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AN OLD PAINTING

THE ART  
OF THE SANDWICH

WHEN FATHERHOOD  
TURNS GRAND

# Texas Coop Power

FOR MEDINA EC MEMBERS

JUNE 2026

## She Walked the Walk

Opal Lee helped elevate  
Juneteenth every step  
of the way





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# June 2026



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Even as Opal Lee—the Grandmother of Juneteenth—approaches 100, she says her important work isn't done.

*By Michael Hurd  
Portraits by Robert Seale*

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Opal Lee at her home on East Annie Street in the Historic Southside neighborhood of Fort Worth.  
*Photo by Robert Seale*

#### ABOVE

Live Oak Trees on Williams Ranch, Bandera County is a 1915 oil painting by Julian Onderdonk.  
*Painting by Julian Onderdonk*



# Volts Charge Into Texas

AFTER A FOUR-TEAM barnstorming season in 2025, the Athletes Unlimited Softball League is set to start its second season with six teams, including one in Texas.

The Texas Volts will return and play their home games at Dell Diamond in Round Rock and join teams based in Chicago; Durham, North Carolina; Oklahoma City; Portland, Oregon; and Salt Lake City.

“Texas is synonymous with softball excellence at every level,” said Kim Ng, the league’s commissioner.

The Volts start their 25-game season June 9 in Oklahoma City. Their first home game is June 18 against the Utah Talons.

“We have simply got to make people aware that none of us are free until we’re all free, and we aren’t free yet.”

— OPAL LEE

## FINISH THIS SENTENCE

The greatest innovation in my lifetime is ...

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

Here are some of the responses to our April prompt: **If I could use only one electronic device, it would be ...**

The air conditioner.

MARILYN WERKHEISER  
BLUEBONNET EC  
BASTROP

My cellphone.

KAT CROSS  
HOUSTON COUNTY EC  
CROCKETT

My coffee maker.

KERRY BEREND  
FORT BELKNAP EC  
LOVING

Ham radio. Communication is most important.

GARY DAVID ANTLEY  
VIA FACEBOOK

Phone with FaceTime.

JOHNNA HALE  
TRINITY VALLEY EC  
CANTON

Visit our website to see more responses.



### **TCP** Contests and More

#### \$500 RECIPE CONTEST

Cranberry Harvest

#### FOCUS ON TEXAS PHOTOS

Tailgating

#### RECOMMENDED READING

*The Bluebonnet Painter* from April 2023 tells more about how Julian Onderdonk’s ethereal South Texas landscapes flourish. Find it on our website.



ENTER ONLINE

APRIL 2026 Kickin' Ashe

“A lot of fitness can still be gained by using a chain saw. The sweat washes off, but the sap stays on the arms for many days.”

RAY WOLBRECHT  
PEDERNALES EC  
BLANCO



DAVE URBAN

**A Whole Mess of Trash**

I had seen all the Don't Mess With Texas signs and so was surprised by a surge in litter [A *Tidy Revolution*, March 2026]. I complained and complained to my husband about the litter and the fact that no one seemed worried about it.

Finally, I grew tired of complaining and decided to act. Now, I try to collect litter once a week—one bag of cans and bottles and one bag of trash.

Lynda Southwick  
Bluebonnet EC  
Brenham

**Wear a Life Jacket**

I was excited by the paddling trails article [Charted Waters, March 2026]. However, I was dismayed when pictures showed paddlers not wearing life jackets and reading only to “pack a personal flotation device, as required by Texas law.”

While canoeing, I've experienced several hairy situations and would never not wear one. According to the U.S. Coast



ERICH SCHLEGEL

Guard, 85% of boating-related drowning victims were not wearing a life vest.

Kat Saul  
Grayson-Collin EC  
Allen

**Cavalry Hopes**

I always wanted to be in the Army cavalry [From Posts to Pillars, February 2026].

When I came of age, the cavalry was no more.

But I knew a man who was born on Fort Ringgold. His father was the post bandmaster. He used to tell me many interesting stories of those times.

Wallace L. Morgan  
GVEC  
Nixon

**Blocker Billboard**

Yes, at one time there was a billboard announcing that O'Donnell was the hometown of Dan Blocker [Tiny Dots on a Big Map, January 2026]. Sadly, the fading signage went AWOL, probably blown away by high winds that frequent this part of the High Plains.

Betty Morgan  
Bryan Texas Utilities  
Bryan

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letters@TexasCoopPower.com

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Austin, TX 78701

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

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# Giant Footsteps

**Even as Opal Lee—the Grandmother of Juneteenth—approaches 100, she says her important work isn't done**

Opal Lee says she was the “little ol’ lady in tennis shoes getting into everybody else’s business” when, in 2016, at age 89 and buoyed by her faith, she embarked on an ambitious campaign to make Juneteenth a national holiday by walking from her home in Fort Worth to Washington, D.C. Ten years later, the holiday is official, she is celebrated as the Grandmother of Juneteenth and her well-worn tennis shoes are getting a long-deserved rest.

That doesn’t mean the contemporary folk hero is finally settling into idleness—even as she approaches centenarian status (she turns 100 on October 7). And once you get a sense of her life, you realize inactivity is not a concept she embraces. Retirement?

“You’ve got to be kidding!” she quickly retorts, flashing her wide, congenial smile. “People who are old can’t sit in a rocking chair and wait for the Lord to come and get them. There’s still plenty of work to be done, and I’ll do what I can as long as I can.”

She speaks with an eloquent urgency and passion about her work over many decades as a civil rights and community activist who advocated for the homeless, jobless and hungry; for education; and for Juneteenth recognition—all of which she connects to being free. She says she fully intends to continue her work through her belief that “we are our brother’s keeper, and we’d better act like it”—but at a slower pace.

For sure, there will be no more extended walking campaigns. An illness last summer was a setback, and though she’s recovered, the episode supported growing suggestions from her family, which includes 15 grandchildren and 40 great-grandchildren, that it was time to step back a bit.

“It’s been great to see her dream come true, something she’s been after most of her life,” says Promise Roland, one of Lee’s granddaughters and a Fort Worth real estate agent. “It’s been overwhelming, but we’re delighted. She’s been asked to slow down, but that’s not her.

“With her tenacity, she’s going to keep at it; she doesn’t take no for an answer.”

Lee, a 1943 graduate, at age 16, of Fort Worth’s I.M. Terrell High School, has maximized her century on this planet with service to family, church and community. She raised her four children as a young single mother, got a bachelor’s degree in education from Wiley College in Marshall, earned a master’s degree in counseling and guidance in 1963 from North Texas State University (now the University of North Texas), and taught third grade for 15 years at Amanda McCoy Elementary School, her alma mater.

She helped start a food bank by contributing fresh produce grown in her 5-acre urban farm that also helps address Tarrant County food deserts.

She is an iconic, revered change agent, so getting into everybody else’s business—good trouble—teaching and helping others is what she does, and she does it very well. She’s received eight honorary doctorates, was named 2021 Texan of the Year by *The Dallas Morning News*, was a Nobel Peace Prize nominee and received the Presidential Medal of Freedom. In 2023, her portrait was placed in the Texas Senate Chamber, making her only the second Black person (after U.S. Rep. Barbara Jordan) so honored. In January, Mattel introduced the “Opal Barbie.”

Opal Lee on her Juneteenth walks: “If people can be taught to hate, they can be taught to love. The promise of freedom is only as strong as those who choose to uphold it. Will you rise to the occasion or stand still as history passes you by?”





COURTESY OPAL'S WALK 2 DC TEAM

LEFT Lee walks for her cause in February 2020 in Las Vegas.

BELOW Lee, on her porch in November 2025, lives on the same Fort Worth plot where, in 1939, a mob burned down her family's home.

**D**espite it all, Lee lives in a modest new house on Fort Worth's East Annie Street—on the same corner lot where, in 1939, her family's home was burned down by a mob of 500 angry would-be neighbors who objected to the family integrating the neighborhood. It happened on Juneteenth.

Her new house was a gift from Trinity Habitat for Humanity in 2024 as a tribute to Lee, one of the nonprofit's founding board members.

