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AMARILLO'S PREMIER LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2026

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WHAT'S INSIDE

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There's no right way to make a taco, but we found a lot of local reasons to eat one.

PHOTO BY SHANNON RICHARDSON

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PHOTO BY SHANNON RICHARDSON

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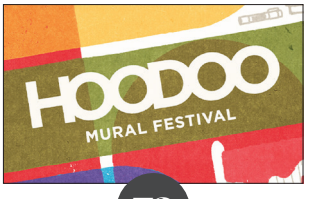

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AMARILLO'S PREMIER LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE

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PLEASE RECYCLE

In spite of trying to avoid the extremely hot weather this summer, we've put together two trails to explore in this issue: our own Taco Trail and, in partnership with Visit Amarillo, their Boots & Brews Trail. Clearly, we were overly optimistic about the weather conditions, but all you hot-weather lovers out there can use this opportunity to eat and drink your way around Amarillo. (Please be responsible and get a ride when you need to!)

I always say I have the best job in Amarillo. And here's one reason why: When we set out to cover tacos from each area of Amarillo, some of the restaurants were entirely new to me. So my weeks have been filled with discovery—new neighborhoods, new super yummy food, and new people. Hearing the stories behind each of the taquerias we visited encouraged me. Over and over we learned about generations of cooks who loved feeding people. When our interview subjects talked about their mothers, grandmothers, fathers and grandfathers, their food heritage, it was touching and so relatable. Who doesn't have a favorite recipe that's been passed down for generations?

This Hispanic Heritage Month (Sept. 15 to Oct. 15) venture out and discover the standout restaurants we feature, but please also pay attention to the lists we've included for each locale. We did our best to include every taco restaurant in the area. If and when you try something new, let us know! We'll be waiting to see taco explorers on social media over the next few months.

¡Qué lo pases bien!

Michele

I grew up about 200 feet from Amarillo Slim. My family lived at the corner of Lynette and Virginia in a newer portion of Paramount Terrace in the 1970s. Slim's property stretched almost a whole city block, just a street and an alley away. We knew his name was "Amarillo Slim" and that, according to my parents, he was really famous. We assumed he was really rich, too, because his backyard was huge. My brother Brooks and I would ride our BMX bikes through the alley behind it. I remember the first time we climbed up his privacy fence to stand on the fencerails and peek into the backyard, which we assumed hid some sort of enchanted kingdom.

It did, actually. There were horses back there. And a golf green with a flag. And a pool. And a tennis court! *Who in the world was this guy? Was he named after Amarillo or was Amarillo named after him?* This was pre-internet, so my childhood questions went unanswered for at least a decade.

I never met Thomas Austin Preston Jr. but he has always felt like part of my story, in the same way that the neighborhood of your childhood is part of anyone's story. For some, he was larger than life. For me, he was a local mystery who practically lived next door. When Clayton Trutor asked if we were interested in an article about the legend of Amarillo Slim, saying *yes* was no gamble at all.

Jason

2026 AMARILLO COLLEGE

VOLLEYBALL

SCHEDULE

AUGUST

13	Blue/White Scrimmage	2 p.m.
15	Badger Alumni Match	11 a.m.
18	WT Scrimmage	2 p.m.
20-22	NMMI Classic	
24	vs Lamar	6 p.m.
26	@ NCTC	10 a.m.
26	@ Navarro College	1 p.m.

SEPTEMBER

1	@ Lamar	6 p.m.
4-5	at Blinn Tourney	
10	vs Blinn	6 p.m.
11	vs Trinidad St.	10 a.m.
11	vs McCook	8 p.m.
12	vs Navarro	1 p.m.
16	@ Clarendon	6 p.m.
19	vs NMJC	2 p.m.
23	@ Midland	6 p.m.
26	@ Odessa	2 p.m.
30	vs NMMI	6 p.m.

OCTOBER

3	vs Frank Phillips	2 p.m.
7	@ Western Texas	6 p.m.
10	vs Clarendon	2 p.m.
14	@ New Mexico JC	7 p.m.
17	vs Midland	2 p.m.
21	vs Odessa	6 p.m.
24	@ NMMI	3 p.m.
28	@ Frank Phillips	6 p.m.
31	vs WTC	2 p.m.

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KAYLA MORRIS

Kayla has been designing professionally for 15 years. She was raised in the Panhandle and graduated with a design degree from West Texas A&M University.

SHANNON RICHARDSON

Shannon has been a commercial/advertising photographer for more than 35 years. His work can be seen at shannonrichardson.com.

WES REEVES

Wes was raised in Wellington and has lived in Amarillo since the early '90s. He serves as chairman of the Potter County Historical Commission.

NICK GERLICH

Nick is the Hickman Professor of Marketing at West Texas A&M University, where he has taught since 1989. In his spare time, he travels around the country in search of vintage signage and other outdoor advertising.

BRITTANI PREECE

Brittani is an award-winning photographer whose work has appeared in national media including *Good Morning America* and *Inside Edition*. See Brittani's work at solo.to/brittanipreece.

GUNNAR McCONLOGUE

Gunnar is a competitive speaker and self-taught designer. Whether through a lens, keyboard or conversation, his goal is to find what makes this region tick and make sure it doesn't go unnoticed. Gunnar is currently an intern with *Brick & Elm*.

REECE WELCH

Reece is a junior at the University of North Texas, where he is studying Digital and Print Journalism with a minor in Political Science. He was born and raised in Amarillo. Reece is currently an intern with *Brick & Elm*.

CHERYLE COOPER

Cheryle Cooper is an editor and freelance writer, with work published in both the fiction and nonfiction market. She is also an adjunct instructor at Amarillo College. Currently, she is organizing a book that compiles her short stories, essays and poetry.

CLAYTON TRUTOR

Clayton writes for many national and regional publications about American culture. He's the author of *Loserville: How Professional Sports Remade Atlanta—and How Atlanta Remade Professional Sports* and *Boston Ball: Rick Pitino, Jim Calhoun, Gary Williams and the Forgotten Cradle of Basketball Coaches.*

VENICE MINCEY

Venice is a natural light photographer, specializing in senior, family and child photography. Venice has been taking photos for more than 20 years. See her work at venicemynceyphotography.com.

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Bar 3

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Take Five

AMY JUBA, CFRE

1. What are some of the most impactful or personally fulfilling fundraising campaigns you've worked on recently, or nonprofits you've helped?

Choosing just one is tough! But Dove Creek Equine Rescue, my longest-term client, holds a special place in my heart. Founder Laurie Higgins-Kerley hired me in 2021 to clean up their donor database and integrate it into new software. From there, my role grew to include strategic planning, grant writing, donor stewardship and helping with fundraising events. And the biggest surprise? I wasn't really a horse person before Dove Creek—but I am now! Ask me about my "boyfriend," Boone, a big, beautiful brown Quarter Horse who has become a special part of my life through Dove Creek's Led by Horses Equine-Assisted Coaching program.

2. How did you get into this specialized kind of consulting?

After graduate school, I worked for three large companies, building a foundation in marketing, sales, management and business finance. Eventually, I realized I wanted to put those skills to work for something I cared deeply about: helping nonprofits make a difference. My first step into the nonprofit world was political fundraising and campaign management, followed by consulting with the Amarillo Area Foundation, and then coordinating a major capital campaign at Harrington Cancer Center. But perhaps my most fun and challenging role was serving as development director for Don Harrington Discovery Center, where I put every fundraising skill in my toolbox to work. In 2016, I hung out my own shingle as a nonprofit consultant.

3. Part of your job is asking people for money. What's the single biggest mistake you see organizations making when they reach this point?

Here's a little secret: Asking for money isn't my favorite part of fundraising. My sweet spot is building the systems, strategies and relationships that set a nonprofit up for fundraising success. Most fundraising mistakes can be traced to three things: not having a solid plan, asking too soon and failing to pivot after failure. The dreaded words "But we've always done it that way" can haunt organizations that are afraid to change and evolve.

4. Costs are rising and a lot of people may have "donor fatigue." In what ways are nonprofits adapting to this new reality?

I'm a loud and proud non-believer in "donor fatigue," the mythical beast that frightens fundraisers and boards far more than it should! People haven't stopped being generous, but people don't give if you don't ask them. But how we ask matters. Donors want to understand the difference their gifts will make and feel connected to the organizations they support. That means nonprofits need to communicate more, not less, and find creative ways to tell their stories. I think our area nonprofits are getting better at doing exactly that. (The Panhandle Gives encourages organizations to think outside the box when asking for support.)

5. What has your work shown you about the generosity of Texas Panhandle people?

My colleagues around the country are often surprised when I talk about the number of successful multi-million-dollar campaigns happening in a community our size. They may not know exactly where Amarillo is on the map, but many have heard of The Panhandle Gives! Its history of raising more than $10 million for 260 nonprofits speaks volumes about the generosity of people throughout the region.

WEEKEND EVENTS

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 6TH
Shopping from 12 PM - 8 PM

RED'S EARLY BIRD SHOPPING
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Refreshments and giveaways to the first 100 shoppers!

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5 PM - 8 PM
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SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 7TH
Shopping from 10 AM - 6 PM

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 8TH
Shopping from 11 AM - 4 PM

PICTURES & CRAFTS WITH SANTA
11 AM - 1 PM

SILENT AUCTION CLOSES
2 PM

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Railroads

Modern Amarillo exists because of trains. The Fort Worth and Denver City Railway transformed a small settlement into a booming railroad town. Amarillo's original location, founded by J.I. Berry, was situated a few miles east until the railroad arrived. Within a few years, most "Old Amarillo" businesses and residents had moved closer to the tracks.

1887

Amarillo's founding due to the arrival of the Fort Worth and Denver City Railway

14

Floors in the historic Santa Fe Building, built in 1930, originally serving as regional headquarters for the Santa Fe railroad

931

BNSF employees in Amarillo

132

Trains passing daily through the BNSF Railroad crossing at Farm-to-Market Road 1541/ Washington Street, the busiest crossing in Amarillo

4

Freight railroad companies operating in the Texas Panhandle (BNSF Railway, Panhandle Northern Railroad, Texas North Western Railway, Union Pacific Railroad)

3.1 million

New cars and trucks moved by BNSF through Texas in 2024

2,595

Route miles owned by BNSF in Texas

345

Public rail crossings in the Texas Department of Transportation Amarillo District (279 include tracks and roads at the same level, 35 railroad overpasses and 31 railroad underpasses)

[sources: TxDOT, BNSF, Federal Railroad Administration]

New in Town

See what's launched and landed.

Social Club

Newly open in The Plaza at Tascosa is the Social Club, 1375 N. Western St., Suite 400, this 18+ club represents a private-membership poker club and social gaming room.

Planet Fitness

Planet Fitness is opening a new location on Amarillo's East Side, in the shopping center at 3510 E. I-40. It should be open by December of this year.

Spirit Halloween

It's that time again. Spirit Halloween is opening up two Amarillo locations this season, at 3339 Bell St. and inside Westgate Mall.

Top Rail Fence

John and Xana Dyer have recently launched Top Rail Fence, a company that specializes in custom fences, along with residential, agricultural and commercial gates.

Nice Items Only

Open on Saturdays, Nice Items Only, a new local vintage decor and collectibles store, has opened at 6500 Canyon Drive, #240. Their preference is right there in the name.

Marshall's

Marshall's has finally opened after months of anticipation. The location at 3220 S. Soncy Road occupies the former Office Depot spot.

eyes
ON WHAT MATTERS
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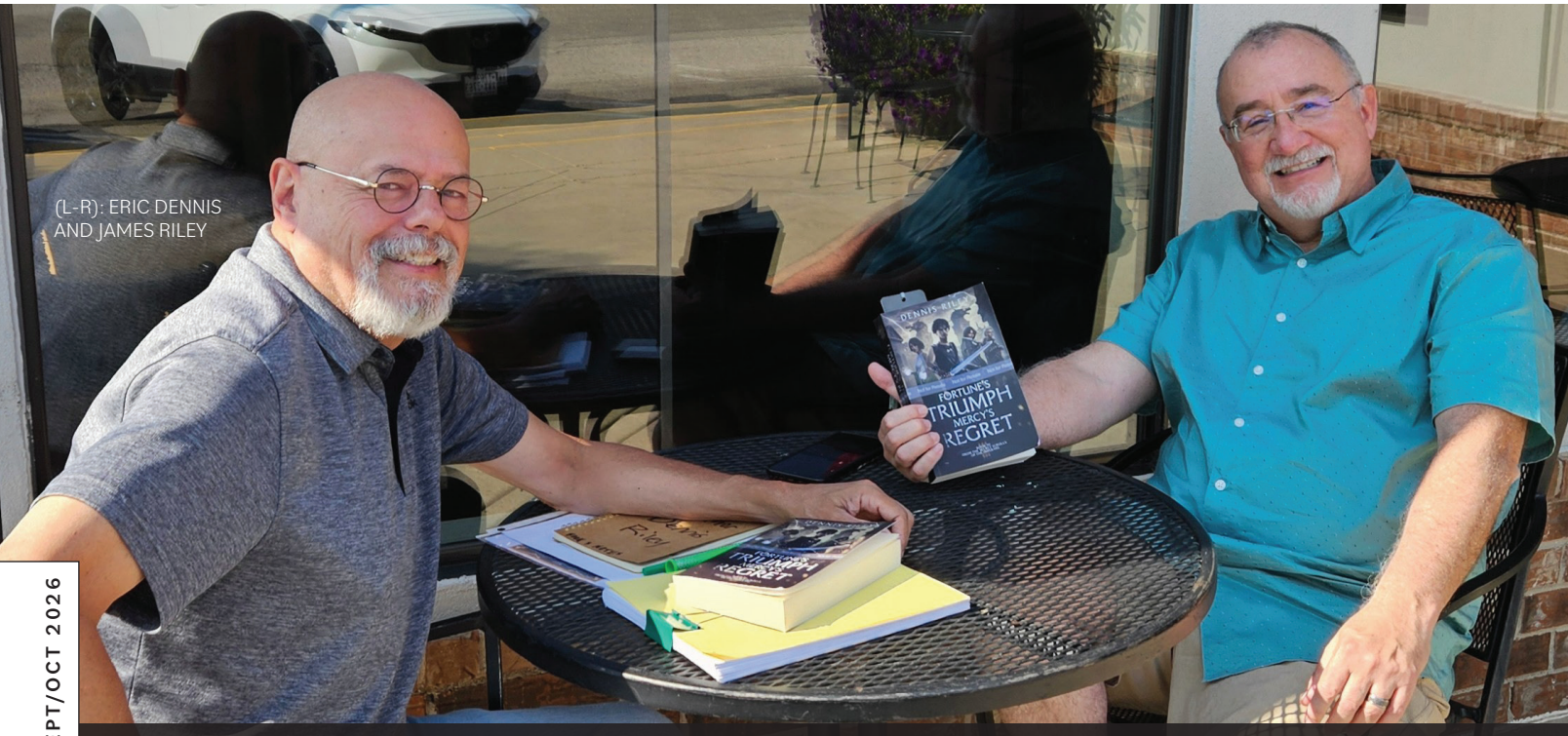

(L-R): ERIC DENNIS AND JAMES RILEY

A Tale of Two Authors

HOW ERIC DENNIS AND JAMES RILEY TURNED 40 YEARS OF TABLETOP GAMING INTO A FANTASY TRILOGY

BY CHIP CHANDLER

Author Dennis Riley should have been mortal enemies—with himself.

Let me explain. "Dennis Riley" is the pen name for two Amarillo-based authors who've been best friends since high school: Eric Dennis, a sixth-grade language arts teacher and Amarillo Independent School District Secondary Teacher of the Year in 2025, and James Riley, who works in the utilities department for the City of Amarillo. Eric went to Tascosa High School, and James to Amarillo High.

But soon after they met in 1979, they started playing tabletop role-playing games like *Dungeons & Dragons*, helping them discover their love of fantasy realms and leading to their now-lifelong friendship.

In August, the duo released *Fortune's Triumph, Mercy's Regret,* the conclusion to their urban fantasy trilogy *Fortune & Mercy.* We spoke a few days before the official release about how their abiding love of gaming has paid off, how they decided to start writing together after 40 years of friendship, and who wins when they have an argument. (This interview has been edited for clarity and length.)

Chip Chandler: What was it about *Dungeons & Dragons* that solidified your friendship?

Eric Dennis: *Dungeons & Dragons* is like playing cowboys and Indians when you're kids, only you're sitting at a table with dice and there are actually rules. It's really fun, collaborative storytelling, but there's also a competitive element to it. I think we were both drawn to those kinds of things.

James Riley: We have a shared love of the fantasy realm, so that helped fuel our imagination. I ended up really early on as the Game Master, the guy who has to create the story and runs the game, so to speak, even though it's a collaboration. That got me interested in storytelling. I love creating a big, expansive world. And that eventually led, much later than it should, into writing.

ED: It was like *Stranger Things*, even though James and I and our friends never encountered any world-destroying monsters in Amarillo, that camaraderie is pretty much what we experienced when we sat down at the table from week to week.

CC: Are you still playing?

JR: I run a game pretty often, but lately, I've been taking a break because I want to play every once in a while.

CC: Whose idea was it to start writing together?
JR: There was a point around 2020 when Eric said he'd love to do a collaborative project. I said, "Let's write." A few years prior to that, Eric ran a game and I took really detailed notes. I started adding things to it, and it turned into a story. I should have kept at it, but I didn't. But around 2020, we started writing a short story just to see if we could, then it turned into a novella, then into a novel, then into a long novel that we split into a trilogy.

ED: James won't say it, but the guy has a natural talent for writing. I've been trying to get him to write since the 1990s, but I could never seem to convince him. Around October of 2020, I asked him to coffee and asked him to do something together so we could hold each other accountable, and thank goodness, he did bite on that.

JR: I'm very grateful he focused me on writing. It's been a lot of fun.

CC: What's the cowriting process like?
ED: We both have full-time jobs, so time is the difficult part. I don't know if we had a process in the beginning, did we, James?

JR: Not really. It was just, "Do you want to take a chapter?"

ED: The way the process has evolved is that we meet at a coffee shop every Sunday for 2 ½ hours and look at what we've written or outlined over the week. We divvy up the responsibilities for scenes or chapters. I have a routine where I try to write a little bit before I head to school and carve out a couple of hours on Saturdays. Once we have the big-picture stuff mapped out, we individually write the chapters.

JR: Writers often fall into two categories—plotters or "pantsers," where you plot everything out or you fly by the seat of your pants. We're mostly plotters, but at some point, we become pantsers.

ED: It ends up being really fun. We'll come to the table on Sunday mornings with a chapter for each of us to read. Sometimes, I'll read what James has written, and it really surprises me in a good way, almost like I'm a fresh reader myself. Other times, I come when I'm bouncing on the inside and can't wait for him to see what I've done.

CC: Have you ever written yourselves into a corner?
ED: Many times. But that's what's so great about having a coauthor. James can look at things from an objective point of view, whereas I'm mired in it. He can say something on a Sunday morning that might hurt at first, but he's usually right.

CC: Who wins arguments between the two of you?
ED: James and I have known each other for a long time. We're best friends. Both of us love reading, love talking, love creating and we love debating. Sometimes, it ends up being a mini-debate trying to make your case with the other author, and in the end, it's down to who has the most persuasive skill and the most evidence.

JR: I can think of plenty of times where we each say we like what we're doing and decide to let the reader decide.

ED: I've conditioned myself at this point that when I hear him saying something like that, I just drop it. It's obviously something important to him, or he wouldn't use that kind of comeback.

CC: Tell me about the series and the new novel.
JR: It's the final chapter of the trilogy. It's been a long journey for our main character, Ulric Darktalon, a street thief/con artist by trade who has gone to the big city, the capital of an ancient republic that's similar to Rome. The gods are very real. He thought he was on the fast track to fame and fortune, but he's had to learn the hard way that you have to pay your dues. Nothing comes easy without sacrifice.

ED: Our series is *Fortune & Mercy*, and Ulric worships the goddess of fortune and luck, and Persius Julia worships the goddess of mercy. Those two themes run throughout the whole trilogy. Sometimes they work great together. Sometimes they're at odds with each other.

CC: Are you working on anything now?
ED: We can't give anything away yet, but we already know what we're going to be writing next. Once we get [*Fortune's Triumph, Mercy's Regret*] out into the world, we'll start outlining and planning our next novel.

JR: Our next two novels. Are you OK with saying that?

ED: Uh-oh.

JR: We're still going to collaborate, but we're going to let each other write a kickoff to a new series each. We'll still work as each other's beta readers, bouncing things off each other.

ED: They'll both still be released under the Dennis Riley pen name.

