

NOV/DEC 2018 • VOL. 1, ISSUE 1



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GoodLife

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Mineola League of the Arts

GUILDS:

Fiber Arts, Line Dance, Painters, Photography, Quilters, Sculpture

Yearly Event Calendar

Art Show.....	2nd weekend in April
Kids' Art Camp	2nd week in July
Knit Camp	4th week in July
Sampler Week	4th week in August
Quilt Show	2nd weekend in October
Fiber Arts Exhibition	2nd week in November
Christmas Bazaar	1st Saturday in December

Mineola League of the Arts

200 West Blair St., Mineola, Texas 75773
 903-569-8877 • www.mlota.org

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Destination **MINEOLA** for the Holidays!

November 23-December 28

Shop Local – submit receipts from purchases during this time. A winner's name will be drawn weekly. Post on Facebook with **#ShopLocalMineolaTX** (and tag the business where it was purchased from), email to mainstreet@mineola.com, or drop off at City Hall, Mineola Community Bank or the Chamber of Commerce.

Thursday, Nov. 29

Jingle Bell Bash Santa visit
6 p.m. Mineola Civic Center
903-569-6115

Fridays-Sundays
Nov. 30-Dec 2 & Dec. 7-9
"A Doublewide Christmas"
Lakecountryplayhouse.com

Friday, Nov. 30
Main Street Window Decorating Contest
Downtown Mineola 903-569-6183

Thursday, Nov. 29
Jingle & Mingle
6 p.m. Mineola Civic Center
903-569-6115 for tickets



Saturday, Dec. 1

Mineola League of the Arts Bazaar
10 a.m. to 6 p.m. • 903-569-8877

Landmark Commission Tour of Homes
1-4 p.m. • 903-569-6183

Music on Main Street
Rafael Espinoza & Band, Gazebo, 1-4 p.m.
Free Horse-Drawn Carriage Rides
2-5 p.m. Historic Downtown

Christmas Parade
sponsored by Chamber of Commerce
5:30 p.m. East Broad to Lankford, then to
Commerce Street and Gazebo
Santa visits at the Gazebo afterward

Saturday, Dec. 15

Santa at the Little Red House
at Mineola Historical Museum
11 a.m. to 3 p.m.



Friday, Jan. 25, 2019

Mineola Historical Museum Taters & Trimmings
10:30 a.m. – 1 p.m. \$10 buys potato loaded with
your choice of toppings, tea & dessert
Place order by Jan. 22
903-569-6183



Friday, Nov. 30

Free children's event/visits with Santa
6:30-8 p.m. Mineola Civic Center
Please bring a nonperishable food for
Caring & Sharing

**We invite and encourage you to continue to
Shop Local through the year to support
our local businesses and economy.**



MAKING MILK the Waldo Way

NaRisa Waldo and her family have been producing raw milk products at The Waldo Way Dairy Farm for five years.

Longtime Mineola resident Waldo, founder of the farm just off Hwy. 37 between Mineola and Quitman, taught nursing at the University of Texas at Tyler for 10 years – until 2013 when she quit teaching to pursue her interest in unpasteurized milk and its effects on health and wellness.

“I have the pleasure of working with my passion and my passion is education. My passion is health and wellness and cows,” Waldo said. “I get to deal with challenges every day of owning and operating your own business, and that’s a real positive because a lot of people can’t say that. They have ‘punch-in, punch-out’ jobs and I get ‘think, develop and grow’. We’re always growing here and continuing to change and evolve.”

*Story and photos
Zak Wellerman*

Extensive research led Waldo to the best cows for the milk she wanted. Guernseys produce milk high in beta-carotene (a provitamin for vitamin A), protein and butterfat.

“I knew I wanted premium milk so I researched the cows that gave premium milk,” she said. “They are touted as having arguably the highest quality of milk that can be found.”

Waldo Way is a family business with Waldo’s son and husband in leadership roles. Trenton Montgomery, her son, serves as the chief financial officer and Bruce Waldo, her husband, is co-owner.

Business has grown and thrived since those first five cows: the herd of Guernseys now numbers more than 120. Waldo Way has also added a robotic milk machine, event

center, classes, tours and a variety of raw milk products over the years.

Classes teach guests about cooking and bread, fermented bread and butter making. Both private and public tours of the farm are available and the event center is utilized for weddings, receptions and parties. From the original 2,000-square-foot facility, Waldo Farms has expanded, now occupying 10,000 feet of

**“Raw milk is
the way God
intended
milk to be.
Pasteurized
milk is what
man did to
it.”**

NaRisa Waldo



One of the Guernsey cows drinks some water at the Waldo Way Dairy Farm in Mineola.

space. “The changes have been enormous,” she said.

Two years ago, Waldo added a robotic milking system.

“It has electronic medical records that we can access. It does not have to be manned whatsoever. It milks the cows,” she said. “The cows come in on their timeframe. In other words, they can just come in and be milked when they want to, not on human time, but on the cow’s timeframe.”

Milk from Waldo Way is raw milk, meaning it hasn’t been pasteurized. According to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, pasteurization sets milk at a specific temperature to kill harmful diseases and bacteria.

“Raw milk has all of the macro nutrients, micro nutrients, vitamins and minerals that could and does keep a body alive. So it serves the neuromuscular system and the complete physiological side of man,” she said. “You could live off of raw milk. When I’m talking about milk, I’m talking about raw milk, not pasteurized milk. It (pasteurized milk) does not do the same.”

Pasteurization takes away the qualities milk was meant to have, she says.

“When you pasteurize, that means it’s put under enormous heat,” she said. “Milk is a complex, cellular structure and when you heat it, you denature that cellular structure to a place where the body tries to throw it off because it doesn’t know what to do with it. Raw milk on the other hand, the body does



Some of the raw milk (unpasteurized) products sold at the Waldo Way store. The products include milk, cheese, yogurt, drinkable yogurt, grass fed beef and more.

know how to absorb and assimilate the nutritional benefits of raw milk and can sustain life."

She says her background in nursing contributes to the success of the farm.

