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IN BANDERA

TEXAS RAISES  
THE AMERICAN FLAG

A NEIGHBORHOOD'S  
SEED SAVER

# Texas Coop Power

FOR FAYETTE EC MEMBERS

APRIL 2024

## Vanishing Act

Conservationists  
work to save  
native plants in decline



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# April 2024



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## Thorny Task 12 Holding Promise

Scientists, landowners and plant lovers work to preserve hundreds of threatened Texas natives.

*By Sheryl Smith-Rodgers*

Bandera's Helping Hand puts relief within reach for neighbors in need.

*Story and photos by Laura Jenkins*

ON THE COVER

The flower of the rare night-blooming cereus can be seen just one night a year.

*Photo by Dave Shafer*

ABOVE

The Hinckley oak is an evergreen shrub in the Chihuahuan Desert.

*Photo by Keeper Trout | Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center*

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## FINISH THIS SENTENCE

Wow! The eclipse was ...

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

Here are some of the responses to our February prompt: **Campfires remind me of ...**

Telling scary stories as kids.

CATHY ONDREJ  
HILCO EC  
AQUILLA

Me and my dad camping. We would stare at the fire for hours and say, "This is much better than watching TV."

MIKE EARLY  
VIA FACEBOOK

The time I set our tent on fire!

HOOMALIMALI PAULO  
VIA FACEBOOK

The possibility of a nostalgic gathering and the surety of an asthma attack.

SHELLY REID  
SOUTH PLAINS EC  
BECTON

Fresh air, boiled cowboy coffee, staring at the embers.

DURENA KRILEY  
VIA FACEBOOK

Visit our website to see more responses.

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Ten years ago we looked at the problems caused by the growing population of feral hogs in Texas. See *Here a Pig, There a Pig* from April 2014 on our website.

# Wiring the American Dream

**ON LINEWORKER** Appreciation Day, April 8, we celebrate the 20 Texas electric cooperative lineworkers who brought electricity to Matasanos, a rural village in Guatemala. They spent two weeks there in November as part of NRECA International, a program that for more than 60 years has delivered electricity to remote places that had none—exactly what co-ops did in rural Texas 85 years ago.

Ten South Texas co-ops sent two crew members each, plus support staff. When they finished, 60 homes had each been wired with four lights, two switches and two outlets. Villagers helped the lineworkers move equipment up the mountain.

"I believe we take the American dream on the road and transplant it to other countries," says Jim Coleman, general manager at Jackson Electric Cooperative in Edna, who has participated in several international projects. He was joined in Guatemala by GMs from four other Texas co-ops.



## No Fooling

Some historians say April Fools' Day customs have been around since the 16th century, when France's King Charles IX decreed the new year would begin January 1—not on Easter. Those who clung to the old ways were called April fools.

The Favorite  
 “I pay for some magazines, but my very favorite one is yours. Great publication.”

NONA GARDNER  
 DEEP EAST TEXAS EC  
 GARRISON




**Making History**  
 For more than 50 years, artists have been...  
 BY PATTY PRYPER • PHOTO BY R.J. HINKLE

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R.J. HINKLE PHOTOS

**Pieces of Art**

We became a fan of Puzzles of Color after meeting them at the Texas State Fair and absolutely loved the artwork of the woman playing bass [Puzzling Times, February 2024]. I made a custom frame for it, and it hangs in our guest bedroom.

Peter Hill  
 Pedernales EC  
 Austin

**The Reality of Gators**

We don't always have a resident gator at Magnolia Beach, but most times there's one or two [Later, Gators?, February 2024].

My son and I were fishing when two teens were swimming nearby. I casually asked if they were watching for gators. “What gators?” came back sarcastically.

“The one with his nostrils and eyes sticking up under the walking bridge behind you,” I replied.

I swear they walked on water getting to the bank.

Jim Evans  
 Victoria EC  
 Port Lavaca



DAVID MOORE

**The Real Bowie**

Yes, Jim Bowie's knife was quite a sensation, and I'm glad you cast some doubt as to his actions at the Alamo, but it might be worth mentioning a bit more of his biography [A Cut Above, February 2024].

He was a slave owner, slave trader, smuggler and an associate of pirates. He also was a land speculator with a suspicious reputation.

Georgia Xydes  
 Pedernales EC  
 Austin

**Shamrock Memories**

Glenn McCarthy's two daughters were at Lamar High School when I was [The Green Carpet, January 2024]. The Cork Club was opened on Sunday afternoons for teens to come, dance to a small orchestra and have nonalcoholic drinks.

In 1952, my date and I went with another couple. The featured singer for the week came to entertain us—Tony Bennett.

Hearing *I Left My Heart in San Francisco* always reminds me of that very special afternoon.

Betty Akin Morris  
 Pedernales EC  
 Canyon Lake

**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.

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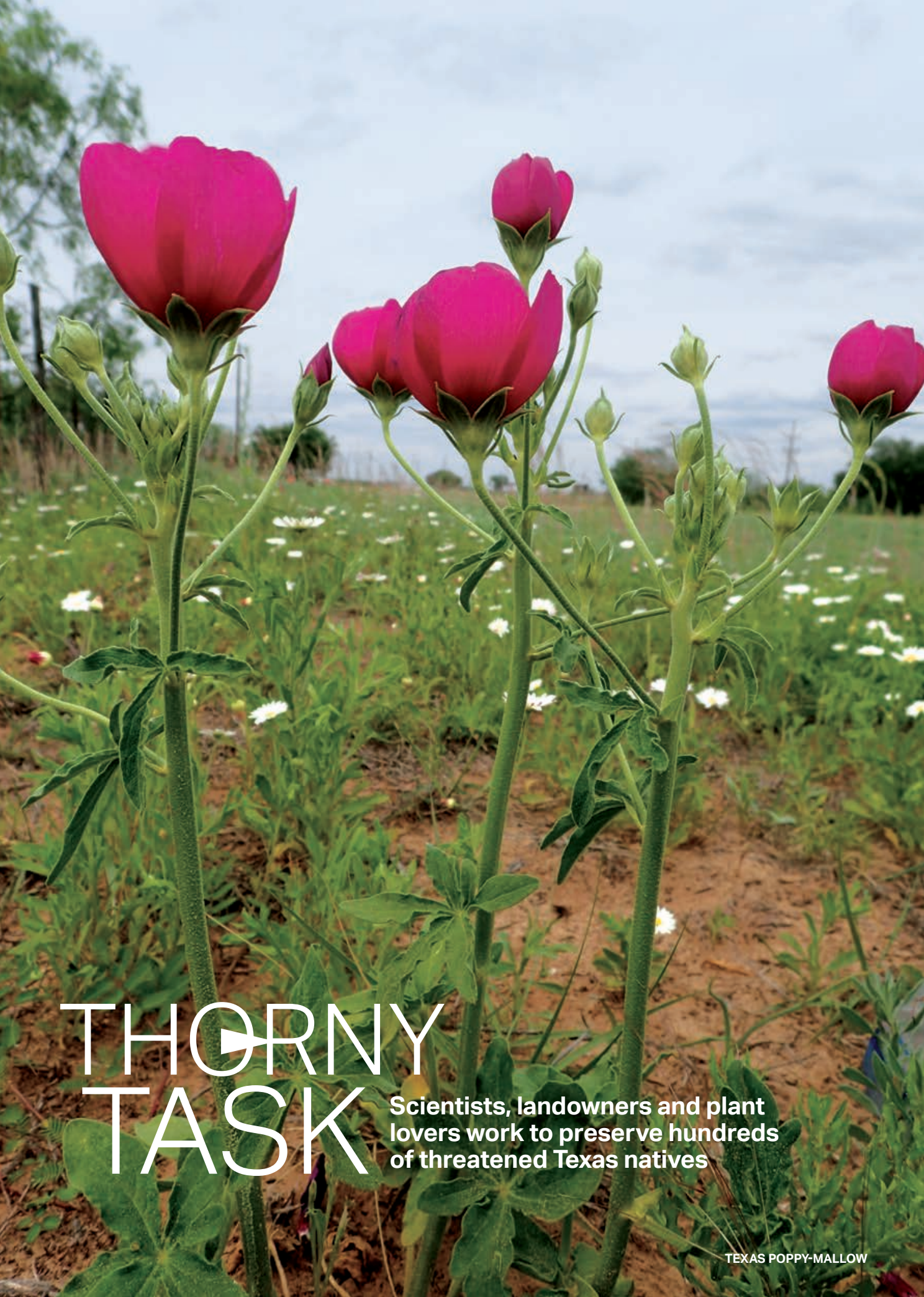
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# THORNY TASK

Scientists, landowners and plant lovers work to preserve hundreds of threatened Texas natives

**R**andy Deming often walks his 10 acres of rural land in Callahan County, near Abilene, always on the lookout for a flower, insect or bird he hasn't spotted before.

