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Tex-Mex dishes in the service window at Blue Moon Mexican Restaurant.

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By Gene Fowler

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By Ken Roberts

NEXT MONTH

Palo Duro Love Letters Georgia O'Keeffe's paintings captured the Panhandle; her wistful writings brought it to life.



TEX-MEX: JODY HORTON. BRUSHES: SANJA | STOCK.ADOBE.COM



ON THE COVER Lunch at Blue Moon Mexican Restaurant: crispy pork cutlets and tender short ribs. Photo by Jody Horton

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Love and Recoiling

I know this article [*A Snake To Love*, April 2020] is full of truth and facts, but I'm not reading it. I don't care what kind it is or how beneficial—my (somewhat) reasonable mind just hates them.

LISA FLOWERREE BIGON | VIA FACEBOOK

I hate snakes, but if they're moving away from me, I let them go.

JANE TALCOTT | VIA FACEBOOK

Last summer, one was in my kitchen a foot from where I was standing while I investigated the weird noise that sounded like water running or static. I finally glanced under the counter, screamed and ran. My husband put him in a trash can and released him far away.

SUZANNE ROTH FULTON | VIA FACEBOOK

I've learned to respect and give them their space. A rattler will warn you before it strikes out of self-defense. A human snake will strike without warning out of pure malice.

JON RANNELLS | VIA FACEBOOK

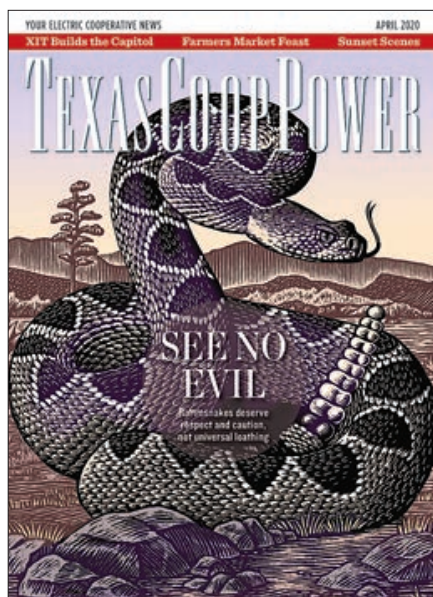
They will bite horses, cows, dogs, you name it. They are kind of like reptile land mines.

SAM YEATES | VIA FACEBOOK

The rattler is one of Mother Nature's mistakes. A rattler can kill creatures, including humans, that it cannot eat.

DONALD DIETZ | BOERNE BANDERA EC

Growing up in Louisiana, in my youth I dispatched poisonous snakes, usually water moccasins. As I aged, I began to see my actions as those of a person ignorant of the ecosystem.



Rattler Respect

When I laid eyes on the April cover, Mike Leggett immediately came to mind [*A Snake To Love*, April 2020]. I enjoyed his column so much in the *Austin American-Statesman*. Back in the day, I learned from him to appreciate rattlers, along with other snakes, and have always let them be because he made clear their importance in my own slice of the Hill Country ecosystem.

MELODIE GREIDER | DRIPPING SPRINGS | PEDERNALES EC

Now, I make amends for the sins of my youth by teaching my children (5 and 9) these lessons, without any animals being harmed.

You also might be pleased to know that your article has turned into a science lesson for my children while they home-school during the shelter-in-place policy of March and April.

LORNE DAVISON | CEDAR PARK PEDERNALES EC

Mike Leggett repeats a dangerous myth that I have heard all my life and have been guilty of spreading myself.

I am a physician and have been involved in the treatment of coral snake bites. The stories told me by the victims caused me to research the capabilities of these small reptiles beyond what is "common knowledge." These beautiful little guys, while shy and nonaggressive, can

bite you and envenomate you in less than a heartbeat. No chewing required.

BILL CLARK | GEORGETOWN BARTLETT EC

Recipes to the Rescue

The Zucchini Taco Boats With Chicken was an excellent recipe [*Farmers Market*, April 2020]. It was easy to make and made a

lot. We had enough to share with our next-door neighbors.

I appreciate these easy recipes during the COVID-19 threat. We had everything we needed to make a delicious meal during these tough times.

AL MAGNESS | AUSTIN PEDERNALES EC



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TEXAS CO-OP POWER VOLUME 76, NUMBER 12 (USPS 540-560). *Texas Co-op Power* is published monthly by Texas Electric Cooperatives (TEC). Periodical postage paid at Austin, TX, and at additional offices. TEC is the statewide association representing 75 electric cooperatives. *Texas Co-op Power's* website is TexasCoopPower.com. Call (512) 454-0311 or email editor@TexasCoopPower.com. **SUBSCRIPTION PRICE** is \$4.20 per year for individual members of subscribing cooperatives and is paid from equity accruing to the member. If you are not a member of a subscribing cooperative, you can purchase an annual subscription at the nonmember rate of \$7.50. Individual copies and back issues are available for \$3 each. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to *Texas Co-op Power* (USPS 540-560), 1122 Colorado St., 24th Floor, Austin, TX 78701. Please enclose label from this copy of *Texas Co-op Power* showing old address and key numbers. **ADVERTISING:** Advertisers interested in buying display ad space in *Texas Co-op Power* and/or in our 30 sister publications in other states, contact Elaine Sproull at (512) 486-6251. Advertisements in *Texas Co-op Power* are paid solicitations. The publisher neither endorses nor guarantees in any manner any product or company included in this publication. Product satisfaction and delivery responsibility lie solely with the advertiser.

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THE ARTS

Heads of State

David Adickes, who created the 67-foot-tall Sam Houston statue in Huntsville, is donating 44 presidential busts that he sculpted, each 18–20 feet tall and weighing 11,000–20,000 pounds, to the **H.E.A.R.T.S. VETERANS MUSEUM OF TEXAS**. The museum, in **HUNTSVILLE**, is in the midst of a fundraising campaign to install a park and display the busts.

This is the third set of presidential busts Adickes has created. The other two were in parks in South Dakota and Virginia, though the parks have since gone, well, bust.

They are made of foam, layers of concrete and reinforced steel. Adickes, 93, has said Abraham Lincoln is his favorite and the easiest to create because his features are so distinct. Gerald R. Ford's facial features lacked sharp details, making him the hardest to depict.

INFO ► (936) 295-5959, heartsmuseum.com

NATURE

The Crape Crusader

Our February feature *Crape Murder* caught the eye of Neil Sperry, perhaps Texas' foremost expert on gardening and horticulture, who says there is hope for severely pruned crape myrtles.

"I thought you might enjoy seeing how a formerly topped crape myrtle can be restored," wrote Sperry, a member of Grayson-Collin Electric Cooperative and resident of McKinney. "Cut it flush with the ground in the winter. Let the many new sprouts regrow the first season. Thin them to 10–12 [sprouts] the second spring. Leave the 3–5 best ones to become the new trunks going into the third year."

Sperry, a board member of the Crape Myrtle Trails of McKinney, included this photo of Beverly Cain's tree in Lubbock in its third summer, below.



FINISH THIS SENTENCE

To me, being a Texan means . . .



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

Below are some of the responses to our April prompt: **I never should have told my parents ...**

I know what I'm doing.
VICTORIA LANGLEY | BRAZORIA | JACKSON EC

You can send me to college, but you can't make me think.
VAL LOFTIN | CISCO | CECA

That I could fix the toilet, so there was no need to hire a plumber.
ANGELA BRUCE | HUNTSVILLE | MIDSOUTH EC

About my job as a radio tower climber in Nacogdoches.
ANTHONY PIWETZ | VICTORIA | NUECES EC

That a dachshund puppy "just followed me home." That was a lie!
PATRICIA HEFTI | BRYAN | BRYAN TEXAS UTILITIES

To see more responses, read *Currents* on our website.

HISTORY LESSON

Mother of All Parks

Mother Neff State Park, one of Texas' first state parks, opened in 1937 near Temple. Check out the photos readers sent us from state parks in Focus on Texas, Page 34.

ACADEMICS

More Critter Care

The **Texas Higher Education** Coordinating Board in December paved the way for Texas Tech University to open the state's second veterinary school. The campus, in Amarillo, will open in 2021.

➡ *Did you know?*

Texas A&M University opened the state's first vet school in 1916.



BY THE NUMBERS

June 3 is
NATIONAL EGG DAY.
Texas chickens
produced more than
6 billion
*eggs in 2018.**

***6,108,500,000 to be eggsact.**

EXPERTS AROUND THE STATE
ARE TRYING TO REVIVE
POPULATIONS OF THE BELOVED
AND THREATENED

HORNY TOAD

THE LIZARD BRIGADE

INCH BY INCH, wildlife biologist Jim Gallagher eyeballed the grassy turf around his boots. So far, several days of scouring the same plot at Mason Mountain Wildlife Management Area had turned up nothing. Still, he kept up his search. Alert to any movement, Gallagher scanned dry patches of dirt, clumps of buffalo grass and trailing morning-glory vines.

