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Painting the Town

Mural artist
Matt Tumlinson
turns Rankin
into his canvas



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July 2021



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08 Rankin as a Canvas

Artist Matt Tumlinson interprets the state's culture in murals around a West Texas town.

*By Pam LeBlanc
Photos by Erich Schlegel*

An Unlikely Blueprint

John S. Chase charted a unique course to become Texas' first Black licensed architect.

By Michael Hurd

ON THE COVER

Thanks to Matt Tumlinson, Willie Nelson has a permanent residency in Rankin.

Photo by Erich Schlegel

ABOVE

John S. Chase and his sons in front of his signature Houston home, circa 1959.

Photo courtesy African American Library at the Gregory School | Houston Public Library

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Groundbreaking Cougar

WARREN MCVEA was a high school football phenom—arguably the best running back in the country—at San Antonio’s Brackenridge High School in 1964, when he turned down more than 70 other scholarship offers and elected to play for the University of Houston.

The decision was historic, making McVea, who turns 75 this month, the first Black player to receive a scholarship to play football at any of the major college programs in Texas. He was a two-time All-American for the Cougars and later played six seasons in the NFL.

McVea was born July 30, 1946.



July 5

National Bikini Day

This year’s celebration takes on special meaning as it marks the 75th anniversary of the skimpy swimsuit.

Dancer Micheline Bernardini debuted the bikini, designed by Louis Réard, at a poolside photo shoot July 5, 1946, in Paris. A world just emerging from World War II considered the suit scandalous because it showed a woman’s navel.

Réard named the swimsuit, which used about a napkin’s worth of fabric, after the Bikini Atoll, the Pacific Ocean coral island where the U.S. tested nuclear weapons for more than a decade starting in 1946.



That’s
roughly
the number
of times
a person
breathes
in a day.



FERTILE FELINE

No cat on record has given birth more than a tabby born in 1935 in Bonham, in North Texas. Dusty produced 420 kittens during her life, according to Guinness World Records, giving birth to her last litter, a single kitten, in 1952.

FINISH THIS SENTENCE

I SHOULD HAVE PAID MORE ATTENTION ...

TCP Tell us how you would finish that sentence. Email your short responses to letters@TexasCoopPower.com or comment on our Facebook post. Include your co-op and town. Below are some of the responses to our May prompt:

This Memorial Day I remember ...

All the fallen. War is hell, and we better remember too few come back from it.

SALLY WOLFE
VIA FACEBOOK

Not only those who fought and died in battle for this country but also those front-line heroes who fought and died in the battle against the COVID-19 pandemic.

W. GRANT BRALY
GUADALUPE VALLEY EC
CUERO

Maj. Marie T. Rossi, the first female aviation combat commander to fly into battle. She was killed in action March 1, 1991.

TAMMY DUPLECHIN
TRINITY VALLEY EC
NEW YORK, TEXAS

Too many to list.

STEVE AND LISA BOSTON
VIA FACEBOOK

To see more responses, read Currents online.



Best Foot Forward

SOME PEOPLE in this country have two feet, and it's causing all kinds of problems. That's about to change, however.

Wait. What?

One foot is the old U.S. survey measuring foot from 1893, according to *The New York Times*, that takes Earth's curvature into account. The other is the shorter and slightly more exact international foot from 1959, used by nearly everybody in the U.S. except surveyors in some states. The two feet differ by about one-hundredth of a foot per mile, or 2 feet for every 1 million feet.

But come January 1, 2023, the old foot gets the boot when the National Institute of Standards and Technology adopts the international foot as the official standard in the U.S.



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Two readers will each win 5 pounds of Gulf shrimp. Enter now to win.



The Hero of Cinco de Mayo

“You have made me feel very proud of being a Tejano. Thank you for your great story on Ignacio Zaragoza Seguín.”

ANTHONY BARRON
TRINITY VALLEY EC
TERRELL

San Jacinto Stands Alone

While I enjoyed the article about the Battle of Puebla and admire Gen. Ignacio Zaragoza Seguín's part in it, I take exception to calling it “Mexico's San Jacinto moment” [*The Hero of Cinco de Mayo*, May 2021].

San Jacinto was a victory that ended the war with Mexico and gave Texas independence, whereas the Battle of Puebla was just a lone victory in a war Mexico eventually lost to France the next year. Cinco de Mayo is not nearly as important as San Jacinto Day.

Steve Yates
Pedernales EC
Wimberley



I love any and all yarns [*Serendipity Spinners*, May 2021].

WENDY L. VERA
VIA FACEBOOK

Dear Texas

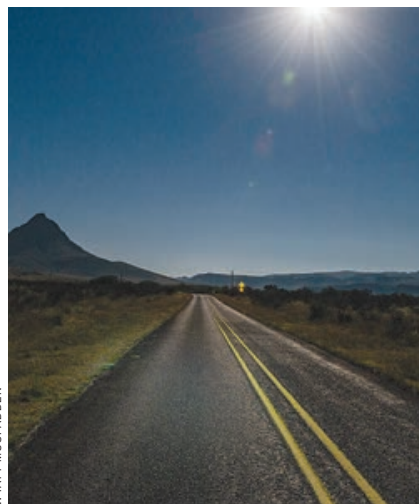
The writing and great photo of Eli Winter's piece [*Few and Far*, March 2021] were so beautiful. It was a poignant, personal and perfect love letter to the entire state of Texas.

Suzanne Howalt
Pedernales EC
Austin

Falfurrias Beef

At one time the Lasater ranch encompassed 350,000 South Texas acres, and in 1912, somewhere on that huge spread, my mother was born [*A Name That Sticks*, February 2021]. The Lasaters were not only famous for their butter, but they were also known for developing the Beefmaster cattle breed in 1931.

Jerry Klumpp
Central Texas EC
Kingsland



WYATT MCSPADEN

TCP WRITE TO US

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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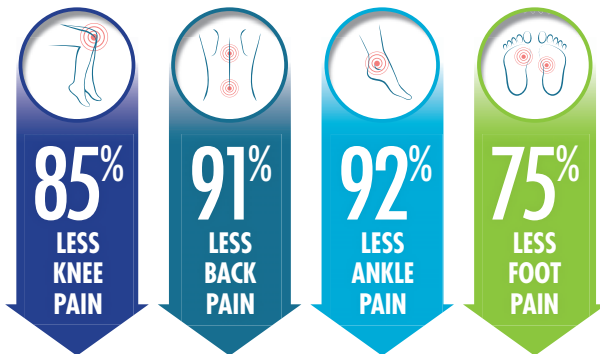


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Rankin as a Canvas

Artist Matt Tumlinson interprets the state's culture in murals around a West Texas town

ABOVE Life imitates art as Matt Tumlinson grabs a selfie in front of his modern take on a *Lonesome Dove* scene. RIGHT A palette of spray paint.

BY PAM LEBLANC • PHOTOS BY ERICH SCHLEGEL



Matt Tumlinson wanted to create a painting that stretched across an entire building, so when the opportunity arose to splash one on the side of a restaurant in tiny Rankin, he headed west, paintbrushes in tow.

"I was thinking if it turns out bad, very few people will see it in Rankin," the San Antonio-based artist said.

The 8-foot letters that spell out the town's name, in a style reminiscent of what you'd find on a cowboy's belt buckle, turned out pretty good, in fact. And since that 60-foot mural went up in 2015, Tumlinson has painted seven more in the West Texas oil town, population about 850.