CC: Could you ever have imagined, sitting around that D&D table in high school, that fantasy would become so mainstream in 2026?
JR: That's a topic that's very close to our hearts.

ED: We imagined it a million times. We hoped and wished for it a million times when we were kids, teens and young adults. But we never imagined it would be like this. There were some swords-and-sorcery movies in the '80s; they were a little cheesy, but we took what we could get. But from the *Lord of the Rings* [film trilogy] on, it's been much greater than we could ever imagine.

JR: I always thought it would stay on the fringes, but *Lord of the Rings* and *Harry Potter* changed everything. You have to be careful what you wish for. When something becomes very popular, the hard, exotic edges get rubbed off. I want to try to bring that back. At least that's the goal. I'll leave it for readers to decide.

PROVIDED PHOTOS

King of the Playground

HOW A ONE-OFF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PLAYGROUND PROJECT TURNED INTO A FAMILY LEGACY

BY CHIP CHANDLER

When Tyler Hall was a second-grader at Sleepy Hollow Elementary School, his dad spearheaded a project to put in a new school playground.

When it was completed, Randy Hall vowed to never do another playground. Until he did. And did. And did again.

Randy installed countless playgrounds as founder of RGH Landscape, and now Tyler and brother-in-law Jeff Shelburne are continuing the tradition, putting together play spaces throughout Amarillo, Canyon and the region. That's not all, though. Thanks to a government contract, they're also installing them for air force and naval bases around the country.

Among their local projects are installations at John Ward Memorial Park, John Stiff Memorial Park, Benton Park and AISD schools in Amarillo; and Kylie Hiner Memorial Playground in Canyon. Further away, they've installed the Monahans Kids Zone in Monahans, Texas, as well as on military bases in Anchorage, Spokane, Cheyenne and Key West, among others.

Tyler and I recently spoke about what it takes to build the perfect playground and why some old favorites are making a return. [This conversation has been edited for clarity and length.]

Chip Chandler: How did your father first get into the playground business?
Tyler Hall: When I was a second-grader at Sleepy Hollow, my dad was on the PTA, which purchased a playground for the school. My dad kind of spearheaded the installation, and by the time it was finally done, the sales rep came to him and said, would you do another one? And he said, "I never want to do another one of those things again." He finally realized he could make some pretty decent money because it's pretty specialized. And now we're to the point where it's all we do.

CC: What was so hard about that project as a beginner?
TH: They had retooled the factory and a lot of things weren't quite right and that added to the difficulty, but overall, putting in play equipment is difficult. It takes very specialized people. What we see a lot of is people that think they can handle it. It's really difficult to get it all right because everything's got to be right from your elevations to what size bolts you use in certain places.

It ends up costing people more money because we have to fix what they messed up.

CC: Obviously, it's been very successful for you guys, and that makes sense why you're still doing it. But what pulled y'all into this

direction to continue such complex work?
TH: Really just because it's fun. It's definitely difficult and very labor-intensive at times, but it's also fun. It's not a cookie-cutter, you know? You're not doing the same thing every day, and I think that's what's always enticed me.

CC: What's it like when a playground finally opens and you see kids enjoying it for the first time?
TH: It's really cool, especially watching the kiddos. Some of the most fun parts are whenever you're out there putting in the playground, and the kids are right there [asking], "When is it going to be done?" And hearing how excited they are when they see each day's progress whenever they come out for recess. People ask, what's your why? And that's really it.

CC: I'm a child of the '70s. We had burning-hot metal slides, and merry-go-rounds that you spin as fast as you can and try to hang on for dear life. Why has everything changed so much?
TH: The answer to that question is actually pretty simple. There was a while where it did seem like they made them too safe, you know, where it was not as fun. The real reason for the safety is that they have what we call "risk vs. hazard" in the industry. Risk is where a kid can look at, let's say, the top of the slide, and go, I'm going to climb up on top and jump off of it. Well, that kid has made a decision. He knows that there's just a chance he'll get hurt. Obviously, we don't want him doing that off of a 14-foot slab. We have to figure out basically what a risk is versus what a hazard is. The hazard is something the kid can't see, like a bolt that sticks out too far. It can be a protrusion or where it could hurt them and they would never even think it could. We're trying to mitigate the risk part for the kids.

CC: To be clear, I'm not advocating for those stupid things I did when I was a kid.
TH: Right. This might surprise you, but the metal slides are coming back.

CC: Really?
TH: Yes. They've done studies on them. [Temperature-wise] they get within one or two degrees of the plastic slides.

CC: Yeah?
TH: Yeah, yeah, I know. They showed us some pictures from Phoenix, and I'm like, I wouldn't have bought it if they didn't show me pictures from Phoenix in July.

CC: As a kid, what was your favorite thing on a playground?
TH: I always liked the slides and the monkey bars.

CC: So do you have to include those in your projects now? Are those musts?
TH: Oh yeah, and the kids love them. The monkey bars, they call them overhead ladders now, are not really recommended for children ages 2 to 5. So it just depends on how inclusive they want to be. But your big slides are all always included. The other thing that I've seen trending is lots of ropes. They're really cool because it adds a challenge for the kids. They have to problem solve a little bit more, which is fun to watch.

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The Hot List

Temperatures may soon be returning to a reasonable range, but the forecast is fantastic for fun throughout September and October. Mark your calendars for these must-dos, and don't forget to subscribe to the free *Brickly* and *Flavorillo* newsletters for weekly entertainment picks.

Amarillo Tri-State Fair & Rodeo: The area's biggest fall tradition arrives Sept. 18 to 27, featuring PRCA rodeo action, concerts, fairway fun and more food on a stick than you can, well, shake a stick at.

Hoodoo Mural Festival: The celebration of public art returns to its new home at Arts in the Sunset on Sept. 26, with a lineup of DJs, jazz, rock and Texas country acts, as well as some of the top muralists in the country. Learn more about this year's festival on page 72.

Halloween: The spooky season will offer fun for kids and adults throughout October, with the return of favorite haunted houses and, given that the holiday falls on a Saturday, a slew of costume parties and trunk-or-treat opportunities. Plus, don't miss out on the family activities at such favorites as Maxwell's Pumpkin Farm and Gee Family Farm.

Arts: The 2026-2027 arts season gets into full swing with Amarillo Little Theatre's *Come from Away from* Sept. 3 to 20 and *Dracula: A Comedy of Terrors* from Oct. 15 to 25; WT Opera's *One Ounce Operas* on Sept. 11; Amarillo Symphony's *Tchaikovsky's Fourth* on Sep. 18 and 19 and *Made in America: Celebrate 250* on Oct. 23 and 24; Chamber Music Amarillo's *A Grand Tour* on Sept. 12 and *Echoes and Landscapes* on Oct. 10; Amarillo Opera's *The Pirates of Penzance* on Oct. 10; and WT Theatre's *The Lightning Thief: The Percy Jackson Musical* from Oct. 14 to 18, among other, as-yet-unannounced performances and exhibitions.

Music: Americana greats Hayes Carll and The Band of Heathens team up for a Sept. 4 show at The Lumberyard in Canyon. Other concerts of note will include Josh Weathers on Sept. 19 at the Tri-State Fair; Giovannie & The Hired Guns on Sept. 24, The Toadies on Sept. 25 and The Randy Rogers Band on Oct. 3 at The Lumberyard; Christian band For King + Country on Oct. 2 in the Civic Center Auditorium; rockers Gooseberry on Oct. 2 and The Filthy Heathens on Oct. 30 at the Golden Light Cantina; and Christian star Steven Curtis Chapman on Oct. 30 at The Church at Quail Creek.

Events: For its 50th anniversary, the Don Harrington Discovery Center revives a classic Labor Day tradition with Discover! 5.0 on Sept. 5. Other highlights include Wing Wars on Sept. 12; *Bluey's Big Play* on Sept. 15; comedian Alfred Robles on Sept. 24; Panhandle PBS's Savor the Goods with Steven Raichlen on Oct. 1; Martha's Home fundraiser A Night in New Orleans on Oct. 3; the Amarillo Chamber of Commerce's Good Times Celebration Barbecue Cook-Off on Oct. 8; and the Discovery Center's Mad Scientist Ball on Oct. 24.

Movies: One of the most bizarre (and bizarrely appealing) trailers that's dropped in recent weeks teases *Wicker*, a fantasy romance opening Oct. 30 that features the brilliant Olivia Colman as a lonely fisherwoman who hires the local basketmaker (Peter Dinklage) to make her a husband out of, yes, wicker. (He's played by Alexander Skarsgard.) Other films to check out include crime thriller *How to Rob a Bank* and animated reboot *Tom and Jerry: Forbidden Compass* on Sept. 4; sequel *Practical Magic 2* and historical drama *The Uprising* on Sept. 11; horror reboot *Resident Evil* on Sept. 18; animated adventure *Forgotten Island* and true-crime reexamination *Primetime* on Sept. 25; thriller *Verity* and dramedy *Digger* on Oct. 2; horror flick *Other Mommy* on Oct. 9; period romance *Sense and Sensibility* and action remake *Street Fighter* on Oct. 16; and DCU horror flick *Clayface* on Oct. 23.

CHIP CHANDLER
Chip is the city's arts and entertainment expert, having covered area events since 1998.

Tri-State Fair & Rodeo

September 18th-27th, 2026

IT'S POURING INSIDE
CELLAR 55
KITCHEN | WINE | SPIRITS

ELAINE KRAZER AND PATRICK TATE

PHOTOS BY SHANNON RICHARDSON

107 Roasters & Cafe

Global coffee expertise, music-inspired drinks, and a massive coffee roaster arrive in Southeast Amarillo. →

"It made sense to come here," Elaine Krazer says, surrounded by walls full of classic rock 'n' roll regalia at 107 Roasters & Cafe, a newcomer to Amarillo's coffee scene. "It wasn't just us opening another location. It was coming home."

Located in an industrial area near 46th Avenue and Washington Street, tucked behind an AutoZone and south of a roofing supply company, 107 Roasters & Cafe is slightly off the beaten path for Amarillo's coffee community. With few espresso-based coffee shops on that side of the city, though, it won't go unnoticed for long.

107 Roasters & Cafe opened in late May after owners Elaine and Dave Krazer moved their roastery and coffee shop to Amarillo from McKinney. It was a popular, established business in the Metroplex suburb, operating multiple locations and earning repeat "Best Coffee" honors.

Moving that success to Amarillo wasn't guaranteed. "We had huge fans," Elaine says. "It was a big risk."

They saw opportunity on the southeast side of Amarillo, but moving wasn't purely a business decision. Dave is the head roaster and Elaine's son, Patrick Tate, creates and serves the shop's 107 drinks named after musical hits. ("Sweet Chai of Mine" or "Livin' La Vida Mocha" are especially noteworthy.) Elaine acts more as the entrepreneur and financial backer of the enterprise, and she had previously lived in Amarillo. When the opportunity arose to return to Pantex, where she works as an IT project manager, the family decided to uproot both their lives and their coffee business.

Amarillo has plenty of locally owned coffee shops, but it also has the kind of coffee culture the Krazers can appreciate. Elaine points out that, in the Dallas area, traffic usually dictates where customers stop for coffee. It's location- and geography-based. Amarillo and Canyon coffee-drinkers, however, tend to value loyalty as they embrace local businesses.

"They will drive past six chains to come to a local [shop]," she says. That local support allowed 107 to quickly establish a growing base of regulars.

Those regulars have already shown the family what makes Amarillo unique. "Down there, we had to do polls and research," Elaine says when describing how hard it was to figure out what drinks to serve at the McKinney shop. "People here will walk up and tell you what they want. This is one of the most friendly towns I've ever been in in my life."

The shop may be new to Amarillo—and to the Texas Panhandle's unpretentious, unfiltered approach to conversation—but Elaine isn't new to coffee. It's been part of her life since childhood. She spent seven years growing up on a coffee and tea plantation near Nairobi, Kenya, where her parents lived while working overseas for Raytheon during the 1970s. Elaine and her family moved from there to other coffee-centric locales like Tehran, Iran and Kuwait City before coming to America.

As an adult, she spent time in Hawaii, where she opened Pacific Tradewinds Coffee in 2015, a company which grew into 107 Roasters & Cafe.

Despite that deep connection to coffee and coffee culture—including Dave's careful dedication to developing roast profiles for beans from countries around the world—the family is quick to point out that they want coffee to remain as accessible as possible. "We don't judge if you're drinking Folgers," Elaine says, laughing. Patrick and other members of the team prefer to meet customers where they are, helping them discover better coffee without insisting they become immediate connoisseurs.

Besides, she points out, coffee is a comfort food for a lot of customers. People get attached to their daily lattes or matchas. "It's your blankie, or your wubby," she says, another smile emerging. "We call it 'serving wubbies.' We want to know what wubby you're looking for."

Meanwhile, comfortable seating in the cafe encourages conversation, surrounded by music decor, including monthly drink menus showcased within custom-printed CD cases by the door. "You want to come in, sit on a comfy couch with the two people you love most in your life, and really enjoy a great cup of coffee," Elaine says. Religious conviction fuels that mindset. "We truly believe that Christ happens in community, and community happens over coffee."

Having built the environment, her project manager's perspective dictates paying attention to the data. 107 Roasters & Cafe, she says, has a 97% repurchase rate among customers. She adds: "Once you get a coffee, you're probably coming back."

Not all customers are from Amarillo. The roastery still sells made-to-order K-cups online, ships single-origin roasted coffee, and supplies white label and custom label coffees packaged for retail partners. In fact, Elaine says they operate what might be the largest coffee roaster in the Texas Panhandle, a massive, commercial-grade Loring S35 Kestrel roasting machine, which can process up to 300 pounds of coffee an hour.

That's a lot of wubbies.

SWEET CARAMEL FROJAVA

"This is one of the most friendly towns I've ever been in in my life."
—Elaine Krazer

107 Roasters & Cafe
512 SW 47th Ave.
214.778.5662
107roasters.com

For the most comprehensive dining guide in the Amarillo area, turn to page 134.

CROCODILE ROCK

YACHT ROCK

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:
THUMB PRINCE COOKIE
MONKEE BREAD
HALL & OATMEAL COOKIE

PROVIDED PHOTO

Letting the Bite Land

Do you feel it? That particular kind of quiet that shows up in autumn? The light changes first, then the air goes from hot and stale to cool and breezy. That certain something in you that has been running at a hundred miles an hour since June finally slows down. Fall is fast approaching, and it is something I always welcome.

Yes, I'm talking about the beginning of hibernation season for us all. I don't mean the kind that happens beneath the ground; I'm referring to the kind that happens at the table. We cook more slowly, we eat closer to the stove, we stop rushing to reach for the next thing and start noticing the thing that's right in front of us. Which is exactly why, if you ask most people what they remember about a meal, they rarely describe the entire plate.

Memory Triggers

Ask someone about a meal from their childhood and watch what happens. They typically don't describe what the table looked like or what other courses were served for that particular meal. They land on one specific memory: the crunch of their mom's pie crust, the way steam swirled up and out of a bowl of soup enjoyed on the front porch, or the scent of fresh onions hitting hot butter in a Dutch oven.

Where Memory Lives

Smell is not the only thing doing the work here. Taste has a memory of its own and can be tied to a certain place, not just a flavor. The same dish, made the exact same way, might taste different at your mother's table than it does anywhere else. Not because the recipe changed, but because the room and the people you remember in that moment did.

For example, when I eat a small plate of canned peaches, cottage cheese and Melba toast as a light snack on a Sunday afternoon, my mind goes back to 1975, to our family dining room table. The table was hefty, with thick legs that took up more space than they should have and had no interest in accommodating 12 restless knees. Mine were still tucked into a high chair off to the side. My mother covered the table in vinyl with a flannel backing—"silence cloth," they called it. It was ridiculous and awesome all at once. Bright oranges and lemons danced across the surface, glossy and cheerful, and occasionally stained with yesterday's breakfast chorizo.

This is part of what food studies as a discipline is built on. We're not just talking about the job our taste buds are doing. We recall the room, what the light looked like, and what year it was. If we move the particular bite of food we remember to a new kitchen, something else is remembered. This is why a dish can taste like a specific person, house or version of oneself. The place was always part of the recipe, even when it was never written down.

Some view a meal as a single experience, from beginning to end. But after I've enjoyed a meal with friends or family, my brain doesn't file it that way. It files bits and pieces and holds onto the moments that hit me the hardest. This is why a simple bowl of soup can outlive a five-course dinner in someone's memory. Feeling makes a bite stick. There is a reason for this.

Smell Gets There First

I learned this recently, and it stopped me cold. Every other sense you have has to check in somewhere first. Sight, sound and touch all get routed through various corners of the brain before landing in the place that handles memory and feeling. But our sense of smell? It

doesn't check in anywhere. It walks straight into the rooms where memory and emotion live. Which means that when the butter hits the pan, or the glorious scent of cinnamon hits your nose while you're checking on an apple crisp in the oven, your brain is filing an emotional event.

Food As Memory, Not Just Fuel

You could argue that this isn't as important as I make it seem. Still, it means more to me than a nutritional science approach. We talk about eating in terms of calories and macros and what a body needs to function, and I agree that all of that has its place. A body, though, is not just running on fuel. It runs on memory, comfort and years of accumulated weight from every meal that ever made it feel something.

What I've learned is that our sensory experience, memory and history are not separate categories. They are the same material, studied from different angles. The most ordinary meal you make today is not necessarily forgettable. It's data you are creating to file away for later. The question is, how will you file it? Under comfort, safety or home?

You may be asking why I'm even writing about this topic. *What do I even do with this?* Here's why: It reminds us you don't need to cook something elaborate for it to count. Don't worry about trying too hard when it comes to preparing dinner. There's no need to plate more carefully or turn every meal into a full-blown occasion. In fact, it's quite the opposite. The bite that stays with someone is almost never the most ambitious thing on the table.

That bite might look like:

- Eating soft-scrambled eggs right out of the skillet, still in your socks, simply because you can
- Slicing an apple and actually sitting down with it instead of eating it on the way out the door in a rush
- Tasting homemade marinara sauce twice before deciding it is done, just to stay a little longer in the noticing
- Standing over the pot a beat longer than necessary, just to smell the garlic do its thing before adding stock

The Plan

This fall, I'm looking forward to cooking and eating like the meal itself is ending my day on a high note. I think that is what this season is really for. We can still be excited about sweaters, pumpkin spice everything and boot weather, but we can also slow down enough to enjoy that first sip, the smell of garlic or a bite of apple crisp. Let it land. And let it be enough.

RUTHIE COLLINS
Ruthie owns Black Fig Catering.
Learn more at blackfigfood.com.

EXPLORING THE

Route 66 Boots & Brews Trail

By **JASON BOYETT**

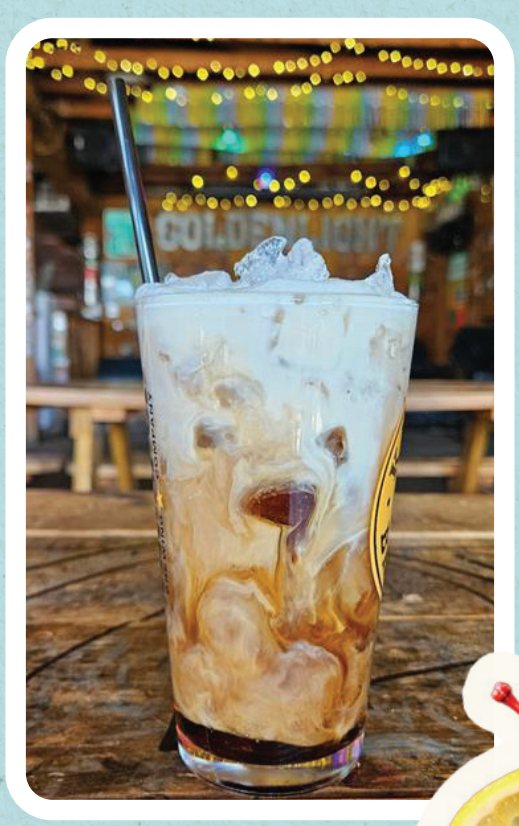
Earlier this summer, during the nationwide Route 66 centennial and the Texas Route 66 Festival here in Amarillo, we learned that our friends at Visit Amarillo had quietly developed something they were calling the TX 66 Boots & Brews Trail. It's a self-guided tour of Amarillo bars, restaurants, breweries and coffee shops, and they enlisted each of them to serve a limited-time drink inspired by the Mother Road.

We wanted to try it and introduce it to our readers, but the timing of our publishing schedule and the flurry of early summer activity made that impossible. Nevertheless, we are always open to new reasons to visit familiar places, especially when they have worked to translate a century of roadside history into a refreshing drink.

Besides, any incentive to further explore Route 66 is enough for us. Here's what you can find along the trail, from craft cocktails to local brews: (Please drink responsibly.)