Then a spiny critter no bigger than a quarter scuttled across the clay loam. “Oh, my God,” he exclaimed. “There’s a horned lizard!”

The tiny reptile was the first of several that Gallagher would count in April 2019. For the first time, Texas horned lizards—captive-bred at the Fort Worth Zoo in 2018 and released as hatchlings into the wild—had successfully hibernated through winter and survived into spring. Researchers celebrated the news.

“We were jazzed,” says Diane Barber, the zoo’s curator of ectotherms (coldblooded animals). “That meant more of the 132 that we released probably survived, too.” Since 2000, she and her team, in collaboration with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Texas Christian University and other Texas zoos, have pioneered care and breeding techniques for wild-caught horned lizards. Together, the coalition is working to reverse the dwindling numbers of the threatened species, which are also called horned frogs and horned toads.

More than 40 years ago, “horny toads” thrived in Texas. Back

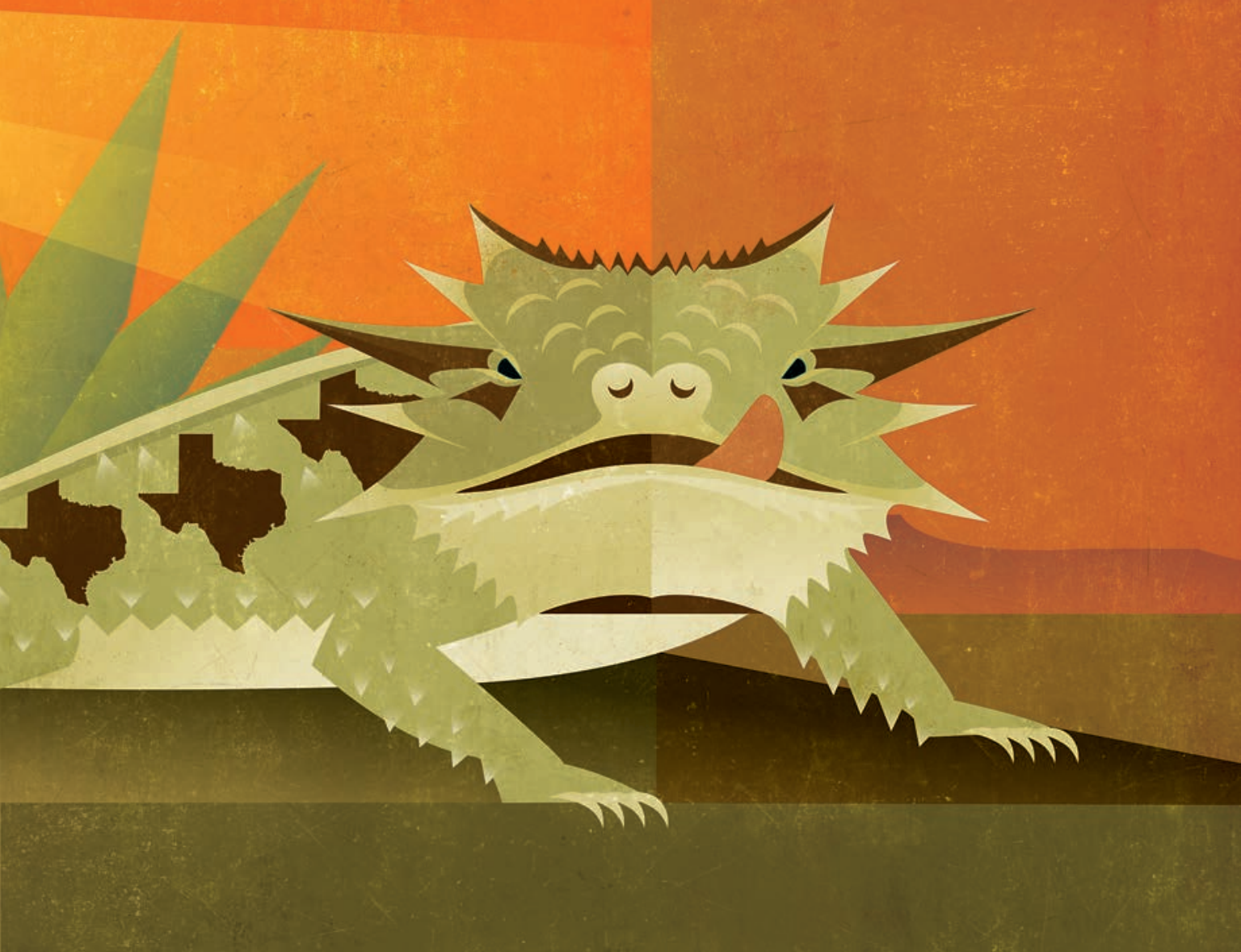
then, the fierce-looking mini dinosaurs ranged across the state. Countless youngsters caught them near their homes. Few people realized the lizards ate the red harvester ants that bulldozed bald spots in yards and landscapes.

Enter pesticides, urbanization and fire ants, to name a few culprits. Horned lizards began to disappear. Today, they’re mostly gone east of a line that can be drawn from Fort Worth to Corpus Christi. “I believe loss of habitat is the biggest reason for their decline,” says Leslie Nossaman, president of the Horned Lizard Conservation Society. “Plus, people still kill harvester ants, which provide a lot of food for horned lizards.”

Since 1991, the conservation society has spread awareness of 17 North American species of horned lizards, found from southern Mexico into southern Canada. Most are protected. Texas claims three species. Best known is the Texas horned lizard, designated as the state reptile in 1993. Two other species live in far west regions: the greater short-horned and the roundtail horned.

“We have permitted handlers who rehabilitate injured lizards and relocate ones that get picked up,” Nossaman says. “People should never pick up horned lizards in the wild. They do not make good pets and will not survive if taken out of their environment. But if they’ve accidentally picked one up, we’ll help them relocate it to the right habitat.”

The conservation society also funds horned lizard research



and conservation projects. For example, one of six grants awarded in 2019 underwrote a pilot project that's training dogs to sniff out horned lizards in the field. "We plan to use these detection dogs to determine if a site already has an existing population of horned lizards," says Andy Gluesenkamp, director of conservation and research at the San Antonio Zoo. "They'll also help us find wild lizards for our breeding program and search for released lizards so we can monitor their success."

Conservation efforts at the zoo have focused on southern populations of horned lizards, while similar projects at the Fort Worth and Dallas zoos work with northern populations. The populations differ genetically, according to biology professor Dean Williams, who's mapped out lizard genetics across the state and leads TCU's Horny Toad Project.

MEANWHILE, Gluesenkamp aims to produce hundreds of hatchlings in the zoo's "lizard factory," a climate-controlled laboratory for breeding and rearing baby horned lizards. Females typically lay clutches of 12–30 eggs once a year. "Our plan is to release 100 young lizards per site per year for three years," he says. "Then we'll follow up with 25 hatchlings every other year." Sites must be 200–250 acres in size and encompass high-quality lizard habitat of native grasses, shrubs, harvester ants or desert

termites, and few or no fire ants. So far, two locations in Blanco County are being managed for horned lizard releases.

In 2019, San Miguel Electric Cooperative donated \$10,000 toward Gluesenkamp's research. "Since the 1980s, we have surveyed for horned lizards in areas we plan to mine," says Dave Burris, fuels manager with the San Miguel Lignite Mine in Atascosa and McMullen counties. "We perform relocations for potentially affected species and also make our sites available to horned lizard researchers at Texas Christian University."

So do folks who live in Kenedy, the horned lizard capital of Texas. Oodles of the reptiles once lived in town. Though their numbers have shrunk, local love for them hasn't. "Every summer, we host scientists from TCU who do DNA studies on horned toads here in Karnes County," says Wade Phelps, a dentist who oversees the Horned Toad Club of Kenedy. "We're also carving out a horned toad habitat demonstration site in our new Escondido Creek Parkway project."

The future looks brighter for the Texas horned lizard. "They're a keystone species," notes Nathan Rains, a wildlife diversity biologist with the TPWD. "The habitat they prefer benefits quail, turkey and songbirds, too. Since we all love horned lizards, it's a win-win for everyone."

Sheryl Smith-Rodgers of Blanco spent many hours as a child playing with horned lizards found around her Corpus Christi home.



WE BRAKE FOR *Queso*

Story by Paula Disbrowe | Photos by Jody Horton

A belt-busting, cheese-topped tour of the best Tex-Mex dishes in San Antonio, ground zero for the beloved cuisine

Spend any time away from the Lone Star State, and chances are you'll begin to crave bubbling cheese-and-onion enchiladas, potent margaritas and spicy salsas. We're talking Tex-Mex, of course, the regional cuisine that was born in Texas and has become our most beloved comfort food. Although the cuisine's popularity has spread well beyond our borders, we love what we get at home.

San Antonio is the epicenter of Tex-Mex

culture and cuisine. The hearty, homey recipes there were created in restaurants run by first- and second-generation Mexican immigrants during the first third of the 20th century.

