

DRIVE THRU



**WCEC 83RD ANNUAL
MEETING
OF MEMBERS**

**Drive Thru Meeting
Due to COVID-19 Precautions
See Inside for Details**

**Wednesday
June 16, 2021
4:00 - 7:00 p.m.
El Campo
Middle School**



OFFICIAL NOTICE OF
WHARTON COUNTY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

83RD ANNUAL MEETING OF MEMBERS

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 16, 2021
EL CAMPO MIDDLE SCHOOL
(DIRECTLY BEHIND EL CAMPO CIVIC CENTER - ENTRANCE ON N. WHARTON STREET)
4:00 - 7:00 P.M.

THIS MEETING WILL BE CONDUCTED AS A
DRIVE THRU MEETING
DUE TO COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS.

This meeting is for the members
of Wharton County Electric Cooperative.

MUST BE PRESENT IN VEHICLE TO VOTE!
SEE BACK COVER FOR DRIVE THRU MAP.
DRIVE THRU PROCEDURE
OUTLINED INSIDE THIS MAGAZINE.

**\$20 BILL CREDIT FOR EACH MEMBER WHO VOTES!
REGISTER TO WIN MORE THAN \$1,500 IN PRIZES!**

Grand Prize: \$300 Electricity Credit
Fabulous Attendance Gift

HE TAUGHT HOLLYWOOD
STARS TO TALK TEXAN

BESSIE COLEMAN'S REACH
KNEW NO BOUNDS

CHAGRIN OVER
MY FATHER

Texas Coop Power

FOR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE MEMBERS

JUNE 2021

After Nature Strikes

How co-ops join forces
to get the power back on



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June 2021



07

'That's What Co-ops Are For'

Three months of historic weather in 2020 and the February polar vortex unleash the full force of Texas' co-op family.

Stories by Chris Burrows

ON THE COVER

A co-op crew works to restore power near Lake Charles, Louisiana, after Hurricane Delta.
Photo by Chad Simon | Sam Houston EC

ABOVE

Lineworkers across Texas scrambled to restore power during the polar vortex in February.
Photo courtesy Pedernales EC

12 Texas Talk Man

Robert Hinkle had some of Hollywood's biggest stars talkin' and dressin' the part.

By Jessica Ridge

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Parent Imperfect
By Martha Deeringer



Sunset Cinema

DRIVE-IN THEATERS have enjoyed a resurgence since last spring as the COVID-19 pandemic forced folks to find forms of entertainment that didn't risk their health. Even before that, drive-ins were thriving in Texas, as we wrote about in *Drive in, Chill Out* in June 2019.

June 6 National Drive-In Movie Day

Grab some popcorn and celebrate.

“Noble fathers have noble children.”

—EURIPIDES

Can-Do Perspective

Recycling one aluminum can saves enough energy to run a 14-watt CFL for 20 hours, a computer for three hours or a TV for two hours.



Storm Surge

A record 30 named storms formed in the Atlantic Ocean in 2020. Thirteen of those named storms turned into hurricanes, and three of them—Hanna, Laura and Delta—brought high winds or heavy rain or both to Texas, which mobilized lineworkers across the state. See *'That's What Co-ops Are For'* on Page 8.

As the planet warms, scientists say, hurricanes are lingering longer and staying stronger once they make landfall.

Alas, hurricane season begins again June 1 and runs through November.

Heavy Metal

THE LARGEST PLAYABLE GUITAR in the world is 43½ feet tall, 16½ feet wide and weighs 1 ton, according to Guinness World Records. Built by students from the Conroe Independent School District Academy of Science and Technology, it's modeled on a 1967 Gibson Flying V and was first played in June 2000 with the opening chord of *A Hard Day's Night*.



TCP Contests and More

[ON TEXASCOOPPOWER.COM](https://www.texascooppower.com)

\$500 RECIPE CONTEST

Pies

FOCUS ON TEXAS PHOTOS

Fillin' Stations

RECOMMENDED READING

Gas With Class (January 2013) visited a fillin' station that still offered full service.



A CAREER TAKES OFF

Nothing is cooler for an aspiring writer than to see her work in print for the first time.

Ainsley Shaw gets that thrill this month with the publication of *Queen Bess Soared* on Page 29.

Shaw is a first-year student at Maastricht University in the Netherlands, but she began writing about Bessie Coleman, the Texan who became the first African American woman and first Native American woman to earn a pilot's license, in 2020, when she was a senior at Leander High School.

Shaw, a Pedernales Electric Cooperative member, participated in the Leander school district's Career Opportunities on Location week by shadowing the staff at *Texas Co-op Power*. "Being in a real writing environment has only reinforced my intention to pursue writing as a career," she said of her COOL experience.

FINISH THIS SENTENCE

I ALWAYS LAUGH WHEN MY DAD ...

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 April prompt: **I thought I was smart until ...**

I realized I was mis-taking knowledge for wisdom.

GAIL DURFEE
MAGIC VALLEY EC
MCALLEN

I left home.
PATTY LONGINO SMITH
VIA FACEBOOK

I began talking less and listening more.

TAMMIE MANCHESTER
JACKSON EC
SARGENT

To see more responses, read *Currents* online.



DAVE SHAFER

The Seed Flourishes

“Great story on vintner Alphonse Dotson. Michael Hurd could have added that Dotson shows great character by his choice of dog—the blue Lacy pictured on the cover.”

BEN ROBERTS
HAMILTON COUNTY EC
GATESVILLE

Runaway Scrape’s Anguish

Janice Woods Windle wrote about her family’s involvement in the Runaway Scrape in her historical novel *True Women* [*The Runaway Scrape*, April 2021]. One detail I’ll never forget is that a child who died on the way east was later dug up and reinterred near home, after the danger was over.

Mary Pritchard
HILCO EC
Midlothian



Gotas de Oro is the best wine, and I’m not a wine drinker [*The Seed Flourishes*, April 2021]. I could get used to it.

TERESA ATOR
LEIFESTE
VIA FACEBOOK

Botched Attempt

You state that Sarah Fuller was the first female athlete to play in a major college football game and two weeks later was the first woman to score in such a game [*A Big Step*, Currents, April 2021]. Wrong on both counts.

Katie Hnida played for the University of Colorado in 1999 and New Mexico 2002–04. On August 30, 2003, she kicked two extra points against Texas State to become the first woman to score in a Division I game.

Mike Lusk
Medina EC
San Antonio

Real as It Gets

I must say that in today’s world of polemic divisiveness, your homey, well-written and informative magazine is a breath of fresh air. In a world of hypercommercialism at mind-blowing speeds, thanks for being so real.

Douglas Stewart
Pedernales EC
Wimberley



COLLEGIATE IMAGES / GETTY IMAGES

TCP WRITE TO US

letters@TexasCoopPower.com

Editor, Texas Co-op Power
1122 Colorado St., 24th Floor
Austin, TX 78701

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

Texas Co-op Power

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BY CHRIS BURROWS

WALKING THE LINES

WHEN FEBRUARY'S polar vortex brought to Texas enough snow, ice, cold and wind to strain every bit of infrastructure, Cody Hansen, a Bandera Electric Cooperative lineworker, parked his bucket truck on the side of a Hill Country road. He was hoofing it.

"The roads were super snowed over. Then instead of patches of black ice, we had all black ice," he said. "It's a lot more difficult when you have to walk the lines out and try not to break an ankle."

Bandera EC and many of the state's 65 other distribution cooperatives supplied line crews with foul-weather gear—even if they couldn't supply their homes with power—and the lineworkers in turn restored power to millions between grid-mandated rolling outages. Those workers faced fender benders, exhausting conditions and 12-plus-hour shifts as they knocked ice from poles and hammered at frozen gates and chains to keep power flowing to co-op members.

But for many, the work wasn't done when their lights were back on. Not when others still needed help.

About a dozen co-ops sent workers to other cooperatives after ice broke thousands of poles across Co-op Country and residential heating demand overwhelmed other electrical equipment, stretching thin co-ops and crews.

"When our system was on the ground and members were without power, it was reassuring to know we had support from our co-op family," said Kathi Calvert, general manager at Houston County EC.

Borne out of hardship and guided by the Seven Cooperative Principles, including Cooperation Among Cooperatives, Texas' electric co-ops worked together, helped along by the very members they serve, to do what they've always done.

"Our crews in the field were constantly stuck and having to be pulled around due to the icy conditions," said Bryan Chandler, operations manager at Heart of Texas EC. "Our members came to our aid with food, fuel and tractors to help pull trucks."

It took everyone working cooperatively.

"This was definitely the worst winter storm I have worked in," said Doug Grimm, a 20-year linework veteran for Bluebonnet EC. "We did what we always do: Come together and get the job done." ■

AFTER TEXAS THAWED AND THE LIGHTS CAME BACK ON IN FEBRUARY, CO-OP LINEWORERS STILL WEREN'T DONE

COURTESY FEDERNALES AND SAM HOUSTON ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES





'THAT'S WHAT CO-OPS ARE FOR'



BY CHRIS BURROWS



THREE MONTHS OF HISTORIC WEATHER IN 2020 UNLEASHED THE FULL FORCE OF TEXAS' CO-OP FAMILY

IT wasn't the 16-hour days or the searing heat. It wasn't the meager accommodations—a 100-man tent—or the fact that he'd had only five days off in seven weeks. Speaking from a mud-caked work truck in southwest Louisiana, James Warden didn't bring up any of those things.

"The hardest part is being away from home," Warden said. He had just missed his youngest son's eighth birthday. "When I'm working at home, I still get to see my kids and wife when I come in late at night. I at least get to kiss 'em good night, but here it's just a phone call."

The construction foreman for Deep East Texas Electric Cooperative was five days into his second trip in about a month to DeRidder, Louisiana, where he was helping an electric co-op severely damaged by hurricanes Laura and Delta. It was mid-October 2020, and Warden's crew, based out of San Augustine in East Texas, was setting poles and hanging lines, some of which they'd already reset and rehung weeks before, following Laura. That hurricane knocked out power to Warden's own home and heavily damaged his own co-op's lines.

But the day after the lights were back on in East Texas, Warden was in Louisiana. He left his own family to help another family—the co-op family.

In his 24 years as a lineworker, Warden has worked the front lines of major recovery efforts, including after hurricanes Katrina and Rita. But he had never experienced anything like this. He'd never had to miss one of his four kids' birthdays.

"When we first got here, there weren't hardly any lines up in the air," he said. "Their whole system was tore up. It was just wiped. When you drove down the highway, just about every pole you would look at was broke."



Co-ops follow the Seven Cooperative Principles, including Cooperation Among Cooperatives, through which they seek aid from and offer assistance to fellow co-ops during times of crisis.

COURTESY BLUEBONNET, HILCO, HOUSTON COUNTY, PEDERNALES, SAM HOUSTON AND SWISHER ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES



'EVERY TIME WE HAVE A STORM AT HOME AND IT GETS REAL BAD, PEOPLE VOLUNTEER TO COME HELP US. BEING A LINEMAN, WHAT YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO DO IS GO HELP PEOPLE.'

Relentlessly dedicated lineworkers like Warden have for more than 80 years ensured that the lights stay on across Co-op Country, where cooperatives rely on one another when disaster strikes. The full force of that network was on brilliant display last fall, when Laura in August, Hurricane Sally in September and Delta in October ripped through the South, including parts of Texas, killing dozens, displacing many more and destroying electrical infrastructure. And then an unprecedented ice storm tore apart co-op grids in West Texas and the Panhandle.

By the end of last October, lineworkers from every part of Texas had helped restore power for more than a quarter-million co-op members in Texas, Louisiana and Alabama—resetting thousands of poles along hundreds of miles.

But lineworkers like Ben Perry don't measure progress in miles or meters. They measure it in relieved faces.

"That's probably what will stick with me the most—the people that were there, the hospitality," said Perry, a foreman for United Cooperative Services, a co-op based south of Fort Worth. Perry, like Warden, was part of a crew dispatched to Louisiana to help Beaufort EC, whose entire electrical system was taken offline by Laura—the strongest recorded hurricane to ever make landfall in Louisiana. The Category 4 storm killed 77 after it made landfall August 27, 2020, packing 150 mph winds.

