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**NEWS & VIEWS**

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# Editor's Letter

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“Is the spring coming?” he said. “What is it like?”...  
“It is the sun shining on the rain and the rain falling on the sunshine...”

—Frances Hodgson Burnett, *The Secret Garden*

What a delicious time of year. The air is fresh and the flowers are aching to burst forth. The sunshine is gentle and I love the breeze that chills afternoon.



We really never know what we're in for when the new year comes around. Spring officially begins on March 19, but we have been able to taste it ever since that easy drop in temperatures a few weeks back. Hope springs eternal for the little buds on the trees and bluebonnet leaves that dared to emerge

in one of the most notorious months of the Texan year. I think we're all ready for the flood of color and raw beauty spring brings with it.

Walks in the early evening, dinners outside, lingering at the playground longer than usual – spring offers us the space for renewal and refilling. It's also time when I revisit the habits and hobbies I hoped to adopt this year. Once the supercharged nature of the holiday season is firmly in the past and all the things have been given the time to be caught up on and conquered, there's space to consider the newness I hope to welcome in before another trip around the sun has elapsed.

There's beauty in the second, the minute, the hour, the moment that can last a lifetime or a split second. The trick is staying present for all of it and not letting the human construct of time weigh too much. Being sure to breathe in fully the cool, fresh air, bask in the temperate sunshine, savor the present moment. I hope this season brings all you hope for.

Happy March,  
y'all!

**Cyle Elizabeth Johnson**  
Editor, Publisher



- 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. March 11, 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, 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 EmilyAnn 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@texiasllc.com](mailto:amy@texiasllc.com).
- Every 3rd Thur. Live concerts at Susanna's Kitchen Coffeehouse, 7:30pm; \$25 adults, \$5 children. Food, coffee, soft drinks available. Corner of RR 12 & CR 1492 (Wimberley United Methodist Church.) [WimberleyUMC.org](http://WimberleyUMC.org) Benefits Barnabas Connection & Mother's Day Out scholarships. **Thurs. March 21: Eliza Gilkison**
- 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



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# Surprises

by Tim Thompson



*Some trails are happy ones; Others are blue.  
It's the way you ride the trail that counts; Here's a happy one for you:  
Happy trails to you, until we meet again... Roy Rogers and Dale Evans*

Life is full of surprises. An unexpected call from a dear friend can brighten any day. Who can resist the delight in their baby's spontaneous laugh or an unexpected visit from a loving grandparent? We are wired to relish such happy surprises, but not all surprises are happy ones.

I tend to be an early riser, so I was on my second cup of coffee when I got the news that the King Feed building was on fire. I can usually see the tallest part of the store from my back door, but the valley was heavily cloaked in dense fog that morning. By the time I got there, the fire was out and the owners, Laurie and Bryan, were busy on their phones. The former owner, Chris, and I offered solace and love in the enormous job the cleanup would be. Nothing prepares you to see the utter devastation brought by fire, and seeing the blackened interior of the store where I spent thirty years of my nursery career was a genuine heartbreak.

Current nursery manager Cristi was happy to report that Simon the nursery cat had spent the night in the greenhouse, which was untouched by the fire. The nursery may be among the first parts of the store to begin full sales since it is partly outdoors. It is my hope that plant trucks will begin delivering loads of spring plants there before too long. My garden can wait until they get up and going.

The little rosettes of bluebonnets in our garden have begun to

swell, confirming a beautiful future, and I try to see that promise in every waking morning. Every day brings unknown events, interactions yet unspoken, terms of endearment still unshared. We have the chance to celebrate the potential of every day as it unfolds if only we are open and responsive to it.

*Horticulturist Tim Thompson managed the garden center at King Feed and Hardware for over 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 hard way, but the right way

by Kern Deschner



One of my favorite musicals in the last few years has been *Dear Evan Hansen*. There is a song in the musical about the proper way to break-in a baseball glove. Obviously, this song is really a lot more about life than it is about baseball gloves. But it emphasizes that, to perform a task correctly, sometimes the path is hard, time consuming, and without shortcuts.

