect for brunch or as an appetizer or side, these tasty fritters are a great way to get more vegetables to the table. Rust came up with the recipe as an alternative to frying. She recommends gluten-free panko (Japanese-style bread crumbs) as an alternative to cornflakes.

MAKES 15 PIECES

1 package frozen spinach (10 ounces), thawed but not drained
3 eggs
½ cup cassava flour
1 teaspoon adobo seasoning
⅛ teaspoon pepper
2 cups shredded mild cheddar cheese
1 cup shredded pepper jack cheese
¾ cup chopped leeks or onions
½ cup chopped bell pepper
1 large clove garlic, minced
¼ cup avocado oil
¾ cup crushed unsweetened gluten-free cornflakes, plus extra for topping

- 1.** Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
- 2.** In a large bowl, combine spinach, eggs, cassava flour, adobo seasoning and pepper. Add cheeses, onion, bell pepper and garlic and stir until ingredients are evenly mixed.
- 3.** Pour avocado oil onto a 9-by-13-inch sheet pan and tilt to coat the entire bottom and sides. Sprinkle crushed cornflakes over the bottom.
- 4.** Dollop spinach mixture onto sheet pan, pressing gently with a spoon or spatula to spread evenly. Sprinkle additional crushed cornflakes over the top.
- 5.** Bake 35 minutes, until browned. Cool until just warm and cut into squares.

TCP \$500 Recipe Contest

TEXAS SEAFOOD DISHES DUE JANUARY 10

We want a boatload of recipes for all manner of seafood. Submit your recipes on our website by January 10 for a chance to win \$500.



CONTINUED >

RECIPES CONTINUED

4. Stir in the sugar until incorporated, then add eggs one at a time, beating well after each addition. Stir in the vanilla, then pour batter into prepared pan.

5. Bake 40–50 minutes, until crackly and dry on top. A toothpick inserted 2 inches from the edge should come out clean. Cool cake in the pan on a wire rack, then remove springform side or lift cake out using foil overhang. Serve warm, at room temperature or chilled with whipped cream or ice cream on top.

SERVES 8–10

Pão de Queijo (Brazilian Cheese Bread)

CAROLINE TEIXEIRA
PEDERNALES EC

Tapioca flour, also called tapioca starch, is essential for making chewy Brazilian cheese bread. Note that the dough will be wetter and stickier than a traditional bread, so avoid the temptation to add too much flour.



1¼ cups whole milk
½ cup water
6 tablespoons vegetable or olive oil
2 teaspoons salt
4 cups tapioca flour, plus more as needed
2 eggs
1½ cups grated Parmesan cheese
1 cup shredded mozzarella cheese

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees.
2. In a saucepan, combine whole milk, water, oil and salt. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat.

3. Add the tapioca flour to the bowl of a stand mixer and pour the boiling liquid over the flour. Mix well on low speed until mixture looks soft, sticky and stringy.

4. With the mixer running, add eggs one at a time, fully incorporating after each. Add cheese a little at a time until all is added and dough is fully mixed.

5. If dough is too moist, add a small amount of tapioca flour until a soft and sticky dough is reached.

6. To shape the bread, wet your hands with cold water. Scoop a small amount of dough out with a spoon or your fingers and roll into a ball slightly smaller than a golf ball. Arrange on a baking sheet and repeat until all dough is shaped, rewetting hands as needed during the process.

7. Bake 15–20 minutes, until puffed and golden.

MAKES ABOUT 3 DOZEN

TCP You don't have to wait until January 20, National Cheese Lovers Day, to partake of this dairy delight. We have more than 300 recipes that include cheese on our website. Now you can't wait, can you?



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Bad to the Bone

Full tang stainless steel blade with natural bone handle —now **ONLY \$79!**

The very best hunting knives possess a perfect balance of form and function. They're carefully constructed from fine materials, but also have that little something extra to connect the owner with nature. If you're on the hunt for a knife that combines impeccable craftsmanship with a sense of wonder, the **\$79 Huntsman Blade** is the trophy you're looking for.