Using an app called iNaturalist, he documents the native grasses, yuccas, Ashe junipers, live oaks and other plants that grow there. Thanks to the app, Deming learned in 2021 that one of his flowering species could be one of only a few remaining populations in Texas.

"I took pictures of a pretty flower and forgot about it," recalls Deming, a member of the Texas Master Naturalist Program and Taylor Electric Cooperative. "A few months later, I was skeptical when someone contacted me through iNaturalist and asked to see my large-flower beardtongues.

"When they told me how rare they are, I was excited," Deming says. "I could have mowed them down! Now I'm watching over them."

In the future, large-flower beardtongues—a tall, erect perennial with tubular purple blooms—could be legally protected if researchers collect enough ecological data to substantiate the designation. In the meantime, 437 other Texas plants have already been designated by the state as "species of greatest conservation need," meaning they're in decline and need attention. Some of those species require even more urgent measures. These are further labeled as threatened or endangered.

The two legal terms stem from the Endangered Species Act, a federal law enacted in 1973 to protect and help recover the nation's imperiled plant and animal species and their habitats. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service oversees the federal list and partners with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, which manages the Texas list. A species can be federally and state protected, such as shrubby Texas snowbells in the Hill Country, or just one or the other.

However, the process for federally listing a species can stretch out for years. Consider the bracted twistflower, a tall annual with lavender flowers that has been increasingly lost to urban sprawl and hungry herbivores. Found only within the Edwards Plateau, the wildflower has been marked as imperiled since 1975 and was petitioned for



TURNER'S CLIFF THISTLE

federal listing in 2014. In May 2023—nine years later—the USFWS finally listed the bracted twistflower as threatened. In Coryell County, the imperiled Texabama croton faces similar challenges.

Plants of all kinds in Texas face many pressures. Every year, development scrapes away one natural area after another. Invasive plants, agriculture, poaching, mining, weather, loss of pollinators, and land and water management also negatively impact the state's flora.

But does it really matter if a few of Texas' estimated 5,000-plus native plant species go away? The answer is yes.

"We have biodiversity for a reason," says Anna Strong, a rare species botanist with TPWD. "Each organism interacts with others in specific ways. Regardless of whether it's rare or common, if we take out one organism, we don't know the implications amongst all the organisms. If we take out one flower, we may take a food source away from a specific insect that relies on that species."

At the San Antonio Botanical Garden, botanist Michael Eason works to conserve and propagate rare Texas plants. "We have more than 90 species in our collections," Eason says. "Some are displayed in our gardens, which helps to educate the public. Others are seed collections, which haven't been propagated yet."

One of those species, prostrate milkweed, a low-growing perennial, is endemic only to Starr and Zapata counties and northeastern Mexico. Since at least 1980, invasive



## Glossary

**An endangered species** is defined under the Endangered Species Act as “any species which is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range.”

**A threatened species** is defined under the ESA as “any species which is likely to become an endangered species within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range.”

**Imperiled** is not a legal term. Biologically, it refers to unprotected species that are in decline and may be in danger of extinction.

**Rare plants** have very limited ranges or exist in low numbers.

buffelgrass, road construction and development have drastically reduced its numbers. After several petitions to the USFWS, prostrate milkweed—an important monarch butterfly host plant—was federally listed as endangered in March 2023. The agency also designated 661 acres as critical habitat needed by the species to survive.

For his part, Eason spent five years tracking down the scarce milkweeds and collecting seeds, then having a milkweed specialist grow the plants to maturity. “We ended up with 150 plants,” he says. “We passed some to other botanical gardens. We’ll install some in our rare plant gardens. The remainder will be kept for perhaps reintroductions in South Texas and donations to other institutions with the Center for Plant Conservation.”

Headquartered in Escondido, California, the CPC is a





TEXAS SNOWBELL

TEXAS SNOWBELL: CHASE FOUNTAIN | TPWD. TEXABAMA CROTON: RAY MATHEWS | LADY BIRD JOHNSON WILDFLOWER CENTER

## Grassroots Efforts

**The Texas Department of Transportation** monitors for rare plants prior to road construction and along state highways and rights of way. Edd Paradise, a TxDOT environmental planner in Pharr and a Magic Valley Electric Cooperative member, worked with USFWS to relocate endangered Zapata bladder-pods in Starr County.

**Aaron Lincoln**—a biodiversity manager with Lhoist, a global corporation—oversees a pilot project to restore grasslands and a pocket prairie at a 3,000-acre chemical lime plant and quarry in Bosque County. So far, he’s documented glandular blazing stars, Hall’s prairie clover, lemonscent and other declining species. Lincoln also hopes to set aside 122 acres as a refuge for white troutlilies and morel mushrooms.

**The Friends of the Warren Ferris Cemetery** in Dallas rallied to transform the historic cemetery’s neglected grounds into native habitat. Today, the Constellation of Living Memorials pilot project includes eight old cemeteries and will serve as an example for revitalizing the state’s 5,000-plus historic cemeteries. One project goal is to encourage the recovery of threatened and endangered plant species.



TEXABAMA CROTON

nationwide network of organizations working together to save imperiled native plants. The San Antonio Botanical Garden partners with the CPC, as do the Botanical Research Institute of Texas at the Fort Worth Botanic Garden, Mercer Botanic Gardens in Humble and the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center in Austin.

As part of its conservation efforts, the wildflower center stores seeds of 575 Texas plant species for research and sharing with botanical gardens and conservation organizations. The seed bank, housed mostly in freezers, also serves as an insurance policy against the loss of imperiled species.

“We visit wild populations that we have permission to access, either on public land or through contacting land-owners,” explains Jonathan Flickinger, conservation collections manager at the wildflower center. “We harvest seeds



BRACED TWISTFLOWER

from plants, but we don't take too many because our priority is to conserve the plants in their natural habitat."

In some cases, researchers may rescue plants by digging them up. That happened with the Texas poppy-mallow, listed as federally endangered in 1981. The tall perennial with reddish purple flowers grows in deep sandy soils along the Colorado River in four counties.

In 2010, some conservation-minded landowners asked that a population of poppy-mallows be removed from a future construction site on their property. That summer, wildflower center staff and other colleagues extracted 54 plants and fostered them in pots for three years.

"We harvested more than 3,000 seeds from them for our seed bank," Flickinger says. "Then we identified another site where they were reintroduced."

Landowners play a huge role in plant conservation, namely because about 95% of Texas' land is privately owned. When threatened or endangered plants grow on private land, landowners are not legally required to manage them under the Endangered Species Act (the law differs for listed birds and animals).

Botanists and other officials must always ask permission before accessing private land. Typically, they want to survey plant species, perhaps harvest a small amount of seeds and collect plant material for herbarium vouchers.

