



Horti-Bull

HORTICULTURAL BULLETIN

Published Monthly by the SAN ANTONIO MEN'S GARDEN CLUB
A club for Men and WOMEN interested in all aspects of gardening
[WEBSITE: mensgardenclubofsa.org](http://mensgardenclubofsa.org)

Volume 2026

January

Number 1



THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER



Alberto Del Rio

A very happy New Year to all! May God bless you with good health, peace, joy, and love with family and friends in 2026. My wish is that all of our members had a welcoming, safe, and enjoyable Christmas and New Year's celebration.

Special thanks to all of our members who did so much to make our Christmas Party a success. It was festive, and again this year, we were able to host a party of very special allied Armed Forces members studying at Lackland AFB. It was indeed a pleasure to meet such talented military members.

Each year, our exciting MGCSA events restart with a BANG! We'll soon discuss our participation in the new Home and Garden Show at Freeman Coliseum, 27-29 March, the 36th Annual Earthwise Living Day 7 March, the Irish Heritage Day, and our very special work with the 70th Annual Regional Science and Engineering Fair at St. Mary's University, 21-22 February. For many years, we've judged student science fair exhibits, awarded well-deserved prizes, and enjoyed working with these talented students. Our involvement means a lot to these STEM-oriented creative youngsters.

It's not too soon to begin planting seeds and cuttings so that we can have lots of choice plants for our many February and March events such as the Hollywood Park Community Garage Sale. Such events and plant sales enhance our reputation as horticultural experts and fund our Club activities.

May you and your family have a happy and prosperous New Year. I look forward to seeing you at our upcoming meetings and special events throughout 2026, and at our first meeting of the new year at a special day, TUESDAY, 6 JANUARY. In February, we'll go back to our 1st THURSDAY of the month meeting schedule, as always.

JANUARY SPEAKER

Our speaker this evening will be Ms. Lee Marlowe. Lee is President of the San Antonio chapter of the Native Plant Society of Texas (NPSOT-SA). A highly regarded native San Antonian Ecologist, her topic will be 'Sustainable Landscaping'.



MGCSA 2026

January Meeting—Tuesday, 06 January at San Antonio Garden Center. We had to change dates because of Holiday.

6:30PM Social—7:00PM Meeting

Guest Speaker is Ms. Lee Marlowe, whose topic will be 'Sustainable Gardening' (see below left)

Coming in 2026

Science Fair 21, 22 February

Annual Earthwise Living Day 7 March

Home & Garden Show at the Joe Freeman Coliseum, 27-29 March: to be discussed

In-depth at the January meeting

—DATES TO BE ANNOUNCED—

Basil Festival

Irish Heritage Festival

Hollywood Park Plant Sale

SAWS Spring Bloom

Festival of Flowers

Peace, Happiness, Good Fortune, and Good Health to all in 2026

HAPPY
New Year

Horti-Bull Gardening Calendar for January 2026 From Dr. Calvin Finch



Our rainfall continues to be skimpy and erratic. Don't neglect to comply with your community's water use rules. As important as compliance is, it also contributes a lot if you participate in establishing the rules. Gardeners have the knowledge and social influence to help produce water use procedures that protect water supplies and meet the needs of the community.

In San Antonio our water conservation success is the result of cooperation between SAWS, gardeners, other property owners, the landscape industry, surrounding communities, and environmental groups. Organizations such as the SA Men's Garden Club, the Master Gardeners, and our elected officials also all deserve special credit for their contributions to insuring that the water use rules in place are effective, scientifically sound and fair to all parties. Keep up the good work!

We have gotten by on a mild winter, but January is usually our coldest month, so be ready to protect your cold tender plants that are not already in the greenhouse such as the lemon and lime citrus trees. Tent-like covers heated by non-LED mechanics' lights work well. Also have some Insulate or other fabric ready to cover the cyclamen if temperatures are predicted to fall below 28 degrees. We usually do not cover pansies, violas, stocks, calendulas or snapdragons. The snapdragons will lose their blooms, but they usually recover for an early spring bloom period.