“Tex-Mex is a glorious yet overlooked cuisine,” says Edmund Tijerina, contributor for *San Antonio Magazine* and former food editor for the *San Antonio Express-News*. “A lot of people look down on it because it’s not ‘authentic’ Mexican. Here’s the thing: It’s not Mexican. It’s Mexican American, and it reflects the history, geography and cultures of South Texas, San Antonio specifically.”

The cuisine’s influences are broad, Tijerina tells me, and range from the indigenous use of corn and beans and techniques of pit cooking to the processed foods of the 20th century. “There’s the home cooking of South Texas and northern Mexico,” he says, “simple dishes that many Mexican Americans like me grew up on, and there’s the Mexican-inspired restaurant cooking created by Anglo business owners a century ago of greasy enchiladas and queso dip.”

Until the early 1970s, the cuisine was generally referred to as “Mexican.” Then the term Tex-Mex emerged, stuck and gained national attention, bolstering the dishes with regional pride and a sense of place.

With the enviable charge of tracking down the best incarnations of eight iconic dishes in one day, photographer Jody Horton and I left Austin before dawn and headed toward breakfast in the Alamo City.

◀ An enchilada combination plate at Jacala.



El Milagrito Cafe

HUEVOS RANCHEROS

≈

Years ago, I asked my friend Elizabeth Fauerso, a San Antonio native, where locals go for the best huevos rancheros. She sent me to El Milagrito Cafe, and it’s been a favorite ever since. Since 1969, the casual, diner-style restaurant has been griddling homemade tortillas and serving breakfast and lunch plates to a loyal clientele. El Milagrito is best known for hefty breakfast plates like huevos rancheros (two eggs cooked to order, served on crispy corn tortillas and bathed in bright red sauce) served with additional tortillas (for scooping up everything else on the plate), smoky refried beans and the arguable star, *papas con chorizo*—potatoes fried with crumbled chorizo.

▲ Huevos rancheros at El Milagrito Cafe.

Teka Molino

CRISPY TACOS

≈

Established in 1937, Teka Molino is one of San Antonio’s oldest restaurants. The friendly counter service and tidy, welcoming space make it easy to see why friends gather in groups and solo diners settle in with laptops. Foodie friends urged us to have crispy tacos because the real star here is the masa. The restaurant has milled its own corn since it opened, so naturally it’s known for corn-centric specialties like guacamole and bean cups. The “cups” are corn tortillas shaped into a single-serving cup, fried until crisp and then filled eponymously. The crackly, flavorful shells are packed with moist, shredded chicken (or ground beef), crunchy lettuce, chopped fresh tomatoes and yellow cheese and served with stellar homemade green and red salsas.

◀ Crispy beef tacos at Teka Molino.

Garcia's Mexican Food

CARNE GUISADA



Co-owned by brothers John and Andrew Garcia, Garcia's Mexican Food is a family affair and has been a San Antonio mainstay since it opened in 1962. We arrived midmorning to find the small space dense with cowboy hats at the counter, babies in car seats and friendly banter between staff and regulars. And, of course, wafting aromas of sizzling meat.

Top sellers on Garcia's comfort-driven menu include *carne guisada*. Loosely defined as a beef stew, guisada is typically made with meat that's simmered in a broth thickened with roux and flavored with chiles, spices and aromatics. Andrew's son, Joseph, served us plates of the warm, tender meat in a peppery gravy. Between bites scooped up with freshly made flour tortillas, John tells me his secret is keeping it simple—simmering the meat with their signature blend of spices for an hour and a half until it is as tender as a Sunday pot roast.

▼ Joseph Garcia serves carne guisada, a favorite at Garcia's Mexican Food.



Jacala

ENCHILADAS



Rudolph Quiñones was a young GI when he and wife Adel opened Jacala in 1949. Its current location is a former grocery store that has been adorned with additional dining rooms, a patio and an outdoor courtyard. The restaurant is run by the couple's three daughters, Cynthia Klauss, Lucille Hooker and Yolanda Showalter. Jacala is as much about family memories as their award-winning enchiladas and combination plates.

"Four generations of our family have been regulars at Jacala, starting with my parents in the 1950s and continuing through today," says Therese McDevitt, a San Antonio native who worked much of her career in New York before returning home.

For McDevitt, no visit to San Antonio was complete without at least one dinner at Jacala featuring the No. 7 Ladies Special (cheese enchiladas with chili gravy and puffy tacos).

▲ The interior at Jacala; inset, co-owner Lucille Hooker.



Ray's Drive Inn PUFFY TACOS



Puffy tacos—discs of masa that puff and balloon into delicate shells when fried—were born in San Antonio, though their exact origin is the stuff of local legend. The late Arturo Lopez claimed to have invented the deep-fried tacos at Ray's Drive Inn. His brother, Henry Lopez, claimed that he was the first, at Henry's Puffy Tacos.

I'm partial to Ray's because of the vintage Western setting. With its neon signage and stone- and wood-paneled walls, the restaurant looks much like it did when it was founded in 1956. To taste a textbook example of the perfect puffy, order a basket of beef or chicken, but try an avocado, too. Topped with fresh, creamy slices that balance the crunchy shell, the tacos, yellow Spanish rice, creamy pintos and pickled jalapeño create a bucket list meal.

▲ Puffy tacos at Ray's Drive Inn.



WEB EXTRAS

► Friends in Co-op Country recommend Tex-Mex favorites.

Blue Moon Mexican Restaurant FIDEO (Y PLATOS DEL DÍA)



We ran through the rain to meet chef Johnny Hernandez at Blue Moon Mexican Restaurant, one of his favorite neighborhood haunts. Housed in a cheery yellow house on South Flores Street, the restaurant is known for its *fideo*, a South Texas dish of spiced vermicelli noodles and beef that's served here on Wednesdays. We followed Hernandez's lead and ordered the *platos del día*—the daily specials, crispy pork cutlets with beans and rice, cheese enchiladas with chili gravy and meltingly tender short ribs braised in guajillo chile sauce.

"Blue Moon café takes me back to my childhood days on the west side of San Antonio," Hernandez tells us. "The aroma of freshly rolled flour tortillas is heaven, and they happen to make my favorite menudo with pig's feet."

▲ Crispy pork cutlets, a daily special at Blue Moon Mexican Restaurant.

Lala's Gorditas

GORDITAS



Less common than tostadas or tacos, gorditas are deep-fried pockets of cornmeal dough filled with savory ground beef or chicken and lettuce, tomato, and cheese.

Steven Pizzini, owner of Lala's Gorditas, has Tex-Mex in his DNA. His restaurant's namesake was his maternal grandmother and culinary muse. In 1938, Ernestine Pizzini Chapa, Steven's paternal aunt, founded the original Teka Molino and relied on her mother's recipes. After a successful run there, Steven's father, Herman Pizzini, and his Uncle Eddie opened the beloved Taco Hut in 1958, which served generations of San Antonians until it closed in 1998. The object that drew Steven back into the food business is the heart of Lala's operation—the original corn mill created by his Uncle Eddie in the 1930s.

These days, that mill gets a daily workout grinding nixtamalized corn (dry corn that's soaked in a mixture of water and lime) to create the fragrant masa used to make gordita shells. Pizzini's gorditas are packed with traditional fillings—beef or stewed chicken, lettuce, tomato, crema and a garnish of *curtido* (Salvadoran slaw).

▼ A gordita with cabbage slaw at Lala's Gorditas.



La Fogata

CHILE CON QUESO



Chile con queso was our last stop and the holy grail of our tour.

With its pretty courtyard, massive wooden doors and festive atmosphere, La Fogata provides an instant holiday, no passport required. The restaurant serves authentic queso *flameado*, a dish from northern Mexico made with molten white cheese and roasted poblanos—as well as the classic Tex-Mex version made with tomatoes, green chiles and a Velveeta-like loaf of pasteurized cheese that melts into a silky smooth consistency.

One could argue the basic elements of queso are more or less the same in every restaurant, so memorable bowls are the result of the company, the setting and the flourish of a topping or two. What sets La Fogata's apart is a dollop of its smoky, fire-roasted salsa; a basket of warm, freshly fried chips; and its potent, made-to-order margaritas—each garnished with an orchid.

▲ Chile con queso at La Fogata.

Paula Disbrowe is the author of seven cookbooks, including her latest, *Thank You for Smoking*. She spent four years as a cowgirl chef on a ranch in the Texas Hill Country. She never met a flauta she didn't like.

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Every American should own vintage U.S. gold coins. They're physical pieces of our own history, dug up from American soil, melted, and struck into symbols of Liberty. This "free" money fueled rapid economic growth and prosperity. Talk about making America Great!

Today, money comes in the form of Bitcoin, or on paper that can be printed whenever supplies fall short. There's no intrinsic value there. But not with gold. As a limited resource, gold carries with it a story virtually unmatched in American history.

Each of these \$10 Gold Liberty coins have been hand selected for their Choice Uncirculated condition. Even better, they are professionally certified and graded in the desirable collector grade of Mint State-62 (MS62).