Laura dealt serious damage to several Texas co-ops but decimated Beaufort EC, prompting a call for help that

draw more than 1,200 lineworkers from across the South and Midwest, including Warden and Perry, for a massive monthslong power restoration effort. "We really couldn't do it without them," said Danielle Tilley, communications specialist at Beaufort EC.

"The devastation from that storm was unreal," said Brad Morrow, another United lineworker. "It seemed like everywhere you drove, there were trees and debris, and any sort of house or building was destroyed."

Twenty Texas co-ops sent help to Jasper-Newton EC, where 90% of that East Texas co-op's 22,900 meters had no power. General Manager Mark Tamplin was grateful. "Assistance from other cooperatives was extremely critical to the restoration effort," he said.

"Every time we have a storm at home and it gets real bad, people volunteer to come help us," Warden said. "Being a lineman, what you're supposed to do is go help people."

Cooperation Among Cooperatives, one of the Seven Cooperative Principles that guide all co-ops, ensures that help is just a phone call away when any co-op anywhere needs it.

"Whenever they call us, we're obligated to go help because there'll be times in the future when I know we'll need help," Perry said. "That's just what you do."

Tate Glasscock knows firsthand.

The foreman at Lighthouse EC, based in the Texas Panhandle, also made the trip east after Laura's onslaught, driving eight hours to spend 10 days helping Jasper-Newton EC.



From August through October, Texas lineworkers faced sweltering and then arctic conditions after hurricanes in the Gulf and an ice storm in West Texas and the Panhandle devastated co-ops' infrastructure.

“That’s what co-ops are for—to help each other,” Glasscock said.

Just a few weeks after returning from East Texas, Glasscock’s own co-op was hit by a devastating ice storm that snapped upward of 3,700 power poles and knocked offline more than 63,000 meters across 15-plus cooperatives in West Texas and the Panhandle. The October storm coated power lines with half-inch-thick ice, which can add 500 pounds to a single span of line, toppling crossarms, lines and poles across sparse stretches of plains.

Help poured in to the co-ops affected by the ice, which a South Plains EC spokesperson called “the most devastating storm we’ve had in 20 years”; Lighthouse EC general manager Albert Daniel said was “the worst storm to ever hit Lighthouse by all recollections”; and Lyntegar EC called “likely the largest single outage event ... in the history of the cooperative.”

Suddenly Glasscock and many fellow first responders were the ones in need of help after they just provided it.

“In my nearly 20-year career, I’ve never seen anything this detrimental to our system,” Glasscock said. “Most of the time it’s in one specific area. This was our whole system.”

United lineworkers Perry and Morrow headed west, just weeks after their tireless work out east, joining a major rebuilding effort in the Panhandle.

“Just seeing those guys roll through the gates, I thought, ‘Man, we’ve got help,’” Glasscock said. “I knew we were in

good shape then.”

Progress was much slower in the Panhandle, where homes can be separated by miles.

“I believe the first day that we went out, there were 13 or 14 poles that were on the ground that fed one house,” Morrow said. “In Louisiana that might have gotten 30, 40, 50 people on, if not more.” But the payoff was no different. “The relief in people’s eyes and the joy that they experience is the same.”

Between the hurricanes and ice storm, Perry spent about three weeks away from his family over the course of about two months. “I don’t know that I’ll ever forget this year,” said Perry, a 16-year line work veteran. “This has been one of the craziest years that I’ve been a part of in this work.”

Those in need kept him going. That was just as true this past February, when co-op members supported crews through an unprecedented polar vortex. Dangerous roads, iced-over lines and poles, and grid-mandated outages made lineworkers’ jobs even more challenging.

“There was the normal fatigue that comes from working so many 12-hour days in a row, but sometimes that was compounded by coming home to a cold house,” said Kendal Fiebrich, a Bluebonnet EC lineworker.

Sympathetic members lent support online and in the field—like a woman in Moss Bluff, Louisiana. She cooked up a meal of gumbo “and any kind of Louisiana fixin’s you could think of,” Morrow said, for linemen from Texas and Missouri who restored her power after weeks of living off a generator.

Strangers united by the co-op family.

“It’s the people who make it worthwhile,” Morrow said. “You’ll never find someone more thankful and willing to help you when you’re there to help them.” ■

Texas Talk MAN

A photograph of an older man with a goatee, wearing a black cowboy hat, a white long-sleeved shirt, and a black leather vest. He is leaning on a thick, mossy tree branch. He has a large silver bolo tie, a gold watch, and a diamond ring. In the background, a brown horse is grazing in a field under trees.

He had some
of Hollywood's
biggest stars
talkin' and
dressin'
the part

Robert Hinkle

likes to sit where he can see everyone in the room and who's walking through the door. He leads me to the corner of a long table at the back of a pandemic-emptied Masonic Lodge in Leander and chooses a seat with a clear view of the entrance. He wears an Air Force cap and a sky-blue Mason's shirt embroidered with "N. Hollywood," each emblematic of the twists and turns of his prolific career.

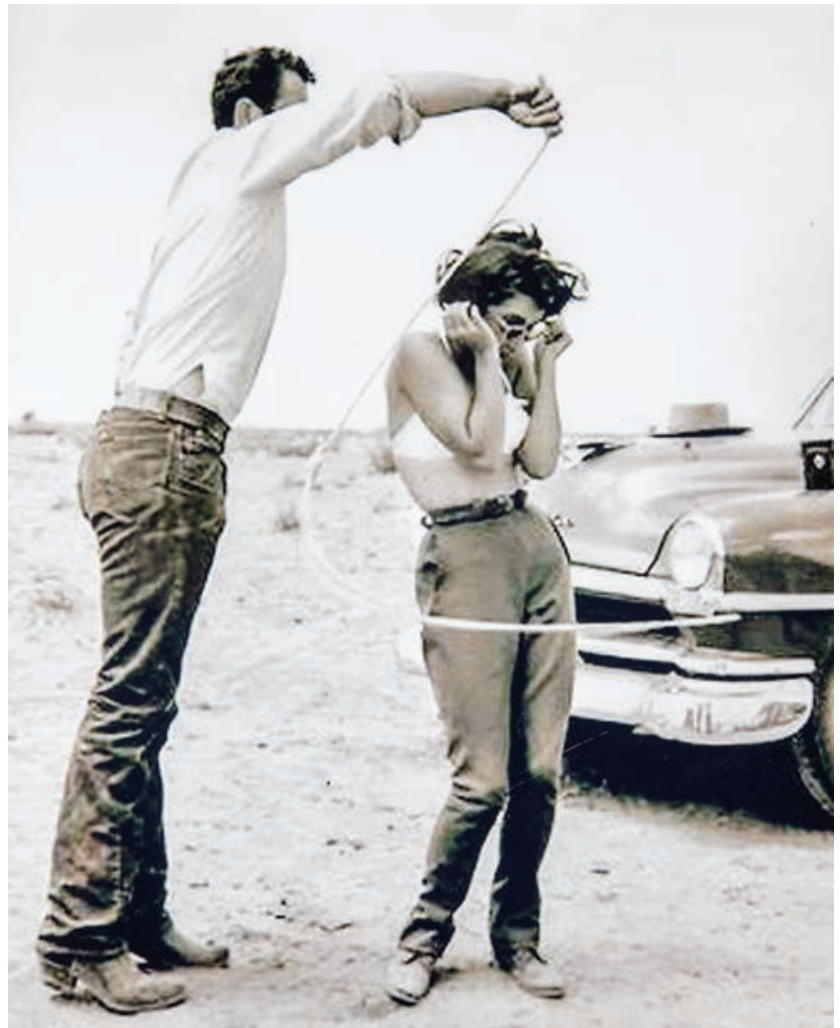
Attention to wardrobe figured into Hinkle's duties as unofficial technical adviser on the West Texas and Panhandle sets of *Giant* and *Hud*, two better-known entries in the catalog of midcentury Texas cinema. When costume design choices went awry—a hat that wasn't creased correctly or was impractical for work, jeans too short for horseback riding—he would issue a concise verdict: "A Texan wouldn't wear that," then figure out a fix.

That was just one duty on two projects over an entertainment career that spanned decades and comprised a raft of roles: stuntman, actor, writer, producer, director and Texas talk man, as *Giant* director George Stevens dubbed him.

Hinkle's preference for an unobstructed view isn't surprising, either. A few years before he coached Hollywood luminaries Rock Hudson, Elizabeth Taylor and Paul Newman on the nuances of a type of Texas dialect—leaving the "g" off words like "walking" and emphasizing r's when they ended a word such as "mother" or "father"—he enjoyed an embarrassment of bird's-eye views.

Born and raised in the South Plains of Texas, Hinkle left high school in 1947 to join the Air Force at 17 after securing a promise from a recruiter that he could continue his education while enlisted. "Nobody in my family ever had a high school diploma," he says. After earning that credential, he spent several months in Europe working on a crew that flew coal from Frankfurt to Berlin.

On one trip, the co-pilot had a heart attack midflight. Hinkle took over co-pilot duties for the rest of the round



Robert Hinkle lassos Elizabeth Taylor on the set of *Giant*.

trip, thanks to the private pilot's license he'd earned at 16.

While stationed overseas, Hinkle's first stop in Vienna was to board the Riesenrad, a 212-foot-tall Ferris wheel. It was a precursor to a ride he'd take a few years later, on a Ferris wheel much closer to home, with his good friend James Dean.

Not bad for a kid from Brownfield who didn't officially exist on paper until his 20s.

The country doctor who attended Hinkle's birth on an unelectrified Terry County ranch in 1930 misrecorded his first name as "Bobbie." It didn't get corrected until some 22 years later, when Hinkle went to the courthouse with his aunt and uncle in tow to vouch for his identity. Today, the nonagenarian takes that misnomer in stride, along with the doctor's weeklong delay in recording his birth on the county rolls. "That old doctor," he says, not unkindly. "At least he got me here."

Hinkle's family followed the crops around for work for a time after his birth. "We were poor," he says. "They were



James Dean shows Hinkle how well he's learned to hogtie.

intense focus on getting the part of Jett Rink, the anti-hero of *Giant*, just right.

"He told me, the day I met him, 'I want you to help me be a Texan 24 hours a day,'" Hinkle says. During filming, the pair grew close as the dialogue coach modeled Texan sensibilities for Dean. They shared meals, pulled pranks and hunted rabbits together. "He was like a brother," Hinkle says, "just like I was raised with him there in Brownfield."

Hinkle says Dean wasn't a big star then, having only one film credit at the time. But his commitment to his craft

and his precision in shaping a character in the likeness of his mentor precipitated a friendship.

"He was so dedicated," says Hinkle, a Pedernales Electric Cooperative member. "He wanted to be with me all the time. Because he wanted to be a Texan. I mean, he watched everything I did and everything I said, watched every person that I met, how I met 'em and things like that, and he just studied it."

That osmosis translated to the screen. Dean received a posthumous Oscar nomination for the role, which came as no surprise to his grieving friend.

"He could have played *Giant* a different way, you know," Hinkle says. "He wanted to play him just as an old down and out cowboy, didn't have anything and didn't figure he'd ever have anything, except a dream."

After filming of *Giant* ended, Dean gave a replica Oscar to Hinkle, inscribed with his name, to thank him for creating the character.

Back at the Masonic Lodge, the afternoon unspools. Just before he tells me about recruiting Buddy Holly to headline a car-selling telethon starring Western character actor Chill Wills, strains of *El Paso* fill the room. It's Hinkle's iPhone ring tone. His eyes crinkle. "That's Marty Robbins," he says. "I managed him for 14 years."

Looking back on his half-century career, spanning roles from cowboy stuntman to mentor to manager and many points in between, I ask if there's anything he'd change.

"No," he says. "I'd just love to do it again. I've had a lot of rough times and things—boy, I'd take them right along with the good ones, if I could just do it one more time." ■

TCP WEB EXTRA Want to see more from Hinkle's Hollywood days? Visit our website.

poor people." After the military and before setting out for Hollywood, Hinkle worked as a weekend rodeo cowboy and in construction, among other jobs. His 12-hour shifts in a West Texas oil field in 1950 and 1951 earned him \$1.76 an hour and, years later, a foothold in a conversation with Howard Hughes, the manufacturing scion and film producer.