It is also a good time to plant shade trees. Among the recommended species to use are live oaks, Texas red oaks, cedar elms, Mexican sycamores, bur oaks, Montezuma cypress, anaquas, Mexican white oak, and chinkapin oak. When you plant the new trees allow at least 15 feet between the tree and buildings, plant them at the same depth as they were in their container and cover the root area with 3-5 inches of mulch without piling soil or mulch against the trunk.

Soak the newly dug planting hole with water before planting and add more water every week for the first year to soak the root ball if it hasn't rained. Comply with the CPS Energy tree planting recommendations to conserve energy use and receive a rebate of \$50 per new tree planted. You will also need to protect the newly planted trees from deer rubbing and feeding with a sturdy and tall enough fencing square, plus ensure that the tender new bark is not wounded by string mowers.

There is still time in January to plant more broccoli and vegetable greens' transplants. The fast-maturing sugar pea seeds, radishes, carrots, lettuce, turnips and beets can also be planted by seed. At the end of the month, plant your potatoes in a trench.

In the flower garden replant sweet pea seeds if your earlier planting was not successful because of warm weather or if a freeze shows up in January. They are hindered by both cold or heat, but replanting is worth it because the blooms are so attractive and fragrant.

January is usually a time when the lawn is dormant. Mow it if the winter weeds have taken over but it is not a productive time to apply fertilizer or herbicides. Sod could be planted if the weather stays relatively mild, but Bermuda grass seed won't germinate until about May 1, which is also the best time to fertilize again. Consider aeration and top dressing the lawn at the end of the month or in February.

MGCSA Officers for 2026

President	Alberto Del Rio	210-518-5097
1st V.P.	Charles Bartlett	210-337-6428
2nd V.P.	Vallerie Hartfield	210-240-1466
3rd V.P.	Robin Van Dusen	210-845-6055
Treasurer	Paul Huegel	210-385-8972
Secretary	Jeff Brown	210-993-6215
Chaplain	Vallerie Hartfield	210-240-1466
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Ken Wolfgram	210-788-0177	
2025-2027		
Gary Ross	210-836-4952	
Andrew Waring	210-307-9704	
2026-2028		
Sylvia Tamez	210-884-5861	
Isaac Martinez	210-519-1097	
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EX Officio	Elena Schriner	210-268-8222
HB Advertising	Paul Huegel	
Historian	Paul Huegel	
Webmaster	Ivan Roman	
HB Editor	Larry Cromer	210-521-5350



MGC Officers for 2026: Alberto Del Rio, President; Charles Bartlett, 1st Vice Pres; Jeff Brown, Secretary; Sylvia Tamez, Director; Andrew Waring, Director; Paul Huegel, Treasurer; Vallerie Hartfield, 2nd Vice President; Joe Shinners, Installer. Unavailable for picture: Robin Van Dusen, 3rd Vice President; Gary Ross, Isaac Martinez, David Badorski, Ken Wolfgram, Directors.



Club President and the co-winners of the **2025 President's Trophy**, Marie Reyes And Marion See.

GETTING PLANTS READY FOR FUTURE EVENTS

By Alberto Del Rio

We all have excess plants that we accumulate or that have outgrown our gardens.

It's that time of the year to start potting them up and saving them for the different plant sales we have throughout the year. What you may think of as an excess plant, may be of value to someone else. Let's start separating or digging up the extra plants and save them. If you don't have access to pots or extra room, let us know and we can reach out to other members who may be nearby, and who can help you dig up the plants, or pot them up and take care of them for future events, such as the SAWS 'Spring Bloom' coming up in March--less than 90 days away.

It's easy, just separate your plant, put it in a pot and water it. This gives us a head start by doing this now, and growing them on for later sale. It also gets members, new or old involved. We can all get involved...many hands make less work.

Plants that do well from cuttings --- such as Coleus, Begonias, Pothos Ivy, and Plumeria, are the easiest of all. You can also just

divide overgrown plants in pots or those in the ground, such as gingers, Liriope, Aspidistra, Ruellia, dwarf or standard, monkey grass, Agaves, Sansevieria, and bulbs too, just to name a few. Some plants are also easy to grow from seed....morning glory, moonflowers, Mexican bird of paradise, 4-o'clock, papaya, and many more.

If you have a few extra pots....ornamental, clay, or plastic, please bring them to our meetings. Our members may need your old pots for plants they can bring to our monthly meetings, event plant sales, OR, even for our monthly DOOR PRIZE table.