The Marshall native was a child when she first learned about the date June 19, 1865, when Union Gen. Gordon Granger arrived in Galveston to make the first notifications that enslaved Texans were free—two and a half years after President Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation. She joined family and friends annually to celebrate the day with “plenty of food, food and more food.”

Lee was a co-founder in 1977 of the Tarrant County Black Historical and Genealogical Society, through which she organized Fort Worth's Juneteenth events, including walks, for 40 years. But she felt there was more she could do.

A quest was born: Make Juneteenth a national holiday.

Her plan was to walk to D.C. and present a signed petition to Congress as a symbol of nationwide support for passage



*I don't feel no ways tired,  
I've come too far from where  
I started from.  
Nobody told me that the road  
would be easy,  
I don't believe He brought me  
this far to leave me.*

—African American spiritual

of the Juneteenth National Independence Day Act. Forty-seven states, including Texas, had already established state holidays or observances.

The octogenarian took to the road, her T-shirt emblazoned with “Opal’s Walk for Freedom,” and was joined by thousands of diverse supporters, many carrying homemade signs of support (“Go, Ms. Opal!”) and walking with her in festive, joyous parades.

“I just started walking, and people started participating, coming to join me, finding a place for me to stay,” she said. “I got 1.5 million signatures. I met all kinds of people, not just those in power. People who were beginning to understand what the day was all about. Not just red soda water and barbecue, but there was meaning to it. People embraced Juneteenth.”

The distance between Fort Worth and D.C. is a little over 1,200 miles as the crow flies. Lee took the scenic route, walking a symbolic 2.5 miles (for the two and a half years it took for news of emancipation to reach Texas) in 20 cities that supported her movement and invited her to walk, including Shreveport, Louisiana; Atlanta; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Pueblo, Colorado; Chicago; and Philadelphia.

She began the walks in September 2016 and four months later was in Washington with the completed petition. Almost five years later, the act passed and was signed into law by President Joe Biden on June 17, 2021.

“I was so happy, I could have done a holy dance!” Lee says.

The crown jewel for her work is the \$70 million state-of-the-art National Juneteenth Museum slated to break ground in Fort Worth later this year. The 50,000-square-foot cultural center is billed as “the epicenter for the preservation of Juneteenth history.”

“Dr. Lee’s advocacy is the foundation on which the museum was established,” says Jarred Howard, the museum’s CEO. “We’re thrilled to collaborate with Dr. Lee and are committed to expanding her extraordinary legacy through the creation of a world-class learning center.”

Though she isn’t moving quite as much now, Lee’s family is gladly taking the baton to keep her legacy going. Her granddaughters are active board members for Lee’s non-



RENDERING COURTESY NATIONAL JUNETEENTH MUSEUM

## National Juneteenth Museum

**Destined for Fort Worth’s Historic Southside, plans include:**

- 10,000 square feet of immersive exhibit space
- A 250-seat theater for lectures, performances and other events
- A business incubator and coworking space
- A food hall featuring culturally diverse cuisine
- The National Juneteenth Plaza, a public courtyard and green space

profit foundation, Citizens Concerned with Human Dignity. The organization assists marginalized families in need of shelter, food, employment, healthcare and education.

“It’ll take more than one person to fill her shoes,” Roland says, “so it will truly be a family effort. She still has a lot of fire, but it’s time for us to do the heavy lifting.”

Lee’s fire has always been about teaching and the fertile minds of young folks, and that flame burns as brightly as ever, sparked by her successful Juneteenth campaigns.

“I want the young people to realize how important Black history is and for them to embrace it, know their history and pass it on,” she says. “The road to true freedom is long, but I’ve walked it my whole life.” ■



**TCP** Enter online to win two signed illustrated children’s books about Opal Lee’s life.



**ENTER ONLINE**



# J.O. WAS HERE

The history of this  
Hill Country vista  
goes right through  
a century-old  
Julian Onderdonk  
painting

BY JOHN R. MILLARD

**The west prong** of the Medina River arises in Bandera County and flows eastward, fed by underground springs amid steep, canyon-carved terrain northwest of San Antonio. The flow traces a serpentine path through oak and cedar groves, rocky outcrops, and grassy slopes before joining the north prong near the town of Medina.

In 1915, this area was still a wild frontier—sparsely settled, with vast ranches dominating the landscape. The Medina Lake dam, completed in 1912, altered downstream flows, but the upper prongs retained their pristine character: clear waters, rocky riverbeds, and dense cedar and live oak groves.

It was beautiful country. I know this because Julian Onderdonk stopped here in 1915, set up an easel and canvas, and got to painting—and I can prove it.

It all started with a chance discovery: a digital image of an Onderdonk oil painting called *Gulf Clouds in the Hills on the West Prong of the Medina River* instantly caught my eye—not just for its beauty but for its uncanny resemblance to our land.

“Debra,” I called out to my wife, “you won’t believe it, but this is our property.”



I had just hiked those ridges that morning, stood on that same bluff and looked down at that same striated rock in the riverbed. The landscape in the painting wasn't just similar—it was ours.

What started as a curious observation turned into a historical investigation—one that led me through Texas archives, family lore and conversations with art experts, historians and ranchers. The deeper I dug, the more the story grew. Not just one painting but possibly four were painted by Onderdonk during a 1915 visit to what was then known as the Williams Ranch, now part of our West Prong Ranch.

We acquired the property in January 2024—one of seven tracts carved from the historic Garrison Ranch, originally established in the late 1800s. Like many historic properties, the ranch evolved over time—its boundaries reshaped by sales, inheritances and a legal dispute—but the same beauty remains.

John R. Millard was stunned to discover that a 1915 Julian Onderdonk painting, above, portrays a view he enjoys on his Bandera County property, opposite. It's undeniable, Millard says.

### **Gulf Clouds in the Hills on the West Prong of the Medina River**

1915

Oil on panel

*Lusher Art Collection*

This painting demonstrates the complex geographic identity of San Antonio's countryside. The title and fluffy white clouds indicate the region's proximity to the Gulf Coast. Green hills, characteristic of Central and South Texas, form the horizon. The west prong, illustrated here, is one of two main sections of the Medina River. The nearly dry river exposes the limestone bed, and there is just enough water to reflect the blue sky.

## The Man With the Brush

Often called the “Father of Texas Art,” Onderdonk left an indelible mark on American impressionism with his radiant Hill Country portrayals. Born in San Antonio in 1882, he trained under his father, artist Robert Jenkins Onderdonk, and later under William Merritt Chase in New York, honing his eye for light and texture.

Returning to Texas in 1909, Onderdonk fused Chase’s plein air, or open air, philosophy of painting outdoors with the rugged splendor of his homeland.

Onderdonk’s works—vibrant with color, delicately executed and alive with natural beauty—earned acclaim during his lifetime and reverence after his death in 1922.

Today his paintings command high prices: *Blue Bonnet Field*, *Early Morning*, *San Antonio Texas* sold for \$515,000 in 2013. Two other pieces sold for \$317,000 and \$281,000 at that same auction in Dallas. His works have been on display in all



of Texas’ major art museums, and several paintings even hung in the Oval Office when George W. Bush was president.

Each of the four 1915 paintings features terrain elements that resemble areas on or near our property—with live oaks, horizon lines and familiar contours we can still observe today. While there’s no direct evidence or documentation of such an excursion, the visual similarities raise the possibility they were painted during a multiday journey by mule into this remote region.

I hiked back out to the bend in the river and took a photo. From that vantage point,

the similarities were undeniable. The limestone bluffs, the curve of the hills, the river’s arc and the distinctive limestone formations in the riverbed all aligned with striking precision—like fingerprints.

It was a match. Onderdonk’s *Gulf Clouds in the Hills on the West Prong of the Medina River* portrays the very terrain we

now call home—capturing its distinctive topography with remarkable accuracy.

## Collector of the Clouds

But for this discovery to be taken seriously, it needed more than compelling visual similarities; it needed validation from people who know Onderdonk best.

Art dealer Harry Halff is the foremost authority on Onderdonk

and author of the artist’s catalogue raisonné—the definitive scholarly resource documenting the artist’s body of work.

“There is no doubt in my mind that the painting’s location is on your ranch,” Halff wrote in an email after reviewing the photographic comparisons and supporting documentation. “This may be one of the rare Onderdonk landscapes still visually tied to a named site today.”