An uncredited role in a 1956 film, *The First Traveling Saleslady*, led to a chance meeting of the two Texas transplants in Hollywood. After being instructed by the director to all but pretend not to even see Hughes as he visited the set, Hinkle was wrangled into meeting him anyway when the film's star, Ginger Rogers, walked him over. The inventor didn't offer to shake hands, Hinkle says, but the two quickly found common ground: Much to the magnate's approval, the drill bits the supporting player had used in his oil field days were manufactured by Hughes Tool Company.

During *Giant*'s 1955 production, Hinkle, James Dean and Elizabeth Taylor, along with a handful of other cast and crew members, repaired to Dallas over the Fourth of July weekend, all because the famously violet-eyed star couldn't resist the siren song of Neiman Marcus. Hinkle called the luxury retailer and dropped a few names. Stanley Marcus, the store's owner, not only agreed to allow the group entry to the store on a Sunday, when it would typically be closed, but also sent a plane to Marfa to whisk the group to Love Field.

After being feted by Dallas society in Stanley and Billie Marcus' Highland Park mansion, Hinkle, Taylor and Dean embarked on their shopping excursion, followed by an outing to an offseason Fair Park, home to the state fair, where they rode a rickety wooden roller coaster, sampled carnival fare, played midway games and boarded the soaring Texas Star.

The lighthearted weekend contrasted with Dean's



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LOW AS
\$34.95
ea.

Actual size
is 38 mm

30+ Years of Purity: 2021 Silver Maple Leafs Now Available

First issued more than 30 years ago, the Canadian Silver Maple Leaf has become one of the world's premier silver bullion coins. Millions are struck each year and are quickly secured by both collectors and silver buyers. They are second only to the U.S. Silver Eagle in terms of unit sales, but are superior in terms of purity, legal-tender value and security.

This year's mintage of freshly struck One-Ounce Silver Maple Leaf coins has just been released, meaning NOW is the time to secure yours at an incredible price!

One of the World's Purest Silver Coins — Guaranteed

The Canadian Silver Maple Leaf is one of the world's purest silver coins, struck in a full Troy ounce of 99.99% ("four nines") pure silver. As an official legal-tender coin with a face value of \$5 Canadian, its content and purity come guaranteed by the Canadian Government. By contrast, the U.S. Silver Eagle is only struck in 99.9% purity and carries a \$1 U.S. legal-tender value.

Iconic Maple Leaf Design

Take one look at this coin, and you know exactly where it was created. The reverse features an iconic design featuring a single sugar maple leaf, the national symbol of Canada. This lifelike design features superior texture and detail, and comes surrounded by a vivid burst of radial lines—lines that serve a dual function...

Advanced Security Features

In addition to its high purity, the Silver Maple Leaf boasts special security features, such as laser-engraved radial lines and a small micro-engraved maple leaf, that make it nearly impossible to forge. It's not just one of the world's purest silver coins, but also one of its most secure—an important benefit for silver buyers.

Reputation Matters

Why are we releasing these high-purity coins at such a remarkable price? We want you to know what hundreds of thousands of satisfied collectors and stackers have known since 1984 — GovMint.com is *the best source for coins worldwide*.

Call Now and Beat the Crowd!

This is a strictly limited release of one of the purest silver coins in the world—and a great opportunity to secure one or more hefty 2021 One-Ounce Silver Maple Leafs in their original freshly struck Brilliant Uncirculated (BU) condition.

These newly minted, 99.99% pure silver coins will quickly be secured by collectors and stackers around the world, so don't wait—call 1-866-450-5687 and use the offer code below. Secure five or more and you'll even receive FREE domestic shipping!

2021 Canada 1oz Silver Maple Leaf BU

- 1-4 Coins- \$35.95 ea. + s/h
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- 10-19 Coins- \$35.25 ea. + **FREE SHIPPING**
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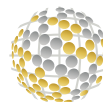
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SACRED STONE OF THE SOUTHWEST IS ON THE BRINK OF EXTINCTION



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

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

We found a limited supply of turquoise from Arizona and snatched it up for our *Sedona Turquoise Collection*. Inspired by the work of those ancient craftsmen and designed to showcase the exceptional blue stone, each stabilized vibrant cabochon features a unique, one-

of-a-kind matrix surrounded in Bali metalwork. You could drop over \$1,200 on a turquoise pendant, or you could secure 26 carats of genuine Arizona turquoise for just \$99.

Your satisfaction is 100% guaranteed. If you aren't completely happy with your purchase, send it back within 30 days for a complete refund of the item price.

The supply of Arizona turquoise is limited, don't miss your chance to own the Southwest's brilliant blue treasure. Call today!

Jewelry Specifications:

• Arizona turquoise • Silver-finished settings

Sedona Turquoise Collection

A. Pendant (26 cts)	\$299	\$99*	Save \$200
B. 18" Bali Naga woven sterling silver chain		\$149	
C. 1 1/2" Earrings (10 ctw)	\$299	\$99*	Save \$200
Complete Set**	\$747	\$249	Save \$498

** Complete set includes pendant, chain and earrings.

Call now and mention the offer code to receive your collection.

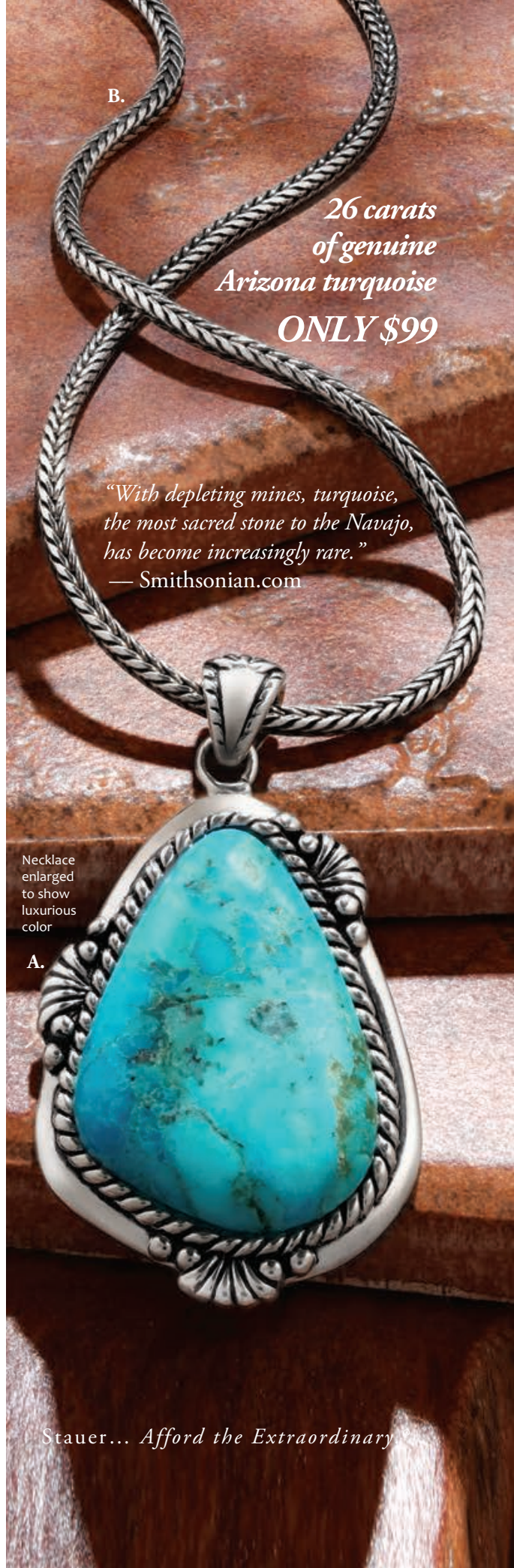
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B.

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of genuine
Arizona turquoise
ONLY \$99

"With depleting mines, turquoise, the most sacred stone to the Navajo, has become increasingly rare."

— Smithsonian.com

Necklace enlarged to show luxurious color

A.

Stauer... Afford the Extraordinary



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Preparing for Disasters

NO MATTER WHERE you live in Texas, it's important to learn about the potential hazards near you to get ahead of possible disasters. Have you considered the types of disasters you may face? Do you know what your risk is for hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, winter storms and wildfires?

As February demonstrated, the worst can happen anytime, so it's important to take disaster preparation seriously. Planning for scenarios such as prolonged power outages or a lack of safe drinking water will make it easier for you and your family to manage a disaster.

Make a Plan

Disasters can happen suddenly, so knowing where your family is and how to communicate with them is important. That's why you need to make a plan. Sit down with your whole family and think through various emergency and disaster situations:

- ▶ What would we do in case of a fire, hurricane, flood or tornado?
- ▶ Where would we meet if we got separated?

- ▶ How will we communicate if phones are not working?
- ▶ Who should be our family's emergency contacts?
- ▶ Where should we go if we have to evacuate and how should we get there?
- ▶ What if we have no home to return to?

As part of your plan, record:

- ▶ Birthdates.
 - ▶ Social Security numbers. Keep these separate from other information for identity security purposes.
 - ▶ Medical provider contact information.
 - ▶ Medical information, including a list of prescription medications and dosages.
 - ▶ Medical and property insurance information.
 - ▶ Work and school phone numbers and addresses.
 - ▶ Emergency contacts.
 - ▶ Designated evacuation and family reunification sites.
 - ▶ Phone numbers of family and friends.
- Local authorities will provide direction on the need to shelter in place or evacuate.

You should have a plan and be prepared for either situation. If you must evacuate, where will you go and how will you get there? If you need to shelter in place, do you have what you need to survive for at least 72 hours?

During many emergencies and disasters, cellphone networks may not work. Do you have another form of communication? How will you receive updates from local authorities to know when the emergency or disaster is over? How will you contact family members?

Build a Kit

No matter the type of disaster, you will need to have food, water and essential supplies for your family and pets.

Pack your supplies in a portable container. A waterproof container is best. If needed, divide your supplies into multiple containers so they are easier to carry. You may also want to create a smaller go-kit of basic supplies in a backpack. If you must leave on foot, you can carry it with you.

Basic supplies should include:

- ▶ A three-day supply of nonperishable food, such as canned or pouched items.
- ▶ 1 gallon of water per day for each person and pet.
- ▶ A manual can opener.
- ▶ Baby items (food, formula, bottles, diapers) and pet supplies, if they're needed.
- ▶ A first-aid kit.
- ▶ Medications.
- ▶ Hand sanitizer and wipes.
- ▶ Flashlights, a battery-powered radio and batteries.

Keep your supplies ready in an easily accessible area. Keep a list of the items you will need to add at the last minute, such as medications, in clear view on your kit. And don't forget to periodically replace items that may expire, such as food and batteries.

Once your plan is complete, print it and keep it in a safe place. And don't forget to practice your plan. The more you practice, the safer you and your family will be during and after a disaster. ■



SIMILJANA ALEKSIC | ISTOCK.COM

Stop Energy Vampires and Save 10%

MOST OF US HAVE tangles of cords to charge our phones and power TVs, computers and other gadgets in our homes. Often those rats nests can represent a significant power drain, even when those devices are turned off or not in use, wasting energy.

Fortunately, there's an easy way to stop this phantom load. Advanced power strips save energy by automatically shutting off power to unused devices. They are simple to use, cost-effective and convenient.

How They Work

Smart strips typically have three types of outlets: one control outlet, always-on outlets and automatically switched outlets. When the device plugged into the control outlet isn't being used, power is cut off to all devices on the switched outlets. Always-on outlets are for plugging in devices that need continuous power, like a cable box.

Different Power Strips for Different Needs

There are three types of smart power strips. Though they work in different ways, they all save energy by disconnecting power to electronic devices that are in standby or sleep mode.

1. Timer-equipped smart strips are programmable. Devices plugged in automatically turn on or off at designated times.
2. Occupancy-sensing devices are controlled by an infrared motion detector. These smart strips detect if someone is in the room and turn plugged-in devices on or off accordingly.
3. Current-sensing smart strips are controlled by a primary outlet. If you plug your TV into the primary outlet, your cable box and video game console will turn off automatically when the TV enters sleep mode. When you turn on the TV, the other electronics turn on as well.

Wi-Fi-enabled smart power strips can connect to your home network, allowing you to control them remotely.

By plugging into advanced power strips, you could save 10% on your electricity bill—and your devices will still be ready to go whenever you need them. ■

Energy Star Makes Product Searches Easy

IF YOU'RE READY to replace appliances in your home, look for the Energy Star logo for savings on products that meet energy efficiency specifications from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Energy Star makes it easy to find rebates and special offers available near you. Just go to energystar.gov and use the rebate finder by typing in your ZIP code.

