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The first six months

“What good is the warmth of summer, without the cold of winter to give it sweetness.”

– John Steinbeck

Well, here we are – at the threshold of summertime. Albeit, it’s felt like summer on and off since April. It never ceases to amaze me how quickly the months can move by. But I’ll go back and look at photos and recount all that has transpired since the first of the year and suddenly it all feels like a little less of a blur. But June, whew – are you ready?

These first six months of 2023 have been interesting. We’ve had ice, we’ve had sunshine and rain, more festivals and fun community get togethers than I can count on two hands. It’s been a beautiful six months, hasn’t it? What shall we do with the remaining months this year? I once was a fastidious resolution maker. I had my lists and ideas and determination. This year I didn’t do any of that. I only resolved to be more present and to do my best. I also resolved to let loose any fear of the unknown, any anxieties about what could be, and any hesitancy to move forward in happy pursuit of dreams. What do you hope to realize in these next six months?

As always, our contributors bring you a bevy of information to benefit heart and home. We are so excited to welcome the Wimberley Valley Art League into the magazine. The amazing artists and creators in this enchanted place add to the sparkle that has existed here probably forever.

Wishing you a beautiful summer.

Happy June, y’all.

Warmly,



Wimberley Valley NEWS & VIEWS

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• Community Calendar of Events •

- Every Mon. **Celebrate Recovery** 6:30-8:30pm, Cypress Creek Church, in the den. 512-847-1222 or CelebrateRecovery@CypressCreekChurch.com. Potluck at 5:30pm every 2nd Monday.
- Every 2nd Mon. **Wimberley Valley Art League** meets at the Wimberley Community Center at 6:30-8:30pm. Visit WimberleyArtLeague.org for information.
- Every 2nd Mon. **Wimberley 4H** meets during the school year at VFW Hall on 401 Jacobs Well Rd. Our next meeting is Monday, April 11, 7pm. 6:30pm Clover Kids Program. April community service: We will be collecting items for the Dell Children's Hospital family room.
- Every 3rd Mon. The **Wimberley Area Parkinsons Association** meets at the Chapel of The Hills Church, 14601 RR 12 in Wimberley from 9-11am. Caregivers, friends, and relatives are welcome. Guest speakers and general discussion. Parkinson's exercise program. Email Paul, paulwilj99@gmail.com.
- Every 2nd & 4th Monday, The Wimberley Chapter of **Overeaters Anonymous** meets at 7pm, at the Wimberley Presbyterian Church, 956 FM 2325, Wimberley, TX 78676. (3rd door from the right). For more info, call or text Aida at 512-787-8313.
- Mon. May 8, **Jacob's Well Chapter, National Society Daughters of the American Revolution**, meets at the Emily Ann Theater in Wimberley at 9:40am, for chat time and 10am for our business meeting. JacobsWellNSDAR@gmail.com for more.
- Mon. **Toddler Time**, Wimberley Village Library, 10:30-11:30am, beginning January 9.
- Every Tues. 6:30-8pm. **Community Bible Study**, an interdenominational Bible study. To register contact Karen Bryson at 512 644 8805 or kb17@txstate.edu.
- Every 3rd Tues. The **Lions Club** meets from 6pm-8pm at the Wimberley Community Center. Call 512-847-0207 for info.
- Every Tues. at noon, **Rotary Club** of Wimberley meets at the EMS Classroom on Twilight Trail. Carolyn Manning is our President, 512-558-1626, director@wimberleylibrary.org
- Every 1st Tue. The Wimberley Community Center hosts **free medical checks** 9:30-10:30am. Call 512-847-2510.
- Every 1st Wed. 5:30-7pm, **Wimberley Valley Arts and Cultural Alliance (WVACA)** holds a mixer at Middleton Brewing. Opportunity for members and curious non-members to meet and mingle, share ideas, learn about upcoming events, and get involved. All are welcome. Visit WimberleyArts.org.
- Every Wed. Join **Wimberley Valley Chamber of Commerce** for breakfast at the Wimberley Cafe for networking opportunities, 8-9am. Bring lots of business cards.
- Every 3rd Wed. Sept. thru May, 9:30am-12pm. The Hill Country Unit of the **Herb Society of America** meets at the Wimberley Presbyterian Church. Visitors are always welcome! Refreshments at 9:30am. Program starts at 10am. Visit HillCountryHerbs.org or email valentine_lisa@msn.com.
- Wed. **Bilingual Storytime**, 5-6pm Wimberley Village Library
- Every 1st Thur. The **Wimberley Alzheimer's Caregiver's Support Group** meets at 1pm at the Presbyterian Church Library on FM 2325. Contact Linda Germain at 512-924-3661.
- Every 2nd Thursday, **Hill Country Bead Society** meets at 1pm at the Wimberley Community Center. All levels and types of beading and metal work. Marilyn Pierce at 512-722-3549.
- Every 2nd and 4th Thur. 7pm **Wimberley Toastmasters Club**, First Baptist Church Wimberley, 15951 Winters Mill Parkway, Wimberley. Toastmasters teaches public speaking and leadership. For more info contact Amy O'Neil at amy@texiasllc.com.
- Every 3rd Thur. Live concerts at **Susanna's Kitchen Coffeehouse**, 7:30pm; \$20-25 adults, \$5 children. Food, coffee, soft drinks available. Corner of RR 12 & CR 1492 (Wimberley United Methodist Church.) WimberleyUMC.org Proceeds benefit Barnabas Connection & Mother's Day Out scholarships. **Thurs. June 15: Jimmy Davis**
- Thurs. **Gentle Yoga** 10-11am, Wimberley Village Library
- Every Fri. **Wimberley VFW Post 6441** hosts bingo nights. Doors at 6:30pm with food concession. Earlybird games at 7:00pm. Regular games start at 8pm. Visit vfw6441.com/bingo
- Fri. **Storytime**, 10:30-11:30am, Wimberley Village Library
- Every 2nd Sat. **Wimberley's Second Saturday Gallery Trail**. Visit ten galleries for art, food, fun, 4-7pm. Email BentTreeGallery@gmail.com. Have a glass of wine & enjoy art after hours.
- 1st Sat. **Wimberley Market Day**, 7am-3pm, March thru December, rain or shine
- 1st Sun. of every month, **Wimberley Coffee & Cars**, 8am-11am,

