



Happy Goats. Happy Wife. Happy Life.

BY PAIGE EATON

KRISTEN TJERNLUND HAS CRACKED the code for a charmed existence. “You just can’t be unhappy around baby goats,” she says. “You just can’t!”

She must be on to something, as a search for “baby goats” on YouTube proves. You’ll get about 550,000 results, including baby goats playing, bleating, flipping, jumping, drinking from bottles, head-butting, wearing pajamas and climbing on everything—including each other. If the “Internet of things” is a gauge, baby goats DO make people happy.

While most just like to spend time watching goats on YouTube or *America’s Funniest Home Videos*, Kristen sought the real-life experience, and her affable and easygoing husband, Don, is happily going along.

Kristen retired in 2012 from a career in information technology with Fortune 500 companies such as American Airlines and Chase Manhattan. She had wanted goats since her childhood in Long Island, New York, but her parents never agreed



to that. Then years of balancing work with child-rearing and family life never jelled with that wish. “I don’t know why I have always wanted goats, but I just love them,” she says. When their five children were grown, and she and Don bought their 13-acre Grand Saline Farm, she finally got her goats.

The Tjernlund herd started out as four pet Boer goats: three nannies

(females) and a buck (male) that Kristen found in Canton. At first, she says, “I didn’t know anything about goats other than I liked them.” Kristen and Don were just merrily enjoying their pet goats and life on the farm until Don, a service engineer who travels for his work maintaining research laboratory equipment, brought Kristen some goat milk soap. “Once I tried this soap, I fell in love with it and I thought, ‘Why am I not doing that?’ ” she says. “So we then went and got some milk goats.”

There was a learning curve, for sure—especially since neither she nor Don had ever milked a goat before. “Everything I have done, I have learned on the Internet,” Kristen says. “I’ve said, ‘Let’s see what I can find out about this,’ and then I have tried it.” With his low-key, agreeable humor, Don chimes in: “When we figure it out, we’ll let you know.”

Some of their learning has been achieved by trial and error.

FROM TOP: Proprietors of Tjernlund Goat Farm Soaps, Kristen and Don Tjernlund, find joy in their pet goats and satisfaction in helping others. One of Tjernlund Farm’s 39 pet goats seems to smile with contentment as some of the herd relaxes in the background.

Kristen relays the story of her first milk goat, Juanita, a Nubian goat they bought at a sale barn. They did not know if Juanita had ever been milked before, but they did know she was “in milk” since she was nursing her kid, who also came with the deal. The Tjernlunds successfully milked Juanita. “The milk was horrible!” Kristen says. “That’s when we learned that goats under stress do not give good milk.” She says she thinks Juanita was stressed from the sale barn experience. Plus, when Juanita got to their farm, the Boer goat herd did not accept her right away. Nubian goats look quite different than Boers. It took several months for Juanita to fit in and feel adjusted. “Then the milk started tasting good,” Kristen says. “That’s when I realized happy goats make good milk.”

The Tjernlund goats are pets first, but they also contribute to what is becoming a growing cottage business, first sparked by Don’s soap gift. Their herd now numbers 39 and includes Boers, which primarily are bred as meat goats, and Nubian and Alpine milk goats. The latter are true milk goats, but all of the goat breeds contribute milk for the soaps. What the Boers don’t contribute in quantity, they give in quality. Kristen says Boer milk has a different, creamy texture that helps make quality soap.

The goats are happy, but Kristen says it’s been like heaven for her and Don. She admits she was never a big milk drinker before because it upset her stomach. But now, she drinks the goats’ milk and makes various types of cheese and ice cream, enjoying them all with no ill effects. Then there is the soap-making.

“I just started researching the soaps, and I spent an entire summer wasting a lot of material, and then I started to finally get it,” Kristen says. “Then my one son was in the Ph.D program at A&M for chemistry, and he came home and helped me tweak my recipe, and I went from there.”

With the base down, Kristen has developed some best-sellers, and she has come up with new blends and scent mixtures using all-natural ingredients and essential oils. “I started researching essential oils because I could never stand fragrances. I’ve always had allergies, and I realized when I used the essential oils, I don’t react badly to them. Then I started reading about all of the healthy benefits to them, too. My best soap customers are the ones who understand essential oils.”

At first, Kristen says, when she started selling her soap, she spent a great deal of time educating people on the healthy aspects of goat milk soap and how good it is for your skin. It’s rich in vitamins and minerals, and the creamy texture feels good and leaves skin feeling silky. But goat milk soap also contains alpha hydroxy, a natural acid found in foods. Alpha hydroxy is a prized substance widely used as an additive in commercial, over-the-counter beauty and anti-aging items. Also, goat milk soap is hypoallergenic and touted for its moisturizing properties.