Depending on the area, products with special offers or rebates could include heat pumps, lightbulbs, pool pumps, air conditioners, clothes dryers, water heaters and more.

You can also use the Energy Star product finder on the website to shop for Energy Star-certified products. Results show product details, possible rebates and nearby retailers. For example, a search for smart thermostats brings up a list of products and where to buy them. You can then select two or more products to compare the features of each in a table format.

These online tools can help you decipher which energy-efficient products are right for your home and budget. ■



OZGURCANAKAYA | ISTOCK.COM



Beachcombing at home.

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

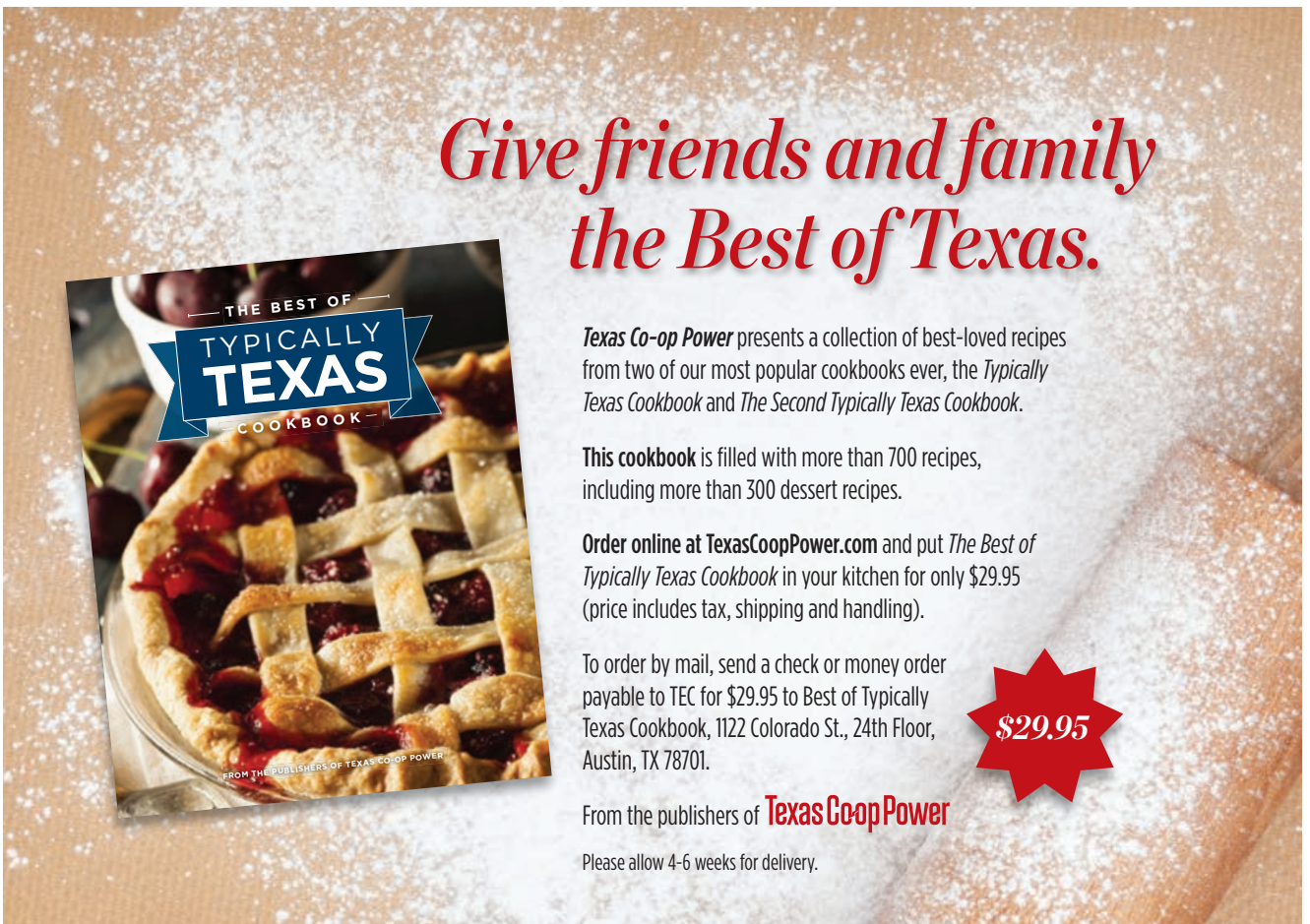
Order online at TexasCoopPower.com for only \$20 (price includes tax, shipping and handling).

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

\$20
or 2 for
\$30

Please allow 4-6 weeks for delivery.

From the publishers of **TexasCoopPower**



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Texas Co-op Power presents a collection of best-loved recipes from two of our most popular cookbooks ever, the *Typically Texas Cookbook* and *The Second Typically Texas Cookbook*.

This cookbook is filled with more than 700 recipes, including more than 300 dessert recipes.

Order online at TexasCoopPower.com and put *The Best of Typically Texas Cookbook* in your kitchen for only \$29.95 (price includes tax, shipping and handling).

To order by mail, send a check or money order payable to TEC for \$29.95 to Best of Typically Texas Cookbook, 1122 Colorado St., 24th Floor, Austin, TX 78701.

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WHARTON COUNTY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE



The 2020 Wharton County Electric Cooperative Board of Directors and staff are: (l-r) John Roach; Samuel Craig Hardin; Patrick Kubala; Gary Raybon, General Manager/CEO; Paul L. Phillips, Jr., Vice President; Frankie Peter, President; Peggy Glaze; Jim W. Harton, Assistant Secretary/Treasurer; Rick Graff, Secretary/Treasurer; and Gus Wessels, Jr.

83rd Annual Meeting of Members

Special Drive Thru Meeting

Due to COVID-19 Pandemic Precautions

DETAILS ON PAGE 2 OF THIS REPORT

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 16, 2021 • 4:00 - 7:00 P.M.

EL CAMPO MIDDLE SCHOOL

2021 BOARD OF DIRECTOR NOMINEES

DETAILS ON PAGE 3 OF THIS REPORT



**JUDY PETER
(DISTRICT 3)**



**RICHARD L. CLARK
(DISTRICT 3)**



**GUS WESSELS, JR.
INCUMBENT
(DISTRICT 6)**



**BRENT CERNY
(DISTRICT 6)**



**CALVIN PFEIL, JR.
(DISTRICT 9)**



**PAMELA R. HUNT
(DISTRICT 9)**



**CHRIS BARBEE
(DISTRICT 9)**

WCEC ANNUAL MEETING OF MEMBERS DRIVE THRU PROCEDURE



MUST BE PRESENT IN VEHICLE TO VOTE!

Each member who votes will receive a \$20 bill credit,
an attendance gift, and entry into the drawing for
WCEC's fabulous door prizes!

Drive thru line will open at 4:00 p.m. Voting will end at 7:00 p.m. SHARP.
No access to drive thru line allowed after 7:00 p.m.

- Enter El Campo Middle School parking lot through the back entrance off of N. Wharton Street. (See Map on Back Cover)
- There will be multiple Registration stations in the ECMS parking lot. You will receive a Director Election and Report Approval Ballot for each membership. To speed up the drive thru process, **PLEASE LOOK OVER THE SAMPLE BALLOT BELOW AND DETERMINE YOUR CHOICES BEFORE THE MEETING.**
- Pick up your attendance gift and drop off your completed ballot with the Balloting Committee. Each voting member will receive a \$20 bill credit on their next month's bill and be entered into the prize drawing which will be held at a later date. Winners will be contacted by phone.

WHARTON COUNTY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING - WEDNESDAY, JUNE 16, 2021 OFFICIAL BALLOT - ELECTION OF DIRECTORS Fill the circle beside Candidate of your choice VOTE FOR ONE IN EACH DISTRICT.			NO.
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>VOTE FOR ONE</u> DISTRICT #3</p> <p>North of Louise & El Campo, Round Mott, and Lost Prong</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Judy Peter</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Richard L. Clark</p> <p><input type="radio"/> _____ <i>Write-In</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>VOTE FOR ONE</u> DISTRICT #6</p> <p>Esquire Estates, West Danevang, and West Midfield</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Gus Wessels, Jr. (<i>Incumbent</i>)</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Brent Cerny</p> <p><input type="radio"/> _____ <i>Write-In</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>VOTE FOR ONE</u> DISTRICT #9</p> <p>Suburban Area surrounding El Campo</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Calvin Pfeil, Jr.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Pamela R. Hunt</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Christopher Barbee</p> <p><input type="radio"/> _____ <i>Write-In</i></p>	
OFFICIAL BALLOT - APPROVAL OF ANNUAL REPORTS The following items were mailed to you as part of the June 2021 Texas Coop Power Magazine. Please check YES or NO for each item.			
<p>I approve the Minutes of the 2020 WCEC Annual Meeting.</p> <p><u>YES</u></p> <p><u>NO</u> Reason: _____</p>	<p>I approve the 2020 WCEC Financial Report.</p> <p><u>YES</u></p> <p><u>NO</u> Reason: _____</p>	<p>I approve the President & Manager's Report</p> <p><u>YES</u></p> <p><u>NO</u> Reason: _____</p>	

DIRECTOR ELECTIONS—THREE-YEAR TERMS

DISTRICT 3

JUDY PETER

“My family and I have lived in Wharton County our entire lives and have been members of WCEC for as many years. My dad, J. Bridges, served on the board in the 1960s and my husband, Frankie, will be terming off this year as WCEC Board President. It was instilled in me at an early age to be a servant and to serve. I would very much like to continue the tradition of my family to serve the patrons, employees, and friends of WCEC.

Wharton County Electric Cooperative has proven itself time and time again in providing to its customers the best of best. You will have to look hard to find a better organization, run by better leaders and employees. WCEC has always been known in this area as a supporter and leader of this community. I will try my best to add my years of expertise to an already ‘successful and well-oiled machine.’

As a candidate of WCEC District 3, I think it will take a board that is ever diligent in this daily-changing world of ours to guide, promote, and safeguard our electric power system. I welcome your calls and comments on how to be more successful and productive.

A big thank you goes out to our linemen and support staff during an unprecedented winter storm just a few months ago. Thank you for this nomination for District 3, and consider marking your ballot for Judy Peter.”

Peter has lived in the WCEC service territory for 70 years. She and her husband, Frankie, have three grown children. She is a graduate of Louise High School as well as a wife, mother, grandmother, farmer, and Realtor.

Peter has served as secretary to the Wharton County Youth Fair Executive Board for 8 years and has been an active member and President of the Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) Board of Directors for 10 years.

RICHARD L. CLARK

“In 1971, WCEC built a line west of Garwood and FM 1693 to an elderly couple who had never had electricity. If it had not been for WCEC, they may have never had electricity. If it had not been for REA, how many others would have been in the same shape? We had coal oil lamps and wood-burning stoves even into the 1970s. Now, thanks to WCEC our lives are so much easier.

Lights at the flick of a switch; push a couple of buttons and your meal is ready in seconds; turn a dial, push a button, put your food in a pot, and your meal is ready when you get home.

I’ve lived through it all - from having to climb every pole to using a bucket truck 99% of the time. Having retired in 2015 after 31 years as a lineman at WCEC, I know what it takes to keep the lights on and the rate as low as possible. Everyone at WCEC - from directors to office personnel to warehouse to linemen and helpers - works hard to keep the lights on and your house comfy.”

Clark has lived in the WCEC service territory for 55 years. He and his wife, Paula, have three grown children and 5 grandchildren. He is a graduate of El

Campo High School and Texas A&M Lineman School. He is retired after 31 years of service at WCEC.

Clark has been a member of the Knights of Columbus for 46 years serving as Inside and Outside Guard and Deputy Grand Knight. He is also on the Taiton Community Center board and served as a member of the WCEC Safety Committee.

DISTRICT 6

GUS WESSELS, JR.

INCUMBENT

“Wharton County Electrical Co-op is successful because of the experienced staff we have including the CEO, linemen, and office professionals. It has been a pleasure working with them over the last three years. During the recent freeze event, all personnel did everything they could to minimize the outages and comply with the mandated response from the power generators and ERCOT. I am sure winterizing the plants will be addressed by the legislature during this session. We need to continue to look at the proper mix of fossil fuel and green energy solutions that will ensure these events will have a minimal impact in the future. I will continue to do my best if elected to a second term as Director of District 6. It is a pleasure serving as your Director.”