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Call now to learn how you can secure these historic U.S. gold coins, each at least 110 years old, at an exceptional GovMint price (limit 3 per household). Just for calling, you'll receive a FREE Gold Guide and Patriot's Pack—including a 100-year-old Lincoln Cent and a Declaration of Independence commemorative suitable for framing. Call now and you'll receive:

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- ▶ **BONUS Patriot's Pack**
 - **FREE 100-Year-Old Lincoln Cent**
 - **FREE Copy of the Declaration of Independence**

FREE!
over \$10 Value



Limit 1 each per household

Hoard like this rarely come along, allowing you to buy as many as three of these historic coins in Choice Uncirculated condition. Don't miss this incredible opportunity. There is no obligation to buy. Call now to secure your gold coins and receive your own Gold Guide.

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1-888-395-3001

Offer Code FVG144-02
Please mention this code when you call.

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**FREE \$99 Binoculars,
With Knife Purchase**
(see details)



*Limited
Collector's
Edition*

Not shown
actual size.

CAN YOU HANDLE IT?

The steel of ancient warriors unfolds from a beautiful Pakkawood handle at only \$99

Damascus steel is the stuff of ancient legend. Treasured by mighty warriors and made using a secret technique, Damascus steel was famed for its sharpness and durability, and was known to slice gun barrels in half and separate single strands of hair in two. The secretive, ancient forging technique mixed different steel alloys to form a supersteel, creating a rippled, wavy texture, which made Damascus steel instantly recognizable.

Can you handle such a blade? You definitely can, because the modern Damascus steel of the *Saga Blade*, complete with the signature rippled texture, unfolds from a striking Pakkawood handle. Pakkawood takes its strength from combining wood with other strength-magnifying materials to create a powerful and near-waterproof product. This mix of two masterful techniques is enhanced by engraved stainless steel at the bolter and handle end, delivering a *Saga Blade* worthy of the name for an epic price of only \$99.

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 *Saga Damascus Blade*.

Your satisfaction is 100% guaranteed. Feel the knife in your hands, wear it on your hip, inspect the impeccable craftsmanship of Damascus steel. If you don't feel like we cut you a fair deal, send it back within 30 days for a complete refund of the item price.

"The most common aspects of Damascus steel knives that enthusiasts consider ideal are the aesthetics and high performance." — Knife Informer

**EXCLUSIVE
FREE**
Stauer® 8x21
Compact
Binoculars
-a \$99 value-
with purchase of
Saga Damascus Blade



What clients are saying about Stauer Damascus knives...



"Without a doubt, this knife will always hold a special place in my heart... because of its beauty, its craftsmanship and its obvious durability."

— J., Hawthorne, FL

Limited Reserves. You could pay well over \$1,000 for a folding Damascus steel pocket knife, but why would you when you can enjoy the superb craftsmanship of the *Saga Blade* for only \$99. Damascus steel blades are a lost art form that only a handful of artisan bladesmiths have mastered. These legendary blades take time to forge and only a few are crafted each month. Don't let this beauty slip through your fingers. Call today!

Saga Damascus Blade ~~\$149~~*

Offer Code Price Only \$99 + S&P Save \$50

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You must use the insider offer code to get our special price.

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*Discount is only for customers who use the offer code versus the listed original Stauer.com price.



Rating of A+

California residents please call 1-800-333-2045 regarding Proposition 65 regulations before purchasing this product.

- Modern Damascus steel blade 3"; overall 7"
- Pakkawood handle with stainless steel bolter & handle top; Leather pouch included

Stauer... *Afford the Extraordinary.®*

Preparation: Facing the Present

The cooperative's Emergency Operations Plan and the pandemic



MESSAGE FROM CEO MARK ROLLANS

JUNE IS NORMALLY WHEN OUR FOCUS is on the possibility of hurricanes on the Texas coast.

The cooperative has an Emergency Operations Plan that has preparations for hurricanes and other disasters. We do a tabletop exercise every year with a different scenario to be sure all staff members are prepared to operate in any emergency that could impact our ability to provide service to our members.

One of the sections in that plan, which has been there for a number of years, addresses and deals with a pandemic. If you had asked me last year if I thought that was the part of the EOP Medina EC would be highly focused on this spring, I would have said no. Yet, that is where we have found business preparations during the last few months.

And now we find ourselves preparing for hurricane season, while simultaneously dealing with the pandemic part of the plan. I hope for the sake of the entire nation that this year's hurricane season is not a bad one. Our electric system and crews can deal with a lot of things, but the effects of a pandemic and dealing with social distancing guidelines while also repairing an area ravaged by a hurricane—that would be a challenge unlike any we have ever faced.

When it comes to dealing with COVID-19, which is what we know to already be an issue: Medina EC understands many of our members are going through difficult times as a result, and we want to work with them.

We suspended disconnects March 19 to help ease the financial burden on our members. Starting July 1, we will again begin disconnecting members who are in a nonpayment status. Be sure to read about that at the bottom of this page and on Page 20. It is very important for members to contact our offices if they know they will not be able to pay the full amount due on their account by July 1. We will work with you as long as you are communicating your situation to us.

COVID-19 has also resulted in some difficult decisions at the cooperative level. Because many of our members are unable to pay their bills, we expect that we will also need to trim costs and cut some projects. That is always a difficult thing to do since, as a not-for-profit cooperative, our projects are in place to increase reliability to our members. When we have to make decisions to cut some of those projects, it is never easy. But just like many households have made those decisions and cut expenses, the cooperative will also, and we know in the end it will all work out.

Many predictions are that this will impact the utility industry for several years, with a decreased demand for electricity since many commercial accounts had to scale back or stop production.

Despite all the predictions, there is one thing I know to be true. The cooperative business model is built around the members and it always prioritizes their needs. All our employees kept our eyes on the mission statement despite COVID: Exceed member expectations. In the end, every decision we make in a pandemic and beyond is made with our members in mind.

Through COVID-19 and beyond, we will continue to do what we have done for the last 82 years—power South Texas through our not-for-profit cooperative way of business.

Sincerely,

Mark Rollans

Disconnects Suspended Until July 1

If you have lost your income as a result of COVID-19 and are having trouble paying your electric bill, please contact our office and speak with one of our representatives. At this time, disconnections are suspended until July 1, and no penalties will be applied to any accounts until August 1.

Read more about those resources and specifics on Page 20.

General Service Changes Postponed to 2021

THE MEDINA EC BOARD OF DIRECTORS approved tariff changes that were scheduled to go into effect May 1. Members were informed of those in the March and April magazines. However, following the outbreak of COVID-19, cooperative staff determined that those tariff changes should be postponed to July 1, unless conditions at that time warrant a further postponement of the changes. At the end of April, it was further decided that the changes will not go into effect until January 1, 2021.

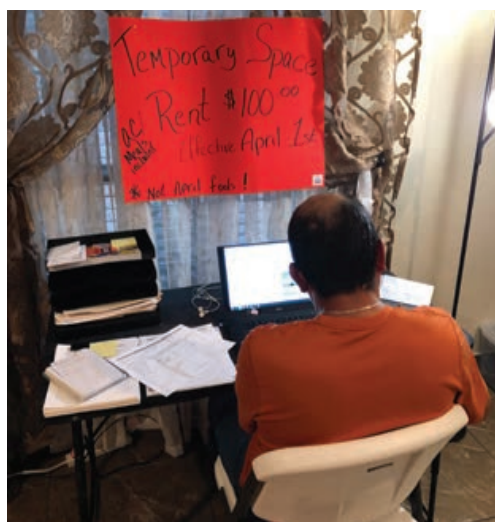
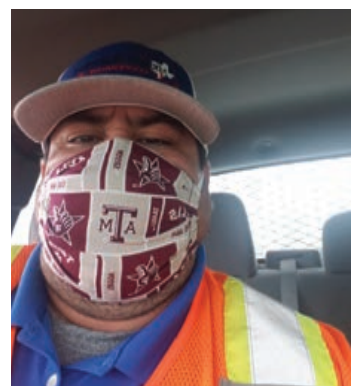
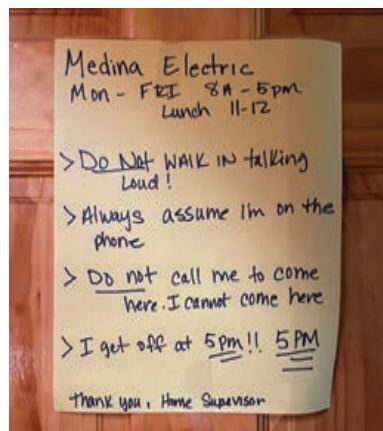
Once in place, the changes will place a \$35 minimum on the General Service rate class, so any bill that would have been less than \$35 will now be rounded up. Based on members' use in prior years, this change will impact about 4,500 members. Members that are most likely to be impacted by this change will be informed by mail and/or email when the minimum is expected to go into effect.