1. Old Tascosa Brewery: Centennial Wit

This light, Belgian-style wheat beer comes from the good folks at Old Tascosa Brewing Company in the Historic Route 66 District. This brewery attracts a ton of travelers stopping through Amarillo, so listen closely for not-quite-Texan accents. While you're there, enjoy trivia nights and regular live music.



2. Golden Light Cantina: Root Beer Float

This is not your granddad's root beer float. (It's not for kids, either.) This Route 66 twist on the classic includes root beer schnapps, whipped-cream vodka, Coke and a splash of bar cream. Stick around for live music, or feast on one of the city's most iconic cheeseburgers next door.

3. Smokey Joe's: Cadillac Ranch Sunset

Right across the street, grab this local twist on a Blue Hawaiian or Malibu Sunset. Smokey Joe's colorful Caddy Cocktail blends Parrot Bay coconut rum, pineapple, cranberry and Blue Curaçao. It's perfect for a porchside sip on Sixth.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF VISIT AMARILLO

4. El Tejavan III: Paul's 66 Michelada

Just a few blocks west of downtown, this beloved local Mexican restaurant serves up this south-of-the-border cousin to the Bloody Mary. Crisp and fizzy, it blends Negra Modelo with fresh lime and El Tejavan's housemade michelada mix. Thanks, Paul!

5. OHMS Cafe & Bar: Cadillac Ranch Water

Head downtown to the always reliable OHMS, where this watermelon-infused tequila drink puts a twist on regular Ranch Water. It also includes fresh lime, a splash of soda, a lovely yellow salt rim and a dash of butterfly pea tea to boost that vibrant color.

6. Toscana Italian Steakhouse: Cadillac Ranch

On the lobby floor of The Barfield, stop in for a blend of Tito's vodka, clarified grapefruit juice, simple syrup and fizzy Prosecco. It's served in a glass adorned with edible paint as a tribute to the Cadillac Ranch. (Just in case you've ever spraypainted a Cadillac and thought, "What would this taste like?" Actually, we take that back. This drink tastes way better than paint.)

7. Patio Vista at The Barfield: Neon Night Spritz

After Italian faves and scratch-made pasta at Toscana, head upstairs to The Barfield's cozy Patio Vista. This perfectly pinkish cocktail uses Grey Whale gin, lemon oleo saccharum, lavender syrup, Fever Tree club soda and another dose of butterfly pea tea.

8. Paramount Recreation Club: King of the Road

The basement speakeasy of The Barfield is hidden behind a secret door, but there's nothing secret about this cocktail, which features barrel-aged Still Austin whiskey, Carpano Antica Formula vermouth, decadent Luxardo Maraschino liqueur and aromatic bitters.

9. The Big Texan: Slug Bug Punch

Tourists don't need a reason to visit this legendary steakhouse, but maybe locals do? If so, here's one: This bold drink is inspired by the colorful, spray-painted chaos of Slug Bug Ranch on East Amarillo. It's vibrant, playful and loud, just like The Big Texan. (Also? It's served in a boot.)

10. Shark Beach Burgers: 66 Sunset

South of Amarillo, the city's only sandy (sort of) beach resort is perfect for marking the end of a warm autumn day. Kick off your shoes and enjoy this peachy, refreshing sip with a burger, tots and the best of this sprawling complex's family-friendly live music scene.

11. Yellow City Grind: Route 66 Breve

After, let's see, 10 cocktails, you probably need something strong but absolutely not containing alcohol. Yellow City Grind has you covered in southwest Amarillo with this espresso-based beverage. It blends caramel and vanilla with a rich breve (espresso and steamed half-and-half), topped with vanilla cold foam and—why not?—a dusting of edible gold glitter.

Eat This, Drink That

Dining-out snaps and recs from the *Brick & Elm* team.

1

2

3

4

1 / VIETNAMESE COFFEE FROM FENG CHA

I am a big fan of the bold, velvety flavor of Vietnamese coffee. When prepared authentically, it relies upon more bitter robusta beans (which have a higher caffeine content), which it then cuts with sweetened condensed milk. There's something about that combination, over ice, that makes me happy. If I want to treat myself, this is typically what I'll choose. Feng Cha is a Texas-based chain but its Amarillo franchise is locally owned. Their Vietnamese Coffee (with boba) is the best in the city. —*Jason Boyett*

2 / COCONUT CREAM PIE FROM GIRASOL CAFE & BAKERY

I love pie. I really love it. And if you do, too, then the from-scratch options at Girasol are always fantastic. Coconut cream pie is the perfect sharable (or not) treat that costs less than $6 for a whole mini pie. You can taste the quality—no canned ingredients here. Owner/Chef Jessica Higgins creates the best treats in town.—*Michele McAffrey*

3 / HOUSE ENCHILADAS FROM THE PLAZA

Is there a more classic Tex-Mex restaurant than The Plaza? My family has been enjoying their food since the original Amarillo location on Bell—the one that had the strange, orange-lit water feature in the middle of the dining area in the 1990s. The Plaza has grown substantially since then, but its food is still reliably good. After always consuming far too much of their free chips-and-salsa combo, I tend to order the House Enchiladas, where you can mix and match fillings with sauces and sides. For this particular meal, I chose one shredded chicken enchilada, one with ground beef, and one with cheddar cheese beneath a savory red sauce. Did I clean my plate? Absolutely.—*Michele McAffrey*

4 / SUPER GREEN SMOOTHIE FROM WTF

On days when I'm rushing from meeting to meeting and don't want to fill up on junk, I swing by WTF for a quick and filling smoothie. The balance of green veggie flavor and the sweetness of banana is perfect for a hot day running errands, and the added pea protein helps keep me full for hours. I love it!—*Michele McAffrey*

5 / CLK FROM 575 PIZZERIA

Consistently, 575 serves some of the best pizza in the city, including for takeout. What I love most is the combination of the crust and the very thin pepperoni slices that crisp up in the oven. My go-to order is typically the Omni, but recently I tried the CLK, which has red sauce, pepperoni, sausage, mushrooms and basil. The extra small size is perfect for a meal that doesn't leave you too full. (Also, their Greek salad is one of my favorites.) Also in the photo: a Johnny Drama (pine nuts, basil, fresh garlic) and an Ultimate (olive oil, baby tomatoes, basil), which we ordered with extra pineapple and goat cheese. —*Jason Boyett*

6 / SOURDOUGH ANYTHING FROM FOSTER SOURDOUGH CO.

I've been so pleased with my orders from Foster Sourdough Co. since they moved into a storefront on I-27. Here's how it works: Sign up to receive notifications from Foster announcing upcoming Bake Days. Then simply order what you want and pick it up the following Friday. My go-tos are their dense-but-fluffy English muffins, bagels, and any flavor of sourdough bread. Order it sliced, then freeze to enjoy anytime you like. Every order from Foster comes in a special bag that keeps your baked goods fresh, with storage and freezing tips on the back of the bag. Confession: I immediately ate the English muffin in the photo, and it kept me full and satisfied until lunch. —*Michele McAffrey*

Flavorillo

Want more dining tips and restaurant recs? Subscribe to* Flavorillo*, our food-and-drink newsletter: brickandelm.com/flavorillo

5

6

We're excited to introduce "Table Talk," a new, ongoing food-and-drink feature in which we select a local leader and ask them about their restaurant preferences. Broc Carter is the senior director of operations and communications for the Amarillo Area Foundation. Among other things, he helps organize and manage its nationally recognized fundraising initiative, The Panhandle Gives.

with *Broc Carter*

What's your favorite breakfast place and what's your order? When I think of breakfast, it's more of a brunch, and that will always be Six Car Pub & Brewery for me. The short rib benedict is one of those dishes that returns in dreams. It's so good.

If you're celebrating, where do you book a table? Celebration places in Amarillo are abundant, but I think OHMS Cafe & Bar is that special spot in the heart of downtown that creates a lasting memory of food and drink on an important day.

What's your ultimate Amarillo comfort food? I find comfort in burgers! I am a huge fan of the burgers at Golden Light Cafe & Cantina. Angela's bacon cheeseburger, matched with the fries, is complete comfort.

Which restaurant do you like to introduce to out-of-towners? Down on Paramount and I-40 is El Tejavan. It's a great place for out-of-town company. You can't go wrong with the Mole de Pollo or the Sopes with the green sauce!

You don't feel like cooking. What's your favorite, most reliable take-out place? Asian takeout is my go-to on nights when I don't want to cook. I have developed a fondness for Little Laos on Sixth Avenue.

If you had to choose a chain restaurant in the city limits, what would it be? I'm very devoted to MotoMedi. While it's a regional chain, it's an exciting concept. That Greek chicken is legendary.

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AmarilloChamber on

Welcome to The Dirt. In every issue, our anonymous writer gives you the dirt on your burning questions about the Amarillo area. Got something you're just dying to know? Drop us a line at **info@brickandelm.com**, and our intrepid writer will dig up the answer.

I saw this little memorial stone on Sixth Avenue and Polk Street. Do you know the story?

Our area is flush with whimsical waypoints, from big soda cups to historic courthouse plaques. Many are courtesy of businesses or famous artists or historical societies—but some are more personal.

The story of this particular little stone begins in the 1940s, when Carroll Eugene Kalka put a knee to the pavement and asked his sweetheart, Anna Marie Wink, to be his wife. The pair married in June 1948 and raised their family on The Little Red Ranch northeast of Amarillo, remaining together for 47 years.

Carroll passed away in 1995, but Anna Marie stayed with her family until July 2018.

At one point during those years, their son Jeff interviewed Anna Marie about her life, including asking about where exactly it was that Carroll proposed. She told him it was the corner of Sixth Avenue and Polk Street—down the street from Amarillo National Bank, where Jeff had been working since the 1980s.

Jeff saw that spot and thought about his parents every time he drew near the ANB building. Then, in a moment of good humor and confidence, the universe offered him an opportunity when the building underwent renovations. Jeff asked his boss, ANB President William Ware, if there was any possibility of putting a commemorative token anywhere in the area "just because."

Ware loved the idea. Jeff coordinated with the architect in charge of the renovations, and the marker was put in place around February 2018. It's located adjacent to ANB's parking lot across from The Barfield.

Readers, I love this story. Romance isn't dead. Carroll and Anna Marie may not be with us anymore, but their memory still brings joy to their family. And the rest of Amarillo now has a chance to share in it with them!

So, next time you're walking downtown, consider glancing at the ground. Reasons to smile are around every corner.

What is that weird, circular concrete slab around Bonham Street and Eighth Avenue?

Crop circle? Pantex UFO landing pad? At the least, it's funky lookin'. Just past the intersection of S. Crockett St. and SW Eighth Avenue, astute drivers may notice a large concrete slab near the curbside. A little ways north of the slab you can see the Rock Island Rail Trail, and immediately south, across the street, is a building labeled *Amarillo Water Works Pumping Station-1926*.

These are artifacts of municipal history. A lot of Amarillo's growth as a city depended on its function as a railroad thoroughfare, as well as its ability to develop utility systems for things like water and power. The early 1900s brought a swell of both municipal and corporate-funded construction for gas and water infrastructure. This included multiple water towers that supplied the city, as well as the steam-powered trains traveling through, which continued at sites around Amarillo at least through the 1980s.

That circle represents the concrete footings for a railroad water tower. It was connected to the 1926 pumping station, and likely also supplemented the Rock Island Line while it was still active. These days, Amarillo's water system still has a base in the neighborhood—but it's a bit further south, off Line Avenue. The concrete coaster remains.

The anonymous writer behind 'The Dirt' is a sharp observer of the Amarillo-Canyon metropolitan area. If they don't know the answer, they know where to get it and who to ask.

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Musings with Maggie

Almost everything will work again if you unplug it for a few minutes, including you."—Anne Lamott

I laughed out loud when I read this quote. I am not what you would call "tech savvy." I get along fine with the usual tasks, but I am absolutely the kind of person who just switches electronic things off and back on again to solve problems. This method has proven successful a surprising number of times.

That being said, the words most striking, and most valuable, are the last two. *Including you*. Including all of us. We have to unplug, don't we? Now, I don't necessarily mean "unplug" like a week in the mountains with no Wi-Fi, although that would be lovely. What I mean is that we can unplug in lots of accessible ways, while balancing the demands of our everyday lives.

The new school year means teachers and parents are firmly planted in a season of constant motion and ever-growing to-do lists. We have homework and lessons and practices and tutoring and games and projects and concerts and a truly endless stream of activity. I do not mean to imply we shouldn't do these things. What I am suggesting is that we remember to rest. Perhaps we can even remember to rest before we are forced to. Before we, like an old printer, have to be unplugged to work again.

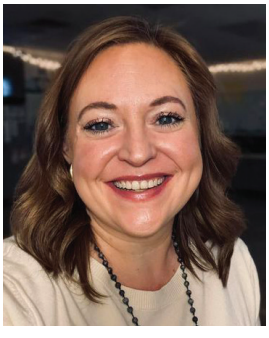
The months ahead are going to be bananas. My meticulously color-coded calendar looks like someone has nearly completed a highly unimaginative coloring book. I know I will need to use every trick in my book to rest, so I have planned for it. An evening alarm will be set to make hot tea. My outfits will be chosen in advance so my mornings can move a little more slowly and require one less decision. This afternoon, I had just a few minutes to myself, so I did some light stretches and deep breathing. I booked a massage for the weekend to ensure I take a pause before rushing into another week. An embroidery project has been prepared and placed in a convenient location, and my journal sits next to my favorite coffee-drinking chair. A book I have been saving is waiting on my nightstand, asking me to ease into the end of my day. I have to make it as easy as possible to unplug and reset, because my brain would otherwise happily keep working and thinking and doing until I can't work and think and do anymore.

There was a time I thought rest and dissociation were the same thing. Not to brag, but I excel at spending hours in front of the television and playing mindless games on my phone. Those sorts of days have their place, but that is not the kind of rest I mean. And it is not the sort of rest most of us truly need. We all need sleep, of course, but sleep and rest are not the same thing, either. Rest is still, but conscious. Quiet, but aware. Rest is intentional and restorative. Rest is being unproductive, on purpose. In our society where accomplishment is king and activities seem to multiply with each passing year, rest might even be an act of resistance. The tricky thing about rest is that many of us believe it must be earned. Earned by some imaginary and arbitrary measure of accomplishment at best, discomfort at worst. I would like to personally assure you that rest is deserved by every person at any time. Being human is an incredibly complex series of tasks and experiences. I promise, you have earned it. A formal definition of rest reads as follows: *to cease from action or motion; refrain from labor or exertion; to be free from anxiety or disturbance.* Sheesh. Easier said than done.

"Burnout" is such a buzzword these days, for good reason, and burnout is essentially a lack of meaningful rest. To "burn out" is, by definition, to cause to fail, wear out, or become exhausted, especially from overwork and overuse. People can burn out from doing just about anything without rest, but it is most often used to refer to those who are responsible for the well-being of others. Perhaps this is because people in these positions care deeply and find it nearly impossible to step away from doing it, thinking about it, and preparing to do it. Whether we are practicing medicine, running a company, parenting, teaching, or caring for an elderly relative, we cannot do it well in the long term if we do not unplug.

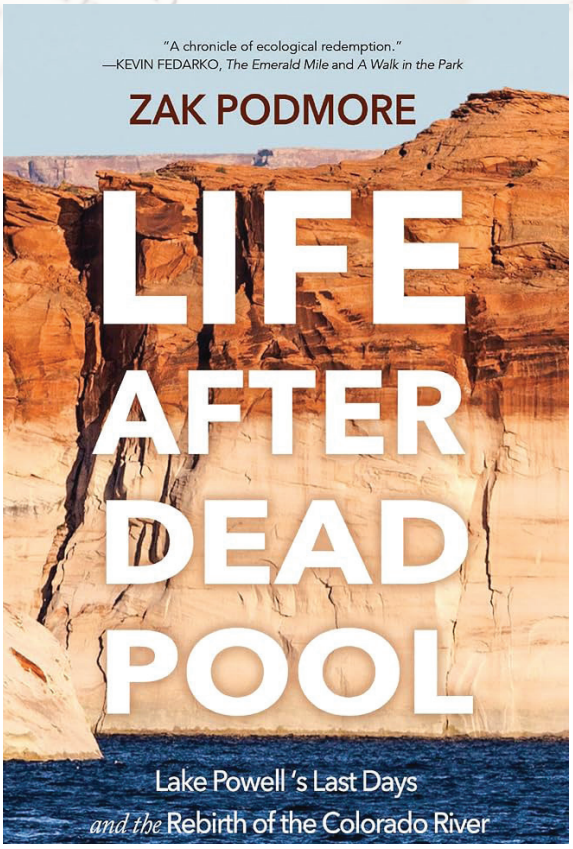
Eleanor Brownn wisely wrote, "When you take time to replenish your spirit, it allows you to serve others from the overflow. You cannot serve from an empty vessel." You have almost certainly heard someone say, "You can't pour from an empty cup." I love Eleanor's words best, but either way, it is absolutely true.

And now, friends, I am going to unplug. I hope you will remember to rest.



MAGGIE BURT
Maggie was born into a family heritage of musicians and educators in Amarillo. She spent several years as a performer and songwriter in Amarillo and Austin, before becoming an elementary music teacher in 2019. Maggie's column draws from her experiences in and out of the classroom.

Burrowing Owl
RECOMMENDS



LIFE AFTER DEAD POOL BY ZAK PODMORE

After decades of drought, the American West is stretched to the breaking point. A changing climate and design flaws in the Glen Canyon Dam have pushed the once-massive Lake Powell reservoir to the brink of collapse—putting at risk millions of people who depend on the Colorado River for water, agriculture and electricity. Now, as Glen Canyon reemerges, its surprising ecological rebirth reminds us that nature's capacity to heal may well outpace our own imaginations. Environmental journalist Zak Podmore explores the complex challenges ahead and reframes the inevitable loss of Lake Powell as a turning point for a more sustainable future. Through an arresting mix of science and storytelling, *Life After Dead Pool* debunks the notion that the West's water challenges are unsolvable and invites us to secure a future where the Colorado River once again runs free.

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HOW DOES THAT WORK?

Many times a month, year, decade, I find myself asking, "How does that work?" Figuratively, I'm like a dog with its head cocked to one side, as if a different sight-angle would actually improve my comprehension.

Sometimes it will be some small thing that falls outside my skill-set. Like algebra. How, and at what point, do numbers become letters, or vice-versa? Never could get past that. Other times it will be a deep question that requires more than I am equipped to deal with.

One of the questions I think about quite a bit is this: *How does a song take you back to a certain place just as sure as if you owned a time machine?*

The obvious disclaimer is in effect: If you are a non-music person, can't relate to music, or (heaven forbid) don't LIKE music, then you are dismissed. Algebra class is down the hall.

For the rest of us, it's an amazing phenomenon, the way a song can take you, literally at the speed of sound, to another place. It's a little like Déjà vu. You can be tooling along in your vehicle, not even particularly listening to the radio, and a song will come on, and suddenly you are transported to your first date with your soul mate, or back at your grandparents house, or wherever that song assigns itself. And quite accurately, it does seem to assign itself. Often, but not always, it will be where you were when you first heard that song. Other instances, it will be a significant time or place. The song decides.

I think, if for no other purpose than this discussion, we should decide on a term for these songs. My beautiful wife Danielle suggests we use "time-warp" songs. I think that's perfect. Especially since one of my favorite time-warp songs is "Color My World" by Chicago. Our band had just opened a show for Chicago, and Danielle and I were right behind the stage, where the lights and colors filtered through the scrim, and, without getting too mushy, we danced like a couple of prom night kids to that wonderful song. *Magic*.

A vast majority of my personal time-warp songs have to do with my college days. In Portales, New Mexico, I worked my way through a dreadfully short amount of school at Eastern New Mexico University as an employee at Pizza Hut: the vintage kind with checkered tablecloths and little red candle vases, shag carpet and the best jukebox in history. I think it was a dime per play. If you had a buck, you could monopolize the dinner hour, and at least be assured no one would play "Night Fever or Stayin' Alive."

Aside from the scourge of disco, that jukebox was a kingdom unto itself. It had the coolest songs. A guy named Ray came every week and refreshed the records. (Yes, they were 45s.) We guarded it with our lives, because the only time it ever skipped was when the occasional over-beered buffoon tried to intentionally bump it. It kept our dreams alive, that machine! The first manager, cook, or delivery person in the door understood that job No. 1 was to feed the jukebox. So often these days, a song will take me straight back to Portales, to that particular summer. Fleetwood Mac had just released *Dreams*, Bob Seger had *Katmandu* that summer, releasing *Night Moves* that fall. Dave Mason's *We Just Disagree*, Peter Frampton's *Comes Alive*, Aerosmith's *Toys in the Attic* album, and Boz Scagg's all-time great *Silk Degrees* collection. All were on our magic jukebox, my time-warp machine.

