



Nancy and Chuck Roy, proprietors of Stella Luna Farm Bed and Breakfast and newspaper *The Community Chronicle*.

Taking the Next Exit With Glee

ALONG TEXAS' HIGHWAYS, there are exits pointing to the next small town, bed-and-breakfast, boat ramp and rest stop. But when Chuck and Nancy Roy planned their “exit strategy,” as they like to call their retirement plan, there was no planned rest stop on their highway of life.

The Roys are world-traveled. Separately and together, they’ve logged an impressive number of miles. At the get-go, Nancy started her nomadic life as an “Air Force brat” who lived all over the United States and in England and Africa. Then she met a traveling (and fishing) man, Chuck, when their paths crossed in Shreveport, Louisiana. Chuck was returning from an engineering project in Italy and had stopped by his dad’s house to get the key to the family fishing camp for a short vacation. While there, his dad took him on an errand to the local insurance office, where Nancy was working at the front desk. After that meeting, Chuck somehow missed fishing, but he wound up with his best catch ever—a love match and life partner.

Chuck and Nancy have been married 36 years now, and they have worked, visited or lived on all but one continent (Antarctica). They’ve also raised three children and have four grand-

children and four “grandpuppies.”

Besides a path to Chuck’s finding Nancy, fishing is also what led the Roys to build their home in the countryside near Yantis. “Fishing has always been fundamental to me, and I would come to Lake Fork quite a bit,” Chuck says. “An individual I was fishing with had property he wanted to sell, and I bought it.”

Then, while Nancy laughs, he confesses, “I actually had the property for several months before I told Nancy anything about it.” She demurs sweetly, “It was OK, of course!”

The couple had been designing and redesigning their “exit strategy” dream home for years. That house became a reality on the Yantis property. It includes a gourmet kitchen, wine room, cigar room, a place to store their homemade cheeses, a 3,000-volume library, a sun room, a huge craft room, two office areas and four large bedrooms (three of those ready to welcome visiting children and their families).

“As it turns out, we built far too big of a house for just the two of us,” Chuck says. Later, when he was expressing this to their visiting daughter, Elizabeth, she suggested they open a bed-and-breakfast.

The Roys, always up for an adventure, agreed. So, that very afternoon, with a little work on the computer from Elizabeth, Stella Luna Farm Bed and Breakfast came to life with a listing on Airbnb. Shortly thereafter, the guests began to arrive.

It's been a very natural fit for the Roys, because they love to cook and entertain. "Cooking and entertaining has always been important to us, and it is something we have always practiced and developed," Chuck says. "The B&B is by accident, but it turned out to be one of the more entertaining things we've ever done."

Eighteen months and 30-plus sets of guests later, the Roys are still enjoying playing host and hostess. Based on the online reviews, their guests are enjoying the experience, too.

Guests of Stella Luna have included European visitors who wanted to immerse themselves in a Texas experience, and a family from Dallas who just wanted to relax in the country. The Roys accommodated both. They took the Europeans on a visit to the local cattle sale barn and then went 10-gallon hat shopping. The Dallasites just wanted to relax and enjoy the farm life, visiting the Roys' pigs, and feeding and collecting eggs from the Roys' chickens. Other guests have booked stays to learn how to make homemade cheese.

The Roys like to treat their guests as long-lost friends. "It's an opportunity for us to visit, but with many of them, it's like we have been friends forever," Chuck says. "We enjoy visiting, but we will also teach guests how to make homemade cheese,

bread and sausage, if they desire."

Nancy chimes in: "It's a lot of work but it's well worth it. We've had a lot of fun."

Chuck has another special word, "volun-told" (volunteer + told), that he likes to use to describe how he and Nancy have developed another time-consuming but rewarding avocation: the production of a community paper called *The Community Chronicle*.

Chuck has always had a passion for writing and has published 11 books in his *Cooking Lessons* series. He was talking with a friend who told him he should start a local paper, and he agreed. The inaugural edition was printed in October 2016, and the Roys distributed 1,200 copies. They printed more copies of the second edition, and circulation will grow to 5,000 copies, which will be the expected volume. Daughter Elizabeth is the publisher; Nancy is the business manager; Chuck is the editor; and they all are contributing writers, along with several other contributors.

The main mission of the paper is to provide hyperlocal news relevant to area citizens. "We consider this our ministry, and the embrace we have had by the community is unprecedented," Chuck says. "Our paper is about God and country with no apologies."

He also says that you won't hear about the Kardashians or politics. He says what you will see and read in their paper are the news items that are important to the community. "As long



The Roys' home, turned into a bed-and-breakfast, offers a gazebo that serves as a pier from which to feed the fish in the well-stocked pond.



Nancy Roy looks on as Chuck Roy feeds the chickens that provide farm-fresh eggs for the gourmet breakfast at Stella Luna.

as there are refrigerator magnets, we will give you something to hang on the refrigerator,” Chuck says.

The Community Chronicle can be viewed as a snowball rolling downhill. It’s growing and being reshaped as it picks up speed. Because Chuck, Nancy and Elizabeth wanted their paper to be as much about the community as possible, they’ve included sections for two high schools, Yantis and Como-Pickton. These sections serve as each school’s stand-alone newspaper, and the sections are written by the students. “Because students are writing the articles, all of the kids actually read the newspaper,” says Nancy, who works at Yantis Independent School District. “Even more, they don’t just read one section, they read everything! The kids are notorious for telling me how much they like it.”

Others seem to like it, too. Chuck tells about how he and Nancy went to breakfast at the Yantis Café the morning after the first edition was printed. He says that everyone had their noses behind their papers, and they were laughing and talking with one another about the contents.

“I am one of those who loves to hear people come into the café and reminisce about old times. I like to hear them talk about how things used to be and compare it to how it is now. That’s what he [Chuck] does with the paper,” says Melissa Stephens, café owner. “My customers always ask, ‘When is the paper coming out? When is the paper coming out?’ The stories they publish are wonderful ... People are actually interested in reading them. That first paper made me cry three times. It’s an inspiration to all, and it includes everybody.”

To Nancy and Chuck, it’s all about giving back. The newspaper is also a teaching tool for the kids. The Roys have spent time in Yantis and Como-Pickton ISDs, teaching the kids about writing their own sections of the paper. The paper is also a revenue stream for scholarships for those very kids.

“Everything we do, most of our advertising sales, goes back to fund scholarships and events for our community’s students and citizens,” Chuck says.

Yantis Mayor Jerry Miller praised the paper. “He is trying to let people know what is going on in the community, which is great,” Miller says. “It is going to be very helpful to my little community. Plus it’s an outlet for our businesses to advertise to help out businesses.”

Nancy and Chuck are now busier than they have ever been, newspapering and acting as hoteliers, but they welcome it all.

“I love the idea that we are here,” Nancy says.

And Chuck says, “The newspaper is both a blessing and a joy. What we strive to do is give our readers back the very best professional representation of them that we can provide.”

About the future, he summarizes with a gleam in his eye: “Where do we go from here? You are going to have to read *The Community Chronicle* each month to find out!”

That may be true, but one certainty remains: The Roys’ “exit strategy” will unfurl with a flourish, and there will be more “volun-tolds” for them to accept with their characteristic glee.

To book a stay at Stella Luna, served by Wood County Electric Cooperative, visit [airbnb.com](https://www.airbnb.com) and search for listings in Yantis. The Roys’ place will float right to the top. To get a peek at *The Community Chronicle*, suggest content or order a home-delivered subscription, call (214) 208-5108 or email commchronicle@gmail.com, or you can find it on Facebook.



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