The blade is full tang, meaning it doesn't stop at the handle but extends to the length of the grip for the ultimate in strength. The blade is made from 420 surgical steel, famed for its sharpness and its resistance to corrosion.

The handle is made from genuine natural bone, and features decorative wood spacers and a hand-carved motif of two overlapping feathers—a reminder for you to respect and connect with the natural world.

This fusion of substance and style can garner a high price tag out in the marketplace. In fact, we found full tang, stainless steel blades with bone handles in excess of \$2,000. Well, that won't cut it around here. We have mastered the hunt for the best deal, and in turn pass the spoils on to our customers.

But we don't stop there. While supplies last, we'll include a pair of \$99, 8x21 power compact, binoculars and a genuine leather sheath **FREE** when you purchase the **Huntsman Blade**.

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COURTESY CHET GARNER

Afterlife Sentence

John Wesley Hardin remains behind bars even in an El Paso cemetery

BY CHET GARNER

LIKE MANY TEXANS, I grew up hearing legends of famous gunfighters who roamed the Wild West. They were quick with a pistol and even quicker to gun down anyone who crossed them. Among the most notorious was John Wesley Hardin, who claimed to have killed more than 40 people in his lifetime.

On a trip to El Paso, I stopped by the historic Concordia Cemetery to visit his grave and see if he could still send shivers down my spine like his stories did when I was a kid.

Concordia Cemetery looks like the set of an old Western movie. Tombstones and wooden crosses cover a landscape of dirt and cactuses. It holds more than 60,000 graves dating back to the 1850s, but it didn't take long for me to find Hardin's final resting place, which is protected by a canopy of iron and stone.

Hardin's story is a violent one. Despite numerous arrests and escapes, starting in his teens, the native of Bonham was eventually sentenced to 25 years in prison for killing a deputy sheriff in Comanche County. During his time in prison, Hardin studied law, led Sunday school and attempted to change his nefarious ways.

At the age of 41, he received a full pardon and moved to El Paso to practice law. Sadly, his old ways followed him westward, and he was shot in a saloon. The coroner famously said, "If Hardin was shot in the eye, it was excellent marksmanship. If he was shot in the back, it was excellent judgment."

Hardin's grave was covered with coins and tokens left by visitors and a pair of golden guns. It's a fitting reminder that those who live by the sword die by the sword. Or in Hardin's case—the gun. ■

ABOVE As Chet can see, there will be no more escaping for John Wesley Hardin.

TCP Chet aims to pay a personal visit to one of Texas' shadiest outlaws. Watch the video on our website and see all his Texplorations on *The Daytripper* on PBS.



Know Before You Go

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

JANUARY

07

Kerrville Symphony of the Hills: Western Swing, (830) 896-9393, caillouxperformingarts.com

Valley View Trout Kids Derby, (940) 637-2294, tpwd.texas.gov

09

Uvalde [9–14] San Antonio Stock Show & Rodeo Qualifier Event, (210) 985-4748, sarodeo.com

12

Glen Rose [12–14] Somervell County Youth Fair, (817) 964-2752, somervellcountyyouthfair.com

Plano [12–14, 19–21, 26–28] Four Weddings and an Elvis, (972) 849-0358, roverdramawerks.com

13

La Grange Kelly Willis, (979) 968-9944, thebugleboy.org

Lubbock Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan and William Shatner, (806) 792-8339, buddyhollyhall.com

New Braunfels [13–15] Antique Show and Sale, (918) 619-2875, heritageeventcompany.com

14

Fredericksburg Blues Festival, (830) 997-3224, luckenbachtexas.com

Granbury The Mammoth Ice Age Run, mammothrace.com

Monahans Sandhills Resolution Run, (432) 943-2187, monahans.org

Austin [14–15] Citywide Vintage Sale, (512) 441-2828, citywidevintagesale.com

15

Fredericksburg Take 3,
fredericksburgmusicclub.com

San Antonio Untamed
With Filipe DeAndrade,
(210) 223-8624,
tobincenter.org

16

Houston MLK Grande
Parade, (713) 560-8328,
mlkgrandeparade.org

20

Lufkin Pink Martini, (936)
633-5454, angelinaarts.org

Galveston [20-21] Yaga's
Chili Quest and Beer
Fest, (409) 770-0999,
yagaschiliquest.com

