

...Evolving ranch

*(Continued from previous page)*  
“After [Hurricane] Harvey, all of that wound up in the bay. So now it’s all there in Sally Crofutt’s brain, which isn’t all that steady. We are journaling again about what’s happening day to day so that we have a baseline. There are always changes, especially after the big freeze.”  
It’s good to know that the Fennessey is in good hands, that its river won’t be surrounded by concrete and condos, and that it will continue to be a source of

education and awe.  
“I’ve been out here where I’ve seen a thousand hawks just lift off,” says Crofutt. “You see, the hawks have to have large trees to roost in. You want tall trees along the river so your migrating hawks will come in. We have a hawk watch every September that’s just amazing. We put guests on a hawk hayride. I can make a hayride out of anything.”  
*This article also appeared online at texascooppower.com.*

Bring Texas State Parks home for the holidays

Find the perfect holiday gift for the outdoorsy person in your life at the new Texas State Park Online Store. The store, which is found on the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department’s reservation website, features the official 2021 Texas State Park ornament, plus ornaments from previous years, magnets, hiking stick medallions, stickers and much more.  
For 20 years, the annual park Christmas ornament has featured some of the most recognizable Texas State Parks landscapes. The metal ornament features photo-

quality artwork in stunning color with rich, laser-etched textures and detail. This year, the ornament features a longhorn from the official state longhorn herd at Lyndon B. Johnson State Park and Historic Site.  
The annual Christmas ornament can be purchased exclusively online for \$19.95 each, with free shipping. Purchase by Thursday, Dec. 10 for likely arrival before Christmas. Taxes will be applied at check out.  
Other items available for purchase on the new Texas State Park Online Store include the

Texas State Parks Pass, which allows a carload of visitors into the park for free for a calendar year, a Bluebonnet metal bookmark, a wooden Texas State Park magnet and sticker, state park zipper pulls and key rings, hiking stick medallions and ornaments from previous years.  
Stay tuned to the online store throughout the year for new items available for purchase.  
Anyone visiting the Texas State Capitol during the month of December can see the Capitol Christmas Tree delivered by Eisenhower State Park staff and the 2021 Texas State Park ornament. Texas State Parks has provided Christmas trees to the Texas State Capitol for more than 40 years.  
The 20-foot tree was delivered on Monday, November 29, at 10 am to the House of Representatives. Mamie III, named after former First Lady Mamie Geneva Eisenhower, is a Virginia Pine grown and harvested from a tree farm near Eisenhower State Park. Texas State Park Police escorts the tree to the Capitol when it enters Austin.

immunity.  
Bullock caught the servant outside the legation, beat him up and threatened to do the same to Saligny. The Frenchman cut off diplomatic relations with Texas before traveling to New Orleans. A year later, he returned to his post, but the pig war had effectively killed the loan.  
Even so, Saligny’s glowing reports of the unfathomable wealth and prosperity for which Texas was destined fueled France’s interest in the nation. By keeping close ties with Texas, France wanted to make a grab at the last foothold available for it in North America. Negotiations for a French colonization and stationing of 30,000 French troops along the Texas frontier continued unconsummated until Texas was annexed by the U.S. in 1845.  
France sacked Saligny for his ineptitude, and the trouble was all traced back to those pigs. As one French minister said of Saligny, “We can make mistakes, but we can’t afford to look ridiculous.”

*W.F. Strong is a professor at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. This story also can be heard on the radio program Texas Standard.*

Let Your Home Be Bright - and Safe

Holiday decorations brighten Christmas, but the National Fire Protection Association reports that holiday lights and other light-up decor are involved in an average of 160 house fires each year, causing millions of dollars in property damage. And 12% of home candle fires occur in December - 1.5 times the monthly average.  
Reduce the risk at your house this holiday season by keeping these important considerations in mind.  
**Lights**  
Unlike incandescent bulbs,

asked for a \$5 million loan. The minister asked if he had any collateral, and the Texan said, “a territory as big as the kingdom of France.”  
At the time Texas was actually about 50% larger than France. It looked like this loan would sail through the French bureaucracy. Then some Texas pigs caused an international incident.  
Back in Austin, hogs owned by the innkeeper Richard Bullock wandered onto the grounds of the French Legation and ate corn in the stable, tore up gardens and invaded the house. Dubois de Saligny, the chargé d’affaires of the legation, ordered his servant to shoot the pigs. An outraged Bullock wanted Saligny arrested, but Saligny claimed diplomatic

which release most of their energy as heat, LEDs are cool to the touch - which also means they’re more energy efficient. LEDs are made with epoxy lenses, not glass, and are much more durable.  
When hanging lights outdoors, use a wooden or fiberglass ladder and keep well away from power lines.  
Turn off all indoor and outdoor holiday lighting before leaving the house or going to bed. An outlet timer can make this a cinch.  
Never drape anything over a lightbulb or lampshade.  
Avoid using candles. Consider using battery-operated candles in place of traditional flames.  
If you need to use a candle, never leave it unattended. Keep burning candles within sight, and extinguish all candles before you leave the room or go to bed.  
Place lighted candles well away from combustible material and areas where they might be knocked over. Never use lighted candles on a tree or near other evergreens.  
**Trees**  
When purchasing a live Christmas tree, check for freshness.  
A fresh tree will stay green longer and be less of a fire hazard than a dry tree.  
Cut 1 - 2 inches from the base of the trunk immediately before placing the tree in the stand and filling with water. This ensures water absorption.  
Because heated rooms quickly dry out live trees, refill the stand daily.  
When purchasing an artificial tree, make sure to check that it’s fire resistant.  
Don’t use electric ornaments or light strings on artificial trees with metallic leaves or branch coverings.  
Place your tree at least 3 feet away from all heat sources, including fireplaces, radiators and space heaters.  
When trimming a tree, only use noncombustible or flame-resistant materials.

Footnotes in Texas History: France’s Beef? Pigs

By W.F. Strong  
After securing independence at San Jacinto, Texas was an independent country but one with no money and a shaky government. With no military force to secure its vast territory, Texas needed friends on the international stage and needed them quickly.  
Texas turned first to the United States. Just months earlier, Stephen F. Austin had written, “We ought to get united to the United States as soon as possible.”  
Though the U.S. was not ready to pursue annexation, it was the first country to formally recognize the new sovereign nation. Congress made that move because it feared Britain or France might gain an inside track to the wealth of Texas.  
The next country to recognize Texas was France. A

commercial treaty was signed September 25, 182 years ago, and it established import duties on Texas cotton in France and reduced import duties on French wines, brandies and silks in Texas ports. The French Legation was opened in Austin, and the Texas Legation was opened in Paris.  
This recognition from France was of enormous significance because most European countries saw the Texas Revolution as internal unrest within Mexico and believed that Santa Anna might crush the rebellion and reclaim the wayward state.  
Once recognized internationally, Texas needed support for its banking system. In 1841, Gen. James Hamilton, the Texas commissioner of loans, walked into a French minister’s office in Paris and

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