"People come here because of my knowledge base of the disease processes and my knowledge base of the benefits of nutrition. I also use (nursing background) for management, treatment, health and wellness of my cows," Waldo said. "There are many days I might be starting IVs on cows or giving them injections or looking at their nutritional intake from grasses. Science plays a huge role in operating a dairy and with animal husbandry."

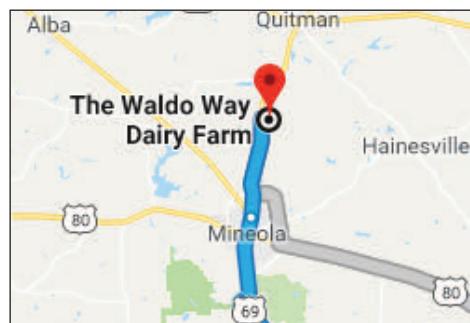
Customers keep coming back for more milk products every year.

"Health being restored is a large part of what I've been told over the past five years. And it's amazing feedback when you have that from one single product,"

she said. "Children are healthier. They have better immune systems because of the milk."

She hopes to distribute products to other retailers next year, but "they would be stores that have the same philosophies that our farm would have," Waldo said. "So I would say more in keeping with health food stores, but independently owned and operated, not big chains."

WHERE'S WALDO?



395 CR 2482, Mineola
Mon-Fri, 10am-3pm • Saturday, 9am-noon

Products

Waldo Way sells a wide range of raw milk products including milk, cream, buttermilk, yogurt, drinkable yogurt, cheese and butter.

They also sell grass-fed beef raised on the farm, bone broth, eggs, peanut butter, granola and honey. At their bakery, everything is made with organic ingredients and they offer a variety of gluten-free baked goods.

Waldo launched a colostrum skin care product in the spring. Colostrum, the first form of milk produced by the cow after she gives birth to the calf, contains antibodies to protect the newborn from diseases, Waldo says. The skin care product is now available online and being shipped across the country.

For more information about the farm, check out their websites, waldoway.com and blessings.club, or follow the Waldo Way Farm Facebook page.



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Serenity

BY ZAK WELLERMAN

for all ages...

Within view of the Mineola Nature Preserve, Serenity Yoga studio provides women of all of ages the opportunity to strengthen their mental and physical health.

Sharon Jones, owner of the studio, started the studio six years ago when she and her friends went looking for exercise that wasn't too difficult but would help with improving flexibility and relieving pain.

"I was just looking for an activity that myself and two of my friends could do that would be a real aerobic exercise, but would still be good for the age that we were and maybe problems that we would have with any issues with pain and flexibility," she said. "So yoga pretty much fit the bill and we didn't have a studio in our area so we needed a place to do yoga."

In 2012, Serenity Yoga was built on Jones' property near her ranch. She said the response has been great over the years. Serenity has two certified trainers and about 20 members.

"It's been a great avenue for, I think, women to come together and enjoy a relaxing place to have some benefits through yoga and meeting ladies here in the area," Jones said. "And especially new people to the area, it gets them acquainted."

Yoga includes practicing physical postures, breathing techniques and is often used for the promotion of physical and

emotional health.

Jones says yoga has a variety of benefits including flexibility, strength, breathing, bone health, alleviating pain issues, aging, stress reduction and mental clarity.

"Yoga is a great stress reliever and by learning the proper breathing technique you'll feel calmer and more relaxed," she said. "There are many positive effects of yoga on mental and physical health, as well as on a personal level. Yoga can help alleviate pain and help individuals feel more relaxed."

One misconception about yoga is that people think it involves religion.

"Yoga is about really being a better person and being more grateful, kind and helping others," she said.

Another confusing part about yoga is that it always consists of challenging poses; however, there are all kinds of types of yoga.

"I think here what we emphasize is a more gentler yoga, one that's more beneficial and not practicing inversions or things like headstands or things that are going to be risky for women that are more middle aged," Jones said. "So we try to do a gentler, relaxed style of yoga. I want women that they're not too old to do yoga and that's probably because of the misconception again with thinking that they have to stand on their head."

Members are generally in their early 30s to late 60s and even beyond, she stated. "If you're in good health, you can do yoga for a long, long time."

Hours for the studio are 9:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. but classes vary depending on attendance. Generally one day is closed for workshops. There are some evening classes at 6 p.m.

Thursdays are often left open for a spa day or workshops. Workshops can be health related, artistic or general parties.

Serenity Yoga is located 1223 County Road 2724 in Mineola.

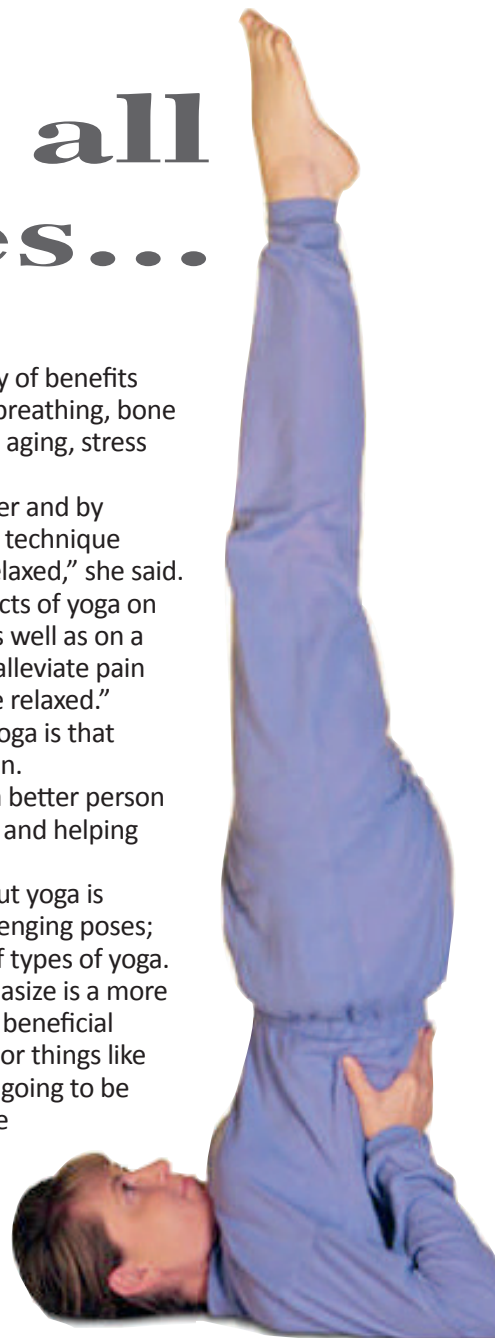
First class is free. There is a \$10 cost for one-time class and \$65 per month unlimited with a senior rate of \$55. Another option is a 10 class punch card for \$8 per class which lasts three months.