"With murals, it's really tough to get permission or access to a wall and even tougher to get access without stipulations on it," Tumlinson said. "I only wanted to do one if I could paint something I wanted to paint, and Rankin's been really good about 'I've got a wall you can paint.'"

Tumlinson grew up in Early. After graduating from Texas Tech University, he worked briefly as a history teacher

but disliked it. When he and his wife, Allison, moved to Nantucket, Massachusetts, he sold his first painting—a watercolor map. In 2013 they moved back to Texas, where he worked as a guide on the San Antonio Riverwalk while trying to kickstart his art career.

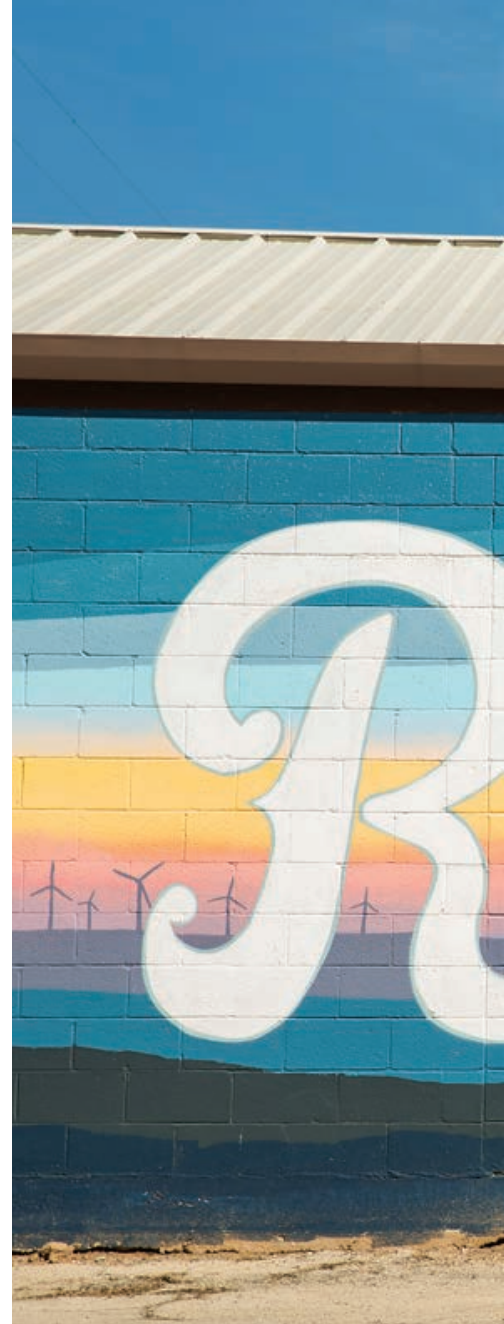
Tumlinson's main business is in "brass canvas" paintings, made on groups of spent bullet casings collected from his uncle's gun range. He also works in oil, painting his view of Texas' quickly changing rural landscapes and drawing influence from Texas singer-songwriters.

"People have this idea that Texas is all boots and cowboys and open range," Tumlinson said. "I just feel like being an eighth-generation Texan, if somebody's going to tell the accurate story of what Texas is today, why not me?"

Rankin, 55 miles south of Midland, didn't offer up its downtown as a canvas randomly. Tumlinson's sister teaches at Rankin High School; his brother-in-law coaches the Red Devils, the school's six-man football team. A local restaurant



ABOVE Tumlinson says the mural of Matthew McConaughey is about being confident in yourself. RIGHT Spray-painting in windblown West Texas can be tricky. OPPOSITE Rankin City Hall.



owner thought a mural would liven things up (which it did). Tumlinson's sister mentioned that her brother was an artist looking for a place to paint a mural, and an invitation was extended. The mural was Tumlinson's first.

Soon, locals suggested he paint the side of the city's water tower. The structure looked rickety to Tumlinson, so instead he painted a scene from Larry McMurtry's *Lonesome Dove* on the side of a building owned by the mayor. The mural shows characters Gus and Woodrow riding into San Antonio, marveling at how the city has changed. "It's all grewed up," Gus says in the TV miniseries.

In Tumlinson's version of the scene, the cowboys are holding a selfie stick. He painted it in a single night, using his pickup truck's headlights to illuminate the wall.

"In a world where all the spaces are filled in on a map, I wonder what happened to the guys like that," Tumlinson says of the image. "I'm trying to put that concept of what it is to be Texan into a modern context."

Another mural sprouted on the wall of an abandoned gas station along U.S. 67 a few blocks away. Tumlinson checked tax records to find out who owned the building and then contacted the company to get permission. The CEO granted approval, and Tumlinson illustrated a saintly looking Willie

Nelson, halo overhead and joint in hand. Within a week, Tumlinson got a call. He'd received permission from the wrong building owner, and the true owner wanted the artwork removed. Tumlinson suggested a compromise—he'd erase the joint if the rest could stay.

It did.

A John Wayne mural adorns the other side of that gas station, alongside a graph marked "stupidity" on one axis and "difficulty in life" on the other, a nod to a quote often incorrectly attributed to Wayne: "Life is hard; it's even harder when you're stupid."

Tumlinson painted other murals, too: a pair of oil field workers on one wall, another Rankin sign on another and a state trooper ticketing a kid riding a Big Wheel on a pink cinder block building. (That one was modeled after his uncle but coincidentally looked like a local trooper at the



time. The trooper took it in stride, according to Tumlinson.)

The artist's most popular work decorates a metal tank near the railroad tracks. In it, actor Matthew McConaughey holds a can of spray paint next to the words, "You'd be a lot cooler if more people thought so," a twist on the actor's quote from the Richard Linklater movie *Dazed and Confused*: "It'd be a lot cooler if you did."

Tumlinson tried but never located the tank's owner to get permission to paint it. He decided to put up the artwork—painted in his studio in downtown San Antonio, then applied to the metal structure—anyway. As he worked in broad daylight, a state trooper stopped to inquire. He asked if Tumlinson had painted the city's murals, told him McConaughey looked great, then drove away.

Since painting the Rankin murals, Tumlinson has expanded his reach—part of a long-term goal to paint his way across the state. In San Antonio his *Puro San Antonio* mural is filled with nods to the local culture. One dubbed *King George* depicts country music singer George Strait in

royal garb, and a third features a woman dressed as Davy Crockett swinging a gun.

Tumlinson likes painting murals because anybody can see them. "It's the closest thing an artist gets to being on a stage," he said. "It's more communal."

The Rankin community, apparently, approves. None have been vandalized.

"You see people all the time taking pictures," said Brandon Brown, the mayor. "I don't think we're a destination yet, but I think the murals have sparked a little bit of new life in Rankin." ■

TCP WEB EXTRA See a slideshow of Tumlinson's Rankin murals.



An Unlikely Blueprint

John S. Chase charted a unique course to become Texas' first Black licensed architect

BY MICHAEL HURD

CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE
John S. Chase with his
sons in front of the fam-
ily's Houston residence,
circa 1959. A rendering
of the home's courtyard.
A street view of the
home from 2019.

