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# Hope

## Wimberley Valley NEWS & VIEWS

I love to witness this time of year through my son's eyes. The beautiful lights everywhere, the music, and, of course, presents. I have to wonder what he makes out of all of it, especially when he was a baby and a toddler. Sometimes he asks – usually in the summertime – “why can't we have Christmas every day?” And it's a question that almost brings me to tears because every year as Christmas Day fades into night, I wonder the same thing.



**Editor, Publisher**  
Cyle Elizabeth Johnson

**Ad designer, Publisher**  
Joey Johnson

**Cover**  
Olena Bohovyk

There's something more to this season than lights and presents. It's possibly the same reason that Christmas time can make some so happy and others so sad. Hope and anticipation of something wonderful to come hovers in the air. I have experienced joyful Christmas and Christmas that reminds me of something or someone we've lost. They definitely hit differently. However when these sad moments in time are embraced with a spirit of reverence and even gratitude, we can find joy therein. Christmas time is a season of hope. Hope, like truth and love, doesn't require anyone's belief in it to be so. Like David Ben-Gurion said, “Anyone who doesn't believe in miracles is not a realist.”

And so, wherever you are this time of year, I pray this is your best Christmas yet. May the Spirit of the season embrace you and carry you through the new year, so we can make it Christmas every day.

*Happy December, y'all.*

Warmly,

*Cyle.*

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- Every 2nd Mon. Wimberley Valley Art League meets at the Wimberley Community Center at 6:30-8:30pm. Visit [WimberleyArtLeague.org](http://WimberleyArtLeague.org) for information.
- Every 2nd Mon. Wimberley 4H meets during the school year at VFW Hall, 401 Jacobs Well Road, 7pm, 6:30pm Clover Kids
- 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](mailto:Paulwilj99@gmail.com).
- Every Mon. Celebrate Recovery 6:30-8:30pm, Cypress Creek Church, in the den. 512-847-1222 or [CelebrateRecovery@CypressCreekChurch.com](mailto:CelebrateRecovery@CypressCreekChurch.com). Potluck at 5:30pm every 2nd Monday.
- 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. November 13, Jacob's Well Chapter, National Society Daughters of the American Revolution, Emily Ann Theater in Wimberley at 9:40am, for chat time and 10am for our business meeting. [JacobsWellNSDAR@gmail.com](mailto:JacobsWellNSDAR@gmail.com) for more.
- Mon. Toddler Time, Wimberley Village Library, 10:30-11:30am, beginning January 9.
- Every Mon. Stroller Strides workout, 9am, Wimberley First Baptist Church, contact Summer 512 644 4198 or email [SMWimberleyDS@fit4mom.com](mailto:SMWimberleyDS@fit4mom.com)
- Every Tues. Gentle Hatha Yoga, 6pm, Wimberley Community Center (\$10)
- Every Tues. Bilingual Spanish Storytime, 10:30-11:30am, Wimberley Village Library
- 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](mailto: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](mailto:Director@WimberleyLibrary.org)
- Every 1st Tue. The Wimberley Community Center hosts free medical checks 9:30-10:30am. Call 512-847-2510.
- Every Wed. Stroller Barre workout, 9am, Wimberley First Baptist Church, contact Summer, 512 644 4198 or email [SMWimberleyDS@fit4mom.com](mailto:SMWimberleyDS@fit4mom.com)
- Every 1st Wed. 5:30-7pm, Wimberley Valley Arts & Cultural Alliance (WVACA) mixer at Middleton Brewing. All are welcome. [WimberleyArts.org](http://WimberleyArts.org).
- Every Wed. Spanish for Homeschool Teens, 12:30-1:30pm, Wimberley Library, multipurpose room, 7th grade and up