• Sunday, June 11, 1-4pm **Made Kids Workshop**, monthly free and fun kids maker workshop. Workshops are come and go, and supplies are first come, first serve. 580 Farm to Market Rd 3237 Unit C, Wimberley. HiSawyer.com for more.

• Tuesday, June 13, **Blue Hole Star Party**, 8:30-10:30pm enjoy an evening of stargazing. The Wimberley Valley Dark Sky Committee & the Texas State Astronomy Club share their telescopes & knowledge. Admission is free!

- Sunday, June 19, **Fathers Day**
- Wednesday, June 21, **first day of summer**

Have something to add to the Calendar of Events? Email us at info@WVNewsViews.com or call us, 512 375 5590.

Loving Nature and each other *by Tim Thompson*



Grief is a part of every one of our lives. Loved ones die. Friends move far away. Promising careers change. I still grieve the loss of my brother and parents after many years, and the loss of so many beloved trees over a couple of nasty winters is a loss not soon forgotten. I am reminded of their absence every time I go outdoors.

A healthy life requires learning to effectively mourn the losses in our lives in ways that make room for our sorrows while still affirming our need for growth. While our culture supports funerals and memorials and celebrations of life, the day-to-day support of grief work is often lost in a sea of toxic stoicism or unrealistic self-expectations.

The recent pandemic took most of us by complete surprise. Never had we imagined our lives being so interrupted by a microscopic virus that could change how we work, educate our kids, worship in churches, shop for groceries, relate to our neighbors, and so many other things. Denied the comfort and touch of other humans, many people suffered personal wounds they and those around them were not prepared to address. Relationships untended by personal contact often soured.

As of today, we have had more mass shootings than calendar days this year. Outrageous behavior on airplanes has become commonplace. More and more jobs do not require the physical presence of the employee. Polite disagreement is often replaced by

candidly mean-spirited tirades.

A friend of mine believes that much of the antisocial behavior we see today is rooted in the fact that we, as a people, have not yet effectively grieved the loss of so many things that rather suddenly disappeared in the spring of 2020. Whether that is the result of individual or cultural denial probably doesn't matter.

Few things in our world need more lovingkindness than humanity's unresolved grief. Every person on the planet carries it with them and every one of us can help those around us deal with theirs.

Horticulturist Tim Thompson has managed the garden center at King Feed and Hardware for the past 25 years. They offer everything you need to have the garden of your dreams without stressing your budget. Pick up Tim's Tips, free one page sheets on how to carry out dozens of gardening projects available only at King Feed Nursery. Call Tim at 512 847 2618.



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Preparation pays off *by Kern Deschner*



As I am writing this, I am waiting in line to shear the last of the alpacas. We are in Denver and have finished our last spring show, so we are shearing the last of the alpacas – the show alpacas that we held off shearing in April. We were supposed to start at 1pm but, by 3pm, they still haven't gotten around us, so it's gonna be a later than planned trailering back to Texas.

Rhonda is very meticulous about planning for shearing. She always says, "a good fleece starts with a good pasture." So, in addition to breeding alpacas with the potential to make great fleeces, she makes certain the pastures are free of any burrs and stickers that will ruin a fleece. Also, we have to protect the fleeces from oak pollen that will turn them yellow. That means that the show alpacas wear a kind of breathable raincoat over their blanket through the oak pollen season. The coats don't cover their head or tails so they get kind of two-toned by the time the oaks are done.

