

CONNECTION

Venturing for vino

Exploring the wine trail
by passport

TREASURED
TRADITION

JAM SESSION

NTCA THE RURAL BROADBAND ASSOCIATION[®]

RURAL CONNECTIONS

By SHIRLEY BLOOMFIELD, CEO
NTCA—The Rural Broadband Association

Seven decades of service

Supporting rural communities through better communications

NTCA proudly represents more than 850 telecommunications companies across rural America as they provide a variety of services including robust broadband, landline, wireless, data, video and IT support. June 1 marks our 70th anniversary, and it's a perfect opportunity to reflect upon how far this life-changing industry has traveled.

The independent telephone industry began to develop throughout rural America in the 1890s, largely because these regions were ignored by large national providers.

After World War II, as the telephone's popularity surged and the value of connectivity was recognized, Congress passed legislation to extend loans to bring telephone systems to rural communities.

With funding on the way, the need for an independent national organization to represent small telephone companies was at an all-time high and, in 1954, NTCA was born.

Eight rural telephone systems in seven states became the original members and got to work advocating to grow the industry.

Over the last few decades, NTCA has focused on the evolution of our members from telecommunications to broadband providers as well as numerous key priorities for rural America, including building a sustainable future for universal service, building Smart Rural Communities, providing cybersecurity tools, being the catalyst for policy engagement and so much more.

As NTCA celebrates its platinum anniversary, we are excited to see what is next for this vibrant industry as it supports rural America and beyond. 📶

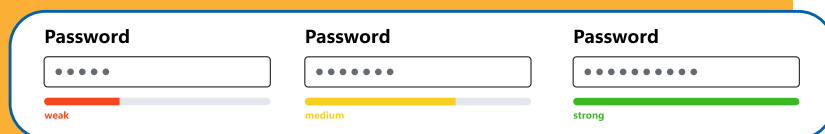
3 tips for password security



Illustration by origami8/Adobe Stock

Passwords are everywhere. From health care and school to work and play, software, websites, essential services and more, most of our daily online activities require a secure login.

The U.S. Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency offers three tips to better password security — and a good password follows all three.



1 MAKE THEM LONG

At least 16 characters — longer is stronger!

2 MAKE THEM RANDOM

Option 1: Use a random string of mixed-case letters, numbers and symbols. For example:
cXmnZK65rf*&DaaD or Yuc8\$RikA34%ZoPPao98t

Option 2: Create a memorable phrase of five to seven unrelated words. Then, get creative with spelling and the addition of a number or symbol.

- » Strong: HorsePurpleHatRunBaconShoes
- » Stronger: HorsPerpleHatRunBayconShoos
- » Strongest: HorsPerpleHat#1RunBayconShoos



3 MAKE THEM UNIQUE

Use a different strong password for each account. For example:

- » **Bank:** k8dfh8c@Pfv0gB2
- » **Email account:** LmvF%swVR56s2mW
- » **Social media account:** e246gs%mFs#3tv6



Fortunately, password managers can help you keep up with these longer, more complex codes. Options range from tools already in your web browser to commercial software.



The 30-second commute

Remote work can be a wonderful opportunity

To those who spend long hours in an office, on the road or in the field, working from home might sound like a dream. And, for some, it is.

It's estimated that by 2025 about 22% of the U.S. workforce — or 32.6 million people — will work remotely. A 2023 study by Forbes Advisor found 12.7% of the nation's full-time employees work from home, while another 28% work a hybrid model, dividing the work week between home and the office.

Working from home can help save money on gas, as well as wear and tear on vehicles. The flip side, however, is being face to face with household chores all day. The isolating nature of solo work can also be a challenge, as can establishing the distinction between work and home life.

TOOLS FOR SUCCESS

- It makes sense that fast, reliable internet is the first component to remote work success. If your link to the working world is compromised, you can't get anything done. A backup location is another must, just in case a storm

knocks out the electricity or your peace and quiet is temporarily disturbed.

- Experts advise setting up a dedicated workspace — not in an area like your living room or bedroom — free from distractions, preferably with a door. While it might be tempting to work from the bed or couch, soft surfaces don't provide proper support and can lead to headaches, strains and arthritis. It's also important to consider how your workspace will appear to your co-workers and clients during on-screen meetings.
- Creating a routine is vital for remote work. If your family and neighbors know your schedule, they'll be less likely to present distractions.
- The opportunities for remote jobs are out there, you just need to know where to look. Computer tech jobs continue to be the most common opportunities, as are marketing, accounting, HR/recruiting and customer service.

REMOTE WORK RED FLAGS

When searching for work-from-home opportunities, it's important to avoid pitfalls. If the job sounds too good to be true, it usually is. Be wary if:

- The ad says things like, "unlimited earning potential," "investment opportunities and seminars" or "quick money."