So, how does that work, after all?

I called a good friend who happens to be both a neurologist and a music fanatic. I asked him if, off the top of his head, he had any theories or even opinions on the subject. His answer was, predictably, way above my pay grade. It had to do with MRIs, glucose and up-to-the minute studies.

The simple answer to our question is not so simple. There are, however, some recent findings that correlate memory with sound, much like the correlation between memory and smell. This in itself is quite intriguing to me. Parts of the brain are in proximity to one another. That seems like a medieval kind of answer, but what do I know?

As opposed to chemistry and physiology, I rather prefer the idea of time and space travel, the ability of the mind to take you to another place, and hopefully a good one. So far, I don't usually go through music warps to disagreeable places. They're almost always accompanied by a smile.

ANDY CHASE CUNDIFF
Andy is an artist, singer-songwriter, music producer and musician. In every issue, his column explores the parts of his life that don't always make it into his songs, accompanied by his own illustration.

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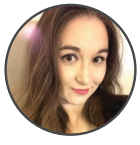
Original Composites & Fiberglass is investing $10 million to bring a second glass furnace back online at its Amarillo facility (formerly Owens Corning). The project is expected to create up to 165 full-time jobs.

Education Credit Union was recently recognized with a **Friends of the Foundation** award from the Harrington Cancer and Health Foundation.

The City of Amarillo announced the resignation of Assistant City Manager and Chief Technology Officer **Rich Gagnon** in July.



Rachael McClung has joined the **Don Harrington Discovery Center** as its education coordinator.

Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center has been selected for the **FirstGen Forward Network Class of 2026**. The university was selected because it demonstrated a commitment to improving experiences and advancing success for first-generation college students.

Dove Creek Equine Rescue announced the hiring of its new executive director, **Shannon Williams**.

The Amarillo Symphony has appointed **Dr. David Clemmer** as executive director. Clemmer is a music executive, educator, published scholar and pedagogical innovator. Former executive director **Larry Lang** retired earlier this year.

Mark Walton is **Northwest Texas Healthcare System Wound Care Center's** new community liaison.

Northwest Emergency at Town Square, 8960 Hillside Road, recently celebrated a decade of care in the region. Over the last 10 years, Northwest Emergency at Town Square has cared for more than 190,000 patients a year.

NWTHS has appointed **Rene Havel EdD, LPC-S,** as chief executive officer of its behavioral health hospital.

Rector Funeral Home announced its 30th anniversary of providing funeral care.

Meghan Gray, APRN, FNP-C has joined the team at **Texas Tech Physicians Family Medicine** as a family nurse practitioner.

SkyRite Sign Co. recently earned two awards from the **Texas Sign Association Design Contest:** first place for Interior Architectural Signage and second place for Miscellaneous Signs for its project at Amarillo Community Federal Credit Union.

Dr. Aaron Pittard has joined **Panhandle Eye Group** as an ophthalmologist and cataract surgeon.

Dr. Beau Schilling recently relocated to **Swann Animal Clinic's** Plum Creek location.

Christina Miller has joined **Public House Amarillo** as its restaurant manager.

Cheryl Malcolm is the new manager at **Aramark Catering** at West Texas A&M University.

Amarillo College recently received a $500,000 grant from the **Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board** to expand its welding workforce training.

After a decade, **President Walter V. Wendler** announced his retirement from **WT,** effective Sept. 1. **Dr. Neil Terry,** a longtime academic leader at the university, will serve as the university's interim president.

The Amarillo Fire Department has promoted **Jordan James** to captain, **Remington Rucker** to lieutenant and **Ricardo Martinez** to driver.

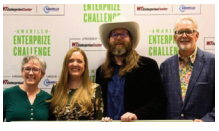
Captain Chris Briley retired from **AFD** in July.

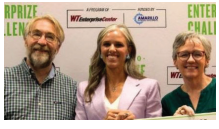
Emily Bell is the new director of development at **Opportunity School.**

Dr. Spencer Albertson has joined **Northwest Orthopedic Surgery** as an orthopedic trauma surgeon. Albertson specializes in orthopedic trauma and upper extremity care.

Blank Spaces has promoted **Charlize Murphy** to site manager, **Kamden Slough** to project manager and **Ariana Gonzalez** to lead intern.

Three area businesses recently won grants from the annual **Amarillo EnterPrize Challenge**: **Lynch Architects**, led by Denise Lynch, Spence Lynch and Chuck Lynch; **Victory Lap**, founded by Bekah McWhorter and Brittany Jackson; and **West Wind Mahjong,** founded by Anne Potter.





Amarillo College recently named **Ramon Suarez Jr.** vice president of administrative services. Suarez began his role in August.

MGroup has welcomed **Joceline Ramirez** to its team. Ramirez is a graduate of WT.

Dr. Kelly Beierschmitt and **Dr. Linda Young** have been named **WT's 2026 Distinguished Alumni**.

The Texas Tech University System Board of Regents approved the appointment of **Dr. Rodney Young**, as a **Grover E. Murray Professor**. This is the highest honor a faculty member can receive.

To highlight your business briefs, promotions or awards in this section, email a press release or your information to ***mm@brickandelm.com.***

Amarillo Chamber of Commerce

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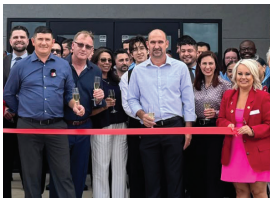
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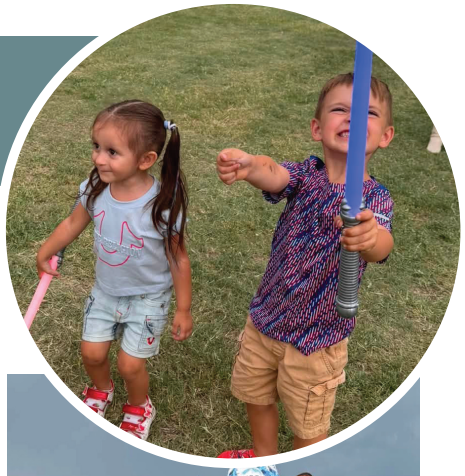
PROPS & PISTONS CAR SHOW AND FLY-IN

Hope Lives Here benefited from the annual car show and fly-in at Tradewinds Airport on June 27. The nonprofit serves disabled veterans through service dog training. (Provided photos)

HIGH NOON ON THE SQUARE

Center City of Amarillo's annual High Noon on the Square wrapped up in July. Beginning June 3 weekly concerts were held every Wednesday downtown featuring local bands and lunch on the courthouse lawn. (Photos by Ralph Duke, courtesy of Center City of Amarillo)

AMARILLO RED, WHITE & BOOM



Amarillo Parks & Rec and nonprofit Outdoor Amarillo hosted a 4th of July celebration at John Stiff Memorial Park. More than 30 food trucks, live music, a kid zone and sand volleyball tournament rounded out the event with synchronized drones and fireworks as the finale. (Provided photos)

REGION 16 Education Service Center | Head Start & Early Head Start

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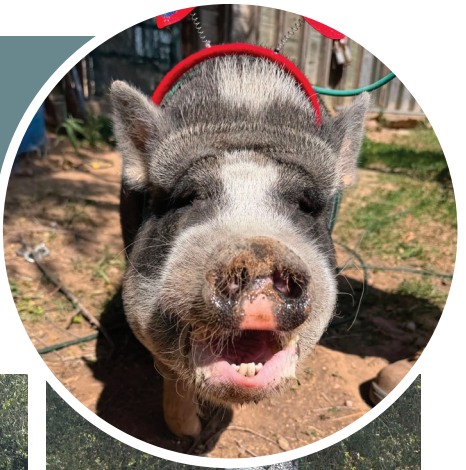
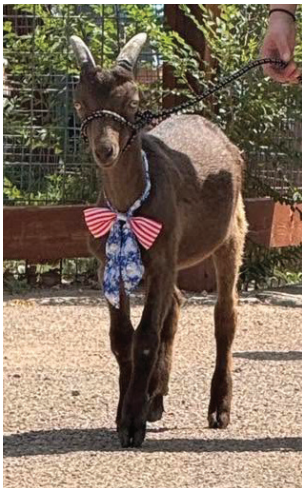
AMARILLO ZOO JULY 4 ANIMAL PARADE

The Amarillo Zoo hosted a Fourth of July party and parade with food trucks and giveaways. Guests lined the parade path to see a variety of zoo residents. (Provided photos)





FM90 50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Amarillo College and FM90 celebrated 50 years of community radio July 9. Held at AC's Washington Street campus, the festivities included station tours, live music and giveaways. (Provided Photos)

SAVE THE DATE

Monte Carlo 2026

Saturday, November 7
Arts in the Sunset

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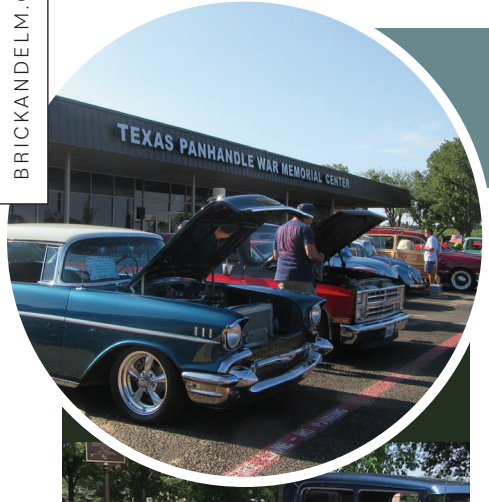
31ST ANNUAL ORIGINAL HARLEY PARTY

Family Support Services hosted its annual fundraiser July 25 at the Amarillo National Center on the Tri-State Fairgrounds. The event featured a reverse drawing for a Harley-Davidson motorcycle or $15,000 cash prize, and live music by Bomb City Groove, Sal and the Stonewall Hippies, and Sterling Elza. (Provided photos)

DAR PATRIOTIC CAR SHOW

The Molly Goodnight Branch of the Daughters of the American Revolution hosted its third-annual Patriotic Car Show at the Texas Panhandle War Memorial and Education Center. The July 25 event included a children's race car track, indoor scavenger hunt and multiple awards. (Provided photos)



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An event of the Harrington Cancer and Health Foundation

ART AFTER DARK

The Amarillo Museum of Art hosted a Clue Gallery Hunt on Aug. 2 as part of its art after dark series. The evening included live music from Rachel Sumner & Traveling Light along with food from Reagan's Pizza Oven and art activities. (Provided photos)

STARLIGHT THEATER SUMMER CONCERT SERIES

The City of Amarillo's Parks & Recreation Department celebrated its 70th season of live music at its concert series. Held every Tuesday evening from June 2 to Aug. 11 at Sam Houston Park, the annual tradition features food trucks and local music from country to rock to jazz. (Provided photos)

MARTHA'S HOME
OFFERING A HAND UP, NOT A HAND OUT
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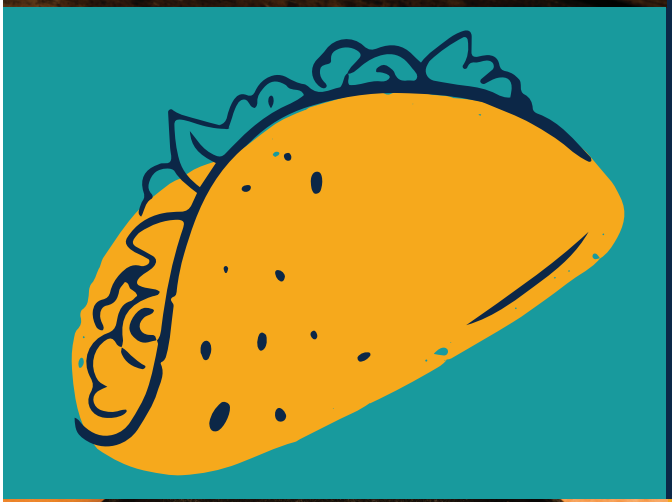
¡Tacos!

BY **JASON BOYETT**

Break out of your restaurant rut and join us on a tasting tour of the city's most traditional (or most creative) taco joints.



"A taco has to have a wrapper," says Paul Leal of Mi Gente near 34th Avenue and Bell Street. That wrapper is typically a warm, soft corn tortilla, but can also be a soft flour tortilla or—in the case of Mi Gente's Asian-fusion Chino Latino tacos—even a fluffy steamed bao bun.

"It's like a gift," Leal adds. "It has to be wrapped. You don't know [the flavor] until you open it, until you bite into it."

We spent the late summer biting into a series of hand-held gifts, understanding that a well-crafted taco is one of the true staples of Texas Panhandle cuisine. Amarillo and Canyon literally have hundreds of restaurants where tortillas are being pressed and grill tops are sizzling with the makings of a delicious taco.

Our self-guided taco tour took us through every quadrant of the city, from modest *taquerias* serving tender *birria* or *carnitas* to taco trucks with more adventurous approaches to the classic street food.

We discovered there's no right way to make a taco. The only right thing to do with a taco is to eat it.

MORE TACOS TO LOVE

Happy Burrito
908 E. Amarillo Blvd., 806.703.0477

Taqueria El Comal
1210 E. Amarillo Blvd., 806.373.7090

Tacos Garcia Amarillo Blvd.
2200 E. Amarillo Blvd., 806.681.1977

Rossy's Cocina
2418 E. Amarillo Blvd., 806.290.2743

Taqueria Los Toritos
2617 E. Amarillo Blvd., 806.679.0946

Pollos Sinaloa
2618 E. Amarillo Blvd., 806.367.8935

La Mariscada de Charly
3500 E. Amarillo Blvd., 806.584.9472,
lamariscadadecharlyamarillotx.com

El Manatial
3823 E. Amarillo Blvd., 806.383.1852

Tacos La Casita
3011 W. Amarillo Blvd., 806.382.3691

Texas Bar & Grill
2801 W. Amarillo Blvd., 806.368.7951

Al Menudazo y Más

Located in a former Toot'n Totum building across Amarillo Boulevard from Prissy's Barbecue, the delightful Al Menudazo y Más (which means something like "Menudo Headquarters and More") is extremely new. It opened in April from the network of family members connected to La Mariscada de Charly and Dayvasos JN, who originally hail from Chihuahua, Mexico.

Traditionally, most authentic Mexican restaurants only serve menudo on Sundays, but owners Esmeralda Monge and Juan Esparza wanted a restaurant where menudo was available every day. But we didn't come to Al Menudazo for the spicy, nutrient-dense comfort soup highlighted in their name.

We wanted tacos.

Al Menudazo offers local favorites like barbacoa and asada tacos. But they also have a few things on the menu that aren't quite as easy to find this far north of the border, like the rich *tacos de machito*, made from lamb.

"You don't find that taco anywhere but here," Esmeralda says in Spanish. (Her daughter, Leimy Perez, translated for her.) "We want you to feel like you are going to your grandma's house, to have something different from the rest of the town. We don't have only tacos, but we have a lot of food that [only] comes from Mexico."

Among those surprises are the couple's attention-getting tortillas, which are handmade with a slight variation on the standard hue. In another nod to how it's done in Chihuahua, they add ground chiles to the dough, giving the finished product an orange-red color.

What are Esmeralda's rules for a good taco? She lists three requirements: "Juicy meat, homemade tortillas, and then a good sauce." The restaurant makes six different sauces available in a central buffet-style cart, from a milder avocado sauce to more intense habañero-based sauce.

Juan came to the United States around 10 years ago, and Esmeralda joined him a few years later. An Instagram-ready mural on one wall says, in Spanish, "I didn't choose to be Mexican. I just got lucky."

We left feeling Amarillo got lucky they chose to come here.

2600 E. AMARILLO BLVD., 806.877.1644

TACOS DE MACHITO

RIB-EYE AND ARRACHERRA (SKIRT STEAK) TACOS WITH MARROW

FRANCIA CALDERA, ESMERALDA MONGE, LEIMY PEREZ, ALINE AGUILAR AND JOSELINE AGUILAR

I-40 Corridor

MORE TACOS TO LOVE

Señor Braceros
1915 E. I-40, 806.352.4598

El Tejavan
3801 E. I-40, 806.372.5250
3420 W. I-40, 806.354.2444
eltejavanmexican.com

Ay Caray!!
1508 S. Grand St., 806.699.1057

El Agasajo
3319 W. I-40, 432.901.7907,
elagasajotx.com

El Patron Tex-Mex Restaurant
3401 W. I-40, 806.418.6934,
elpatronrestaurantatx.com

Jorge's Tacos Garcia
1619 S. Kentucky, C-318, 806.371.0411,
tacosgarcia806tx.com

Yellow City Street Food
2916 Wolflin Ave., 806.353.9273,
yellowcitystreetfood.com

ASADA TACOS

MARÍA CONCEPCIÓN SANTO CARILLO

El Charro

A no-frills family joint with a prime Bolton Street location on East Interstate 40, El Charro caters to a mix of neighborhood regulars and hungry travelers passing through the city. If the location looks familiar, it's because the building used to be the Western-oriented Stockman's Restaurant.

"We had to remodel everything," says owner María Concepción Santo Carillo of the restaurant's L-shaped footprint. She's a native of Jalisco, Mexico, who immigrated to the U.S. with her sister in 1990. [María was less comfortable interviewing in English, so our conversation with her was translated by friend-of-the-magazine Jennifer Gallardo.]

If you look closely, you'll see cowboy silhouettes remaining on the signage, a vestige of that former identity. The new name reflects it as well: *El Charro* basically refers to a traditional Mexican horseman or cowboy, and Jalisco is the birthplace of *charrería*, Mexico's national equestrian sport.

María spent several years working at El Tejavan restaurants in Amarillo before the opportunity arrived to launch her own concept 9 years ago.

Much bigger than most authentic Mexican restaurants on the east side of Amarillo, El Charro has seating capacity for 178 people and, on weekends, has been known to completely fill that space. Most customers are from the surrounding neighborhood, drawn to María's flavorful cooking.

But a substantial number of them just happened to Google something like "Mexican food near me" on their way through Amarillo. The interstate location means a constant flow of out-of-state and international travelers passing through the Panhandle.

"A lot of people from other states and other countries [come here]," María says. "New York, Canada. Chinese and Indian people, who love spicy like us. Recently some British gentlemen came but we couldn't communicate very well. They don't always tell me what they're looking for but after they eat it, they love it."

Growing up in Mexico, María says, tacos were a staple of family cooking. "In Mexico, Jalisco, everywhere, always tacos. Breakfast, lunch, dinner. Morning, noon and night. Always tacos, tacos, tacos."

She insists a corn tortilla is required for a good taco, and El Charro only serves handmade tortillas, made in the restaurant. In Jalisco, finding a taco made with a flour tortilla is something you only encounter *raramente*, she says. "Asada tacos are the most popular here and the most popular in Mexico."

4207 E. I-40, 806.373.4555

PHOTO BY JASON BOYETT

Taco Villa Forever

BY **MICHELE MCAFFREY**

As a high schooler at Amarillo High, the Taco Villa location on Bell Street (now The Bagel Place) was nearly an everyday stop for me. I'd say it's my very first fast-food love, behind Dunkin Donuts, where I used to gorge myself on the Bavarian creams. But back to Taco Villa.

I'm not a huge fan of Mexican food. (Cue the hissing. I know, I know. It's because of the spice.) But Taco Villa has a piece of my heart. Before there was a nacho cheese cup on the menu, I "invented" my very own special, which was an order of small fries and a cup of nacho cheese for dipping. I don't want to admit how many times a week I ate that snack as a quick meal during our very short lunch break.

Then, disaster struck. Taco Villa left Amarillo. All the locations shuttered, and I was bereft. I don't remember what year it was. I blocked it out. I also don't remember how long the franchise was gone. But eventually—*oh, happy day*—it returned. And once again, I could enjoy my very favorite fast food.