Ted Lusher agreed with that assessment. He’s a respected collector of Texas art and history whose personal archive includes rare artifacts of Texas and Onderdonk’s original *Gulf Clouds in the Hills* itself.

“There’s no question in my mind,” he wrote of the similarities to our land. “The alignment of terrain and artistic detail is too precise to be coincidental.”

In 1915, traveling from San Antonio to Bandera County—about 50 miles away to the northwest—was challenging. With FM 337 not established until 1945, Onderdonk would have traveled over steep dirt trails and caliche paths, common in rural Texas at the time.

Automobiles like the Ford Model T had existed since 1908 but were impractical in the Hill Country’s rough conditions, especially for an artist of modest means. Instead, Onderdonk

“  
For us, this land has become something rare—  
a kind of living time machine. The terrain remains  
so untouched, the features so distinctive, that the  
gap between today and 1915 seems to vanish.  
”



COURTESY DEBRA WILLARD

OPPOSITE, FROM TOP  
A 1901 portrait of  
Onderdonk, one of  
Texas' artistic masters,  
by William Merritt  
Chase. Millard stands  
with Daisy Jane on the  
property he bought  
with his wife in 2024.  
He considers their  
ranch a living gallery.

RIGHT Millard's research  
into Onderdonk  
suggests *Windmill  
on Williams Ranch*  
was also painted on  
his property in 1915.



JULIAN ONDERDONK

likely used horse-drawn transport, such as wagons or buggies for flatter areas, and possibly mules for the steeper terrain.

Half notes that Onderdonk was “not averse to long hikes in the country,” often walking out into the hills armed with his easel, canvas and paints.

While Half has not found any direct references to mule travel, he considers it “entirely plausible” that Onderdonk may have ridden by mule into more remote terrain.

## The Muleman Next Door

That brings us to Paul Garrison III, our neighbor and a skilled mule skinner.

Garrison's family has lived and ranched on this land for five generations, and he carries forward the family legacy as the owner of Garrison Mulemanship and Training, a program known far and wide for cultivating the unique partnership between mules and their handlers.

Garrison and I discussed how Onderdonk might have reached this rugged, steep land more than a century ago. “There's no way he got there by car,” he said. “You'd need a good mule—maybe two. This is classic mule country.”

Before the Garrison family—and long before us—the land was known as the Williams Ranch. One of its earliest first-hand accounts comes from Samuel H. Sutton, who was born in 1850 and moved here in 1876.

One memory stood out for Sutton, writing for *Frontier Times Magazine* in 1928: He and his wife were washing clothes at the confluence of Cazey Creek and the west prong of the Medina River when they were surprised by Native Americans on a bluff above them. Sutton grabbed his rifle, his heart pounding. The moment passed without violence, but the tension and terrain left a mark on him.

His description of the bluff and the wash spot corresponds closely to the same curve and elevation where *Gulf Clouds in the Hills* was likely painted. It's fascinating to think that within a few decades, this same bluff and river could have

been the setting for a settler's tense moment and an artist's quiet observation.

## Preserving the View

One of the most remarkable aspects of this story is how little the land has changed, and Debra and I are determined to keep it that way. We've intentionally avoided building in areas that would disrupt the natural setting and have left existing trails undisturbed.

For us, this land has become something rare—a kind of living time machine. The terrain remains so untouched, the features so distinctive, that the gap between today and 1915 seems to vanish.

Visitors notice it, too. When we show them the digital image of the painting beside the actual view, there's often a long pause, followed by some variation of: “This place hasn't changed at all.”

In a constantly evolving world, finding proof that a landscape has stayed so consistent is unusual. The land reflects the same beauty Onderdonk captured, and now, more than a century later, we can see it just as he did.

As landowners, we're stewards of something much greater than ourselves. Our ranch is more than just acreage. It's a living gallery—one that requires no velvet ropes, no security guards and no admission fee. Just boots, curiosity and a willingness to see.

We didn't set out to uncover a hidden chapter in Texas art history. But once we realized what we were standing on, it became clear: This land belongs to history. To Onderdonk. To Sutton. To the Garrisons. And to everyone who's ever paused to marvel at the way clouds move across the hills.

*Gulf Clouds in the Hills* isn't just oil on canvas. It's evidence. That Onderdonk stood here. That he saw what we see. And that he found it beautiful enough to preserve forever.

We're honored to be part of that continuum. ■

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# Our Bone-ified Best Blade

*This knife says you're no one to mess with*



*"It's a beautiful knife with a great blade and a sure grip"*

— William B. Wilmington, NC

My friend Sergio is a mixed martial arts fighter. His shoulders are broad. His muscles have muscles. He's not the kind of person you want to be on the wrong side of.

This manly man has a saying about being tough: You should either know how to fight or look like you do.

The message is simple enough. People spoiling for a fight usually don't pick the biggest guy in the bar. If you look like someone who shouldn't be messed with, you likely won't be. With our Blue Bone Bowie Knife on your hip, that's exactly the message you'll send.

As beautiful as it is functional, this knife is 10" overall and features a high-quality 420 surgical stainless steel blade with a serrated spine. The handle is constructed of genuine natural bone with redwood spacers. On the handle you'll find design work that's carved by hand, a testament to its craftsmanship.

This knife is stick tang, meaning it won't wimp out when you need it. This knife also features brass hand guards and brass spacers with file work, so you won't lose your grip. For easy carrying, it comes with a genuine tooled leather sheath. **CALL NOW!** If you're one of the first 700-587 callers for this ad, we'll throw in a pair of *Stauer Pocket Binoculars* — a \$99 value — **ABSOLUTELY FREE!**

Walk around with the Blue Bone Bowie Knife and you'll feel a lot safer. I know I do.

#### Knife Specifications:

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**CEO**  
**HERBERT "TREY"**  
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# Safety Starts With You

**ELECTRICITY PLAYS** many roles in our lives, powering baby monitors, cellphones and lighting and running air conditioners and appliances. No wonder we've gotten so comfortable with its instant availability that when we flip a switch, we expect our systems and devices to do the job.

Remember, every electrical device has a purpose and a lifespan. While we can extend their operations with maintenance and care, none are designed to last forever. Periodic inspections can prevent hazards from becoming dangerous.

## GFCIs

Outdoor outlets and those in potentially damp locations like the kitchen, bathroom or laundry room typically include ground-fault circuit interrupters. GFCIs are designed to detect abnormal current flows and break the circuit to prevent potential electric shocks.



WATTANAPHOB | ISTOCK.COM

The average GFCI outlet is designed to last about 10 years, but in areas prone to electrical storms or power surges, they can wear out in five years or less. Check them frequently by pressing the test button. Make sure you hit the reset button when you're done. Contact a licensed electrician to replace any failing GFCI outlets.

## Outlets and Switches

Unstable electrical outlets or wall switches with signs of heat damage or discoloration are early warnings of potential shock or electrical fire hazards. Loose connections can allow electrical arcing. If you see these warning signs, it may be time to contact an electrician.

## Surge Protectors

Power strips with surge protectors can help safeguard expensive equipment like TVs and computers from power spikes. Voltage spikes are measured in joules, and surge protectors are rated for the number of joules they can effectively absorb.

If your surge protector is rated at 1,000 joules, it should be replaced when it hits or passes that limit. When the limit is reached, protection stops and you're left with a basic power strip.

Some surge protectors include indicator lights that warn you when they've stopped working, but many don't. If your electrical system takes a major hit, or if you don't remember when you bought your surge protector, it might be time for a replacement.

## Extension Cords

If you use extension cords regularly, you may need to call an electrician to add more outlets.

With a growing number of electrical devices connecting your family to the electricity you get from Medina Electric Cooperative, having enough outlets in just the right spots can be challenging. Remember, extension cords are designed for temporary use.

Watch out for cords that get noticeably warm when in use; they might be undersized. If a cord shows any signs of frayed, cracked or heat-damaged insulation, it should be replaced.

If the grounding prong is missing, crimped or loose, it will not provide the protection it's designed to. And always make sure that extension cords used in outdoor or potentially damp locations are rated for exterior use.

Electricity is an essential necessity for modern living, and Medina EC is committed to providing safe, reliable and affordable power to all our members. We encourage you to keep these safety tips in mind so you can address potential hazards before damage occurs.