An hour session with a therapist using eight essential oils on the spine is available. This treatment is called Aromatherapy Touch.

Jones added that she would like to turn her old hired hands house into a bed and breakfast in the spring.



Located next to the Mineola Nature Preserve, Serenity Yoga studio has a peaceful setting for women of all ages to relax and practice skills to improve flexibility and strength. (Photo from Sharon Jones)



Casburn's life an exception to the rule



BY LARRY TUCKER

In 1989, not too long after Terry Casburn joined the country-rock band Mason Dixon, the group's single 'Exception to the Rule' climbed to number 35 on the American country music chart.

That's appropriate: Casburn's road to Wood County is an exception to the rule.

From the streets of Fort Worth to performing before thousands in venues across the country, to Wood County and UT Health/Quitman, Terry Casburn has followed an unusual path.

Casburn has made his home in Wood County for more than three decades. He came here to be near his parents who had previously moved to Wood County from Fort Worth. "They came here for the fishing and I came here to be close to them," Casburn observed. Currently



Terry Casburn in his home studio in Land's End and below with his guitar. (Photo by Larry Tucker)

he is the Risk Management Director at UT Health Quitman and Pittsburg, but the road to his present occupation has been one of perseverance, hard work and humility.

Casburn, a 1968 graduate of Fort Worth Polytechnic High School, grew up singing in Beacon Baptist Church. Since an early age, he wanted to be an entertainer. "I was strictly a singer. I started as a kid wanting to sing at everybody's birthday party. My dad, Bill Casburn, raised us with music at the church. We were at church every time the doors opened," Casburn noted. "I can't remember a time in my life when I didn't want to sing."

Casburn was six years old when he met another young man who could play the guitar. "I found out this guy who lived across from the Sunday School building had a guitar. He played the guitar like crazy. He had a beautiful guitar, a Fender Jazz Master. His name was Billy English," Casburn said. "He is the brother of Paul English, Willie Nelson's drummer. Billy is on the road playing drums for Willie these days. We didn't make it as a band back then, but we became good friends."

Casburn caught up with English years later. "We (Mason Dixon) were on tour with Willie, Merle Haggard, Tanya Tucker and the Mavericks in the late 1980s and early '90s. We were playing this big theater in Tucson. I got out of the bus and

started wandering around and thought I recognized this guy who was moving equipment into the building," Casburn said. "We started looking at each other and realized we knew one another and it was Billy. We had a great reunion."

Casburn's introduction to professional music business came right after high school when he auditioned and was hired to be a member of Thurlow Sparrow and the Sparrows. The group traveled the nation playing contemporary Christian music at high schools, offering their testimony to crowds of young people.

"I got a call to come to Detroit to audition. I used the money I had gotten from high school graduation to buy a plane ticket and went to Detroit," Casburn said. "After I landed, I went to a J.C. Penney's and bought a Nehru jacket and off I went to audition. They hired me and I began traveling with the show. It was a Christian show and I learned so much about performance and preparation it took to put on a live show. We got to open for the Beach Boys in Tulsa and I fell in love with the music business."

Casburn's next musical venture was a move to California with a group called Shuffle. They played rock music and traveled the West Coast. The group's end came rather suddenly when the couple

who was booking them tragically passed away.

Casburn returned to the Dallas-Ft. Worth area and went into the jingle business recording radio ID's and commercial jingles for a variety of businesses. He also became a member of a "cover band," Allen Conner and the Conner Brothers.

"One night I was tired of doing and listening to all the cover songs and I wanted to hear some original music. I went out to a club on Jacksboro Highway. That was how I met Danny Stegall, Red Stegall's brother. We became good friends and still are today," Casburn observed. "As a matter of fact, I produced Danny's latest CD right here in my studio. I even co-wrote the title cut, 'For Heaven's Sake,' with Danny."

The Conner Brothers band got a gig opening for a group called Mason Dixon at Billy Bob's in Ft. Worth. Casburn was checking sound when a member of the Mason Dixon crew talked to him about the great sound he was getting. "I was impressed with Mason Dixon and their sound; they really blew me away," Casburn said. "They were doing well regionally and getting a lot of buzz in Nashville. I talked to my friend Danny Stegall and he told me he had heard good things about Mason Dixon."

In a later conversation, Mason Dixon's guitarist and banjo player Jerry Dengler asked Casburn to consider coming with them to play bass – he joined Mason Dixon as the bass player in 1986, not a vocalist.

Shortly after he joined the group one of the singers left the group and Casburn joined Frank Gilligan and Dengler out front, making harmonies. His vocal audition came on the bus when he was asked to sing the national anthem with Gilligan and Dengler. "The harmonies were tight and we sounded great together."

A whirlwind ride with Mason Dixon took Casburn all over the nation playing to large crowds and watching their music climb the charts in the late 1980s and early '90s. The group did a country version of The Police's pop single "Every Breath You Take" which became a radio hit and two-step sensation.

And then just like that, it was over. Record company executives pushed Mason Dixon aside for other artist promotions.

The band honored agreements they already had scheduled, but the ride with Mason Dixon ended after those commitments were fulfilled.

"We did have some free shows we wanted to honor because it was the right thing to do. We did a lot for MDA (Muscular Dystrophy Association) and the Starkey Developmental Center in Wichita, Kansas, with Charlie Daniels," Casburn added. "It was a place where folks who are challenged (with disabilities) could have a job and make a life for themselves and make them independent. Charlie and Hazel are two of the finest people in the world. I served on that board too."