The Fish and Wildlife Service offers a program that provides property owners with free technical and financial assistance for improving wildlife habitat on their land. "We're always looking for opportunities to work with landowners," says Chris Best, USFWS botanist. "Most of the ones I've met want to protect their land's natural resources."

That aptly describes attorney Liz Rogers, a Medina Electric Cooperative member. For more than two decades, she's welcomed researchers onto her family's 8,000-acre cattle ranch in southeastern Brewster County, along the Mexico border. "They always show me cool things, which has made me appreciate our ranch even more," she says.

Eason has been among many plant conservationists who have botanized the ranch's Trans-Pecos deserts, canyons and mountainsides. "Liz has an assortment of rare plants found along cliff faces and other protected areas," he says. "We've collected plants such as Turner's cliff thistle, rock-daisy and Barton's dalea. She also has a small population of night-blooming cereus."

Whether rare or not, showy or inconspicuous, every native plant matters. "We shouldn't focus conservation merely on species that have declined so far that they're teetering on the brink of extinction," Best says. "We should be working to keep common plants common." ■



## Noah's Arks for Seeds

**Just as the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center** in Austin stores seeds of 575 Texas plant species for research, national and global seed vaults do the same—preserving plant types in case they are wiped out by natural or human-made disasters.

**The National Laboratory for Genetic Resources Preservation** on the campus of Colorado State University is run by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. It houses more than 850,000 plant seeds and materials, as well as DNA samples from about 160 breeds of livestock.

**The Svalbard Global Seed Vault**, located about halfway between the North Pole and the coast of Norway, is more than 300 feet inside a mountain, where the permafrost maintains a stable temperature between 26 and 39 degrees. Three large concrete chambers have the capacity to hold 3.5 million seed samples.



# HOLDING PROMISE

BANDERA'S **HELPING HAND** PUTS RELIEF WITHIN REACH FOR NEIGHBORS IN NEED



**FROM THE ROAD,** it doesn't stand out from any other small office complex you might find in the Hill Country. But once you pass through the towering iron gate, get out of your car and start walking, the landscape becomes much more inviting: winding paths that lead to a peaceful courtyard and a sprawling pergola nestled against a scenic lily pond.

This is what hope looks like. More specifically, the Village of Hope—the cluster of buildings owned by Bandera County Helping Hand, a haven for residents facing a personal crisis. Are you sick? There's a free medical clinic. Is your cupboard bare? Head over to the food pantry. Do you need shoes, clothes or basic household items? The thrift store has what you need.

Since 1984, Bandera Helping Hand has been a steadfast safety net for folks who have hit hard times.

"We're here to help people get on their feet," says Jesse Parks, executive director of Helping Hand. "You never know what tomorrow will bring. Everything's great until all of a sudden there's a car wreck and somebody's gone or there's a flood or a fire and you've lost everything. It's devastating."

Parks speaks from experience. In the late 1990s, she and her husband uprooted their lives in Corpus Christi and moved to Medina, just west of Bandera, where they signed a long-term lease on a piece of land and started working on their dream: building a facility for teens experiencing crisis. Two years later, without warning, the landowner sold it out from under them, including the structures and improvements they'd funded with their own money.

They lost everything. To make ends meet, Parks got a job at the Apple Store in Medina (which actually sells fruit). One day a friend came in and told her that she'd recommended Parks for the director position at Helping Hand. Even though she'd never worked at a nonprofit, Parks accepted the position and has led the organization since 2000.

Helping Hand began 16 years earlier, in 1984, when local churches came together to assist neighbors in need. The aim was to pool resources and provide a central place where people could go for help. In the early days, Helping Hand operated a thrift store and a food pantry and provided school supplies for children. It also helped struggling residents pay their utility bills.

But when the Medina River swept through the town during the devastating South Texas floods of 2002, it demolished Helping Hand's facilities. Quite suddenly they were among those in crisis.

"Our building was completely destroyed," Parks remembers, "so we set up shop in a warehouse and started gathering donations from other food banks. The Salvation Army came in and helped us provide aid for flood victims as well."

Seeing how generously and efficiently Helping Hand had been serving the community, Bandera's city council offered them space so they could continue helping residents while they figured out how to start over themselves. And that's when offers of help started pouring in.

"A retired grant writer by the name of Dan Wise got in touch and offered to help us raise funds to rebuild," says Parks, a member of Bandera Electric Cooperative. "I looked forever for land that was not in a flood plain and finally found this 3.77 acres. We bought it with money we borrowed from Bandera Bank but were able to pay it back within a year using the grants that Mr. Wise helped us get from various foundations."

By early 2004, Helping Hand's crisis intervention center was complete. At the building's dedication, then-board President Comellia Rue announced that the next structure they would build was a free medical clinic to serve the county's uninsured residents. But no one had any idea where the money would come from.

Enter Kerrville businessman Arthur Nagel, who approached the pastor of a local church and told him God had given him a vision to start a medical clinic in Bandera. The pastor introduced Parks to Nagel, who donated \$150,000 to construct the shell of the clinic building on the Village of Hope grounds. Within a year, Helping Hand had raised enough money to complete the clinic and operate it for a year. The clinic formed its own nonprofit and opened its door to patients in 2008.

Today the Arthur Nagel Community Clinic is open three days a week. In addition to primary care, the clinic offers mental health services and teen and elder care programs. Healthy cooking and cardio fitness classes are also available. The clinic provided an estimated \$1.9 million in health services to 443 Bandera County residents in 2023, says clinic director Chuck Lutke.

The food pantry stays stocked thanks to food and cash donations from individuals and contributions from other food banks. As a result, Helping Hand can feed an average of 130 families a month.

At the thrift store, which thrives on steady donations of gently used clothing and household items, residents purchase what they need at affordable prices. Sales cover nearly three-fourths of Helping Hand's annual operating budget.

"Helping Hand is about community," Parks says. "We all work as a team. I see us as a community of 'hands' that resources pass through. Each one of us has been through hard times and knows what a little compassion and love can mean in a crisis situation.

"Helping people get back on their feet and feeling good about themselves as they overcome whatever they're going through is a privilege.

"It's not a *handout*, it's a *hand up*." ■

OPPOSITE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP The Village of Hope welcomes folks who have hit hard times. Angelica Hernandez greets patients at the medical clinic, which is open three days a week. The food pantry can feed 130 families a month.

**TCP** See this story on our website to donate to the Village of Hope.

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**Peace Silver Dollar:** With a beautiful design memorializing peace following the end of World War I, the 90% silver Peace Dollar was intended as a one-year only release struck in 1921—but it proved so popular with the American people, it was struck until 1928, then again in 1934-35. Extremely Fine (XF) condition coin included in set.

**Eisenhower Dollar:** The last circulating U.S. dollar coin, the Eisenhower Dollar, aka the "Ike Dollar," was prized by Americans, with its design featuring war hero President Dwight D. Eisenhower, backed by an image symbolizing the Apollo II moon landing. First struck with silver 1971-1976, the Eisenhower Dollar in this set was struck in 40% silver for collectors, and you will receive a coin in Brilliant Uncirculated (BU) condition.

**Silver Eagle Type 1:** The first-ever U.S. Silver Dollar minted in 99.9% silver, these coins were first minted in 1986 following President Ronald Reagan's signing of the Liberty Coin Act into law on July 9, 1985, which authorized the U.S. Mint to strike America's new silver bullion coin. This gorgeous Silver Dollar features the original, revered Type 1 "Heraldic Eagle" reverse design by John Mercanti, 12th Chief Engraver of the U.S. Mint. Brilliant Uncirculated (BU) condition coin included in set.