The song emphasizes that there is a hard way, but a right way, to break in a baseball glove, and implies that life is that way also.

Rhonda got me a barbecue smoker. It's electric and beautiful and it allows me to set a perfect temperature, one of the hardest things in running a smoker, and know it will be stable. But I'm finding out that there is more to making perfect barbecue than having a perfect smoker. A perfect cut of brisket is worthless in the hands of someone who has no idea what they're doing. You can buy delicious barbecue, and be quite happy about it, for the moment, but it's never really *your own* until you have to go through the process, and the joy, of making it your own.

For every experienced brisket maker, there is a different recipe. It's hard to know who is correct and I've learned that I have to sample their products to find out who really knows what they're

talking about. Then I beg for their recipe, and some are carefully guarded. Most people are happy to share, though, and a lot of recipes are pretty involved but the results are delicious. They all have in common the element of time and patience. My brother-in-law includes "take a 2-hour nap" in his recipe. Anyone who bakes, knows that there is a difference between two hours in the oven at 250° and one hour at 500°. Patience is important with baking, barbecue, baseball gloves, and life. You have to invest the time.

That's the way it is with raising alpacas as well. It is a kind of shortcut to buy somebody else's champion (like buying a nice baseball glove or a perfect cut of brisket... Don't worry, we don't eat the alpacas) but when you get the champion home, it will never reach potential unless you invest the time, the effort, and the know-how to bring out the full capabilities of that champion. And, if you need the *recipe*, you need the help of an expert, like Rhonda, who is willing to share and knows exactly what she is doing.

*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).*



# How many gallons do you weigh?

by Rance and Betsy Mosley



Alkaline  
Water  
& Health  
Market



We discussed previously that most of the human body is water, with an average of approximately 60%, but can be as high as 75%. Have you ever wondered how many gallons of water this would equate to? Well I'm weird like that so I did some research and this is what I found. I weigh 210 pounds so the formula is as follows:

$$210 \times 2 = 420, \text{ divide by } 3 = 140, \text{ divide by } 8 \\ = 17.5 \text{ gallons of water}$$

A gallon of water weighs approximately 8.34 pounds so my body is approximately 146 pounds of water. These calculations are probably on the high side because as you age the total percentage of water decreases, but this is a fun, easy way to get an estimate. This puts into perspective how important it is to stay hydrated.

Nearly all of the major systems in your body depend on water. Cartilage, found in joints and the disks of the spine, contains around 80% water. Long-term dehydration can reduce joint mobility leading to joint pain. It moistens tissues such as those in the mouth, eyes, and nose, and helps dissolve minerals and other nutrients to make them accessible to the body. Our blood is more than 90% water, and blood carries nutrients and oxygen to different parts of the body. It cushions and protects the brain, spinal cord, body organs, and other sensitive tissues. Dehydration can affect brain structure and function, which can lead to problems with

thinking and reasoning. Water lessens the burden on the kidneys, liver, and digestive system by flushing out waste products. Dehydration can lead to constipation, and an overly acidic stomach, which increases the risk of heartburn along with stomach ulcers. Another interesting fact is that our airways need water because dehydrated airways are restricted by the body in an effort to minimize water loss. This makes asthma and allergies worse. This information shows that with so many important bodily functions requiring water to perform at an optimal level it is crucial to stay hydrated.

So how much water does your body need on a daily basis? A good rule of thumb would be half your body weight in ounces per day. However, if you are working outside or exercising, your water consumption should increase by 12 ounces for every 30 minutes of physical exertion. Then according to the American Pregnancy Association if you are pregnant or breastfeeding, you need to increase your water intake by 24 to 32 ounces depending on how much you weigh. Also, monitor your urine. Your urine should be colorless or very pale yellow. If it is darker than that you need to increase your water intake. Headaches and dizziness are late signs of dehydration so don't wait until it's too late, keep yourself well hydrated.