Casburn was left pondering what was next. He had been in the music business



Terry Casburn is pictured here with Willie Nelson when Mason Dixon went on tour opening for Nelson.

all of his adult life and now found himself looking for work. "I was hanging Christmas lights at Wood County National Bank and detailing cars, anything I could do because I was struggling. Mason Dixon was over; we had run the gamut," Casburn declared. "We, the band, were in debt. We had to sell the bus and I had to retool myself."

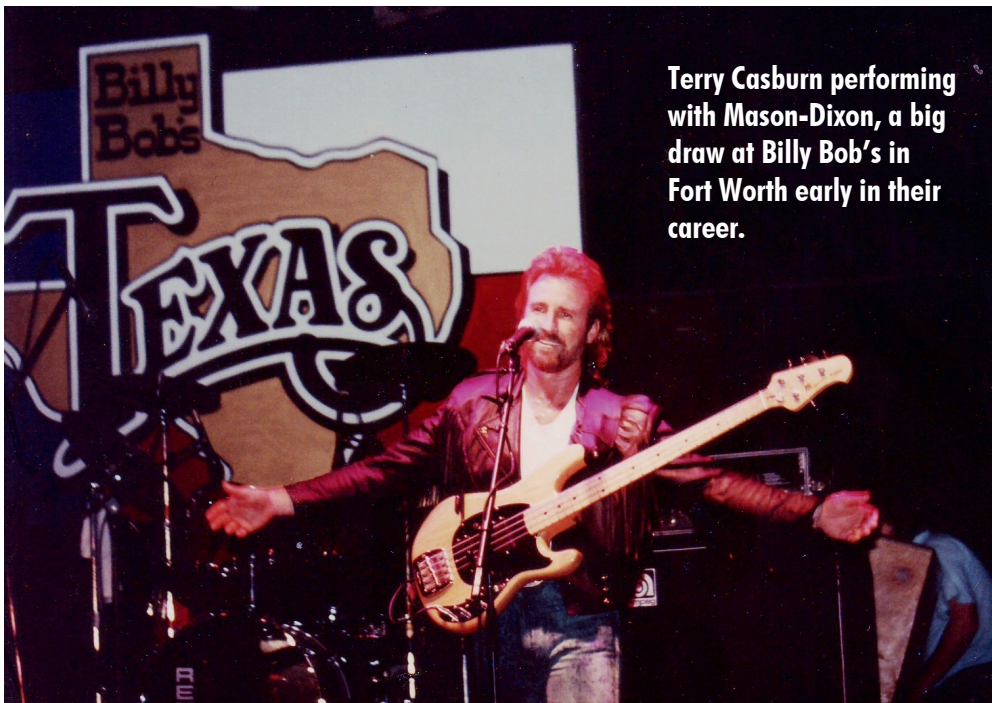
Casburn got his fill of odd jobs. He knew he wanted to do something to help others, to be of service. "That's when my cousin Deanna Henry, who was a nurse, suggested I consider the medical field," Casburn said. "I had tried to get on with fire departments and police departments, but I was too old."

"I went and talked to Marion Stanberry at the hospital (Wood County Central Hospital, later East Texas Medical Center). He knew me and knew who I was because we had done a lot of local stuff," Casburn explained. "I told him I wanted to go to nursing school and I was trying to figure out how to do it because I didn't have the money to do it."

Stanberry asked Casburn how he was sure he wanted to be a nurse. "I said I wasn't sure, so give me a job emptying trash cans, bed pans or mopping the floor, being an orderly or a nurse's aide and that way I will know for sure," he said. "I was still a hired gun at the time, singing on commercials and stuff. (Stanberry) said he would take a chance and I became an orderly in 1994. I didn't know if I could handle the blood, the snot and the guts that went with the job."

He found out he could do it. "I just poured myself into it like I had done everything else in my life. I simply told myself, mister, you are not too good to do this."

Casburn went to Tyler Junior College nursing school even though he had to take the math test twice before he could be admitted. "I failed the math test the first time, but Wyatt Warren who was at First



Terry Casburn performing with Mason-Dixon, a big draw at Billy Bob's in Fort Worth early in their career.

Baptist Church at the time, was a former math teacher. He told me to go to the library and get an eighth grade math book and he would help me," Casburn said. "I passed with flying colors that second time. I went to college and took all the basics and then went to nursing school. I swallowed my pride and took care of business. I have always had a servant's heart and this is what I wanted to do."

The local hospital paid Casburn's way to school. "They paid for everything, but I had to pay it back. For each semester they paid for I had to work for six months. It was the toughest three and a half years I ever spent doing something."

Casburn became a registered nurse and was the emergency room nurse at the local hospital facility for several years and weekend supervisor of the hospital for a while. He was in "quality improvement" for eight years.

These days, as the risk management director, he handles conversations with insurance companies, any issues with the Texas Medical Board and is the lead person to handle complaints. "I talk to families who have complaints and try to find out how we can do better. It can be a tough job because we are dealing with folk's loved ones," Casburn said.

Casburn is also making music again, playing at local events and smaller venues. He spends time in the recording studio at his home. "I got myself a PA system so I don't have to depend on anyone else. I love singing and music and want to continue writing and performing."

Nursing school brought another life-changing event for Casburn. He met Sue through her son Kelly, who was also attending nursing school. "Kelly and I went through nursing school together. He invited me over for dinner and told me his Mom would be there. We were actually supposed to play golf,



Terry Casburn and former Mason Dixon singer Frank Gilligan played recently at The Bowery in Winnsboro.

but it snowed that Valentine's Day," Casburn confided. "We brought the same kind of wine to the dinner that night." One year later, Casburn and Sue married on Valentine's Day and have been together 15 years.

When not working or doing music, he spends time with Sue and their rescue Beagle, Bogie. Casburn's goal these days is simple. Though still hoping to finish a recording of his songs, he says, "My goal is to work as long as I enjoy it. I want to work as long as I feel I am helping somebody. If I am still being helpful in the healing process I will continue. I believe music is healing, so as often as I can play and sing, I will."