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 designated as a critical care residential member. To sign up, fill out the form at [MedinaEC.org/Registry](https://MedinaEC.org/Registry) and attach a physician's directive or prescription.

Residential accounts designated as critical care are notified before planned outages and are flagged as a priority for restoration during unplanned outages. This designation does not guarantee uninterrupted electrical service and will not prevent you from losing power for reasons outside the cooperative's control or from being disconnected for nonpayment.

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. You can learn more about the requirements to connect a generator to our system at [MedinaEC.org/Generators](https://MedinaEC.org/Generators).

## Protecting Your Privacy

**YOU HAVE ENTRUSTED** Medina Electric Cooperative with personal and confidential information so that we can manage your electric account, 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 about your account.

Your information is kept in encrypted files behind protected firewalls. Only qualified Medina EC employees can access the information. Our information technology 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 have 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** 1-866-632-3532

**Email** [Info@MedinaEC.org](mailto:Info@MedinaEC.org)

**Web** [MedinaEC.org](https://MedinaEC.org) - Chat Feature Available

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

#### Voting District 1

Mickey Holzhaus, (210) 422-3310

Larry Huesser, (830) 426-1539

Ken Weynand, (830) 426-0762

#### Voting District 2

Joe Foley, (830) 261-1304

Larry Neal, (210) 218-2367

Jimmie Raines, (830) 591-8437

#### Voting District 3

Dennis Gonzalez, (956) 218-8325

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

Rodolfo H. Rodriguez, (210) 846-1092

### CEO

Trey Grebe, 1-866-632-3532, ext. 1046

## Call us.

### TOLL-FREE

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**Option 2:** Report an outage

**Option 3:** Pay bill, get account balance

**Option 5:** Speak to a representative

### OFFICE LOCATIONS

**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](https://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 1-866-632-3532 o visitando una de nuestras oficinas.



RISKA | ISTOCK.COM

### Assemble Supplies

You'll need supplies not just to get through the storm but to survive the potentially lengthy and unpleasant aftermath. Have enough nonperishable food, water and medicine to last each person in your family for at least one week.

You'll need extra cash, blankets, a battery-powered radio and flashlights. A cellphone can be useful—but you'll need a fully charged power bank to keep it going.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency provides an extensive checklist of recommended supplies to include in an emergency kit at [fema.gov](https://www.fema.gov).

### Strengthen Your Home

If you plan to ride out the storm in your own home, make sure it's in good condition and up to local hurricane building code specifications. Many retrofits do not cost as much or take as long to enact as you might think.

Have the proper plywood, steel or aluminum panels to board up windows and doors. Make sure your insurance covers floods, as most standard plans don't.

### Find Reliable Sources

The National Hurricane Center is an official source for forecasts and the issuance of watches and warnings. Your county's emergency management agency makes decisions regarding evacuations.

Preparedness and aid organizations, including the American Red Cross, make safety recommendations, and local and regional media outlets broadcast these bulletins. These organizations work together to serve as trusted information sources, especially for those less able to take care of themselves.

### Finalize Your Plan

Take the time now to write down and share the details of your hurricane plan.

The time to prepare for a hurricane is before the season begins, when you have the time and are not under pressure. Being prepared well beforehand can make you more resilient in the face of a hurricane—and make the difference between being a hurricane victim and a hurricane survivor.

## Prepare for Hurricane Season

**THE ATLANTIC HURRICANE** season begins June 1. This year meteorologists are watching weather patterns, especially the El Niño cycle, which has the potential to reduce hurricane activity. But even if the season brings fewer named storms, you should still be prepared well in advance for potential weather events.

Here is a six-step plan to help you prepare for hurricane season.

### Determine Your Risk

Find out what types of wind and water hazards exist where you live. Hurricanes are not just a coastal problem; their impact can be felt hundreds of miles inland. Hurricanes such as Ike, Sandy and Isaac also remind us that significant damage can occur without an "official" major hurricane.

### Make a Plan

If you live in an evacuation zone or have a home that could be unsafe during a hurricane, figure out where you'd go during an evacuation and how you'd get there. Identify friends or relatives who don't live in a danger zone or an unsafe home, and work out with them the use of their home as your evacuation destination. Remember to account for your pets, too.

Secure the place where you will ride out the storm and start stocking up on emergency supplies immediately.

Finally, be sure to put the plan in writing for yourself and those you care about.



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

**MEDINA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE MEMBERS WILL SEE** their 2025 capital credits allocations printed on their June bill. These totals represent the 2025 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 member’s monthly electric bill. 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 and former members receive a check. Each retirement is a portion of the total allocation that has been assigned to your account.

“Allocating capital credits is a direct reflection of what it means to be a member-owner,” said Trey Grebe, Medina EC CEO. “It demonstrates that when our cooperative succeeds, that success is shared directly with the people who built it—our members.”

To learn more about capital credits and see a list of unclaimed credits, visit [MedinaEC.org/CapitalCredits](http://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 any future capital credits retirements 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 1-866-632-3532 or logging in to your SmartHub account.

## Medina EC Celebrates Right-of-Way Professionals Week

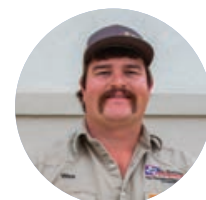
**IN HONOR OF** Right-of-Way Professionals Week, June 8–14, we would like to recognize our team members involved in right-of-way management. Right-of-Way Professionals Week shines a light on the dedicated individuals who play a crucial role in acquiring, managing, and clearing the land necessary for essential infrastructure projects. This includes Medina Electric Cooperative’s vegetation management coordinators, Joshua Roberts and Wesley Bohl, and right-of-way specialist, Barbara Broll.

Roberts and Bohl work to maintain our members’ beautiful surroundings and ensure a 40-foot right-of-way around power lines is clear from vegetation to provide a reliable power supply. Broll helps members and Medina EC procure the necessary easements for our infrastructure.

### VEGETATION MANAGEMENT COORDINATORS



**Joshua Roberts**



**Wesley Bohl**

### RIGHT-OF-WAY SPECIALIST



**Barbara Broll**

# Managing Summer Energy Demand and Costs

AS THE TEXAS HEAT INTENSIFIES, the statewide electric grid faces its highest demand of the year. For cooperative members, understanding how energy is consumed during these peak months is key to maintaining both grid reliability and affordable rates.

Energy costs for the Medina Electric Cooperative are not just based on the total amount of electricity used, but also on peak demand—the points in time when the need for power is at its highest. Because wholesale power costs are significantly influenced by these summer peaks, reducing demand during the hottest parts of the day directly benefits the entire membership through more stable rates and lower wholesale expenses.

Medina EC's agricultural members play a specific and vital role in this effort. Through the Load Management Program, which runs from June through September, irrigation accounts allow for the temporary interruption of power to their equipment during times of extreme system stress.

This voluntary participation helps lower Medina EC's overall system demand. In exchange for this contribution to the cooperative's efficiency, participating agricultural members receive a reduced electric rate, passing the cost savings directly back to those who help manage the load.

While large-scale irrigation management is a significant factor, the collective actions of residential and commercial members are equally important. Shifting energy use away from the daily peak window—3:30 p.m. to 7 p.m.—can have a measurable impact.

## Simple ways to reduce your energy use include:

- **Thermostat Adjustments:** Raising your thermostat by just a few degrees during peak hours.
- **Appliance Timing:** Delaying the use of large appliances, such as dishwashers, washing machines and clothes dryers, until after 7 p.m.
- **Usage Tracking:** Utilizing consumer analytics to monitor your daily power patterns.

By being mindful of energy consumption during these critical hours, Medina EC members contribute to a more sustainable and cost-effective energy future for the entire community. For more practical efficiency tips, visit [MedinaEC.org/EnergySavings](https://MedinaEC.org/EnergySavings).

## Stay Cool and Save This Summer

SUMMER MONTHS bring some of the highest energy bills of the year. But why? Cooling your home accounts for a large portion of your monthly energy use, and the hotter it gets, the harder (and longer) your air conditioner works to keep you cool.

Here are a few ways to help you save—not only during the dog days of summer but throughout the year.