One last thing --- be sure to put a plant label in each pot when you're offering a plant for sale. Do a little research and put both the scientific name (Latin) and the common name on the plant label. For example, a plant with the name of 'Butterfly Bush' does not tell us much. Too many plants have the same common name ---'Sage'is that plant a Salvia or a Texas Cenizas? Many plants got their common names 150 years ago. We are more knowledgeable now. Anything you can do to make our sales customers more knowledgeable is a very worthy project and adds to our MGC reputation for horticultural expertise.

The Installation of Officers

and Christmas Dinner

by Paul D Huegel

The MGCSA 56th Annual Christmas Dinner and Officer Installation took place on Friday December 5, 2025 at the Oblate Grotto St Eugene Hall. This event was attended by 50 members and guests. Our Coordinator and Committee Chairman, Sylvia Tamez and Co-Chair Ida Santiago Maldonado did an excellent job of managing this successful event. It took many hands to make the 2025 Christmas Celebration a memorable and successful event. Paul Huegel set up his annual wine and beer bar, which did not disappoint. Larry Cromer with the help of Mary Martinez designed and printed the program and took photos at the festivities. Once again Charles Bartlett and President Alberto Del Rio donated to the club 27 ten-dollar gift cards which were door prizes given to the members throughout the evening. Thanks also to all the members that brought their delicious side dishes and desserts to add to our catered meal. A special Thanks to Fr. Richard Hall, for the use of the St Eugene Hall. Thanks to Jeff Brown as the music chairman, thanks also to Joe Shinners who did his usual great and humorous job installing the incoming officers and board. And of course, to our President Alberto Del Rio who welcomed everyone at the beginning and served as our master of ceremony throughout the night. This year as last, we had some special guests from the Language School at Lackland Air Force Base at the invitation of their hosts and club members, Thomas Sako and Naomi Maulden. The attendees were able to mingle and talk with five military junior officers from the Japanese Army, Navy and Air Force who got to experience our Christmas and MGCSA traditions, practice their English and enjoy a Texas barbecue dinner. They also participated in the door prize Christmas gifts and the traditional poinsettia table centerpieces. Also attending was special guest Dr Calvin Finch, who has supported the club with his monthly Horti-Bull articles for over 36 years in addition to promoting the club at various times on his weekly radio show at Milberger Nursery.

The formal Installation of officers at this year's Christmas celebration is where we honored our incoming officers and board for the year 2026. Congratulations to our incoming officers: Alberto Del Rio, president, Charles Bartlett, first vice president, Vallerie Hartfield, second vice president, Robin Van Dusen, third vice president, Jeffry Brown, secretary, and Paul Huegel, treasurer; and our new incoming Directors Sylvia Tamez and Isaac Martinez. The installation ceremony was conducted by Joe Shinners, who added his usual touch of humor to the swearing in of each of the officers. The presentation of the President's Award Trophy went to two of our most deserving members, Marion See and Marie Reyes. We all benefit each meeting from their tireless hostess support for all the meetings and parties. While many members and friends helped with the many tasks associated with putting on this event, we hope more members will rise to the occasion and help next year. We can always use your help at all our events.



Our Japanese Military Guests and their hosts. Dr. Shin Tadakoro, Gary Maulden, Dr. Thomas Sako, Capt. Daigo Ogata, Capt. Masashi Oki, SSgt Special Forces Yasuhiro Ichinohe, 1Lt Ryo Takagi. Sitting, Naomi Maulden and Michiyo Sako. Hosts, Dr. Thomas & Michiyo Sako, and Naomi and Gary Maulden.

6 SUPER HEALTHY SEEDS YOU SHOULD EAT

From Vallerie Hartfield

Seeds, including flaxseeds and hemp seeds, can provide key nutrients and health benefits. They can contain compounds that may reduce your risk of certain health conditions.

Seeds are a great source of fiber. They also contain healthy monounsaturated fats, polyunsaturated fats and many important vitamins, minerals and antioxidants.

When consumed as part of a healthy diet, seeds can help reduce blood sugar, cholesterol and blood pressure.