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Story and photos • Hank Murphy

Grape Expectations

Wood County winery uncorks unique blends in old-world style

Nestled in the rolling green hills just a few miles southeast of Mineola is a place where science mingles with art, where a centuries-old practice forms the roots of a burgeoning East Texas industry, where a winemaker plies his trade with skill, labor and love. Here you'll find Grand Oaks Vineyards & Winery, a Wood County business that contributes its few drops into the Texas wine industry's stream of economic impact estimated at \$13.1 billion annually.* In the early years of the century, the Texas wine industry was primarily the province of West and Central Texas. But over the years, research on fungal diseases and other obstacles, and development of new hybrid vines have allowed growers to establish wine grape in regional climates like East Texas where standard varieties have faced difficulties.

At its location overlooking the Mineola Nature Preserve, Grand Oaks maintains 2.5 acres of grapes and roughly 1,700 vines. The winery has the capacity to produce about 500 cases annually, though it generally makes about half that, according to Carroll McHenry, who owns and operates Grand Oaks with his wife, Martha. Most of those cases contain wine with taste and character wholly unique to Grand Oaks.

"We make most of our wines in the old-world style, which means we blend them," says McHenry. Of Grand Oaks' nine wine offerings, two are varietals, meaning the wine comes from just one variety of grape. The other seven are blends from among the six varieties of grapes grown at Grand Oaks.

"They are designed by us and produced by us, and you can only get them here," he notes.

The Grand Oaks vineyards grow Tempranillo, Mourvedre, Syrah, Lenoir/Black

"Wine is the only art work you can drink."

Luis Fernando Olaverri



ABOVE. Grand Oaks Vineyards & Winery is located at 2455 CR 2724 in Mineola.
RIGHT: The vines are losing their leaves as autumn comes to East Texas.



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Spanish, Chenin Blanc, and Blanc du Bois grapes – grapes selected for their compatibility with the soils and climate of East Texas. And more than any other factor, it's the grape that determines the quality of a bottle of wine.

"Good wine starts with a good grape," explains McHenry.

"It takes you about four to five years to get a vineyard to produce a quality grape. And then it took me another two or three years to take that quality grape and turn it into quality wine," he says.

He described the process of making quality wine as "a science and an art."

It's crucial for the grape to ripen on the vine to where it has a high sugar content. As the grapes ferment, they

convert sugar into alcohol. That alcohol content must be high enough to ward off unwanted organisms, which allows the wine to stay alive and age until it can produce the character inherent in the grape, explains McHenry.

Grand Oaks was conceived in 2006. The property near Mineola had been used as a weekend home, and McHenry decided to use it to create the vineyards and winery as a retirement pursuit. He had no previous experience in growing grapes or making wine.

"It was strictly a new venture," he says. "I started experimenting with grapes in 2007; I didn't do the winery until 2013, six years later. And we opened in 2014."

He learned his craft by attending seminars and researching the methods and processes of making wine. "I made myself a little private winery in a building back here, and I taught myself how to make wine, how to make good wine," he said.

Today, Grand Oaks' wine list includes dry and semi-sweet reds as well as off-dry and semi-sweet whites.

McHenry describes the Grand Oaks enterprise as a "labor of love." The humid East Texas climate, however, tilts



Carroll McHenry, owner and winemaker, at Grand Oaks Winery & Vineyards.

the scales a bit toward the "labor" side of things.

West Texas, where it's cooler and dryer at night, provides a more hospitable climate for wine grapes.

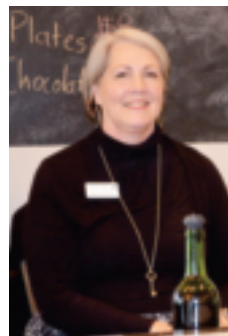
"I underestimated the amount of labor it would take," McHenry says of Grand Oaks venture. "Also, the humidity and the fungus and the other things that attack grape vines are just more costly to manage in East Texas than it is in West Texas. So that's the big difference."

McHenry expressed no regrets for launching Grand Oaks, but he paid tribute to the wisdom bestowed by the hindsight.

"I'd describe this as something I'd do again. If I had to do it over again, I'd do it. But I'd do it a little differently. A lot of things are done by trial and error."

**According to a study commissioned by the Texas Wine and Grape Growers Association in partnership with the Texas Wine Marketing Research Institute of Texas Tech University.*

Sharon Jones tends to the tasting room at Grand Oaks Winery & Vineyards.



Texas Wine Facts

\$13.1 billion – Total economic impact

394 – Wine producers

4,368 – Acres of vineyards

104,627 – Jobs

\$4.3 billion – In annual wages

1.7 million – Annual tourist visits

\$716 million – Annual tourist spending

\$1.8 billion – Total taxes collected

Source: 2017 Impact report on American Wine Industry by John Dunham & Associates, New York.

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QUITMAN ARBORETUM

George Bridge is a part of the walking trail at the Quitman Arboretum, and visitors often use the bridge for a photo background.

Story and photos • Zak Wellerman

“It’s an absolute labor of love.”

Elizabeth Neuens is vice president of Friends of the Arboretum – her sentiments are echoed by other members of the group.

Quitman Arboretum and Botanical Gardens, a jewel polished by its cadre of volunteers, brings beauty and color to the back side of Governor Jim Hogg City Park in Quitman.



An upstairs bedroom for a child is replicated in the Stinson House by the organization, Friends of the Arboretum. All items in the house are donated.

The arboretum, which covers 23 acres, is overseen entirely by volunteers who take time out of their day to maintain the arboretum, gardens and the historical Stinson House.

Friends of the Arboretum (FOA) is the nonprofit organization that manages the arboretum since its start in 2007. FOA is led by its unpaid officers and board of directors.

FOA President Deanna Caldwell said every dollar raised goes back into the arboretum, house and gardens.

“As far as we know, we’re the only one that’s 100 percent volunteer and it’s a little bit unusual in that we also don’t have what I would call a consistent funding source,” Caldwell said. “The city, of course, supports us and we really appreciate what they do, but the vast majority of our money is raised by our volunteers.”