It takes weeks for her to get ready for shearing. She has a organized task list (shots, nails, teeth trimming, microchipping, etc.) individualized for every alpaca with special fleece bags, labels for each bag, and special material to roll up the show fleeces. We hire

a professional shearer, a Kiwi that moved to Colorado 20 years ago and has done our shearing ever since. He is a master, and I dare not try to do the shearing myself. He always gets us a great fleece. We need lots of staff for shearing and everyone has a specific set of jobs. All of that preparation leads to a very smooth and efficient shearing process.

At last, it is our turn to get our last alpacas shorn in Denver. The shearers here are not used to Rhonda's level of organization and preparation so we lose some time while they congratulate her, and quiz her about her methods, taking notes so they can teach their other clients how to help them do their job more successfully. The client becomes the instructor. They even walk over and shake my hand at our level of preparedness, but I have to tell them it is all coming from Rhonda.

Next, in the slower days of June, comes fleece skirting in preparation for show and sale. That means going through each fleece and finding those last bits of hay, and pulling of the edges of belly and leg fiber that is less desirable and will go into rugs. We hope all this preparation pays off at the National Alpaca Fleece Show in Louisville in July. It has before!

Rhonda and Kern Deschner are experienced alpaca ranchers raising alpacas through all kinds of Texas weather since 1997. Tierra Prometida Alpaca Ranch can be visited by calling Rhonda at 512 753 9962, or at tierra@alpacausa.com.



Throughout the year the Wimberley Valley Art League Gallery, located in the Wimberley Community Center, exhibits juried shows featuring works by local artists. Each spring, however, instead of works by established artists we feature works from budding artists, students at our local schools.

The level of community involvement in this aptly named Student Show is a wonderful tribute to our town. It begins when area art teachers select student works and submit them to our gallery committee. These selected works are then beautifully framed for display using frames purchased through generous grants from our local Lions Club and Civic Club.

Art League volunteers work carefully to frame and prepare each piece for hanging. Once this task is complete, it's time for our dedicated volunteers to create the actual exhibit. If you have ever hung artwork on your wall, you know it can be a bit tricky to get it exactly as you want it. Imagine that times 70. The works must be arranged in a way that is pleasing to view, ensuring that our special gallery lighting shows each at its best.

The last detail, and one that is so important in confirming to each student the value of their artistic spirit, is the addition of their artist statement. We encourage student artists to create this statement in order to help them reflect on their vision and purpose. We know from feedback that creating the statement provides a meaningful opportunity for the student artist to more fully recognize and value their creativity.

The artist statement is also a great way to engage these students in conversations about their art at the annual Student Show Opening Reception. The artists' families and friends along with Art League and community members converge on the gallery for this festive event. The joy of these young artists is palpable as they are greeted and photographed alongside their artwork. The families take pride in supporting their child's creativity and the community acknowledges its value. It is truly a night to remember.

The 2023 Student Show closed on May 9 but don't worry; there's another one next year. Mark your calendar now for that opening reception, Thursday, April 11, 2024.

Of course you will want to visit before that. Stop by the gallery now to see our current juried show featuring magnificent works by area artists. Admission to the gallery is always free and parking is, too. (Tip: Instead of circling for a parking spot in the Square, park here, visit the gallery then walk to the Square.)

And be sure to join us Friday, July 14 for the opening of a new juried exhibit. We will have special evening hours; 5-7:00pm, complimentary champagne, and – most importantly – amazing artwork. We hope to see you there.



To learn more, scan here or visit us online at WimberleyValleyArtLeague.org For the latest news follow Wimberley Valley Art League on Instagram & Facebook.



Coming this Summer
 July 14, 5-7:00 pm
 Juried Gallery Show Champagne
 Opening Reception
 at our gallery in the
 Wimberley Community Center

Mark your calendar NOW
 September 30 - October 1
 Our Annual Studio Tour

October 28 - October 29
 Our Newest Art Fair: Blue Agave

Talking, walking heads

by Sarah Geenberg



I go on walks when I can. They are great meditation times for me.

I have noticed that I start my walk in my head. I am thinking about a million things and solving all sorts of problems. My posture is forward-leaning, and I am impatient to get the walk done.

But as I walk on, I start to walk from my gut. My posture straightens. My thoughts have slowed, and I have tapped into something deeper. Solutions come slowly if at all, for I realize most things can just be left alone. What is really important – on a life path level – becomes apparent and even obvious. I know the actions I want to take, and I can't wait to experience them.

There are several ways to get into your gut and the truth that lies there. Eating is a way to literally get your energy back into your gut, but there are better ways. Meditation. Tai Chi and yoga are great for slowing people down and letting the mind rest. But the funny thing is that when one gets connected to their gut, movements become more quality. Muscles become better connected and move better together. Strain in any particular area is eliminated.