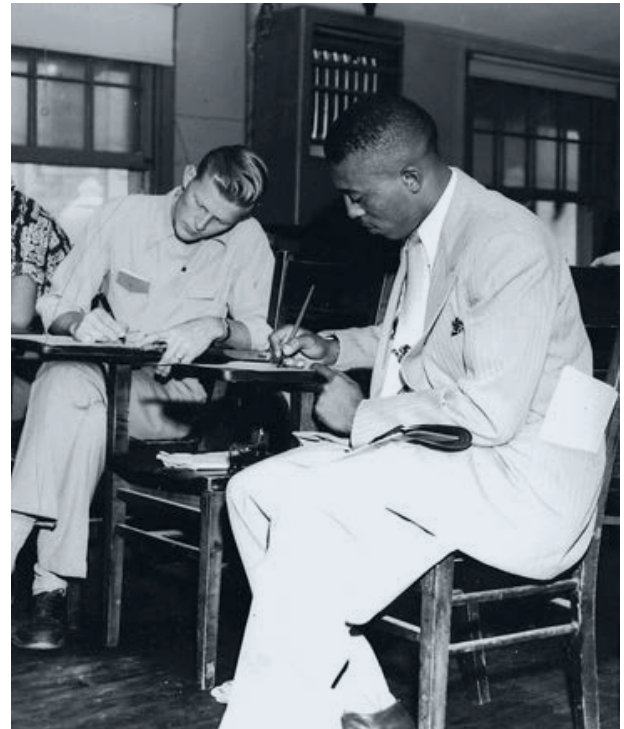


FAMILY: AFRICAN AMERICAN LIBRARY AT THE GREGORY SCHOOL | HOUSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY HOME: HESTER + HARDWAY

JOHN SAUNDERS CHASE didn't want Texas, and the state certainly wanted nothing to do with him. It was 1948, and race relations in the rigidly segregated South were heavily tilted toward nonexistent.

Yet as Chase pursued an education and started his career as an architect, he and the Lone Star State struck up a historic relationship despite an epic perfunctory legal battle, menacing stares, media glares, hate mail and death threats.

Because of this unlikely alliance, it was in Texas where the Annapolis, Maryland, native would, in 1950, become



Chase in a University of Texas classroom in 1950.

One of his most noted residential designs is the Phillips House in Austin—with its distinctive green, diamond-shaped roof; large expanses of windows; and long lines—built for Della Phillips, co-owner of East Austin's Phillips-Upshaw Funeral Home.

In Houston several buildings on the Texas Southern University campus, including the Martin Luther King Jr. Humanities Center and Thurgood Marshall School of Law building, are Chase designs. He also collaborated on construction of Houston's George R. Brown Convention Center and the Astrodome renovation and was commissioned to design the U.S. Embassy in Tunisia. In 1980, Chase became the first Black man to serve on the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts.

As a young man, Chase could not have imagined doing any of that while based below the Mason-Dixon Line, but in retrospect his iconic, trailblazing career in Texas was fated. Chase had just received his architectural engineering degree from Virginia's all-Black Hampton College in 1948 when the school's placement officer presented Chase with several job possibilities. Chase told him, "You can strike Texas off the list." However, when the job he took in Philadelphia didn't work out, Chase wrote the officer to ask if he had other prospective employers and added a surprising stipulation.

"I underlined the Deep South, and I never did think I'd do something like that," he said in the HistoryMakers interview. "I just figured that in Philly, they got everything they need, but down in the Deep South, the opportunity to build would be greater, and I was right."

the first African American student admitted to a graduate program at a major university in the South—the University of Texas. Chase followed that victory in 1952, when he became the university's second Black graduate and, the same year, the state's first Black licensed architect.

"For the most part, they treated me with respect, and I treated them with respect," Chase recalled in a 2004 interview with the HistoryMakers, a research institution that archives African American oral history. "I got to know some very, very important architects and some very important people because of the work and relationships that I had at UT."

Chase went on to design an estimated 300 Black churches, primarily in Houston and throughout East Texas but also in Austin, where the angular roofs of Olivet Baptist Church and David Chapel Missionary Baptist Church, with their minimalist approaches, are indicative of Chase's style. They blend contemporary design with natural materials—wood and stone—and an abundance of open spaces and natural light. Inside David Chapel the amount of natural light increases as you approach the pulpit and a simple wooden cross on the wall, intentional symbolism Chase designed into the building.

DRAWING: DAVID HEYMANN, BROOKE BURNSIDE, SARAH SPIELMAN AND WEI ZHOU. CLASSROOM: THE DOLPH BRISCOE CENTER FOR AMERICAN HISTORY, THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN



David Chapel Missionary Baptist Church in East Austin.

Chase started his own business, and his first clients were the congregants of African American churches.

Outside the classroom, heads turned when Chase passed. He was shadowed around campus by reporters and federal marshals and received stacks of explicit hate mail that varied on the theme “You are less than a dog to force your way into someplace that you’re not wanted.”

Yet Chase persevered and completed the program, even making some lifelong friends. He and his wife, Drucie, moved to Houston, where Chase took a teaching position at Texas Southern University. No architecture firms would hire him because of his color.

Chase started his own business, and his first clients were the congregants of African American churches.

“To me, selling architecture is no different than selling insurance—you got to know somebody,” Chase said of his Sunday pilgrimages with Drucie and their three children in tow. “I figured it was the best way to know people—join church. We got so much work out of that.”

However, it is the home he built for himself in Houston’s Third Ward that is the focus of *John S. Chase—The Chase Residence*, a new book by David Heymann and Stephen Fox.

“It was designed around a completely open-air courtyard and exemplified the type of house that was very popular with Houston modern architects in the 1950s—flat-roof, courtyard houses, often with interior walls of glass that opened to the courtyard,” explained Fox, an architectural historian at Rice University. “When he added a second story, it reflected his great admiration for the architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright, so it kind of changed the tone of the house from an austere modern house to one that had a mixture of materials, a very exuberant interior.”

Chase died in 2012, leaving an inspiring legacy that continues to impact Black architects. He co-founded the National Organization of Minority Architects in 1971.

“He was one person against all odds,” said William Batson, an associate professor at the Prairie View A&M University School of Architecture, the country’s top producer of African American undergraduate architects. “Those people hated him, didn’t want him to succeed, but he did, no matter what. He didn’t have any crutches, he didn’t have any pampering. He didn’t go around protesting, whining and complaining. He set the example and dropped the mic 70 years ago.” ■

TCP WEB EXTRA Enter online to win a copy of *John S. Chase—The Chase Residence*.

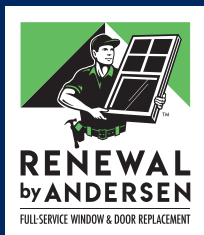
N MOVING TO TEXAS, Chase worked for the Black-owned Lott Lumber Co., a homebuilder in East Austin, but he knew he needed more formal education in architecture, and that meant studying at the state’s segregated flagship university just across East Avenue, now Interstate 35.

Chase got two breaks: first, a friendly face in Hugh McMath, dean of the UT School of Architecture, and then the Sweatt v. Painter Supreme Court decision prompted by Chase’s friend Heman Sweatt, who gained admittance to the UT law school after the high court ruled in his favor in the case that outlawed the separate-but-equal doctrine and opened the door for school desegregation.

“I talked with Dean McMath,” Chase remembered. “He asked if I was familiar with the case in front of the Supreme Court. He said, ‘Well, give it just a little more time, and if that thing comes through, I think your prayers are answered.’”

The decision was handed down June 5, 1950, and two days later Chase registered for UT’s summer session. Chaos ensued.

“All the media made it difficult,” he said, “but you could pick the friends out right away; you could pick out the foes. The ones that thought you were OK would do things like if you’d been drawing and studying, they’d come in, saw you’d been working long enough and say, ‘Let’s go to the Union and get a soda or a sandwich or something; come on, go with us.’”