Caldwell became interested in arboretum after becoming a part of the Wood County Master Gardeners program in 2010. She stayed because of the friendships and became president earlier this year.

“I’ve learned a lot about plants from other people and I love old houses so it’s really a pleasure to be able to help maintain an old house and make sure that part of history remains,” she said.

Pam Riley founded the arboretum in October 2007 and later in 2009 the Stinson House became a part of the arboretum. The house was built in 1869 by James Stinson, father of Sallie Stinson, 13 miles east of Quitman. Sallie married Jim Hogg, first



Stinson House, built by James Stinson in 1869 and moved to the Governor Jim Hogg City Park 50 years ago, sits on the grounds of the Quitman Arboretum.



Stinson House sits at its original location 13 miles east of Quitman before being moved to the park. (Photo from the book 'Wood County 1850-1900' at the Quitman Public Library)

native governor of Texas, in the house.

The Stinson House was later moved to the park about 50 years ago with the assistance of Hogg's daughter, Ima.

"When she (Riley) started, all of the flower gardens as you're looking on the right side, that was completely wooded and she started putting in the flower beds," Caldwell said. "So now, there is somewhere around 10 or 12 different flower beds out there big and small."

Community members provide great support to the arboretum and its preservation efforts.

"We had tremendous support from the businesses, from the city, from individuals in the community. They tell us

they love to come here," she said. "They're happy that we are preserving this. People can come to the gardens all the time. So they come up here to eat lunch or when they want to relax and stroll through gardens."

Last year, the flower beds were ruined by hog damage. Businesses and community members gave donations for a fence and repairs, FOA vice president Elizabeth Neuens said.

"We're working on building a new bed that's going to have heritage roses, heirloom rose and some other perennials that do well in East Texas," Caldwell said.

Neuens also started volunteering while part of the master gardeners program.

She and her husband moved to Quitman in 2016 and her neighbor showed her around town.

"Immediately when I laid eyes on it (the arboretum), it just felt like it was such a treasure. We had a small town treasure, kind of hidden back behind the park," Neuens said. "I wouldn't have known that it was here."

When she started at master gardeners, Neuens wanted her volunteer hours to go toward the arboretum. She wanted people to know more about the arboretum, Stinson House and community events so she created Facebook, Instagram and Twitter accounts.

"The number one thing to me is to get the word out, not just the community

and county but really to the state and everyone to know what a beautiful treasure the arboretum is. Take that little drive behind Governor Hogg Park and there's this beautiful, white historic farmhouse in the midst of this garden," Neuens said. "It's almost like a secret garden and I want everyone to know about it."

The arboretum has a global following online, including internet visitors from Australia and Russia.

"I think everyone here truly feels drawn to these grounds and has a heart to make it as beautiful as we possibly can, preserve as much as we can with the house and share everything with the community and world," says Neuens.

The arboretum hosts plant sales twice a year, an annual yard sale, Valentine's candlelight dinner and a series of educational workshops from January to June. Stinson House can be rented for weddings, luncheons and parties. Annual membership at the arboretum earns a discount at the plant sales.

Growth is also a part of the plan for the arboretum.

"We are going to continue to expand the gardens. There's about a quarter mile walking trail back in the woods so we have plans to keep developing that," Caldwell said. "We would love to do more educational things and have more space to do that."



One of the gardens featured in the Quitman Arboretum and Botanical Gardens in the back of Governor Jim Hogg City Park.



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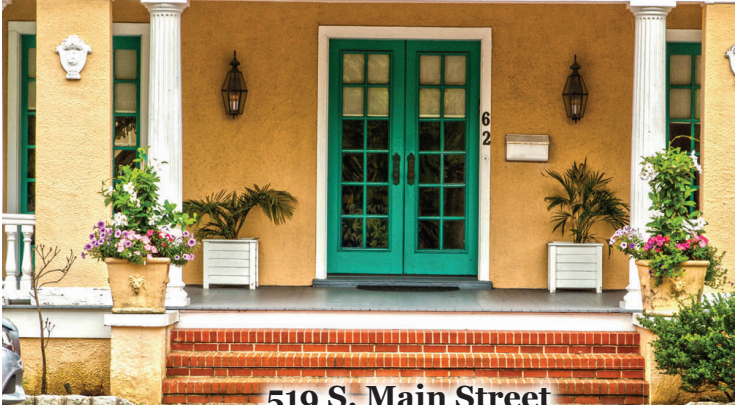


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Former Dallas Cowboy Randy White loves pies made by Tiffany Hollinquist. (Courtesy photo)



A sign at Lake Fork touting Tiffany Hollinquist pies with their motto "My Oh My the Pie."



Ingrid Hightower rises early each morning to start baking pies at Your Appetites.

Pies can come in many flavors and sizes. There are pies of all kinds, but in Wood County and East Texas apple, chocolate and pecan dominate the menu in most homes and star at family reunions. Everybody looks forward to an aunt's apple pie, grandma's pecan pie or a cousin's chocolate or lemon meringue creations.

Holidays bring out those special pies we all enjoy and yearn after. In this time of the year pumpkin pies can become the darling of the dessert set.

Quitman's Ingrid Hightower of Your Appetites, gets to work in the early morning hours and starts rolling out the dough to make her most sought-after delicacies – all her pies are made from scratch. Hightower has years of experience as a pastry chef and now serves not only sweet sensations, but handcrafted lunches made daily from her small store front on Quitman's downtown square.

Story and photos Larry Tucker

"I think people connect pie with family. It was easy and something to make for your family. Pies were made from left over fruit or maybe some of the pieces you couldn't sell at the market," Hightower noted. "Making a pie just brings you back home. I love to make all kinds of pies, they are all the same for me. Chocolate meringue is probably the most popular around here. This time of the year I am making a lot of pumpkin, a lot of sweet potato and a lot of buttermilk.

"At Christmas I make a lot of mince meat pie. A long time ago mince meat pies actually had meat in it. My Dad tells us about when they used to make mince meat pies out of meat fat, suet or hard beef fat you would grate. Now, it's made of raisins and nuts. Each pie you make is special."