Flaxseeds: The omega-3 fats are contained within the seed's fibrous outer shell, which humans cannot digest easily. If you want to increase your omega-3 levels, it's best to eat flaxseeds that have been ground. Flaxseeds also contain a number of different polyphenols, especially lignans, which act as important antioxidants in the body. Although there's no recommended intake of flaxseed, experts generally suggest having 2 tablespoons of ground flax a day.

Chia Seeds: Chia seeds are very similar to flaxseeds because they are also good sources of fiber and omega-3 fats, along with other nutrients. They contain a number of important antioxidant polyphenols.

Hemp Seeds: According to a 2024 review, hemp seeds are rich in high quality proteins, and contain healthy fats such as omega-6 and omega-3 fatty acids, as well as vitamins E, D, and A. Hemp seeds also contain natural compounds called polyphenols and terpenoids that offer antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, and antimicrobial benefits. They also contain essential amino acids.

Sesame Seeds: Sesame seeds are one of the oldest known oil crops and are packed with nutrients. They're commonly used to make products like sesame oil, tahini(sesame paste), and sesame milk. These tiny seeds are full of powerful plant compounds including healthy fats, proteins, essential amino acids, vitamins, and antioxidants. Some of the most important compounds in sesame seeds, such as sesamin and sesamol, have been shown to offer a wide range of health benefits. Research suggest they may help:

Reduce inflammation and oxidative stress	Lower cholesterol
Protect the heart, liver, and kidneys	Slow signs of aging
Support skin and hearing health	Fight cancer cells in early studies

Sesame seeds are a simple, tasty, and nutritious addition to a healthy diet.

Pumpkin Seeds: Pumpkin seeds offer powerful health benefits. Rich in nutrients like fiber, healthy fats, amino acids, and antioxidants (like tocopherols and carotenoids), they are packed with compounds that support overall wellness. Studies have shown that pumpkin and its seeds may help:

Reduce inflammation and infections	Manage diabetes
Improve mood and help with depression	Protect the liver
Support male fertility after chemotherapy	Support heart health
Aid digestion and protect against ulcers	

Sunflower Seeds: Sunflower seeds are high in nutritious components, including protein, unsaturated fats, fiber, vitamins (especially E) selenium, copper, zinc, folate, iron, , and more. Sunflower seeds also contain a high amount of oil, mostly made up of linoleic acid, which is a healthy omega-6 fatty acid. Research shows that sunflower oil can help lower total and "bad" LDL cholesterol while increasing "good" HDL cholesterol. This may support heart health. It may also protect against breast cancer, especially in diets common to southern Europe. Studies suggest that oleic acid may suppress a gene(Her2/neu) linked to breast cancer.

Source: 'Advice for Life' by Your True Nature Source:
6 Super Healthy Seeds You Should Eat
Medically reviewed by Imashi Fernando, MS.RDN,CDCES
-Written by Ruairi Robertson, PhD-Updated on August 5, 2025



RAINBOW GARDENS also at 8516 Bandera Road

January
2026



Elena Schriner brought her son and daughter-in-law, Cris and Jessica Heron to the Christmas Party,

WHITE WINTER HONEYSUCKLE

From Charles Bartlett

Greatly appreciated for its intoxicating fragrance, the Winter Honeysuckle (*Lonicera fragrantissima*) is not a vine, but a multi-stemmed shrub famous for its abundant tubular, creamy-white flowers that fill the air with a citrus-like, lemony aroma in mid to late winter. As an added bonus, the budded branches can be cut for intensely fragrant indoor floral arrangements.