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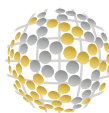
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luxurious color.



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*Happiness takes flight in shimmering abalone and gleaming sterling silver for **just \$49!***

They say that something as tiny as the flap of a butterfly's wings can change the course of history. Even the faintest flutter can set off a chain reaction affecting the future. Is it possible that by choosing the perfect gift today, you can positively alter the course of tomorrow?

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Consider the *Abalone Butterfly Effect Pendant*. This graceful beauty blends two of Mother Nature's most magical creations—shimmering abalone and the fanciful butterfly. Nothing on earth creates an iridescent glow quite like abalone. Even the subtlest of movements elicits an ever-changing rainbow of colors. This organic gem suits the transformative splendor of the butterfly perfectly.

Now, there are abalone pendants in sterling silver fetching in excess of \$1,000. But who wants that price tag in their future when our *Abalone Butterfly Effect Pendant* will bring just as much joy without the buyer's remorse. In fact, chances are good that giving her this pendant will change your life for the better, creating a romantic chain reaction beginning the minute she opens the box.

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Co-ops Helped America Grow



MESSAGE
FROM CEO

**MARK
ROLLANS**

AS THE UNITED STATES celebrates its 245th birthday July 4, Medina Electric Cooperative is observing its 83rd year. That's just a fraction of the age of our nation, but over time, I think we and the 900-plus other electric co-ops across the country have greatly enhanced the quality of life of Americans of all stripes.

When rural electrification took hold, fledgling co-ops powered the American dream for farmers and townsfolk, helping them achieve the prosperity that their urban countrymen had enjoyed for years.

And the origins of our co-op and the hundreds

The loans that made it possible to start these democratically governed nonprofits would eventually be paid back, and the program was so successful that within a generation, virtually all rural areas in the U.S. had access to reliable electricity.

Electricity changed life not only in those small towns but also across the country as a whole. The availability of electricity opened up a whole new market because people in rural areas could finally take advantage of its labor-saving power.

Electricity increased productivity on farms by replacing back-breaking labor with machines. The

demand for electric appliances created wealth with increased manufacturing and sales, which created jobs for electricians and plumbers. Cooperatives themselves provided good careers in the office and in the field. Medina EC is still a major employer in our communities.

Electric co-ops haven't forgotten that our roots are planted in democracy. Our very structure depends on governing boards of members elected to make decisions for everyone's benefit. And we work with our state-wide and national organizations to represent the interests of rural Americans in the Texas Legislature and the U.S. Capitol.

And this Independence Day, as we celebrate our nation's founders, we also

would like to salute those who founded this and other rural electric cooperatives. They helped transform the U.S. into the prosperous nation that it is today. ■

of others like it across the nation have their roots in American democracy. The Rural Electrification Administration was created in 1935 by executive order of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, and it quickly became a permanent institution with a stamp of approval from Congress.

The REA harnessed the power of the federal government to help rural residents organize cooperatives to provide electricity to their neighbors in places that for-profit companies would not serve.



MICHAEL SHAKE | ISTOCK.COM



LISA KINGDON | ISTOCK.COM

Running Ceiling Fans Saves Energy

CEILING FANS DON'T actually cool the air in a room. They circulate the air, and anyone in the room while one is running will feel a breeze. That makes the person feel cooler.

So there's no point in running a ceiling fan in an empty room.

But a ceiling fan can make a room feel like it's up to 8 degrees cooler than a room without one. And because the fan circulates cool air, it gives the air conditioning system a break. In fact, with a ceiling fan running, you can turn your thermostat up by about 4 degrees without sacrificing comfort, according to the U.S. Department of Energy.

A few tips for getting the most energy savings from ceiling fans:

- Change the direction that the fan blades spin when the weather warms up. In the summer, ceiling fans should rotate counterclockwise. That way the blades push cool air down into the room. In the winter, they should rotate clockwise so the updraft pushes warm air that is near the ceiling down into the room's occupied space. To switch rotation you have to manually flip a switch on most models.

- Hang the fan 7–9 feet above the floor. Fan blades should be at least 8 inches away from the ceiling and 18 inches from walls.

- Large ceiling fans move more air than small ones. For a large room, choose a larger fan. Likewise, large fan blades move the air around more forcefully. So if you're installing one in a home office or another room where you keep loose papers, choose one with small blades.

- Generally, the more expensive the fan, the more quietly it runs.

- Fans with an Energy Star label are about 20% more efficient than standard models. ■

**Medina Electric
Cooperative**



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Web MedinaEC.org - Chat Feature Available

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Option 3: Pay bill, get account balance

Option 5: Speak to a representative

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Dilley 1718 W. FM 117, Dilley 78017

Hondo 237 Hwy. 173 N., Hondo 78861

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

Uvalde 2604 Hwy. 90 E., Uvalde 78801

Corporate Office 2308 18th St., Hondo 78861

VISIT US ONLINE

MedinaEC.org



This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

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

HARD WORK NEVER QUIT

Operation Round Up Applications Due August 6

Operation Round Up has awarded more than \$172,000 to various causes since it began making donations in 2006.

Applications are being accepted for the next round of donations. The funds can be used to help individuals pay for medical bills, better their lives, recover after house fires and more.

If you know of someone who could use assistance, consider submitting an application on their behalf. Applicants do not need to be a member of Medina EC, but they must live in one of the 17 counties served by Medina EC.

Learn more and apply at
MedinaEC.org/ORU.



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To learn more about the cooperative difference, visit MedinaEC.org.



Employee Milestones

Retirees

MEDINA ELECTRIC CELEBRATED several special milestones for employees during the first half of this year—retirements and work anniversaries.

Work anniversaries are celebrated in five-year increments, also known as service awards. For service awards, the cooperative donates \$100 in honor of each employee to an organization of their choice. In the last two years, employees have chosen various community organizations to receive a total of \$3,400 through service award donations.

Two members of the Medina EC team also said goodbye this year. Theresa Aelvoet, who worked at the cooperative for 39 years—most recently as the manager of accounting at our corporate office in Hondo—clicked her keyboard for the last time in January. Kerry Baxter, class A lineman, also retired in May after 37 years of service to members in the Uvalde area. We wish them both the best as they enter the next chapter of their life. They’re missed at the cooperative but we know they have earned this stage!

Please join us in celebrating these Medina EC employees, who retired or received service awards between January and June 1.



THERESA AELVOET
Retired in January



KERRY BAXTER
Retired in May



RUBEN YBARRA
Line Designer | Uvalde office
| 5 years

DONATION TO
Uvalde Humane Society



JOE CARROLL
Consumer Accounting Assistant | Hondo corporate office
| 15 years

DONATION TO
Operation Round Up

Service Awards



DOUG KINDRED
Manager of Information Technology | Hondo corporate office | 20 years

DONATION TO
Semper Fi & America’s Fund



MARCOS MUNOZ
Engineering Technician | Uvalde office | 20 years

DONATION TO
St. Jude



MARTY DE LEON
Senior Meter Technician | Hondo corporate office | 25 years

DONATION TO
D’Hanis VFD



MARK ROLLANS
CEO | Hondo corporate office | 30 years

DONATION TO
Relay For Life of Medina County

Solar Installations Available



Have you been considering a solar photovoltaic system? Through Solar by Medina EC, members can purchase a 5-kilowatt, ground-mounted solar PV system with installation for \$15,000 plus tax. Here are two of the most common questions about solar power system installations.