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

## Starting a new practice

by Sarah Geenberg



Many people have considered starting an exercise program like yoga, Tai Chi, or karate. Their doctors may have even recommended it. But where do you start?

When looking for a yoga, Tai Chi, or karate class, the most important thing is that you jive with the teacher. The teacher's energy makes a difference. The

teacher will also attract a certain type of person, and if you jive with the teacher, you will also jive with the energy of the class. Even though the practice is the same with different teachers, the energy of the class makes all the difference when it comes to you looking forward to getting up and going on a regular basis.

As for our yoga classes, I enjoy the unpretentiousness and relaxed attitude. We have a lot of seniors, but I enjoyed the classes as a thirty-something because people were so relaxed and not at all showy. Bottom line is that you can make the class harder or easier, so I got what I needed out of it. The seniors have fun and are grateful to be there. We have teachers that are more direct and teachers that are really just goofy. The Tai Chi is more focused but chill and the karate is also real relaxed. We are serious when called up to be and we also have fun and are supportive.

People have also said that they like the variety of teachers we have. They jive with many of them, and that rounds out their practice, for each one hits at things a little differently.

What to expect in the classes is a journey. You will get benefits that stem from a balance of both physical body and mentality. As muscles find balance, tight ones release and weak ones are allowed to gain strength. Pain dissipates. There will always be things to explore and sometimes that causes uncertainty. People with difficulties find answers and more ease with patience and time.

To start a class with us, just show up wearing loose, comfortable clothing and maybe bring some water. The teacher will help you from there. The first class is *free* and I recommend you try all the teachers to see which jives best.

*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





# The yoga you can do

by Carla Daws



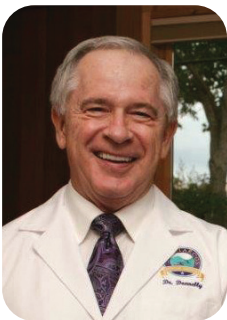
*But I'm not flexible enough to do yoga* is a response I hear most often when I invite someone to yoga class. In fact, that is the best reason to start a regular yoga practice. Gentle Hatha yoga focuses on increasing flexibility, strength, balance, and improving mood and focus. My classes are for everyone, from beginners looking to improve their health to advanced practitioners wanting to incorporate a slower paced class. Once you try "The Yoga You Can Do" you will look slimmer, feel stronger, have less pain, and gain a more positive outlook. Hope to see you on the mat!

"Yoga is the artwork of awareness on the canvas of body, mind, and soul." — Amit Ray

*Carla Daws has been a Wimberley native for 25 years. She was Yoga Teacher certified at the 200 hour level through the Living Yoga Program in Austin in 2009. She has taught non-stop ever since in Wimberley, Dripping Springs, Buda, Kyle, and San Marcos. Her classes are also available on YouTube. When she is not on the mat, you can find her onstage in local community theater productions. Carla can be contacted at 512 753 9379 or via email at GeminiPisces@hotmail.com.*

## The Yoga You Can Do SCHEDULE

TUESDAYS 4pm	St. Stephens Episcopal Church (by donation)
TUESDAYS 6pm	Wimberley Community Center (\$10 - card only)
WEDNESDAYS 9:30am	at Twisted Motion Visit TwistedMotionATX.com or call 512-722-3322.
WEDNESDAYS 3pm	Emily Ann Burdine Theater (\$10 cash or check)
THURSDAYS 10am	Wimberley Village Library (free)
THURSDAYS 12pm	Wimberley Community Center (\$10 card only)
SUNDAYS 11am	Wimberley Junction Farmers Market (upstairs from Savages) by donation (Weather dependent so contact me to see if it is being held.)



# Oral cancer awareness

by Robert Donnelly, DDS

Our office is not only dedicated to your smile, we're also dedicated to your overall wellness. Dr. Donnelly includes an oral cancer screening as a part of your regular exam and cleaning. The Oral Cancer Foundation estimates that 53,000 Americans will be newly diagnosed with oral cancer in 2019.