Karate can be done from the head, but is more physically balanced and therefore both easier and stronger if done from the gut. All sports and movement are like that. Additionally, if done from

the gut, all outside pressures are gone. The head is calm. The person is free to concentrate on only the challenge and has better reactions. Some call it being in the Zone.

In our practices, we train to get to the gut quickly, which is why I get there every time I walk. It only takes a short distance. It is a gift I did not know I'd receive when I started training, and I am grateful for it.

Sarah Geenberg is the owner of Wimberley Karate and Yoga Studio, near Blue Hole, and OnlineSeniorsYoga.com. The yoga, Tai Chi, and karate classes are building again. Classes are offered indoors, outdoors, and online. Feel free to come check us out.

Wimberley Karate and Yoga Studio



Sarah Geenberg
(512) 971-8528

501 Old Kyle Road
Wimberley, TX 78676
wimberleykarateyoga.com



Alone needn't mean lonely

by Leslie Tourish, LPC

Way back in the day when I was a year out of my counseling program, I was working long hours for a small clinic and trying to pay off graduate school loans. To make ends meet on my tiny salary, I had moved into a cute house with affordable rent in a galaxy far, far away from any urban coffee shop. "Well," a friend said when he came to visit, as he surveyed my house and the landscape while slowly pivoting in a 360-degree circle, "I'm glad you're in the profession you're in, because obviously you're crazy to live out here."

Who could argue? I was in a suburb of about 15 houses surrounded by acres of corn and wheat fields. My closest neighbor had a dyslexic rooster who believed it was dawn somewhere. He crowed every hour, on the hour. All night long.

Getting used to my own company without traffic-filled streets, stores around the corner, and no television (for that completely monastic, on a strict budget feel) was more difficult than I had anticipated. But gradually I began to cherish the sound and sights of the wind whispering through corn stalks, stars piercing the black sky, and a country road often silent of cars rushing up and down its black ribbon of asphalt. After a few months I was reintroduced to my own company and discovered a deeper serenity in the quiet.

During that time, I had a counseling session with a client who was struggling to adjust to her recent divorce. Even though she was in her mid-30s and an accomplished professional, she was terrified at the prospect of being alone for the first time in her life.

"But," I asked, "What was it like in your marriage these past few years?"

"Awful! He was never there, and when he did come home, he'd be exhausted from work and just disappear into his recliner and sports channels," the client said, holding back tears.

"Then if you went to work alone, came home alone, and often slept alone, what's the difference between now and then?"

The emotional dam broke and her tears spilled. "Because I always had the idea of him."

Solitude is intertwined into our human condition. Perceptions of our separateness washes us with the hues and colors created by our thoughts and emotions. If we view being alone as a burden and an unacceptable state of being, then we may go to great lengths to stay in unhealthy situations and relationships with family, spouses, or friends. If we can't stand our own company, then how can we expect others to want to be with us?

Learning to love ourselves is one of the basic building blocks of self-esteem. While it may not be comfortable at first to tolerate being alone, be patient with yourself because nature abhors a vacuum. Conversely, by going forward and taking some risks, you create changes. Your life will organically begin to fill with new people, places, and things. And every action you take is a learning experience as to whether those decisions were healthy or unhealthy. But staying stuck in an unhealthy situation for fear you aren't strong enough for change, may be the worst kind of loneliness. To have faith in a better life, put your faith into action.

Leslie Tourish, LPC, is a Dripping Springs psychotherapist in private practice. To contact Leslie, visit LeslieTourish.com or LATourish.com

Are you ready for clear skin this summer? Learn how we can help!

by Breca Tracy, PhD



Many of us struggle with acne – a skin condition that often occurs due to clogged hair follicles beneath the skin. Our sebaceous glands produce an oil known as *sebum*. Sebum keeps our skin from drying out. In many acne cases, our sebaceous glands over produce sebum causing the hair follicles to become clogged with oil and dead skin cells. The hair follicles can

then become inflamed and irritated, resulting in pimples and zits.

What if I told you at REGENERATE we have a way to down regulate the production of oil from the sebaceous glands? Even better, what if we told you our solution does not involve chemicals, creams, antibiotics, or pharmaceutical drugs with side effects? AviClear is a laser specifically targeting these oil producing glands, down regulating oil production. Pretty fantastic, right? The sebaceous glands will still produce oil, which is healthy for our skin, but their production will now be regulated (ie, they will not over produce oil anymore).

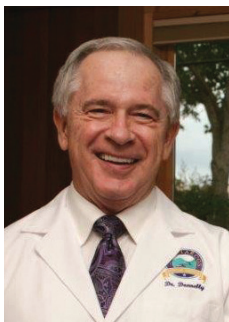
Unlike most lasers, this laser is designed with patient comfort in mind. AviClear is enhanced with the AviCool cooling mechanism. The treatment will be chilly, but patients walk away with no downtime. Clients are going back to school and going back to work immediately post treatment, and no one knows they have just had

a laser treatment. The treatment is about 30-40 minutes, and the protocol is once a month for three months. Clinical studies have shown clear skin out to at least two years post treatment protocol.