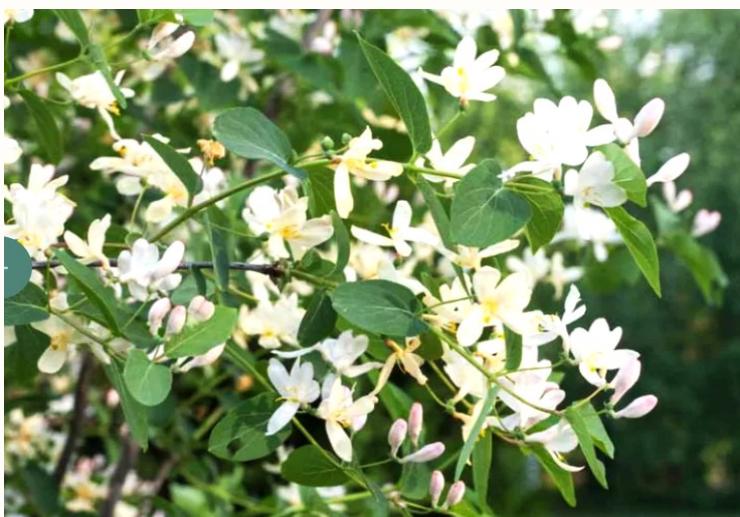
Attractive, oval-shaped, blue-green leaves clothe the arching stems throughout the warm seasons, often persisting through most of the winter in our San Antonio and Hill Country gardens, unless the temperatures drop into the teens. Exceptionally easy to grow, we've seen no pest or disease problems with Winter Honeysuckle in Central Texas, and deer that visit San Antonio gardens steer clear of this attractive shrub.

White Winter Honeysuckle grows well in USDA Zones 4a to 10, prefers full sun, but tolerates partial shade, and in Central Texas grows about 6-8 feet high, and 6-8 feet wide. When well established, this bush honeysuckle is extremely drought tolerant. For example, it's been grown in rocky, gravelly, alkaline limestone-rich soils in Bandera County since the mid - 1990's with no watering. It has subsisted only on natural rainfall for almost 30 years, even in such dry, poor soils.

This particular bush honeysuckle is one of the very rare nectar sources available in mid and late winter (December-February) at a time when few other plants are flowering, and is extremely popular with honey bees, over-wintering butterflies, and moths. Easy to grow in Central Texas, and virtually maintenance free, this fragrant bush is ideal for use as a specimen plant, or in groupings in the landscape, or as an evergreen hedge. It's especially nice near patios, decks, porches, and other outdoor living spaces where the fragrance can be enjoyed up close. It's a stellar addition to a fragrance garden.

This choice bush honeysuckle is native to southern and eastern China, and was first introduced to Europe and the United States in the mid-1800's. It became popular as an ornamental, and was planted for wildlife food (red berries), and shelter, but it has naturalized in several heavily forested Appalachian mountain states (Alabama, Georgia, North and South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia) in areas with about 100 inches of rainfall annually, but it is not listed as an invasive plant west of the Mississippi River. Over the last 100 years that it has been grown in Texas, it has not become invasive – too dry in this area.

The white winter honeysuckle is truly a delight when this gracefully arching 6 foot shrub bears its attractive creamy-white flowers with their irresistible and far-reaching scent! It's perhaps the most note-worthy, and desirable, of all the winter flowering fragrant shrubs and should be a prized plant in your San Antonio garden, if you are interested in assisting nectar-hungry pollinators in your neighborhood. But, like so many of our heirloom treasures, it's often hard to find in our local nursery trade. Look for this low-maintenance prize at our meetings in the Spring – a bonus of your membership in the MGCSA!



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January 2026

SPRING
HOURS
Tuesday -
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9:30-6:00



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January 2026

MGCSA
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Men's Garden Club of San Antonio (MGCSA)

Open to men and women 2026 Membership Application

CK # _____
Cash _____



Annual Membership	3-year Membership	Life Membership
\$20 Individual	\$50 Individual	\$200 Individual
\$25 Joint*	\$60 Joint*	\$250 Joint*

*Joint membership is one additional member residing in the same household. Both members may enjoy all the member benefits of the MGCSA, but only one receives the club newsletter, the Horti-Bull.

Please circle above the type of membership. Use one form for each membership or joint membership. Please print or write legibly.

Name _____ Spouse _____

Street Address _____

City _____ TX 78 _____ Occupation _____

Phone Number _____ E-Mail _____

Best way and time to connect _____

Today's Date _____ New Member _____

Sponsor _____ Renewal _____

Make checks payable to MGCSA; Address:

Paul Huegel, 15619 Cloud Top, SA, TX 78248

Botanical Garden's Children's Vegetable Garden Program

The children had the Vegetable Contest on 11/22/2025. They are now harvesting their vegetables and maintaining and winterizing their plots. The last day for the fall season is 12/6/2025. The more dedicated participants are already visualizing what they will plant come the spring gardening season.