- **Raise your thermostat.** The smaller the difference between the indoor and outdoor temp, the more you'll save.
- **Install window coverings** like blinds or light-blocking curtains to prevent indoor heat gain during the day.
- **Rebates.** Medina Electric Cooperative offers rebates for the efficient equipment you purchase and more, like HVAC tune-ups and an electronic programmable thermostat. Many of our rebates can be claimed by simply filling out a form. Find a list of all our rebates at [MedinaEC.org/Rebates](https://MedinaEC.org/Rebates).
- **Seal leaks with caulk and weatherstripping** around windows and exterior doors. Air leaks force your air conditioner to work harder and run longer than necessary.
- **Run ceiling fans** for additional cooling but turn them off when you leave the room.
- **Monitor your electricity** using

consumer analytics through SmartHub. Medina EC's residential members can gain a deeper understanding of energy usage, specifically pinpointing which appliances are driving up electric bills and by approximately how much. Learn more at [MedinaEC.org/ConsumerAnalytics](https://MedinaEC.org/ConsumerAnalytics).

By implementing these energy-saving tips, you'll not only lower your monthly bill, but you will also help reduce overall demand on the Electric Reliability Council of Texas power grid, contributing to a more stable power supply for all Texans. To stay informed about ERCOT grid conditions, we encourage all members to sign up for TXANS alerts at [ERCOT.com/TXANS](https://ERCOT.com/TXANS).



BILL CHIZEK / ADORSTOCK

# Safe Travels, Youth Tour Delegation

THREE STUDENTS FROM THE MEDINA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE service area will join more than 1,900 others from across the country on the trip of a lifetime June 14–22 as part of the Government-in-Action Youth Tour. In addition to the trip, the contest winners will receive a \$2,000 scholarship toward their educational expenses after they graduate from high school. The students will gather 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. Then-Sen. Lyndon Baines Johnson inspired the trip when he addressed 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 100,000 young Americans have participated in this educational program. Medina EC has sent 58 students on the trip since 2007. More information about Medina EC’s Youth Tour program can be found at [MedinaEC.org/YouthTour](http://MedinaEC.org/YouthTour).



Applicants were asked to write an essay in response to the following prompt: **What would life be like without electricity? How does it add value to our lives?** Applicants were also asked to provide a list of their extracurricular activities and community involvement and to describe their career goals and why they wanted to attend Youth Tour.

Read a snippet of the 2026 delegates’ essays below. Sign up to receive information about the 2027 Youth Tour trip at [MedinaEC.org/YouthTour](http://MedinaEC.org/YouthTour).

## And the Winners Are ...



REESA LOWELL  
D’HANIS

“The convenience of running water and a light switch adds so much value to our everyday life. Electricity adds value to our lives by connecting us and by the many integrations we use every day.”

“Electricity isn’t just about convenience; it’s about comfort and progress and it adds value to our lives. It is the silent force that keeps life moving forward.”

RAYEE SLAUGHTER  
D’HANIS



JORGE ALVAREZ III  
SANTA ELENA

“Electricity is far more than a convenience; it is a necessity that supports modern life, safety, and opportunity. It is a cornerstone of modern society that powers almost everything we do from the time we wake up until we go to sleep.”

# Medina EC Awards \$50,000 in Scholarships

**TWENTY-FIVE AREA STUDENTS** have an extra \$2,000 to help with their education expenses next school year.

Medina Electric Cooperative awarded scholarships totaling \$50,000 to 10 adults and 15 graduating seniors in its service area 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 \$802,000 in scholarships to 568 students from our service area.

Learn more about the scholarship program requirements and eligibility at [MedinaEC.org/Scholarships](https://MedinaEC.org/Scholarships). The scholarship applications generally open and have a deadline in the first quarter of each year. If you have applied in the past and have not won, look for information on next year's scholarship program in January or February 2027.



**AARON GONZALEZ**  
HONDO



**AVERY FOHN**  
HONDO



**BERENICE SALINAS**  
LAREDO



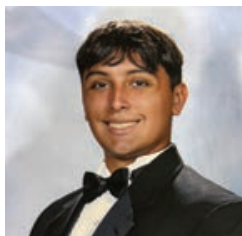
**CARSON SUHR**  
DEVINE



**CATHERINE CROWE**  
SAN ANTONIO



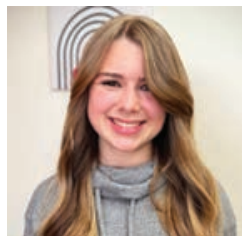
**DANIELA ZARAGOZA**  
LAREDO



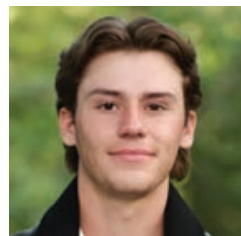
**EDGAR RODRIGUEZ**  
ROMA



**ELLE LUTZ**  
HONDO



**EVELYN DUKE**  
SAN ANTONIO



**JACKSON LOWELL**  
CASTROVILLE



**JEREMY STEINBRUNNER II**  
DEVINE



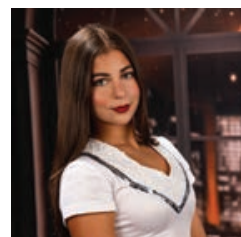
**JESENIA WARE**  
CASTROVILLE



**JOLIE BERGER**  
HONDO



**JOSEPH HABY**  
CASTROVILLE



**KAREN RIVERA**  
MISSION



**KINSLY COX**  
SABINAL



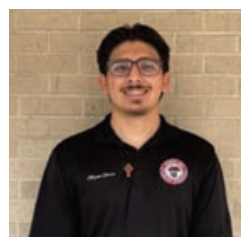
**MADISON SPEER**  
UVALDE



**MALLORI LEWIS**  
HONDO



**MICHAEL WILLIAMS**  
UVALDE



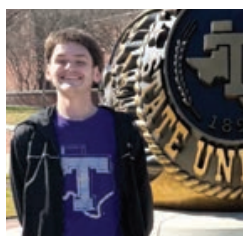
**MIGUEL GARCIA**  
ROMA



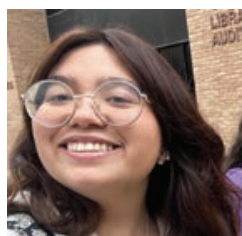
**NICHOLAS RIFF**  
HONDO



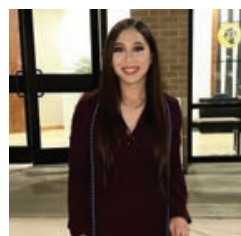
**REILLY AMSLER**  
UVALDE



**RYAN EARL**  
CASTROVILLE



**SASHA YERE**  
ROMA



**YULITZA MENDIOLA**  
ZAPATA



JOHN ZELLNER / ISTOCK.COM

## 5 Tips To Reduce Wildfire Risks

**WILDFIRES ARE NO LONGER CONFINED** to the western United States. Traditionally associated with dry, fire-prone regions like California, wildfires are now affecting areas in the Midwest and even parts of the Southeast.

This shift is driven by rising temperatures, prolonged droughts and changing weather patterns, which are creating conditions ripe for fires in regions that historically saw fewer of them. As a result, more communities are now facing growing threats from wildfires, prompting a need for broader awareness and preparedness nationwide.

Through regular vegetation management and grid maintenance and hardening practices, we are proactively working to reduce risks and improve the reliability of our local system.

As a member of Medina EC, there are steps you can take to prevent wildfires.

- 1. Properly extinguish campfires.** Always douse your campfire with water, stir the ashes and ensure everything is cool to the touch before leaving the area.
- 2. Don't burn on windy days.** Avoid outdoor burning when it's windy or dry, as embers can easily spread and ignite surrounding areas.
- 3. Clear vegetation and debris.** Maintain a defensible space around your home by removing dry leaves, dead branches and other flammable materials.
- 4. Use equipment safely.** Tools like lawnmowers or chainsaws can spark fires. Use them during cooler times of the day and keep them in good working condition.
- 5. Follow local fire regulations.** Always check for burn bans or restrictions in your area before burning anything or using open flames outdoors.

For more information on wildfire prevention and preparedness, visit [RedCross.org](http://RedCross.org).