- Every Wed. Gentle Hatha Yoga, 3pm, Burdine Theatre At Emily-Ann Theatre (\$10)
- 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. Hill Country Unit of the Herb Society of America, Wimberley Presbyterian Church. Visitors welcome! Refreshments 9:30am. Program 10am. [HillCountryHerbs.org](http://HillCountryHerbs.org) or [Valentine\\_Lisa@msn.com](mailto:Valentine_Lisa@msn.com).
- Every 1st Thur. The Wimberley Alzheimer's Caregiver's Support Group meets at 12:30pm at the Presbyterian Church Library on FM 2325. Contact Linda Germain at 512-924-3661.
- Every Thurs. Gentle Hatha Yoga, 12pm, Wimberley Community Center (\$10)
- 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@texasllc.com](mailto:amy@texasllc.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](http://WimberleyUMC.org) Proceeds benefit Barnabas Connection & Mother's Day Out scholarships. **Thurs. December 21: Susan Gibson**
- Every Thurs. Gentle Yoga 10-11am, Wimberley Village Library
- Every Thursday, Master Gardeners at the Library, 2-5pm
- 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](http://vfw6441.com/bingo)
- Fri. Storytime, 10:30-11:30am, Wimberley Village Library
- Every Fri. Stroller Strides workout, 9am, Emily Ann Theatre, contact Summer, 512 644 4198 or [smwimberleyds@fit4mom.com](mailto:smwimberleyds@fit4mom.com)
- Every Fri. Stroller Strides Playdate with Kids Craft Fridays, 10am, Emily Ann Theatre, contact Summer, 512 644 4198 or email [SMWimberleyDS@fit4mom.com](mailto:SMWimberleyDS@fit4mom.com)
- Every Fri. Story Time, 10:30-11:30am, Wimb. Village Library
- Every 2nd Sat. Wimberley's Second Saturday Gallery Trail. Visit ten galleries for art, food, fun, 4-7pm. Email [BentTreeGallery@gmail.com](mailto:BentTreeGallery@gmail.com). Have a glass of wine & enjoy art after hours.
- 1st Sat. Wimberley Market Day, 7am-3pm, rain or shine
- 1st Sun. of every month, Wimberley Coffee & Cars, 8am-11am, at Blanco Brew located at 14200 Ranch Road 12

• November 17-December 10, Nuncrackers by the Wimberley Players. Visit [WimberleyPlayers.org](http://WimberleyPlayers.org) or call the box office at 512 847 0575 for tickets and more information.

• December 2-December 26, EmilyAnn Trail of Lights, 6-9pm weekdays, weekend nights from 6-10pm. Live entertainment, Santa, warm up by the Yule Log. Special guests who will entertain and engage all ages. Hot dogs, chili dogs, frito pie, s'mores, water available for purchase. Train running as weather permits.

*December 24 and 25 walking trail only, no additional activities or services scheduled.*

Check calendar for more information. Visit [EmilyAnn.org/TrailofLights](http://EmilyAnn.org/TrailofLights)

**Have something to add to the Calendar of Events? Email us at [info@WVNewsViews.com](mailto:info@WVNewsViews.com) or call us, 512 375 5590.**

## The strongest roots

by Tim Thompson



Exploring around our property shortly after we moved to the Texas Hill Country, I detected a distinctly sweet-smelling plant. Locating it took a while, since it emanated from a cluster of trees down the hill from our house. Closer inspection revealed long clusters of fragrant white blossoms that erupted into a cloud of large black and yellow swallow-tail butterflies as I approached. They soon landed again on this tree that I later identified as an Escarpment Black Cherry. I catalogued it along with other plants we had found on our place that were used by settlers and natives, as its small fruits are true cherries and are not only edible, but delicious.

Finding plants that were important parts of the lives and culture of older civilizations inhabiting our home is one of my favorite ways of exploring the history and customs of Texas' former inhabitants. Attracted by the springs, creeks, and rivers of our valley, people have found ways to use the natural resources here to make good lives for centuries. The histories of those cultures live on in the trees, shrubs, herbs, and forbs all around us still.

Another find was a Toothache Tree, also known as Tickle-Tongue for its dramatic numbing effect on oral mucus membranes. Its leaves smell strongly of orange peel and its stems are covered with tiny bumps that host sharp spines when the branch is young. Used medicinally for centuries, it is found in localized concentrations throughout the south and southeastern states but only in undisturbed areas here.

Many plant specimens may have been brought by settlers from another place at another time. I cannot know for sure, but it is possible these unusual trees were brought here by humans who brought them to their new home when they settled in what became the Texas Hill Country. Brought for food, medicine, or flavor, migrating people often took their favorite plants with them, importing the literal roots of their lives with them to their new home. I sometimes wonder: do we have roots as strong in our lives?