**Silver Eagle Type 2:** In honor of the popular 99.9% silver coin's 35th anniversary in 2021, the Silver Eagle received a new, esteemed Type 2 "Eagle Landing" reverse design. This is the current issued coin by the U.S. Mint. Brilliant Uncirculated (BU) condition coin included in set.

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<sup>1</sup>DETAILS OF OFFER: Offer expires 6/30/2024. Not valid with other offers or prior purchases. Buy one (1) window or entry/patio door, get one (1) window or entry/patio door 40% off, and 12 months \$0 money down, \$0 monthly payments, 0% interest when you purchase four (4) or more windows or entry/patio doors between 4/1/2024 and 6/30/2024. 40% off windows and entry/patio doors are less than or equal to lowest cost window or entry/patio door in the order. Additional \$30 off each window or entry/patio door, minimum purchase of four (4) required, taken after initial discount(s), when you purchase by 6/30/2024 Subject to credit approval. Interest is billed during the promotional period, but all interest is waived if the purchase amount is paid before the expiration of the promotional period. Financing for GreenSky® consumer loan programs is provided by federally insured, federal and state chartered financial institutions without regard to age, race, color, religion, national origin, gender, or familial status. Savings comparison based on purchase of a single unit at list price. Available at participating locations and offer applies throughout the service area. See your local Renewal by Andersen location for details. CA License CLSB #1050316. Central CA License #1096271. License #RCE-50303. OR License #198571. WA License #RENEWAP877BM. WA License #RENEWAW856K6. FL #CGC1527613. All other license numbers available upon request. Some Renewal by Andersen locations are independently owned and operated. <sup>2</sup>Based on testing of 10 double-hung units per ASTM E2068 20 years after installation. <sup>3</sup>It is the only warranty among top selling window companies that meets all of the following requirements: easy to understand terms, unrestricted transferability, installation coverage, labor coverage, geographically unrestricted, coverage for exterior color, insect screens and hardware, and no maintenance requirement. Visit renewalbyandersen.com/nationsbest for details. <sup>4</sup>Review aggregator survey of 5-star reviews among leading full service window replacement companies. January 2024 Reputation.com. "Renewal by Andersen" and all other marks where denoted are trademarks of their respective owners. © 2024 Andersen Corporation. All rights reserved. RBA13747

<sup>3</sup>Using U.S. and imported parts.



MESSAGE FROM GENERAL MANAGER

GARY DON NIETSCHKE

## Our Heroes Wear Hard Hats

LINE WORK IS NOT A glamorous or easy profession. It takes years of specialized training and ongoing education and, just as important, a sense of service and commitment to your community. How else can you explain the willingness of lineworkers to leave the comfort of their homes to tackle a challenging job in difficult conditions, when most other folks are sheltering safely with their families?

This dedication and service is truly what sets our lineworkers apart. That's why Fayette Electric Cooperative sets aside the second Monday in April—April 8 this year—to celebrate and recognize the men and women who work around the clock to keep the lights on.

We join other electric cooperatives across our state and nation in celebrating Lineworker Appreciation Day to recognize those workers' critical roles

**Our lineworkers are heroes in every sense of the word.**

in providing our members with the power they depend on.

Every day, lineworkers face immense risks. Carrying heavy gear, they regularly scale 40-foot poles near

high-voltage power lines, often in the wake of Mother Nature's worst. It's no wonder their profession is among the most dangerous around.

Fayette EC's lineworkers maintain thousands of miles of power lines, keeping the lights on for our members. Our lineworkers are heroes in every sense of the word. As the first responders of our workforce, we count on them to get us through some of our darkest hours, day or night.

We appreciate our dedicated lineworkers and are proud of their commitment to our members. They deserve all the appreciation and accolades that come their way.

On April 8, and any time you see a lineworker, we hope you'll take a moment to thank them for their service. ■



Lights.  
Air conditioning.  
Clean clothes.

Proudly brought to you by Fayette EC

Lineworker Appreciation Day  
Monday, April 8



# Lineworker Appreciation Day Keeps Going Strong

**ELECTRIC LINEWORERS** don't always receive the recognition they deserve for keeping our electricity flowing. On April 8, we choose to celebrate lineworkers with co-ops around the country. Thank them with us online with #ThankALineworker.



Clayton Brossmann



Corey Brown



Shane Drosche



Royce Friemel



Joey Jasek



Steven Kallus



Ronnie Martinek



Justin Neiser



Greg Noak



Mike Proske



Macy Scott



Charles Srubar



Daniel Storm



Robert Thomas



Aaron Tonn



Justin Whited

## Fayette Electric Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

### CONTACT US

357 N. Washington St.  
P.O. Box 490  
La Grange, TX 78945  
**Local** (979) 968-3181  
**Toll-Free** 1-866-968-3181  
**Email** [electric@fayette.coop](mailto:electric@fayette.coop)  
**Web** [fayette.coop](http://fayette.coop)

### Your Board of Directors

David Lehmann, President  
Joseph D. Kruppa, Vice President  
Bill Briscoe, Secretary-Treasurer  
David A. Stancik  
Leo C. Henke  
Gale Lincke  
James A. Anderle

### Your General Manager

Gary Don Nietsche

**24/7**

## Outage Hotline Numbers

For information and  
to report outages,  
please contact us.

**LOCAL**  
(979) 968-3181

**TOLL-FREE**  
1-866-968-3181

### ABOUT FAYETTE EC

FEC serves Austin, Bastrop, Colorado, Fayette, Lavaca, Lee and Washington counties.

### CONVENIENT PAYMENT OPTIONS

- Pay by Bank Draft
- Pay Online Using SmartHub
- Pay by Phone at 844-971-1048
- Pay in Person
- Pay by Credit Card Draft
- Pay by Mail

### TEXAS CO-OP POWER

Fayette EC provides *Texas Co-op Power* and [TexasCoopPower.com](http://TexasCoopPower.com) to give you information about events, safety, special programs and other activities of your cooperative. If you have any comments or suggestions, please contact the co-op office.

### VISIT US ONLINE

[fayette.coop](http://fayette.coop)



Check us out at  
[TexasCoopPower.com/fayette](http://TexasCoopPower.com/fayette)



BEAL PHOTOGRAPHY

## Get Your Home Ready for Summer

**YOU STILL HAVE PLENTY** of time before you need to blast the air conditioning at home during hot summer weather. In the meantime, use the spring season to do some maintenance that could help your AC run more efficiently and reliably this summer.

### Here are some tips:

**Replace air filters before you turn the air conditioner on for the first time.** Then, replace them again about once a month until autumn. Clean air filters allow conditioned air to flow easily through your rooms. And they lower the amount of dust, dander and pollutants that get pushed into your indoor air.

**Move lamps away from thermostats.** Electronics and lamps give off heat when they're turned on, which can fool your AC into "thinking" the room is warmer than it is.

**Seal leaks.** If you felt cold drafts coming inside during the winter, find the sources of the leaks and caulk them. Look around ducts, cables and wires on the indoor side of exterior walls. Those same leaks will let cool, conditioned air escape during the summer.

**Switch the direction of your ceiling fan blades.** For warm weather, the blades should rotate counterclockwise.

**Schedule an inspection.** A qualified HVAC pro can spot problems with your AC system before they cause a malfunction and make sure your equipment is maintained and ready for warm weather.

**Change out any old lightbulbs for LEDs.** The latest lighting technology makes these the most energy-efficient choice, and bulbs come in various tones to suit your home's needs.

**Check your insulation.** If your home is older, it might not have the recommended amount or optimal type of insulation.

**Clean air vents.** Vents covered in hair and dust won't circulate air as efficiently as clean ones. ■



HALYNA BOBYK | ISTOCK.COM

## Safety Doesn't Grow on Trees

Be safe when planting this spring

A **WELL-POSITIONED TREE** can provide a windbreak, offer shade, reduce carbon in the environment and serve to beautify your landscape. This year, Arbor Day is observed April 26 nationwide (although Texas also recognizes the first Friday in November as its Arbor Day). It's a great time to plant a tree.