- The job requires upfront expenses from you.
- You're asked for personal information — Social Security number, birthdate, banking account numbers, etc. — early in the interview process or as part of your initial application.
- You are offered a job without an interview or anyone contacting or asking for references. 🗨️



Pros of working from home

- Better work-life balance
- More freedom
- Improved employee mindset
- Decreased wardrobe budget
- Comforts of home
- No commute, less wear and tear on vehicle
- Self-regulated hours
- Flexible schedule

Unlock your perfect break

A dream vacation is a click away

Are you ready for a vacation? Summer travel season is about to ramp up, and many Americans will be hitting the highway or heading to the airport. Whether it's a short trip or a multiday excursion, I think about all the ways Colorado Valley Communications' services can help you plan your perfect break.



KELLY ALLISON
General Manager

Before we chat about how we can help you find your next adventure, however, I'd like you to keep in mind the opportunities our area provides. While we consider this place home, others are discovering that our region is a perfect destination for their own vacations.

That's the beauty of rural communities like ours. Often there's so much to do, and it's easy to take the places you see every day for granted. But our wildlands, trails, parks and more offer great opportunities for outdoor enthusiasts.

Similarly, we have plenty of history shaped by the businesses, industries, people and events that help establish who we are. While you may know the tales of our past, many history buffs and others find these nuggets of days gone by endlessly fascinating.

That's only the beginning, because there are plenty of interesting places to stay in our area, too. Hotels are a great choice. Also, thanks to internet-based resources, there is a range of vacation rentals with online listings managed by sites like Airbnb and Vrbo.

It's never been easier to plan a vacation and find our nation's gems. Have you visited all the local spots? If you're not sure, I encourage you to venture online to www.visitfayettecounty.com. or tripadvisor.com — both list highlights from our area. Explore what others say about our region, and you just might find a new adventure right here at home.

But if you're ready for that summer trip away from home, those same tools come into play. Travel agents very much have a place, and they're available to help you, but if you have a do-it-yourself mindset, going online opens the door to a wealth of resources.

Many travel sites offer day-by-day itineraries. Are you going to be in a city for two days? A plan is likely available. Considering a weeklong driving trip with some ocean views? Those plans are out there, too — all just a few clicks away.

If you're wired into social media like Facebook or Reddit, you can tap into another powerful resource — people. Most cities, destinations or hobbies have online groups dedicated to them, and these are often surprisingly helpful. Planning a fishing trip to the coast? Are you a hiker? Or, perhaps you want to explore all the best kid-friendly spots of a specific town or city. There's an online resource for you. Make no mistake, this type of resource exists for places in our area, too.

Even when we're contemplating unplugging, the online world can help connect us. We're proud to provide internet service that allows you to unlock your next adventure.

Thank you for allowing us to serve you. ☺

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Colorado Valley Communications
P.O. Box 130
4915 S. U.S. Highway 77
979-242-5911
800-242-5911
La Grange, TX 78945

Office hours: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Monday through Friday
24-hour technical support
1-877-452-9035

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To sign up for service, to increase your bandwidth or to let us know where to build out our fiber network next, visit cvctx.com.

Customers in several parts of our service area can access fiber to the home, while expansion for access is in the works for other locations.

For more information on Colorado Valley's service area, visit cvctx.com/maps. The area served by the Cooperative can be seen in the link for Colorado Valley Exchanges. Fiber availability outside the Cooperative service area can be seen under the Colorado Valley Communications header.

Produced for CVCTX by:

Pioneer
UTILITY RESOURCES

On the Cover:



A summer passport promotion by the Texas Independence Wine Trail helps visitors explore the variety of wines created locally.

See story on Page 8.

Photo by Melissa Gaines

CVCTX continues to expand our fiber network

Colorado Valley Communications is continuing to expand its fiber footprint. The new Fiber 5 buildout will bring our high-speed fiber optic network to the unserved and underserved rural areas.

CVCTX provides matching upload and download speeds, smoother streaming and a stable connection so your family can simultaneously work remotely, learn virtually, check in with the doctor and game online.

Gigabit internet connectivity is the lightning-fast internet for homes with multiple smart devices and users with data-intensive demands. The average upload and download speeds are at 1 Gigabit or more in those fiber-to-the-home residences.

In some instances, it will be necessary for CVCTX to obtain easements to cross property lines. We need landowners to grant the easements so we may connect service for you and your neighbors. Complete the Telecommunications Easement form at cvctx.com/fiberbuildout in three easy steps.

To find out more about this exciting fiber project, scan the QR code on the back page of this magazine or call customer service at 979-242-5911.