Wessels has lived in the WCEC service territory for 60 years and is the Dean of Financial & Business Services/CFO at Wharton County Junior College. He and his wife, Donna, have two adult daughters.

Wessels is a graduate of Southwest Texas State University and a Certified Public Accountant. He is a member of the American Institute of CPAs and the Texas Society of CPAs. He belongs to Christ Lutheran Church and has served on the board of Czech Catholic Home.

BRENT CERNY

“I am a strong supporter of cooperatives and have been my whole life. I feel cooperatives give their members an advantage over large corporations that are owned by stockholders.”

Cerny has lived in the WCEC service territory for 31 years. He and his wife, Sarah, have three children. He is a graduate of El Campo High School and Texas A&M University where he received a B.S. in Agribusiness. He is a district sales manager at Land O’ Lakes as well as a farmer.

Cerny serves on the boards of Danevang Farmer’s Co-op, United Ag, and Texas Farm Bureau.

DISTRICT 9

CALVIN PFEIL, JR.

“The recent chaos showed that our co-ops faired above the rest. They had power when others didn’t. Our member-owned cooperatives provided fantastic service. They are an integral part of today’s world in providing for its members.

I do believe the future will present an even greater need for the product offered. Even in these difficult times, the co-op has been able to keep the price at a good rate. The future looks bright for the co-ops. I

would be proud to serve on the board of our co-op.”

Pfeil has lived in the WCEC service territory for 64 years. He is a graduate of El Campo High School and the University of Texas-Arlington. He is retired as a deputy sheriff/jailer for Wharton County. He has five grown children. He is married to Nancy Novosad Pfeil.

Pfeil is a past officer of the Knights of Columbus, El Campo Little League board, and is a lector and Eucharistic Minister at St. Philip’s Catholic Church.

PAMELA R. HUNT

“The benefits of rural electrification allow member-owned cooperatives to purchase power on a wholesale basis and distribute it using their own network of transmission and distribution lines. It is to provide reliable, safe, competitive electricity to their members. It also provides economic benefits to our community rather than distant stockholders. It is important to maintain electricity to rural areas now and in the future.”

Hunt has lived in the WCEC service territory for 6 years and is the Executive Director of the El Campo Medical Foundation. She and her husband, Tommy, have four grown children. She is a Southwest Texas State University graduate and has her Texas Real Estate License.

Hunt is a member of the Anchor Club, Beta Sigma Phi, Delta Gamma, Pilot Club, Rotary Club, and First Baptist Church. She is involved with many youth-oriented organizations such as Rotary Literacy, FBC Youth Committee, and the Shattered Dreams project.

CHRIS BARBEE

“Rural electrification gives those in the country the same advantages as their city neighbors. Since July 24, 1939 when the first rural electric lines were energized in Wharton County, rural electrification continues to change and improve lives. Member-owned cooperatives like WCEC purchase power on a wholesale basis and distribute it using their own network of transmission and distribution lines.

With commercial utilities, only major shareholders have any say in running the company. All members of cooperatives can take part in shaping policies and influencing the business, as expressed through your election of directors. Unlike commercial utilities, cooperatives focus on service, not profits.

I think all will agree that during the recent freeze it was GREAT being a WCEC member! Our WCEC team kept the lights, and heat, on as much as possible while some of our neighbors on AEP lines went 3-4 continuous days without power. That was a benefit of rural electrification.”

Barbee has lived in the WCEC service territory for 53 years. He and his wife, Carol, have two grown children. Barbee is a graduate of El Campo High School and the University of Texas. He is the current mayor of El Campo and the former Publisher of the El Campo Leader-News and City of El Campo Community Services Director.

Barbee is a member of the Rotary Club, a charter member of the El Campo Museum Society and El Campo BEEs, and has served as an officer for the El Campo Hospital Authority, El Campo Chamber of Commerce, West Wharton County American Cancer Society, and Texas Press Association. He is a life member of the NRA and a deacon at First Baptist Church.



Strength Through Adversity PRESIDENT & MANAGER'S REPORT



PRESIDENT
FRANKIE PETER



MANAGER
GARY RAYBON

2020 and the first quarter of 2021 will be a time that we remember for the rest of our lives. We can safely say that we are all glad to see that time frame in the rear-view mirror. From a history-making pandemic to a record-shattering ice storm, we all should be commended for simply making it to the point of having an Annual Meeting. In April 2020 when the WCEC Board approved protecting the membership by having a drive-through Annual Meeting, we all assumed that it would be a one-time affair and by June of 2021 everything would be back to normal. As the saying goes, "Man makes plans... and God laughs." At the February 2021 meeting of the WCEC Board, it was decided out of an abundance of caution to once again hold a drive-through Annual Meeting. While we would prefer to get together with the members and enjoy a good meal and fellowship, we feel that this is the best decision at this time.

Starting in mid-March 2020, your Board and the employees at WCEC have overcome and adapted to changes in operations due to the global pandemic. During 2020 the Board held both virtual meetings and socially distant meetings. While not optimal, the necessary work of the Board was accomplished and the Board remains united in moving forward with the goals and mission of WCEC. Throughout the year the employees have adapted to changed working hours, mask requirements, and socially distancing rules which at the time seemed to change hourly. Through it all, the employees got the job done with no complaints and a smile on their faces. Through the pandemic and resulting shutdowns, our priority has been the safety of our employees while maintaining the level of service that our members have come to expect from WCEC. We hope that we have

accomplished that goal.

The events surrounding Valentine's day and winter storm Uri were extremely trying for WCEC. While we were lucky to not have much damage to our electrical system, we were exposed to over 100 hours of ERCOT mandated rotating outages. While our power supplier South Texas Electric Cooperative (STEC) was providing all the generating capacity to serve our loads, being part of the ERCOT grid meant our members were subject to the rotating outages like everyone else in the state. We apologize for any inconvenience that the outages caused, but please believe our employees did an amazing job of fielding questions from members and assisting STEC in minimizing the duration of the rotating outages. A special thanks for all the kind words of support from our members during that difficult week.

As of the writing of this report, there is still turmoil at ERCOT, and the powers that be in Austin are holding hearings on design changes and restructuring the wholesale market. Please be assured that your voice as a cooperative member will be heard in any and all discussions.

As we have since 1938, WCEC will continue to answer to the needs of the members we serve with a sense of dedication and a smile on our faces.

For Peggy Glaze and Frankie Peter, this Annual Meeting marks the end of their service on the WCEC Board as each of them has reached their term limits. They wish to say "Thank You" for the honor of serving the membership of WCEC for nine years.

OPERATION ROUND UP 2020 CHARITABLE FUND DISTRIBUTION

100 Club of Wharton County
All Little Things Country
Blessing Cup
Boys & Girls Club of El Campo
Danish Historical Preservation Society
El Campo Art Association
El Campo Community Events

El Campo Medical Foundation
El Campo Red Wave Booster Club
El Campo Youth Baseball
Everyday Heroes
Garwood Volunteer Fire Department
Hospice Support
Louise Beautification, Inc.

Matagorda County CASA
Matagorda Women's Crisis Center
Patriots & Heroes Outdoors
Shall Not Hunger
Texana Center
Wharton County Youth Fair

2020 COBANK SHARING SUCCESS GRANT RECIPIENTS

Helping Hands Ministries | Manna Meals | Wharton County Youth Fair

MINUTES OF 2020 MEETING OF MEMBERS

Minutes of Annual Meeting of Members

June 17, 2020

Wharton County Electric Cooperative, Inc. held its 82nd annual membership meeting Wednesday, June 17, 2020 at the El Campo Civic Center in El Campo, Texas. On June 1, 2019, each member of the cooperative was mailed, in the 82nd Annual Meeting brochure, an Official Notice of Annual Meeting of Members to be held June 17, 2020.

Due to the global coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic and Texas Governor Greg Abbott issuing an executive order to observe social distancing of at least six feet between persons, at a special called board meeting, the Board of Directors of Wharton County Electric Cooperative, Inc. voted to continue with plans to hold the annual membership meeting as scheduled; however, the format would be a "drive-through" for the safety of both cooperative members and employees. No meal was served. To abide by the social distance rule, members remained in their vehicles at all times.

Registration began at 4:00 PM. Upon entering the Civic Center parking lot, members received an additional copy of the Texas Co-op Power insert showing information and photos of Director Nominees; the 2019 Annual Meeting Minutes; 2019 Financial Report, and the President's and Manager's Reports. Members then drove under the covered portico and stopped. WCEC employees registered members and gave them a two-part ballot. The first part of the ballot was the Election of Directors; the second part was the Approval Ballot allowing members to approve the Minutes of the 2019 Annual Membership Meeting, the 2019 Financial Report, and the President's and Manager's Reports.

Members then drove around the building for the second stop. Here each voting member received an attendance gift. Any children in the vehicle also received a special attendance gift.

As members continued driving around the back of the building, the third and last stop was the ballot drop-off area. Here the pre-selected Ballot Committee collected the ballots. Members then exited the parking lot.

At 7:00pm sharp, no further entries were allowed into the parking lot. Any members still in line were allowed to register and vote.

After all ballots had been collected, the Ballot Committee consisting of Bryan Popp, District 1; Thomas Kaspar, District 2; David Kutac, District 3; Steven Goetsch, District 4; Donald Southall, District 5; Donna Wessels, District 6; Tiffany Riha, District 7; Cuatro Strack, District 8; and Albert Rucka, District 9, were directed to an area to count the ballots with the assistance of Patsy Metting, Manager of Accounting.

Director Nominees were:

- District #2: Patrick Kubala; Karl H. Haupt
- District #5: Annett K. Simmons; Rick Marik; Samuel Craig Hardin
- District #8: Fritz Cornelius; Jim W. Harton, Incumbent.

Immediately after all ballots had been counted, winners of the Director Election were certified by Ballot Committee Chairman Cuatro Strack. Those elected by simple majority vote were:

- District #2: Patrick Kubala
- District #5: Samuel Craig Hardin
- District #8: Jim W. Harton

General Manager/CEO Gary Raybon and outgoing President Leroy Kaspar called all candidates and notified them of the results.

The Approval Ballots were tallied with the following results:

- The Minutes of the 2019 Annual Membership Meeting were approved.
- The 2019 Financial Report was approved.
- The President's and Manager's Reports were approved.

Each registered member will receive a \$20.00 bill credit that will be applied to the June billing period. Given the unusual format of the 2020 meeting, on Thursday, June 18th, registration cards were printed for each voting member, and the cards were put in a drawing for prizes. The drawing for twenty (20) prizes took place at the WCEC headquarters office on Facebook Live. All name cards were included for the final grand prize drawings. Grand prize winners were:

- \$100 free electricity: Bobby Peter
- \$100 free electricity: Stephen Hilderbride
- \$100 free electricity: Felix E. Mica, Jr.
- \$300 free electricity: Alice Atchetee

The final count of voting members was a Wharton County Electric Cooperative history-breaking record of 760. Given the unexpected turnout, only 500 ballots were ordered and more ballots had to be made. There were only 500 attendance gifts ordered and vouchers were given for those who did not get one.

2021 SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

UNFORTUNATELY, THE 2021 GOVERNMENT-IN-ACTION YOUTH TOUR WAS CANCELED DUE TO COVID-19. THREE \$2,500 SCHOLARSHIPS WERE AWARDED IN LIEU OF THE TRIP.



KAYLA BOLFING
El Campo High School
District 8
Daughter of Steve Bolfing
and Gloria Williams.



CALE CHAMBERS
El Campo High School
District 4
Son of Scott and
Tammy Chambers.



TRENT VILLARREAL
Rice High School
District 1
Son of Gabriel and
Shannon Villarreal.