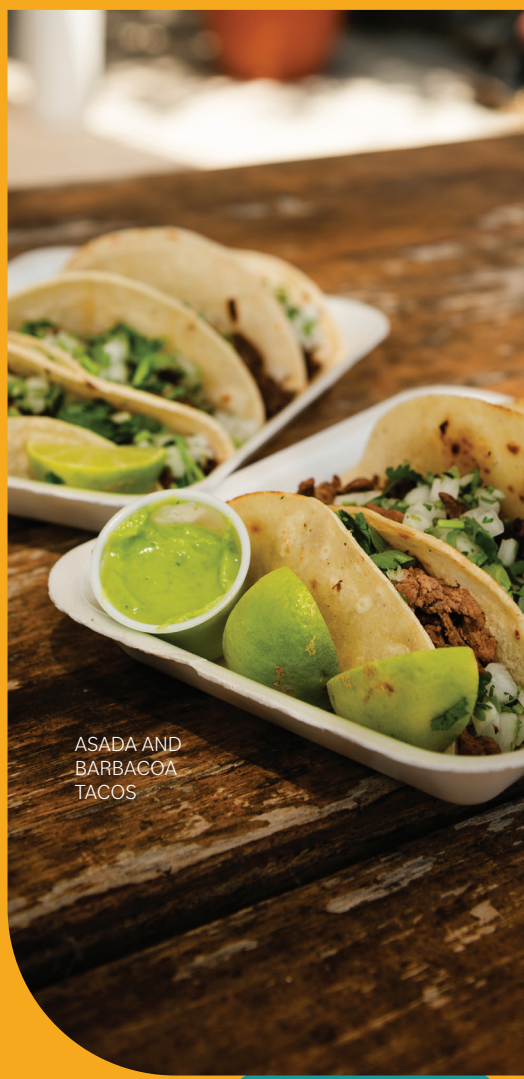
Over the years, I've introduced outsiders to the finest burritos in town, and they've often responded with uncalled-for negativity and scepticism. "That's not beef. What is it?" has been common, to which I've responded: *Who cares. We love it!* There's never been a single person who hasn't come around to the correct point of view. It's delicious! Don't overthink it.

My go-to has always been a bean burrito with extra cheese and sour cream (red sauce only), with a cup of nacho cheese to dip my fries in. I can't eat anything on the menu without copious amounts of the perfectly black-peppered hot sauce. I would kill to get that recipe.

About the hot sauce: Any Taco Villa veteran knows that you have to hold it pointed *away* from you when you're prying off the seal on the little container. Otherwise, the ensuing hot sauce explosion will end up on your shirt. It's a great way to get back at an annoying out-of-town cousin, though.

These days, I usually order a kid's meal because a full-sized burrito fills me up too quickly. But I'll go for an avocado burrito, nacho cheese fries with extra cheese sauce and sour cream, or deluxe nachos with refried beans. After our move to west Amarillo last fall, we're privileged to have a Taco Villa location minutes away from our house. It's paradise!

Taco Villa, you stole my heart in the '80s, and you'll have it forever. Long live the very best Tex-Mex around.


ASADA AND BARBACOA TACOS

The North Side

MORE TACOS TO LOVE

Taqueria Y Restaurante El Sol De México
3501 NE 24th Ave., 806.383.2038

Pancho Villa Restaurant
4601 River Road, 806.381.0105

Casa Jalisco
5608 River Road, 806.803.2827

David's Mexican Restaurant
400 E. Hastings Ave., 806.418.6333, davidsmex.com

La Fuente
511 S. Grand St., 806.584.4874

La Choza Taqueria Y Tortilleria
1407 N. Grand St., 806.383.8826

CARLOS (CENTER), ESMERALDA MUÑOZ, FATIMA GARCIA, JESUS PAVIA, ROSIO GARCIA AND ERIKA TORRES

La Pasadita

In Spanish, *la pasadita* means something like the equivalent of a quick visit, but you'll want to linger with the barbacoa tacos (and breakfast burritos, and authentic menudo and posole) at this small, casual restaurant just east of the Martin Road Park complex. Carlos Salazar owns and manages it, having inherited the family business from his parents, Ernesto and Maria Salazar.

Ernie and Maria opened the original walk-up restaurant in 2007 while also operating a convenience store, La Esquina Corner Mart, at Northeast 15th Avenue and Mirror Street. The family is originally from Juarez, Mexico—Carlos was born there—but came to the U.S. in 1990.

"We had both of them running at one time," Carlos says of the two family endeavors. Then Ernie passed away four years ago. Maria was diagnosed with cancer. The family wanted to simplify. They sold the convenience store and focused on La Pasadita.

"It was nothing like it is now," Carlos says of the former establishment, which was very small and had minimal seating. "It was a little bitty thing."

But as business began picking up, Carlos decided to make it bigger. He enclosed the ordering window, added tables and chairs, and built a comfortable outdoor patio next to the kitchen.

"We are known for our barbacoa," Carlos says. He's quick to point out that it's real barbacoa (beef cheek meat) rather than brisket. "And our burritos. And we're known for fast service. We actually sell 800 burritos every Tuesday to Claude, to a [contractor] at the data center. They pick them up at 5 in the morning because their meetings are at 6 in the morning, so they want breakfast."

La Pasadita also occasionally provides food for the Amazon Fulfillment Center just down the road.

"A taco, to us, is the corn tortilla," he says. "A burrito is flour tortillas. A taco is corn. That's the difference."

2730 NE 16TH AVE., 806.381.2309

Downtown

MORE TACOS TO LOVE

Bracero's Downtown
727 S. Polk St., 806.699.1055, bracerosdowntowntx.com

Hacienda Meche
626 S. Polk St., 806.236.4288

La Campana
2220 Canyon Drive, 806.373.4486

CLAUDIA TORRES, SALVADOR MURGUIA AND RAFAEL MURGUIA

ASADA TACOS

Los Picuchos

If there's one restaurant widely regarded by locals as one of the most successful and authentic Mexican restaurants, it's probably the Murguia family's multi-location El Tejavan. Los Picuchos is a lesser-known branch of that tree. But unless you work in a specific part of downtown, it may not be on your radar.

You'll want to change that.

Los Picuchos operator Salvador "Chava" Murguia cut his teeth working for El Tejavan when he arrived in Amarillo three decades ago. El Tejavan founders Jose and Patricia Murguia got their start selling tacos from their convenience store on Grand Street, and Chava paid attention when he joined the family business. As the opportunity arrived to launch a small Mexican restaurant to serve workers in the basement of the multi-story Happy State Bank building at 701 S. Taylor St., Chava took action.

Los Picuchos is a nickname for his two children, given by an older acquaintance who thought the kids had too much energy. "He called them '*picuchos*.' I said, 'What's that?' He said it's a small fish from Chihuahua." Chava isn't exactly sure, but the name stuck.

Open from 7:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. weekdays, the restaurant serves breakfast all day, plus a variety of authentic favorites for a customer base that extends well beyond the Happy building. "Most [customers] come from outside. From Xcel Energy, from the police [station]. We have a lot of DoorDash. We all eat in the living room, right?"

Los Picuchos makes its own tortillas, and Chava says the asada tacos are customer favorites. We asked: *What ingredients are essential for a good taco?* He doesn't pull punches. "The best thing for a taco, the thing that makes a taco better? It's the sauce. It's the hot sauce."

701 S. TAYLOR ST., SUITE 500, 806.443.1349

MORE TACOS TO LOVE

Maria's Cocina Mexicana
1316 SE 10th Ave., 806.373.8841

Carniceria La Popular
1505 SE Third Ave., 806.374.6451

Mimi's Restaurant
1400 Ross St., 806.373.3484

La Frontera
1401 S. Arthur St., 806.372.4593

TACOS AL PASTOR

ASHELY BARA PAREDES AND JENNIFER BARA

La Fiesta Grande

A Mexican food fixture among Amarillo's family-owned restaurants, La Fiesta Grande dates back to 1983 when Roy and Betty Bara moved here from Muleshoe. Once, for another publication, one of their daughters, Ashley Bara Paredes, mentioned that she thought a family business staying open for 30 years was a big deal.

That was a decade ago.

La Fiesta has been around long enough to have been one of the first restaurants to introduce local people to Mexican food, and then to watch local tastes evolve as time went on. "Over the years, we have diversified," explains Ashley, who serves as marketing director for the family business. La Fiesta's taco options were decidedly Tex-Mex at the beginning. "We started out with regular crispy tacos and they were ground beef or shredded chicken only. Lettuce and tomato and cheese. But as time has gone on, starting in the early 2000s, that's when we added barbacoa."

True barbacoa. "At one point, we even had lengua," she says.

The lengua (cow tongue) wasn't quite popular enough to remain on the menu, but barbacoa was a hit, and eventually the family began preparing street-style tacos using soft corn tortillas and more authentic flavors (asada, adobada, barbacoa and pastor). Today, La Fiesta's *tacos al pastor*—with seasoned pork and pineapple—have become one of the top sellers on the menu.

Customers have begun requesting spicier food as well. "I definitely feel like people's profile, as far as flavor and taste and heat, has changed tremendously," Ashley says. "Our menu started out really Tex-Mex, but if you eat here consistently, now it's half Tex-Mex and half authentic."

But longevity also means that local diners have developed an established, familiar relationship with restaurants like La Fiesta. "Because we've been here so long, 80 percent of our customers always order the same thing," says Ashley's sister, Jennifer Bara, vice president of the company. "They're like, 'This is what I get at La Fiesta.' They don't even need menus anymore. It's a good thing because we have nostalgia on our side. That's a blessing."

Meanwhile, the Bara family has watched as ethnic restaurant options have exploded in Amarillo, including smaller competitors who might offer more experimental dishes. They don't mind it, actually. Sometimes it causes customers to miss a favorite La Fiesta meal. Or sometimes it leaves a diner more receptive to change.

"It allows us to be more creative," Jennifer says. "Those customers will try something new at another restaurant offering really different things, and then they come back to La Fiesta. It opens the door for us to add things to the menu that [earlier] wouldn't have made it."

The proximity of the Ross location to I-40 also means an ongoing stream of hungry drivers. "We get people from all over the world. You'd have to see it to believe it," Ashley adds. She says many travelers from Australia, Germany or England will spend a couple of days in Amarillo. On their first day, they go to The Big Texan. But after that, they want Mexican food.

When they end up at La Fiesta, she says, "I usually recommend tacos. It's just universal. They're going to like it."

2200 S. ROSS ST., 806.374.3689, FIESTAGRANDE.COM

The Way She Says "Hot Sauce"

BY **WES REEVES**

I have vast experience with fast food. I know the unintelligible language of the squawk box, the staticky tongue of part-time workers younger than 20 who all started calling me "boss" shortly after I turned 50.

And through the years, I've learned from heartbreaking traumas to check the order before I drive off. Somebody might've confused *beef* for *bean.* Then I encountered Candace Collier at the Taco Villa drive-thru on Georgia Street, and my well of knowledge, seemingly so deep, was found to be wanting.

"Welcome to Taco Villa, how may I help you?" It was so clear, so sweet. No static. It's like the wires were electronically cleansed by her delightful voice. On that first day when Candace took my order, sometime back in 2019 or so, I may have even heard bluebirds singing, just like in *Snow White.* It was enchanting. When I finally caught a glimpse of her through the window, she had a motherly look to her, not old or frumpy, but motherly, as in nurturing. I thought to myself, *she really does care that I'm hungry.*

I continued to return to Taco Villa, maybe a little more often than usual. I was intrigued. Then came that magical day when she said, "Do you want your one hot sauce?" and my head just exploded. First off, just the way she says "hot sauce." It's like when Mom would ask if I wanted more butter on my bread. There's a certain way "sauce" comes out that is just so special. But also, how does she remember these things? In time, I would just say, "I'll have my usual," and she never forgot the smallest details. Even so, she would still recite it all back to me in that singsong way. I would occasionally order a bean burrito just to hear her spell out *B-E-A-N burrito* for perfect clarity.

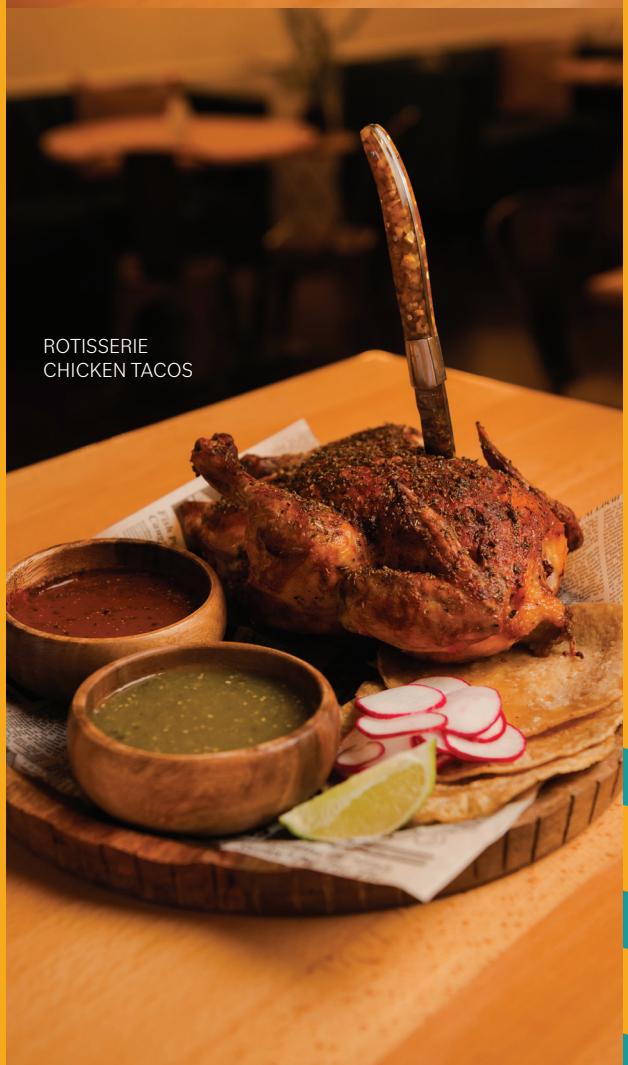
I also realized that when Candace was there, everything went really fast. I had to start getting my cash and change counted before I pulled up. Often, if no one was in front of me when I ordered, a hand was already holding my bag of goods outside the window before I pulled up. It's like Candace read my mind 15 minutes before I left for Taco Villa and commanded the taco elements to assemble themselves in advance.

Then suddenly, she was gone, without notice. I don't know how long she was gone because time stood still. But I found out other people had noticed as well and were equally as crestfallen. I would have good company wandering in the wilderness. The waits grew longer, people got grumpy in line out in the parking lot, and nobody seemed to remember how it all worked.

But just like in the Lassie movies, a happy ending was in order. One fine day, the word on the street was that Candace had returned to the window. I wasn't going to believe it until I saw, or heard, for myself. From two cars behind in line I detected that voice over the speaker. I got nervous—would she remember me? Did she know how many hot sauces I need? I made up my mind that there'd be no questions. I'd act like she'd never left. And that's exactly how it went down. It was like when you lose an important file and ask IT to dial back time to an earlier date, except I had grown a bit older. In short order, Candace ever so delicately began offering me the senior discount just after verifying my Dr Pepper and one hot sauce (you really don't need more).

Over the years, Candace has achieved celebrity status in Amarillo. There is a "We Love Candace" Facebook page. Young and old come together to mingle in her glow. MAGA and Woke find common ground. And with Candace at the helm, the drive-thru line forms effortlessly with people waving and smiling, even when someone cuts in line. Yes, we love tacos, but we love Candace even more. There's still hope for this world, and in fact, I've often thought that Candace should be president. No more wars, nobody goes hungry, no long lines at the Social Security office. Wouldn't that be something?

CHINO LATINO TACOS



ROTISSERIE CHICKEN TACOS

Southwest Amarillo

MORE TACOS TO LOVE

Caudillos Mexican Food
4602 SW 34th Ave., 806.437.1514, caudillosmexicanfoodtx.com

El Giro
1800 Bell St., 806.318.3859

Good Day Burritos
3609 SW 45th Ave., 806.358.8226

Los Braceros Mexican Bar & Grill
3303 Bell St., 806.355.0889, losbraceros.com

Mexico Lindo Restaurant
4515 S. Georgia St., 806.355.1851

San Jose Mexican Restaurant
3723 SW 58th Ave., Suite 100, 806.425.1121, sanjosemexicanrestauranttx.com

Taqueria El Tapatio Mexican Restaurant
3410 S. Coulter St., 806.331.6248, tapatiotx.com

La Fiesta Grande
7415 SW 45th Ave., 806.352.1330, fiestagrande.com

Joe Taco
5700 S. Georgia St., 806.350.8226, joe-taco.com

Cada Vez Cocina Mexicana
9200 Town Square Blvd., Suite 1000, 806.418.6976, cadavezamarillo.com

Mi Gente

"Phones eat first, then the eyes, then I get to eat," Chef Paul Leal says while plating gorgeous carnitas tacos (roasted pork shoulder with pickled onion and cilantro) at Mi Gente. Though he's a French-trained chef who cut his teeth at Del Frisco's Double Eagle Steakhouse in Dallas—one of the swankiest see-and-be-seen restaurants in the Metroplex—he also understands the simple, visual appeal of a well-crafted taco.

His carnitas tacos pop with onions dyed purple by the presence of beets in the citrusy pickling liquid—a technique he learned from indigenous artisans while traveling in Mexico. The rotisserie chicken tacos add radishes to the ingredient list. And Paul's Asian-fusion Chino Latino tacos are a visual delight, served with a tiny, flamingo-topped sandwich pick to hold together its steamed bao bun shell. ("I describe it as a light, airy, cloud pocket," says his wife and restaurant partner Amber Leal.)

He says tacos began as humble, filling products from street vendors, intended to provide inexpensive fuel for the working class. "If you break it down, it was what we'd call 'poverty food,'" he explains. "We take it, add stuff to it and elevate it. It's beautiful. The colors are beautiful. The flavors are beautiful."

Mi Gente started as a food truck after Paul and Amber moved to Amarillo during the pandemic. Soon after, they began using the food truck as the kitchen for a brick-and-mortar across from Hodgetown, then expanded to a new location at 34th Avenue and Bell Street in early 2026, transforming the former Butterlove Biscuits into something new. "Downtown, we were at capacity," Amber says. "We needed something bigger to grow."

Vintage photos of Paul's and Amber's grandmothers line the back wall of the new restaurant. "That's how it all got started—their flavors, in the kitchen," says Paul, who is of Mexican heritage. "It's about honoring them. These are the flavors of our grandmothers, of our ancestors."

3440 BELL ST., SUITE 130, 806.576.5467

AMBER AND PAUL LEAL

MORE TACOS TO LOVE

Mariscos El Victor
2813 SW Sixth Ave., 806.803.2107

Braceros Mexican Grill & Bar
2822 SW Sixth Ave., 806.220.2395,
bracerosmexicangrillbar.com

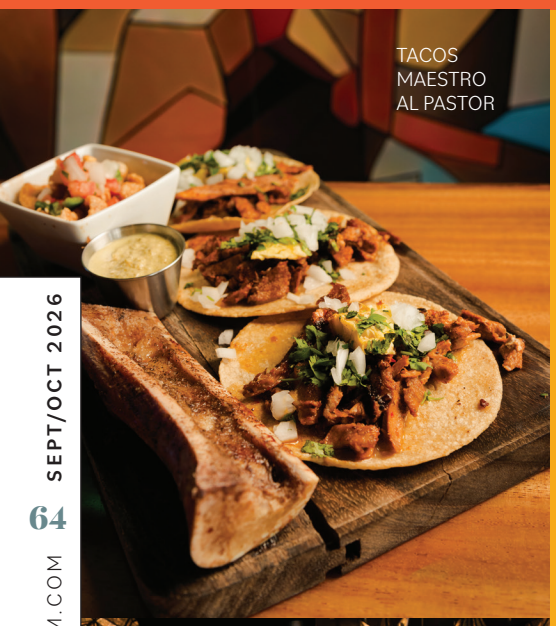
Aldaco's Tacos
3623 SW Sixth Ave., 806.374.4945

Taqueria El Tapatio Mexican Restaurant
5630 W. Amarillo Blvd., 806.803.3220

Joe Taco
7312 Wallace Blvd., 806.331.8226,
joe-taco.com

El Tejavan III
801 SW Sixth Ave., 806.437.1323

SEAFOOD TACOS



TACOS MAESTRO AL PASTOR

ANGEL ARREOLA AND IVAN CARNERO

El Maestro Taquero Bar & Grill

Two years in the making, this elevated, authentic Mexican food joint on Historic Sixth is what happens when a home builder (Ivan Carnero) teams up with someone raised in a family-owned grocery (Angel Arreola of Carniceria La Popular) and they decide to enter the high-stakes restaurant business for the first time.

The sizable location, most recently Austin's Texas Pub, needed a lot of work. So the childhood friends started dreaming.

Almost immediately, the dreams began pushing boundaries. The attention-getting design includes stunning light fixtures imported from Mexico, along with tables and chairs custom-made in Jalisco. Colorful Spanish tiles surround an internally lit bartop. The open kitchen set-up adds culinary theater to the mix, and feels more aligned with big-city restaurants than what Amarillo diners are accustomed to. And in that kitchen, restaurant-goers can watch a slowly turning *trompo*—the inverted cone-shaped vertical rotisserie that Arreola and Carnero fought to include, working through the city's health codes, so they could offer the most authentic *al pastor* preparation. (It may represent the only commercial *trompo* in the city.)