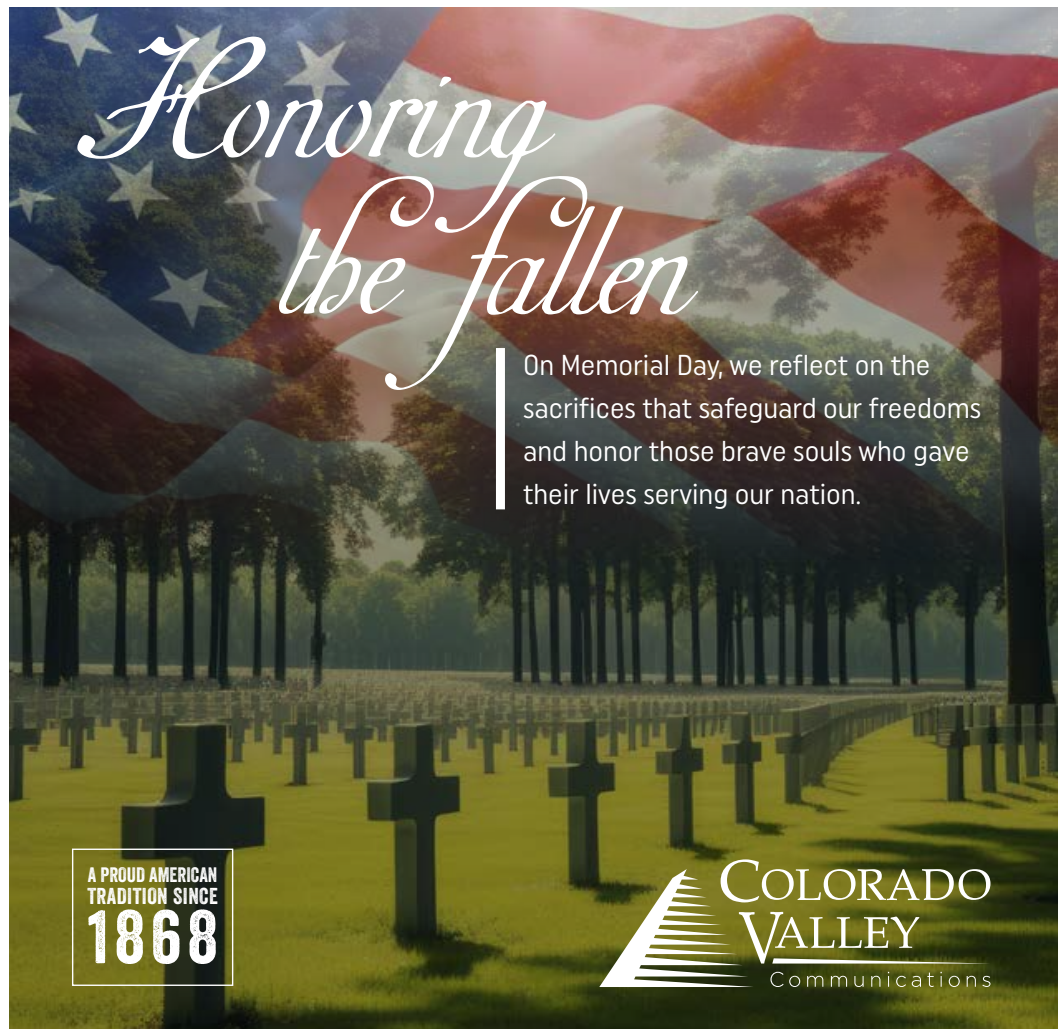


Call before you dig 811

Texas law requires homeowners to contact 811 at least two business days before digging, excluding weekends and holidays, so underground utility lines can be marked. Fencing, planting trees, watershed projects and tilling operations are a few examples of when you should call 811. To learn more visit texas811.org or cvctx.com/support.

OFFICES CLOSED

Colorado Valley Communications will close on **Monday, May 27**, in observance of **Memorial Day**.



On Memorial Day, we reflect on the sacrifices that safeguard our freedoms and honor those brave souls who gave their lives serving our nation.