How much energy does a 5 kW solar PV system produce? That depends on the time of year and hours of sunlight, but a good rule of thumb is that for each kilowatt the system should produce about 125 kilowatt-hours per month. Using those figures, a 5 kW system should produce approximately 625 kWh per month, which is about \$62.50 in savings. Keep in mind: This savings occurs only if you are producing the energy at the same time you are using it.

If I generate more electricity than I consume, will Medina EC purchase my excess energy? Yes, Medina EC will purchase all kWh generated by the member in excess of the kWh consumed at an avoided cost rate. Medina EC does not allow banking or storing of kWh; this means electricity is purchased at the time it is generated and cannot be used to offset use later in the same day or billing period. You can view current and historic avoided cost rates at MedinaEC.org/DG.

**For more information on Solar
by Medina EC:**

MedinaEC.org/Solar

**For more information on
installing any distributed
generation system:**

MedinaEC.org/DG

Contact us:

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

Info@MedinaEC.org

We hope to see you at our

**82nd
Annual Membership Meeting**

Morning of Saturday, September 25 | Willie de Leon Civic Center | Uvalde-

More details as available: MedinaEC.org/AnnualMeeting2021





Co-op Connections Corner: Auto Shop

Need to get your oil changed, tires rotated or fix recent hail damage to your windshield? These local business partners offer discounts in Medina EC's service area that can help you save a little on those needed repairs.

Dixon Automotive—Hondo

(830) 741-2886 | DixonAutomotiveTX.com
5% discount on parts and labor up to \$100

Hebbronville Machine Shop—Hebbronville

(361) 527-4461 | HebbronvilleMachineShop.com
5% discount after \$500 or more on labor on each invoice, when asked

Hilltop Automotive—Dilley

(830) 963-1290
10% off total labor cost, up to \$500

H-Town Automotive & Performance—Hondo

(830) 426-4777 | HTownPerformance.com
5% discount on parts and labor

Lone Star Radiator Co.—San Antonio

(210) 732-7558 or 1-800-445-6449
LoneStarRadiator.com
5% off parts and service on auto, truck, ag and industrial



Learn more about Medina EC's Co-op Connections program and all the benefits at MedinaEC.org/Connections or on the app.



HAPPY FOURTH OF JULY

Medina EC offices will be closed on July 5. As always, crews will be on call to respond to any out-ages. Stay safe!

TOMWANG112 | ISTOCK.COM



POWER TIP

Avoid running electrical appliances during peak times, usually 3-7 p.m., or anytime a conservation emergency is declared.

RAWPIXEL.COM | FREEPIK.COM



How Do Transformers Work?

TRANSFORMERS ARE CRUCIAL in converting electricity to a voltage that is safe for use in homes and businesses. But how do they work?

Electricity loses voltage as it is transmitted because of the resistance in wires and other components. As a result, electricity starts out at very high voltages, as it starts along power lines, to offset these “line losses.”

At power plants, generators produce electricity at very high voltages and use transformers to step up this voltage.

Transmission lines connect to substations filled with transformers and control gear. This is where transformers step down the voltage to safer, more manageable levels. Depending on the distance to the farthest co-op member and the amount of load served, distribution voltages can range from 7,200 to 24,900 volts. After a couple more step-downs, electric-

ity arrives at homes at about 440 volts.

Regardless of transformers’ shapes and sizes, they all work the same way. Transformers have two sides—a high-voltage side and a low-voltage side. In normal operation, electricity flows into the transformer on the high-voltage side, where it goes into a coil of wire that is usually wound around an iron core. As the electricity flows through this coil, it creates a magnetic field that induces a voltage in the other coil.

Each coil has a different number of turns. The greater the number of turns, the higher the voltage. The coil on the high side will have more turns than the one on the low side. As the charge travels from the high side to the low, the voltage induced on the low side is less. It leaves the transformer at a level suitable for distribution to homes and businesses.

Transformers work in both directions.

Electricity flowing in on the low side can be stepped up to the voltage of the high side. This is why Medina Electric Cooperative educates members on the proper connection of home generators. A generator feeding 220 volts into a residential transformer will produce whatever high voltage the transformer is rated for, creating a potentially deadly risk for our line crews and your neighbors. So please connect your generators according to the manufacturer’s recommendations. Or give us a call at 1-866-MEC-ELEC (632-3532) for advice.

It’s always best to be safe. ■



A LIVE LINE DEMONSTRATION AT MEDINA VALLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL.

Medina EC Presentations

Keeping Our Communities Safe

MEDINA EC KNOWS ELECTRICITY IS BOTH DANGEROUS AND FASCINATING and wants to help keep people safe. To do this, we offer safety presentations for schools, chambers of commerce, civic organizations, members and first responders in our service area.

Our most popular presentation is our live line high-voltage demonstration, where Medina EC linemen use a smaller version of working power lines and transformers to show the results of various situations. It demonstrates what happens if someone touches a power line with their finger or a mylar balloon gets caught on a power line, teaches what to do if you are in a car accident near a power line and much more.

We also have a high-tech safety tabletop display that uses a 3-D model to show how to safely use electricity. It gives examples of real-life scenarios including vehicle accidents with power lines, ladders coming into contact with power lines, dangers of playing near substations and so much more.

We also offer a presentation on energy efficiency, career days, materials to help in the classroom and custom presentations depending on the audience.

Learn more about the presentations Medina EC offers at MedinaEC.org/Presentations, and email MyCoop@MedinaEC.org if you are interested in scheduling a presentation. Shortened video versions of the presentations are also available if you would like something to show in your classroom.

CAREER DAY AT LA GRULLA MIDDLE SCHOOL



Learn more at
**[MedinaEC.org/
Presentations](http://MedinaEC.org/Presentations)**

Beachcombing at home.

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

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

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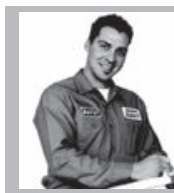
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A D V E R T I S E M E N T

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

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



Dear
Darryl

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

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

Clogged and Smelly – Lubbock, TX

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

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

SeptiCleanse® Shock and Maintenance Programs are designed to work on any septic system regardless of design or age. From modern day systems to sand mounds, and systems installed generations ago, I have personally seen SeptiCleanse unclog and restore these systems in a matter of weeks. I highly recommend that you try it before spending any money on repairs. SeptiCleanse products are available online at www.septiccleanse.com or you can order or learn more by calling toll free at 1-888-899-8345. If you use the promo code "TXS13", you can get a free shock treatment, added to your order, which normally costs \$169. So, make sure you use that code when you call or buy online.



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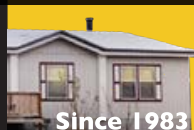
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Now, THIS is a Knife!

This 16" full tang stainless steel blade is not for the faint of heart —now **ONLY \$99!**

In the blockbuster film, when a strapping Australian crocodile hunter and a lovely American journalist were getting robbed at knife point by a couple of young thugs in New York, the tough Aussie pulls out his dagger and says "That's not a knife, THIS is a knife!" Of course, the thugs scattered and he continued on to win the reporter's heart.

Our Aussie friend would approve of our rendition of his "knife." Forged of high grade 420 surgical stainless steel, this knife is an impressive 16" from pommel to point. And, the blade is full tang, meaning it runs the entirety of the knife, even though part of it is under wraps in the natural bone and wood handle.

Secured in a tooled leather sheath, this is one impressive knife, with an equally impressive price.