South Padre Island
[20-22] Market Days,
spimarketdays@gmail.com,
spimarketdays.com

Port Aransas [20-29]
Restaurant Week,
(361) 749-5919,
portaransas.org

21

Irving Las Colinas
Symphony Orchestra,
(972) 252-2787,
lascolinassymphony.org

Kerrville ZuZu African
Acrobats, (830) 896-9393,
caillouxperformingarts.com

Lake Jackson Delfeayo
Marsalis With the
Brazosport Jazz Orchestra,
(979) 285-2501,
brazosport.org

Victoria Jason Scheff's
Chicago Nights,
(361) 576-4500,
victoriasymphony.com

MORE EVENTS >

TCP Submit Your Event

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



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Pick of the Month

Wild Game and Wine Camofest

Bay City, January 28

(979) 245-8081

baycitycamofest.net

Break out the camouflage and blend into a festival with locally caught samples of wild game, fish and fowl; wine; food inspired by Texas wines; live entertainment; shopping; and activities for the kids.

JANUARY EVENTS CONTINUED

21

Fredericksburg [21-22]

Rockhounds Gem and Mineral Show, (325) 248-1067, rockngem.com

Plano [21-22] Dallas

Area Train Show, chris@railroadmodelers.com, dfwtrainshows.com

24

Tyler The Doo Wop

Project, (903) 566-7424, cowancenter.org

26

Schulenburg Turtle Wing

Toast, (979) 505-5090, turtlewingfoundation.org

27

San Angelo [27-29]

Comic Con, sanangelocomiccon.com

28

Coppell San Jose Taiko

Interactive Matinee, (972) 304-7047, coppellartscenter.org

Mathis Kid Fish,

(361) 547-2635, tpwd.texas.gov

29

Port Aransas Home Tour,

portagardenclub@hotmail.com, facebook.com/portaransashometour

Surfside Beach Food and

Art Festival, (979) 233-1531, surfsidetx.org

Temple Temple Symphony

Orchestra, (254) 778-6683, templesymphony.org

Lufkin Marian Anderson

Quartet, (936) 633-5454, angelinaarts.org

Richardson Rhapsodies

in Blue, (972) 744-4650, www.eisemanncenter.com

FEBRUARY

02

Orange The Simon

and Garfunkel Story, (409) 886-5535, lutcher.org

South Padre Island [2-4]

Kite Fest, (956) 761-1248, spikitefest.com

03

Burnet [3-4] Highland

Lakes Quilt Festival, hlqguild@gmail.com, hlqq.org

04

Brenham Brenham

Heritage Museum Dance at La Bahia, (979) 337-7580, visitbrenhamtexas.com

Corpus Christi Corpus

Christi Symphony Orchestra: An Interplanetary Experience, (361) 883-6683, ccsymphony.org

North Zulch Chili Cook-

Off, (979) 488-9214, facebook.com/nzvfcd

Rockport [4-5] Clay

Expo, (361) 729-5519, rockportartcenter.com

Nature's Color

"Nature's first green is gold,
Her hardest hue to hold.
Her early leaf's a flower;
But only so an hour."
—From *Nothing Gold Can Stay* by Robert Frost

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1 REAGAN FERGUSON
CENTRAL TEXAS EC

"The majestic Frio River offers amazing fall colors in the Texas Hill Country near Concan."