A PROUD AMERICAN
TRADITION SINCE
1868

**COLORADO
VALLEY**
Communications

Hitting a HIGH NOTE

THERE'S MUSIC IN THEM THAR HILLS

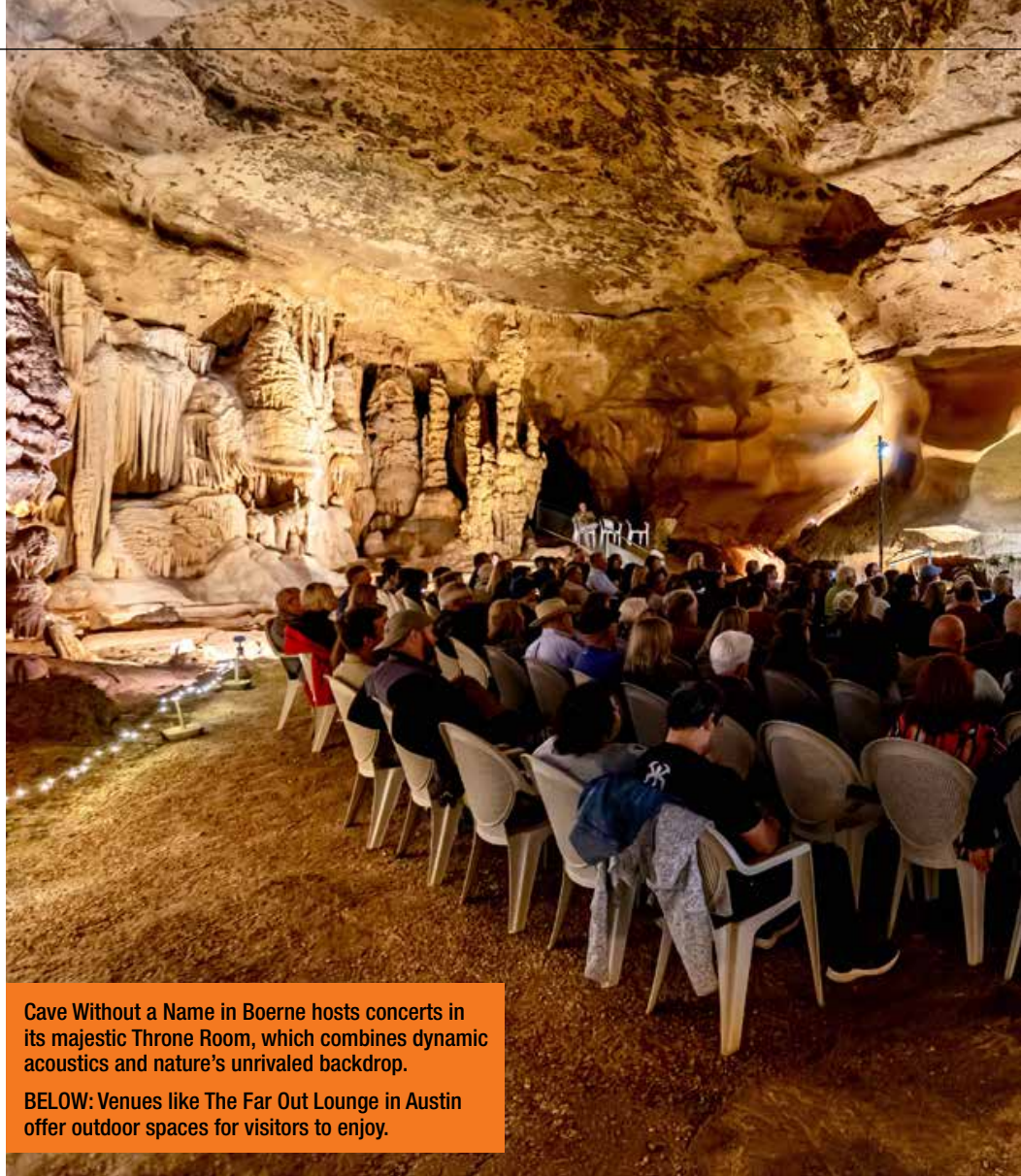
Story by KATHY DENES

Like Texas itself, the Lone Star State's music scene is huge and diverse. Much of it can be found in Austin, the self-billed "Live Music Capital of the World." Besides well-known venues like the Moody Center — which hosts huge events like the upcoming Justin Timberlake tour — and the more intimate Moody Theater — home to "Austin City Limits" — the capital city has dozens of music-filled bars, halls and honky-tonks.

Options for outdoor listening abound as the weather warms, many at no cost. These include the Mother's Day Austin Symphonic Band concert, May 12 at 7 p.m., on the south steps of the state Capitol. Also downtown, the lawn at the Long Center hosts free drop-in concerts every Thursday evening from May 23 to Aug. 15. For event information, go to thelongcenter.org/thedropin.

But you don't have to be in the music capital to enjoy live music in Texas. Just follow the highways and byways to great destinations throughout the state.

"Live music venues are the heartbeat of the Texas country music industry," says Linda Wilson, president of the Texas



Cave Without a Name in Boerne hosts concerts in its majestic Throne Room, which combines dynamic acoustics and nature's unrivaled backdrop.

BELOW: Venues like The Far Out Lounge in Austin offer outdoor spaces for visitors to enjoy.



Photo courtesy of Empire Control Room & Garage



Photo courtesy of Tom Summers

BOERNE FOR MUSIC

Food, fun and family are the daily focus at Dog & Pony Grill, where there's a playground and basketball court for the young'uns and a fenced dog park for furry guests. On the weekends, the outdoor action shifts to three stages and a concrete dance floor as live music fills the air. There's no cost involved, except for occasional ticketed concerts and the food and drinks served at this full-service Boerne restaurant at 1481 S. Main St. Check out scheduled events such as the Cinco de Mayo Sunday Fun Day at dogandponygrill.com.

Another Boerne business where music and dogs take center stage on weekends is 259 Brantley's Bistro at 259 S. Main St. Eclectic Hill Country food prepared by chef Joseph Brantley is the star attraction, but the recently remodeled outdoor dining area and stage are big draws on Friday and Saturday evenings and for Sunday brunch. Dogs are welcome to sit in on the fun, but they must be on a leash. For info, go to 259brantleysbistro.com.



Photo courtesy of Alex Parker



Photo courtesy of Roger Ho

Country Music Association. "From large cities to small, rural communities, live music is thriving."

Linda says the association, which advocates for the Texas country music industry, actively supports and promotes live music throughout the state.