*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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## The alpaca military

by Kern Deschner



Having turned 18 in 1975, when we did not even have to register for the draft, I never was in the military. However, I have watched my brother ascend to colonel and I did work at the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology for a while. I found then that calling the lab and identifying myself as Kern Deschner would get a lot of attention since what they would hear was *Colonel* Deschner. Even the perception of rank had its privileges.

In the alpaca world, some breeders have given their breeding males military names. There is *the General* and *the Colonel*. That got me to wondering what these various names mean. So, I looked it up. And, if any honored military veterans are reading this, I apologize that I may be so simplistic.

We will start with corporal, from the middle English term *corporalis*, which means *of the body*. In ancient time, these were non-commissioned officers who were responsible for the direct care and training of a small group of soldiers. Kind of like today.

The term sergeant comes from the old French word *sergeant* which in turn comes from the Latin word *serviens* which means, well, servant. Sergeants were a knight's first assistant and oversaw the knight's serf army group.

The word lieutenant comes from an old French word that was

spelled with a silent *f* – *lieuftenant*. It means *substitute* and represented an officer who was ready to step in when one of higher rank was killed or injured. American English does not pronounce the *f* that used to be there, but the British have kept it.

The word captain comes from the Latin word *caput* which is obviously different from the German word *kaput*. It means *head* or *chief* and generally referred to a leader of a full company of men. The word major comes from a Latin word of the same spelling that means *older* or *greater*. They were kind of a senior captain who was charged with being the supervisor of several captains.

The term colonel, which contains an *l* that we do not pronounce, comes from an Italian word *colonello*, which means *column leader*. Armies on the move would move in columns, sometimes several, and a colonel was in charge of an entire column of men.

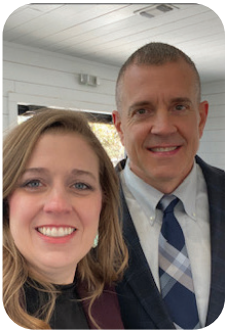
Finally, the term general comes from the Latin word *genus* that means *class*. I'm not sure how that got to be used as a rank, but ancient Roman Generals were in charge of several legions. All these names have been in use for hundreds, if not thousands, of years.

So I guess it's okay if we name alpacas with these names. And Navy vets, don't be surprised if there is an alpaca named Admiral, from Arabic word *amir al-bahr* meaning *commander of the seas*.

*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](mailto:tierra@alpacausa.com).*

# Water: Cool, clear, “purified” water

by Rance and Betsy Mosley



I mentioned previously that using water in its most natural state is extremely important to our well being. However, according to the U.S. Geological Survey one of every five (22%) groundwater samples from aquifers used for drinking water were contaminated from geological or man made sources at concentrations that were a concern to human health. *So what is the best source of water for consumption?*

Since our groundwater can potentially be contaminated and contain what scientists are calling *forever chemicals* it is best to be sure that the water we consume has gone through a purification process. One of these processes is *distillation*, which produces distilled water. In this process the pure H<sub>2</sub>O is boiled out of its contaminants. The pure water turns into steam, is then captured, cooled, and becomes *distilled water*. The problem with distillation is that our water can contain many volatile organic compounds that have a boiling point lower than pure water. To remove these compounds the water must pass through a carbon filter after it has been processed by the water distiller system. The distillation process also removes the minerals from the water and this is not water in its most natural state.

Next, there is *filtered water* which is most likely what you will find in the grocery store. This is usually municipal water that has been run through carbon and possibly micron filters to remove the chlorine. The water is then ozonated, bottled, and shipped to

stores. You can also find bottled *spring water* in the grocery store. Spring water is processed to remove some pollutants. It does retain essential minerals that are good for you, but since it is not purified it may still contain toxic impurities, such as nitrates and metals.

To meet the legal definition of *purified water*, water impurities must be removed or reduced to extremely low levels. One of the most common and effective methods to purify water is reverse osmosis. Reverse osmosis (RO) is a water filtration process that removes contaminants by pushing water through a semi-permeable membrane at a high pressure; contaminants get caught and are left behind so only filtered water can pass through. The membrane acts as a screen to catch impurities like sediment, chemicals, and metal particles. The one problem with RO filtration is that it also removes the minerals that are actually healthy for your body. This is why it is important to utilize *remineralization* to raise the pH and alkalinity to levels that are found in nature.