With those pieces in place, they turned to chef Giovanny Zacarias—who got his start as a 17 year old in the kitchen of Amarillo's late, great Ruby Tequila's before cutting his teeth in Mexico City's culinary scene—to help them develop the menu.

The taco-centered result definitely stands out. "We call them gourmet tacos because these are not your average tacos, right?" Arreola says. The tortillas are made in-house. The tacos are served with *tuétano asado*, roasted marrow bones, which have deep roots in Mexican cooking and add a rich, savory flavor when scraped over grilled meat. "It's like beef butter," Arreola explains.

This isn't your average street taco, nor your average atmosphere for authentic Mexican food. Arreola brings the dishes out from the kitchen, serving them on thick wooden trays rather than the usual oval plates.

They didn't intend to go this hard at the beginning, Carnero admits. "It was gonna be more laid-back, but throughout the process, everything just kind of slowly started coming into play," he explains. "Something a little more elevated."

Arreola grew up around food, in the grocery business, but that's a far cry from what they've created with El Maestro Taquero. "We're new to this," he says.

"It's not like any other traditional Mexican restaurant," Carnero adds.

3121 SW SIXTH AVE., 806.803.0101,
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Salsa-faction Guaranteed

Publishers' note: To accompany our tacos feature, we sent two of our interns—UNT student Reece Welch and incoming Texas Tech student Gunnar McConlogue—on an Amarillo salsa tour. This is their report.

BEST SALSA OVERALL: EL MANANTIAL MEXICAN RESTAURANT

Deep and flavorful, it pairs beautifully with thick, corn-forward chips.

The chips at this Boulevard favorite have a more pronounced corn taste and chewier bite. They're nicely complemented by a velvety salsa with a hot-sauce-like consistency, which delivers a slow burn that lingers in the back of your throat. The pairing highlights the unique textures and corn flavor.

FRESHEST SALSA: BRACEROS MEXICAN GRILL & BAR

Fresh cilantro, onion, garlic. Tastes light, not tomato-forward, with a little heat.

The chips at this Route 66 staple have a light char and are thicker. They aren't overly corn-forward, and the texture balances well with the salsa. The tomato salsa was the freshest we sampled. It has a subtle kick and is chunky in texture compared to others, while maintaining a light, fresh flavor. Cilantro, onion, jalapeño and other notes contribute to the overall taste.

SPICIEST SALSA: DONA JAUNITA'S

The heat isn't overwhelming, but there's definitely a kick. The thin texture allows it to coat the chips well.

Also on the East Boulevard, Dona Juanita's offers one of the most distinctive chip-and-salsa pairings, with charred chips that deliver a smoky flavor and a moderate texture. The salsa is the thinnest sample we tried. Slightly orange-colored, it stands out for chili and spice lovers. It's bold!

BEST CHIP OVERALL: CADA VEZ COCINA MEXICANA

A clear winner. Its success is largely due to the seasoning. It's easy to fill up on these!

Located in Town Square Village, Cada Vez may not be the most aesthetically traditional on our list, but it makes a strong showing. Specifically for the chips, it's one of the only restaurants that salted, let alone used other seasonings. Our opinion: The thin, well-seasoned chips are dangerously easy to over-eat. The chips were paired with a mellow salsa that was smooth but still dense without notable cilantro flavor, making it perfect for someone who doesn't want a lot of spice or isn't a fan of cilantro.

BEST CHIP TEXTURE: LA FRONTERA

The wonton-like texture means these melt in your mouth as you eat them.

A longtime favorite in the Barrio, La Frontera makes its chips and salsa in-house daily, and you can tell. The chips have a melt-in-your-mouth texture and are the airiest of the bunch, with an almost wonton chip-like appearance. They are great paired with the salsa, which is smooth and has a faint roasted flavor. But we felt these were the chips that could best stand on their own. And if you're a fan of salsa verde, La Frontera provides a fantastic alternative salsa that contains all the best parts of its red salsa with the signature tomatillo flavor of green salsa.

CLASSIC CROWD-PLEASER: THE PLAZA RESTAURANT & BAR

This salsa is hard to resist.

As a staple Mexican restaurant of the Texas Panhandle, it's no surprise that we couldn't stop dipping. The chips were probably the thinnest and easiest to break. (We tend to use the chips to hunt through the salsa to find the coveted bits of cilantro.) Combined with a soft kick of garlic and pepper, the thin chips and bright flavors are sure to keep you crunching.

SMOOTHEST SALSA: LA FIESTA GRANDE

This salsa is ideal if you like it blended rather than chunky.

Another longtime leader in the Tex-Mex scene, La Fiesta's chips are pretty standard but will still leave you wanting more. The salsa has a strong tomato flavor and a thin, smooth quality, making the combo a delicious appetizer or snack. This salsa is perfect for those who prefer no chunks in their dip and mild spice.

BEST SALSA VARIETY: GRANDMA'S BURRITOS

Want options beyond traditional, tomato-based salsa? Start here.

Grandma's is more of a quick-service restaurant, but it doesn't shy away from great chips and plenty of unique salsas. The chips were well salted and had a light, airy texture that still held up when dipping. We tried five different salsa options: traditional salsa roja, salsa verde, jalapeño salsa, green chile salsa, and a red chili option. All are delightful; notably, the red salsa was fresh and more tomato-forward, pairing great with the tasty chips. The others added unique flavors and textures, but the jalapeño salsa really stood out. With a distinct jalapeño flavor and creamy texture, it's fresh and packed with flavor—unlike any others we tried.

Food Trucks

2 Hermanos Tacos
1117 SE 10th Ave., 806.443.3489, facebook.com/2HermanosTacos

The 806 Fix
3703 Wolflin Ave., 806.443.4920

Asada Mama
806.420.3135

Big O's Cocina
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Birria Y Tacos El Rey
707 E. Amarillo Blvd., 806.410.5670

Burrito Barn
806.690.2746, facebook.com/BurritoBarn806

Canelo's Taqueria
605 E. Amarillo Blvd., 806.881.4407

Carnitas El Pariente
3009 E. Amarillo Blvd., 806.626.3565

Cocina On The Go
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David's Taqueria
714 N. Fillmore St., 806.517.5098

Don Toño's Barrio Food
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El Barrio Taqueria
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La Guanaca Food Truck
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La Tabasquena Taquera
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Mi Torreon
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Mimi's To Go
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Panchos Burguers
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Tacos Guadalajara
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906 SW 10th Ave. / 3601 E. Amarillo Blvd., 806.437.9324

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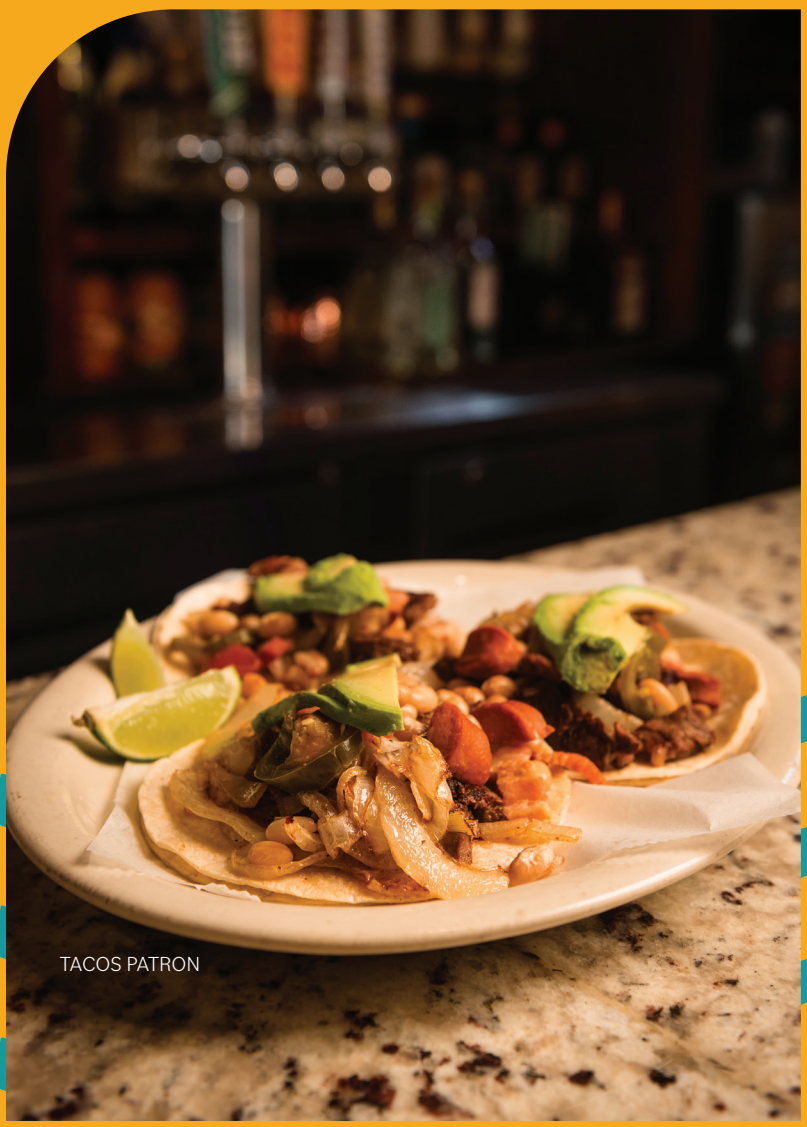

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Taqueria El Tapatio No. 3

This multi-location family restaurant enterprise started with the Plascencia family. These three brothers from Jalisco, Mexico, immigrated to the U.S., ran restaurants in San Antonio, and then sought new opportunities in the Texas Panhandle. Taqueria El Tapatio was the result of that expansion, with ventures serving Jalisco-style flavors in Dumas, Amarillo and Canyon. All are operated by a network of family members.

Diego Conchas, a former WT student, has managed the Canyon location since 2017, and says the generous portions, authentic flavors and huge menu—which includes breakfast—have been critical to their local success.

Importantly, the family's commitment to authenticity doesn't come at the expense of local preferences. "Half of the menu's Tex-Mex, and the other half is more authentic food," Diego says. "I mean, we still have crispy tacos. That's Tex-Mex."

But you can also order those tacos with *tripas* (tripe), a beloved Mexican street-food staple made from the rigorously cleaned and cooked preparation of the lining of small intestines. Diego says Canyon diners are more experimental than outsiders might expect. About tripas, he says, "There's people who are, like, 'what is this?' But after they try it, they like it."

Serving up a plate of the ribeye-based Tacos Patron, Diego says he thinks the taco, a simple corn tortilla wrapped around a protein source, is the undisputed heart and soul of Mexican street food.

"Anyone can make a taco, but not everyone can make a good taco," he adds.

2301 12TH AVE., 806.510.7703

LBJ and CHARLIE GIBSON

How the Panhandle (maybe) made a presidency

BY **REECE WELCH**

LYNDON B. JOHNSON IN AMARILLO DURING THE 1948 CAMPAIGN

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE PANHANDLE-PLAINS HISTORICAL MUSEUM

"We've got that story about LBJ. How a drunk Amarillo delegate was the reason he ended up president."

As a summer *Brick & Elm* intern, I was sitting in a planning meeting for this issue at Palace Coffee. Copublishers Jason and Michele were discussing editorial ideas. Then I heard my dad's name.

"It's from a paper written by Reed Welch and Wade Shaffer at WT," Jason said.

I'm sure my face gave away my surprise. "That's … my dad."

I hadn't heard of this paper, but I mentioned it shouldn't be too hard to get in contact with the authors, given that I live with one of them. That's how I ended up here, writing about Lyndon Johnson's victory in the 1948 Texas Democratic Senate primary, and the strange but historically significant role Amarillo played in it.

Would LBJ have become president if not for what happened? Possibly not.

THE 1948 PRIMARY

Let me start at the beginning. My dad, Dr. Reed Welch, has taught at West Texas A&M University since before I was born. He's the Teel Bivins Professor of American Politics and the head of the political science and criminal justice departments. His colleague, Dr. Wade Shaffer, is a professor of history who's taught at WT longer than my dad has. Shaffer has been studying the political culture of the Texas Panhandle and, according to his WT bio, "the complicated relationship between Panhandle voters and Lyndon

Baines Johnson."

Together, they published an article in last year's *Panhandle-Plains Historical Review*. It was titled "The Texas Panhandle, LBJ, and the 1948 Senate Primaries."

I came home and informed my family I would need to interview our very own for a magazine. Admittedly, having grown up with my dad and his vast knowledge of niche American political history, I wasn't anticipating the chaos and humor this particular story brought.

"For Johnson, this could make or break his career and with his future on the line, he worked his tail off," my dad told me about that campaign. Back then, LBJ was still a young Congressman who was running against Coke R. Stevenson, an extremely popular former Texas governor. Johnson was hungry for power, but he was the underdog.

"You see it all the time. The person or team that is the underdog is willing to work harder, fight a lot harder and take some chances," Dad said.

But Johnson's ceaseless efforts to win that 1948 election weren't enough to land him the victory—at least not without help. As they tell it, that help came from a drunk Amarillo delegate who cast the tiebreaking vote (29-28) which certified the result of a primary runoff election. Without this one man's possibly intoxicated decision, LBJ's political career might have ended. It was enough to change American history.

Johnson had never won a statewide election before, my dad explained. As the primary results came in, Stevenson had dominated Johnson, especially in the Panhandle. But it was a multi-candidate field and neither was able to gain the necessary majority for the nomination, so the election went into a runoff.

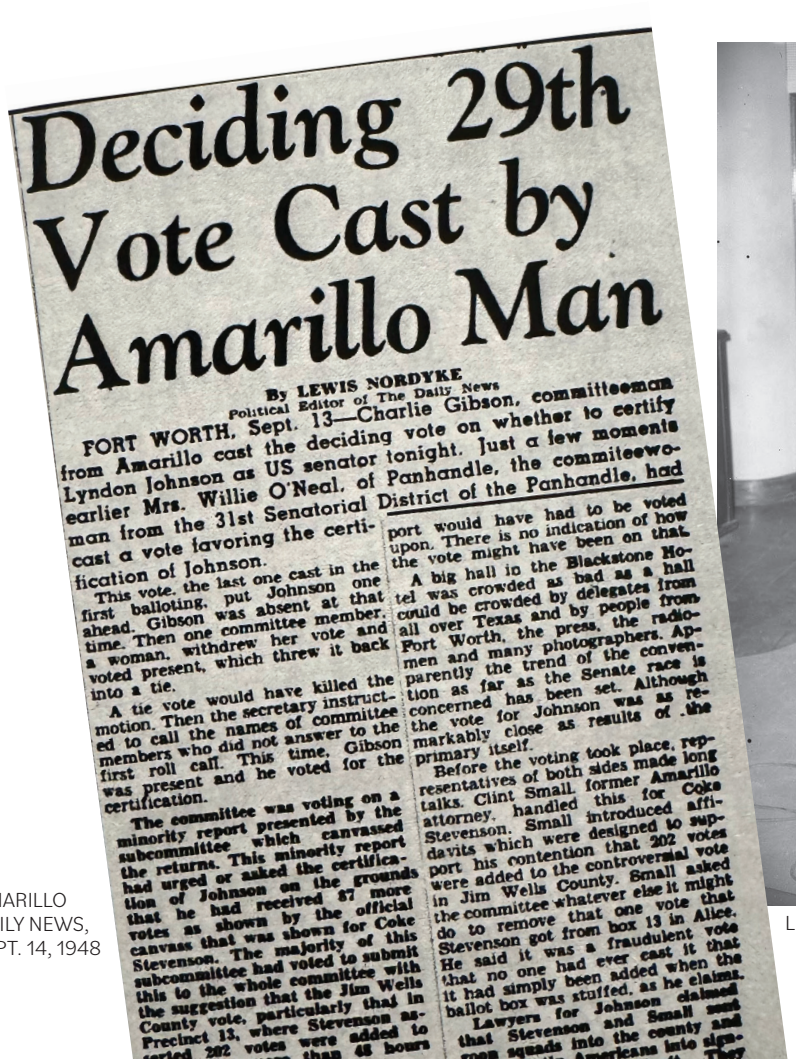
LBJ briefly considered dropping out of the race, which seemed unwinnable. But when he finally relented, he decided Amarillo—where he'd lost by 71,000 votes—would be 1 of 7 cities to focus his campaign on.

"PAPPY'S SPEECH"

At a pivotal moment, conservative leaders offered Johnson financial support if he agreed to give a prewritten radio address known as "Pappy's Speech" on radio stations across the state. The speech, originally delivered by former governor Pappy O'Daniel, was vehemently anti-communist. It embodied all of the harshest parts of Texas conservatism, my dad explained, and didn't mesh well with Johnson's values.

But with almost no money left and an embarrassing loss in sight, Johnson decided to give the speech, for the first time, in Amarillo. I asked Shaffer about this one.

"He's in the Herring Hotel literally walking up and down the hallways deciding if he wants to do this or not," Shaffer said. "Originally he said he was not going to do it. It went against everything he stood for."



Deciding 29th Vote Cast by Amarillo Man

By LEWIS NORDYKE
Political Editor of The Daily News

FORT WORTH, Sept. 13—Charlie Gibson, committeeman from Amarillo cast the deciding vote on whether to certify Lyndon Johnson as US senator tonight. Just a few moments earlier Mrs. Willie O'Neal, of Panhandle, the committeewoman from the 31st Senatorial District of the Panhandle, had cast a vote favoring the certification of Johnson.

This vote, the last one cast in the first balloting, put Johnson one ahead. Gibson was absent at that time. Then one committee member, a woman, withdrew her vote and voted present, which threw it back into a tie.

A tie vote would have killed the motion. Then the secretary instructed to call the names of committee members who did not answer to the first roll call. This time, Gibson was present and he voted for the certification.

The committee was voting on a minority report presented by the subcommittee which canvassed the returns. This minority report had urged or asked the certification of Johnson on the grounds that he had received 87 more votes as shown by the official canvass that was shown for Coke Stevenson. The majority of this subcommittee had voted to submit this to the whole committee with the suggestion that the Jim Wells County vote, particularly that in Precinct 13, where Stevenson carried 202 votes were added to

port would have had to be voted upon. There is no indication of how the vote might have been on that.

A big hall in the Blackstone Hotel was crowded as bad as a hall could be crowded by delegates from all over Texas and by people from Fort Worth, the press, the radiomen and many photographers. Apparently the trend of the convention as far as the Senate race is concerned has been set. Although the vote for Johnson was as remarkably close as results of the primary itself.

Before the voting took place, representatives of both sides made long talks. Clint Small, former Amarillo attorney, handled this for Coke Stevenson. Small introduced affidavits which were designed to support his contention that 202 votes were added to the controversial vote in Jim Wells County. Small asked the committee whatever else it might do to remove that one vote that Stevenson got from box 13 in Alice. He said it was a fraudulent vote that no one had ever cast it that it had simply been added when the ballot box was stuffed, as he claims.

Lawyers for Johnson claimed that Stevenson and Small sent goon squads into the county and

AMARILLO DAILY NEWS, SEPT. 14, 1948

LBJ GIVING PAPPY'S SPEECH OVER KGNC

"It's interesting that the little old Panhandle that nobody cares about ends up casting the deciding vote."—Dr. Wade Shaffer

But at the Herring Hotel, LBJ apparently talked himself into it. The speech represented his only chance to stay competitive. "He was desperate enough to swallow his pride and read the speech to connect with an audience he hadn't connected with before," Shaffer said.

The image of Johnson pacing a hotel hallway in downtown Amarillo, agonizing over it, is something Shaffer finds compelling. "Johnson is easy for people to dislike and criticize, but at that moment he is very human," Shaffer said. "I think this moral quandary he faced is one that a lot of people could understand, just maybe not at that level."

He gave the speech on Amarillo radio station KGNC.

It worked. Almost immediately, Johnson's poll numbers began to rise, and a few days later he received his first and only newspaper endorsement in the Panhandle, from the *Shamrock Texan*.

My dad, always a careful historian, said it's impossible to be sure that the speech was the cause for LBJ's rising popularity. In fact, he's not sure if it even mattered, given how the election was eventually decided by one man from Amarillo.

One man who was probably drunk.

That's the story I want to tell.

AMARILLO TIMES, MAY 25, 1948

CAMPAIGN STRATEGY was being mapped Monday morning when Congressman Lyndon Johnson (left) met with Jay Taylor and other Amarillo supporters in Mr. Taylor's office. Johnson, who has represented the Austin district in Congress for the past 12 years, is starting out on a 60-day campaign which he hopes will put him in the United States Senate, replacing Senator W. Lee O'Daniel.

