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AN OLD PAINTING

THE ART
OF THE SANDWICH

WHEN FATHERHOOD
TURNS GRAND

Texas Coop Power

FOR FAYETTE EC MEMBERS

JUNE 2026

She Walked the Walk

Opal Lee helped elevate
Juneteenth every step
of the way





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June 2026



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Opal Lee at her home on East Annie Street in the Historic Southside neighborhood of Fort Worth.

Photo by Robert Seale

ABOVE

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

Painting by Julian Onderdonk



Volts Charge Into Texas

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

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

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

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

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

— OPAL LEE

FINISH THIS SENTENCE

The greatest innovation in my lifetime is ...

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

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

The air conditioner.

MARILYN WERKHEISER
BLUEBONNET EC
BASTROP

My cellphone.

KAT CROSS
HOUSTON COUNTY EC
CROCKETT

My coffee maker.

KERRY BEREND
FORT BELKNAP EC
LOVING

Ham radio. Communication is most important.

GARY DAVID ANTLEY
VIA FACEBOOK

Phone with FaceTime.

JOHNNA HALE
TRINITY VALLEY EC
CANTON

Visit our website to see more responses.



TCP Contests and More

\$500 RECIPE CONTEST
Cranberry Harvest

FOCUS ON TEXAS PHOTOS
Tailgating

RECOMMENDED READING

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



ENTER ONLINE

APRIL 2026 Kickin' Ashe

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

RAY WOLBRECHT
PEDERNALES EC
BLANCO



DAVE URBAN

A Whole Mess of Trash

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

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

Lynda Southwick
Bluebonnet EC
Brenham

Wear a Life Jacket

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

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



ERICH SCHLEGEL

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

Kat Saul
Grayson-Collin EC
Allen

Cavalry Hopes

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

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

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

Wallace L. Morgan
GVEC
Nixon

Blocker Billboard

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

Betty Morgan
Bryan Texas Utilities
Bryan

TCP WRITE TO US
letters@TexasCoopPower.com

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Austin, TX 78701

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

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Giant Footsteps

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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





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

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

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

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

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

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

A quest was born: Make Juneteenth a national holiday.

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



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

—African American spiritual

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



RENDERING COURTESY NATIONAL JUNETEENTH MUSEUM

National Juneteenth Museum

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

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

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

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

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

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



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



ENTER ONLINE



J.O. WAS HERE

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

BY JOHN R. MILLARD

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

1915

Oil on panel

Lusher Art Collection

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

The Man With the Brush

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

Collector of the Clouds

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

Art dealer Harry Halff is the foremost authority on Onderdonk

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

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

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

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

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

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

“

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

”



COURTESY DEBRA WILLARD

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

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



JULIAN ONDERDONK

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

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

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

The Muleman Next Door

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Preserving the View

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Our Bone-ified Best Blade

This knife says you're no one to mess with



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

— William B. Wilmington, NC

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

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

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

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

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

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

Knife Specifications:

- 10" overall length
- 420 surgical stainless steel and stick tang construction
- Genuine natural bone and redwood hand-carved handle
- Genuine leather sheath included

Blue Bone Bowie Knife

~~\$299~~ \$79* + S & P **Save \$220**

*Special price only for customers using the offer code.

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**Stauer Pocket
Binoculars**

a \$99 value

with your purchase of the
Blue Bone Bowie Knife



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Stauer | AFFORD THE EXTRAORDINARY



MESSAGE
FROM
GENERAL
MANAGER

**DOUG
LAMBERT**

Home Is Where Our Heart Is

AT FAYETTE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, Concern for Community isn't just one of the Seven Cooperative Principles—it's a responsibility we take personally. Our board of directors and employees live right here alongside the members we serve. This is home for us, too. Because of that, every decision we make is guided by a simple question: How does this serve our members and strengthen our communities?

First and foremost, we serve our community by doing what we do best, providing safe, reliable, affordable electricity. Homes, schools, farms, healthcare facilities and local businesses all depend



AFRICA IMAGES

on reliable power, and our cooperative exists to meet that need with a long-term perspective.

As our region grows, Fayette EC continues to invest in infrastructure, system reliability and grid modernization to ensure we can meet future demands. Our cooperative has been locally owned and governed since 1937, and members can be confident that we're here for the long haul—not driven by outside investors but guided by local leadership and member needs.