Tiffany Hollinquist, who owns Tiffany's restaurant at Lake Fork with her husband

Southern Comfort

'Pies make people smile'

Joe, arrives at work at 4 a.m. each morning, not only to cook breakfast orders, but to start making pies, which she also makes from scratch. "She gets here by at least 4 a.m. and never takes a day off. That's when she starts baking the pies for the day," Joe Hollinquist explained. "People in Wood County and East Texas love their pies. It's not just from here though. We have some customers order ahead of time and fly into the Wood County Airport from Bryan to pick up several pies and then fly home.

"Pie is simply one of those southern comfort foods that we are all used to having, whether it's here, at home or at

the family reunion. Our most requested pies are the meringues, chocolate, lemon and coconut. Peanut butter pie is also real big here in Wood County. My wife probably makes between 3,000 and 4,000 pies a year. Pies make people smile."

Toni Butler has been serving customers at Tiffany's for almost a decade. "It's the crust that makes the pie. Tiffany makes absolutely the best crust you could want," Butler noted. "For me it's the coconut ice box pie that is divine. Eating your favorite piece of pie just makes your whole day better, it puts you in a good mood. It's great during the holidays when she makes a lot of apple, pumpkin and pecan pies."

Geneva Banks, Quitman, agreed with the family concept of making and enjoying a pie. "First, people love pies because they are good. Enjoying pies is a family thing. Everybody has their favorite. I try to please everybody when I make pies. I do my best to make each pie something special."

With the holiday season upon us, it's time to get ready for your favorite pie. Whether you make your own or get yours from someone else, it's time to get ready to enjoy your favorite pie hopefully with someone you love.



Ingrid Hightower of Your Appetites looks over the pies as they bake in the oven.

Story and photos • Hank Murphy

Decades of Drama

Lake Country Playhouse a fine arts jewel for East Texas

"It looks like someone kicked an ant bed."

That's how Mike Holbrook describes the frenzied pace of activity that gushes forth after the Select Theater converts from showing motion pictures to a venue for live play performances.

"If you're in the cast, you're swinging a hammer," says Holbrook, executive director of the Lake Country Playhouse Theater. "And if you can't work a drill, you're going to be carrying stuff. We've got some very talented people in the area as far as people who can decorate a set. And they just create the magic."

The magic started 40 years ago with a dozen or so theater buffs, rehearsals in a downtown dance studio and a production of the classic 1939 comedic farce *Arsenic and Old Lace*. Over the decades, the early vision of a few thespians blossomed into a creative force committed to the fine arts in East Texas.

Today, the Lake Country Playhouse is woven into the fabric of Wood County as a community theater company that performs four or more plays each year. Its historic Select Theater venue also hosts first-run motion pictures and musical performances by the 75-piece Lake Country Symphonic Band.

It was a passion for theater that gave birth to the Playhouse back in 1978, a time when Americans were tuned in to television shows like *Mork & Mindy*, *M*A*S*H* and *Happy Days*. They flocked to the movie theaters to see *Grease*, *Superman* and *Animal House*.

Kay Lamb of Mineola, an original member of the troupe, recalled the Playhouse's origins.

"A local deejay at KMOO put a notice in the *Monitor* advertising for anyone interested in community theater. About 10 or 12 people got together once a week to play theater games, and we talked about working in the theater. When enough people got involved, we started the Lake Country Playhouse," says Lamb. "We were just a group of people who enjoyed theater and got together ... we were all interested in theater and had no place to hone our craft, so we all got together and found a place to work."

The first play was *Arsenic and Old Lace* at the Mineola Civic Center, which drew a crowd estimated at between 100 and 200.

"We were happy; we had a lot of fun," she says.

So much so that throughout the 1980s and early 1990s the company stuck



together. With no real home of its own, the troupe rehearsed and performed at various places. In 1993, the stars aligned for the Lake Country Playhouse and, with help from the Meredith Foundation, it purchased the historic Select Theater on Johnson Street in downtown Mineola. The purchase secured a permanent home, a place to rehearse and perform. It also ensured that Mineola would always have a place to enjoy motion pictures.

Today, the Lake Country Playhouse is led by Holbrook, a retired Army musician, who's been running the Playhouse since 2007.

In most seasons, the Playhouse performs a slate of four plays. However,



ABOVE: Tonya Slayton, left, and Missy Armstrong practice their lines for the upcoming production of "A Doublewide Texas Christmas." LEFT: Daniel Armstrong rehearses his role on stage at the Select Theater. TOP: The historic Select Theater, home of the Lake Country Playhouse.

it will put on an additional play this year, a comedy titled *A Doublewide Texas Christmas* on Nov. 30, Dec. 1 and 2, and Dec. 6, 7, and 8.

The audiences around here typically go for comedies and musicals, according to Holbrook. "Every now and then we'll throw out a serious offering. But generally we keep it nice, light and entertaining," he notes.

The Playhouse's last summer musical was *1776*. Finding enough volunteers to pull off that production was a challenge. The cast alone called for 27 people, 25 men and two women.

"It takes a lot to form a Continental Congress," Holbrook observes wryly. "Finding 25 men who sing and dance ... there were a lot of people who scratched 'be an actor' off their bucket list when we did that show. But they did a good show, and everybody had a good time and it was a success."

To fill its casts, Lake Country Playhouse generally draws from the area – from a talent pool of actors in Wood, Smith, Upshur and Van Zandt counties, Holbrook says. Typically, a play is cast through open auditions, but on occasion, a director will cast his/her own actors.

"With a three-person play, you've got to have people who are on their game," Holbrook explains. And the Playhouse has seen its share of big league talent. "There are people who have moved out to this area who have serious credits."

People like Matthew Greer,



Mike Holbrook, executive director of the Lake Country Playhouse.

who appeared in popular motion pictures *Ruffian* and *The Mist*. Greer, a Mineola native, also had roles in the television series *Friday Night Lights*, *Prison Break*, and *Walker, Texas Ranger*.

Then there's *1776* director Bob Hibbard, who had an acting career in the Dallas-Fort Worth area and once ran the Quitman Community Theater.