But Fayette Electric Cooperative wants to make sure you do so safely. Whether planting trees this spring or later this fall, it's important that you keep power lines in mind—and keep tree limbs well away.

Trees that grow too close to power lines can create shock and fire hazards and lead to power outages. Trees and wood conduct electricity under the right conditions, causing outages or momentary interruptions when branches touch overhead lines. Electrical arcing and sparking from a wire to a nearby branch also can cause fires.

Safe Electricity urges parents and caregivers to teach children never to climb trees near power lines. Accidental contact of electric wires with a tree limb while climbing or playing around the tree can be fatal.

Landowners must understand utility line tree trimming and clearance practices and why they're important to safe and reliable electric service. If you have trees that appear to be growing into power lines, contact your electric utility. Never try to prune them yourself. Fayette EC has skilled professionals trained to prune and trim trees safely for electric line clearance.

Seek help in choosing and placing trees that provide shade, color and screening that won't grow to interfere with the electric infrastructure. When landscaping, take the time to research tree selections by consulting your local arborist,

nursery or utility experts who can assist in designing a beautiful, shade-filled yard with trees appropriate for each area.

**To avoid future electrical hazards, safe planting tips include:**

- ▶ Consider the mature height of trees. Never plant a tree that could grow to a height of 25 feet or more near a power line. Tall-growing trees should be planted at least 25 feet away from power lines and 50 feet away to avoid future pruning. A mature height of less than 15 feet is recommended for trees planted closer to lines.

- ▶ Do not plant near underground utility services. Tree roots can grow to interfere with underground pipes, cables and wires. Future repairs to these facilities also could damage the health and beauty of nearby plants and trees.

- ▶ Keep areas around electric meters, transformers or other electrical equipment free of any vegetation that could limit utility service access.

- ▶ Before digging, call 811 to have the locations of underground utilities marked to prevent accidental contact, damage and injuries.

There are many beautiful varieties of low-growing trees and shrubs that provide color, screening and shade as well as enhance the quality of life in our communities and environment. Consider the types of trees that coexist well with power lines and the environment to avoid the need for trimming for line clearance. ■

# SAVE the DATE!

## District Meetings are in May!

Did you know district meetings are held on a rotating basis each year? The purpose is to elect a nominee for director-candidate for your district who is then officially elected by members at the Fayette Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting held the third Wednesday in July. District meetings are also an opportunity to meet with FEC staff and share information about cooperative-related matters. For information about the current board of directors and how the cooperative works, visit [fayette.coop/board-directors](http://fayette.coop/board-directors).

### What:

District Meetings for Districts 3 and 4

### DISTRICT

3

### MEETING

**Monday, May 6**

St. Mary's Catholic Church Parish Hall  
2833 FM 2672  
Schulenburg

### When:

Registration begins at 6 p.m.  
Business meeting begins at 6:30 p.m. See dates and locations below.

### DISTRICT

4

### MEETING

**Tuesday, May 7**

Ascension of Our Lord Catholic Church Parish Hall  
11134 FM 957  
Schulenburg

## What Are the Duties and Responsibilities of Board Members?

**ONCE ELECTED TO THE BOARD**, directors have two basic functions: decision making and oversight.

As decision-makers, they're responsible for working with the cooperative's management and key staff to set policies and develop strategies to keep the cooperative on track. To do that, they have to maintain a working knowledge of all phases of the electric cooperative program, from the broad national overview down to day-to-day operations, to serve members in each of the seven districts.

The oversight function, or fiduciary duty, requires board members to monitor the cooperative's business performance, risk assessment and compliance with legal obligations.

### **Other responsibilities and functions of the board are to:**

- ▶ Set the cooperative's mission and purpose and provide strategy, direction and guidance.
- ▶ Contract for and approve an annual independent financial audit.
- ▶ Review the annual financial audit and management letter.
- ▶ Select and appoint legal counsel.
- ▶ Review and approve major contracts, such as wholesale power agreements, loan agreements and construction contracts.
- ▶ Review, monitor and report to the membership regarding the

critical operating and financial performance of the cooperative.

- ▶ Hire and regularly evaluate the performance of the general manager.
- ▶ Comply with all board policies and bylaws, including attendance at cooperative meetings, training sessions and certifications.
- ▶ Conduct membership meetings.
- ▶ Protect the cooperative's assets through review, approval and procurement of appropriate insurance coverage while adhering to all regulatory requirements at local, state and federal levels.

Cooperative directors represent the members who elect them and take seriously the duties and responsibilities of their position. They uphold the unique democratic business model that distinguishes your electric cooperative from utility companies whose sole purpose is to make a profit for investors.

At Fayette Electric Cooperative, the guiding principle is service. Your board of directors serves to uphold that mandate with knowledge, integrity and vision. ■

# Director Qualifications

1. No member shall be eligible to become or remain a director or to hold any position of trust in the cooperative who is a close relative of an incumbent director or of an employee of the cooperative, who has not been a member in his/her individual capacity for at least one year prior to his/her election and whose principal place of residence is not served with electric power and energy by the cooperative in the district he/she is to represent.

2. No member shall be eligible to become or remain a director who is not at least twenty-one (21) years of age, is a convicted felon, or who is in any way employed by or financially interested in a competing enterprise or a business selling electric energy or supplies to the cooperative, or a business primarily engaged in selling electrical or plumbing appliances, fixtures, or supplies to the members of the cooperative.

3. No member shall take or hold office as a director who is the incumbent of or candidate for an elective public office in connection with which a salary is paid.

4. A director whose term expires may be reelected for subsequent terms.

5. The term of service for each director is three (3) years from the date of the annual membership meeting at which such director was elected.

6. Once elected, each director is required to become credentialed under the Credentialed Cooperative Director Program of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association during his/her first full term. The CCD Certificate is earned by completing five courses designed to provide the basic knowledge and skills required of cooperative directors, who have several opportunities during the initial three-year term to earn the CCD Certificate.

7. Since the cooperative is a member of NRECA and Texas Electric Cooperatives, directors are encouraged to attend conferences and other activities to improve their skills and knowledge. While a director's attendance is not mandatory, nor a bylaws requirement, the training programs, conferences and meetings offer unique educational opportunities that are conducive to making the board of directors a more knowledgeable and informed decision-making body.

8. Directors spend an average of 30 days annually attending monthly board meetings; state, regional and national meetings; training sessions, and other meetings or functions. Most events are held during regular business hours, but some meetings are held in the evenings, and some may last several days. ■

## Editor's Notes:

Excerpts 1-5 were taken from Article IV, Section 4.02 of the bylaws of Fayette Electric Cooperative.

For members interested in serving on the board of directors, FEC's policy on director duties and responsibilities is available for review at the cooperative's office located at 357 N. Washington St. in La Grange.

## NOTICE TO OUR MEMBERS:

Our Pay By Phone Number was changed on March 19.

If you would like to pay your bill using our automated phone system, please call (844)971-1048.



## POWER TIP

Lengthen the life of your dryer with regular cleaning. Clean the lint filter after every load and check the lint trap opening to ensure it's clean.