Concern for Community also means investing in people. Fayette EC provides well-paying jobs with competitive benefits, helping our employees and their families build their lives right here at home. Those wages stay local, supporting small businesses, strengthening the tax base and contributing to a healthier local economy. Keeping good jobs in our service area helps ensure our communities remain strong and vibrant.

Education remains one of the most meaningful ways we invest in the future. Each year, Fayette EC awards academic and trade school scholarships to graduating seniors from member families, supporting college and skilled trade career paths.

We also sponsor students on the Government-in-Action Youth Tour trip to Washington, D.C., giving young leaders a firsthand look at our nation's capital and the cooperative business model.

We also believe it's important to support neighbors who may be facing difficult times. Through our newly adopted program, the Power of Change, participating members round up their electric bills to the next dollar, creating a pool of funds—members helping members through tough financial times. Small contributions can make a big difference when we work together.

In addition, our board responsibly reinvests unclaimed capital credits back into the communities we serve, supporting scholarships and expanding opportunities for local economic development. These dollars stay local—right where they belong. Look for details of how to take advantage of this program and the Power of Change program on our website in the fall.

But Concern for Community goes beyond programs and financial support. It's visible every day through the actions of our employees. Fayette EC team members volunteer their time at schools, career days and safety events.

They support literacy through partnerships such as Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, help children stay warm through our annual coat drive, and participate in community and nonprofit initiatives throughout our service area. We're proud to support this involvement through board-approved volunteer time and community programs.

At the end of the day, Fayette EC is made up of people who care deeply about this place. Our employees are your neighbors. They coach youth sports, serve in churches, volunteer in civic organizations and take pride in helping make our hometowns stronger.

When you think about your electric cooperative, I hope you remember this: Concern for Community isn't just something we talk about, it's something we live out every day.

Because at Fayette Electric Cooperative, our community isn't just where we work.

It's where our hearts are. ■



POKE | ISTOCK.COM

Keep Scammers Out During Outages

WHEN SEVERE WEATHER causes power outages, scammers may see an opportunity. They might pose as Fayette Electric Cooperative employees, urging you to act quickly and share personal or financial information to restore service.

Scammers may offer reimbursement for outages, claim an account error or threaten disconnection unless immediate payment is made. Don't believe them.

Always communicate with Fayette EC through official channels, such as fayette.coop or by calling (979) 968-3181. If you receive a suspicious call, hang up and contact the co-op directly using a trusted number. Never provide personal or banking information over the phone or return calls from unknown numbers.

Remember that Fayette EC will always provide members with notice, time and multiple payment options to resolve legitimate account issues. We do not demand immediate payment or threaten disconnection without proper communication. Scammers rely on fear and urgency—slow down, trust your instincts and verify before responding.

Legitimate utilities will never request payment by gift card, money transfer or cryptocurrency. You can report scam attempts to the FCC at fcc.gov/consumers. As a member-owned cooperative, Fayette EC is committed to transparent communication and protecting your personal information. When in doubt, don't hesitate to reach out. ■

Fayette Electric Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

CONTACT US

2111 N. Von Minden Rd.
P.O. Box 490
La Grange, TX 78945
Local (979) 968-3181
Toll-Free 1-866-968-3181
Email electric@fayette.coop
Web fayette.coop

Your Board of Directors

Joseph D. Kruppa, President
Gale Lincke, Vice President
James A. Anderle, Secretary-Treasurer
David A. Stancik
Clayton Wessels
Scott Schultz
Jonathan Treptow

Your General Manager

Doug Lambert

24/7

Outage Hotline Numbers

For information and to report outages, please contact us.

LOCAL

(979) 968-3181

TOLL-FREE

1-866-968-3181

TEXT "OUT"

1-844-971-1048

ABOUT FAYETTE EC

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

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- 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 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





RISKA | ISTOCK.COM

Prepare for Hurricane Season

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

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

Determine Your Risk

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

Make a Plan

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

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

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

Assemble Supplies

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

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

The Federal Emergency Management Agency provides an extensive checklist of recommended supplies to include in an emergency kit at fema.gov.

Strengthen Your Home

If you plan to ride out the storm in your own home, make sure it's in good repair and up to local hurricane building code specifications.

Many retrofits do not cost as much

or take as long to enact as you might think.

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

Find Reliable Sources

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

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

Finalize Your Plan

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

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

Hurricane Preparedness Guidelines

Hurricane season is June 1–November 30

If you're under a hurricane warning, find safe shelter right away.

