

LONE STAR LIVING

Noel Barfoot combines Case knives with everything that is good about family, fun, and the great state of Texas

Noel Barfoot (*NWBCPA on the Case Knife Forum*) loves being a Texan. For him, that simply means family, Blue Bell Ice Cream, the Dallas Cowboys, and Case® knives. A member of the Case Collectors Club® since 2014, Noel, a Texan by birth who resides in the town of Cypress in suburban Houston and works as a partner in the public accounting firm of McCall Gibson Swedlund Barfoot PLLC, credits his brother-in-law, Terence Thedford, with flipping that switch that never turns off – the one that introduced him to Case knives about 10 years ago.

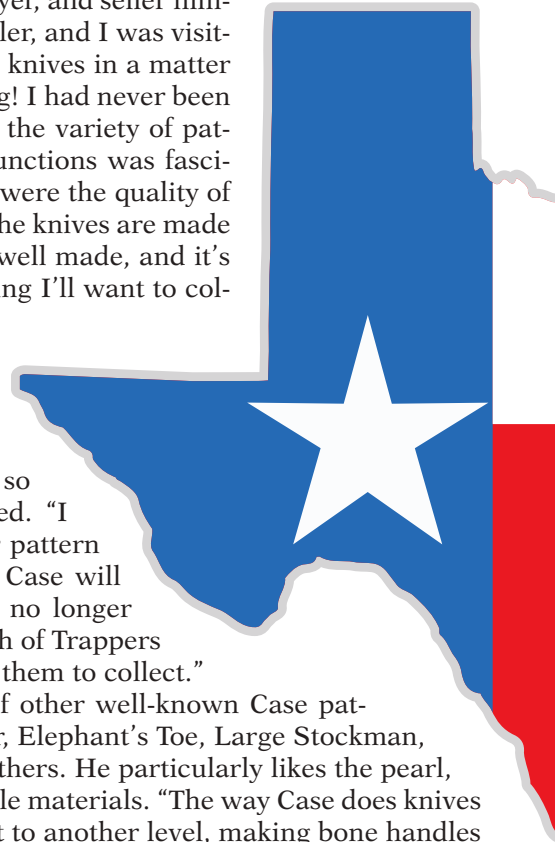
“Terence is a knife collector, buyer, and seller himself,” explained Noel. “He lives in Tyler, and I was visiting him. He got me hooked on Case knives in a matter of a minute or two. It didn’t take long! I had never been much of a guy to carry a knife, but the variety of patterns, sizes, shapes, and different functions was fascinating. The biggest factors, though, were the quality of the craftsmanship and the fact that the knives are made in the U.S.A. I could tell they were well made, and it’s natural that if I start to like something I’ll want to collect it.”

Some say everything is bigger in Texas, and true to form Noel has committed to Case knives with lots of knives in his collection so far. “I started to count them a month or so ago, but I got sidetracked,” he laughed. “I have gravitated toward the Trapper pattern because of its size and shape, and Case will probably be making it until I’m no longer above ground. They make a bunch of Trappers every year. So, I’ll have plenty of them to collect.”

Noel also owns a number of other well-known Case patterns, including the Cigar Whittler, Elephant’s Toe, Large Stockman, Pocket Hunter, Clasp, and many others. He particularly likes the pearl, abalone, and mammoth ivory handle materials. “The way Case does knives these days, they have really taken it to another level, making bone handles look like stag and with the new designs they do,” he commented.

Checking into the Case Knife Forum once or twice a day, Noel stays in touch with the Case collector community. “I’ll see what’s going on, post a picture, see what other guys are selling, and maybe sell a knife here and there myself. Sometimes I’ll buy a set of 30 knives and break it up to help someone else fill in their own collection. I don’t get to go to as many events as I would like to,” he remarked.

For the last two years, the limited travel opportunities have been to the Shepherd Hills Cutlery Celebration in the Ozarks in Lebanon, Missouri. The drive time is about 11 hours, but the atmosphere of fun and enjoyment is well worth the trip. In October 2016, Noel and his eight year old son also attended the Texas Knives & Collectibles Case Consumer Event in Spurger,



Texas. For now, these events are special father and son times, although other members of the family, his wife of 15 years, Sharla, and 10 year old daughter, Kayla, share a growing interest in Case® knives with the guys. By the way, Noel is quite proud of his son's name – Case.

Was it tough to convince Sharla to go with that name? “Well, you don’t pitch it like he would be named after a knife,” Noel admitted. “It’s about something that goes well with his sister’s name and suits a boy too. For the first year, Sharla didn’t associate the name with the brand, but now she fully grasps it and understands. Not long after that, my brother-in-law and his wife found out they were expecting a baby. He wanted the name Case, too. But I got it first!”

A true collector at heart, Noel’s interests extend to a couple of other favorites, comic books and golf clubs. A lifelong golfer, he played for his alma mater, the University of Houston, and collects the clubs that he continues to use during the rounds he plays today. “From the time I could walk, my dad and I played golf nearly every day,” he related. “I try to get out a few times a month depending on the weather, but I’m not a competitive player these days. We play golf as a family now.”

The Barfoot family also recently pitched in to help with relief efforts after Hurricane Harvey devastated the Houston area with high winds, torrential rain, and severe flooding. Although Cypress is more than 80 miles from the Texas Gulf Coast, the area was inundated. “Our family was very fortunate not to have water in the house,” Noel advised, “but others were seriously impacted, and we did what we could do to help them. There are so many creeks and bayous around here, and when it rains more than 50 inches, all that water has to go somewhere.”

Noel’s extensive comic book collection rivals his number of knives. “I have lots of them,” he said. “I’ve collected them since I was 12 years old, and I just turned 44.”

One of the most satisfying aspects of collecting Case knives is the opportunity to display at least a portion of the collection for others to enjoy. Noel has dedicated some space to that pursuit and finds that maintaining his knives is less labor intensive than some might believe. “Fortunately, I have space with air conditioning, low lighting, and low humidity,” he noted. “The knives that are not on display are wrapped in paper, and I wax some of them from time to time. If I did that with all the knives, though, it would be a full-time job. I have had some knives wrapped for 10 years and can pull them out and look at them and no degradation has happened.

“In stores they have sectional displays that stack on top of one another,” Noel continued, “and there is metal backing that uses magnets to attach and hold knives in the display. I had a buddy who shut down his knife business, and he had a few of these sectionals. I bought all he had. Those are in my display room. Other knives are in 13 X 18 display cases where you open up and place each knife in foam backing. Some of the Case mint sets come in their own displays and those are out for viewing, along with a few other types of displays that I have bought from stores.”

Case knives fit well with Noel Barfoot’s lifestyle and his affection for the Lone Star State. “There is nothing I love more than Texas and being a Texan,” he smiled. “I have a hard time talking about myself without mentioning that I am a diehard Cowboys fan. When I was a little boy, my grandma and I would sit there and watch the Cowboys together and holler at the TV! And have you ever had Blue Bell Ice Cream? My favorite flavor is homemade vanilla. With my wife’s apple dumplings. that’s my favorite dessert. In fact, I just had some for my last birthday.”

Like so many others, the Barfoot family is making memories with Case knives as well. It’s a Texas tradition.