BACK TO THE BASICS

You don't need to be there with Waylon and Willie and the boys to enjoy the daily music options offered at Luckenbach Texas. From the acoustic pickers' circle to concerts, there is plenty to enjoy at this rustic venue, whether in the centerpiece dance hall or on one of the outdoor stages. To see the schedule for this busy Fredericksburg landmark — where "everybody's somebody" — and to find lodging nearby, visit luckenbachtexas.com.

'NOTE'-ABLE EVENTS

Special events where music plays a big part are springing up all over. Austin hosts the Pecan Street Festival, May 4-5, showcasing dozens of musicians, and the Hot Luck Festival, May 23-26. On May 4, Brady's Mexican Colony Park celebrates Cinco de Mayo, and downtown Taylor hosts Blackland Prairie Day. Boerne's

TOP: Free outdoor concerts are a big draw on Thursdays for The Drop-In at Austin's Long Center.

ABOVE: A former auto shop, the Empire Control Room & Garage is one of many eclectic music venues in Austin.

Cave Without a Name hosts a Mother's Day tribute with mariachi music on May 11 and a woodwind quintet honoring Memorial Day on May 25. The Old Blanco Courthouse is the site for Market Day on May 18. Kerrville's Folk Festival at Quiet Valley Ranch focuses on songwriting, May 23-June 9. 📍

On your mark, get set, sip!

Texas Independence
Wine Trail offers
cost-saving
Summer Passport

Story by LAZ DENES

With the summer fast approaching, it's time for wine enthusiasts in and around the Colorado Valley to plan their strategies when it comes to hitting the trail — the Texas Independence Wine Trail, that is.

Five wineries are on the trail, all located within a 60-mile radius between San Antonio, Austin and Houston. They've joined forces again to bring back the popular Texas Independence Wine Trail Summer Passport promotion. The purchase of the \$30 passport, available at texasindependencewinetrail.com, means a free full tasting session at each participating winery from June 1 through Aug. 31 — a \$140 value. Passport holders also receive a free gift after their third and sixth winery visits. "We've been offering the Summer Passport for several years, now. It gives people a chance to visit all the wineries on the trail and experience all there is to enjoy at each one," says John Cooke. John's Whistling Duck Vineyards & Winery in Weimar was one of the founding members of the wine trail in 2014.

Adobe Stock/DG PhotoStock

Whistling Duck, which celebrated its 10th anniversary in February, is the southernmost stop on the trail, with its tasting room and 4 acres of blanc du bois and lenoir grapes situated 8 miles south of I-10. Busted Oak Cellars, just off Highway 290 in Carmine, is the northernmost stop. Coincidentally, Busted Oak Cellars was started in 2020 by John's younger brother, Patrick Cooke, and his wife, Sherrie. Majek Vineyard & Winery in Schulenburg is the westernmost location on the trail. In the middle are Blissful Folly Farm in La Grange and nearby Blue Mule Winery in Fayetteville.

'BUILD IT, AND THEY WILL COME'

John, who learned viticulture and winemaking at Grayson College in Dennison, says a vast majority of the customers visiting the wineries on the trail come from San Antonio, Austin and Houston. He planted his vineyard in 2007 intending to sell the grapes. Other winery owners encouraged him to make his own wine and open a tasting room, a notion he initially dismissed because of his property's location 11 miles from the nearest interstate exit. "It was a matter of 'build it, and they will come.' Sure enough, they came, they've kept coming, and we've been just blown away," John says.

John describes Whistling Duck as a little country winery out in the middle of nowhere, the perfect escape for his big-city dwelling customers. Its offerings include dry, semisweet and sweet whites and reds, as well as specialty blends. Bodacious, a dry red aged in bourbon barrels and named after the rodeo community's

"world's most dangerous bucking bull," is Whistling Duck's best seller, along with its Cattle Guard Sweet Tempranillo. "We try to make sure we have enough variety that everyone will find at least one or two wines that their palate likes," John says.

BUSINESS FLOURISHES IN CARMINE

At Busted Oak Cellars, Sherrie runs the winery operation with Patrick and their son, Kevin. They offer 27 wines of various styles, mostly dry with a handful of semisweets and sweets. Double Barrel Red, a dry red made with tannat grapes, then aged in oak for a year followed by eight months in Kooper Family Whiskey barrels, is the top seller. Also popular is the Renegade Red, a medium-bodied dry wine.

Patrick and Sherrie also intended to grow grapes for sale to other wineries at the outset but soon learned their only profitable option would be to make and sell wine. Business has flourished since their 2020 opening, and they recently opened a new 32-by-64-foot event space on the property for weddings and other special gatherings, which has been in high demand.