Purified water is of significantly higher purity than either tap water, spring water, or filtered water, which makes it the best source of water for consumption. However, in nature, water in its most natural state contains minerals that your body needs. So let’s not forget that in water purification *remineralization* is key!

*Rance and Betsy Mosley are the owners of Blue Jug of Wimberley and My Wimberley Office Space. Rance retired from teaching after 28 years and now manages and operates Blue Jug while Betsy teaches at Blue Hole Primary. Stop by and try the best tasting water in the Hill Country. Located at 14201 Ranch Road 12, Ste. 1. Contact us at 512 387 1001 or email Rance@bluejug.com.*




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*Gabria Cathcart, FNP-C, IFMCP*

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# Deep in the ART of Texas: *Galleries Galore*

by Theresa Vincent

Can it really be Christmas already? With this year's long, hot summer, it feels like we went straight from July to "Jingle Bells"! If you're looking for last-minute gift ideas, head to Wimberley's galleries for unique, one-of-a-kind items offered by local artists and artisans. Here's a look at some of the galleries located within walking distance of the town square, many of which will be open late for the Winter's Eve holiday celebration on December 9 (10AM – 10PM):



Art on 12

**Wimberley Valley Art League** – located in the Community Center, the art league presents an ongoing series of juried member shows. The gallery is open during business hours on weekdays, as well as on weekends when special events are taking place.

**220 Fine Art Gallery**, Wimberley's newest gallery, showcases both recognized and emerging talents from the Texas Hill Country. Carefully curated by owner Suzanne Oliver, a range of representational, impressionistic, conceptual, abstract, and whimsical styles can be seen in a variety of works, including both bronze and ceramic sculptures, painting, pottery, photography, assemblage, jewelry, glass, and fibers.

**Art on 12** features approximately fifty talented local artists, including Maxine Price, Ronnie Weeks, Warren Cullar, and Rodney Bursiel. With works ranging from fine art to fun art, photography, hand-crafted jewelry, sculptures, leather work, glass work, and more, a browse through the extensive rooms is always a treat. In the back of the gallery, be sure to check out the latest members' show, "Small But Mighty Works of Art", as well as Mercy Raines' wonderful little shop filled with great bargains in natural stone jewelry and South American gifts.



Pitzer's Fine Arts  
photo by Teresa Kendrick

**Pitzer's Fine Arts** recently celebrated its 45th anniversary and features an outstanding collection of sculptures and paintings by a number of widely-recognized talents such as G. Harvey, Kathie Odom, Ezra Tucker, William Kalwick, Rusty Jones, and Angela De la Vega. Featured local artists include Lilli Pell, Betty Edmond, Jim Street, and Kim Springer-Smith. With her wealth of knowledge of the fine art world, curator Pamela Rudd makes a visit here a rewarding experience.

**WILD LIFE – Rodney Bursiel Gallery** showcases the artist's nationally award-winning photography works, with a focus on African wildlife, horses, and well-known musicians.

**Hill Country Collectables** presents original works from noted Texas Hill Country artist George Kovach, among others, as well as an eye-catching range of other items such as natural stone accent items and jewelry.

**Wildflower Art Gallery** features the vibrant wildflower paintings of Linda Calvert Jacobson, as well as a delightful collection of small sculptural works.



front: Rob & Lynda Pitzer, center: Pam Rudd,  
Betty Edmond, Eric Slocomb, back: Gerald Balciar  
& Jim Street  
photo by Teresa Kendrick



220 Fine Art Gallery

To learn more, scan here or visit us online at [WimberleyValleyArtLeague.org](http://WimberleyValleyArtLeague.org)  
For the latest news follow Wimberley Valley Art League on Instagram & Facebook.





## Slow down

by Sarah Geenberg



Have you heard that old story about the 1,000 pots? A professor was teaching ceramics. He split his class in two and told one half that in order to get an A, they had to come up with one great pot. He told the other half that to get an A, they had to make 1,000 pots.

In the end, which had a better pot: the students who worked hard to get one wonderful pot or the ones who had – without caring about the outcome – gone through 1,000 mess-ups and 1,000 opportunities to figure it out? Who do you think had more confidence that they could produce another great pot and knew they could do it even better?