You can read Medina EC's current tariff and view other important cooperative documents at MedinaEC.org/CorpDoc. Rates for all rate classes can be viewed at MedinaEC.org/Rates.

If you have questions on if these tariff changes could impact you, please contact us at 1-866-MEC-ELEC or Info@MedinaEC.org.

CHANGES ARE POSTPONED
UNTIL JANUARY 1, 2021.

Snapshots of a COVID-19 Workforce



Just as it has for many of our members, life has looked different for our employees.

As we dispersed our workforce and had them move their offices to home to avoid contact with others, some had to put up new signs at their "office" to keep children out. Others had spouses that put up signs to jokingly charge them rent for office space.

Employees transitioned to wearing masks to be able to continue to perform essential functions in various communities.



Medina Electric Cooperative

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

VOTING DISTRICT 1

Larry Huesser, (830) 363-7651
Wayne W. Scholtz, (830) 426-1328
Ken Weynand, (830) 426-0762

VOTING DISTRICT 2

Jimmie Raines, (830) 591-8437
Chris Surlis, (830) 965-5538
Kenneth White, (830) 232-6541

VOTING DISTRICT 3

Annette Sorrells, (361) 231-0173
J. L. Gonzalez, (956) 286-1863
Rodolfo H. Rodriguez, (210) 846-1092

CEO

Mark Rollans, 1-866-MEC-ELEC, ext. 1045

COOPERATIVE OFFICES

Headquarters

2308 18th St., Hondo 78861

Area Offices

Hondo Office
237 Hwy. 173 N., Hondo 78861

Dilley Office

1718 W. FM 117, Dilley 78017

Rio Grande City Office

601 N. FM 3167, Rio Grande City 78582

Uvalde Office

2604 Hwy. 90 E., Uvalde 78801

Bruni Office

1300 FM 2050 N., Bruni 78344

CONTACT US

CALL US

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

Option 2: Report an outage

Option 3: Pay bill, get account balance

Option 5: Speak to a representative

EMAIL

Info@MedinaEC.org

FIND US ONLINE AT

MedinaEC.org

[Facebook.com/MedinaEC](https://www.facebook.com/MedinaEC)

[Twitter.com/MedinaECTalks](https://twitter.com/MedinaECTalks)

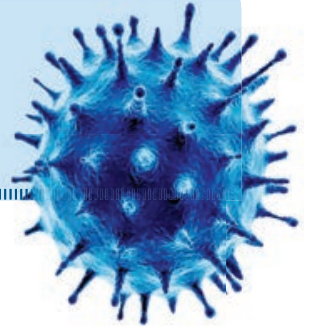
[Instagram: @OurMEC](https://www.instagram.com/OurMEC)

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.

COVID-19 Resources

Help during this uncertain time



Below are various resources that may be helpful to members and businesses during the coronavirus pandemic.

MEDICAL DISCOUNTS: PRESCRIPTIONS AND OTHER SERVICES

If you lost your health insurance due to job loss or if you do not have health insurance, the Co-op Connections card could help. The card can save you money on prescriptions and other health services such as pharmacy discounts, dental and vision benefits, diabetic supplies, hearing aids, chiropractics, lab testing, and MRI and CT scans. If you do not have your card, you can print one from the website, or contact us at 1-866-MEC-ELEC (632-3532) or MyCoop@MedinaEC.org and we can mail you one.

The card is completely free to members. Visit MedinaEC.org/Connections for more information.

BILL-PAY ASSISTANCE

Medina EC has suspended disconnects through July 1, and no penalties will be applied to any accounts until August 1. If members know they are going to be unable to pay the amount due on their account by July 1, we are asking that they contact our member service representatives before mid-June. They are working with members on payment plans that fit their needs and making notes on accounts. Once disconnects do begin, accounts with payment arrangements will not be disconnected, so it is important to communicate with our staff.

There are also various community agencies you can reach out to. These agencies assist members with financial hardships.

COMPREHENSIVE ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (CEAP)

Utility assistance program for low-income households—TDHCA.State.Tx.Us/Community-Affairs/CEAP/

COMMUNITY COUNCILS | ccst.org

Seguin (Admin Office)—(830) 303-4376

Atascosa County—(830) 767-2019

Kinney County—(830) 563-9155

La Salle County—(830) 876-9606 or (830) 879-3053

Medina County—(830) 584-2100

McMullen County—(830) 767-2019

Frio County—(830) 334-4800

Cotulla—(830) 879-5320

Uvalde County—(830) 278-3699

Zavala County—(830) 876-1212 or (830) 854-2110

COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY

Starr County—(956) 849-1000

Webb County—(956) 724-7050 | webbcountytx.gov

Uvalde County—(830) 261-5514

ALAMO AREA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENT | aacog.com

San Antonio—(210) 362-5200

CORNERSTONE ASSISTANCE NETWORK OF HONDO

Hondo—(830) 741-9951, 1303 Avenue M, Open Monday only, 10 a.m.–1:45 p.m.

Assists recipients in becoming self-sufficient by requiring budgeting classes and finding employment.

HELP FOR BUSINESS OWNERS

If you are offering specials to customers, Medina EC can promote those on our social media pages through our Co-op Connections program, which is free to join. We are spotlighting small businesses on the program on our social media pages and in future issues of the magazine. Get more information and a business application at MedinaEC.org/Connections.

The U.S. Small Business Administration may have funding options for those seeking relief. To see what current support they are offering, visit SBA.gov and select the Coronavirus small business guidance and loan resources.

Solar Installations Available

SOLAR ARRAYS AND INSTALLATIONS ARE AVAILABLE for Medina Electric members interested in this service. Through Solar by Medina EC, members can purchase a 5-kilowatt, ground-mounted solar photovoltaic system with installation for \$15,000 plus tax. There can be additional installation charges, but those would be determined by cooperative staff during the site visit. Members will be informed of any additional costs before they make a purchasing decision. Full payment is due before materials can be ordered.

All construction and installation will be done by Medina EC staff or an approved contractor. Medina EC's licensed staff electrician will perform the final inspection and connect the system to the location and grid.

PRODUCTION

The amount of energy produced by a system varies based on the time of the year and hours of sunlight. A good rule of thumb when looking at all solar PV systems is that for every kW of capacity, the system should produce about 125 kilowatt-hours per month. Using those figures, a 5-kW system should produce about 625 kWh per month.

SELLING POWER BACK

The cooperative purchases electricity from distributed generation systems in excess of electricity consumed at an avoided cost rate. The avoided cost rate is the cost the cooperative would have incurred had it purchased the energy from a wholesale power supplier. It varies monthly and is based on the prior 12 months' total wholesale power purchase cost, excluding some fees.

The cooperative does not allow banking, or storing, of electricity credits. That means you cannot save excess power to offset use later in the same day or billing period; if it is not consumed, electricity is purchased at the avoided cost rate when it is generated.

Because of that, savings will vary depending on when you are producing and using power. A 5-kW system would equate to about \$62.50 in savings each month if you are producing the energy at the same time you are using it, but savings would be lower if you are putting power back on the grid and selling it at the avoided cost rate.

If you have been considering a solar PV system, there are various resources to determine if it is the right purchase for you. Do your homework, and research what you are told by salespeople. Even if you are looking at another vendor and don't intend to purchase a system from Medina EC, our staff is happy to answer questions to help you.

For more information on Solar by Medina EC: MedinaEC.org/Solar

For more information on installing any distributed generation system: MedinaEC.org/DG

1-866-MEC-ELEC (632-3532) | Info@MedinaEC.org



PrePaid:
Pay the amount
you want ...
when you want.

PrePaid Electricity will change how you pay for electricity.

Like gas for your car, you fill up your "electric tank" and then pay again when you're running low. No deposit required.

It's just another option for members!

Learn More:
MedinaEC.org/PrePaid

Medina EC Provides Activities for Students During COVID-19

MEDINA EC WANTED TO HELP PARENTS who took on the sudden role of teachers to their children during COVID-19, so we created seven weeks' worth of activity packets full of coloring pages, infographics, word searches and electricity-related home activities.

We also created a scavenger hunt using scrambled names of electrical appliances. Children had to unscramble the words, take a picture with one of the appliances and send it to MyCoop@MedinaEC.org. Medina EC sent each one of the children that participated a special prize. Below are just a few of the students that completed the scavenger hunt!



Scavenger hunt submissions, from top left clockwise:

Ainsley Cooper, Castroville;

Kollins Haby, Hondo;

Kenedy Haby, Hondo;

Christina Bingham, Uvalde;

and Aliyah Arenas, Dilley.

Visit MedinaEC.org/COVID19 for the scavenger hunt and packets. They make good summer activities!