When a hurricane is 36 hours from arriving:

- ▶ Turn on your TV or radio in order to get the latest weather updates and emergency instructions.
- ▶ Restock your emergency preparedness kit. Include food and water sufficient for at least three days, medications, a flashlight, batteries, cash, and first-aid supplies. Learn how to build an emergency kit at ready.gov/build-a-kit.

When a hurricane is 18–36 hours from arriving:

- ▶ Bookmark your city or county website for quick access to storm updates and emergency instructions.
- ▶ Bring indoors any loose, lightweight objects that could become projectiles in high winds (e.g., patio furniture and garbage cans); anchor objects that are unsafe to bring in (e.g., propane tanks); and trim or remove trees close enough to fall on a building.

When a hurricane is six to 18 hours from arriving:

- ▶ Turn on your TV or radio or check your city or county website every 30 minutes for the latest weather updates and emergency instructions.
- ▶ Charge your cellphone so you will have a full battery in case you lose power.

When a hurricane is six hours from arriving:

- ▶ If you're not in an area that is recommended for evacuation, plan to stay at home or where you are, and let friends and family know where you are.
- ▶ Close storm shutters and stay away from windows. Flying glass from broken windows could injure you.
- ▶ Turn your refrigerator or freezer to the coldest setting and open only when necessary. If you lose power, food will last longer. Keep a thermometer in the refrigerator to be able to check the food temperature when power is restored.

To stay safe during a hurricane:

- ▶ If told to evacuate, do so immediately. Do not drive around barricades.
- ▶ If sheltering during high winds, go to a Federal Emergency Management Agency safe room; International Code Council 500 storm shelter; or a small, interior, windowless room or hallway on the lowest floor that is not subject to flooding.
- ▶ If trapped in a building by flooding, go to the highest level of the building. Do not climb into a closed attic; you may become trapped by rising floodwaters.

To stay safe after a hurricane:

- ▶ Listen to authorities for information and special instructions.
- ▶ Do not touch electrical equipment if it is wet or if you are standing in water. If it is safe to do so, turn off electricity at the main breaker or fuse box to prevent electric shock.
- ▶ Avoid wading in floodwaters, which can contain dangerous debris. Underground or downed power lines can also electrically charge the water.

Preparación para huracanes

La temporada de huracanes es del 1 de junio al 30 de noviembre

Cuando un huracán está a 36 horas de llegar:

- ▶ Prenda su televisor o radio para obtener las últimas actualizaciones meteorológicas e instrucciones de emergencia.
- ▶ Reponga su kit de emergencias. Incluya alimentos y agua suficientes para al menos tres días, medicamentos, una linterna, pilas, dinero en efectivo y suministros de primeros auxilios. Aprenda como construir un kit de emergencia en ready.gov/build-a-kit.

Cuando un huracán está a 18–36 horas de llegar:

- ▶ Marque como favorito el sitio web de su ciudad o condado para el acceso rápido de las actualizaciones de tormentas e instrucciones de emergencia.
- ▶ Traiga adentro objetos sueltos y ligeros que puedan convertirse en proyectiles con vientos fuertes (por ejemplo, muebles de patio y botes de basura); sujete objetos que no serían seguros para llevar adentro (por ejemplo, tanques de propano); y recorte o retire los árboles que están lo suficientemente cerca como para caer en un edificio.

Cuando un huracán está a 6–18 horas de llegar:

- ▶ Encienda su televisor o radio, o visite el sitio web de su ciudad o condado cada 30 minutos para obtener las últimas actualizaciones meteorológicas e instrucciones de emergencia.
- ▶ Cargue su teléfono celular para que tenga una batería llena en caso de que pierda energía.

Cuando un huracán está a seis horas de llegar:

- ▶ Si no se encuentra en un área recomendada para la evacuación, planifique quedarse en su casa o donde se encuentra y avise a sus amigos y familiares donde se encuentra.
- ▶ Cierre las contraventanas y aléjese de las ventanas. Los vidrios que vuelan de las ventanas rotas podrían dañarle.
- ▶ Ajuste la temperatura de su refrigerador o congelador a la posición más fría y ábralos solo cuando sea necesario. Si pierde la energía, la comida durará por más tiempo. Mantenga un termómetro en el refrigerador para poder verificar la temperatura de los alimentos cuando se restablezca la energía.