We say in karate – *Great kick! Now practice it 10,000 times.* We all know that the world is full of instant gratification that did not exist before. We've had 150 years and more things that have quickly become even more instantaneous. Think of someone born in 1850 and living 25 miles outside of town. He went from it taking two days to get into town by oxen and covered wagon to horses pulling the wagons to seeing his first train to later in life going by car and getting home in 30 minutes. And we just keep getting faster and faster.

In karate, we say there are two ways of learning. The first is the fast way. Here, learning does not go very deep. It is easily forgotten due to it not being connected to other experiences and

problems. There is also a slow way to learn that goes into such a deep understanding that it connects to similar situations and challenges that then connect to more situations. This continues to the point that seemingly different areas of life connect. In the case of karate or even yoga or Tai Chi, the learning takes place in muscle memory and becomes a part of how we move as well as how we think.

The art of practice is so important, no matter what we are practicing. Brain health is going away, because we are simply going too fast.

*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](http://wimberleykarateyoga.com)



## The science of journaling

by AJ Harwood



Journaling is a great way to reflect on the past year and prepare for the new one – and it's scientifically proven to work! Here are a few ways journaling can benefit your mental and emotional health.

- Reduce stress. Journaling can help process and overcome stress. In one study, students who journaled about their test anxiety before the exam outperformed those who only wrote about

test contents.

- Relief in tough times. People who spent 15 minutes twice a week journaling about a stressful event later reported feeling less anxious and depressed, especially if they were struggling before.

- Improves health. Journaling keeps you healthy! Patients living with chronic health conditions saw physical improvements after writing about stressful or negative experiences.

- Improves memory. Writing about your thoughts and emotions frees up space in your memory and improves its function at the same time.

- Emotional well-being. Repeated journaling increases emotional intelligence, helping you to process thoughts and feelings in a healthier way.

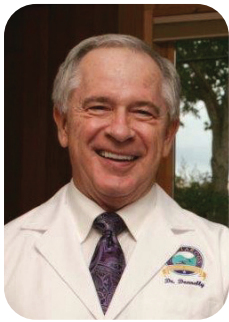
Choose your journaling style! *Bullet journaling* is where you write your thoughts out in bullet points. *Blank notebook journal-*

ing allows your creativity to take over. *Artist journals* allow you to draw or tape in mementos. *Gratitude journals* focus on what you're grateful for each day.

If you are wondering what your own home would look like on the market, give me a call! I am happy to run a comparative market analysis to see what homes in your neighborhood are going for right now. At the end of the day, real estate is local and I'm happy to walk you through what's going on and how it applies to you in the Wimberley and Texas Hill Country area. If you're thinking of selling your home, give me a call! Experience matters. I would be honored to help you through the home selling process.

*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](mailto:AJ@REMAX.net) or drop by our office location at 160 South River in the South River Business Park, Wimberley, Texas 78676.



## Easing dental related anxiety

by Robert Donnelly, DDS

Going to the dentist can cause anxiety, and that's a normal reaction. It's estimated that between 15-40 % of people are affected by dental anxiety. This often leads to unnecessary oral health problems as a result of avoidance behavior, which can ultimately lead to more time spent in the dental chair to receive more

extensive and potentially costly treatment.

There are many causes of dental anxiety:

- The fear of pain
- Feeling embarrassed about the condition of your teeth
- Recalling you own past experiences or the experiences of your family and friends
- The fear of needles, drills, and gagging
- Anticipating costly and/or extensive treatment

Please come talk with me at San Marcos Gentle Dental, I can help dispel any negative or frightening perceptions you may have. Having an understanding of your dental health and the dental services or treatment you may need will help to relieve dental anxiety. Make sure to avoid caffeine and sugar before any a dental appointment; they may make you anxious. Focus on relaxing, breathe regularly and slowly during any procedure. When you are nervous

you tend to hold your breath, which decreases oxygen levels and further increases feelings of panic.

Prior to any dental treatment we can discuss options of sedation. There are different types of sedation methods. The most common would be breathing a mixture of nitrous oxide and oxygen (laughing gas), and/or orally taking a medication by mouth. Sedation will make you feel more relaxed and even sleepy. We offer a comforting environment including headphones, with a variety of music options to choose from, large windows overlooking a bird haven and a staff that cater to our patients needs.