Sherrie credits being a part of the Texas Independence Wine Trail for Busted Oak's growth. "When we first opened, I had no clue what I was doing," she says. "Every owner from the wine trail helped me in some way, like how to post and manage our social media, how to set up and run a wine club, which we've seen grow to 700 members. They've been such a good source of information. As I've gone along and learned more stuff, I can now contribute. The wine trail just helps bring people to us." 🗨️



Photo courtesy of Busted Oak Cellars



Photo courtesy of Whistling Duck Winery



Photo courtesy of Busted Oak Cellars



Photo courtesy of Whistling Duck Winery

CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: A wine club member took a bottle of Tempranillo Reserve to a wedding in Sedona, Arizona.

Whistling Duck Winery's covered tasting rooms are close to the vineyard.

In addition to its tasting room, Whistling Duck Winery sends bottles to its Wine Club members.

Wine aficionados enjoy an outdoor mixology class at Busted Oak Cellars, where they learn more about the vino they are drinking.

Texas Independence Wine Trail
texasindependencewinetrail.com



@TexasIndependenceWineTrail



Living the HIGH LIFE

Hot Air Balloon Rides Make for a Magical Experience

Story by JEN CALHOUN

As a child growing up in California, Kim McCourt scrambled up hills, cliffs and trees to see the land below. “I had this need to see all those things I never even knew were there,” he says.

But when his family moved to the flatlands of Florida, he had to find a new way to see the world. In 1998, he took his first flight in a hot air balloon. “I learned that ballooning is, well, kind of magical,” says Kim, who is now a licensed hot air balloon pilot in the Orlando region. “There’s the exploration part of it, and you’ve got Mother Nature all around you.”

ULTIMATE ADVENTURE

These days, Kim often travels the skies with tourists who want to experience a ride they can’t find at the region’s theme parks. For many, it’s a way to fly without being contained in the metal tube of an airplane. “In the balloon, you can see so much more, and you can actually feel everything,” Kim says. “You can breathe the air.”

There’s a spiritual component, too, says Mark West, vice president of the Balloon Federation of America. West, a former Navy pilot, also served as president and chief engineer of Aerostar International, which was once the largest hot air balloon manufacturer in the country.

“Ballooning has an incredible amount of magic to it,” Mark says. “Virtually everyone who sees one is enamored with them. I suppose they’re kind of representative of breaking free of the bonds of Earth and floating away.”

UP AND AWAY

Across the country, hot air balloon rides are a popular pastime for families celebrating a special occasion or tourists looking for a new experience. Some passengers want to make memories with their families, while others go to commemorate important events, like marriage proposals, bucket lists and to spread the ashes of loved ones into the sky. “There are all kinds of stories,” Kim says. “The only things that stay the same are the sun coming up and people smiling.”



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT:
Balloons get ready for a flight.

Most hot air balloons are operated by gas.

Hot air balloons take off during an event.



But as wide-open spaces dwindle, so do the balloon rides. Pilots simply don't have enough space to land. Weather's also been a factor, because unreliable winds can ground a pilot. Kim says he's seen this firsthand. "Over the last 15 years, the weather went from 275 days we could fly to probably 100 days," he says.

He worries other factors could cause ballooning to take a hit, too. "Fabric, wicker, propane, repairs and parts are way more expensive these days, so it takes more money to maintain them," Kim says.

HOPE FLOATS

Despite the challenges, Kim still grins like a kid after an early-morning

flight. "There's nothing like it," he says. "When we lift off and the sun starts to rise, we might rest at the top of a tree and stare clear down to the bottom of a pond. Then we'll take off again and maybe rest right on top of the water where the mist is coming off the surface. It's up and down, up and down — gently. One person said it was like flying in the hand of God while getting a brain massage."

Balloonists enjoy attempting to describe the sensation of floating on — and with — the air, Mark says. "One of my good friends said it was 'having a destiny without a destination.' I think it attracts people who want to enjoy the beauty of the Earth and want to experience that kind of freedom." 🗨️

To catch a ride with Kim McCourt, visit greaterorlandoballoonrides.com. For more information on hot air ballooning and the people who are passionate about it, visit the Balloon Federation of America's Facebook page, or find the group at bfa.net.



1783

THE BIRTH OF THE HOT AIR BALLOON

▶ June 1783 — First unmanned flight

After a year or two of experimentation and invention, brothers Joseph Michel and Jacques Etienne Montgolfier publicly launch their version of a hot air balloon. It held no passengers. The balloon landed in the middle of a vineyard a little over a mile from where it had taken off.

▶ September 1783 — Confused farm animals

The first balloon flight with passengers launches in Versailles carrying a duck, a rooster and a sheep. The animals made it out alive. However, sources say the sheep kicked the duck and damaged its wing. King Louis XVI of France was pleased to learn that animals could breathe so high up.

▶ November 1783 — First human flight

Jean-François Pilâtre de Rozier and another passenger take the first untethered, human-occupied flight. The flight, which launched in France, lasted about 25 minutes and reached an altitude of about 500 feet. Less than two years later, de Rozier and his passenger would become the first people to die in a hot air balloon crash during a flight from France to England.

▶ December 1783 — Hydrogen balloon

Jacques Charles, a French physicist who had been experimenting with hydrogen balloons, boards one with a few colleagues. They traveled 25 miles in less than two hours. They also carried a barometer and a thermometer. Afterward, gas balloons became the preferred method of ballooning.