2 JAZZMIN AGUAYO
PEDERNALES EC

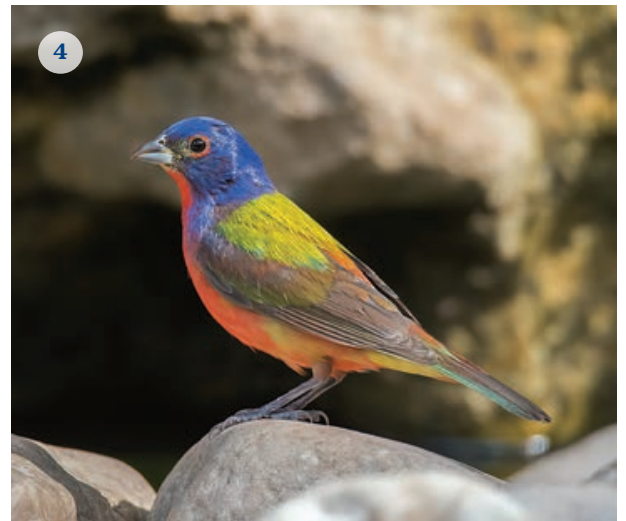
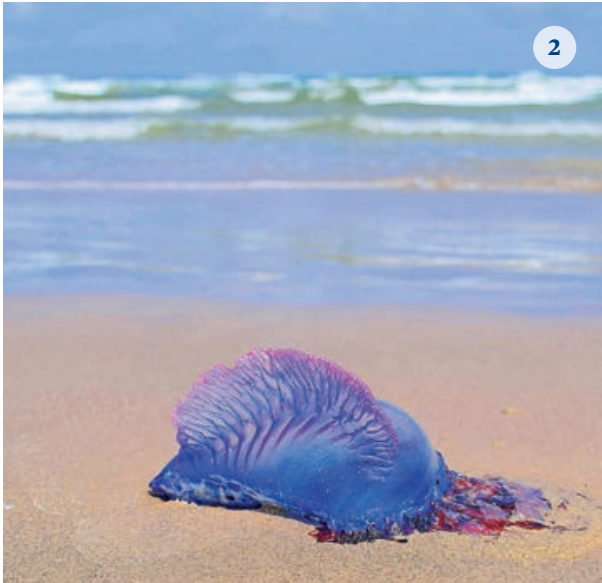
"A Portuguese man-of-war on the shore of Port Aransas provides a vibrant display of brilliant color."

3 GARY IMM
SAM HOUSTON EC

This emission nebula, as seen from the shores of Lake Livingston through a large telescope, is called the Cat's Paw Nebula.

4 MIKE ZARELLA
PEDERNALES EC

This male painted bunting stopped for a drink at the bird blind water feature at Pedernales Falls State Park.



Upcoming Contests

DUE JAN 10 Taking Flight

DUE FEB 10 Dad

DUE MAR 10 Waterfalls



Enter online at TexasCoopPower.com/contests.

TCP See Focus on Texas on our website for more Nature's Color photos from readers.



Oh! Possum!

Learning to like a late-night neighbor

BY MARTHA DEERING
ILLUSTRATION BY KIRSTEN ULVE

THE FIRST TIME our resident opossum and I met in the dark on a tiny, enclosed back porch was traumatic for both of us. I may have screamed. He may have hissed.

We made hasty retreats in opposite directions—he back through the broken pet door he had rudely entered.

The next night, my husband caught him in a humane trap, took him to the farthest corner of our back pasture and shook his seemingly dead body out of the trap. He was “playing possum.” And he had already developed a taste for the cat food we keep on the back porch.

He was back the next day.

After his return from eviction, I looked up some fascinating facts about him.

In spite of their naked, ratlike tails, opossums are not rodents. They are the

only marsupial—pouched mammal—native to North America and have been around for 70 million years, once coexisting with dinosaurs. Their short life span, one to two years, is due to their many predators—dogs, coyotes and humans.

There are 65 species of opossums, and all are related to kangaroos and koalas. While the only species that populates the U.S. is the Virginia opossum, others reside in Central America, South America, Australia and New Guinea.

Opossums are not aggressive. Their open-mouthed hissing is a bluff—but with 50 teeth, more than any other North American land mammal, it worked on me. If hissing isn’t successful, they feign death, falling on their sides with tongue extended in hopes that predators will lose interest and move on. If the predator decides to call this ultimate bluff, the opossum is a sitting duck.

Opossums have a number of redeeming qualities. They eat cockroaches, ticks, crickets, spiders, beetles and June bugs and find snails and slugs a delightful delicacy. We once had an infestation of slugs, which left their slimy, silvery trails all over the sidewalks, storm doors, back porch and the bowl of cat food. Since our opossum began his nightly visits, the slugs have been vanquished. Eureka!