*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!*



## Simplicity is not too much to ask

by Randy Lawrence



Depending upon the quality of your water supply, water treatment systems can range in size from compact units designed to be tucked away in a small closet to multiple pieces of equipment requiring a large area. Often a system will have been modified over time with plumbing repairs and the addition or replacement of equipment. In many cases, these modifications are done in a way which makes the installer's job as easy as possible. Simply connecting a brand new softener to an existing maze of old

pipe or running unsupported pipes at odd angles to connect a new piece of equipment are examples of shortcuts which demonstrate a lack of concern for the finished product. The result is a pieced together system which makes access for service difficult, and typically takes up far more space than necessary.

While the operation of the equipment and the product water quality are the most pressing concerns, it is almost as important that the system be simple and streamlined to eliminate problems when the need arises for maintenance or service. When discussing the work to be performed, you should address any concerns you may have about the current system and clarify the scope of work to be done. If a piece of equipment is to be replaced, ask how the new connections will be made. Also, be sure to ask what will happen to the old unit. Many times, the equipment will be simply left in

the immediate area for the homeowner to dispose of. Obviously, it affects the equipment dealer's bottom line to perform work beyond a simple *cut and paste* installation, but it's reasonable to expect your water system to be carefully planned and installed in a user-friendly and space efficient manner.

It usually takes a little more time, and a few additional fittings, but when the technician puts forth the extra effort to simplify the system, it can make a world of difference. If you're concerned about the treatment equipment you currently have, a trained and licensed professional can suggest ways to improve the layout, performance and overall efficiency of your system.

*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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## Routine tree care now may prevent storm damage later

by Steven Austin

A certified arborist, like those from Bartlett Tree Experts, can inspect for defects and conditions that could predispose your trees to failure. A skilled arborist will look for:

- Dead, dying, and weakly attached branches and dead trees
- Decayed or split stems and branches
- Root disease or disturbances
- Exceptionally dense canopies
- Trees with poor architecture
- Species with weak wood

In many cases these hazards are not always obvious to the untrained eye and correcting them can be a dangerous job. That's why before remedial treatments are recommended or any work is performed, an arborist should fully inspect trees and conduct a more detailed assessment if needed. This could even include a climbing inspection or an analysis of decay.

Based on the outcome of an inspection, an arborist will recommend appropriate treatments such as pruning, installation of supportive cables or braces, and even lightning protection systems. Removal should only be considered where high-risk conditions exist that cannot be effectively mitigated.

Whatever treatments are required, the arborist should provide a detailed proposal that describes the work to be performed and

the reasons that it is needed. Tree work proposals should always include a firm price for these services and should address issues of debris and stump removal when appropriate.

Do not use an arborist who proposes topping trees as a solution to storm damage prevention. Topping leads to problems later in the life of the tree and is expressly prohibited by industry standards.

Schedule a consultation with an ISA certified arborist to ensure your trees are prepared for the season.

*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.*



## Curb appeal:

### More pop for your pennies

by Jim and Debbie Donaldson



Thanks to the many TV shows about upgrading homes, most people are very aware of the importance of curb appeal. Research tells us that our minds have the ability to judge something visually in one tenth of a second. With a little thought and planning you can follow simple steps to add curb appeal without breaking the bank! Here are a few ideas for you:

1. Paint your front door. Drive around the neighborhood and see what the neighbors are doing or try the web for fresh ideas on how to make your front door pop!
2. While you are focusing on the front entry take a look at your porch light fixtures. Fresh lighting can enhance the look of the entry to your home. Most fixtures today are inexpensive and simple to install.
3. Add a few colorful pots with plants that add interest to make your entry pop. Pick plant colors that are a contrast to the color of your home and stick with one or two colors.
4. Replace that old door mat with something fresh and interesting to add to the work you have already done to the entry to your home.

5. Paint the window, door, and porch trim if needed to freshen the look of the front of your home. Your shutters might be ready for a new coat of paint or a new color also.

6. Trim trees, bushes, and any landscaping that is overgrown. A manicured lawn and landscaping go a long way towards a positive curb appeal.

7. If window boxes work for your home they are a great low cost way to add visual interest. There are many local plant people that can help advise you in plant and color selection.