From Vallerie Hartfield

SEAWEED AS A FERTILIZER

By Jane McDaniel

When my mother cooked up carrageen moss, for my frequent sore throat, using a tightly-wound, dried seaweed, with water and lemon juice and honey, I had no idea that seaweed had such a wide variety of uses. That drink soothed the throat: we kids were stuck multiple times with colds during the winter month and the juice, drunk warm or cold, was a welcome respite.

I collected kelp on the nearby beach in Keel this July and spread it around my strawberry plants at the house on Achill Island to protect them from the raw winter winds. From time immemorial, people who lived by the sea have used seaweed as medicine, as a fertilizer and as mulch. In Ireland, particularly, seaweed was harvested to fertilize nutrient-poor post glacial soils, using it together with composted manure as an enrichment. Surrounded by the ocean, collecting the sea's bounty along the coastline in Ireland was a natural thing.

Seaweed has a broad array of benefits for the soil. The application of seaweed fertilizer to the soil, similar to the addition of ripe compost, can also alter the structure of microbial communities. Seaweed aquaculture is promoted as a solution to restore damaged ecosystems while expanding food security. Although the seaweed fertilizer industry is still in its infancy, the rising popularity of organic farming practices is drawing increased attention towards the various applications of seaweed-derived fertilizers and soil additives. This is true for the increased attention to the threats of climate change, and the depletion and degradation of marine resources over the past century, and increased global interest in sustainable solution for blue economic development of the oceans— all a far cry from spreading kelp as mulch amongst my strawberry plants.

“Lazy beds” can still be seen today when one drives through the Irish countryside. These are little fields close to the house, where potatoes were grown in trenches, heaped up as the plants grew above the ground. Minimal crop rotation was the solution. The high value of seaweed in coastal areas often caused political disputes over harvesting rights. In Ireland such rights were established locally before the Republic itself was declared.

And there are many small, seaweed rich bays along the West coast which carry the name Pirate Bay because of nightly sorties to illegally collect seaweed for sale to the pharmaceutical

industry.

Seaweed was a boon for farmers. In the 18th and 19th century Scotland, rocky substrate was placed in the intertidal zones to encourage seaweed growth. The seaweed biomass was then used in composted trenches, similar to Ireland. In Scotland potatoes, oats, wheat and onions were grown directly in the sandy fertilizer mixture, a method that was adopted on all rocky and dirt-poor islands of the northern Atlantic Ocean. And many islands used a dried blend of red and brown seaweeds spread over potato trenches during the winter months before planting the crop in the spring.



Seaweed can be applied in a number of different forms, including refined extract and dried, pulverized organic material. Through its' composition of various bioactive molecules, seaweed functions as strong soil conditioner, bio-remediator (I just made that word up!) and biological pest control. The benefits can include improved soil texture and water retention, and reduced occurrence of soil diseases. On a broader ecological scale, seaweed aquaculture and fertilizer development play significant roles in biogeochemical nutrient cycling through carbon storage and the uptake of nitrogen and phosphorus.

Seaweed fertilizers can be more biodegradable than chemical fertilizers, less toxic and less hazardous. However, global production of seaweed fertilizers was largely phased out when chemical fertilizers were developed in the 1920s; “chemicals” were cheaper to produce.

Synthetic fertilizers, today, are still the predominant global source for commercial agricultural applications due to the low production and their widespread access.

But, on a smaller scale, in our gardens and for small scale farmers, and particularly for coastal communities, seaweed use can be a healthy and soil-improving method of fertilizing. And seaweed fertilizers now come in a variety of forms: foliage spray, bio-stimulants and soil conditioners.

I prefer to go down to Keel Beach and gather fresh kelp from the sea, heavy, wet and dripping, in all its red and brown glory, to mix in with my compost heap and to spread around my strawberry plants. Or collect it in the shallow tidal pools, where “spaghetti” seaweed grows. Delicious: cooked with pasta and pesto sauce.

(Deep thanks to Wikipedia for help with the research!)



Our Officer Installation Czar, Joe Shinners, has just discovered the perfect meat to help him get through the strenuous ceremony.

Award Winning Story Teller, Jane McDaniel, gets ready at the podium for tonight's Christmas story.