Opossums, which can hiss and foam at the mouth as defense mechanisms, get a bum rap. They almost never carry rabies because their body temperature is too low to sustain the virus. President Benjamin Harrison kept two pet opossums in the White House. President Herbert Hoover had one too.

Our little visitor doesn’t kill chickens, nor does he tip over the garbage cans. He has learned to coexist with our cats, who are too fat and lazy to stay up for his late-night visits.

So I guess we won’t be installing a new pet door any time soon. He’s welcome to his cat food appetizer. ■

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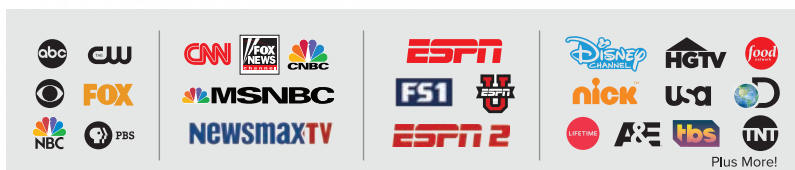


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Offer for new and qualifying former customers only. Important Terms and Conditions: Requires credit qualification and 2-year commitment. Upfront activation and/or receiver upgrade fees may apply based on credit qualification. Offer ends 4/12/23. Offer requires 2-year commitment: Early termination fee of \$20/mo. remaining applies if you cancel early. Included in 3-year price guarantee at \$79.99 advertised price: America's Top 120 programming package, local channels, HD service fees, and Hopper Duo Smart DVR for 1 TV. Included in 3-year price guarantee for additional cost: Programming package upgrades (\$94.99 for AT120+, \$99.99 for AT200, \$109.99 for AT250), monthly fees for upgraded or additional receivers (\$5-\$7 per additional TV, receivers with additional functionality may be \$10-\$15), NOT included in 3-year price guarantee or advertised price (and subject to change): Taxes & surcharges, add-on programming (including premium channels), DISH Protect, and transactional fees. Premium Channels 3 Mos. Free: After 3 mos., you will be billed \$20/mo. for Showtime, and DISH Movie Pack unless you call or go online to cancel. Remote: The DISH Voice Remote with Google Assistant requires internet-connected Hopper, Joey or Wally device. Customer must press Voice Remote button to activate feature. Other: All packages, programming, features, and functionality and all prices and fees not included in price guarantee are subject to change without notice. After 6 mos., if selected, you will be billed \$10.99/mo. for DISH Protect Silver unless you call to cancel. After 3 years, then-current everyday prices for all services apply. For business customers, additional monthly fees may apply. Free standard professional installation only. Reliability Guarantee: limited time offer, subject to change. Available only to new or returning former customers. Guarantee covers signal loss outages due to normal weather and/or technical issues. Does not cover signal loss outages due to user error. Does not cover changes in programming content. To receive outage credits, you must contact DISH customer service by phone or chat within 72 hours of the outage. Upon verifying the outage, DISH will issue bill credits in daily increments from the time of the outage until the outage is restored. Not available to DISH Outdoors customers. 99% signal reliability based on data from set-top boxes. Not a guarantee of signal in all weather conditions. Watching live and recorded TV on DISH Anywhere requires internet-connected Hopper and compatible mobile device. Miscellaneous: Taxes or surcharges may apply. All packages and offer subject to change without notice. Additional restrictions may apply. Netflix, Prime Video, HBO Max and Discovery Plus streaming memberships required. Indiana C.P.D. Reg. No. - 19-08615. ©2023 GoDISH.com. All rights reserved. Internet speeds, prices, and providers vary by customer address. \$50 price refers to widely available plan from multiple providers. Restrictions apply. Nationwide availability is subject to change without notice. The application of "No Data Limits" varies by provider, but commonly means that your access to the Internet will not be stopped by going over a data limit, but that speeds may be lowered. Call for details. Internet not provided by DISH and will be billed separately.