Sources: DragonFly Balloon Adventures, Virgin Balloon Flights, National Balloon Museum

A time-honored *tradition*

Local church picnics bring generations together for food, fun and family

Story by PATRICK SMITH

More than 100 years ago, church picnics were small community gatherings across the Colorado Valley. What were once simple, home-cooked meals are now unofficial holidays celebrated alongside thousands of friends.

“After people visit once, they’re usually hooked,” says Joyce Dietrich, of St. Mary’s Catholic Church. “It just keeps growing through our traditions and word of mouth.”

Anyone expecting a small, family outing with a blanket on the grass and basket full of sandwiches is in for a surprise. As everyone knows, everything is bigger in Texas. “It’s like a big homecoming,” says Gina Kozelsky from Queen of the Holy

Rosary Church. “Over the years, the picnics have become more about the friendship, camaraderie and visiting with all the people you don’t get to see very often.”

HISTORY OF THE PICNICS

The Colorado Valley, as it’s known today, was first settled by fewer than 100 Anglos. Relocating from Alabama, Mississippi and Tennessee, they started building in Fayette County in the 1820s. A decade later, German immigrants arrived, followed by Czechs flocking to the area between the 1850s and 1880s, according to Ed Janecka, a historian with the Texas State Historical Commission

and member of Sts. Cyril and Methodius Catholic Church.

It’s hard to pin down when the first church picnic was, but St. Mary’s, in Praha, and Sts. Cyril and Methodius Catholic Church, in Dubina, were among the earliest. St. Mary’s still holds its annual Prazka Pout event on Aug. 15, celebrating the Feast of the Assumption and drawing nearly 4,000 guests.

Sometime in the late 1800s, feast day gatherings started becoming church picnics by way of advertising in local newspapers, according to Ed. “You hear about the picnics, and people talk about them like they got off the boat and the first



Volunteers Patrick Heinrich, from left, Richard Copeland, Matt Quinlan and Edward Matocha take tickets for the Queen of the Holy Rosary Church picnic.



Dozens of kolaches are ready to be devoured by the devoted fans of church picnics.

thing they did was have a parish picnic,” he says. “These picnics were probably nothing more than covered dish dinners when they started out. It’s just gotten a lot bigger over the years.”

Nearly all today’s picnics are held on a Sunday to draw larger crowds. “In the old days, you couldn’t do anything on a Sunday, including weddings or funerals,” Ed says.

They’re a fun way to give back to the community. “We’re so blessed to have families come back and help us volunteer every year,” Joyce says. “That’s part of what makes it so special. They’ll come back and talk about how their grandpa used to do this job or that at the picnic, and now they’re willing to take that extra step to help us make it a big success.”

A COMMUNITY CELEBRATION

Planning starts well in advance. “The actual setup for the picnic usually starts about two weeks ahead of time, but parishioners work on auction items all year long,” Gina says. “From quilts to canned food, wood projects and more, it’s not just a one-day affair.”

While each picnic has its own unique traditions, there are plenty of similarities, too. The day usually starts with a Mass

around 9 a.m., followed by food — often barbecue, fried chicken, sausage or stew — live music, a raffle and an hourslong auction. There are grilled hamburgers for dinner, and some picnics end with fireworks lighting up the night sky. Parishioners return the next morning to clean up.

“There’s a volunteer group that comes to help us, and then some of our guys go help at their picnic,” Joyce says. “We all help each other. That’s what really makes it awesome because they help us, and we turn around and do the same thing for them.”

PARTY WITH A PURPOSE

“We use the picnic to fund future projects and repairs around our facilities,” says Chris Kovar, picnic chairman for Warda’s Holy Cross Lutheran Church. “The event was started to support the parochial school. Someone would donate a cow for the barbecue at the end of the school year.”

In 1969, Holy Cross moved its event to Labor Day weekend, referring to it as a homecoming picnic. About 1,800 pounds of brisket and pork shoulder and 400 chickens are cooked for the event. “It takes the entire community of our church to put this on, using multiple talents, whether it’s setting up, cooking or cleaning,” Chris

says. “Every member older than confirmation age has a position.”

At St. John the Baptist, the kolaches are always baked fresh for the picnic. “They’ve always been made using the same recipe since the first feast,” parishioner Jean Muske says. “The same mixer has always been used as well.”

At Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic Church, the drive-thru meal service isn’t just for locals. “The homemade sausage is so good,” parishioner Shirley Antosh says. “People come from as far away as Austin and Houston to buy a cooler full of sausage before driving back home.”

If that doesn’t whet your appetite, maybe the raffle and auction items will. Everything from cattle to pickles, pies, cookies, cakes, bicycles, gift cards, gift baskets, hay bales, jellies, barbecue sets, quilts, lawn mowers and more are available.

Auction prizes are donated as part of the biggest — and often the only — annual fundraiser for the parish. The fun and food mix with bingo, a cakewalk, a country store, ring toss games, children’s entertainment, dancing and more.