Para mantenerse a salvo durante un huracán:

- ▶ Si se le indica que evacue, hágalo inmediatamente. No maneje alrededor de las barricadas.
- ▶ Si se refugia durante vientos fuertes, vaya a una habitación segura de la Federal Emergency Management Agency, refugio contra tormentas del International Code Council 500 o una habitación o pasillo pequeña e interior sin ventanas en el piso más bajo que no esté sujeto a inundaciones.
- ▶ Si queda atrapado en un edificio por inundación, vaya al nivel más alto del edificio. No suba a un ático cerrado porque usted puede quedar atrapado por las crecientes inundaciones.

Para mantenerse a salvo después de un huracán:

- ▶ Escuche a las autoridades para obtener información e instrucciones especiales.
- ▶ No toque el equipo eléctrico si está mojado o si está parado en el agua. Si es seguro hacerlo, apague la electricidad en el interruptor principal o en la caja de fusibles para evitar una descarga eléctrica.
- ▶ Evite vadear en el agua de la inundación, que puede contener desechos peligrosos. Las líneas eléctricas subterráneas o caídas también pueden cargar el agua eléctricamente.

5 Ways To Reduce Use During Extreme Heat

DURING PERIODS OF extreme heat, the demand for electricity can skyrocket, placing additional strain on the grid. By working together to lower our electricity use, we can conserve energy when it matters most.

Here are five effective ways to lower use at home:

- ▶ Raise your thermostat setting a few degrees; every degree reduces cooling energy use.
- ▶ Cook with smaller appliances like microwaves or air fryers to save energy and reduce heat gain in the kitchen.
- ▶ Keep blinds, curtains and shades closed during the hottest part of the day to block direct sunlight.
- ▶ Use fans to circulate air, which can make you feel cooler without needing to lower the thermostat.
- ▶ Shift activities that require a lot of energy consumption to off-peak hours when demand is lower. ■



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Know the Signs of Heat-Related Illness

DURING EXTREMELY HOT and humid weather, your body's ability to cool itself is challenged. When the body heats too rapidly, or when too much fluid or salt is lost through dehydration or sweating, body temperatures rise. It's important to know the symptoms of extreme heat exposure and the appropriate responses.

Heat cramps may be the first sign of heat-related illness and may lead to heat exhaustion or stroke. The symptoms are heavy sweating and painful muscle cramps and spasms, usually in the legs and abdomen.

Apply firm pressure on cramping muscles or gently massage to relieve spasms. Give sips of water unless the person complains of nausea—then stop giving water. Seek immediate medical attention if cramps last longer than one hour.

Signs of heat exhaustion include weakness or tiredness; cool, pale, clammy skin; a fast, weak pulse; dizziness, nausea or vomiting; headache; and fainting.

Move the person to a cooler environment, preferably an air-conditioned room. Loosen clothing. Apply cool, wet cloths or have the person sit in a cool bath. Offer sips of water. Seek immediate medical attention if the person vomits or if symptoms worsen or last longer than one hour.

Heat stroke symptoms include a throbbing headache; confusion; slurred speech; nausea; dizziness; a body temperature above 103 degrees; hot, red, dry or damp skin; a rapid and strong pulse; and loss of consciousness.

Call 911 or get the victim to a hospital immediately. Heat stroke is a serious medical emergency, and delay can be fatal.

Move the victim to a cooler, preferably air-conditioned, environment. Reduce body temperature with cool cloths or a bath. Use a fan if heat index temperatures are below the high 90s. A fan can make you hotter at higher temperatures. Do not give fluids.

For more information on heat-related illnesses, visit [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov). ■



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Have Cool Fun Without the AC

WHEN TEMPERATURES RISE, so can your electric bill as everyone heads inside. Encourage kids to stay cool with these activities that get them outdoors and don't require cranking up the air conditioner.

Jump rope water challenge: Take turns spinning the jump rope while the person jumping holds a paper cup of water. Whoever has the most water in their cup after 10 hops wins.

Ice-age excavation: Take waterproof children's toys and freeze them in blocks of ice. Use kid-friendly tools to chip and melt away the ice to expose the toys.

Cold sweets: Freeze fruit juice or fruit purée poured into ice pop molds or ice cube trays to make cool treats. Ice cream is also a summer staple. To enjoy this summer favorite sans electricity, use a hand-crank ice cream maker.

Plastic waterslide: Whether rented, purchased or improvised with a tarp and hose, a flexible plastic waterslide can provide hours of wet and wild entertainment for the whole family.