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

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

Your satisfaction is 100% guaranteed. Feel the knife in your hands, wear it on your hip, inspect the impeccable craftsmanship. 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.

Limited Reserves. A deal like this won't last long. We have only 1120 *Down Under Bowie Knives* for this ad only. Don't let this beauty slip through your fingers at a price that won't drag you under. Call today!

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is an incredibly fine
instrument."*

— H., Arvada, CO



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TCP WEB EXTRA

Listen to W.F. Strong
read this story.



An Early RGV Mover

Col. Sam Robertson envisioned Boca Chica as the place
to launch his highway on the beach

BY W.F. STRONG

ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO, Col. Sam Robertson stood on the same Boca Chica Beach that Elon Musk owns today and dreamed a different dream. Instead of Musk's spaceport, Robertson dreamed of seaports and an oceanside highway.

Robertson owned 800 acres at Boca Chica, and it was likely some of the same 1,000 acres now managed by Musk's companies. Back then Robertson built the railroad that connected the Rio Grande Valley to the wider world. He had founded the town of San Benito, serving as sheriff and helping to run the Ku Klux Klan out of the region.

He had repurposed the old resacas to irrigate the lower Valley. In 1926 he gathered RGV leaders in Brownsville's El Jardin Hotel to make his pitch for an

oceanside highway that would run from Boca Chica to Corpus Christi and become, in his words, "the most beautiful 150 miles of highway in the world."

Robertson laid out his vision before the Rio Grande Valley Commercial Club. "I have traveled somewhat extensively in this world," he said, "and have never seen any scenery wilder or more beautiful than this stretch of beach."

Robertson was not only an entrepreneur; he was a decorated soldier and noted engineer. In 1916 he served as a scout for Gen. Jack Pershing in the pursuit of Pancho Villa in Mexico. During World War I, he served in Europe as a commander of the 22nd Engineers, building railroads and bridges for Allied troops in France. He was awarded the

Distinguished Service Medal for bravery under fire.

The business leaders of the Valley trusted his vision because they believed his claims. He wasn't pitching a black-top road.

"The beach is as smooth as a billiard table," Robertson said. "No road can be constructed by man as good for autoing as the beach, and the Gulf of Mexico maintains it." All you would need is maintenance crews to move driftwood out of the way, he said, telling those assembled that he had explored the beach from Corpus Christi to the mouth of the Rio Grande River and that a highway was quite possible and would bring in enormous numbers of tourists.

Robertson advocated the laying in of water lines for irrigation because then the beachscapes could be enhanced with "bermuda grass, live oak trees, palms and other beautiful trees along the sand hills of the beaches."

Such a development would be good for the Rio Grande Valley, too, he argued. With good roads to Boca Chica Beach, Valleyites could have a Sunday lunch at home, then drive to the beach for a Sunday afternoon swim at the beach and still be home by 10 p.m.

Robertson's oceanside highway was never developed. But looking at South Padre and North Padre today, with their causeway bridges, carefully maintained beaches, opulent hotels and verdant landscaping, you can see that his dream for the island has been partially realized.

Robertson opened his Del Mar Resort on Boca Chica Beach in 1931, but the resort was virtually wiped out by a hurricane in 1933. He rebuilt within six months and constructed an asphalt road from Brownsville to Boca Chica Beach because his personal mantra was "Civilization follows transportation."

Musk would like that, too. ■

Ice Cream and Sorbets

Churn out flavorful treats sure to take the edge off a Texas summer

BY MEGAN MYERS, FOOD EDITOR

One blessing of the Texas heat is that we rarely need an excuse to indulge in a cool, creamy bowl of ice cream. When I make ice cream, I tend to opt for Philadelphia-style, which does not use eggs. After chilling the liquid, you can let your machine churn it while you're eating dinner and have fresh soft serve for dessert. Amaretto helps keep this ice cream soft enough to scoop, but if you prefer, you can substitute ½ teaspoon of almond extract.

Cherry Amaretto Ice Cream

1 jar (11 ounces) maraschino cherries, without stems, divided use
1½ cups heavy cream
1½ cups whole milk
½ cup sugar
2 tablespoons amaretto liqueur

1. Strain cherries over a bowl, reserving liquid. Slice half the cherries into quarters and set aside.
2. Purée remaining cherries with the reserved juice, then pour into a medium bowl. Whisk in cream, milk and sugar. Cover and chill 2 hours.
3. When ready to make the ice cream, add amaretto and mix well. Pour the mixture into an ice cream maker and freeze according to the manufacturer's instructions. In the last few minutes of churning, mix in the reserved sliced cherries. Scoop ice cream into freezer containers and chill completely, until ready to serve.

MAKES 1.5 QUARTS

TCP WEB EXTRA Follow along with Megan Myers and her adventures in the kitchen at stetted.com, where she features a recipe for Chocolate Frozen Yogurt.





Texas Wildflower Honey Ice Cream

MELISSA TURLEY
BANDERA EC

This ice cream is sure to be a hit for honey lovers. Turley re-created the recipe after tasting a similar version at a local restaurant. Note that the honey makes this a very soft ice cream, so be sure to keep it frozen right up until serving.

1 cup whole milk
¾ cup raw honey
2 cups heavy cream
1 tablespoon vanilla extract

1. In a bowl, whisk together milk and honey until well blended. Add cream and vanilla and mix well. Cover and refrigerate 1–2 hours or overnight.
2. When ready to make the ice cream, stir mixture and pour into an ice cream maker. Freeze according to the manufacturer's instructions.

MAKES 1.5 QUARTS

MORE RECIPES >

TCP \$500 Recipe Contest

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What nifty gifts for loved ones come out of your kitchen around the holidays? The best reader recipe wins \$500. Enter at TexasCoopPower.com/contests by July 10.

\$500 WINNER

Pecan Caramel Pear Ice Cream

KRYSABELLE GILBERT
WOOD COUNTY EC



Don't be daunted by the extra steps for the mix-ins in this ice cream—the results are well worth the effort. "It tastes just like eating a pear upside-down cake a la mode," says Gilbert, who came up with the recipe after a neighbor shared a harvest bounty. If you can't find Asian pears, Bosc pears make a suitable substitute.

MAKES 1.5 QUARTS

ICE CREAM
2 eggs
½ cup sugar
1½ cups heavy cream
1½ cups whole milk
1 tablespoon vanilla extract
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

CARAMEL PEARS
2 Asian pears
¼ cup (½ stick) unsalted butter
½ cup sugar

PECANS
1 egg white
1 tablespoon water
½ teaspoon vanilla extract
2 cups pecans, chopped
¼ cup sugar
½ teaspoon cinnamon
¼ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg
¼ teaspoon ground cloves
¼ teaspoon ground ginger
¼ cup diced crystallized ginger

COOK'S TIP Crystallized ginger can be found in the spice section, but you can also leave it out.

1. ICE CREAM In a small bowl, whisk eggs and ½ cup sugar together until thickened and pale.

2. In a medium saucepan over medium-low heat, bring cream and milk to a simmer. Slowly whisk half the heated liquid into the egg mixture to temper, then pour tempered egg mixture back into saucepan.

3. Cook over low heat, stirring constantly, until mixture is thick and coats the back of a wooden spoon.

4. Strain into a large bowl and let cool to room temperature, then stir in vanilla and cinnamon. Cover and refrigerate overnight.