FINANCIAL REPORT

BALANCE SHEET

ASSETS AND OTHER DEBITS

	As of 12/31/20	As of 12/31/19
Total Utility Plant in Service	\$ 67,535,576	\$64,524,255
Construction Work in Progress	1,055,939	994,494
Total Utility Plant	68,591,514	65,518,750
Accumulated Provision for Depreciation	(1,137,272)	(10,349,518)
Net Utility Plant	\$57,454,242	\$55,169,232
Investment in Assoc. Org. - Patronage Capital	\$20,518,313	\$19,541,041
Investment in Assoc. Org. - Other Non-Gen. Funds	516,211	522,579
Other Investments	2,460	2,460
Total Other Property & Investments	\$21,036,984	\$20,066,081
Cash - General Funds	\$403,818	\$1,090,768
Temporary Investments	0	0
Accounts Receivable - Sales of Energy (net)	1,691,957	1,636,026
Accounts Receivable - Other (net)	149,909	57,662
Materials and Supplies	29,351	38,599
Prepayments	221,444	209,258
Other Current and Accrued Assets	0	0
Total Current and Accrued Assets	\$2,496,479	\$3,032,314
Other Deferred Debits	\$631,995	\$809,405
Total Assets and Equities	\$81,619,700	\$79,077,031

MARGINS AND EQUITIES

Memberships	\$20,900	\$20,610
Patronage Capital	42,385,099	40,794,330
Operating Margins - Prior Years	0	0
Operating Margins - Current Year	1,784,559	2,126,939
Nonoperating Margins	57,395	123,265
Other Margins and Equities	60,370	60,370
Total Margins and Equities	\$ 44,308,323	\$43,125,514

LIABILITIES AND OTHER CREDITS

Long-Term Debt	\$35,022,712	\$33,586,942
Accumulated Operating Provisions	23,905	43,905
Accounts Payable	1,494,935	1,381,135
Other Current and Accrued Liabilities	401,092	487,406
Total Current and Accrued Liabilities	\$1,896,027	\$1,868,541
Other Deferred Credits	\$368,733	452,130
Total Liabilities and Other Credits	\$81,619,700	\$79,077,031
Equity as a Percent of Assets	54.286%	54.536%
Equity as a Percent of Capitalization	55.852%	56.217%

SUMMARY OF OPERATING STATEMENT

Revenue	\$21,699,871	\$21,534,251
Less Cost of Power	14,428,636	14,283,246
Gross Margin	7,271,235	7,251,005
Distribution Expense - Operations	611,217	631,326
Distribution Expense - Maintenance	985,221	995,986
Consumer Accounting Expense	437,785	427,041
Customer Service and Information Expense	77,751	82,025
Sales Expense	90,258	85,424
Administration and General Expense	863,152	853,733
Total Operations and Maintenance Expense	\$ 17,494,021	\$17,358,781
Depreciation, Tax and Interest Expense		
Depreciation and Amortization Expense	\$1,913,820	\$1,812,237
Interest Expense - Long-term Debt	1,610,628	1,598,540
Interest Expense - Other	9,310	8,708
Total Depreciation and Interest Expense	\$3,533,758	\$3,419,484
Cost of Electric Service	\$21,027,779	\$20,778,265
Operating Margins	\$672,092	\$755,986
Nonoperating Margins - Interest	20,271	33,428
Nonoperating Margins - Other	37,124	89,837
Generation and Transmission Capital Credits	839,063	1,116,746
Other Capital Credits and Patronage Dividends	273,404	254,207
Patronage Capital or Margins	\$1,841,954	\$2,250,204

2020 REVENUE



2020 EXPENSES



Rick Graff
Secretary/Treasurer

Wharton County
Electric Cooperative

Feb. 18, 2021

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

Wharton County Electric Cooperative, Inc.

El Campo, Texas

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of Wharton County Electric Cooperative, Inc. (the Cooperative), which comprise the balance sheets as of December 31, 2020 and 2019, and the related statements of revenue and patronage capital, and cash flows for the years then ended, and the related notes to the financial statements.

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America; this includes the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audits. We conducted our audits in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditors' judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. Accordingly, we express no such opinion. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Wharton County Electric Cooperative, Inc. as of December 31, 2020 and 2019, and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the years then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Bumgardner, Morrison & Company, LLP

Bumgardner, Morrison & Company, LLP

Certified Public Accountants

Victoria, Texas

EMPLOYEE YEARS OF SERVICE MILESTONES



45 YEARS

PATSY METTING
Accounting Manager



40 YEARS

LUZ-MARIA ARREDONDO
Consumer Service Manager



10 YEARS

JODY DOMEL
Foreman



5 YEARS

RICKY GARZA
Journeyman Lineman



5 YEARS

DANIEL GUTIERREZ
Journeyman Lineman



5 YEARS

BRAYDEN PAYNE
Journeyman Lineman



5 YEARS

ANDREW ROTHBAUER
Network Technician

YOUR DEDICATED WCEC HOME TEAM

Wesley Lange 51	Linda Bacak 22	Andrew Rothbauer 5
Clarence Kunz 49	Tim Bohuslar 16	Troy Korenek 4
Patsy Metting 45	Miriam Piloto 16	Shelly Schulz 4
Brenda Rodriguez 43	Willie Stavena (part-time) 16	Gene Puryear 4
Janice Kulcak 42	Lee Wayne Roddy 14	Lance Kolafa 4
Luz-Maria Arredondo 40	Chris Cavness 13	Carol Diaz 3
Gary L. Raybon 37	Jody Domel 10	Spencer Sebring 2
Richard Arnett 34	Selena Delapena 9	Jayson McKeon 2
Kenny Trochta 33	Nathan Danielson 8	Russell Shelton 1
Donald Priesmeyer 32	Glenn "Dusty" White 7	Esmeralda Leon5 mos.
Vance Jaks 27	Keaton Hubbell 6	Ashley Wells (part-time)3 mos.
Keith Beal 24	Ricky Garza 5	Matthew Abbott 1 mo.
Juan Rubio 23	Daniel Gutierrez 5	
Mario Manriquez 22	Brayden Payne 5	

RETIREES FOR 2021



RICHARD JALOWY
ENGINEERING MANAGER

44 Years
of Service



DIANE BARGER
HUMAN RESOURCES ADMINISTRATOR

42 Years
of Service



PATRICK CERNY
SERVICE LINEMAN

32 Years
of Service

WEST LOOP

FM 2765

N. MECHANIC STREET

El Campo Middle School

Wednesday, June 16
4-7 p.m.

DO NOT ENTER WHARTON STREET FROM N. MECHANIC! CONTINUE TO TURA STREET.

Please be courteous! Do not use business driveways to reach Wharton Street - continue to Tura Street. Do not block traffic on Wharton Street.

VOTING ENDS AT 7 P.M. SHARP.
NO ACCESS TO THE DRIVE THRU LINE AFTER 7 P.M

ENTER HERE FROM WHARTON STREET

TURA ST.

N. WHARTON STREET

DO NOT ENTER HERE



EXIT HERE

GIFT PICK UP

BALLOT DROP OFF



EL CAMPO MIDDLE SCHOOL



\$20 Bill Credit, Attendance Gift, and Entry for Prize Drawing for each Member Who Votes!
MUST BE PRESENT TO VOTE.

MEETING OF MEMBERS
Drive Thru Meeting
Due to COVID-19 Precautions



Don't Go Out on a Limb

Safety for you and your children is a top priority at your electric co-op. Kids don't always know—or remember—what can be dangerous, so it's up to all of us to watch out for them. Safety rules for power lines:

Don't plant trees or install tall playground equipment under or near power lines.

Don't build treehouses in trees near electric lines.

Don't allow children to climb trees near power lines.

Teach your children to always look up to check for power lines before climbing trees or any tall objects.

Keep children away from ladders and equipment that may be near power lines.

And the No. 1 safety rule for everyone to remember: Never touch a power line or anything that's touching a power line. Look up and live!

Your electric cooperative encourages you to always practice safety.



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Do Words Bug You?

A master naturalist spins a web around the tangled language of the natural world

BY SHERYL SMITH-RODGERS • ILLUSTRATION BY GORDON STUDER

A PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN six years ago captured me pointing to a warning sign posted on a Galveston beach. The sign read: CAUTION—POISONOUS SNAKES IN DUNES. The choice of adjective still irks me. But I understand. I, too, made the same mistake before I learned my first naturalist lesson. Since then, I've learned many more.

Poisonous or venomous? The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines poison as “a substance that through its chemical action usually kills, injures or impairs an organism.” Venom is “a toxic substance produced by some animals ... that is injected ... chiefly by biting or stinging and has an injurious or lethal effect.” Poison must be consumed whereas venom must be injected.

Bite or sting? A venomous bite happens when a creature sinks its fangs into a victim and injects venom through special structures in its mouth. Stings occur when a creature jabs venom into a victim through its stinger. Spiders and snakes bite; bees and wasps sting.

Bee or wasp? To tell the difference, look at the body. Honeybees, carpenter bees and bumblebees have plump, fuzzy bodies with thick legs. Honeybee colonies generally build their honeycomb nests inside tree cavities or human-made boxes. They sting once, then die. Carpenter bees and bumblebees, which respectively nest in wood and underground burrows, can sting but rarely do. The majority of native bees in Texas are solitary, meaning they nest alone.

Wasps have slender, smooth bodies with narrow waists, skinny legs and bright markings. They usually build papery nests and can sting repeatedly. Examples include yellow jackets and paper wasps. As for hornets, they're larger than wasps. Texas has only one kind—the bald-faced hornet, which is actually a yellow jacket. Aren't common names confusing?

Bug or insect? First, all bugs are insects. But not all insects are bugs. Bugs are classified as insects because they all have six legs, segmented bodies and exoskeletons. But not all insects have a mouth part called a proboscis. Only true bugs do. Examples include stink bugs, leafhoppers, cicadas, aphids and bedbugs. True bugs also hatch from eggs as tiny versions of their adult selves. Insects, such as butterflies, ants, flies and beetles, go through the stages of egg, larva and pupa.

Butterfly or moth? Most butterflies fly during the day. They're usually brightly colored and have slender, smooth bodies with club-tipped antennae. At rest, they hold their wings up. In contrast, most moths fly at night. They're usually drab in color and have fuzzy, thick bodies with feathered or tapered antennae. At rest, most fold their wings back.

Chrysalis or cocoon? Butterflies and moths pupate. That is, both metamorphose from caterpillars (larvae) into pupae, which then transform into adults. Most moth caterpillars spin a silk case called a cocoon around themselves. Inside, they pupate and emerge as adults. Butterfly caterpillars attach themselves to a safe place. Then they wiggle out of their caterpillar skin, leaving behind a smooth chrysalis that hardens and protects the pupa inside. Later, an adult butterfly breaks out of the chrysalis.

Spider or daddy longlegs? Another taxonomy lesson first. Spiders and daddy longlegs both have eight legs and exoskeletons. That makes them arachnids. The two differ in that spiders have two body parts and spin silk; daddy longlegs (also called harvestmen) have one body part and spin no silk. Unlike spiders, they have no fangs or venom.

Turtle or tortoise? All tortoises are turtles. But not all turtles are tortoises. Both are classified in a group of hard-shelled animals known as turtles. True turtles live in or near water and most have webbed feet and a smooth shell. Not so for tortoises, which have stumpy feet and live exclusively on land. Tortoises eat only plants; turtles eat plants and animals.

Frog or toad? Look at the skin. Generally, toads have bumpy, dry skin and don't need to live near water. Frogs have smooth, moist skin and require a watery habitat. Both live in my yard. Gulf Coast toads, warty and blackish gray, show up in my flower beds sometimes. They're harmless. Not so for the resident Rio Grande leopard frogs. To my dismay, they hang out in my stock tank and trample the aquatic plants, but they can't hurt a human.

What's a gardener to do? That's a lesson I haven't learned yet. ■

TCP WEB EXTRA

Go online, where the author corrects William Shakespeare.

COCOON



Chrysalis

Moths



Sting



HORNET

Caterpillars



Spiders

BITE

POISONOUS

SNAKES

VENOMOUS

Frogs

Turtles



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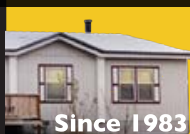
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CELEBRATING
10
YEARS

TEXAS MINT

We are excited to announce the release of the 2021 Texas Silver Round – Revolution Series. This is the second release of a four-year series commemorating the battles of the Texas Revolution. Each Texas Silver Round is one troy ounce .9999 fine silver.

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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TXPOWER2021

to get a free Collector's Booklet with any order!



BATTLE OF GONZALES

first in the series ● ● ● ●

The stunning 2020 Texas Silver Round depicts a scene from the Battle of Gonzales, with three Texian revolutionaries defending the famous Gonzales cannon, while brandishing the Come And Take It Flag.