There are two distinct causes of oral cancer. One is through the use of tobacco and alcohol, a long term historic problem and cause, and the other is through exposure to the HPV-16 virus, the same one which is responsible for the vast majority of cervical cancers in women. While some think this is a rare cancer, oral cancer will be newly diagnosed in about 100 new individuals each day in the U.S. alone, and a person dies from oral cancer every hour of every day.

Unfortunately, the majorities are found as late stage cancers, and this accounts for the very high death rate of about 45% at five years from diagnosis. Lack of diagnosis is not occurring because most of these cancers are hard to discover, it is because of a lack of public awareness and patients waiting to seek treatment because of it. You are the most important factor in the early diagnosis of oral cancer through routine screenings at our office.

We have the skills and tools to ensure that early signs and symptoms of oral cancer and pre-cancerous conditions are identi-

fied. The most common symptoms include red or white spots or sores anywhere in your oral cavity, a sore that bleeds easily or does not heal, a lump, thickening or rough spot, or pain, tenderness or numbness anywhere in the mouth or on the lips.

The best way to prevent oral cancer is to avoid all tobacco products and only drink alcohol in moderation, maintain a healthy, balanced diet, and limit your exposure to the sun.

*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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# DEEP IN THE ART OF TEXAS

## Sculpture: Part 2

by Theresa Vincent

Last month, we looked at a few of Wimberley's talented bronze sculptors. Since then, I've been able to explore the works of sculptors who craft their pieces from other materials, including clay (ceramics), wood, glass, stone, and even wire.

My journey began with 220 Fine Art Gallery, a few blocks off the square on Old Kyle Rd. Driven by a love for three-dimensional art and a desire to showcase local artists, owner Suzanne Oliver has recently installed a new sculpture garden in the front courtyard. A short, inviting pathway lined with native grasses is designed to let viewers enjoy a variety of works and to contemplate installation ideas. All of the pieces are offered for sale, and the artists are available to discuss and assist with installations. On display are works by JJ Priour, Peter Mangan, and Matt Donner. Garden gongs, steel assemblage pieces by Efrain Arvelo, are also featured.



Peter Mangan



JJ Priour



Carol Schwartz

**Peter Mangan's** "Tree of Life" offers a visual contrast between the solid opaqueness of metal and the airy transparency of glass. Mangan uses both traditional and new techniques, from laser-jet metal cutting to medieval glass painting methods.

"Creating artwork enables me to use planning and intuition to make objects that communicate to others," Mangan shared. "I enjoy the struggle with ideas, materials, and tools. It is rewarding to bring something original into the world and see how people respond. One of my current interests involves the human figure...What makes up the interior of a person: the memories, humor, quirks, faults, emotions? What of the external environment: relationships, possessions, location, time, obstacles? These are concepts worth exploring through sculpture."

Mangan holds a Master of Fine Arts degree from San Jose State University. Mangan's artwork has been shown and collected in the U.S.A., Europe, and Japan.

**JJ Priour** was inspired from childhood by watching his father create powerful works as a sculptor. Priour's beautiful abstract designs of stone and glass aim to inspire individual interpretations while enhancing the beauty of our surroundings. "Our draw to beauty is intrinsic and begins at birth... We eventually develop our own unique understanding of where we find beauty and why."

"The fossiliferous Central Texas limestone is representative of the historical strength of life in this area. The glass is incorporated as metaphor for water... The incredible roles that water plays in life range from providing necessary nourishment for life, the comfort and beauty that it creates, to the potential hazards presented by too much or too little. Living in the spectacular central Texas hill country has embedded in me the motivation to preserve our habitats and beautify our public spaces."

Priour also exhibits in Austin and Sedona, Arizona. One of his most powerful works, which commemorates the tragic Memorial Day floor, is found at the Emily Ann Theatre in Wimberley.

Inside 220 Fine Art Gallery, the works of two ceramicists can be found.