Making community theater work demands long hours by committed volunteers, who form the backbone of the enterprise. Only Holbrook and the theater's technical director, Tim Mitchiner, are salaried.

Generally, the cast will rehearse for a six- to eight-week period two to three nights a week and at least two to three hours per rehearsal. Two weeks prior to

opening night, the pace intensifies and rehearsals may go four to five times a week, Holbrook says.

The Select stops showing motion pictures two weeks before a play begins, and during that time the theater is prepped for the play and an intense amount of work begins as cast members build a set, which is dressed, lighted and tuned by the technical director.

Holbrook recalled the first Broadway musical Lake Country Playhouse ever performed – *Man of La Mancha*. Cast members built a 16th century Spanish Inquisition dungeon on stage, making rock walls out of Styrofoam. For *The Sound of Music* the cast recreated the Swiss Alps – and a pending natural disaster. The mountains came crashing down on stage.

The old Select Theater, however, was no worse for the wear. After all, it withstood the Mineola tornado of 1962.

"This place is built like a fortress," Holbrook remarks. "It took a direct hit in the tornado of '62 with 80 something kids inside watching a movie."

The wind tore bricks from a building across the street and hurled them at the Select, which "wiped the marquee out." Power went dead and a swamp cooler was knocked cockeyed, "but other than that, not a child was harmed. There was a lot of panic. James Dear and Truman Thomas had the theater then, and they kept law and order in here and kept everybody safe. When they opened those doors it was a whole different world when they walked out."

Today's Select Theater has 246 bolted down seats and can accommodate as many as 310 people. It has been updated to digital with a state-of-the-art sound system, courtesy of the Meredith Foundation. Its restrooms are ADA compliant. The foundation also pays the salaries of Holbrook, Mitchiner and the movie theater manager. Like so many other civic enterprises in Mineola, the Lake Country Playhouse Theater has also been touched by the fairy's wand.

"They (the foundation) are firmly entrenched in the belief that the arts are important and there needs to be more culture out here besides agri," he says. "They support this theater wholeheartedly."

Holbrook paused and gazed about the 98-year-old theater, which has functioned as an East Texas entertainment magnet for movies, music and stage – a place enjoyed by generations of Wood County residents.

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Merry Christmas

MINEOLA

Mineola will ring out with its annual offering of yuletide merriment on Saturday, Dec. 1 as the city and its downtown celebrate the holiday season in joyous fashion.

"Festive and fun" are the buzz words for the day, which starts at 10 a.m. with the Mineola League of the Arts Bazaar at the 200 W. Blair St. in Mineola. Members of the League will offer some of their finest work for sale and give away hot cocoa and cookies.

Later in the day, the city's Landmark Commission will stage its Tour of Homes beginning at 1 p.m. One of the stops is expected to be the historic O.P. Pyle house, a Victorian-style structure built in 1903-04 by Owen Pinkney Pyle, an Arkansas native and editor and publisher of the Mineola Courier. Another stop along the way will be the Hogg mansion, the home occupied long ago by Ima Hogg, daughter of James Hogg, the first native-born governor of Texas.

From 1 p.m. until 4 p.m., the Mineola Landmark Commission will sponsor carriage rides, and musician Raphael Espinoza and his band are lined up to perform at the Gazebo near the train depot in downtown Mineola.

As darkness descends, Mineola's Chamber of Commerce will stage its annual Christmas Parade of Lights through the heart of downtown beginning at 5:30 p.m. This year's parade theme is "Christmas Around the World" and will feature the Mineola High School Marching Band, people donning costumes, horses, and Santa and Mrs. Clause. The merry couple will arrive at the end of the parade aboard a fire truck. Later, they will be at the Gazebo for the annual tree lighting and for pictures with children.

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NOVEMBER 2018

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1	2	3	
4 <small>Daylight Saving Time Ends</small>	5	6 <small>Election Day</small>	7	8	9	10
11 <small>Veterans Day Remembrance Day (CA)</small>	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22 <small>Thanksgiving</small>	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

ALBA
4th Annual Alba-Golden Food Pantry Car Show
Dec. 1
Downtown Alba

Fire Department Fish Fry
Dec. 1

Christmas Parade and Santa on the Square
Dec. 8

HAWKINS
Christmas in the Park
Dec. 8
4-7 p.m. snow, Santa, caroling, hay rides
Hawkins City Park

MINEOLA
Holiday Farmers Market
Nov. 17
8 a.m. – noon, Gazebo in Mineola

Jingle Bells Bash (Santa will visit)
Nov. 29
6 p.m., Mineola Civic Center

Jingle & Mingle
Thursday, Nov. 29
6 p.m. Mineola Civic Center
903-569-6115 for tickets

Main Street Window Decorating Contest
Nov. 30
Downtown Mineola

Mineola League of the Arts Bazaar
Dec. 1
10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

"A Doublewide Texas Christmas"
Nov. 30, Dec. 2 and Dec. 7-9
Lake County Playhouse

Free children's event/visits with Santa
Friday, Nov. 30
6:30-8 p.m. Mineola Civic Center
Please bring a nonperishable food for Caring & Sharing

Mineola Tour of Homes
Dec. 1
Carriage Rides, Music downtown
1-4 p.m.

Parade of Lights Christmas parade
Dec. 1
5:30 p.m., downtown Mineola

"Seasonal Soundings"

Dec. 16
2 p.m. Lake County Playhouse

"Seasonal Soundings"
Dec. 18
7:30 p.m. Lake County Playhouse

Holiday Farmers Market
Dec. 22
8 a.m. – noon, Gazebo in Mineola

QUITMAN
Christmas Parade
Dec. 8

WINNSBORO
Candyland Christmas Parade
Dec. 8

DECEMBER 2018

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1
2 <small>Hanukkah Begins at Sundown</small>	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22 <small>Winter Begins</small>
23 30	24 31 <small>New Year's Eve</small>	25 <small>Christmas</small>	26 <small>Kwanzaa Begins</small>	27	28	29

Main Street Window Decorating Contest
Nov. 30
Downtown Mineola

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