Summer Relief for the Grid

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

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

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

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

**You can
Do Your Part!
Conserve electricity from
3 to 7 p.m. during June,
July, August and September.**

Text **ENERGY to
(830) 423-5032
to sign up for
conservation alerts.**

**VOLUNTEER FIRE
DEPARTMENTS:**

**WE HAVE A
TRUCK FOR
YOU!**

**MEDINA EC IS DONATING
A RETIRED**

**2010 FORD F-150 4WD,
1/2 TON**

**SERVICE TRUCK TO AN
AREA VFD.**



**DEADLINE TO APPLY:
WEDNESDAY, JULY 1**

**ELIGIBILITY &
APPLICATION:
MEDINAEC.ORG/
VEHDONATION**

**VFDs THAT SERVE ANY OF THE
COUNTIES LISTED BELOW ARE
ELIGIBLE TO APPLY:**

ATASCOSA	MCMULLEN
BROOKS	MEDINA
DIMITT	REAL
DUVAL	STARR
EDWARDS	UVALDE
FRIO	WEBB
JIM HOGG	ZAPATA
KINNEY	ZAVALA
LASALLE	

Do You Have a Medical Need for Electricity?

UNINTERRUPTED ELECTRICITY IS IMPORTANT TO EVERYONE, but for some people, it is a medical necessity.

If someone in your home depends on an electrically operated health aid, your account needs to be listed on Medina EC's Life Support Registry. To be added to the Life Support Registry, 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 a priority for restoration during unplanned outages. Being on this list will not keep your account from being disconnected for nonpayment and does not guarantee uninterrupted electrical service. Outages are unavoidable and occur for reasons outside the cooperative's control.

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

Medina EC offers GenerLink, a device installed by our employees, as an option for members to safely operate their generators.

Learn more at MedinaEC.org/Generlink.

Protecting Your Privacy

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Youth Tour 2020



Medina EC hosted a Youth Tour Day on March 12 for the 2020 winners, from left, Johnny "Kaden" Muniz, Presley Rodriguez and Luke Lessing, so they were able to meet and get to know each other.

THIS MONTH, THREE STUDENTS FROM MEDINA EC'S SERVICE AREA should be traveling on what is often referred to as the trip of a lifetime. But due to the coronavirus, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association made the decision to cancel the 2020 Youth Tour trip, so these students will have to wait to make memories.

The 10-day trip, which was slated to start in Austin on June 18, was to not only be educational but most definitely fun. After visiting the state Capitol, Medina EC winners were to head to Washington, D.C. Youth Tour students were to visit major landmarks, meet their elected officials, and learn about U.S. and cooperative history.

To be eligible for the trip, this year's applicants competed in an essay contest. The topic was, "If you had a chance to sit down with a legislator (either at the state or federal level), what questions would you ask them and why?" Medina EC had an impressive response from applicants, and we are happy to announce our winners: Luke Lessing from Hondo, Johnny "Kaden" Muniz from D'Hanis and Presley Rodriguez from Pearsall. You can see some of their essay responses below.

This year's winners will each receive a \$500 scholarship after graduating high school. The board and staff are working to determine if they may also be able to attend the trip next year, and we will keep the members and students updated.

To learn more about Youth Tour, visit MedinaEC.org/YouthTour.

If you had a chance to sit down with a legislator (either at the state or federal level), what questions would you ask them and why?



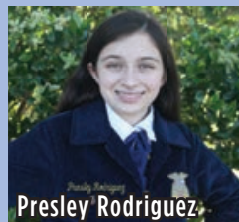
Luke Lessing

"How can our government leaders promote and encourage open-mindedness and effective communication between members of different political parties?"



Kaden Muniz

"What influences my legislator in their decisions? Do they advocate based on what is important to them or important to the people that voted them into office?"



Presley Rodriguez

"Are there better ways for YouTubers to comply with the COPPA law while still possessing the ability to create appropriate content without the added burden of limits and boundaries?"



© AUBREY STOCK | LOST IN THE MIDWEST

Up Your Cool Factor and Save Money!

MEDINA EC OFFERS MEMBERS REBATES for certain energy efficiency upgrades.

This time of year, many people are getting HVAC systems tuned up or replaced, often out of necessity. If you are doing anything to up the cool factor in your house, keep Medina EC's rebates in mind!

Rebates of \$60 are offered for HVAC tuneups, and rebates of \$35 are available for Energy Star-certified window units. If you are replacing an existing HVAC system with a 15-SEER central AC or heat pump, that may also qualify for a \$200 or \$400 rebate. Check if your purchase or service qualifies for a rebate at MedinaEC.org/Rebates.

The list of items that qualify for rebates also includes water heater blankets, programmable thermostats and Energy Star-certified appliances like refrigerators, freezers, dishwashers and clothes washers.

Learn more about rebates at:

MedinaEC.org/Rebates

Medina EC Awards \$25,000 in Scholarships

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

Since Medina EC's scholarship program first began in 2000, the co-op has awarded more than \$607,000 to 423 students from our service area.

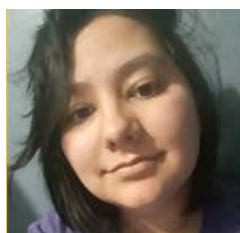
The scholarship program is funded by unclaimed capital credits. When capital credits remain unclaimed for three years, they are escheated to the state of Texas. The state can then give a portion of that money back to the cooperative.

This money is used to offer scholarships, promote energy efficiency and encourage local economic development.

Learn more about the scholarship program requirements and eligibility at MedinaEC.org/Scholarship. If you have applied in the past and not won, watch for information on next year's scholarship program in January or February 2021.



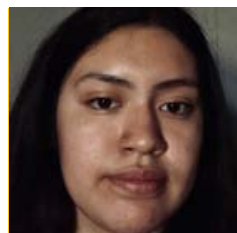
ADRIANA CAVAZOS
ZAPATA



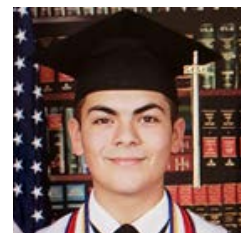
ALEXIS CULVER
SAN ANTONIO



ALVARO IBANEZ, JR.
ROMA



ANA HERNANDEZ
PEARSALL



ANDREW GARZA
HEBBRONVILLE



ANGELA MIRANDA
RIO GRANDE CITY



ANGIOLINA GONZALEZ
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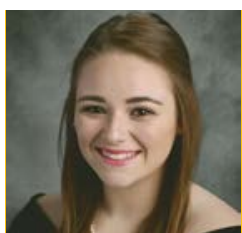
AUSTIN FUENTES
CASTROVILLE



BENJAMIN SMITH
SHAVANO PARK



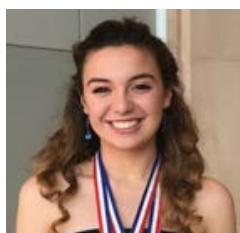
CASSANDRA FLORES
LAREDO



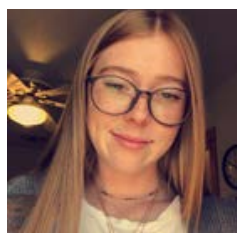
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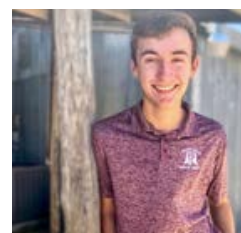
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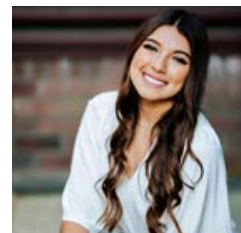
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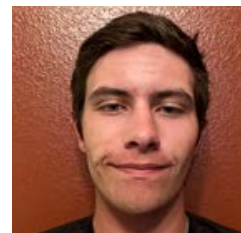
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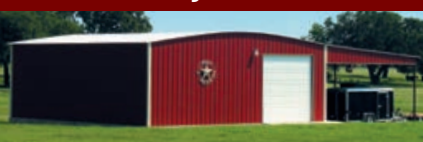
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An Alternate Reality

John Howard Griffin darkened his skin to try to understand racial attitudes in the South

BY MELISSA GASKILL

WITHOUT BECOMING A BLACK MAN, author John Howard Griffin inquired in 1959, how could a white man hope to learn the truth about racial suppression? So, Griffin used medication to temporarily darken his skin and then traveled through the South as a black man for more than a month. His experiences formed the basis for *Black Like Me*, his 1960 book that has sold more than 10 million copies.

June 16 marks the 100th anniversary of Griffin's birth in Dallas. He was educated in France and spent time in an abbey contemplating a religious vocation, then served in the U.S. military 1942–1945, suffering a shrapnel injury that caused him to lose his sight.

He lived with his parents in Mansfield until he married Elizabeth Holland in 1952. Five years later, Griffin's sight returned, and he described the experience in the book *Scattered Shadows* and in stories for *The Dallas Times Herald*. He also wrote syndicated columns for the International News Service and King Features and became an accomplished photographer.

In an epilogue for a later printing of *Black Like Me*, Griffin wrote, "I learned within a very few hours that no one was judging me by my qualities as a human individual and everyone was judging me by my pigment." Motivated by that injustice, he gave hundreds of lectures and befriended civil rights leaders, in-



John Howard Griffin, left, shares a meal at Sterling Williams' shoeshine stand.

cluding Martin Luther King Jr. Griffin received death threats and was hanged in effigy in Texas, causing him to move his family to Mexico for nine months. He eventually cut back on his speaking, saying he found it absurd to presume to speak for black people when there were superlative black voices to do so.