**Carol Schwartz** is a storyteller who has focused on narrative sculptures for the past several years. Drawn in part from real life, and in part from fantasy, her work addresses issues of love and desire. She often uses the human figure and animals to tell stories about romantic relationships. The narrative quality of her low-fire sculptural work lends itself well to drawing accents, though she also uses this technique on more functional, high-fired pieces.





Kris Cummings



Victor Summers

Schwartz has been working with clay since 1997. She received her BFA in ceramic arts from Texas State University in 2002, and her MFA in ceramic arts with a minor in printmaking from Edinboro University of Pennsylvania in 2005. She has been teaching and making work ever since. Schwartz maintains an active studio at home while teaching ceramics and 3D design foundations at Texas State University.

**Kris Cummings'** ceramic sculptures are often figurative, sometimes relaying a socio-political message, while at other times incorporating images inspired by the native flora and wildlife of the Texas Hill Country. Before taking up ceramics, Cummings had a number of other creative outlets, including working as a photographer while studying under Garry Winogrand. She performed as the keyboard player and backing vocalist for Joe "King" Carrasco, appearing on Saturday Night Live and Austin City Limits. She also worked as an assistant to film maker Les Blank on the New Orleans music documentary "Always for Pleasure". Since receiving her BFA in ceramics and printmaking at Texas State, Cummings has worked full time as a ceramicist based in Wimberley and taught ceramics at Laguna Gloria, Eye of the Dog, and Jump Into Art in McKinney.

Other talented sculptors are also to be found around town, including several who are members of the Wimberley Valley Art League.

**Steve Shellenberger** started out as a passionate print maker, and then turned to making wooden wall sculptures in 2013. His three-dimensional abstract designs are often complex and on second look reveal hidden patterns and visual surprises. Color, pattern, texture, and repetition are key features of his creations.

Shellenberger says he enters his shop with an attitude of curiosity and play. While each project begins with a plan, he is always open to wherever the process takes him. Most of all, he loves to bravely answer the question, "What if?" Although sometimes challenging, he shared that finding the right combination of those elements is what provides energy to the pieces. His desire is for the observer to experience the joy that creating his art brings him.

**Victor Summers** (Silo Gallery) is a lifelong woodworker who turned to sculpture when the pandemic shut down his festival market for wooden utensils. Initially inspired by MidCentury carver Emil Milan, his repertoire of stylized birds and fish gradually expanded to include more architectural and ceremonial pieces. Working exclusively with salvaged Texas native woods, his creative process is guided by the shapes, bark textures and grain patterns of the branches and logs that he rescues from waterways and burn piles. (victorsummers.sculptor on Instagram, SummerFish Studios on FB)



Steve Shellenberger

**Brent Romero** describes himself as the typical logical, left-brained nerdy individual who found an outlet for his creative side back in 1985 by twisting wire into trees. Though he never considered his work to be art, he won a blue ribbon on his first try when his company sponsored a local art fair. Brent made his trees for a year or so as gifts for family and friends. After retiring to Wimberley almost 40 years later, he met his muse, Marianne Dorsey, who encouraged him to take up his craft once again. His work has since been accepted into the juried member shows with the Wimberley Valley Art League.

**March 3** - Wimberley Arts Three Cheers Celebration

**March 9** - Art on 12 - Second Saturday

**March 11** - Wimberley Valley Art League - Artist Presentation: Kathy Utts

**March 16** - 220 Fine Art - What About the Birds? - Rodney Bursiel

**March 22** - WIC Mural Celebration



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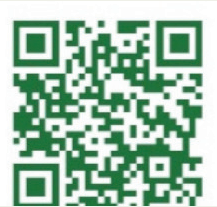
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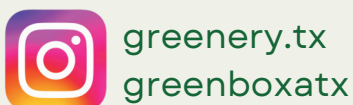


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## Homestead exemption

by Alice Gumbert Lebkuecher



What is a homestead exemption? Homestead exemptions are granted by the county appraisal district where the property is located. The exemption reduces a homeowner's property tax bill by removing part of the home's value from taxation. All Texas homeowners may receive a general residence homestead exemption on the value of their property for

school taxes upon application. Other taxing entities may also offer exemptions of some percentage of the home's value. Other exemptions are available to homeowners who are over 65 or disabled and require the same application process.