### MARK YOUR CALENDAR

#### Load Management Begins

Monday, June 1

#### Flag Day

Sunday, June 14

#### Juneteenth

Friday, June 19

#### Father's Day

Sunday, June 21

#### National Ice Cream Cake Day

Saturday, June 27



MADEZHDA1806 / ADOBESTOCK

# Texas: Forever in Your Heart



1. Heart of Texas Women's Hoodie

3. Personalized Heart of Texas Women's Denim Jacket



Hoodie and tote feature a silver-tone Texas charm



2. Heart of Texas Quilted Tote



Denim Jacket Personalized FREE with your name or initials

## 1. Heart of Texas Women's Hoodie

This cozy ivory hoodie is expertly crafted of an easy-care cotton blend knit and features a detailed image of a cowgirl boot and hat next to the embroidered saying, "You Can Take The Girl Out Of Texas, But You Can't Take The Texas Out Of The Girl." Additional details include fun embroidered accents, soft contrasting taupe jersey knit-lined hood, front hip pockets, full front zipper, knit cuffs and a straight hem for an extra comfortable fit. A silver-tone zipper pull shaped like the State of Texas with a heart cutout completes this classic country girl design. Imported. Available in women's sizes S-3X. *Item price: \$99.99, payable in 3 easy installments of \$33.33 each (plus a total of \$19.99 s + s\*) Add \$10 for sizes 1X-3X*

## 2. Heart of Texas Quilted Tote

This Texas-inspired quilted tote features classic country styling with a sentiment every Texas girl knows by heart. Framed in a bold red bandana print, the front and back feature a cowgirl boot and hat alongside the saying, "You Can Take The Girl Out Of Texas, But You Can't Take The Texas Out Of The Girl." Crafted of soft yet durable high-quality quilted fabric, this tote features a roomy interior with one zippered pocket and two slip pockets, along with a zippered closure. A silver-tone charm showcasing the silhouette of Texas with a heart cutout adds a perfect finishing touch to this versatile dual-handle tote. Imported. *Item price: \$79.99, payable in 3 easy installments of \$26.66 each (plus a total of \$19.99 s + s\*)*

## 3. Personalized Heart of Texas Women's Denim Jacket

Beautifully crafted of durable, medium-wash cotton-blend stretch denim, this jacket features a bold outline of the Lone Star State with bandana-inspired accents beneath a classic Western yoke—finished with the sentiment, "Forever a Texas Girl." A gold embroidered heart and white embroidered accents add to the look. The front of the jacket is personalized FREE with your monogram or full name (max 12 characters). Additional design details for this flattering and roomy jacket include two flap chest pockets with silver-tone button closures, two hip pockets, an adjustable hem and cuffs and a full button-front closure. Imported. Available in women's sizes S-3X. *Item price: \$149.99, payable in 4 easy installments of \$37.50 each (plus a total of \$19.99 s+s\*) Add \$10 for sizes 1X-3X*

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2. Heart of Texas Quilted Tote 01-44510-001
3. Personalized Heart of Texas Women's Denim Jacket 01-44612-001 Size \_\_\_\_\_

Jacket and Hoodie available in women's sizes Small (6-8) Medium (10-12) Large (14-16) XL (18) 1XL (20) 2XL (22) 3XL (24)

### STEP 2. Add your name or initials FOR DENIM JACKET ONLY (Up to 12 characters MAX):

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Mrs. Mr. Ms. \_\_\_\_\_

Name (Please Print Clearly)

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City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

\*See [bradfordexchange.com](http://bradfordexchange.com) for information on all that is included in your one-time shipping and service charge. Please allow 4-8 weeks after initial payment for shipment. Sales subject to product availability and order acceptance.

E54801



# Go the Other Way

Eastern Central Texas' hill country also has plenty of wildflowers, rolling hills and history

BY W.F. STRONG • ILLUSTRATION BY CHRIS WORMELL

A GREAT MANY TEXANS set off for the Hill Country to enjoy the splendor of the wildflowers over the past couple of months. The blooms light up the hills and roadsides with carpets of vibrant color.

But I want to suggest that you consider the other hill country, composed of a gentler, less dramatic topography—one that also offers wildflowers galore and winding roads but has the advantage of being far less traveled.

You start in the small eastern Central Texas hamlet of Clay, between Brenham and Bryan, on FM 50, heading south. Here, you will encounter the first hill rising off the flatlands into a changing ecosystem. You can see the gentle rise sweep across

the land like a stationary wave, from left to right.

Once you get into Independence, which changed its name from Cole's Settlement around 1836 to honor Texas' freedom from Mexico, take a right on FM 390 and stay on that road almost all the way to Burton.

This is a famous scenic drive that passes through the old ghost town of Gay Hill. Wildflowers are often bountiful here. From Burton, continue on U.S. Highway 290 for a few miles and pick up State Highway 237 to Round Top.

Round Top was part of Stephen F. Austin's original colony. The town took its name from an octagonal tower

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



constructed there in stagecoach days. Since the 1960s it's been known as a mecca for antique lovers. What I appreciate most about the road from Round Top to La Grange are the white fences that curve along emerald green pastures.

Once you get into La Grange on State Highway 159, you'll take a left on U.S. Highway 77, climb the big hill and head south out of town, crossing the Colorado River. La Grange is probably best known for the Chicken Ranch brothel, which ZZ Top and reporter Marvin Zindler made famous in the 1970s—or perhaps infamous. It's long gone, of course.

Just 4 miles down that road, you'll take a right on County Road 2436. Look to your left and, quite soon, you'll see the largest lawn mower graveyard you've ever seen. That's Keith's Lawnmower Repair. I'm not sure it's a good advertisement for Keith's skills, but maybe it's an endorsement of his genius as a seller of new mowers.

This road dead-ends into FM 609, where you'll take a left. Here, the hills get bigger and the wildflowers more robust.

Watch for a shed painted in the colors of the Texas flag, off to the left. It's magnificently situated among wildflowers—as if the shed is posing for you.

It won't be long before you will arrive in Flatonia, which isn't particularly flat (it was named for pioneer settler F.W. Flato). In Flatonia, pick up State Highway 95 headed south toward Shiner. On this stretch, you'll enjoy more rural roads, gentle hills and wildflowers, including panoramic views off to the west.

End your drive with a Shiner Bock at the oldest independent brewery in Texas. After a two-hour drive through wildflower country, you've earned a bock or two. ■

# The Art of the Sandwich

Warm your heart with a meal dressed in layers

BY VIANNEY RODRIGUEZ, FOOD EDITOR

All my favorite things—brisket, butter, Texas toast and cheese— together in perfectly delicious harmony makes for one happy señorita. Whenever my husband cooks up a brisket, I always tuck away some in the freezer to whip up these sandwiches. Pair this sandwich with a glass of wine, an icy cold beer or a frozen margarita.

## Brisket Grilled Cheese Sandwich

**4 tablespoons (½ stick) butter, softened**

**4 slices thick-sliced white bread (often labeled Texas toast)**

**8 ounces sharp cheddar cheese, grated or sliced**

**16 ounces diced, cooked brisket, room temperature**

1. Butter one side of each slice of bread.
2. On the unbuttered side of 2 bread slices, layer half the cheddar, brisket and other half of cheddar. Top with two remaining bread slices, butter side out, to make sandwiches.
3. Heat a large skillet over medium-high heat. Cook sandwiches 3–4 minutes on each side, or until both sides are golden brown.
4. Remove sandwiches from skillet, slice in half and serve warm.

SERVES 2

**TCP** Follow Vianney Rodriguez as she cooks in *Cocina Gris* at [sweetlifebake.com](http://sweetlifebake.com), where she features a recipe for Mini Chorizo con Papa y Huevo Breakfast Sandwiches.





## Grilled Strawnana Hazelnut Sandwich

LISA CASIMIR  
COSERV

Grab a few napkins and get ready to sink your teeth into the sweetest twist on the classic PB&J. I love a peanut butter sammy, but the combination of berries and banana with chocolate hazelnut is everything I didn't know I needed!