Water fight: Challenge your children to a battle with water balloons or squirt guns. Evaporation will help keep you cool! Just be sure to pick up all the balloon pieces when you're done so the little bits don't become litter or choking hazards.

Water table: A water table puts water and toys at toddler height for outdoor play. Create a "duck pond" with rubber duckies and a shallow plastic tub, or make a pouring station with various sized buckets and pitchers.

Water-gun painting: Take this art project outdoors and away from surfaces that you want to keep clean. Fill water guns with washable, nontoxic paint and use them to squirt a piece of paper set up on an easel. ■

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MEETING

WEDNESDAY
JULY 15TH

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INFORMATION
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“

THE COOPERATIVE ADVANTAGE

We do more than keep the lights on.
We're here to keep our community strong because every member matters.

”

For generations we've powered the growth of our community. And today our cooperative is stronger than ever.

We keep you connected to what matters most.

FAYETTE
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Your Touchstone Energy Cooperative 

Grill Safely This Father's Day

DADS KNOW: GRILLING outdoors is not only a good way to keep your house cooler and lower your energy bill but also a great way to enjoy Father's Day.

But make sure safety is a priority. Each year, grill fires cause thousands of injuries and millions of dollars in property loss, according to the National Fire Protection Association. Most grill fires can be prevented with proper maintenance and safe use.

Stay safe by following these simple tips from Safe Electricity, a program of the Energy Education Council.

No matter which type of grill you prefer, keep it clean by removing grease or fat buildup from grates and trays. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for proper cleaning practices.

Keep a fire extinguisher nearby, and make sure everyone present knows how to use it.

Place the grill on a stable surface, away from homes, deck railings and overhanging branches.

Keep children and pets at least 3 feet away.

Never leave an active grill unattended.

Use propane and charcoal grills outdoors only, which prevents fire hazards and carbon monoxide poisoning.

Gas grills pose a greater fire risk due to the potential for leaks. To ensure safe grilling, check hoses for leaks each season.

Charcoal Grills

Only use starter fluid designed for grills, never gasoline or other flammable liquids.

Never add lighter fluid to a lit fire—this causes flare-ups.

Store starter fluid away from heat sources and out of children's reach.

Let coals and ashes cool completely before disposing of them in a metal container.

Electric Grills

Ensure your electric grill is outdoor rated to withstand exposure to moisture and varying temperatures.

Never use an electric grill in rainy or wet conditions. Store the grill in a dry place when not in use.

Keep electrical connections away from water, damp surfaces and pools to avoid electric shock.

Always plug your grill into a ground-fault circuit interrupter outlet to protect against shocks. If using an extension cord, make sure it's outdoor-rated and GFCI-protected.

Check the power cord for frays, cracks or damage before use. ■



GORBENKOFF | ISTOCK.COM

Texas: Forever in Your Heart



1. Heart of Texas Women's Hoodie

3. Personalized Heart of Texas Women's Denim Jacket



Hoodie and tote feature a silver-tone Texas charm



2. Heart of Texas Quilted Tote



Denim Jacket Personalized FREE with your name or initials

1. Heart of Texas Women's Hoodie

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

2. Heart of Texas Quilted Tote

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

3. Personalized Heart of Texas Women's Denim Jacket

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

Order Today at bradfordexchange.com/ForeverTexas

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- 1. Heart of Texas Women's Hoodie 01-44509-001 Size _____
- 2. Heart of Texas Quilted Tote 01-44510-001
- 3. Personalized Heart of Texas Women's Denim Jacket 01-44612-001 Size _____

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

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

Check here if you do NOT want personalization

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Mrs. Mr. Ms. _____
Name (Please Print Clearly)

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City _____ State _____ Zip _____

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

E54801



Go the Other Way

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

BY W.F. STRONG • ILLUSTRATION BY CHRIS WORMELL

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Art of the Sandwich

Warm your heart with a meal dressed in layers

BY VIANNEY RODRIGUEZ, FOOD EDITOR

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

Brisket Grilled Cheese Sandwich

4 tablespoons (½ stick) butter, softened
4 slices thick-sliced white bread (often labeled Texas toast)
8 ounces sharp cheddar cheese, grated or sliced
16 ounces diced, cooked brisket, room temperature

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

SERVES 2

TCP Follow Vianney Rodriguez as she cooks in Cocina Gris at sweetlifebake.com, where she features a recipe for Mini Chorizo con Papa y Huevo Breakfast Sandwiches.