People of all ages can suffer from acne. The AviClear treatment and outcomes are not dependent on what is causing your acne! If you have tried all the things and nothing has worked for you, and/or if you have been waiting for a natural solution because you *do not* want to be on Accutane, or do not want your children on Accutane, we just might have a solution for you!

If you or someone you know is suffering from acne, come in for a complimentary consultation! We will educate you on the process and assess whether AviClear is a good fit for you. The results we are seeing from this treatment are life changing. The change in confidence levels and physical appearances have blown us away. We are so excited to continue to change the lives of so many of our community members! Call us for more information. We would be happy to educate you further!

We have a very unique team of experts. Come see us, call, or email us! Dr. Breca Tracy currently serves as Director of Science & Operations at REGENERATE Dripping Springs. Breca has resided in Dripping since 2007 after obtaining her Ph.D. in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology from the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center. Contact us at 512-368-4548, 800 Hwy 290 W, Building F, Suite 200. NaturalHealingTX.com.



Halitosis: What is it? What causes it?

by Robert Donnelly, DDS

Halitosis is better known as chronic bad breath. It is something that mints, mouthwash or even a good brushing can't solve. It is unlike *morning breath* or a strong smell that lingers after your lunch. Halitosis remains for an extended period of time and may be a sign of something more serious.

If quick bad breath fixes are only covering up the problem for a short time, then something else may be happening in your body that may include cavities, and deeper pockets for gum disease that give bad breath bacteria extra places to hide in your mouth that are difficult to clear out when you're brushing or cleaning between your teeth.

According to the Mayo Clinic, nose, sinus, and throat issues that can lead to postnasal drip may also contribute to bad breath. Bacteria feeds on mucus your body produces when it's battling something like a sinus infection, leaving you sniffing and smelly.

Suffering from dry mouth? Saliva goes a long way for your dental health and your breath. It rinses and removes unwanted leftovers from your mouth, helps break down food when you eat, and provides disease-fighting substances to help prevent cavities and infections. If you don't make enough saliva, one sign may be halitosis.

Tobacco products wreak havoc on your body and your breath. Not only do many tobacco products leave their own odor on your breath, they can also dry out your mouth. Smokers are also more likely to develop gum disease which can also add to halitosis.

If you or someone you know are interested in learning more about maintaining oral hygiene, Dr. Donnelly is here to help you. You can contact San Marcos Gentle Dental by calling 512 396 5225 where we will be happy to get you scheduled. Come see why Dr. Donnelly was voted a Texas Super Dentist by Texas Monthly Magazine and Best Dentist in Hays County!



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Should sellers have their home pre-inspected?

by Alice Gumbert Lebkuecher



If you are thinking about listing your home for sale, you may want to consider having it inspected. Listed below are several reasons why a seller can benefit from a home inspection:

- Price. The cost of an inspection is usually less than the first price reduction

asked for by buyers. Also, a home with a clean bill of health can support a higher sales price.

- No surprises. Dramatically lessen the chance that a buyer's inspection will reveal surprises about needed repairs or maintenance.

- Stands out. Performing a seller's inspection differentiates a home from others on the market.

- Minimizes concessions. During negotiations, small items found during a buyer's inspection sometimes escalate into demands for larger fixes. Proactively correcting small things helps avoid discussions of repairs.

- Comforts buyers. A home in documented good shape or even one with disclosed conditions offers a comfortable certainty for buyers. Instead of loving a home and wondering about added costs from unknown problems, buyers can focus on closing the deal. Such an open marketing approach can attract buyers and keep them interested.

- Fewer terminations. With more information at their disposal

before they make an offer, potential buyers are less likely to use their termination option in the contract. This saves time and money that may have been spent on a deal that dies.

For more information on listing your home for sale, feel free to contact me to discuss.

This article was first published in the February 2009 issue of Texas Realtor magazine.

Alice Gumbert Lebkuecher is a sales agent with Keller Williams Realty, Partners in Real Estate, in Wimberley. She works with both buyers and sellers in Wimberley and surrounding areas. To contact her, call her cell at 713 253 1311 or by email at AliceInWimberley@gmail.com.

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Pre-plumbing requires pre-planning

by Randy Lawrence



Almost every new refrigerator available today comes with a built-in activated carbon filter designed to improve taste or odor. Most models also have some type of reminder system that tells you when to replace the filter cartridge. Many people have questions about these filters. Is it necessary to have the filter in the first place? If so, how important is it to change that filter as soon as the reminder is activated? Here are a few interesting facts about these filters that may help clear up some confusion and

possibly save you some money in the long run.

There are two main types of filter change reminders in today's refrigerator models. The most common is a basic timer system. This system will simply count down a pre-set amount of time (usually six months) and then activate a light which tells you to replace the filter. The main drawback to this method is that it does not take into account the volume of water used. For example, you could go six months without using the ice or water dispenser and the unit will still indicate that it's time to change the filter. It's a fair assumption that the majority of these filters are thrown away far too soon.