Others use it—and swear by it—to clear up skin issues like acne, eczema and psoriasis. “I have a lot of customers with eczema, which is a big problem for a lot of people today, especially children,” she says. “I am not an expert in this field, but I



FROM TOP: This goat kid enjoys getting people’s attention by “kidding” around. Tjernlund Goat Farm Soaps are packaged in rounds and rectangles. Plain or scented with essential oils, all feature goat’s milk.



have a lot of repeat buyers who tell me that my soap has helped them.”

The No. 1 ingredient in all of Kristen’s handmade soap is goat milk, and she couples it with other elements such as palm, coconut, olive or castor oils. She offers unscented soap, but she also has some blends that include lemon, orange, lemongrass, bergamot, anise, honeysuckle, jasmine, lavender, mint, nutmeg, cloves, rosemary, sage, vanilla and coffee. Some soaps also feature sea salt, clay, pumice, oatmeal or shea butter. The soap comes in rounds or rectangles and sell for \$6.50 a bar. In addition to soaps, Kristen also sells goat milk skin cream for \$10–\$15 for 2–4 ounces. “It’s more than about selling,” Kristen says. “I actually feel really good about helping people.”

Beyond the heady aromas that come from the natural fragrances of Tjernlund Goat Farm Soaps, users of essential oils also will appreciate the medicinal properties of many of the blends for antirheumatic, antiseptic, antifungal, antibacterial, calming, restorative, astringent, moisturizing and disinfecting properties. Others will just likely enjoy and savor the hand-crafted luxury soap, and the way it refreshes.

Kristen sells her soaps and creams at fairs and trade days, and online. Here, she also offers her unique “barkware,” made from hardened tree bark overlaid with dried Texas wildflowers and epoxy to preserve it. She also crafts ceramic soap dishes and plaques with the same flowers to create unique pieces.

Whether it’s soap, cream or a decorative item, Kristen says,



ABOVE: Dried Texas wildflowers preserved under epoxy make beautiful soap dishes. **LEFT:** Ezekiel, or EZ for short, completely ignores his goat mother (background) to play with Kristen Tjernlund. **BOTTOM LEFT:** Kristen cures all of her soap for about 30 days to release the moisture and ensure a mild and longer-lasting bar with a rich lather.

“I usually make something every day.” It’s hard to know how she finds the time or the energy, as a typical day at the farm starts with lots of chores. She or Don must milk the goats and clean the stalls, then water and feed the animals. Once the goat herd is taken care of, they must tend to six rescue dogs, two cats, four hens and a horse. There is also a large garden to cultivate. If Don is on a job, that leaves only Kristen to take care of everything. Kristen is also in the process of acquiring some bee hives. After all, what’s another 50,000–60,000 creatures to care for?

In the midst of all the creating, tending and feeding—which would be enough for most people—Kristen says, “What could I do more? I think there are so many more people that could benefit from being around goats. They are therapeutic! I often wonder how I should be using that to help people. To see these baby goats, they are so innocent and joy-filled.”

And Don? He’s good with it all. He smiles and laughingly says, “I’m going to write a book: Everything I need to know in life, I learned from my goats.”

Kristen adds, “You can’t be depressed around them. There is something to it!”

MEMBERS OF WOOD COUNTY Electric Cooperative, Kristen and Don Tjernlund live on their farm in Grand Saline. Tjernlund Goat Farm Soaps can be found at Canton Trade Days in Trade Center Building 1, at Mesquite Marketplace, Oak Cliff Farmers Market in Dallas, online via Etsy at TjGoatMilkSoap.etsy.com, and on Facebook. The Tjernlunds can also be reached via email at tjgoatfarm@gmail.com. They are not on YouTube yet, but don’t be surprised if they or some of their pets show up there, too, one day.

Can’t Sleep? Cool Off!

IF YOU HAVE TROUBLE SLEEPING on warm summer nights—either because you don’t have air conditioning or you would rather not use it—here are five ways to ease into cool, comfortable slumber:

1. Keep the bedroom blinds closed all day long. That way, your room won’t heat up as much—and it won’t have so far to cool down because it will already be more comfortable.

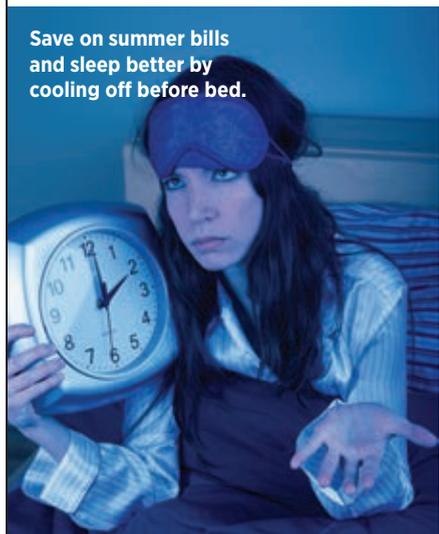
2. Resist the temptation to open the windows at night if the outdoor temperature is hotter than the indoor air. If it’s cool out, though, take the opportunity to open the windows and let in the fresh air and cooler temperatures.