8. Fresh mulch in your flower beds is another staple for a front yard that pops!

Whether you are preparing your home to sell or just want to improve the appeal of your home, the above are simple, low cost things you can do to improve the look of your home.

*Jim and Debbie Donaldson are Sales Agents with Keller Williams, Partners in Real Estate Group, in Wimberley. They moved to Wimberley in 1993 and enjoy helping sellers and buyers have an awesome real estate experience. You can reach Jim at 830-857-3371 or Jim.Donaldson78@gmail.com or Debbie 512-665-9588 or Debbie.Donaldson79@gmail.com.*

# Tax efficient charitable giving

by Scott G. Hackett, CFP®



Donating appreciated securities to charity can be a tax-efficient way to support a cause you care about. When you donate securities that have appreciated in value, such as stocks or mutual funds, you may be eligible for certain tax benefits. Here are some key points to consider:

- **Capital gains tax benefits:** If you sell appreciated securities, you would typically be subject to capital gains tax on the profit. However, when you donate these securities to a qualified charitable organization, you can generally avoid paying capital gains tax on the appreciation.

- **Tax deductions:** You can usually deduct the fair market value of the securities on the date of the donation on your income tax return, subject to certain limitations. This deduction can potentially reduce your taxable income for the year.

- **Qualified charities:** Ensure that the organization you are donating to is a qualified tax-exempt charity under the IRS guidelines. Not all organizations are eligible to receive tax-deductible contributions.

- **Holding period:** To qualify for the favorable tax treatment, you typically need to have held the securities for more than one year. This is because only long-term capital gains receive preferential tax treatment.

- **Transfer process:** Work with your financial institution or broker to facilitate the transfer of the securities to the charity. This is

usually done electronically. The charity may have an established account to receive such donations.

- **Documentation:** Keep thorough records of the donation, including the date of the gift, the name of the charity, and the fair market value of the securities. The charity should provide you with a written acknowledgment of the donation.

- **Consult a tax professional:** Tax laws can be complex and subject to change. It's advisable to consult with a tax professional or financial advisor to understand the specific implications for your individual situation.

By donating appreciated securities, you not only support a charitable cause but also potentially benefit from tax advantages. However, tax laws vary, and individual circumstances differ, so it's crucial to seek personalized advice based on your specific financial situation.

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

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# Estate planning for blended families

by Carrie Campbell



With a large percentage of modern families consisting of children from previous relationships, estate planning for blended families has become a regular process. There are several inheritance options available for *non-traditional* families which can be tailored to the needs and goals of any specific family.

One option is for all children to be treated as the children of both spouses. The usual agreement is that all assets go to the surviving spouse at whose death the estate is divided among all the children based on agreed upon percentages (sometimes equal – sometimes not). The risk that the surviving spouse could later amend his or her will to disinherit the stepchildren can be minimized by making the wills contractual.

Another option is to create specific gifts for the surviving spouse with the remainder of the estate going to the deceased spouse's children. The asset most significant to a surviving spouse is usually the home which can be given out right or as a life estate. This option is most acceptable in situations where the spouses have adequate independent finances, but much more difficult if one or both spouses are dependent on both incomes to maintain his or her standard of living.

When financial dependency exists, spouses can reverse the pre-

vious option so that the children inherit specific gifts with the surviving spouse getting the remainder of the estate. The value of the specific gifts to the children can be conditional on the money left in the estate at the time of death. For example, *If my estate is worth at least \$1 million at my death, then I leave a cash gift of \$100,000 to each of my three daughters.* This approach allows everyone to carefully weigh their duty to their spouse and to their children.

In any of these instances, a variety of assets can be used to make the gifts work for the betterment of the family regardless of its make up. To develop an estate planning uniquely designed for your family, have a consultation with an attorney with experience in estate planning and probate.

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: Who changed the rules?

by Roland Brown



Imagine a game in which the referees can change the rules and the result after the final whistle. Now imagine that you are a coach and must anticipate how the rules might be changed and then must devise a game plan knowing that a win may be ripped from you by an arbitrary rule change made by referees who may be sympathetic to the other

team. What if it's not a game; what if it is a critical legal matter that is of supreme importance to you or someone you love? It can happen. In fact, it did happen to some of your fellow citizens recently.