The other type of reminder system is a little less common. It involves a flow meter which counts gallons as they are used through the dispenser. This is a more efficient method than the timer be-

cause it actually measures water usage.

Unfortunately, neither technology knows what your incoming water quality is. This can greatly affect the lifespan of the filter. If you are on a chlorinated water supply, your filter life will be shorter. If you have a whole house treatment system, like a softener or carbon filter, then the life of your filter would be greatly increased. If your refrigerator is fed by a reverse osmosis system, then your built-in filter becomes completely unnecessary and can be removed or bypassed.

Each case is slightly different, but at \$40-\$60 per filter it pays to know the facts so you aren't wasting money on unnecessary replacements.

Randy Lawrence is the owner of ProQuality Water Systems, a full service water treatment company. He is one of only six Class III Certified Water Treatment Specialists in Hays County (LIC# WT0002693). With over 20 years of experience he has serviced Wimberley and surrounding areas for over a decade.

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Summer 2023: America's hidden gems

by AJ Harwood



Whether your idea of a summer vacation is camping, visiting a museum, or beach lounging, America has a myriad of places to visit. Here are a few ideas to consider for your next adventure.

- Birch Point Beach State Park, Owls Head, Maine. This quiet and relaxing sandy beach is close to Camden and Bar Harbor; free of the crowds and traffic.
- Wildcat Beach, Point Reyes National Seashore, Bolinas, California. Its highlight is Alamere Falls, a rare *tidefall* (waterfall that flows directly into the ocean).
- North Shore Drive, Minnesota. This stunning 154-mile trek stretches alongside Lake Superior between Duluth and Canada.
- Padre Island National Seashore, Texas. This beautiful beach is ideal for camping and watching sea turtle hatchling releases.
- Skyline Drive, Shenandoah, Virginia. This scenic, 105-mile National Parkway runs the entire length of the Shenandoah National Park in the Blue Ridge Mountains.
- Prairie State Park, Mindenmines, Missouri. A public recreation area in Barton County, it encompasses nearly 4,000 acres of grasslands and woodlands.
- Estes Park, Colorado. The base of the Rocky Mountain Na-

tional Park; home to wildlife like elk and bears, plus miles of trails.

- Ausable Chasm, New York. The *Grand Canyon of the Adirondacks*, cliff hikes, biking, river rafting, and daring cable bridges.

I know the market can be confusing, but I am here to offer clear, concise information you can trust. Feel free to contact me and I will answer any questions you have. If you are wondering what your home would look like on the market, give me a call! I would be honored to complete a Comparative Market Analysis (CMA) to see what homes in your neighborhood are selling for right now – you might be surprised!

This information is designed to provide a brief overview of the subject matter covered and is offered for general educational and informational purposes only. Used with permission by the Buffini & Company.

Allison "AJ" Harwood, JD, MBA, GRI, is the Broker/Owner of RE/MAX REAL PROPERTIES. When Experience matters...Call "AJ" Today! Your Hill Country Luxury Property Expert. Member: Institute for LUXURY HOME MARKETING. He is Wimberley's "Peak Producer" offering Professional Representation for both Buyers and Sellers in Real Estate Transactions. He may be contacted at 512.847."SOLD" 7653 or at AJ@REMAX.net or drop by our office location at 160 South River in the South River Business Park, Wimberley, Texas 78676.

Biochar and your trees

by Steven Austin



In the 1950s, a Dutch soil scientist made a significant discovery in the Amazon rainforest. He found terra preta, a type of charcoal that people in the Amazon Basin had used for centuries. This *black earth* improved agricultural productivity by making poor soils more fertile. Its modern name, biochar, comes from how it is formed, the heating of *bio-*

mass (plant waste) in a process called *pyrolysis*.

In recent years, biochar has become the subject of research studies, not only for agricultural use but also for improving soils in the landscape setting. Results have been positive, and biochar products are now available for use on trees and shrubs. Biochar benefits these plants, in part, by its ability to manage resources critical to plant health. Because it is extremely absorbent, biochar can store excess water, beneficial microbes, and soil nutrients, releasing them back into the soil when the plant needs them.

Research findings have shown that biochar enhances soil fertility, reduces nutrient leaching, reduces ground water contamination, increases soil microbial activity and water retention, stimulates growth, and reduces susceptibility to disease and insect infestation. In the process of pyrolysis, much of the carbon, which would otherwise be released into the atmosphere, becomes sequestered in the soil. Biochar stays in the soil for years.