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# Board Members Seeking Reelection



**GALE LINCKE (INCUMBENT)  
DIRECTOR, DISTRICT 3**

**EDUCATION:**

Graduate of La Grange High School and Texas A&M University in College Station

**OCCUPATION:**

Owns and manages Lincke Floors with husband, Gary

**PAST MEMBERSHIP AND OFFICES HELD IN ORGANIZATIONS:**

La Grange Independent School District School Board, past president and trustee; Fayette Community Foundation, past president; Lower Colorado River Authority, former chair and board member; Leadership Texas, graduate; Leadership Fayette County, graduate; and Top 10 Outstanding Women of Fayette County, recipient

**CURRENT MEMBERSHIP AND OFFICES HELD IN ORGANIZATIONS:**

Fayette Electric Cooperative, director since 2006; Swiss Alp Lutheran Heritage Foundation, vice president; La Grange Education Program Support Foundation, La Grange ISD, secretary; and Friends of the Railroad Depot, treasurer and member

**NATIONAL RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE ASSOCIATION**

**CERTIFICATIONS:**

Credentialed Cooperative Director, 2007



**LEO HENKE (INCUMBENT)  
DIRECTOR, DISTRICT 4**

**EDUCATION:**

Graduate of St. John's Seminary High School; Assumption Seminary, St. Mary's University; and University of Louvain in Belgium

**OCCUPATION:**

Rancher

**PREVIOUS EMPLOYMENT:**

Texas Department of Human Services, area supervisor

**PAST MEMBERSHIP AND OFFICES HELD IN ORGANIZATIONS:**

Texas Department of Human Services, Austin Region, supervisor of the year; TDHS, unit of the year; 4-H leader

**CURRENT MEMBERSHIP AND OFFICES HELD IN ORGANIZATIONS:**

Fayette EC, director since 2003; Lavaca County Farm Bureau, vice president; Knights of Columbus, third degree member; KJT, member; American Legion Post 230, member; and Ascension Catholic Church, Moravia, Eucharistic minister and lector

**NATIONAL RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE ASSOCIATION**

**CERTIFICATIONS:**

Credentialed Cooperative Director, 2006

## District Meeting Voting

- ▶ Members must be present to vote at the meeting.
- ▶ Each member shall be entitled to one vote and no more upon each matter submitted to a vote at the meeting.
- ▶ At all member meetings, the spouse of a member will be allowed to vote for the membership, whether single or joint.
- ▶ If a husband and wife or two persons hold a joint membership, they shall jointly be entitled to one vote.
- ▶ In the event of the death of a person holding a joint membership, the surviving member alone may vote.
- ▶ A membership held by a school, community hall or similar public body shall be voted by the president or chairman of the board or, if so authorized in writing, by any one member of the board.
- ▶ The pastor or, if so authorized in writing, any one member of the governing body of a church holding membership in the cooperative shall cast the vote of the church.
- ▶ A membership held by any corporation, partnership, firm, government agency or political subdivision shall be voted by any person submitting proof of their authority to vote for the membership. ■





## FEC & COBANK TO OFFER GRANTS

Fayette EC, in partnership with CoBank, is seeking applicants for the Sharing Success Grant Program.

Eligible grant applicants must:

- Be a 501(c)(3) organization
- Plan to use grant money to serve a public purpose
- Submit a grant application by 5 p.m. on May 13.
- For more rules and information and to complete an application, visit [fayette.coop/grants](http://fayette.coop/grants).

Questions? Contact Tracy Denton @ 979-968-3181 or [tracya@fayette.coop](mailto:tracya@fayette.coop).

## Notice to Critical Care Members

Fayette Electric cooperative maintains a record of members dependent upon electrical support systems. A life support-dependent member is a person who has an electrical device and/or equipment designed to sustain that person's life that was prescribed by a physician who is licensed by the state of Texas as a medical doctor or osteopath.

Members currently on the Critical Care Residential Member List who are dependent upon electrical life support systems are asked to complete a new application every two years and submit it to FEC's operations department.

Members on life support must understand that they secure no special right to preferential service because FEC has created a system to take into account members' special needs and that FEC in no way guarantees uninterrupted service. Life support-dependent members also are advised to make alternative arrangements in the event of an interruption to their normal electrical service.

Forms can be found on FEC'S website, [fayette.coop/report-outage](http://fayette.coop/report-outage). For more information, call the operations department at (979) 968-3181.

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**Joe Namath, Superbowl III MVP MDHearing Aid User**

**How can a rechargeable hearing aid that fits inside your ear and costs as low as \$297 a pair be every bit as good as those that sell for \$4,800 or more?**

**The answer:** Although tremendous strides have been made in Hearing Aid Technology, those cost reductions have not been passed on to you. Until now... **MDHearing™** uses the same kind of technology incorporated into hearing aids that cost thousands more at a small fraction of the price.

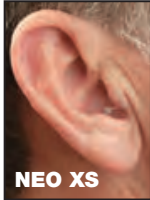
**Choose From Our *Smallest NEO XS* or the *Best-Selling NEO***  
Both are medical-grade, rechargeable hearing aids offering sophistication and high performance.

## MDHearing™ *NEO XS*

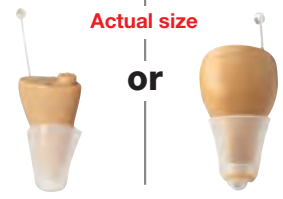
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At 50% smaller than our previous model, the NEO XS measures only 15mm long and is virtually invisible. And, at only \$397 for a pair, you won't find a better hearing aid.



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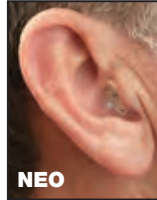
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**TCP** Listen as W.F. Strong narrates this story on our website.



What was needed here was what linguists call a speech act, a moment in time where something is made real by virtue of pronouncement.

Jones began with “I, as president of the Republic ... am now present to surrender into the hands of those whom the people have chosen, the power and the authority which we have some time held.”

Noah Smithwick, a blacksmith in attendance, recorded the moment the Texas flag came down. Here is what transpired in that brief ceremony.

“Many a head was bowed, many a broad chest heaved, and many a manly cheek was wet with tears when that broad field of blue in the center of which, like a signal light, glowed the lone star, emblem of the sovereignty of Texas, was furled and laid away among the relics of the dead republic.”

The U.S. flag was raised, and the mood changed dramatically.

“We were most of us natives of the United States, and when the stars and stripes, the flag of our fathers, was run up and catching the breeze unrolled its heaven born colors to the light, cheer after cheer rent the air,” Smithwick recalled.

He tended toward that creature still common in Texas—the exceptionally proud Texan. Smithwick thought the star in the lower left corner of the U.S. flag should have been especially dedicated to Texas.

The exchanging of the flags made one statement. Jones made another: “The Republic of Texas is no more.” He made it politically true but never absolute because the republic lives on in the minds of Texans who still think of it as their country and their nation. ■

# Republic’s End

‘Many a manly cheek was wet with tears’ when the Texian flag was lowered for the last time

BY W.F. STRONG

**IN ABOUT A YEAR** and a half—December 29, 2025—we’ll mark the 180th year of Texas statehood. That’s the day the proudest of Texans would say the U.S. was allowed to join Texas.

The vast majority of Texians—95%—voted for statehood, a level of agreement we haven’t enjoyed since. President James Polk signed the joint resolution making Texas a state December 29, 1845, but there was some confusion as to the official moment that the Republic of Texas passed into history and statehood status began.

Anson Jones, president of the republic at that time, said that February 19, 1846, was the actual day that the republic

ceased to exist. That day, Anson presided over a ceremony in Austin where the flag of the young but venerable republic was lowered for the last time and the U.S. flag was raised in its place.

You see, Texas couldn’t just let President Polk’s signing of a document 1,300 miles away be all there was to the moment. They couldn’t allow the republic that so many had died for to pass into history without properly memorializing the occasion.

So Jones arranged a ceremony in front of the Texas Capitol, really just a wooden house at that time, to mourn the passing of the republic and to celebrate Texas as the newest (and by far the largest) state in the union.