- 1/3 cup chocolate hazelnut spread, such as Nutella**
- 4 slices sourdough bread**
- 1 cup strawberries, thinly sliced**
- 2 bananas, thinly sliced**
- 2 tablespoons (1/4 stick) butter**

1. Spread hazelnut spread on one side of each slice of sourdough. Top two slices with strawberries. Top the other two slices with bananas.
2. Stack bread to make two sandwiches, pairing one strawberry-topped slice with one banana-topped slice, and evenly spread butter on each side of sandwiches.
3. Heat a skillet over medium-high heat. Cook sandwiches, covered, 3 minutes on each side, or until bread is lightly toasted.
4. Slice in half and serve warm.

SERVES 2

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28 >



\$500 WINNER

## Muffuletta

BETTY HERZIK  
FAYETTE EC



A briny olive spread combines with a smorgasbord of cold cuts and cheese to create a mouth-watering BIG bite of a sandwich, and I am in love. The food processor does all the heavy lifting in this recipe, then the sandwich gets wrapped in foil and baked until warm. I cannot wait to make this sandwich again and again.

- 1 jar giardiniera (16 ounces), drained**
- 1/2 of 10-ounce jar pimiento-stuffed Spanish queen olives, drained**
- 1/2 of 10-ounce jar sliced Kalamata olives, drained**

- 1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil**
- 1 loaf ciabatta bread, sliced horizontally**
- 1/4 cup red wine vinegar**
- 1 tablespoon dried oregano**
- 8 ounces sliced Black Forest ham**
- 4 ounces sliced hard salami**
- 4 ounces sliced mortadella**
- 8 ounces sliced provolone cheese**

**COOK'S TIP:** The sandwich may be refrigerated overnight (wrapped in aluminum foil). If doing this, take it out of the refrigerator about 45 minutes before baking. Increase the baking time to 20–22 minutes.

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees. In a food processor, combine giardiniera, olives and oil and pulse until a uniform mixture forms. Brush both cut sides of bread with vinegar and sprinkle with oregano.
2. Place bottom half of the loaf on a piece of aluminum foil large enough to wrap around the entire sandwich. Layer meats and provolone on bread. Top with olive mixture. Place top half of bread on sandwich and wrap foil around sandwich.
3. Place wrapped sandwich on a baking sheet and bake 15–17 minutes, until thoroughly heated. Remove foil, slice into individual portions and serve.

SERVES 6

## TCP \$500 Recipe Contest

**CRANBERRY HARVEST** DUE JUN 10

Cranberries can add a tart fall touch to pastries, salads, drinks and desserts. Come November we'll share the best from Co-op Country and award \$500 for the top recipe.

**UPCOMING: HOLIDAY TRADITIONS** DUE JUL 10



## Bridget's Sandwiches

LYNNETT RATCHFORD  
BLUEBONNET EC

These easy sandwiches have it all: sweet slices of ham, gooey Swiss cheese, and rolls that stay soft and fluffy on the inside with a perfectly toasted top. The secret is marinating them overnight in a savory butter sauce. They are delicious and a great dish for making in advance.

- 24 Hawaiian sweet rolls**
- 16 ounces sliced ham**
- 16 ounces sliced Swiss cheese**
- ½ cup (1 stick) butter**
- ½ teaspoon poppy seeds**
- 1 tablespoon minced onion**
- ½ teaspoon steak sauce**
- ½ tablespoon yellow mustard**

1. Slice rolls in half and arrange bottom halves in a baking dish. Layer with ham and Swiss. Place top halves of the rolls over cheese.
2. In a saucepan over medium-high heat,



melt butter. Add poppy seeds, onion, steak sauce and mustard and cook 1 minute. Pour mixture over sandwiches, spreading evenly.

3. Cover baking dish with aluminum foil and refrigerate overnight.
4. Preheat oven to 350 degrees and bake sandwiches, still covered by foil, 10 minutes. Remove foil and cook 10 minutes uncovered. Serve warm.

**SERVES 6**

## Hacks for Your Stacks

Great sandwiches are all about high-quality ingredients and technique. Here are some secrets from my kitchen.

### USE THOSE LEFTOVERS

Last night's shredded or roasted chicken or pork loin transform into a tasty lunch.

### NO MAYO, NO PROBLEM

Pesto, ranch dip, hummus or sour cream with hot sauce can easily fill in for mayonnaise.

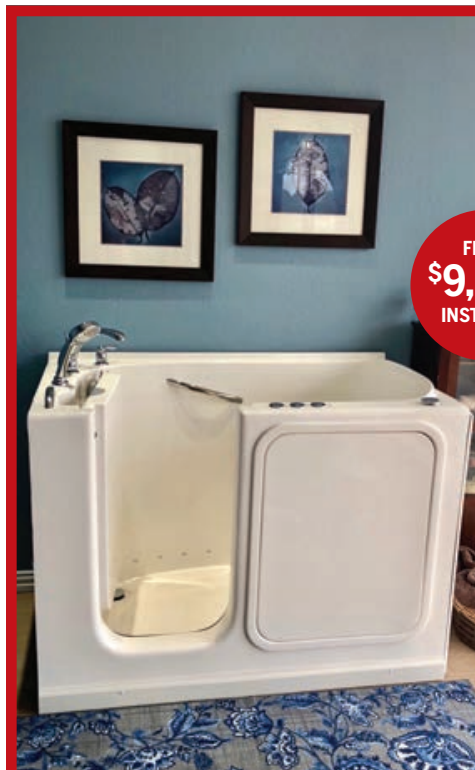
### SEASON YOUR TOMATOES

Please! A little salt and pepper go a long way. And slice them with a serrated knife for the cleanest cut.

### DON'T HOLD THE HERBS

Make your sandwich pop with a sprinkle of fresh dill, thyme or basil.

—Vianney Rodriguez



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COURTESY CASEY CHAPMAN ROSS

## Play Time on the Prairie

The 'Fort Griffin Fandangle' is a spectacle like no other

BY CHET GARNER

I ARRIVED IN ALBANY, northeast of Abilene, just as the summer heat began to loosen its grip and the sky softened to a dusty pastel. I took my seat in the open-air Prairie Theater with 1,000 other folks who had all made the pilgrimage to witness the oldest outdoor musical in the state: the *Fort Griffin Fandangle*. The place was buzzing with anticipation, and I could see hundreds of costumed performers waiting in the ranks as saddled horses trotted offstage.

This was Albany's Super Bowl, and it was almost game time. Every year, a cast of 250 performers, horses, longhorns and a robotic snake rehearse for months in preparation for the last two weeks in June, when *Fandangle* takes the stage. The shows are June 19–20 and 26–27 this year.

The tradition goes back to 1938, when Robert Nail Jr., a high school teacher and amateur playwright, penned a musical about the history of Shackelford County. Nearly 90 years later, it's still going strong.

For the next few hours, I watched neighbors become pioneers, soldiers, ranchers and Comanche warriors, telling their collective story through songs, dance and a few gunfights. The narration carried us through settlement, struggle and celebration, but the real magic came from the sheer number of people involved—kids, parents, grandparents—sometimes three generations sharing the same spotlight.

There's something incredibly charming about knowing the singing cowboy or cancan dancer could be the local custodian, lawyer or barista. It was meaningful when it needed to be and at times completely ridiculous.

As the last song rang out across the prairie and the cast took their final bows, I felt like I had witnessed something deeply personal for Albany but also important for everyone. To quote its creator, Mr. Nail, "You can never be who you're supposed to be until you know who you've been." ■

ABOVE A cast of 200-plus stages the *Fort Griffin Fandangle* in Albany, continuing a tradition that goes back to 1938.