Best of all, if you miss one picnic, there’s sure to be another one nearby that you can attend. “Just about every weekend from May through October you can go to a church picnic, get a meal, see some friends and have fun,” Gina says. 📞



Photo courtesy of Sue Zapalac

Volunteers rotate the sausages for the church picnic at St. John the Baptist Catholic Church in Fayetteville.



Photo courtesy of Fayette County Record

It takes a small army of volunteers to prepare the meal at Queen of the Holy Rosary Church.

For dates and a full list of all church picnics in the area, subscribe and search the articles at fayettecountyrecord.com.

OLDIES

but goodies

Classic recipes create timeless tastes

Although we love creating new recipes in keeping with today's tastes and trends, there's something sweet about a vintage recipe that can still hold its own. Get ready for a trip down memory lane with these old-fashioned recipes we still love.

From classic chicken tetrazzini to a delightful lemon icebox pie, these vintage recipes are worth holding onto. They may have been gone from our culinary repertoire for a decade or two, but they certainly are not forgotten.

Ready for some nostalgia and satisfied smiles at your table? Give these retro recipes a try, and they're sure to stir up good memories.



**Food Editor
Anne P. Braly
is a native of
Chattanooga,
Tennessee.**

Photography by **Mark Gilliland**
Food Styling by **Rhonda Gilliland**



CHICKEN TETRAZZINI

No roundup of retro recipes is complete without a classic chicken tetrazzini.

- 16 ounces linguini or spaghetti, cooked
- 1/2 cup unsalted butter, softened
- 4 chicken breasts, cooked and diced
- 2 cans cream of chicken soup
- 2 cups sour cream
- 1 teaspoon garlic salt
- 1 tablespoon chopped parsley
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 1 cup chicken broth
- 2 tablespoons Parmesan cheese, grated
- 2 cups mozzarella cheese shredded

Preheat the oven to 350 F. Grease a 9-by-13-inch baking dish and set aside.

Cook noodles to al dente, according to the box instructions. Drain and set aside. Meanwhile, in a large bowl, combine chicken, soup, sour cream, butter, chicken broth, garlic salt, parsley and pepper. Mix well, then stir in cooked noodles. Pour mixture into prepared baking dish. Sprinkle both cheeses on top and bake, uncovered, for 36-42 minutes, until cheeses are melted and casserole is bubbling.

CREAMED CORN

If you can't wait until summer to take advantage of sweet Silver Queen corn, use the sweetest corn you can find.

- 13 ears of fresh corn, husks and silks removed
- 1 cup evaporated milk
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon pepper

Remove silks from corn. Cream the corn by cutting the kernels from the cobs, then scrape the

corn cobs with the back of the knife to get all the "milk" and pulp. Transfer creamed corn to a large skillet. Add milk, butter and salt. Cook over low heat, stirring often, for 30 minutes. If corn becomes too thick, add more milk for desired consistency. Sprinkle with pepper. Makes 6-8 servings.



CLASSIC SOUTHERN CORNBREAD SALAD

- 1 skillet of your favorite cornbread
- 1 cup diced onions
- 1 green or red bell pepper, seeded and diced
- 1 cup diced tomato
- 1 15-ounce can whole kernel corn, drained
- 1 pound bacon, cooked until crisp and crumbled
- 2-3 cups mayonnaise
- 1 package ranch dressing mix

Crumble cooled cornbread into a large bowl. Add onions, bell pepper, diced tomatoes, corn and bacon. Stir until well combined. In a separate bowl, stir together mayonnaise and ranch mix until well-blended. Add mayonnaise dressing mixture to salad and stir until fully mixed. Cover and refrigerate at least 2 hours before serving.



LEMON ICEBOX PIE

Finish your retro meal with a slice of this much-loved pie.

Crust:

- 1 1/2 cups graham cracker crumbs
- 2 tablespoons granulated sugar
- 7 tablespoons butter, melted

Filling:

- 2 14-ounce cans sweetened condensed milk
- 1 cup fresh lemon juice
- 5 large egg yolks
- 1 tablespoon lemon zest
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 2 tablespoons powdered sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract

For the crust: Preheat the oven to 350 F. Combine the cracker crumbs, sugar and butter in a medium bowl. Mix with a fork until the crumbs are well coated and stick together when pinched. Press the mixture into the bottom and up the sides of a 9-inch pie plate. Bake until set, about 10 minutes. Set aside to cool slightly, about 10 minutes.

For the filling: Whisk together the condensed milk, lemon juice, egg yolks and lemon zest in a medium bowl until combined. Pour the filling into the crust and bake until the center is set but still slightly jiggly, about 15 minutes. Let cool for 30 minutes, then refrigerate until chilled, about 2 hours.

Once pie is chilled, beat the heavy cream, powdered sugar and vanilla in a large bowl with a mixer on medium speed until soft peaks form. Spoon onto the center of the pie and serve.

Alternatively: Buy a premade graham cracker crust as a timesaver. 📺

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