3. Sleep downstairs, if possible. Heat rises, so if you sleep in an upstairs bedroom, you’ll be warmer than if you stay on a lower floor.

4. Run the ceiling fan. If you don’t have one in your bedroom, consider installing one. The fan moves the air around, creating a comfortable breeze that makes the air feel cooler on your skin.

5. Take a cool shower and drink cold water before going to bed.

Save on summer bills and sleep better by cooling off before bed.





AUSTIN DECKER
Mount Vernon



BRENNA GARDNER
Quitman



CLAIRE GLIDEWELL
Alba-Golden



JARED GRAVES
Grand Saline



RACHEL HAYS
Alba-Golden



DEREK MCCREIGHT
Miller Grove



ALLIE MEDLIN
Quitman



NATALIE OUD
Mount Vernon



CLAIRE PICKENS
Mineola



LOGAN REDDING
Winnsboro

WCEC Awards \$20,000 to East Texas Students

A PANEL OF THREE INDEPENDENT JUDGES recently awarded \$20,000 in scholarships as part of Wood County Electric Cooperative’s Power My World scholarship program. Ten local high school students, residing within WCEC’s nine-county service area, were each awarded \$2,000 continuing education scholarships. The program is funded entirely by unclaimed capital credits payments returned to WCEC by the state; the funds do not come from WCEC’s operating budget.

The independent judges were three WCEC members: **Dorinda Mitchell**, Lindale; **Sharon Brooks**, Yantis; and **Pat Harris**, Hawkins. They used various criteria to select the 10, who were chosen from among 38 qualified applicants. Each judge was tasked with reviewing each submission that included academic records, civic and community achievements, and an essay. Based on their exceptional work and achievements, the 2016 Power My World scholarship recipients are: **Austin Decker**, Mount Vernon; **Brenna Gardner**, Quitman; **Claire Glidewell**, Alba-Golden; **Jared Graves**, Grand Saline; **Rachel Hays**, Alba-Golden; **Derek McCreight**, Miller Grove; **Allie Medlin**, Quitman; **Natalie Oud**, Mount Vernon; **Claire Pickens**, Mineola; and **Logan Redding**, Winnsboro.

“Every year, we are amazed by the talent and ambition of the young men and women of East Texas, as well as their

demonstrated service to the community,” said WCEC CEO/General Manager Debbie Robinson. “We look forward to seeing all of the applicants achieve their dreams and goals.”



Judges of the 2016 Power My World Scholarship had their work cut out for them to select the scholarship winners from so many qualified applicants. From left are Dorinda Mitchell, Lindale; Sharon Brooks, Yantis; and Pat Harris, Hawkins.

Cool Roofs

IF YOU'VE EVER STOOD ON A ROOF DURING a Texas summer day, you know how hot it can get. The heat from a home's roof makes the air conditioner work even harder to keep the inside cool.

If you want to upgrade an existing roof, you can:

- ▶ **Retrofit** the roof with specialized heat-reflective material.
- ▶ **Re-cover** the roof with a new waterproofing surface (such as tile coating).
- ▶ **Replace** the roof with a cool one.

If you are building a new home, decide during the planning phase whether you want a cool roof. A cool roof uses material designed to reflect more sunlight and absorb less heat than a standard roof. Cool roofs can be made of a highly reflective type of paint, a sheet covering, or reflective tiles or shingles.

A cool roof can lower the surface temperature by up to 50 percent and save energy and money by requiring less air conditioning. Cool roofs make spaces like garages or covered patios more comfortable.

Nearly any type of home can benefit from a cool roof, but consider climate and other factors before you decide to install one.

—Energy.gov



Upgrade to a cool roof for summer savings.

Summertime Savings Strategies

WE'RE FACING ANOTHER LONG, hot Texas summer! Here are several ways to use energy more efficiently and save some money on electricity:

Change the air-conditioning system's filter every three months during cooling season—and more if your neighborhood is especially dusty. Dirty filters stop air from flowing through, which causes your AC to work harder—and use more energy—as it cools your home.

If you have a programmable thermostat, instruct it to run the AC only during part of the day. There's no need to keep your house comfortable if nobody's in it during the day. Program the thermostat to turn on the AC an hour before you get home so that it's cool upon your arrival.

Use ceiling fans. If you don't have any, consider getting them as a good investment. Install them in bedrooms, the kitchen and the living room. Fans move the air around and make the people in the room feel cooler. They help your air conditioner cool the house for less.

Close the drapes. A sunny day might be pretty to look at through the window, but the sun's rays can heat the air in your home and force the AC to work overtime. Keep curtains and blinds drawn on bright, hot days, especially on south- and west-facing windows.

If you have a pool, wait until after dark to run your pool pump. Operating it during off-peak hours when fewer people are using a lot of appliances at once can save money on your energy bill.

Switch your central air-conditioning system's fan to "auto." The "on" setting forces it to run constantly—even when your house is already cool.



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Debbie Robinson

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- Friday,** Economy Drug, *Grand Saline*