5. CARAMEL PEARS About an hour before churning, make the mix-ins. Peel pears and chop into ½-inch chunks.

6. In a large skillet, melt butter over medium heat. Add ½ cup sugar and cook until it starts to turn golden. Add pears, stirring to coat, and cook 10–15 minutes, or until golden brown and caramel has thickened.

7. Pour pears onto a parchment-lined rimmed baking sheet to cool.

8. PECANS Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In a medium bowl, whisk together egg white, water and vanilla. Add chopped pecans and toss to coat.

9. In a large plastic bag, combine sugar, cinnamon, salt, nutmeg, cloves and ground ginger. Add pecans and shake to completely coat nuts.

10. Spread nuts on a rimmed baking sheet and bake 20 minutes, stirring once halfway through. Stir again and let cool completely.

11. When ready to make the ice cream, stir the ice cream base and pour into an ice cream maker. Freeze according to the manufacturer's instructions. Add pears, pecans and crystallized ginger in the last few minutes of freezing. Scoop ice cream into freezer containers and let chill completely before serving.





Strawberry Perfection

LAMONT PETERSEN
NAVARRO COUNTY EC
BANDERA EC

Ideal for summer, when strawberries are at their peak, strawberry ice cream is a hit for all ages. The fruit is macerated before blending to soften and release juices, which allows the berry flavor to pop.

1 pound strawberries, hulled and sliced
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup sugar
 $\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon salt

Which Ice Cream Maker Is Right for You?

BY MEGAN MYERS

When it comes to making ice cream at home, there are two main types of machines: electric and traditional.

Electric

Countertop electric ice cream machines are widely available and make churning at home a breeze. Their smaller size makes them ideal for those who like to make ice cream often or enjoy experimenting with flavors. Keep in mind, however, that the mixing bowl needs to be pre-chilled, so you'll need to plan ahead.

Traditional

If you grew up with hand-churned ice cream makers, you'll be familiar with this style, which uses rock salt and ice packed around a center compartment. While hand cranks are still available, these now have an electric motor option as well. The standard size makes 4 quarts of ice cream, so make room in your freezer.

2 cups heavy cream
1 tablespoon vanilla extract

1. In a bowl, combine sliced strawberries, sugar and salt. Cover and refrigerate 1–2 hours to release juices.
2. Stir mixture well and purée berries with the accumulated juices.

3. Whisk together purée, cream and vanilla. Cover and chill in the refrigerator 2 hours.

4. When ready to make the ice cream, stir mixture and pour into an ice cream maker. Freeze according to the manufacturer's instructions.

MAKES 1.5 QUARTS



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The obverse of the high-quality mint strike features Texas' iconic lone star in the foreground. The smooth engraving of the star is framed by a textured topographical outline of the state of Texas. "TEXAS" arches proudly over the top of the round's obverse in large capital letters, with "Precious Metals" presented inversely along the opposite side. The round's mintage year is engraved in the bottom left of the round, just southwest of what would be the Rio Grande bordering Texas and Mexico.

The reverse of the 2021 release displays a scene from the famous Battle of the Alamo. It depicts two Texian soldiers including the American icon, Davy Crockett, attempting to fend off Mexican soldiers attempting to breach the walls of the Alamo.



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BATTLE OF THE ALAMO

second in the series ● ● ● ●

The events of this famous battle took place on the days of February 23rd - March 6th, 1836. At the end of a 13-day siege, President General Antonio López de Santa Anna and his Mexican troops reclaimed the Alamo Mission, killing the Texian and immigrant occupiers.

The Texas Silver Round can be purchased in a monster box produced exclusively for the Texas Mint. Packaged in 20 protective tubes of 25 rounds each, the monster box holds 500 1-ounce Texas Silver Rounds. Built from durable cold-rolled steel and finished with a matte black powder coat, the monster box lid features an orange cutout of the state of Texas. Each sealed monster box is secured with a unique serial number and a holographic seal to ensure maximum product protection.

The Texas Silver Round is also available to purchase in a similarly designed and secured mini-monster box, which contains 10 protective tubes of 25 rounds each for a total of 250 silver rounds.



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COURTESY CHET GARNER

A Serious Undertaking

Houston funeral museum pays its respects to the inevitable

BY CHET GARNER

AN OVERCAST SKY painted the North Houston landscape with a somber shade of gray, which seemed appropriate as I approached the National Museum of Funeral History. Based on the institution's name, I expected an experience akin to a carnival sideshow or a roadside attraction full of plastic corpses and otherworldly burial stories. Instead of a tribute to the bizarre, I found a museum staffed by funeral directors who take their profession—and its history—very seriously.

Starting with a narrative of Egyptian mummies and mummification, I followed a serpentine path through the cavernous building, learning about funerary topics such as custom casket-making and the embalming techniques of the Civil War. Each lesson was communicated through detailed displays or life-size dioramas. Most impressive was the collection of classic hearses, one of which served in the funerals of presidents Gerald Ford and Ronald Reagan. Also fascinating was the step-by-step description of how a pope is laid to rest. This sequence chronicled the death and burial of Pope John Paul III, whose funeral was one of the largest in history.

As expected, I saw displays to satisfy the morbidly curious, such as a three-person casket and the ghost stories that accompany one of the horse-drawn hearses. I found one entire room with memorabilia from the funerals of celebrities such as Michael Jackson, Neil Armstrong and Gene Wilder. That room seemed like a funeral home version of Planet Hollywood.

I could have spent hours learning more about every detail of how we humans mourn and pay tribute to those we've lost. It turns out that honoring the dead is a tradition that goes back to the earliest days of humans. This strange yet compelling museum can help us become a little more comfortable with our own inevitable conclusion. ■

ABOVE Even at a funeral museum, Chet's mug is half full.

TCP WEB EXTRA Chet ponders life's grave consequences in his latest video. See all his Texplorations on *The Daytripper* on PBS.

Know Before You Go

Some events may have been affected by COVID-19. Call or check an event's website for scheduling details.

JULY

03

Bandera [3, 10, 17, 31]

Cowboys on Main,
(830) 796-3781,
banderacowboycapital.com

Bulverde [3, 10, 17, 24, 31]

Saturday Night Rodeo,
(830) 980-2226,
tejasrodeo.com

05

Salado [5–Aug. 26] Women,

Aviation and WWII,
(254) 947-5232,
saladomuseum.org

07

Goliad [7, 14, 21, 28]

Wayback Wednesdays,
(361) 645-3752,
presidiolabahia.org

08

Palestine [8, 10, 15–17,

**22–24, 29–31] Diesel
Round Trip,**
1-855-632-7729,
texasstaterailroad.net

09

Palestine Wines in the

Pines, 1-855-632-7729,
texasstaterailroad.net

Gladewater [9–10] East

Texas Gusher Days,
(903) 845-5501,
gusher-days.com

10

Arlington Micky and the

Motorcars, (817) 543-4301,
levittpavilionarlington.org

Corpus Christi Plumeria

Passions, (361) 852-2100,
stxbot.org

11

Arlington Courtney Patton,

(817) 543-4301,
levittpavilionarlington.org

15

Fredericksburg [15-18]
Beauty and the Beast Jr.,
 1-888-669-7114,
fredericksburgtheater.org

16

Taylor [16-17] Taylor
 Rodeo, (512) 238-2101,
wilcoexpo.com

Temple [16-17] Wildflower
 Quilt Guild Quilt Show,
 (254) 220-5597,
wildflowerquiltguild.com