Griffin developed diabetes and died in 1980 at age 60. His friend Robert Bonazzi, who later married Elizabeth, wrote several books based on Griffin's journals. "He felt like he had an effect with his efforts, certainly back then," Bonazzi says from his home in Austin. "Not too many white men would take on a black look and venture out into the world. It was brave and reckless, but he thought it was time for a white man to experience what a black man did, and there was only one way to do that."

Julie Hudson specializes in African American women's literature at Huston-Tillotson University in Austin. "I think the book is important," she says, "especially for a white audience, because it provides some insight into what it means to be black in America and into the issue of race and the implications of racism and hatred. There was so much anger in his community [in response to the book] because he was presenting the truth to people who didn't want to face it, or didn't care, or were embarrassed by it."

Of course, she adds, Griffin always knew that he could return to his white life, which likely informed his writing. And while his family did have to flee, the furor died down and they were able to return home.

"The book still resonates today," says Bonazzi. "He is much less known than he should be."

Read more about Melissa Gaskill's work at melissagaskill.blogspot.com.

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Texas Wine Harvest

A FEW YEARS AGO, I WAS LUCKY enough to go on a tour of Lubbock-area wineries. Because of the High Plains' semiarid climate, the region is ideal for viticulture and is now one of the top wine-producing areas in the country.

Mediterranean varietals love the Texas heat, so look for viognier, roussanne, marsanne, vermentino and trebbiano for white wines and tempranillo, tannat, mourvèdre, grenache and sangiovese, among others, for reds, says certified wine educator Denise Clarke. While these wines may not be as familiar or easy to pronounce, give them a try and see what Texas has to offer.

A great way to add wine to your table is with sangria, the ultimate summer drink that is endlessly customizable. Sangria is most often made with red wines, but here I've used a Texas rosé to pair with juicy summer fruits. Making it ahead of time ensures the flavors from the fruit and wine are well blended.

MEGAN MYERS, FOOD EDITOR

Rosé Sangria

- 1 bottle (750 milliliters) rosé wine
- 1 cup orange juice
- ¼ cup vodka
- 1 cup quartered strawberries
- 2 peaches, sliced
- ½ cup raspberries

1. Combine all ingredients in a large pitcher and stir well. Cover and chill at least 2 hours or until ready to serve.
2. To serve, stir sangria to recombine any settled juices. Fill glasses halfway with ice, then pour in sangria. Use a ladle or serving spoon to add an extra scoop of fruit from the pitcher into each glass and serve. ▶ Serves 6.

Follow along with **Megan Myers** and her adventures in the kitchen at stetted.com, where she features a recipe for Lemon Sage Mustard.

MEGAN MYERS

Recipes

Texas Wine Harvest



THIS MONTH'S RECIPE CONTEST WINNER

MELODY YUHN | CENTRAL TEXAS EC

This succulent lamb stew is even better the next day, so don't worry about any leftovers going to waste. Yuhn recommends using a sangiovese or tempranillo in the stew and to pair with the final dish.

Lamb Stew

- 4 ounces bacon, chopped into ¼-inch strips
- 2 pounds boneless leg of lamb or lamb shoulder, trimmed of excess fat, cut into 1½-inch pieces
- 2½ teaspoons sea salt, divided use
- 1½ teaspoons ground black pepper, divided use
- ¼ cup flour
- 1 large yellow onion, diced
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1½ cups Texas red wine
- 1 pound button mushrooms, thickly sliced
- 4 cups beef broth or stock
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- ½ teaspoon dried thyme
- 2 bay leaves
- 1½ pounds small yellow potatoes, halved or quartered into 1-inch pieces
- 4 medium carrots, peeled and cut into ½-inch pieces
- ¼ cup finely chopped parsley, for garnish

1. Preheat oven to 325 degrees. In a 5-quart Dutch oven over medium heat, sauté bacon until browned and fat is released. Using a slotted spoon, transfer bacon to a large plate. Do not wipe out pot.
2. While bacon cooks, season lamb pieces with 1½ teaspoons salt and 1 teaspoon pepper. Sprinkle with flour and toss to coat.
3. Cook lamb in two batches in hot bacon grease over medium heat until browned (3–4 minutes per side) then transfer to the plate with bacon. Add diced onion to the pot and sauté 2 minutes. Add garlic and cook another minute, stirring constantly. Add wine, scraping the bottom of the pan to deglaze. Add sliced mushrooms, bring to simmer, then cook uncovered 10 minutes.
4. Return bacon and lamb to pot and add broth, tomato paste, 1 teaspoon salt, ½ teaspoon pepper, dried thyme and bay leaves. Stir in potatoes and carrots, making sure potatoes are mostly submerged in liquid, and bring to a boil.
5. Cover, carefully transfer to oven and cook 1 hour 45 minutes. Garnish with parsley when serving. ▶ Serves 8.

COOK'S TIP Prepare this recipe in a pressure cooker to save time. Use the sauté setting for the first few steps and set for 40 minutes at high pressure with a natural pressure release.

\$500 Recipe Contest

The holidays are a perfect time for a **Cookie Swap**. Share your go-to swap recipe with our readers. Enter our November contest by **June 10**. Featured recipes will receive a special *Texas Co-op Power* apron.

ENTER ONLINE at TexasCoopPower.com/contests; MAIL to 1122 Colorado St., 24th Floor, Austin, TX 78701; FAX to (512) 763-3401. Include your name, address and phone number, plus your co-op and the name of the contest you are entering.

Plum Sorbet With Wine

BARBARA REISS | PEDERNALES EC

Taste the plums before making this; their sweetness will determine the amount of sugar to use.

- ¾–1 cup sugar, depending on the sweetness of plums
- 1 pinch kosher salt
- ¾ cup water
- 3 cups peeled, pitted and chopped red plums (about 3–4 large plums)
- 2 tablespoons orange juice
- 1 tablespoon orange zest
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 cup chilled dry white wine, such as sauvignon blanc

1. In a large saucepan over medium heat, dissolve sugar and salt in water, then bring syrup to a boil.
2. Stir in plums and cook, stirring frequently, while mashing plums with a potato masher until the mixture is the consistency of very thick honey, about 5–10 minutes.
3. Let cool, then purée using a standard or immersion blender. Pour mixture into a bowl that has a pour spout and refrigerate 2–3 hours or overnight.
4. Once chilled, add juice, zest, vanilla and cinnamon to mixture. Whisk to blend well.
5. Transfer mixture to an ice cream maker and process according to manufacturer's instructions. After about 15 minutes (when mixture is beginning to freeze), pour wine into mixture slowly. Process until entire mixture is frozen. Serve immediately, or transfer to another container to freeze. ▶ Makes 2 pints.

Chicken Breast With Sun-Dried Tomato Cream Sauce

LAMONT PETERSEN | NAVARRO COUNTY EC

Petersen recommends pairing with McPherson Cellars albariño, a white wine that is perfect for chicken dishes.

- 1 pound skin-on chicken breasts or thighs, fat trimmed on thighs
- ¼ teaspoon salt, divided use
- ¼ teaspoon pepper, divided use
- 2 tablespoons oil from jar of sun-dried tomatoes



- ½ cup oil-packed sun-dried tomatoes, drained and sliced
- ½ cup finely chopped shallots
- ½ cup dry white wine
- ½ cup heavy cream
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley

1. Sprinkle chicken with half the salt and pepper and set aside.
2. Heat oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add chicken skin-side down to skillet and cook until golden brown, about 15 minutes. Turn chicken and cook another 15–20 minutes, until it reaches 165 degrees in the thickest part. Transfer to a plate and cover to keep warm.
3. Add sun-dried tomatoes and shallots to the pan. Cook, stirring, 1–2 minutes.
4. Add wine to pan and scrape up any browned bits to deglaze. Continue to cook until the liquid has mostly evaporated, about 2 minutes.
5. Reduce heat and stir in cream, any accumulated juices from the resting chicken and the remaining salt and pepper. Simmer about 2 minutes, until

slightly thickened.

6. Serve chicken over pasta or rice with the pan sauce and top with parsley. ▶ Serves 4.

COOK'S TIP You can use onion in place of the shallots. If you do, add a finely chopped clove of garlic.

Gary's Wino Burgers

GARY HEATHCOTT | SAN PATRICIO EC

While the recipe calls for zinfandel or cabernet sauvignon, Heathcott recommends serving the burgers with a pinot noir.