Who qualifies? These requirements must be met to receive the exemption: You must own your home before for which you are applying. No longer do you have to own your home as of January 1 of the year you are applying. You must reside at the home as your principal residence and not claim any other property as your homestead. Only individual homeowners (not corporations or other entities) may receive a homestead exemption.

A homestead can be a house, condominium, or a manufactured home. It can include up to 20 acres, if the land is also owned by the homeowner and used as a yard or for another purpose related to the residential use of the home.

How to apply for a homestead exemption? Your homestead exemption will be denied unless all of the required documents show the same homestead address. First, fill out the application specific to your county appraisal district, then mail/email all of the documents to the appraisal district for your county. Go to your county's appraisal district website and download the Residence Homestead Exemption Application (Form 50-114). Include a copy of your driver's license or identification card. Your driver's license needs to be from the Texas Department of Public Safety (TX DPS) and the address must match the homestead address.

You are to file the completed application with all required documentation beginning January 1 and no later than April 30 of the year for which you are requesting an exemption. If you qualify for the age 65 or older or disabled persons exemption or the exemption for donated homesteads of partially disabled veterans, you are to apply for the exemption no later than the first anniversary of the date you qualify for the exemption.

*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.*

## Understanding hard water

by Randy Lawrence



It's well known that in central Texas, we have some of the highest water hardness levels in the country. Something you may not know is that those levels can vary greatly from one water source to another. The amount of calcium and other hardness minerals dissolved in water is expressed using grains per gallon, or GPG. The amount of scale buildup and corrosion you'll experience is directly proportional to the hardness of your water. It's safe to say that, with a

test result of 10 GPG or more, the home's plumbing system and water-using appliances would benefit from a water softener.

Unfortunately there are few, if any, available ground or surface water sources in our area which contain less than 12 GPG. Most of our local municipal and community water supplies contain between 20 and 40 GPG. At the lower end of the range, visible issues can be relatively manageable with cleaning chemicals, but calcium scale will definitely accumulate in the pipes, fixtures and water heater. The news isn't any better with private wells. Depending on the location and depth of your well, hardness can range from 15 GPG to as much as 160 GPG. At the higher end of the range, the calcium will cause excessive buildup on fixtures and surrounding surfaces, etching of glassware and premature failure of water heaters, dishwashers and other water-using appliances.

It's important to know that treatment equipment is not *one size fits all*. Despite misleading claims by some, traditional salt or potassium-based softening is the only method which physically removes hardness from your water. Recent advances in electronic controllers have made the new generation of softeners more reliable, efficient and user-friendly than ever. A water treatment specialist can test your water in order to determine the necessary softener size for your home.

*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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# Home improvements: DIY or hire a pro?

by AJ Harwood

Whether you want to save money with a do-it-yourself approach or save time by hiring a professional, use this guide to help you decide!

When to do it yourself:

• You're willing to research. Before you start, take the time to research the project. If you want to paint your cabinets, for example, watch tutorial videos, read about paint options, or ask a store associate for advice.

• The project isn't complex. Simple projects are the best ones to tackle yourself. If you understand the directions and are confident you can execute them, doing it yourself can save you money.

• You have the time. Consider the free time you have to complete the task. If you're busy with work and other obligations, you risk rushing through the project and making costly mistakes.

When to hire a pro:

• There's a risk of serious damage. Avoid DIY jobs that could cause serious damage to yourself or your home. Examples include a plumbing leak inside a wall that causes water damage or faulty electric work that overloads a circuit or causes a fire.

• You don't have the necessary tools. DIYers often get into projects and realize they forgot to budget for the cost of buying or renting tools to complete the task. A pro, on the other hand, already has quality tools to get the job done.

