



Collecting

By the Numbers

There is no getting around it: Robert and Linda McWhorter are collectors. It's in their spirits and their hearts. It's just what they do. And there is almost no limit to it. At their store in Hawkins, appropriately named Cabin Collectibles, they surround themselves with objets d'art, oddities and beautiful and/or unusual things. No resting place for eyes, floor to ceiling—the shop is crammed full.

Everything is for sale. And some regrettably so. When Linda buys for their resale shop, she says, “The hunt is the fun part for me. If I get fixated on an item I see, I can't forget it, and I'll make sure I get it.” She likes getting things she likes. Her favorites are old costume jewelry, beautiful dishes with old collectible patterns, and artwork—especially paintings—and whatever else puts a sparkle in her eyes. Robert favors clocks that chime. He doesn't care if they are battery-operated or weight-driven; he just loves the song

in them. And he likes guitars and anything with wheels, and gadgets. And Linda and Robert love old furniture and people. They really like people.

Both are admitted city folks. They met at the company where they both worked near Dallas. Robert worked as an inspector on the shop floor of a heating and cooling business, and Linda was hired as a receptionist while Robert was on vacation. The whole time he was gone, the boss kept telling Linda, “Wait until Robert sees you!” The day he returned,

Robert did see her—and something clicked. Shortly after, the pair was married, and on November 4 of this year, they celebrate their 40th anniversary. In October, they also celebrated their 15-year anniversary as co-owners of Cabin Collectibles.

In the 1990s, when the couple moved to Lake Hawkins, they really weren't sure what their work plans would be. Robert initially opened a painting and repair business, and later they tried their hands at selling collectibles via a small consignment booth in Mineola. Luck—or, as Robert calls it, “God’s unsolicited favor”—was with them. A location on Front Street (also Highway 80) in downtown Hawkins was becoming available. The shop owner who was renting had just painted and installed new carpet but then decided on a larger spot. She called the landlord on the McWhorters’ behalf, and he said to just give them the keys.

Since that first day of owning the shop, the McWhorters have purveyed some interesting items. When asked about their more unusual finds, they list an antique prison ball and chain, a real conversation piece until it sold. They also had a Robert E. Lee print that had provenance of being passed down through the Lee family. Another item that they still laugh about was the 8-foot-tall brass giraffe, which also eventually sold. They say that just goes to show: There is a market for everything if the right person happens to come along.

“To do this, you have to like stuff, yourself,” Linda says. It seems you also must like to “fix” things, which Robert has a talent for. In fact, some folks around Hawkins call him the “chair man” because he excels at steadying and repairing wobbly furniture. He says that one couple had a set of chairs that had belonged to their grandparents, and the chairs were very old and rickety. He did such a good job repairing them that the couple keeps coming back to have him repair things, including eyeglasses, a car taillight and even their vacuum cleaner. It’s clear he enjoys it. Every single bit of it. He and Linda simply like helping people out.

In addition to the locals, the McWhorters enjoy visits from dealers near Dallas and shoppers from all over Texas and neighboring states. They’ve had guests from Canada, Greece and England. They have even had a few brushes with fame. Actor Gary Busey’s wife visited, as did Mo Bandy’s guitar player.

Robert is still waiting patiently for country singer Willie Nelson to happen by. He has something he wants to tell him. Or, he says, if anybody out there knows Willie, he sure would like them to pass something on to him: He wants to thank Willie for his 1975 album “Red Headed Stranger.” Robert explains that there is a haunting instrumental on that album that has always nearly brought him to tears when he heard it. “It just touched me, and I did not know why,” he says.

Later, after Robert became a Christian, he heard the song at church and was just bowled over. He could not figure out for the life of him why the church was playing a Willie Nelson song. But in the end it was Willie who had put the much-loved





hymn “Just As I Am” on his album. It’s been many years since Robert made that discovery, but his wonder is still fresh. He says, “I want to thank him for putting that song on that eight-track tape because it has moved me.” And he believes that this is just one affirmation that God can and does speak through the least likely sources.

The McWhorters know a little about music. Robert is a song stylist and plays guitar, and they both sing. Their shop is always filled with music, and often they will serenade their customers—sometimes customers will even come in and jam with them. So beyond collecting items, they’ve also gathered a few fans. “What we are about is touching people,” Robert says. “Whether it is through something they are looking for, or if they need something to pump up their spirit, there are so many people around, and we would just love to meet them. They can also come to the shop if they ever need a prayer.”

Robert and Linda keep a prayer list on display, adding to it continually. He says they pray according to Numbers 6:24-26: “The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace.”

When the idea for a shop first came to Linda and Robert, they wanted it to be more “high end.” It seems that’s been accomplished, but not in the way they were initially thinking.

The McWhorters have been residential members of Wood County Electric Cooperative since 1995. They can be visited at **Cabin Collectibles** at 114 E. Front St. in Hawkins, or reached by calling (903) 258-2531.

POWER TIP

Save ENERGY • Save MONEY

To save energy this month, try lowering your water-heating costs. Water heating accounts for 14 to 25 percent of the energy your home consumes. Turn the water heater’s temperature to the “warm” setting, around 120 degrees Fahrenheit. This will save energy—and help you save on your monthly bill.



Happy Thanksgiving!

The Wood County Electric Cooperative’s board of directors, management team and all our employees wish you and yours a happy Thanksgiving.



Help Us Save Power Plants

To ensure safety and reduce energy use, most American homes are constructed to meet building codes. Imagine if the government applied a new, more stringent code retroactively to your home, forcing you to move out because your home was not sufficiently energy efficient. You would still be required to pay the mortgage for the home you could no longer use and also pay for a new, more expensive home.

This is happening on a national scale to the electric industry. The latest proposal from the Environmental Protection Agency will fundamentally change the rules and force the early shutdown of many of the power plants on which electric co-ops still owe money. Not only will this plan make it difficult to provide you with affordable and reliable power, but it also will leave you, our member-owners, holding the keys to power plants that can't operate.

Seem unreasonable and unfair? We agree. For more than 75 years, Wood County Electric Cooperative has made strategic, long-term investments to bring affordable and reliable electricity to your home and family. Looking ahead to the long term helps us stretch your hard-earned money.

Many of our power plants are only about 30 years old. Some were expected to remain operational until 2040 or beyond.

Since they made those initial investments for construction, electric co-ops also have spent billions on emissions-control upgrades. In some cases, the cost of these upgrades has exceeded the original cost of the power plant. As a result, your cooperative still owes money on many of these facilities, and the plants need to run to pay off the loans.

Rather than moving our nation away from an all-of-the-above energy policy, we want the EPA to work with us on practical and reasonable solutions that balance affordability, reliability and environmental stewardship.

You wouldn't allow the federal government to force you out of your home. Don't let them do that to the power plants built to serve you. We ask that you join us, along with the more than 800,000 supporters of America's electric cooperatives, in taking a stand. Speak out against this proposal today, at Action.coop.

Together, we can remind the government that the rules they write have real-world consequences. It only takes 30 seconds to send your message to the EPA via Action.coop.

WCEC is proud to play by the rules and—with your help—we look forward to providing affordable power to your family for generations to come.



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