# Perfect Potluck

Dishes so good you'll be tempted to eat them en route

BY VIANNEY RODRIGUEZ, FOOD EDITOR

Iliana de la Vega, esteemed owner of the Austin restaurant El Naranjo, shares her ultimate potluck dish: "*Rajas poblanas* (poblano strips) is a vegetarian dish that goes beautifully with grilled meats or fish but also with rice and pasta. You can make tacos with it or even use the rajas as a filling for quesadillas and omelets."



## Rajas Poblanas

**6 poblano chiles, seeds and veins removed**

**1 tablespoon canola oil**

**1 white onion, julienned**

**1 cup crema Mexicana**

**Salt, to taste**

**Corn tortillas**

**COOK'S TIP** If crema Mexicana is unavailable where you shop, making your own is simple. Combine 1 cup heavy cream, 1 cup sour cream, 1 teaspoon salt and 1 tablespoon lime juice, and stir until smooth.

**1.** Preheat broiler. Place poblanos on a baking sheet. Roast under broiler, carefully flipping with tongs until charred on all sides, about 5 minutes. Place charred poblanos in a bowl and cover with plastic wrap until cooled enough to handle, about 15 minutes.

**2.** Remove skin from chiles. Slice them lengthwise into strips ½ inch thick.

**3.** Heat the oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Sauté the onion just until soft; do not brown.

**4.** Add the chile strips (rajas) and the crema Mexicana. Cook the chile mixture until heated through, about 5 minutes. Season with salt.

**5.** Serve immediately with warm corn tortillas.

**SERVES 6**

**TCP** Follow Vianney Rodriguez as she cooks in *Cocina Gris* at [sweetlifebake.com](http://sweetlifebake.com), where she features a recipe for Mexican Corn Salad.



## Perfect Potato Salad

CHERYL LEE  
CENTRAL TEXAS EC

Lee's potato salad is hearty and tangy, with a hint of freshness from the dill. It was so tasty and good that I'd eat plates of it by itself—no need for any of the bris-ket, sausage or hot dogs being served.

- 10 small russet potatoes, unpeeled, rinsed and cubed**
- 1 cup mayonnaise**
- 4 tablespoons mustard**
- 1 large onion, finely diced**
- 1 tablespoon minced garlic**
- 1 tablespoon ground oregano**
- 1 teaspoon onion salt**
- 1 teaspoon garlic salt**
- 8 hard-boiled eggs, cubed**
- 1 tablespoon fresh dill for serving**

- 1.** Place potatoes in a saucepan and cover with water. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer until potatoes are fork tender, about 10 minutes. Drain and allow to cool.
- 2.** In a large bowl, stir together mayonnaise, mustard, onion, garlic, oregano, onion salt and garlic salt. Gently stir in potatoes and eggs.
- 3.** Chill until ready to serve.
- 4.** Sprinkle with dill before serving.

**SERVES 20**

[MORE RECIPES >](#)



\$500 WINNER

## Easy Chicken Spaghetti Casserole

DONNA KENNEDY  
WOOD COUNTY EC



I love this casserole because it's so simple to make. Leftovers heat up great on day two, plus it freezes like a dream! (If there are leftovers of course.) This is serious comfort food.

**SERVES 8**

- 2 chicken breasts**
- 3 chicken thighs**
- 1 box spaghetti (16 ounces)**
- 2 tablespoons (¼ stick) butter**
- ½ bell pepper, stem and seeds removed, diced**
- 1 medium onion, diced**
- 1 can cream of chicken soup (10.5 ounces)**
- 1 can cream of celery soup (10.5 ounces)**
- 1 can chicken broth (14.5 ounces)**
- 2 cups shredded mild cheddar cheese**

- 1.** Place chicken in a large saucepan, cover with water and simmer until fork tender.
- 2.** Prepare spaghetti according to package directions.
- 3.** In a skillet over medium-high heat, melt butter. Sauté bell pepper and onion until the onion is light and translucent.
- 4.** Shred chicken and mix all ingredients except cheese together in a large bowl.
- 5.** Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Spoon mixture into a 10-by-14-inch baking pan. Bake 15 minutes.
- 6.** Sprinkle cheese on top and bake 10 more minutes or until bubbly.

### **TCP** \$500 Recipe Contest

**FOOTBALL FAVORITES** DUE APRIL 10  
What do the fans of your cooking crave on game day? Send us your recipe by April 10 and you could score big: \$500.





## Cold Broccoli Salad

ALEXANDRA DIBRELL  
CENTRAL TEXAS EC

This is one of the best broccoli salads I've ever had. Why? It's crisp and fresh, with a pop of heat—exactly what I want broccoli salad to be. It's also seriously addictive, thanks to the sweet and tangy combination of fresh lemon juice and rice vinegar.

- 1 pound fresh broccoli**
- ¼ cup olive oil**
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice**

- 2 tablespoons rice vinegar**
- 2 teaspoons Dijon mustard**
- 2 cloves garlic, minced**
- ½ teaspoon salt**
- ½ teaspoon ground black pepper**
- ½ teaspoon red pepper flakes**

- 1.** Cut broccoli into bite-size pieces. Steam until tender. Allow to cool, then place in fridge.
- 2.** In a large bowl, stir together olive oil, lemon juice, rice vinegar, mustard, garlic, salt, pepper and red pepper flakes. Place in fridge to chill.
- 3.** When ready to serve, remove bowl from fridge and add broccoli, stir to coat and serve chilled.

**SERVES 4**

**TCP** Potluck options abound on our website. After trying all these here, see what else has come out of Co-op Country kitchens. Simply search for a dish or key ingredient.

## Don't Leave It All to Luck

BY VIANNEY RODRIGUEZ

Consider whether your contribution will add to high demand for an oven or increase crowding in the kitchen.

If you're not hosting, bring food that travels easily.

Bring the appropriate utensils for your dish: a serving spoon, pair of tongs or ladle. This way dishes won't be double-dipped, and you won't have guests grabbing food with their hands.

Consider the advantages of disposable pans: less mess, no lost casserole dishes and easier cleanup.

Consider the dietary restrictions of other guests.

Remember that beverages will be needed, and this can be your contribution.

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COURTESY CHET GARNER

## Carried Treasure

Canton has hosted the World’s Largest Flea Market since the 1850s

BY CHET GARNER

**THIS DEFINITELY** wasn’t the shopping trip I expected, I thought, as I loaded an 8-foot-tall Bigfoot sculpture into the back of my truck. I had just finished securing my new (to me) cowhide, vintage street signs and antique chair. I should have brought more tow straps.

This is the experience of visiting the World’s Largest Flea Market, which happens every month in the town of Canton, midway between Dallas and Tyler. My legs, wallet and stomach were not prepared.

The tradition goes back to the 1850s when the circuit judge would make his monthly trip to town and the locals would congregate around the courthouse. They started bringing items to swap and sell: a gun for a dog or a cantaloupe for a dozen eggs. Soon a tradition was born that now attracts upwards of 150,000 visitors to First Monday Trade Days (which actually happens the weekend before the first Monday of each month).

As soon as I stepped onto the grounds, I realized that this wasn’t a normal swap meet. The official area boasts more than 5,000 vendors across 400 acres. That doesn’t even include the dozens (if not hundreds) of merchants who fill the streets and buildings of the town.

I walked from booth to booth, chatting with junkers and thrifters who had brought their special wares in search of the perfect buyer. While there was more than enough vintage “junk,” I was surprised at the unique artisans selling incredible handcrafted goods—furniture, décor and even metal tools.

Very soon I had worked up an appetite and stuffed my face with some of the best fair food in Texas, including corny dogs and “upside-down” lemonade. Hey, with all the walking I did, I figured I had earned it. And so I ordered an extra piece of peach pie. ■

ABOVE The finds for sale at First Monday Trade Days in Canton stretch across 400 acres.

**TCP** Join Chet as he wades through acres of stuff. Watch the video on our website and see all his Texplorations on *The Daytripper* on PBS.



