

Long-time SWRE member, Kim Jones has been on the board for the Wilbarger County Salvation Army for over a decade. Though she is a charity worker by profession, her time spent with the Salvation Army is all volunteer.

**“I have to believe in something in order to be a part of it. I believe in the Salvation Army because my grandfather and Dad were both veterans who spoke a lot about how much the organization helped them when they were in battle,”** says Jones.

Simple things such as free coffee and doughnuts were all it took to inspire generations of Jones’ family, right down to her own efforts.

Last year Jones was only one of many who donated a combined total of 833 hours towards the charity. Together, with the help of 26 organizations, the volunteers raised nearly \$16,000 for Wilbarger County. It may be no surprise that the majority of these funds were raised in a month’s worth of cold days spent ringing a bright red bell outside of the local United Supermarket. Most of us know that the donations inside the red bucket go to a good cause, but what exactly do they go towards?

According to the board reports, 100% of the funds go back into the community, helping over 600 families throughout the year. These families are helped with emergency needs such as medical expenses and rent assistance. The board has even been known to help people buy bus tickets when individuals were in dire need.

The Wilbarger County Salvation Army has done a tremendous amount of good for the city of Vernon and those around it. The chapter has even been recognized in Texas for the largest per capita campaign.

This December when you are out and about and you see someone ringing a bright red bell, be sure and donate what you can. “Even pennies make a difference,” says Jones. Know that through your donation you are helping the folks in Wilbarger County who need it the most.



See more at:  
[facebook.com/salvationarmywilbargerco/](https://facebook.com/salvationarmywilbargerco/)

## Merry Christmas!

Christmas is a season of giving  
without a thought of getting.



Manager/CEO, Ken Simmons

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Haley Hoover, *SWRE News* editor

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# Christmas Gumbo: A Simmons' Family Tradition

Nearly every room in our home is decorated for Christmas and most rooms have a fully decorated Christmas tree as a center piece. There are lights, garland, wreaths, nutcracker's, tiny Christmas villages and of course -- the reason for the season -- a nativity scene. Christmas is a very special time of the year for not just our family, but I would venture to say for most of you as well. For us, the festivity will be made complete on Christmas Eve with the scent of our traditional holiday meal. Shrimp and Okra Gumbo.

While a Gumbo may sound a little strange for a Christmas meal here in the Texoma region, Gumbo is a common traditional meal in my home state of Louisiana. Although I'm not in charge of the holiday decorating, the Gumbo is my assignment.

Preparing Gumbo isn't just cooking; it's a labor of love, it takes a lot of time and a great deal of preparation. You may not know that there are as many different gumbo recipes as there are shrimp recipes in the movie *Forrest Gump*. In fact, every gumbo has its own uniqueness in flavors and ingredients. However, every Gumbo begins with the same basic principles and ingredients.

First a roux, it's the base along with a stock and what is referred to in Louisiana as the "Holy Cajun Trinity" – bell peppers, onions and celery. After that, the variations begin with endless combinations of ingredients including a protein, vegetables and fresh seasonings to your personal taste. It is important to appreciate and understand the variety of ingredients and flavors that this dish can adapt.

Much like gumbo, each cooperative is unique. Every co-op is different from another, though they bare the same basic principles and ingredients. As it is important to appreciate the differences as well as commonalities in the traditional Cajun dish, so it is important to appreciate the unique skillsets, personalities and operations of each individual co-op. That said, I'm extremely appreciative of our cooperative, from you, our member-owners, to our Board of Trustees, to each and every employee that serves so selflessly.

It is also important to recognize the differences in opinions across our communities, states and nations. In a time of what might be best described as "extreme tribalism" in our nation's politics, I believe Christmas is a time to remember that we are all on the same team, all part of the same tribe -- "we are Americans." It's important to appreciate others who have ideas and passions that are different from our own.

Take some time this month to first remember what this season is truly all about, and extend kindness, gratitude, understanding and appreciation for those around you. Remember, we're all on the same team "we are American."

*Wishing you and your family a very Merry Christmas,*

Ken Simmons



## Elix retiring after 31 years at SWRE

If you've ever called our office with a need for a specific electrical service, chances are you've probably spoken to our Dispatcher, Ms. Wanda Elix.



**Wanda Elix, SWRE Dispatcher**  
31 years

Her unmistakable laugh, her loud and clear voice and her cheery disposition are all reasons why we love Wanda.