In choosing biochar as an enhancement to tree health, property owners should be aware that it can vary in quality and composition, depending on how it is produced. For example, some biochar products are completely organic, while others contain inorganic

additives that your plants may not need. The biomass source and production practices used can also influence the product outcome. A qualified arborist familiar with biochar should be able to determine from the source, product labeling, and perhaps a property soil analysis whether a particular biochar product is appropriate for a given soil type. For an excellent review of the history, benefits, research findings, and uses of biochar, web search: *Biochar: A Game Changer for Soils and Delving into Biochar*, a two-part article series from *The Landscape Contractor* magazine.

A Wimberley resident, Steven Austin is a member of the Texas Chapter of the International Society of Arboriculture and is an ISA Board Certified Master Arborist and ISA Tree Worker/Climber Specialist. His expertise includes integrated pest management of trees and shrubs and state-of-the-art organic treatments. He holds a commercial pesticide license with the Texas Department of Agriculture and is Texas Oak Wilt Certified by the Texas Forest Service. Steven is an Arborist Representative for Bartlett Tree Experts. Call 512 392 1089 or toll-free at 800 443 8733.

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Taxes impact your retirement: Income strategy

by Scott G. Hackett, CFP®

Retirees face several unique challenges when managing their income, particularly when it comes to taxes. From understanding how taxes relate to Social Security and Medicare to determining when to tap taxable and tax-advantaged accounts, retirees must juggle

a complicated mix of factors.

Social Security and Medicare... People are sometimes surprised to learn that a portion of Social Security income becomes federally taxable when combined income exceeds \$25,000 for single taxpayers and \$32,000 for married couples filing jointly. The taxable portion is up to 85% of benefits, depending on income and filing status.

In addition, the amount retirees pay in Medicare premiums each year is based on the modified adjusted gross income (MAGI) from two years earlier. In other words, the cost retirees pay for Medicare in 2023 is based on the MAGI reported on their 2021 returns.

Taxable, tax-deferred, or tax-free? Maintaining a mix of taxable, tax-deferred, and tax-free accounts offers flexibility in managing income each year. Taxable accounts... Income from most dividends and fixed-income investments and gains from the sale of securities held 12 months or less are generally taxed at federal

rates as high as 37%. By contrast, qualified dividends, and gains from the sale of securities held longer than 12 months are generally taxed at lower capital gains rate. Tax-deferred accounts... Distributions from traditional IRAs, work-sponsored plans, and annuities are generally subject to federal income tax. Tax-free accounts... Qualified distributions from Roth accounts and Health Savings Accounts (HSAs) are tax-free and therefore will not affect Social Security taxability and Medicare premiums.

The Impact of RMDs... Retirees often tap into their taxable accounts in the earlier years of retirement to allow other accounts to continue benefiting from tax-deferred growth. However, traditional IRAs and workplace plans cannot grow indefinitely. Retirees must begin taking minimum distributions after they reach a specific age. A larger RMD may push your taxable income into a higher tax bracket.

Eye on Washington... Finally, retirees will want to monitor congressional actions over the next few years. Today's historically low marginal tax rates are scheduled to revert to higher levels in 2026, unless new legislation is enacted.

Scott G. Hackett, CFP® is the president of the Hackett Financial Group LLC (HFG), a fee-only registered investment advisor. Contact Scott at 512-847-0630.

Lost wills

by Carrie Campbell



The Texas Estates Code requires that an original will be submitted for probate. The presumption under law is that a missing will was a will that was intentionally revoked. A copy of a will is only admitted under very limited circumstances. For example, courts have accepted copies of wills when there is clear and direct proof that: (1) a third party has the will but

will not give it up, (2) the person who wrote the will now has dementia and threw out the will without knowing its importance, (3) the will was stolen or irreparably damaged by a thief or vandal, (4) an angry family member took the will without permission, or (5) the will was destroyed by fire or other natural disaster. It is significant to note among these acceptable excuses, there is no *oops* or *I don't know what I did with it*. If it was placed somewhere *safe*, and it is no longer there, then the court must assume that the person writing the will did away with it for a reason.

In addition to a valid reason for a missing will, the judge in a probate matter must be convinced as to the contents of the will and informed as to the identity and address for each heir under the will, as well as the people who would inherit if there was no will (as provided under the default provisions of the Texas Estates Code.)

Therefore, it is extremely important to protect the original will while still allowing accessibility. A safety deposit box is okay, but

only if the people you named as executor *and* alternate executors are listed as having access to the safety deposit box and know where the key is. If the service is offered, consider allowing your attorney to keep the will in their safety deposit box to ensure a smooth transition and avoid a lost or damaged will scenario.

Finally, I recommend you go look for your will. If you can't find it, you should replace it at your earliest convenience.

Carrie Campbell has lived and practiced law in Wimberley since 1997. She is the managing partner of Mounger & Campbell law firm. Carrie is an active member of the Rotary Club of Wimberley and president of the Wimberley Village Library Foundation. She proudly has three wonderful daughters and two lively grandsons.



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Litigation: You can't lose

by Roland Brown



When I discuss mediation with my clients one of the first things I tell them is, "you can't lose a mediation."