## Know Before You Go

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

## APRIL

8

**Kerrville Totality at the Ridge**, (830) 896-0420, shopsattheridge.com

**McKinney Total Eclipse of the Heard**, (972) 562-5566, heardmuseum.org

12

**Poteet [12–14] Strawberry Festival**, 1-888-742-8144, strawberryfestival.com

13

**Sealy Spring Fest**, (832) 492-4244, sealyhistoricalsociety.org

**Waxahachie Cowboy Gathering**, (469) 309-4040, waxahachiecowboy.com

**Chappell Hill [13–14] Bluebonnet Festival**, (979) 836-6033, chappellhillhistoricalsociety.com

**Temple [13–14] Texas State Button Society Spring Show and Sale**, texasstatebuttonssociety.com

19

**Granbury [19–20] North Texas Gourd Festival**, (903) 258-7410, texasgourdsociety.org

**Lakeway [19–21] Art Walk**, (512) 261-1010, lakewayartsdistrict.com

20

**Burton Cotton Gin Festival**, (979) 289-3378, texascottonginmuseum.org

**Channing Panhandle Children’s Foundation Hogs at the Point**, (806) 935-5598, talonpoint.org

26

**Gun Barrel City [26-27] Quilt Show**, (903) 391-3241, gunbarrelquiltersguild.org

**Hallettsville [26-28] Texas State Championship Fiddlers Frolics**, (361) 798-2311, fiddlersfrolics.com

**Ingram [26-27, May 2, 4-5, 10-12] The Explorers' Club**, (830) 367-5121, hcaf.com

27

**Castroville Alsatian Festival of Texas**, castrovilletx.gov

**Corsicana Derrick Days**, (903) 654-4850, derrickdays.com

**Huntsville Gen. Sam Houston Day**, (936) 294-1832, samhoustonmemorialmuseum.com

**Lewisville ColorPalooza**, (972) 219-3401, visitlewisville.com

**Wimberley Pie Social**, info@wimwic.org, wimwic.org

28

**Bellville Fruehling Saengerfest**, (713) 582-2461, bellvilleions.org

MAY

2

**New Braunfels Soul Sessions' Tribute to Tina Turner**, (830) 627-0808, brauntex.org

4

**Brenham [4-5] Maifest**, (979) 337-7580, brenhammaifest.com

**TCP Submit Your Event**

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

# Thanks a Million

The Nature Conservancy is proud to have protected **one million acres of land in Texas**. This milestone could not have been achieved without the collaborative efforts of landowners, partners and supporters across the Lone Star State. Yet, the urgency to protect and preserve Texas' treasured landscapes, rivers, wildlife and way of life is greater now than ever. Together, we can find a way to achieve even more.



[nature.org/millionacremilestone](http://nature.org/millionacremilestone)



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# Pollinators

All aflutter, we are humming with anticipation. Photos flew in from every corner of the state, and we managed to alight on a few critters that have crawled their way to the top. No sting of disappointment here, just a swarm of entries that leave us buzzing with excitement.

CURATED BY GRACE FULTZ



1 MARK BONAME  
JACKSON EC

"It is a rare sight to see hummingbirds feeding on sunflowers, but the drought this year in Texas made these little guys feed on whatever they could find."

2 CINDY VIGIL  
GVEC

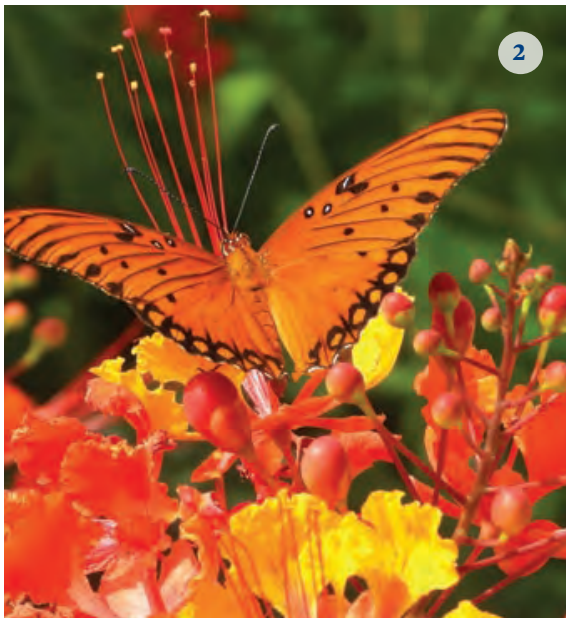
"Gulf fritillary butterflies love this pride of Barbados."

3 SUSAN KNAPP GIBBONS  
UNITED COOPERATIVE SERVICES

A feeding butterfly.

4 GAIL EINKAUF  
SAN BERNARD EC

"Taken at Sweet Berry Farm in Marble Falls."



## Upcoming Contests

- DUE APR 10 Textures
- DUE MAY 10 Parenthood
- DUE JUN 10 Climbing High



Enter online at [TexasCoopPower.com/contests](https://TexasCoopPower.com/contests).

**TCP** See Focus on Texas on our website for more Pollinators photos from readers.



## Seedy Behavior

Gardening scavengers stoop low to help native species

BY SHERYL SMITH-RODGERS  
ILLUSTRATION BY  
CHANELLE NIBBELINK

**COME MID-MAY**, I turn into a street walker. Not *that* kind, mind you. Instead, I ply my trade with a green plastic cup and sharp eyes.

“Oh, there you are,” hollers James, my husband, who’s strolling along Greenlawn Parkway. “I figured I’d find you over here!”

My gaze is fastened on clumps of lazy daisies growing along the street. Among the white-petaled blooms with orange centers, I scan for dried seed heads. Now and then, I spot one. Happily, I lean down, pinch it off, then drop the itsy-bitsy treasure into my cup.

We walk while I scope out wildflowers that grow along a ditch. Patiently, I’m watching for Texas prairie parsleys, wine-cups and beeblossoms going to seed. I’ll collect some seeds—but not all. I want to admire them again next spring.

I also want to establish them in our yard. Since 2008, we’ve nurtured Texas native plant gardens at our Blanco home and adjoining meadow, a former vacant lot. Since then, I’ve expanded into rescuing, preserving and protecting overlooked native species that grow in our neighborhood. I collect seeds whenever I can.

Sometimes I dig up and relocate plants, too. For instance, a next-door neighbor several years ago gave me permission to transplant a yellow passionflower, Texas lespedeza and hoary false goldenaster that grew on her side of the fence, where they were often mowed down. Now the trio grows, unrestrained and lush, in our backyard.

I’ve also relocated Indian mallow, Texas snoutbean, scarlet pea, narrowleaf blue-eyed grass and Texas frogfruit to our gardens. Roemer’s mimosa, too. I love to show kids how their tiny leaves fold up when touched. Magic!

Two regular walkers once rang our doorbell. “What’s this?” asked Yalene, while daughter Arden held up a slender branch with yellow flowers. I eyeballed the specimen. Lindheimer’s senna? James and I beelined to the easement where they’d found the plant. It was twoleaf senna, a new-to-me species. A few weeks later, I collected seeds from the site, which has since been cleared. Hopefully the seeds will germinate in our meadow, and the twoleaf senna will live on.

Why go to all that trouble? Because I deeply care about these plants. Because they were here long before us. Because they’re resilient and adapted to our soils and climate. Because they, unlike most ornamental plants, sustain the pollinators and other wildlife that inhabit this place we call home.

From blunt-leaf rabbit-tobacco to zizotes milkweed, we’ve welcomed neighborhood natives into our gardens, where I hope they’ll be appreciated and perpetuated for years to come. So call me a renegade. Or call me a tree hugger. I’ll answer to either one and make no excuses.

I’m a street walker on a mission in a green-light district. ■



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