Grilled Strawnana Hazelnut Sandwich

LISA CASIMIR
COSERV

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

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

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

SERVES 2

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28 >



\$500 WINNER

Muffuletta

BETTY HERZIK
FAYETTE EC



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

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

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

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

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

SERVES 6

TCP \$500 Recipe Contest

CRANBERRY HARVEST DUE JUN 10

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

UPCOMING: HOLIDAY TRADITIONS DUE JUL 10



Bridget's Sandwiches

LYNETT RATCHFORD
BLUEBONNET EC

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

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

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



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

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

SERVES 6

Hacks for Your Stacks

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

USE THOSE LEFTOVERS

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

NO MAYO, NO PROBLEM

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

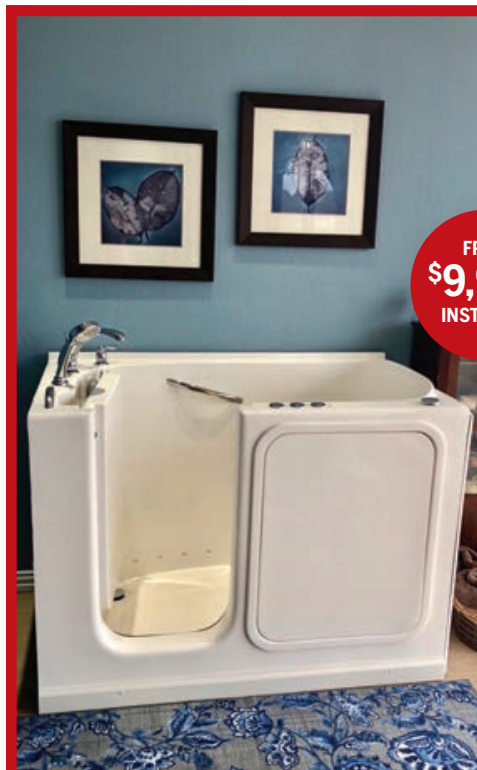
SEASON YOUR TOMATOES

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

DON'T HOLD THE HERBS

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

—Vianney Rodriguez



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COURTESY CASEY CHAPMAN ROSS

Play Time on the Prairie

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

BY CHET GARNER

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Know Before You Go

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

JUNE

10

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

11

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

13

Fredericksburg Luckenbach School Open House, (830) 685-3321, historicschools.org

Jacksonville Tomato Fest, (903) 586-2217, jacksonvilletexas.com

Mason Hot Dog & Hot Rod Night, (325) 347-5758, mason.tx.org

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

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

17

Fairfield Tea With Miss Texas, (903) 389-5792, fairfieldtexaschamber.com

18

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

20

Dallas Showtime Saturday: Hot Toast Music Company, (972) 702-7100, galleriadallas.com

Garland Juneteenth Celebration, (972) 205-2749, visitgarlandtx.com

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

23

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

25

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

27

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

JULY

3

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

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

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

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

4

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

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

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

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

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



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

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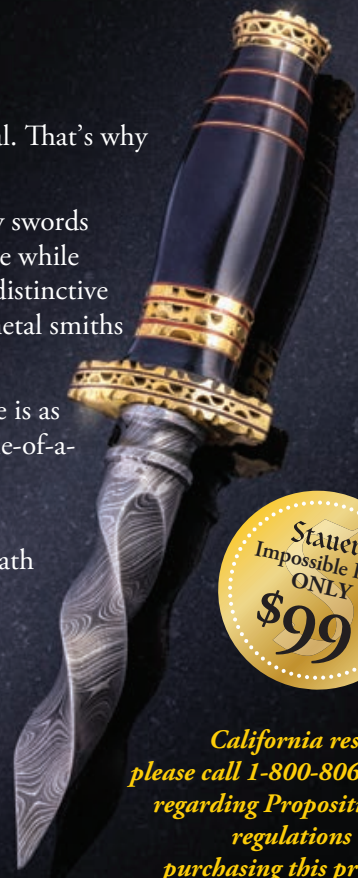
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1 RAY BEDNAR
BLUEBONNET EC
A painted bunting bathing.

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

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

4 PAUL GARCIA
MEDINA EC
“I just happened to catch this cardinal taking a bath in my home’s birdbath.”



Upcoming Contests

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



ENTER ONLINE

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



Papa Hits His Stride

Fatherhood becomes grand when you get a second go

BY MARK TROTH

ILLUSTRATION BY
URAN DUO

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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