**TCP** Watch the video on our website and see all of Chet's Explorations on *The Daytripper* on PBS.



## Know Before You Go

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

### JUNE

10

**Snyder [10–13] West Texas Western Swing Festival**, (325) 573-3558, [snyderchamber.org](http://snyderchamber.org)

11

**Abilene [11–14] Children's Art + Literacy Festival**, (325) 677-1161, [abilenecalf.com](http://abilenecalf.com)

13

**Fredericksburg Luckenbach School Open House**, (830) 685-3321, [historicschools.org](http://historicschools.org)

**Jacksonville Tomato Fest**, (903) 586-2217, [jacksonvilletexas.com](http://jacksonvilletexas.com)

**Mason Hot Dog & Hot Rod Night**, (325) 347-5758, [mason.tx.org](http://mason.tx.org)

**Seguin [13–July 10] Red, White and Blue Art Show**, (830) 305-0472, [seguinartleague.com](http://seguinartleague.com)

**Grapevine [13–August 30] Dinosaur Quest**, (817) 410-3185, [grapevinetexasusa.com](http://grapevinetexasusa.com)

17

**Fairfield Tea With Miss Texas**, (903) 389-5792, [fairfieldtexaschamber.com](http://fairfieldtexaschamber.com)

18

**Corsicana [18–21, 25–28] The Drowning Girls**, (903) 872-5421, [thewlac.com](http://thewlac.com)

20

**Dallas Showtime Saturday: Hot Toast Music Company**, (972) 702-7100, [galleriadallas.com](http://galleriadallas.com)

**Garland Juneteenth Celebration**, (972) 205-2749, [visitgarlandtx.com](http://visitgarlandtx.com)

**Sherman Juneteenth Celebration**, (469) 715-7471, bit.ly/shermanjuneteenth

23

**Fort Worth [23-28] The Notebook**, (817) 212-4280, basshall.com

25

**Levelland [25-27] Golden Spread Classic**, (806) 759-1102, goldenspreadclassic.com

27

**Van Freedom Boom**, (903) 963-7216, vantx.gov

JULY

3

**Eagle Lake Freedom Festival**, (979) 234-2640, coeltx.net

**Fairfield Fireworks at the Fairgrounds**, (903) 389-5792, fairfieldtexaschamber.com

**Palestine [3-4] America 250: A Star-Spangled Jubilee**, 1-800-659-3484, visitpalestine.com

**Snyder [3-4] July 4th Celebration**, (325) 573-3558, snyderchamber.org

4

**Corsicana Freedom Fest**, (903) 654-4850, visitcorsicana.com

**Giddings Firemen's July 4th Celebration**, (979) 542-3455, giddingstx.com

**Lakehills Independence Day Parade**, (830) 612-1034, bit.ly/post0410bbq

**Point Blank America 250**, (281) 757-0682, usa250-pb.com

### 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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Upper Antelope Canyon, fine art giclée print, 2025, 12" x 19", Bobby Greeson

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### Event Calendar

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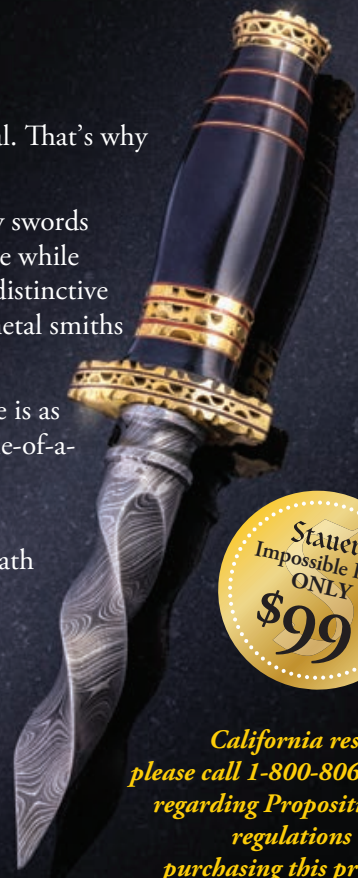
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# Making a Splash

From splash pads to swimming holes, these Texans know how to cool off in style. So grab your suit and jump in—the water’s fine.

CURATED BY GRACE FULTZ



**1 RAY BEDNAR**  
BLUEBONNET EC  
A painted bunting bathing.

**2 FRANKI SALDIVAR**  
J-A-C EC  
"I was able to photograph bears in Alaska in the fall of 2022."

**3 LAUREN MCCLAIN**  
PENTEX ENERGY  
"Wild and free, this 4-year-old lives life to the fullest."

**4 PAUL GARCIA**  
MEDINA EC  
"I just happened to catch this cardinal taking a bath in my home's birdbath."



## Upcoming Contests

- TAILGATING** DUE JUN 10
- RIDE THE RAILS** DUE JUL 10
- CHRISTMAS FAILS** DUE AUG 10



ENTER ONLINE

**TCP** See Focus on Texas on our website for many more Making a Splash photos from readers.



## Papa Hits His Stride

Fatherhood becomes grand when you get a second go

BY MARK TROTH

ILLUSTRATION BY  
URAN DUO

**GENERATION GAPS CAN BE** measured in years but also in opinions and outlooks.

And as parents continue a decades-long trend of having children later in life, I wonder what will become of the growing gap between grandchildren and their grandparents. After all, a 60-year age difference between a Baby Boomer and his grandkids (I was a child of the 1960s) is bound to create more difficulty in finding common ground.

My dad was a hardworking, principled man of few words and a strong code of ethics. I didn't challenge him often. Serious father-son conversations usually assured a quiet peace. Though as he aged, Dad mellowed, especially with my children. And now that I'm the next generational Papa, it all makes perfect sense to me.

After retiring in 2023, my wife, Mary, and I relocated to Washington County—just an hour commute to the grandkids. We touch base daily and get together often, but the most special times are when they visit us in Chappell Hill for holidays or long weekends.

With these extended stays, I can play the grandfather role 24/7 and share my pearls of wisdom, old jokes and timeless stories that are, of course, always new to them. My son and daughter just roll their eyes.

Not unlike my dad, I bring a renewed patience and tolerance to my grandkids that may have been a bit lacking with my own children. As a father, work pressure, financial obligations and just plain life often got in the way.

Now, we are second in line with regard to child-raising responsibility. Mary and I assist, advise, support, nourish, teach and console—but rarely mandate.

Ten years now into full grandparent mode, my elder wisdom serves me well. I'm the peacemaker between siblings and cousins, the answerer to boundless questions, the blocks and puzzles play partner on the floor (getting back up is the hard part), the safety foot on the Kubota pedal while they steer, the fishing partner who takes the perch off the hook, the positive "get 'em next time" coach, a second—perhaps more seasoned and sympathetic—ear when they're troubled, and any other role that needs filling.

Yet I must be cautious to always support and respect my son's and daughter's parental initiatives.

If there is a generational gap with our grandchildren, Mary and I have bridged it with a circle of life and love. It is a second chance for Papa and Mimi to get it right.

It's been said, "Dearer than our children are the children of our children." Is there anything more grand than that? ■



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<sup>1</sup>DETAILS OF OFFER: Offer expires 7/31/2026. Not valid with other offers or prior purchases. Buy one (1) window or entry/patio door, get one (1) window or entry/patio door 40% off, and 12 months no money down, no monthly payments, no interest when you purchase four (4) or more windows or entry/patio doors between 6/1/2026 and 7/31/2026. 40% off windows and entry/patio doors are less than or equal to lowest cost window or entry/patio door in the order. Additional \$50 off each window or entry/patio door, minimum purchase of 4 required, taken after initial discount(s), when you purchase by 7/31/2026. Only valid on initial visit. Subject to credit approval. 12-month Promo Period: while no payments are due, interest accrues but is waived if the loan is paid in full before the Promo Period expires. Any unpaid balance owed after the Promo Period, plus accrued interest, will be paid in installments based on the terms disclosed in the customer's loan agreement. Financing is provided by various financial institutions without regard to age, race, color, religion, national origin, gender, or familial status. Savings comparison based on purchase of a single unit at list price. Available at participating locations and offer applies throughout the service area. See your local Renewal by Andersen location for details. License numbers available at renewalbyandersen.com/license. Some Renewal by Andersen locations are independently owned and operated. <sup>2</sup>Based on testing of 10 double-hung units per ASTM E2068 20 years after installation. <sup>3</sup>It is the only warranty among top selling window companies that meets all of the following requirements: easy to understand terms, unrestricted transferability, installation coverage, labor coverage, geographically unrestricted, coverage for exterior color, insect screens and hardware, and no maintenance requirement. Visit renewalbyandersen.com/nationsbest for details. <sup>4</sup>Review aggregator survey of 5-star reviews among leading national full-service window replacement companies. January 2024 Reputation.com. "Renewal by Andersen" and all other marks where denoted are trademarks of Andersen Corporation. © 2026 Andersen Corporation. All rights reserved. RBA14201

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