Fredericksburg [16-18]
 Trade Days, (210) 846-4094,
fbgtradedays.com

17

**Fredericksburg Night in
 Old Fredericksburg**, (830)
 997-2359, gillespiefair.com

**Howe Hotter 'N Howe Sum-
 mer Bash**, (903) 532-6080,
howechamber.com

Lockney Christmas in July,
 (806) 983-6228

23

Fredericksburg [23-25]
 Hill Country Swap Meet,
 (254) 751-7958, [earhart
 productions.com/
 hill-country-swap-meet](http://earhartproductions.com/hill-country-swap-meet)

24

Arlington Green Day,
Fall Out Boy and Weezer,
 (817) 533-1972,
hellamegatour.com

**Bandera National Day of
 the Cowboy**, (210) 215-1995,
[nationaldayofthecowboy
 bandera.com](http://nationaldayofthecowboybandera.com)

**Bandera Ridin' the River
 Cowboy Fellowship Ranch
 Rodeo**, (830) 460-0710,
ridintheriver.com

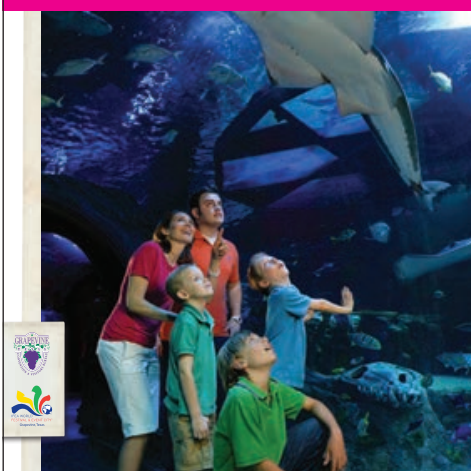
**Waxahachie Indian Artifact
 Show**, (979) 574-6501

MORE EVENTS >

TCP Submit Your Event

We pick events for the magazine directly from TexasCoopPower.com. Submit your September event online by July 10, and it just might be featured in this calendar.

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24

Buffalo Gap [24-25] Tour de Gap, (325) 829-0617, tourdegap.com

29

Clute [29-31] Great Texas Mosquito Festival, (979) 265-8392, mosquitofestival.com

Brenham [29-Aug. 1] The Wizard of Oz, (979) 830-8358, unitybrenham.org

Fredericksburg [29-Aug. 1] Hill Country Film Festival, 1-866-224-7714, hillcountryff.com

30

Bonham [30-31] Quilt Hop, (903) 583-9830, visitbonham.com

31

Columbus Country Market, (979) 732-8385, columbusfmtx.org

AUGUST

06

Kerrville [6-7, 13-15, 20-22] Murder on the Orient Express, (830) 896-9393, caillouxperformingarts.com

07

Bellville Farmers Market, (979) 865-3407, discoverbellville.com

Fredericksburg Texas Ranger Day History Symposium, (830) 990-1192, trhc.org

Freeport KidFest, (979) 233-0066, freeport.tx.us

Palestine Saturdays on Main, (903) 723-3014, visitpalestine.com

South Padre Island [7-8] Pro-Am Beach Soccer Tournament, (415) 308-0603, sopadre.com

Bulverde [7, 14, 21, 28] Saturday Night Rodeo, (830) 980-2226, tejasrodeo.com



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Night Life

No, it isn't hot in Texas; and the cool night dews are falling,
And the katydids are chirping in the grass beside the pool;
And from out the moonlit distances the mockingbirds are calling,
And I know the days are hazy and the nights perfumed and cool.

From *Longing for Texas* by Judd Mortimer Lewis

GRACE FULTZ



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT

MICHELE TECH
UNITED COOPERATIVE SERVICES

Honky-tonk nights at Billy Bob's Texas in Fort Worth.

CHARLES BAXTER
COSERV

The Fort Davis Drug Store and Hotel.

KYLEIGH HOLLE
HILCO EC

The Dallas skyline at night with car light trails.

ELYSE KANA
BLUEBONNET EC

The other side of nowhere, Big Bend Ranch State Park.



Upcoming Contests

DUE JUL 10 Funny Signs

DUE AUG 10 Bridges

DUE SEP 10 Fired Up!

Enter online at TexasCoopPower.com/contests.

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



Common Ground

Whether many acres or a pint-size lot, there's pride and joy in land ownership

BY RHONDA REINHART
ILLUSTRATION BY LINDA BLECK

IN THE BLACK-AND-WHITE Westerns that my dad used to watch when I was a kid, a cowboy hat-clad rancher might head out on horseback to survey his domain, a vast expanse of dusty terrain spanning thousands of acres. My father wasn't a rancher by any means, but he did own a 10-acre spread in deep East Texas where he raised all manner of animals, including guinea fowl, hogs and cows.

He loved "going to the land," as we called it back then, and he spent countless hours building pens, planting vegetable gardens, clearing sections of the property and walking mile after mile through the seemingly endless stretch of pines.

I did not share my father's affinity for going to the land, and even though I spent plenty of time out there with

him over the years, I would have much preferred to be back in Houston, reading a book, hanging out with friends or sitting in a cool, dark theater watching a movie—definitely not a Western. In fact after I left home, I spent two decades living in apartments, townhouses and condos—surrounded by land covered in concrete instead of pine needles and serenaded by the sounds of traffic instead of livestock.

About five years ago, however, I reached my limit on sharing walls with nosy neighbors and knowing that I was spending my hard-earned money to live atop ground that would never be mine. So I decided to purchase my own tiny patch of land.

At my little homestead in northwest Dallas, unlike the sprawling ranches in those old Westerns—or even my father's modest parcel in the Piney Woods—I merely have to peek out the back door to take in the full 7,976 square feet of North Texas soil that belongs to me. After 20 years of having little more than a balcony or patio at my disposal, the 0.18 acre on which my 1952 cottage sits feels enormous to me. I've even dubbed the small section of yard behind the garage "the back forty."

My dad died years ago, and his land was sold. While I don't have his knack for animal husbandry or even one-tenth of the acreage he owned in Sam Houston Electric Cooperative's service area, I do have a dog who loves to roll in the grass, sunbathe in the driveway and patrol the grounds for squirrels and opossums. I've also been thinking about starting a garden where I can grow my own tomatoes and cucumbers, some of my dad's favorite crops.

I can't be certain, but I'm betting that if he were still around, those things alone would earn me his signature grin and a nod. ■



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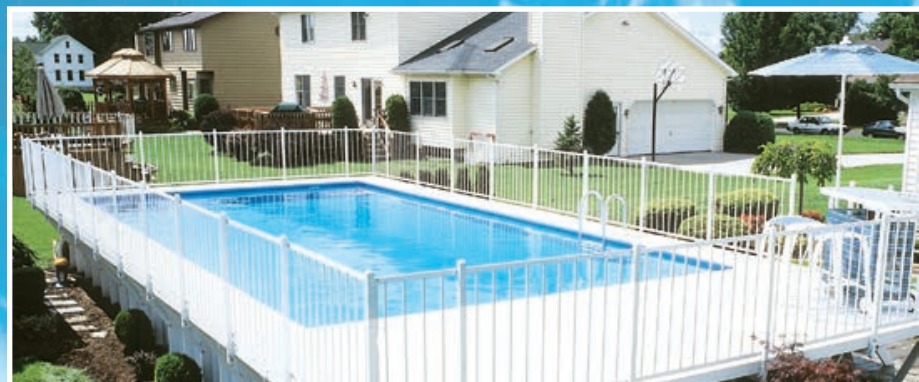


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