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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TCP WEB EXTRA

See Gigi Coleman's performance as Bessie Coleman.

Back in the U.S. a year later, she became the first Black woman to perform in an air show. She toured the country making speeches, executing tricks, stunting like a daredevil and working as an activist against discrimination. Coleman, nicknamed Queen Bess, had a reputation for refusing to perform for segregated audiences. Using money she earned from barnstorming, she purchased her own plane, a Curtiss JN-4.

Tragedy struck during a test flight April 30, 1926, over Florida, when a loose wrench jammed the control gears and flipped the plane upside down. She wasn't wearing her seat belt, and the plane had no canopy. Coleman, 34, fell to her death.

Black newspapers gave her death front-page coverage, but the mainstream press barely noted it. In 2019, *The New York Times*, as part of an effort to recognize the lives of remarkable people whose deaths went unreported at the time, ran a complete obituary. "Coleman saw aviation as a way to empower Black people in America and dreamed of opening a flight school," it wrote. "Future pilots said they had been inspired by her, and flight clubs have been named in her honor."

The Challenger Air Pilots Association of Chicago began an annual tradition of flying over Coleman's grave there in 1931. The U.S. Postal Service issued a stamp in her honor in 1995 after Marion Coleman, Bessie's niece, persistently petitioned for it. Texas historical markers stand in Atlanta and Waxahachie, Bessie's former hometowns.

A great-niece, Gigi Coleman, portrays Bessie Coleman in a one-woman show that she performs around the country.

"When I do my performance, people cry," Gigi Coleman says. "I'm very proud to be a relative of hers. She was a trailblazer, and she didn't take no for an answer." ■

Queen Bess Soared

Bessie Coleman slipped from the grips of gravity and Jim Crow to become the first African American female pilot and first Native American female pilot

BY AINSLEY SHAW

JIM CROW SEGREGATION laws seemed to have a grasp like gravity on Bessie Coleman—as they did for most African Americans in the early 20th century—keeping her from rising very high in life.

Coleman, born in 1892 in Atlanta, Texas, to an African American maid and a Native American sharecropper, spent her youth picking cotton. She likely never dreamed she would go on to become the first African American woman and first Native American woman to earn a pilot's license—two years before Amelia Earhart earned hers—100 years ago.

When she was 23, Coleman moved in with two of her brothers and found work as a manicurist in Chicago. Her brother John, who served in Europe during

World War I, drunkenly teased her one day about the wider range of opportunities for women in France. He told her, "Women ain't never goin' to fly, not like those women I saw in France," according to *Queen Bess: Daredevil Aviator*, a biography by Doris L. Rich.

Coleman took that as a challenge and responded, "That's it! You just called it for me." She decided to head to France, where she would face fewer obstacles for being Black and a woman.

After spending her nights learning French and days managing a chili restaurant, Coleman sailed to France and found a pilot to train her. Seven months later, she earned her pilot's license from the Fédération Aéronautique Internationale, on June 15, 1921.

Tomatoes

Sliced is nice, but you can also bake them into saucy desserts

BY MEGAN MYERS, FOOD EDITOR

For years I avoided eating tomatoes in anything but pasta sauce or pizza. Thankfully those days are behind me, and now I look forward to when my garden starts producing piles of cherry tomatoes and sandwich-ready slicers. This cake helps use up any extra tomatoes you might have on hand—and gets kids to eat them. This recipe was one of the first to appear on soup cans, and this iteration's use of fresh tomatoes only improves it. Filled with spices and wonderfully moist, it will become a summer staple.



Tomato Cake

CAKE

- 1 pound tomatoes, or more as needed to yield 2 cups plus 2 tablespoons purée, divided use**
- 2 cups flour**
- 2 teaspoons baking powder**
- 1 teaspoon baking soda**
- 1 teaspoon salt**
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon**
- 1 teaspoon ground cardamom**
- ½ teaspoon ground ginger**
- ½ cup packed brown sugar**
- ½ cup sugar**
- ¾ cup (1½ sticks) butter, softened**
- 2 eggs**

GLAZE

- 1½ cups powdered sugar**
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract**
- Reserved tomato purée**

- 1. CAKE** Preheat oven to 350 degrees and coat a 10-cup Bundt pan with cooking spray.
- 2.** Core and quarter tomatoes. Purée in a blender or food processor until completely smooth. Measure out 2 cups and set aside, reserving remainder.
- 3.** In a large bowl, sift together flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt, cinnamon, cardamom and ginger.
- 4.** In another bowl, beat sugars and butter until the batter is creamed and fluffy. Beat in eggs one at a time.
- 5.** Alternate adding flour mixture and tomato purée to the batter, starting and ending with the flour. Incorporate fully before each addition.
- 6.** Pour batter into the prepared pan and bake 40 minutes, or until a toothpick comes out clean.
- 7.** Let cake cool in pan 10 minutes, then invert onto a rack to cool completely.
- 8. GLAZE** Mix powdered sugar, vanilla and 2 tablespoons tomato purée until completely smooth. Add more sugar or liquid as necessary. Drizzle over cooled cake.

SERVES 10

TCP WEB EXTRA Follow along with Megan Myers and her adventures in the kitchen at stetted.com, where she features a recipe for Roasted Corn and Tomato Salad.



Broiled Stuffed Tomatoes

JOYCELYN SKIDMORE
LAMAR ELECTRIC

The ideal starter for any summer dinner, these stuffed tomatoes are ready in a flash. If you have one handy, a melon baller makes easy work of removing tomato seeds.

- 4–6 tomatoes**
- ½ cup breadcrumbs**
- ¼ cup chopped fresh basil or parsley**
- 3 tablespoons minced green onion**
- 1–2 cloves garlic, minced**
- ¼ teaspoon salt, plus more for sprinkling**
- ¼ teaspoon pepper, plus more for sprinkling**
- ⅛ teaspoon dried thyme**
- ¼ cup olive oil, plus more for drizzling**

- 1.** Core tomatoes. Using a spoon, scoop out seeds and juice, taking care not to break the sides of the tomatoes. Set tomatoes upside down in a colander to drain.
- 2.** In a small bowl, combine breadcrumbs, basil or parsley, green onion, garlic, salt, pepper, and thyme. Stir in olive oil until mixture is well combined and looks like wet sand.
- 3.** Sprinkle salt and pepper into each tomato. Fill tomatoes with breadcrumb mixture and set on a rimmed baking sheet. Drizzle with additional olive oil. Broil at 400 degrees 5–10 minutes, keeping an eye on the breadcrumbs so they don't burn.

SERVES 4–6

[MORE RECIPES >](#)



\$500 WINNER

Tangy Tomato Slices

DALA BURK
WISE EC



This simple yet flavorful dish brings back summer memories for Burk, who has been enjoying this recipe for 40 years. Enjoy the slices on their own or tucked into a warm biscuit for a best-ever tomato sandwich.

SERVES 6

- 6 tomatoes, thinly sliced**
- 1 onion, thinly sliced**
- 1 cup olive oil**
- ⅓ cup vinegar**
- ¼ cup chopped fresh parsley**
- 3 tablespoons chopped fresh basil**
- 1 tablespoon sugar**
- 1 teaspoon salt**
- ½ teaspoon pepper**
- ½ teaspoon dry mustard**
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder**

- 1.** Layer tomato and onion slices in a 9-by-13-inch baking dish and set aside.
- 2.** In a small bowl, whisk together remaining ingredients. Pour over tomatoes and onion, using a spatula to spread herbs evenly. Cover and chill 4–5 hours before serving.

TCP \$500 Recipe Contest

PIES DUE JUNE 10

OK, time to show off. We know readers all over the state serve up prize pies. Could yours be the \$500 winner? Enter at TexasCoopPower.com/contests by June 10.



Savory Tomato Bread Pudding

VALERIE KRUSE
TRI-COUNTY EC

This dish is ideal for using up day-old bread. Since the tomatoes cook down, feel free to use not-so-perfect ones.

- 8 tablespoons olive oil, divided use
- 1 large baguette, cut into 1-inch cubes
- 3 cloves garlic, chopped
- 3 pounds tomatoes, cored and cut into chunks
- 2 teaspoons sugar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon pepper
- 1 cup grated Parmesan, Asiago

or Romano cheese
2 tablespoons chopped fresh basil (optional)

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Lightly coat a large casserole dish with cooking spray and set aside. Heat 6 tablespoons olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the bread cubes and stir to coat. Sauté about 5 minutes or until bread is lightly browned and toasted, working in batches if needed. Transfer to a large bowl.
2. Add remaining olive oil to the skillet and cook the garlic 30 seconds. Add tomatoes, sugar, salt and pepper and stir well. Cook until tomatoes have released their juices and are submerged, about 10 minutes.
3. Add tomato mixture to bread cubes. Stir well to combine. Pour mixture into casserole dish and top with cheese.
4. Bake 40–45 minutes, loosening the edges with a spatula after 30 minutes to allow juices to distribute. Remove from oven and let rest 15 minutes, then sprinkle with chopped basil and serve.

SERVES 6–8

Tasty Tomato Types

BY MEGAN MYERS

While there are more than 10,000 varieties of tomatoes, most of us return to our tried-and-true favorites when cooking.

Globe

Alongside beefsteak tomatoes, this round, firm and juicy variety is what you'll most likely find at the super-market. They're delicious raw and cooked, and their shape makes them suitable for stuffing.

Roma

Roma and plum tomatoes are oblong and most commonly used for sauces thanks to their lower water content.

Cherry and Grape

These bite-size tomatoes are perfect raw for salads but also are delicious sautéed or roasted with herbs. Sweet varieties are a hit with kids, making them a great healthy snack.

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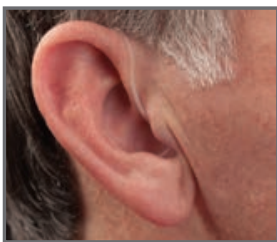


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COURTESY CHET GARNER

Deep Dip

Wimberley's seemingly bottomless Jacob's Well invites a plunge

BY CHET GARNER

STANDING ON A limestone ledge and staring into Texas' strangest swimming hole, I remembered my mother's warning, "Don't jump unless you know what's underneath you." I wasn't completely sure what was beneath the surface, but with a crowd of cheering onlookers, chickening out was not an option. I held my breath and braced for the unknown.

This is the thrill of Jacob's Well, a spring-fed swimming hole near Wimberley that's been attracting visitors for centuries. The hole itself measures less than 20 feet across but looks like it plummets to the center of the Earth. In reality, it descends into a series of caverns that extend a mile back into the Earth. Every minute of every day, the Edwards Aquifer pushes a river of fresh water out of the cave and feeds Cypress Creek.

As I completed the plunge, my only thought was, "Wow! That's cold." The spring water holds at a chilly 68 degrees year-round. Once I regained my composure, I could appreciate the fact that I was floating above what seemed like a bottomless pit of water. I had to see what was down there.

I grabbed my goggles, pointed my head toward the bottom and started kicking. I could feel the mass of water pushing against me with its invisible current, and the water was so clear that I could see every detail of the algae-covered walls and the ledge 25 feet down. With every bit of strength and air that I had, I propelled myself to the stone shelf and from there could see the small opening to the deeper and darker caves.

That was enough to freak me out, so I quickly turned and swam to the sunshine and safety of the surface. It was time for another jump. ■

ABOVE Chet leaps into Jacob's Well.

TCP WEB EXTRA See Chet's video from Jacob's Well and check out his Explorations 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.