* * *

Lyndon Johnson To Dodge No Issues

Beaming with optimism and elated over the response he has received since his opening radio speech Saturday night, Congressman Lyndon Johnson is in Amarillo for a two-day organization visit in behalf of his candidacy for United States Senator.

"Every voter in Texas," said the 39-year-old Johnson City congressman, "will know exactly how I stand on every important issue."

Continuing, Mr. Johnson said: "I have nothing in my record to apologize for. I've voted with the late President Roosevelt, and I've voted against him; I've voted as I felt was right, and in the way I believed to be for the interests of the great majority of the people. I'm not for the extremists on either side. I'm against the minorities that seek unfair advantages, whether they be labor or management."

Congressman Johnson will give a

Man Shot . . .

(Continued from Page 1)

portedly followed an argument a
the game.

Deputy Young called Dr. L. B
Barnett and Rowe was taken t
the hospital for surgery.

Rowe was shot five times with
.38 super automatic. Both his leg
were broken. All the copper-jacket
ed bullets went through his bod
except two, one lodging in each
leg. The shot in the stomach wa
in the center of the body, just be
low the chest. The bullet left
large hole as it tore through hi
back. One-third of the stomach
was removed in surgery. The lef
elbow was half shot away at th
joint. Two slugs hit his right leg
one cutting away the blood suppl
to the lower leg. About thre

THE DELEGATE IN THE BATHROOM

By the time the runoff election day arrived, Johnson had pulled even with Stevenson statewide. The opportunism and campaign efforts had been worth it, but the contest was still incredibly close.

It was controversial, too. As they counted the votes, LBJ ended up with a razor-thin lead of 87 votes—out of nearly a million cast. Votes from some counties were contested, and the vote tallies kept shifting.

The winner of the runoff was officially decided at the State Democratic Convention in Fort Worth, where the 62-member executive committee had to certify the results. Given the disputes, they were divided over how to proceed, and only 57 members of the committee were present. The majority still favored Stevenson for the nomination.

But where were those five missing committee members?

After three hours of arguing, the committee started voting around 10 p.m. That first round of voting tied at 28 after one delegate marked a ballot "present, but not voting."

As my dad explained this to me, this is where the story stopped being just another one of his history stories and instead an extraordinary turn of events.

LBJ suddenly had a chance, but he needed additional votes. Johnson's staff began to hunt for the five men. It turns out that four of them weren't even at the convention.

But one was: Charlie Gibson, of Amarillo.

They found him in a bathroom stall. The circumstances were sketchy. According to my dad and Shaffer's article, LBJ aide John Connally—yes, *that* John Connally, the future Texas governor who was in the vehicle when JFK was shot—discovered Gibson and screamed at him to "get out there and vote." (The language was a little more colorful than that, but this is a family magazine.)

What happened next depends on who you ask, or perhaps, who you want to believe. "Whether he was drunk, or whether he was simply afraid to go out on the floor, he knew the votes were happening and he was definitely hiding in the bathroom," Shaffer told me.

Gibson finally stumbled into the meeting and asked what he was to be voting on. Then he cast his vote for Johnson. It cemented the winner of the primary and sent the room into chaos.

"Wait, he really had no idea what was being voted on?" I asked. Surely there's no way that was true.

My dad chuckled. "You wouldn't think so, would you?"

Shaffer added that one account indicates another delegate kicked over Gibson's chair after he cast his vote.

The newspapers at the time reported a more sanitized story, stating merely that Gibson was initially absent but was paged and asked to come vote. Conspiracy theories began to spread. *Was Gibson pressured to vote for Johnson? Why would a Panhandle delegate vote for someone the region opposed throughout most of the election?*

JOHNSON IN THE OLD TASCOSA ROOM AT THE HERRING HOTEL

"I think he was just too afraid to cast a vote in either direction," Shaffer said, "and if he was in the bathroom and the tie vote didn't happen, he could go back out and say he merely missed the vote." Gibson faced immense criticism back home, and never gave a satisfying answer as to why he voted the way he did.

THE LBJ LEGEND BEGINS

Lyndon Baines Johnson, of course, went on to win the general election in a landslide, taking 66 percent of the vote statewide.

Which means Gibson's vote put him on a path that eventually led to the American presidency. "Johnson becomes senator, then vice president. And when Kennedy was assassinated, he became president," Dad explained. If Johnson had lost the 1948 primary, his political career would have ended right there, probably for good.

"It's interesting that the little old Panhandle that nobody cares about ends up casting the deciding vote," Shaffer said.

The 1948 election is a famous one, but the Panhandle's role in the end result had rarely been told. Shaffer and my dad met for several months to discuss how telling the story through this new lens could provide important context—not just to this integral piece of Texas history, but also to how it shaped the politics of a region.

"By using the Panhandle as the focus point, the story looks a little different than the one that has been told over and over again," Shaffer said. "I think it gives us a much fuller image of what was taking place."

The two political parties have definitely changed over the decades, but my dad and Shaffer both speculate about whether Amarillo and the rest of the Panhandle were actually ahead of the rest of the state when it came to adopting modern conservatism. That's why Johnson never performed well in the area, regardless of his attempts, and that's why Gibson's vote was met with such surprise.

"We both feel like the Panhandle has been overlooked and ignored politically, socially, economically," Shaffer said.

I can attest to this, having grown up in Amarillo before moving to the Metroplex area for college. Panhandle politics had always been a frequent discussion topic at our dinner table. I often felt like the city was forgotten about or left out of these types of conversations, and was visited infrequently by politicians or prominent names.

On campus, I'm reminded about the misconceptions and ignorance about our hometown again and again. I tell people where I'm from and they ask, "Where even is that?" or "Isn't it just tumbleweeds out there?"

Maybe we do have too many tumbleweeds and definitely too much wind to blow them around. But this story shows that our region is capable of profound impact on an incredibly large scale. The history of the 1948 Texas Democratic primary and Charlie Gibson's indelible role in it is just one clear example of the influence of the people of the Texas Panhandle.

We don't just shape Texas history. We've shaped American history.

LBJ DURING THE 1948 CAMPAIGN, LBJ PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY [PUBLIC DOMAIN]

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ARTS IN THE SUNSET | HOODOOMURAL.COM | 3701 PLAINS BLVD

HOODOO MURAL FESTIVAL

As the Hoodoo Mural Festival settles into its second year at Arts in the Sunset, Sept. 26 promises a full day of art, music and community for the 2026 event.

Since its launch in 2019, the Hoodoo Mural Festival has brought more than 40 large-scale murals to Amarillo, with many transforming the walls of downtown Amarillo, where the festival first took root.

Last year, the festival made its move to the Arts in the Sunset campus on Plains Boulevard, which allowed for more intentional art activations and improved-upon safety and logistics for the event. Participants enjoyed jamming in the Silent Disco, watching muralists paint live, eating culinary delights from local food trucks, and participating in a variety

ADVERTISEMENT

of surprising art activities—from the ACTS drum circle and golf simulation to the mini-mural art zone and a paint catapult.

Fans were moved by performances of local musicians like The Blue Johnnies and Plemons Bridge as well as headliners Midlake and Rayland Baxter. Throughout the week, visitors were wowed by David Swartz' fluid tiger mural and Dan Black's comical take on John Wayne in a camping chair. The days flowed with creative energy and an underlying current of connection. It brought the public into the fold and inspired them not only to witness the art being made, but to become a part of the art itself.

This year's festival builds on that momentum. Headliner Neon Indian brings a high-energy electronic DJ set, while The Motet delivers its signature blend of funk, soul and jazz. Muralist Megan Oldhues will create a painterly new work on the front of Arts in the Sunset, while Egypt Hagan transforms the nearby Margaret Wills Elementary School gym with a mural celebrating the school's multicultural student body.

Festivalgoers can also explore new interactive experiences, including the debut of Arts in the Sunset's interactive mural and graffiti park.

Whether you're coming for the live music, the murals, or simply to experience Amarillo's creative spirit, the Hoodoo Mural Festival continues to be one of the city's most distinctive cultural events. It's a celebration of public art, local talent, and the connections that happen when creativity spills out into the community.

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B&E EXPERTS

Around here, a recommendation is so much more than just a suggestion. Genuine friendships and word-of-mouth carry massive weight in the Texas Panhandle, where expertise is personal. Our readers are looking for professionals who understand that skill only matters when it's backed by integrity. It says a lot that this version of our annual Experts section is the largest in our history. In it, you'll discover the local leaders and service providers who've earned the confidence of this community.

[SPECIAL ADVERTISING SECTION]

MORTGAGE LENDING DEPARTMENT
Amarillo National Bank

Tell us about ANB's history. Amarillo National Bank has proudly served the Texas Panhandle since 1892 and is the largest family-owned bank in the United States, remaining under the ownership of the Ware family. Our mortgage department has been helping families achieve homeownership for decades. While the lending industry has evolved dramatically over the years, our mission has remained the same: to provide honest guidance, dependable service and financing solutions that help our customers confidently purchase a home.

What skills are required of your mortgage lending team members? We look for people who are analytical, detail-oriented, organized and able to solve problems under pressure. Strong time management, communication and multitasking skills are essential because every loan has deadlines and unique circumstances. Above all, we hire people who genuinely care about others. Our team understands that behind every loan is a family, a dream, and often a lot of emotions. Empathy and exceptional customer service are just as important as technical knowledge.

How has the mortgage industry changed since ANB was founded? Before the creation of modern mortgage programs in the 1930s, purchasing a home often required buyers to pay a significant portion—or even the full purchase price—up front, making homeownership unattainable for many families. That's definitely a change!

More recently, we've watched the industry evolve from a paper-heavy, manually processed business into today's highly automated, technology-driven environment. Applications that once required multiple office visits can now often be completed online. Electronic documentation, digital signatures, automated underwriting, and instant verification services have improved efficiency while allowing us to serve customers faster than ever before.

Regulations have also evolved, especially after the 2008 housing crisis. This created stronger consumer protections and more consistent lending standards. Interest rates have fluctuated through every economic cycle. Freddie Mac's historical data shows rates reaching nearly 18% in the early 1980s, declining through the following decades, falling to historic lows near 2% during 2020 and 2021, and more recently returning to levels in the 6 to 7% range. While the market continues to change, helping families navigate those changes remains our responsibility.

What's the biggest misconception people have about your industry? That you need a 20% down payment or perfect credit to buy a home. While those factors can certainly influence loan options, they are not requirements for many borrowers. Today's mortgage market offers a variety of loan programs designed to fit different financial situations. Many qualified buyers are surprised to learn they may be able to purchase a home with a much smaller down payment than they expected. Our job is to educate customers on the options available to them and help them find the financing solution that best fits their needs.

What core philosophies guide your work? Our philosophy is simple: to do what we say we're going to do. We honor our approval letters, communicate honestly throughout the process, and strive to make what can often be a stressful experience as smooth as possible. Our goal isn't simply to close loans. It's to build lifelong relationships with our customers by earning their trust every step of the way.

Tell us about a recent success story. One of our biggest milestones this year was moving into a new facility (our Greenways Branch) that brings our mortgage production, home equity and operations teams together under one roof. This has strengthened collaboration and allowed us to provide an even better experience for our customers. Shortly after the move, during June 2026, our team celebrated its highest monthly mortgage funding volume in more than five years.

How has doing business in Amarillo affected your long-term success? Amarillo is built on relationships, and so is Amarillo National Bank. Many of our customers are more than clients—they're our neighbors, friends and fellow community members. Those relationships create a level of trust that cannot be replicated. Because we retain the servicing on many of the loans we originate, our relationship with customers continues long after closing. Instead of a national call center, many borrowers can walk into our office or speak with someone they know by name. That commitment to local service and long-term relationships has been one of the defining reasons for our success. It will continue to guide us for generations to come.

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ORTHOPEDIC SPECIALIST
Northwest Physicians Group

DR. SPENCER ALBERTSON

How did you get into the medical field? I ended up in medicine through a few lucky breaks and the massive support and belief of my family. Growing up, it was never my goal to be a surgeon. I just wanted to take advantage of the opportunities my parents gave my brother and me. They gave me the chance to find my stride in this world and once that became medicine—which was in my early 20s—they were very supportive.

How has orthopedics changed since you started? Orthopedic surgery is still a growing field with regular debates and controversies. The pendulum is ever-swinging, so this early in my career I'll simply say things are advancing.

What do you wish you'd known when you entered the field? How much of a gift this life is and how truly fortunate I feel to be included in the same breath as some amazing mentors and friends.

What do you enjoy most about your work? I love the learning which occurs every day, every case, every patient.

What core philosophy guides your work? There's a quote by Albert Einstein that I found in a fortune cookie about 15 years ago and keep in my wallet today: "Only a life lived for others is a life worthwhile." As silly as it seems to find meaning from a "fortune," this was one of the most impactful statements I've ever read. It's something I've seen from my parents and my big brother. It's a value that many mentors of mine have exuded in countless ways. I see my significant other, Maura, live this in taking care of our daughter.

If someone stepped into your shoes for one day, what would surprise them the most? How much I truly enjoy being a surgeon.

Tell us about a recent success story. I guess it depends on one's measure of success. For me, I was able to help get my family to New York to visit with my partner's family and celebrate our daughter's first birthday. Having a career that allows me the means and access to bring the people I love most together is one of the biggest wins I could ever imagine.

How has working in Amarillo affected your long-term success? So far, it's been the experience of a lifetime. I have great partners and colleagues at work who help me succeed beyond the expectations I set for myself. I'm surrounded by extraordinary people who force me to rise to the occasion every day.

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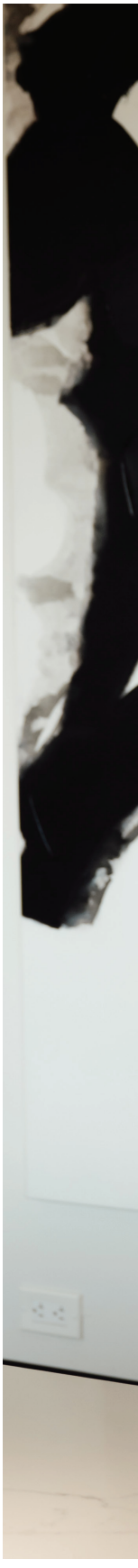
Spencer A. Albertson, MD
Orthopedic Trauma Surgeon

CIVIL TRIAL ATTORNEY

Sprouse Shrader Smith PLLC



GRANT Z. GIBSON, SR.

How did you get into litigation? Growing up playing sports, I became addicted to competition. As I got older and phased out of competitive sports, I found that I got that same competitive adrenaline rush in a far more useful situation: arguing for people who have suffered injustices.

How has the practice of law changed since you started? Technology has accelerated almost everything—how much information exists, how quickly clients expect answers, and now, of course, the increasing use of artificial intelligence. I think as a profession, we're all wrestling with how to best utilize the benefits of AI while mitigating the downsides. I've also noticed that the legal system increasingly reflects some of the broader polarization in society. That makes professionalism, credibility and a willingness to separate the actual legal issue from everything surrounding it even more important.

What do you wish you'd known when you entered the field? How difficult it is not to become personally invested in your clients' cases. In law school, I assumed I would be able to separate the intellectual side of the work from the human consequences of it. I have found that much harder than I expected. There is probably a healthy balance somewhere between complete detachment and taking every case home with you. I am still working on that balance.

What do you enjoy most about your work? Using whatever skills I have developed to accomplish something meaningful for a client.

Knowing the law is obviously important, but I think judgment is the harder part of being a good litigator. There is rarely a single obviously correct answer, and those decisions compound over the life of a case. That is the part of litigation I enjoy most. It is particularly rewarding when something that looks like a small strategic decision turns out months later to have played a substantial role in accomplishing the client's goals.

What core philosophy guides your work? Know the law, prepare in detail, understand what actually matters, and never sacrifice credibility.

I do not believe every conceivable argument should be made simply because it can be made. A weakness in the case is better acknowledged than avoided. The objective is not to win every individual exchange. It is to put the client in the best possible position when the case ultimately has to be resolved.

If someone stepped into your shoes for one day, what would surprise them the most? How little of a trial lawyer's day involves dramatically arguing in a courtroom. Most of the job is preparation: reading, writing, analyzing records, talking with clients, learning unfamiliar industries, and making dozens of strategic decisions that the judge or jury may never see.

Tell us about a recent success story. I tend to measure success by whether the client believes I helped solve the problem they brought me. Sometimes that means a verdict or a significant settlement. Sometimes it means getting a case dismissed, avoiding litigation entirely, or finding a practical solution that saves the client months of expense and distraction. Over time, the measure I probably value most is that former clients come back when they have another problem and refer their friends, families and businesses to me. I cannot think of a stronger endorsement of the work.

How has doing business in Amarillo affected your long-term success? Amarillo has been an excellent place to build a litigation practice because reputation matters here. I moved to Amarillo immediately after law school, and for more than a decade I have appeared repeatedly before many of the same judges and litigated against many of the same lawyers. That creates accountability. You cannot afford to exaggerate a fact, make an argument you do not really believe, or behave badly simply because you think you will never encounter that person again. You will.

I think that environment makes lawyers better. Amarillo also has exposed me to a variety of industries and given me deep local roots without limiting my practice to local matters. For the kind of lawyer I wanted to become, it has been a very good place to do it.

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CARDIOTHORACIC SURGERY

BSA Health System

Tell us about BSA's history. BSA Health System has served the Texas Panhandle for more than a century, building a legacy of providing high-quality healthcare close to home. As the healthcare needs of our region have evolved, BSA has continued to expand specialty services and invest in advanced medical technology. The growth of our Cardiothoracic Surgery Program reflects that commitment, allowing patients to receive sophisticated heart and lung care in Amarillo rather than traveling outside the region. Today, we are proud to offer advanced cardiovascular and thoracic services while remaining focused on the needs of our local communities.

What skills are required of your care team? Cardiothoracic surgery requires advanced medical expertise, technical precision and exceptional teamwork. Our team performs complex procedures including coronary artery bypass surgery, aortic and valve procedures, minimally invasive lung resections, and robotic-assisted thoracic surgery. Success depends on seamless collaboration among surgeons, anesthesiologists, intensivists, nurses, perfusionists, rehabilitation specialists, and other members of the care team. Critical thinking, attention to detail, communication and a commitment to patient safety are essential. Equally important is compassion, as we help patients and families navigate some of the most challenging moments of their lives while providing the highest level of cardiovascular and thoracic care.

How has the medical industry changed since BSA was founded? The field of cardiothoracic surgery has evolved dramatically through advances in technology, imaging and surgical techniques. Procedures that once required large incisions and extended hospital stays can now often be performed using minimally invasive and robotic-assisted approaches. Improvements in imaging, perioperative care and enhanced recovery protocols have led to better outcomes and faster recoveries for patients. At BSA, we continue to adopt innovative technologies and evidence-based treatments to ensure patients throughout the Texas Panhandle have access to advanced surgical care close to home.

What's the biggest misconception people have about your industry? One of the biggest misconceptions is that patients must travel to larger metropolitan areas such as Dallas, Houston or Lubbock to receive advanced heart and thoracic care. While those cities have long been recognized for specialty medicine, patients are often surprised to learn that many of those same advanced procedures are available right here in Amarillo. Our cardiothoracic surgery team provides high-quality, specialized care that allows patients to remain close to their families and support systems throughout treatment and recovery. We believe exceptional care should be accessible within the communities we serve.

What core philosophy guides your work? Our guiding philosophy is to provide exceptional, patient-centered care close to home. Every patient deserves access to advanced cardiovascular and thoracic services without the burden of extensive travel. We approach each case with a commitment to clinical excellence, clear communication and compassionate care. Every decision we make is focused on improving outcomes, enhancing the patient experience, and supporting patients and their families throughout the care journey. By combining innovation, expertise and compassion, we strive to deliver the highest standard of care to every patient we serve.

BSAHS.ORG

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INSPIRED FLORAL DESIGN Avant Garden

Tell us about Avant Garden's history: Founded in 2019 with a love for florals and a desire to create a welcoming, creative space, Avant Garden is a place to find uncommon gifts, exquisite florals and charming home decor. We have something for everyone, no matter the occasion.

What skills are required of your team members? Everyone on our team is an expert in their own field. We have experts in floral design, wedding trends, customer service, and more so we can ensure the best experience for every client.

How has the industry changed since Avant Garden was founded? The wedding and events industries are constantly evolving. Trends come and go, but our standards of top-notch customer service and unsurpassed skills in floral design remain. The color of the year will change. New styles will pop up. But our expertise is the same, no matter the trend.

What's the biggest misconception people have about your industry? That all arrangements are the same price, no matter what is in them. In reality, it depends on the specific florals used in each arrangement. At Avant Garden, we cater to clients of all budgets and work to bring their dreams to life.