- 1½ cups red wine, such as zinfandel or cabernet sauvignon
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped sweet onion
- 2 tablespoons (¼ stick) butter
- 2 teaspoons chopped rosemary
- 1½ teaspoons brown sugar
- 1½ tablespoons olive oil
- 4 ounces portobello mushrooms, sliced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1½ pounds lean ground beef
- 1 teaspoon salt

- 1 teaspoon ground black pepper
- ½ cup blue cheese crumbles
- 4 large sesame buns
- 4 lettuce leaves
- 1 tomato, sliced

1. In a medium saucepan, bring wine, onion, butter, rosemary and brown sugar to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer about 30 minutes, until liquid is reduced to ½ cup. Remove from heat.
 2. In a small skillet, heat oil. When shimmering, add mushrooms and sauté until tender. Stir in the garlic and sauté for another minute or until fragrant. Set aside.
 3. Place ground beef in a medium bowl and mix with salt, pepper and wine sauce. Form into 4 patties and place on a hot grill. Cook burgers to about 145 degrees. Place a spoonful of blue cheese on top of each burger and continue to cook to about 155 degrees for medium-well doneness.
 4. Dress burgers on toasted buns with mushrooms, lettuce and tomato.
- ▶ Serves 4.

TEXAS CO-OP POWER

NEXT MONTH

PALO DURO LOVE LETTERS Georgia O'Keeffe's paintings captured the Panhandle; her wistful writings brought it to life.

NO LONGER A YANKEE After a half-century here, a Michigan native decides she can call herself a Texan.

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WEB EXTRAS ▶ See Focus on Texas on our website for more photos from readers.



▲ **APRIL COKER**, Wood County EC: Coker's 1962 Scotsman Scotty "Miss Millie" all decked out for the holidays at Tyler State Park.

◀ **CHARLES BAXTER**, CoServ: "Capitol Mesa and moon in Palo Duro Canyon State Park."



▲ **STEVE COYLE**, Pedernales EC: "Anyone who says Texas doesn't have nice fall colors just hasn't looked in the right place. Although the fall colors were past their prime in many parts of Martin Dies Jr. State Park during our visit, there were still a few pockets."

▶ **ELLEN BEAR**, Concho Valley EC: "I was at San Angelo State Park when these javelinas appeared to snack on the birdseed."



AROUND TEXAS ▶ TCP's monthly list of local events has been suspended due to COVID-19 cancellations. Always call or check an event's website for scheduling details.



◀ **TRAVIS LACOSS**, Pedernales EC: "Hiking to Big Cave at Palo Duro Canyon State Park."



▲ **CAROLINA BURGOS-CALDERON**, Bluebonnet EC: "McKinney Falls State Park was magical with fall color and snow and crystal accents."



▲ **VALERIE JOHNSON**, Pedernales EC: "Quiet and shade on Caddo Lake."

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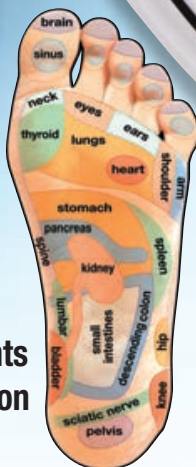
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63483 shown



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All Purpose/Weather
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4 Piece Anti-Fatigue Foam Mat Set ★★★★★ (2,694)



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001119346
\$19.99
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\$6.99

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Electric
SC1
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DW1389
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62281/61637 shown 21635054 LIMIT 4 - Coupon valid through 8/1/20



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FR1055
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SFA600
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PITTSBURGH ★★★★★ (1,449)

40 Piece, 1/4" and 3/8" Drive
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C9MT12018
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64980/64545 shown 21692725 LIMIT 2 - Coupon valid through 8/1/20

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Mechanics Gloves



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25521
\$14.99

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62433, 62432,
62429, 64179,
62428, 64178 shown 21695535 LIMIT 4 - Coupon valid through 8/1/20

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U.S. GENERAL ★★★★★ (1,423)

30", 5 Drawer
Mechanic's Cart



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Blue-Point
KR8C10TBPS
\$830

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64722, 64031,
64721, 64059,
64720, 56429
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62742
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PORTLAND ★★★★★ (4,810)

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Pressure Washer



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20600
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Orange Inspiration

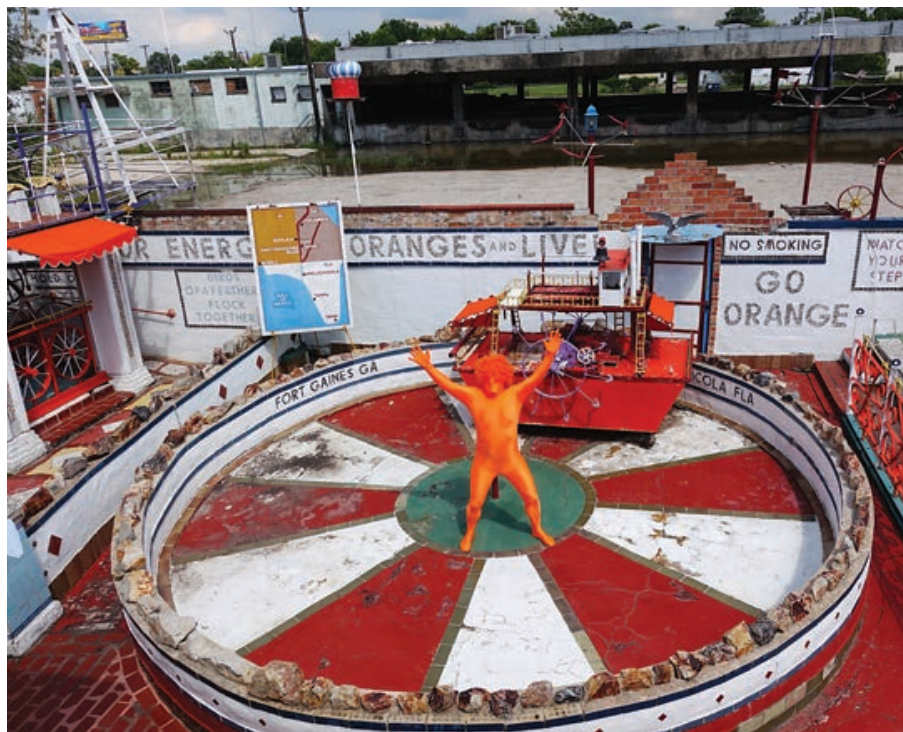
Houston folk art installation is a mashup devoted to its creator's favorite fruit

AS SOMEONE WHO GREW UP IN Southeast Texas, I know the heat and humidity can drive a person to the brink of insanity. I believe it can also fuel an intense creativity and artistic vision. Mix this inspiration with lots of vitamin C, and you have the formula for one of the strangest art installations in the world: the Orange Show.

After navigating Houston's urban maze, I turned into a neighborhood near the University of Houston, searching for a building-sized work of art. Even though I could see only modest midcentury houses, my phone assured me I was headed in the right direction. Then I found it: one of the state's preeminent folk art installations. From the street, its colorful wrought-iron railings and white stucco walls made it resemble an abandoned carnival attraction. I imagined circus music as I stepped inside the Orange Show, but what I experienced was beauty and intrigue.

The installation began to take shape in 1956, when postal worker Jeff McKissack decided that the world needed to know about the health benefits of his favorite fruit and how hard work and good nutrition were the secret to a long and productive life. Even though he had no formal training in the arts, McKissack picked up scraps of lumber from trash piles and shopped flea markets and, piece by piece, created a maze of staircases, doorways and stages. It's an orange-themed fantasy world.

Past the front gate, every turn revealed diagrams of orange-promoting propaganda. Phrases like "Go Orange. Be Strong" and "Love Me Orange" were inscribed in mosaics across the walls. Dioramas housed a half-dozen mannequins dressed in seemingly



Orange is the new Chet at Houston's Orange Show.

unrelated clothing: One with a hook for a hand stood near a clown who had found happiness by drinking cold, fresh orange juice. Another was Santa's son, in full Christmastime regalia, hoping to plant oranges for everyone. Each display balanced between charmingly whimsical and downright creepy.

Outside, I climbed strange staircases and discovered two open-air stages surrounded by 80 metal tractor seats. Above the stages fluttered 45 metal birds and 10 waving Texas flags. The largest arena was a "pond" that didn't hold water but did hold a stationary boat. What baffled me more than the art was the fact that McKissack had welded, paved and painted the entire experience by himself.

McKissack lived next door to his creation and worked tirelessly on the project until his death in 1980. Soon after, Houston's art community formed a trust to steward the property. Today, the Orange Show Center for Visionary Art makes the

art experience—and visionary art—accessible to the public. Nearby is the foundation's newest project, Smither Park, with meandering paths and bright, mosaic-covered walls created to honor McKissack.

Some folks might wonder why this mashup of materials should be considered art, but that's what makes folk art so amazing. It's usually created by artists without formal training. Did McKissack know that he was creating art? Maybe not. But there's no doubt he loved building it and sharing both his talents and love for citrus with the world.

Walking through the Orange Show is a stroll through the creative process. It's weird. It's wonderful. And it's confusing. I left not really knowing what I had just experienced, and I was thirsty for a big, cold glass of orange juice.

Chet Garner shares his Texplorations as the host of *The Daytripper* on PBS.

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