JUNE

04

Bandera [4, 11, 18, 25; July 2, 9, 16, 23, 30; Aug. 6] **Riding on Faith Rodeo**, (830) 777-7129, facebook.com/ridingonfaithrodeoseries

Denton [4–Sept. 4] **Soul Art Renewal: General Art Exhibition**, (940) 382-2787, dentonarts.com

05

Bulverde [5–July 31] **Saturday Night Rodeo**, (830) 980-2226, tejasrodeo.com

Hunt [5, 12, 19, 26, July 3, 10, 17, 24, 31] **Crider's Rodeo and Dancehall**, (830) 238-4441, cridersrandd.com

07

Mesquite [7, 21] **Jazz Breaks**, (972) 216-8132, mesquiteartscenter.org

Jacksonville [7–12] **Tomato Fest Week**, (903) 586-2217, jacksonvilletexas.com/tomato-fest

08

Victoria [8–12] **Bach Festival**, (361) 570-5788, victoriabachfestival.org

11

Luckenbach [11–12] **Thomas Michael Riley Music Festival**, (830) 997-3224, thomasmichaelriley.com

San Antonio [11–Aug. 7] **Fiesta Noche del Río**, (210) 226-4651, fiestanochesa.com

12

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

New Braunfels Granger Smith, (830) 964-3800, whitewaterrocks.com

Terrell [12-13] Antique Tractor and Engine Show and Pull, (214) 837-8861, north-texas-antique-tractor-and-engine-club.org

14

Mesquite [14, 28] Music in the Park, (972) 216-8132, mesquiteartscenter.org

17

Big Spring [17-19] Cowboy Reunion and Rodeo, (432) 267-5053, facebook.com/bigspringrodeo

Stonewall [17-19] Peach JAMBoree, (830) 644-2735, stonewalltexas.com/peach-jamboree

18

Kerrville Urban Cowboy Reunion, (830) 896-9393, caillouxperformingarts.com

Lufkin [18-19] Pineywood Heifer Futurity, (979) 277-2656, arklatexlonghorns.com

McKinney [18-20] Third Monday Trade Days, (972) 562-5466, thirdmondaytradedays.com

19

Palestine Dogwood Jamboree: Country Music at Its Best, (903) 724-2556, dogwoodjamboree.com

New Braunfels [19-20] Old Gruene Market Days, (830) 832-1721, gruenemarketdays.com

24

Elgin [24-26] Western Days, (512) 285-4515, elgintxchamber.com

MORE EVENTS >

TCP *Submit Your Event*

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

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Pick of the Month

Honey Festival
Uvalde, June 11-12
(830) 278-4115
mainstreetuvalde.com/honey-festival

Pioneers of the late 19th century found an abundance of trees and caves loaded with honey around what is now Uvalde, which is 85 miles west of San Antonio. The town celebrates this history with a festival featuring street food, a 5K race, live music, kids activities and late-night shopping.

JUNE EVENTS CONTINUED

26 **Bandera RiverFest**, (830) 796-3045, banderariverfest.com

Belton [26-July 4] 4th of July Celebration, (254) 939-3551, beltonchamber.com

JULY

02 **Llano [2-4] Rock'n Riverfest**, (325) 247-5354, llanorocknriverfest.com

El Paso [2-3, 9-10, 16-17, 23-24, 30-31, Aug. 6-7] Vival El Paso, (915) 534-0600, vivalpaso.org

03 **Stephenville 4th of July Concert and Fireworks**, (254) 918-1295, stephenvilletx.gov

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



Hit the Road
Event Calendar

With hundreds of events across Texas listed every month, TexasCoopPower.com has something for you.

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TexasCoopPower.com/events

Man-made vs. Nature

Beauty can be found where the natural and the human-made collide. Over time some things once shiny and new return to the elements, often forming a new beauty all their own and leaving us to wonder at nature's awesome power.

GRACE FULTZ



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP

KIM LEATHERWOOD
UNITED COOPERATIVE SERVICES

Nature reclaims this old service station in Glen Rose.

DEBRA CZERNY
BLUEBONNET EC

Cactus flowers growing out of asphalt.

JACK ROBERTSON
CECA

A rainbow scarab impaled on barbed wire.

STEVEN LACKIE
PENTEX ENERGY

The Continental Avenue Bridge over the Trinity River near downtown Dallas.



Upcoming Contests

DUE JUN 10 Fillin' Stations

DUE JUL 10 Funny Signs

DUE AUG 10 Bridges

Enter online at TexasCoopPower.com/contests.

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



Parent Imperfect

Love outdistances cool
in appreciation of a good father

BY MARTHA DEERING
ILLUSTRATION BY KEVIN FALES

WHAT AWFUL AFFLICTION is it that makes preteens view their parents' idiosyncrasies through a monstrous magnifying glass?

I cringe to admit this, but in middle school I was embarrassed by my father. Born with cataracts after his mother contracted German measles, he wore Coke-bottle glasses and walked with an exaggerated high-stepping gait to avoid tripping over things. Worse, he couldn't drive like other dads. Surgery improved his vision slightly, but he was still considered legally blind.

Perhaps that was why music was so important to him; being deprived of one of his senses had sharpened another.

When my friends came over, I engineered excuses to avoid my father. He told the awfulest jokes: "What did the

mayonnaise say to the icebox? Close the door, I'm dressing." In my adolescent imagination, my friends were laughing *at* him, not *with* him.

"Your father is playing with the orchestra tomorrow night at Baylor before freshman orientation," my mother explained one night. "It's the same night as my writing class. Could you walk over there with him?"

As we crossed a busy street in the dark, my father tripped over the curb and fell forward onto his chest. His battered violin case landed with a clatter on the sidewalk along with his glasses, which suffered a spiderweb of cracks across one lens. Horrified by my inattention, I helped him up and brushed off the front of his suit coat.

"Are you all right?" I asked. "Do you want to go home? You won't be able to see the music with your glasses smashed."

"No, I can't go home," he said, checking his 200-year-old violin for damage. "They can't play the violin parts without me. I can't see the music unless I'm up close anyway, so I always memorize my parts. If you'll help me get set up on the stage, I'll be OK. Why am I so clumsy?"

Years later in high school, I began to recognize the courage it took for this gentle, loving man with a disability (he hated the designation "handicapped") to get a doctorate and then a job just after the Depression; to play Mozart, Bach and Beethoven in front of large crowds; to teach psychology to classes of graduate students; to lead brain exercise groups at local nursing homes; and to raise three children, willingly wearing out the knees of his suit pants to play the part of the horse to our cowboys and Indians.

I'm sure that my father recognized and forgave my adolescent foolishness. He was that kind of guy. ■

dish

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 Qualification: Advertised price requires credit qualification and 24-month commitment. Upfront activation and/or receiver upgrade fees may apply based on credit qualification. Offer ends 7/14/21. 2-Year Commitment: Early termination fee of \$20/mo. remaining applies if you cancel early. Included in 2-year price guarantee at \$64.99 advertised price: America's Top 120 programming package, local channels, HD service fees, and Hopper Duo Smart DVR for 1 TV. Included in 2-year price guarantee for additional cost: Programming package upgrades (\$79.99 for AT120+, \$89.99 for AT200, \$99.99 for AT250), monthly fees for upgraded or additional receivers (\$5-\$7 per additional TV, receivers with additional functionality may be \$10-\$15). Regional Sports: RSN Surcharge up to \$3/mo. applies to AT120+ and higher packages and varies based on location. NOT included in 2-year price guarantee or advertised price (and subject to change): Taxes & surcharges, add-on programming (including premium channels), DISH Protect, and transactional fees. Premium Channels: 3 Mos. Free: After 3 mos., you will be billed \$30/mo. for Showtime, Starz, and DISH Movie Pack unless you call or go online to cancel. Remote: The DISH Voice Remote with the Google Assistant requires internet-connected Hopper, Joey, or Wally device. Customer must press Voice Remote button to activate feature. The Google Assistant Smart Home features require Google account and compatible devices. Google is a trademark of Google LLC. Other: Netflix streaming membership required. All packages, programming, features, and functionality and all prices and fees not included in price lock are subject to change without notice. After 6 mos., if selected, you will be billed \$9.99/mo. for DISH Protect Silver unless you call to cancel. After 2 years, then-current everyday prices for all services apply. For business customers, additional monthly fees may apply. Free standard professional installation only. Indiana C.P.D Reg. No. – 19-08615. ©2021 GoDISH.com. All rights reserved. Internet speeds, prices, and providers vary by customer address. \$40 price refers to widely available plan from multiple providers. Restrictions apply. Nationwide availability of 25 Mbps plan is subject to change without notice. The application of "Unlimited Data with no Hard Data Limits" varies by provider, but commonly mean that your access to the internet will not be stopped by going over a data limit, but that speeds may be lowered. Call for details. Internet not provided by DISH and will be billed separately.

WANTED: DEMO HOMESITES FOR 2021 SEASON



Display one of our beautiful Kayak maintenance-free pools and save \$\$\$!
CALL NOW to qualify for this limited opportunity!

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- Financing Available/Pre-Approvals
- We Consider Anything Of Value On Trade

AMERICA'S BEST BUILT POOL—WE GUARANTEE IT!

If within 30 days after your purchase of an Award Winning Kayak Pool, you find another brand name pool with all of Kayak's features and benefits, we'll refund 100% of your purchase price, plus we'll give you the Kayak Pool **ABSOLUTELY FREE!**

WCEC ANNUAL MEETING OF MEMBERS DRIVE THRU PROCEDURE

MUST BE PRESENT IN VEHICLE TO VOTE!

Each member who votes will receive a \$20 bill credit,
an attendance gift, and entry into the drawing for
WCEC's fabulous door prizes!

Drive thru line will open at 4:00 p.m. Voting will end at 7:00 p.m. SHARP.
No access to drive thru line allowed after 7:00 p.m.

- Enter El Campo Middle School parking lot through the back entrance off of N. Wharton Street. (See Map on Back Cover)
- There will be multiple Registration stations in the ECMS parking lot. You will receive a Director Election and Report Approval Ballot for each membership. To speed up the drive thru process, **PLEASE LOOK OVER THE SAMPLE BALLOT BELOW AND DETERMINE YOUR CHOICES BEFORE THE MEETING.**
- Pick up your attendance gift and drop off your completed ballot with the Balloting Committee. Each voting member will receive a \$20 bill credit on their next month's bill and be entered into the prize drawing which will be held at a later date. Winners will be contacted by phone.

WHARTON COUNTY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING - WEDNESDAY, JUNE 16, 2021		NO.
<h3>OFFICIAL BALLOT - ELECTION OF DIRECTORS</h3> <p>Fill the circle beside Candidate of your choice <u>VOTE FOR ONE IN EACH DISTRICT.</u></p>		
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>VOTE FOR ONE</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">DISTRICT #3</p> <p>North of Louise & El Campo, Round Mott, and Lost Prong</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Judy Peter</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Richard L. Clark</p> <p><input type="radio"/> _____ <i>Write-In</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>VOTE FOR ONE</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">DISTRICT #6</p> <p>Esquire Estates, West Danevang, and West Midfield</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Gus Wessels, Jr. (<i>Incumbent</i>)</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Brent Cerny</p> <p><input type="radio"/> _____ <i>Write-In</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>VOTE FOR ONE</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">DISTRICT #9</p> <p>Suburban Area surrounding El Campo</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Calvin Pfeil, Jr.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Pamela R. Hunt</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Christopher Barbee</p> <p><input type="radio"/> _____ <i>Write-In</i></p>
<h3>OFFICIAL BALLOT - APPROVAL OF ANNUAL REPORTS</h3> <p>The following items were mailed to you as part of the June 2021 Texas Coop Power Magazine. Please check YES or NO for each item.</p>		
<p>I approve the Minutes of the 2020 WCEC Annual Meeting.</p> <p><u>YES</u></p> <p><u>NO</u></p> <p>Reason: _____</p>	<p>I approve the 2020 WCEC Financial Report.</p> <p><u>YES</u></p> <p><u>NO</u></p> <p>Reason: _____</p>	<p>I approve the President & Manager's Report</p> <p><u>YES</u></p> <p><u>NO</u></p> <p>Reason: _____</p>

WEST LOOP

FM 2765

N. MECHANIC STREET

El Campo Middle School

Wednesday, June 16
4-7 p.m.

DO NOT ENTER WHARTON STREET FROM N. MECHANIC! CONTINUE TO TURA STREET.

Please be courteous! Do not use business driveways to reach Wharton Street - continue to Tura Street. Do not block traffic on Wharton Street.

VOTING ENDS AT 7 P.M. SHARP.
NO ACCESS TO THE DRIVE THRU LINE AFTER 7 PM

ENTER HERE FROM WHARTON STREET

\$20 Bill Credit, Attendance Gift, and Entry for Prize Drawing for each Member Who Votes!
MUST BE PRESENT TO VOTE.

DO NOT ENTER HERE

EXIT HERE

REGISTER HERE

GIFT PICK UP

BALLOT DROP OFF

EL CAMPO MIDDLE SCHOOL



MEETING OF MEMBERS

Drive Thru Meeting
Due to COVID-19 Precautions

TURA ST.

N. WHARTON STREET