Wanda Elix began working at Southwest Rural Electric in 1987 as Dispatcher. She has remained in this important position ever since. Through two major snow storms, countless outages, and multiple tornadoes, she's been the woman behind the operations at Southwest Rural Electric.

"The biggest outage I ever worked was the winter of 2010. I will never, ever forget that storm," says Elix. She went on to explain that the co-op had poles out in both states and it took nearly a month to restore power to all of the members.

"We all worked for weeks straight without going home. Eventually, we had to rotate shifts on the weekends so some of us could get a rest. It was just too much."

During every major storm, Wanda is one of the first to arrive at the office in the middle of the night to begin monitoring the locations of the linemen and taking service calls from the members. She's the link between what's happening and what needs to get done!

As a co-worker, Wanda makes the days go by quickly. She's been known to pull a prank or two and she's also everyone's voluntary health coach, making sure to encourage participation in weigh-in Thursday and watch what snacks are kept at the desks. Ironically, when she shares her "homemade" desserts, the cupcakes and pastries seem to look suspiciously like Little Debbie snacks.

*"Wanda is irreplaceably one of a kind. I will definitely miss her laugh that you can hear from Vernon",*  
said co-worker, Justin Marsh.

2018 marks Elix's 31st year with the co-op and unfortunately her last. While we will all miss Wanda's voice booming over the radios, we are excited for her retirement and all the new adventures it will bring. Join us in celebrating Wanda Elix's time with SWRE on December 6, 2018 from 4-5:30 p.m. at our Tipton office. If you know Wanda, you know it will be a blast!



# Christmas Goopy Butter Cookies



## Ingredients:

1/2 cup unsalted butter, softened  
1 (8 oz.) package cream cheese, softened  
1 egg  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
1 white cake mix  
1/2 cup sprinkles, divided  
1/2 cup confectioner's sugar

## Instructions:

1. Cream together the butter and the cream cheese. Add the egg and the vanilla and beat just until combined. Beat in the cake mix until well blended. Stir in 1/4 cup of the sprinkles. Refrigerate at least one hour or overnight.
2. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Lightly grease a cookie sheet or line with parchment paper. Scoop out rounded tablespoons of dough and roll into a 1-inch ball. Sprinkle the ball with sprinkles then roll in the confectioner's sugar until completely covered. Place about 2 inches apart onto the prepared cookie sheet. Bake 8 to 10 minutes then allow to sit on the sheet for 2 minutes before transferring to a wire rack to cool completely.

## SWRE Trading Post

*FREE classified non-commercial ads available for SWRE members only. Ads also posted at [www.swre.com](http://www.swre.com).  
Mail ads to Haley Hoover at P.O. Box 310 Tipton, OK 73570, email to [haleyhoover@swre.com](mailto:haleyhoover@swre.com) or call 1-800-256-7973.*

**For Sale:** Used fencing wood posts. 6-8 feet long, varied diameters; corner & insulators. Text/call 940-631-2568

**FREE to a good home:** 2-year-old Rottweiler dog. Hates chickens but loved kids. Very friendly - will lick you to death! Call 580-563-2289.

**For Sale:** PS016510S Spicer large truck transmission. 750 miles since rebuilt. Excellent condition. Fits Cat, Cummins & Detroit. Phone: (580)480-5452 (cell) or (580)639-2341.

**For Sale:** Registered Polled Hereford Bulls and commercial Angus Bulls. 16-20 months old. Call 940-852-5181 or 940-839-5551.

**For Sale:** 2003 Keystone Hornet camper trailer. 31 foot with a 3x12 slide-out. Call (580) 318-4812.

**For Sale:** Betty Boop dolls for \$10 each, also china dolls for \$5 each. Call 940-552-2010 for inquiries

**For Sale:** Young Guinea Chicks, \$3 each. Call 580-471-8055.


**For Sale:** Jack Russell Puppies. Vet checked, first shots, wormed. Located in Blair. 580-301-0253 please no texts.

**For Sale:** 20-22 mo. Old Polled Hereford Bulls, also 12-24 mo. Angus Bulls. Call 940-852-5181 or 940-839-5551.

**For Sale:** 1968 Cub Cadet 124, 42" mower deck, good tires, good condition, used very little, includes bulldozer blade and almost new very heavy compost grinder used 2 times. Also selling a 1973 Cub Cadet 1650 hydrostat, 50" mower deck with new blades, needs tires and engine work. Call 580-482-5722.

**For Sale:** 1987 Cadillac Deville Sedan. One owner, about 110,000 miles. Needs new radiator. Has a fairly new battery. Make offer. Located near Altus. 580-563-2802



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