Several of my cases have been mediated in recent weeks, some have settled as a result of the mediations and others did not. When the cases settle, it means the clients were happy enough with the settlement to


forego a trial. When they don't settle, it may just mean that more work needs to be done on the case in order to get a better offer on the table, or it may let us know that the case needs to be tried.

Mediation involves a negotiation process in which each side generally puts forth their reasons why they feel they have a strong position. Often, at least some of those reasons have not previously surfaced. This means that I will gain information that alerts me to areas where I need to focus as I continue preparing for trial. For these reasons, even when we don't get the case settled, we haven't *lost*, because we have gained valuable knowledge that we can put to use.

A mediator does not make a decision for the parties. The mediator is only a facilitator of the negotiation process. What is said at a mediation is confidential, so the parties can negotiate freely without fearing that if the case doesn't settle, something that is said


at mediation will be used against them in trial. Should you ever have occasion to be involved in a mediation, you will likely find it a rather intriguing process. The interaction between the mediator, the lawyers, and the clients brings into play many factors including the skill levels of the mediator and the lawyers as each side jockeys for a better position hoping for an outcome that meets their clients' needs. Whether the case settles or not, the time and money spent on the mediation is never wasted because whatever the outcome, something is always gained in a mediation.

Attorney Roland Brown handles exclusively personal injury claims. Roland, who offices in Wimberley, has been voted HAYS COUNTY'S BEST PERSONAL INJURY ATTORNEY for 2020 and for 2021 in annual polls of Hays County attorneys. For more information call 512 847 2500.



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Toes and big words

by Tracy Sheffield, RVT



Summer season has another name, pedicure season. As sandals become the footwear of choice, care of the feet matters. Pretty toes make a happy summer. For people, happy toes come from a pedicure. For dogs, sometimes having happy feet can be a major problem.

Veterinary medicine has given some very long names to toe problems in dogs. Interdigital furunculosis (IF) and folliculitis, sometimes called *interdigital cysts* can occur for many reasons. Both conditions can make a dog highly uncomfortable. The symptoms include increased licking of the paws, swelling, and nodules between the toes. If you see your dog licking at their feet, give a look between the toes.

These conditions can be caused by the intersection of several factors. Allergies, certain breeds, gait abnormalities (often caused by arthritis), and obesity can all play a part. Affected animals are often larger-breed, heavy dogs like mastiffs, Labrador retrievers, and English bulldogs. Dogs with webbed paws, deep palmar interdigital pockets, obesity, and conformation abnormalities are prone to IF.

The licking associated with allergies can push the hair shaft deeper into the skin causing a foreign body reaction. With continued licking and inflammation infection can result. This creates a

cycle of inflammation and infection with can lead to antibiotic resistance, scar tissue, and cellulitis. In dogs with allergies multiple paws can be affected.

With weight, conformation problems and gait abnormalities there can be friction between the toes that can cause these problems as well. Smaller dogs that are prone to this include Shetland sheepdogs and Cavalier King Charles spaniels.

The first step in treating IF is determining if the problem stems from allergies or weight and gait problems or a combination of both. Weight loss *unloading the front paws* can make significant improvement in many cases. Antibiotic courses, medicated paw soaking, and anti-inflammatory medication are often the indicated treatment.

If weight loss and allergy treatments (including hypoallergenic diets) don't resolve the condition, laser surgery may be necessary.

IF and folliculitis can make a dog very uncomfortable. As there are multiple possible causes, there is not a quick fix. They are conditions that require veterinary care to improve.

Summer time is pedicure time. When thinking of your own toes, take a look at your dog's toes and the spaces between them.

Tracy Sheffield, RVT works with her husband, Dr. Mike Sheffield, at Wimberley Veterinary Clinic. Wimberley Veterinary Clinic sees all kinds of animals, dogs, cats, horses, birds, pocket pets, reptiles and other exotic animals. Make your boarding reservations online at WimberleyVetClinic.com or call us at 512 847 5630.

The advertisement features a circular inset photo of a woman in a white shirt and red skirt kneeling in a grassy field with two grey donkeys. To the right of the photo is the Wimberley Veterinary Clinic logo, which consists of a yellow banner with the word 'WIMBERLEY' in black, 'VETERINARY' in large red letters, and 'CLINIC' in smaller red letters below it. Below the logo, the text reads 'Caring for them all. Every pet big or small.' At the bottom of the advertisement, a white-bordered box contains the text: 'Wimberley Veterinary Clinic is pleased to welcome Jacqueline Babin, DVM to our outstanding team of doctors.'



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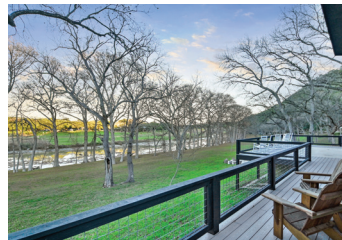


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