• Your project could require a permit. Some renovation jobs require a permit, so make sure to find out the local rules on what you can and can't do.

If you are wondering what your home would look like on the market, give me a call at 512 848 6612! I am happy to run a comparative market analysis to see what homes in your neighborhood are selling 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 the Texas Hill Country. I also have great experience sharing the top ten items every seller should complete before listing their home. Experience matters.

*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.

# Five symptoms you should not ignore

by Jo Harris



You know there are health symptoms people should not overlook. Well, it's the same for trees. They often display key symptoms indicating that serious problems exist or could develop if ignored.

Here are five symptoms that merit a call to a certified arborist for a professional assessment.

1. Obscured root collars: Most trees, even young ones, exhibit a distinct, visible flare where the stem (trunk) joins the

root system. If this flare is covered by soil or mulch, then disease, girdling roots, and insect infestations are more likely to occur. If this condition is allowed to continue untreated and disorders develop, the interruption of water flow from the roots to the branches will lead to the crown's decline. Once the crown is affected, remedial treatments may be unsuccessful in arresting the failure. So, inspecting this critical region for disorders is important. Excavation of the buried root collar is a priority.

2. Bleeding on stems and branches: Wet spots on branches and stems indicate sap flow from wounds that could have been created by insect borers, disease pathogens, or environmental disorders. The sap may be colonized by bacteria and other microorganisms resulting in a discolored flux that may have a sour odor.

3. Delayed budbreak: Trees initiate new growth in spring depending on species, weather conditions, and the health status of the individual plant. If a plant seemed later than usual breaking bud and if the resulting new growth appears sparser than normal,

this could indicate a root or vascular disorder. Delayed bud-break and a sparse crown are expected on newly planted trees.

4. Yellowing and premature loss of leaves in summer: Yellowing and loss of leaves on the interior portions of the crown may simply be indications of water stress (too little or too much) soil moisture. These symptoms commonly occur on birch, maple, tulip tree and other shallow rooted plants. In some cases, these symptoms may be an early indication of a root or soil disorder that is inhibiting water uptake.

5. Premature autumn color and leaf drop: Trees under stress will frequently develop autumn coloration early and cast their leaves prematurely. This condition is most commonly associated with serious root and soil disorders but also can be caused by vascular diseases and certain boring insects.

A yearly check up isn't just a good idea for you. It's great for your trees as well!

Jo grew up in Charlotte, Michigan, as a second-generation arborist. In 2004, drawn to the warm weather, Joe found himself in San Marcos where he attend Texas State and became intrigued with the inner workings of the arboricultural industry. He joined Bartlett while he was there. Jo worked five years as an arborist climber and crew leader, recently making the transition to Arborist Representative. He and his family love spending time on the San Marcos river.







## Navigating the 2023 tax season: What you need to know

by Scott G. Hackett, CFP®

The annual ritual of filing income taxes is upon us once again. As you gather your financial documents and prepare to file, here are some key points to keep in mind:

1. Standard deductions increased.

When filing your taxes, you have the option to claim either the standard deduction or itemize your deductions. For most taxpayers, the standard deduction is the simpler route. The IRS estimates that 90% of filers choose this method.

For the 2023 tax year (which you'll be filing in 2024), the standard deduction amounts have increased.

- Single: \$13,850
- Married Filing Jointly: \$27,700
- Married Filing Separately: \$13,850
- Head of Household: \$20,800
- Qualifying Widow(er): \$27,700

Taxpayers who are 65 and older or are blind qualify for an additional standard deduction. For 2023, the additional amounts are \$1,850 for single filers or heads of household, and \$1,500 for married filers or qualifying widow(ers).

2. Income tax brackets expanded. Alongside the higher standard deductions, the IRS has adjusted the income tax brackets for the 2023 tax year. These changes mean that taxpayers can expect a slightly smaller tax bill.

Let's illustrate with an example: Suppose a single taxpayer

has taxable income of \$44,000 for 2023. Under the new brackets, they'll be taxed at a marginal rate of 12%. If the same income had been received in 2022, the top rate would have been 22%.

