

# Irene Van Winkle

## The Busiest Woman in Print

It's not often I get a chance to write about one of my favorite topics - writers.

In these days of "fake news," there are many journalists that still do their jobs writing articles by going to locations, interviewing the participants and writing about events without bias or opinion. Much like Joe Friday on Dragnet, real journalists reach out with a "Just the facts, Ma'am" attitude. We have one such journalist that works hard every day to deliver "real news" to Hill Country readers - Irene Van Winkle.

It is often said of her that she just seems to be everywhere, covering one event or another, camera and notepad in hand, right in the middle of everything.

Irene has walked a long path to bring her to the Texas Hill Country and West Kerr Current.

Irene was born in Austria following her family's escape from Ukraine during WWII. Landing in Boston, then settling in New York on the Lower East Side, the family started their climb up the ladder after moving to Pelham Bay in the Bronx.

She recently visited Ukraine to reconnect with family history and

her heritage. Prior to the trip, she had helped support the We Stand relief project and met with Ukrainian wounded heroes and patriots and was deeply moved.

Irene has always been an avid reader, although as a young girl she didn't know that she would wind up with a career in journalism, both print and other media.

*"I imagined it would be so cool to just be able to express thoughts, ideas and paint pictures with words."*

Irene's first published piece dates back to high school days - publishing a poem, the title of which she no longer remembers, but she does recall the pride in seeing her words in print for the first time. She then went on to perform one of her poems at Marymount Manhattan College.

Her first venture into the world of professional writing started when she became an editorial assistant at Peterson Publishing in New York.

Although the job didn't require a lot of writing, her time there honed her skill set and gave her a view of what professional writing was all about.

Luckily for Central Texas, Irene married a Texan and moved to the Hill Country to have proximity to her husband's family.

After several years in local radio and television (broadcast and sales), she decided she wanted to get into serious journalism, and went to work penning articles at the now defunct Kerrville Mountain Sun until 2004.

In 2005 Irene found a more permanent home when she started working at West Kerr Current, taking over the job vacated by Rosa Lavender.

Since that time Irene has been all over the Hill Country covering every kind of event imaginable - accidents, County Commissioner meetings, Chamber mixers, floods, fires, murders, veterans' issues and even birthday parties for local centenarians.

Accolades? How about this? The Texas Historical Commission selected Irene for their 2008 Award of Excellence in Media Achievement.

Another project close to Irene's heart is her sesquicentennial history series marking the 150th anniversary of Kerr County. To date she has written 470 histories (and counting) of the area, covering founding families, places and events that molded Kerr County into what it is today.

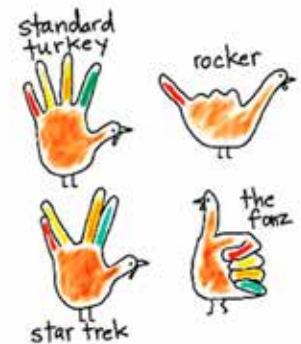
Kerrville has some recognition as an artist's town, so try to keep in mind that writing is also an art, and with Irene Van Winkle, you are reading the work of a master. Thank you Irene!



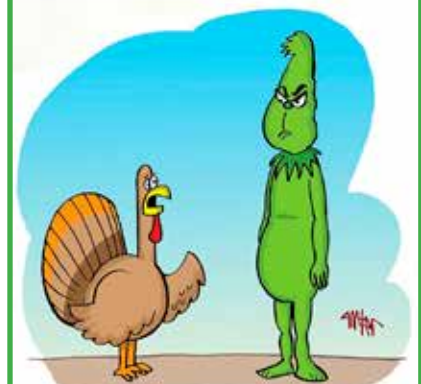
Irene in Ukraine in 2016



"He's got a point. Nobody eats a flamingo on Thanksgiving."



Happy Thanksgiving!!



"We'd like to hire you to steal Thanksgiving."