The referees were six justices on the Texas Supreme Court. The game was a suit brought by the widow and three children of a man killed by the negligence of an 18-wheeler. The family won when a jury assessed sixteen million dollars in wrongful death damages (for a bit of perspective, that's about 20% of what a Texas university recently agreed to pay their football coach not to coach there anymore). The defense appealed the verdict claiming it was excessive. The court of appeals that heard the initial appeal determined that it was not excessive. The defense then appealed that decision and that's when the rules changed.

Simply stated, the next court ruled that valuing human life by comparing it to inanimate objects such as a work of art or an airplane, which has been a traditional approach, was suddenly not allowed. The judges couldn't get a majority to agree on the reasoning, but they agreed on the result. The case was sent back to the trial court for a new trial, but the Supreme Court couldn't explain what a jury would be allowed to analogize to in valuing a life. What that means for this bereaved family and their lawyers is that they will be unclear as to what they can and cannot suggest to the jury in terms of evaluating the loss. The decision is troublesome on many levels and is too complex to fully digest in this article, but it illustrates the difficulties trial lawyers face when courts change the rules of the game. A fuller discussion appears in Roland's Blog at [www.Your-Personal-Injury-Lawyer.Law](http://www.Your-Personal-Injury-Lawyer.Law).

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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# Pancreatitis and dogs

by Tracy Sheffield, RVT



**Dietary indiscretion.** That is such a great phrase. It covers a broad array of situations. Eating too much in the way of chips and salsa watching football games. Eating too much at Wurstfest. Full-on indulgence during the holiday feasting season. For your dog it can be the beginning of some serious health issues.

One of the results of dietary indiscretion can be the ingestion of a foreign object. Dogs can choose to eat a remarkable array of non-food items. Everything from yellow plastic ducks to several dozen socks to rocks, dogs have eaten them all. Then once the items become lodged in the digestive system, surgery is the only way they are coming out.

Another name for dietary indiscretion is *garbage gut*. The name comes from the fact that dogs often derive great joy from getting into the garbage and eating their fill of such tidbits as bacon grease, chicken skin or other fatty meats. This kind indulgence can lead to a condition called *pancreatitis*.

Pancreatitis is a complex chain of events that can be triggered by a variety of causes but it is generally started off by, as we said, dietary indiscretion. The overload of nutrients triggers the pancreas to secrete an overload of enzymes and some of the enzymes

start to break down the pancreas instead of the food. When this happens the dog feels quite sick, vomits, has abdominal pain and is often dehydrated.

There are other factors in pancreatitis including breed (miniature Schnauzers, several spaniels, shelties, toy poodles and Yorkies), obesity, age and diabetes can all predispose a dog to pancreatitis. When a dog with any of these risk factors becomes ill, pancreatitis is something that should be considered. There is a lab test that measures an enzyme from the pancreas. If that measurement is high, pancreatitis is a strong possibility.

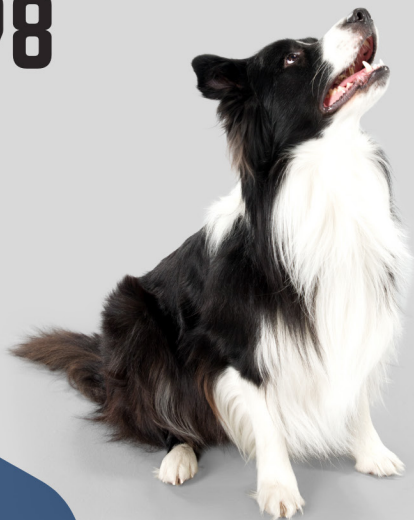
With prompt, appropriate care dogs can make a full recovery from an attack of pancreatitis. If your dog engages in dietary indiscretion a call or visit to your veterinarian is in order. Timely attention can make all the difference with both foreign body ingestions and pancreatitis.

*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](http://WimberleyVetClinic.com) or call us at 512 847 5630.*




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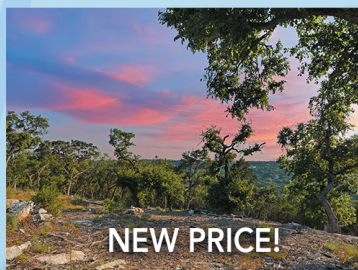
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