3. New 1099-K reporting threshold for payment apps delayed. The American Rescue Plan (ARP) of 2021 modified requirements for reporting transactions involving payment apps (third-party processors). Keep an eye out for any updates on this front.

Remember, whether you choose to file your taxes yourself, use tax software, or seek professional assistance, staying informed about these changes will help you navigate the process smoothly.

Happy filing, and may your refunds be swift!

*Disclaimer: This article provides general information and should not be considered professional tax advice. Consult a tax professional for personalized guidance.*

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

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## Accessibility of estate documents

by Carrie Campbell



An original will must be protected from accidental damage, loss, or careless notations that have the legal impact of revoking the entire will. Therefore, it is my standard practice to keep the original wills for all my clients. I provide them a copy with a label reminding them where the original is kept. That copy of the will, along with medical powers of attorney and durable general powers

of attorney, should be kept in a location that is easily and quickly accessible.

The powers of attorney are documents that permit an individual to name *agents* to make medical decisions and/or financial decisions on their behalf if they become incapacitated, and therefore, unable to make those decisions for themselves. I give my clients bright, durable, expandable folders for this purpose so that relatives can grab and go with the necessary documents in the event of an emergency. I also recommend that a HIPAA Release to activate the powers of attorney, other estate documents, and important information be kept in the bright, accessible folder. Then, it is essential to notify and/or show the appointed agents or executor where the folder is kept.

I also provide my clients with the option of digital copies. Our family learned the hard way to keep digital copies with us as we

travel. A close relative had a seizure at a family reunion and spent three days in a hospital many hours from home. While he had a medical power of attorney, a HIPAA release, a list of medications, and medical providers easily accessible at home, they were of no help given the distance. I have since kept in my emails a copy of all my important documents, plus those of my closest family members. I suggest you do the same.

For assistance in preparing a will and estate documents, personalized financial planning, and advice on how best to avoid guardianship procedures and/or a difficult probate, you should consult with an attorney experienced 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: Watching a trial

by Roland Brown



Last week I spent a day in a San Antonio courtroom watching testimony in a traumatic brain injury case. The science regarding what are euphemistically called *mild* traumatic brain injuries is developing rapidly, particularly since the relatively recent studies relating to concussions suffered by football

players.

In assisting my clients who suffer such injuries in motor vehicle collisions, I do a lot of reading, attending seminars, and discussing the science with doctors and other attorneys. However, the opportunity to watch one of the pioneers in the field of neuroscience as it relates to mild traumatic brain injuries explain the testing, analysis and interpretation used to diagnose what can be an elusive cause of life-altering impairments was fascinating and informative. While I plan on discussing in a future article these injuries which often go unrecognized following relatively minor crashes, today I want to offer a suggestion prompted by my experience last week.

My suggestion for you is to go watch a trial. It is live entertainment, and it is an opportunity to see the time-tested American justice system at work. It won't look like what you see on TV. There was a time when the courthouse was a regular source of

entertainment for the community. One of the stories I heard repeatedly as a young man was about a trial in which my father was the prosecuting attorney, and the renowned criminal defense lawyer, Percy Foreman, represented the accused. Over the years, I heard many accounts from folks who watched the trial which ended with the defendant being convicted of murder. What really caught my attention was the fact that folks attending would pack a lunch and eat in the packed courtroom because, if you left to go eat, you would lose your seat to someone waiting for an opportunity to watch the trial.

Things have changed, and few people attend trials unless they are involved or have a family member who is involved. Still, true life dramas play out weekly in courtrooms you have access to. Some are more interesting than others, and it can be a little challenging determining when and where to go, but like my experience as an observer rather than a participant, it can be fascinating. Local options include, among others, courthouses in San Marcos, New Braunfels, Austin and, one of my favorites, San Antonio.

*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, 2021, and 2023 in annual polls of Hays County attorneys. For more information call 512 847 2500.*

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