What core philosophy guides your work? Our philosophy is simple: Every space should tell a story. Whether it's a home, an event, or a floral installation, we create designs that feel personal, timeless and thoughtfully layered. We believe beauty isn't about following trends; it's about creating something that reflects the people who will live with it and enjoy it.

Tell us about a recent success story. One thing people don't usually know about us is that we are expanding our design services nationwide and traveling more for event production. Our lead floral designer recently went to Santa Fe to complete the full design for a beautiful home. Our designs also often take us to Lubbock and occasionally to events in South Texas. Whether there are 5,000 hanging tulips or just a dozen decorative vases, there is no limit to the distance or occasion.

How has operating your business in Amarillo affected your long-term success? Amarillo is a community that genuinely supports local businesses, and we've been fortunate to grow because of that support. Collaborating with other local businesses and serving generations of families has created opportunities we couldn't have imagined. We're proud to be part of the city's continued growth.

2475 W. I-40 | 806.322.3598
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VANT
ARDE

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN FIRM

Lynch Architects

CHARLES LYNCH

How did you get into architecture? I've always been fascinated by the creation of spaces and buildings and knew when I was 5 years old that I was going to be an architect. Growing up, I built and created spaces. In high school I began drafting, which felt natural to me. I continued drafting and designing at Amarillo College and my architectural degree education began in 1982 at Texas Tech.

How has the industry changed since you started? Technology! When I began my career, all drawing was done on a drafting board, where sketches and final drawings were executed by hand. Technology has shifted from hand drawing to computer drafting and rendering. As I've navigated my career, I've made sure to keep my hand-rendering ability while my firm produces final drawing sets.

What do you wish you'd known when you entered the field? I wish that architects had proper business training. The degree curriculum is so tight, leaving no room for that part of the career. I learned by trial and error, mistakes and corrections. But 30 years later, I know I must have figured something out.

What do you enjoy most about the work you do? We enjoy helping people achieve their dreams of spaces and buildings where they live and work. I also get satisfaction seeing them thrive in our architecture. It's great to be able to revisit a finished space and listen to the client talk about the impact and how our spaces feed the community in a way we don't experience in the design, but always hope for.

What core philosophy guides your work? "If it's not magic, it's not done." Our work is only right when it's right for the client. We pride ourselves on exceeding our clients' expectations, even if that means challenging the program they bring to us. We consider ourselves artists as well as architects, molding the media to reshape the fabric of our community.

If someone stepped into your shoes for one day, what would surprise them most? The daily challenges of putting projects together, from code requirements to administration of the construction. Challenges pop up throughout the entire project, and many of those go unnoticed by the public. But that's what keeps buildings safe and accessible for our users.

Tell us about a recent success story. Our most recent success story is The Loft at First Baptist Church of Amarillo. It is an 80,000-square-foot student ministry building with dynamic spaces. The vision transformed an existing surface parking lot adjacent to the church into a space that is utilized and enjoyed by students, church members, and a vast number of Amarillo residents. FBC generously provides safe access to the main campus for an aging congregation, and allows the wider public to have a safe space to meet. It brings us joy to see the space being used to its potential and watching the impact of something we designed come to fruition.

How has doing business in Amarillo affected your long-term success? Amarillo is a great place to do business. It has both a small-town and big-city feel. The location is also central to a wider small-town demographic, allowing us to be able to work all over the Panhandle and the state of Texas. Referrals and testimonies from our clients who enjoy and appreciate our architecture are key to our success. Word of mouth has carried our business for many years. With each project's success, momentum builds as we do more work in our community. The client's success becomes our success. Having Spence and Denise continue our legacy that began in 1996 is a real honor. They will steward Lynch Architects into the future.

1001 SE THIRD AVE. | 806.374.0676
LYNCH-ARCHITECTS.COM

COMPREHENSIVE DOG DAYCARE

Good Dog Pet Ranch

Tell us about your organization's history. Good Dog Pet Ranch grew out of owner Jim J. Brewer's dream of a place where he would feel confident leaving his dogs. He wanted a safe, clean facility where dogs are treated like family and get plenty of attention, fresh air and exercise. Good Dog Pet Ranch has offered lodging, day care and training to Amarillo's dogs since its doors opened in 2019.

What skills are required of your team members? Our employees are chosen because they love caring for dogs. Every new employee is trained carefully by a seasoned employee who knows our procedures and routines, but more importantly, our philosophy. Dogs are family here and we love making sure they receive the care, love and affection they're used to at home.

How has the pet care industry changed since your company was founded? More people are realizing the importance of playtime and socialization for their dogs while owners are busy during the day. As a result, our daycare program has grown, with many clients enjoying the convenience of daily pick-up and drop-off services with our Good Dog Express van.

In the past, pet owners may have thought of dog daycare and lodging as an occasional necessity. Now they realize how much dogs benefit from getting lots of outdoor playtime and interacting with other dogs and people. By the end of their stay, the dogs are satisfied and content to wind down with their owners once they're back home.

What's the biggest misconception people have about your industry? How much time is spent cleaning when you're taking care of lots of dogs! It's a constant part of our job and we strive to keep a spotless facility to ensure the comfort and health of all our dogs.

What core philosophy guides your work? Every day we stay true to Jim J.'s desire to create a safe and happy place where dogs are treated like family. And we have a lot of fun doing it. Every holiday is celebrated, whether that means photos with Santa or baby pools and sprinklers in the summer heat. We make sure the dogs in our care have fun and feel loved.

Tell us about a recent success story. We're very excited to partner with the Amarillo Area Foundation to support the Panhandle Companions Fund. It was created to support the health, welfare and long-term sustainability of animal welfare organizations across all 26 counties of the Texas Panhandle. Our clients will have the opportunity to contribute directly to the Fund through Good Dog Pet Ranch transactions.

How has operating your business in Amarillo affected your long-term success? Amarillo is an ideal place to have a business because the people are exceptional. They care about their dogs and we're grateful they allow us to care for them, too. They also understand the importance of consistency. Establishing a close relationship with a dog care facility like Good Dog Pet Ranch means your dog will benefit from consistent, insightful care over the years. We get to know these dogs very well and can notice any slight changes in their health or behavior, adding to the owners' confidence in allowing their dogs to stay with us.

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GOOD DOG
PET RANCH

IRRIGATION COMPANY

Amarillo Lawn Sprinkler

How did you get into the irrigation business? Amarillo Lawn Sprinkler was started by Larry Lemarr in 1974, and for more than 52 years he and his family built it into one of the most trusted irrigation companies in the Panhandle. When the opportunity came to carry the company forward, my wife, Brit, and I took it. We took over in February of this year, and it's a privilege to build on a foundation that Larry brought to life. I worked for Larry for 10 years before we made the jump.

How has the industry changed since you started? Technology has changed significantly. We've gone from manual systems—where homeowners had to walk outside and turn everything on by hand—to smart systems you can run from an app on your phone. What hasn't changed is that a system is only as good as the design and install behind it. That part is still done by hand, in the dirt.

What do you wish you'd known when you entered the field? How much of this business is about people, not how much you know about pipe. The technical side you can learn. What makes or breaks you is calling customers back, showing up when you said you would, and explaining the work in plain terms. The phone call matters as much as the repair.

What do you enjoy most about the work you do? Every yard is a different puzzle. You have to think critically to track down a leak or figure out why a zone won't run, and then there's real satisfaction in diagnosing a problem and fixing it right. A well-built system runs for decades. We get to leave that behind.

What core philosophy guides your work? Do it right or don't do it. We'd rather fix something once than come back three times. That means quality parts, honest diagnosis and telling a customer the truth even when it might not be what they expected to hear.

If someone stepped into your shoes for one day, what would surprise them the most? How much detective work is involved. People picture digging trenches, but most of the day is tracing wires, chasing leaks underground, and troubleshooting valves you can't see. It's problem-solving that takes time.

Tell us about a recent success story. Two come to mind. We had a customer call in for a repair this year on a system we installed 30 years ago. It was the first service call he'd ever needed! That's the kind of work we want to be known for. Then, just recently, a customer had called several other sprinkler companies and none of them could figure out the problem (or weren't licensed to do the work). We had it diagnosed and fixed within 45 minutes. Now we have a happy customer for life.

How has doing business in Amarillo affected your long-term success? Amarillo is a word-of-mouth town. If you do good work, people talk. Many systems we service today were installed by this company decades ago. That continuity doesn't exist in bigger markets.

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AMARILLO LAWN SPRINKLER CO.
TEXAS EDITION
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DESTINATION WEDDING PHOTOGRAPHER

Brit Nicole Photography

Tell us about your business's history. Brit Nicole Photography began in 2006. I spent nearly two decades learning how to define myself in this saturated industry. Instead of sticking with traditional barn weddings, my couples say vows on Alaskan glaciers, black sand beaches in Iceland, canyon rims, and islands their guests still talk about years later. My work has been featured in more than 200 publications, such as *Martha Stewart Weddings* and *PopSugar*, seen on *The Ellen Show*, NBC, CBS, ABC, FOX, and earned a place in *The Knot's* Top 3% Best of Weddings Photographer Hall of Fame.

What skills are required of your team members? Knowing how to dive deep into people's personalities and what really matters most to them when they want a destination adventure elopement or a local boudoir session. Camera skills are just 10% of it.

How has the industry changed? People no longer want cookie-cutter "Pinterest" experiences. They want experiences that cater to who they are as a couple, not obligations they feel they have to meet because their mom's best friend's cousin that you've never met wants to attend a wedding.

What's the biggest misconception about your industry? That this is out of reach or you can't have guests. Quite a few people don't realize you can get hitched in Aruba for a true once-in-a-lifetime experience and it can cost less than a barn venue wedding.

What core philosophy guides your work? There's a place on this planet that matches who a couple is and captures the meaningful emotional aspect. My job is knowing where that place is and giving you the best experience/photos. I also sometimes officiate the weddings, handling permits, travel, budgets and ensuring your guests are fully prepared.

Tell us about a recent success story. A couple came to me with a date and a dream thinking it was the Colorado mountains. They didn't know they could get married in Iceland for about the same price as their planned Colorado wedding. Iceland was their dream. Colorado was their parents' dream.

How has Amarillo affected your success? My very first destination wedding outside the country came from an Amarillo couple 15 years ago. Since then, I've had the best cheerleaders in this town coming from the same industry.

806.681.2011
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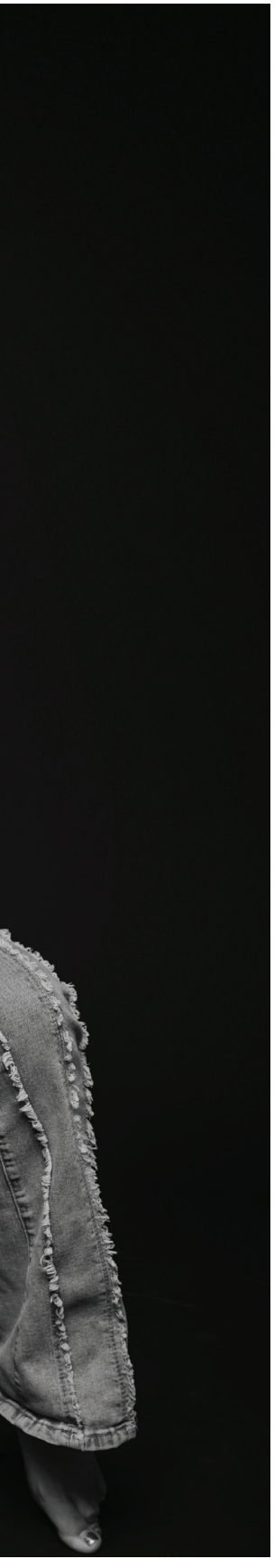

SKILLED CUSTOMER SERVICE

Street Volkswagen of Amarillo

Tell us about Street VW's history: Street Volkswagen opened in Amarillo in 2013. When we first opened, we were located at the corner of 45th and Georgia in a small, temporary location with only two service bays and two salespeople. In 2015, we moved into our current location on Soncy Road, where our service department has grown to 21 bays, allowing us to better serve our customers. Our sales team has grown as well, from just two salespeople when we opened to 20 today.

What skills are required of your team members? Our salespeople and technicians spend hundreds of hours gaining hands-on experience in both our showroom and service department. Several times throughout the year, members of our team also attend training seminars across the country. Continued training and a willingness to learn are extremely important for our team.

How has the automotive industry changed since your company was founded? The automotive industry is constantly changing, and that's why we believe so strongly in continued education, whether it's for our technicians or our salespeople. Technology in today's vehicles is advancing quickly, and we have to adapt and stay ahead of those changes. That allows our technicians to work confidently with the newest technology while our salespeople can help customers understand all the features and capabilities of their new vehicle.

What's the biggest misconception people have about your industry? Many people think of buying a car as a negative experience they simply have to endure. Since we opened, we've worked hard to change that mindset. We aren't just here to sell cars or fix cars. We want to create a positive experience for every customer who walks through our doors. At the end of the day, we want our customers to leave knowing we did our best for them and to feel confident recommending us to their friends and family.

What core philosophy guides your work? Exceptional customer experiences begin with an exceptional team. By investing in our employees, encouraging professional growth, and fostering a culture built on respect, integrity and accountability, we empower our people to provide outstanding service every day. When our team succeeds, our customers benefit, and that's what drives everything we do at Street Volkswagen.

Tell us about a recent success story. One thing we take a lot of pride in is investing in our team and giving our employees opportunities to grow. Every one of our managers was promoted from within the company. They each started in different roles and, through their hard work and dedication, grew into leadership positions. Recently, we saw that same potential in one of our sales consultants, who has now transitioned into a position in our accounting office. We love seeing our employees discover new talents, learn new skills, and find opportunities to grow their careers within Street Volkswagen.

How has doing business in Amarillo affected your long-term success? We are incredibly proud to be in Amarillo. Many members of our team have made Amarillo their home because they've grown to love this community, and we can confidently say we wouldn't be where we are today without community support. When Street Volkswagen opened in 2013, we anticipated creating 50 to 60 jobs in our community. Today, we employ nearly 100 people. That growth wouldn't have been possible without the customers and community that have supported us over the years. We're proud to continue investing in the community that has invested so much in us.

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WITH US SINCE DAY 1
SITTING: JOHN LUCIANO
STANDING L-R: DAVID ORTIZ, GREG BYLER,
DANIEL GREGG, CASSIE OWENS AND DAVID MERAZ

WELLNESS EXPERT
TGC Athletics

LAUREN MARLER, NASM CERTIFIED TRAINER, USAVB CERTIFIED, BBA

How did you get into athletic training? Athletics have shaped nearly every stage of my life. I competed in volleyball at the national level in high school and later earned a scholarship to play at West Texas A&M University. Those experiences taught me discipline, teamwork, resilience and how much the right coaching can influence both performance and confidence. After graduating with a business degree, I ultimately decided to pursue training full time to combine my athletic background, business experience, and passion for helping people. Today, I work as a personal and group trainer. I also coach club volleyball and continue exploring specialized areas of training and athletic development.

How has the fitness industry changed since you started? It has become more individualized. People are no longer simply looking for a workout. They want coaching that considers their goals, lifestyle, injury history, experience level and long-term health. There is also more information available than ever before. A trainer's role now includes helping people understand what is evidence-based, appropriate for their bodies, and what they can realistically sustain. I also see the industry moving beyond appearance-based goals. More people are focused on longevity, mobility, resilience, energy and maintaining an active lifestyle.

What do you wish you had known when you entered the field? That being a successful trainer is about more than knowing exercises or writing programs. Technical knowledge is essential, but relationships are what allow that knowledge to make a difference. The best coaching happens when people feel seen, supported and understood.

What do you enjoy most about the work you do? Watching people recognize their own capabilities. Physical progress is rewarding, but the greatest transformation often happens in a person's self-confidence. Helping someone become more resilient and able to adapt to challenges is one of the most meaningful parts of my work.

What core philosophy guides your work? My philosophy is to educate, not simply instruct. I want clients to understand why they are performing an exercise, how it supports their goals, and how to recognize what their bodies need. My goal is not to make someone dependent on a trainer. It is to give them the knowledge and foundation to make healthy, informed decisions throughout their life. Ultimately, I want people to leave training feeling stronger, more capable and better prepared for whatever comes next.

If someone stepped into your shoes for one day, what would surprise them most? How many different roles I move between in a single day. Personal training is only one part of what I do. I may lead a group session, support an athlete's performance development, coach volleyball, communicate with clients, adjust programs, track progress and continue my own education. People see the hour spent with a client, but they don't see the preparation behind it. Every session involves planning, observation, communication and the ability to adjust in real time.

Tell us about a recent success story. One recent client came in lacking confidence and feeling uncomfortable in a gym environment. Rather than focusing only on physical results, we worked on creating a routine that felt manageable and sustainable. Over time, that client became more consistent, began asking questions, developed better movement patterns, and grew comfortable training more independently. The most rewarding part was seeing the shift from "I don't know if I can do this" to "I know what I am capable of." That kind of self-confidence can influence every area of a person's life.

How has working in Amarillo affected your long-term success? Amarillo is a community where relationships, trust and reputation matter. Working through TGC Athletics also gives me access to opportunities that are uncommon for a trainer early in her career. TGC is part of Kinetic Strategies, a larger sports management firm that supports athletes, fitness clients, community programs and corporate wellness initiatives.

Within that environment, I can provide personal training inside TGC facilities while learning from professionals across several disciplines. I have opportunities to work alongside Sanders Fit & Rehab, support performance training with experienced coaches and leaders such as Marc Cornell and Blue Baggett, and contribute to lifestyle and wellness coaching at the community level.

TASCOSAGOLFCLUB.COM/ATHLETIC-LIFESTYLE/FITNESS

ATHLETIC CENTER

CREDIT UNION Education Credit Union

BRANCH MANAGERS (L-R): ANGELA G.; SHARON W.; VICKI F., BRIANNA C.; BECKIE H. (NOT PICTURED)

Tell us about your organization's history. Education Credit Union was formed on Jan. 19, 1935. For more than 90 years, ECU has served members across the Texas Panhandle, opening on-campus branches to afford local students career opportunities and embracing digital tools to make banking more accessible and efficient. Today, we are proud to be the largest credit union in the region, trusted by more than 40,000 members. Our commitment to financial literacy, service excellence and community engagement continues to set us apart in the Texas Panhandle.

What skills are required of your team members? At ECU, we're all about people—so we look for team members who are genuinely friendly, listen well, and make members feel welcome. We want our team to manage member accounts with confidence. We're deeply connected to the local community, so it's crucial our leaders show up for neighborhood needs, building trust by being present and approachable. With branch managers totaling 91 and a half years of collective experience, our members can count on leadership that's both expertly informed and rooted in local service.

How has the industry changed since your company was founded? While we were initially founded to serve teachers, over the years our mission has grown. These days, ECU membership is open to anyone who lives, works, worships or attends school within 10 miles of any of our locations. We're proud of our educator-based history, but all Texas Panhandle community members are welcome at ECU.

What's the biggest misconception people have about your industry? Credit unions are not-for-profit financial cooperatives, which means they are owned by their members, not stockholders. Thousands of local credit unions across the country share a common "People Helping People" philosophy that puts members before profits in every decision made. ECU returns profits to our members in the form of better rates on loans, higher rates on deposits, and low or no fees. A credit union's expertise lies in providing personalized, values-driven financial services that empower its members to thrive.

What core philosophy guides your work? Our core value, "People First, Impact Always!" reflects our desire to serve the local area. We're here to help our members succeed with great products and services. We invest in the communities we serve across the Texas Panhandle. Whether volunteering with local organizations or helping deliver Pocket Change Grants to deserving teachers, employees can feel proud to be a part of something meaningful through their work at ECU.

Tell us about a recent success story for your team or organization. Recently, Mr. Moore, a regular member at the Hillside branch where Sharon (pictured above) offices, was thrilled to find a signed Ford Mustang available for sale in the Dallas area. After making the decision to purchase the vehicle, Mr. Moore turned to ECU for a loan. "Everyone I've met has made me feel like a person, and not a number on a spreadsheet," Mr. Moore said. "If all the branches treat their customers like ECU treats me, there's no reason you can't just grow and grow."

How has doing business in Amarillo affected ECU's long-term success? Operating in Amarillo has shaped everything we do. Being close to the people we serve means we understand what matters most: accessible banking, family priorities and real-life financial goals. We know our success isn't something we created alone. Our growth comes from you, our community—members choosing to bank with us, local partners collaborating with us, and neighbors showing up for one another. With more than 90 years in service and counting, ECU is thriving because the community has been our foundation. Looking forward, we're committed to giving back as faithfully as we receive.

806.358.7777 | EDUCATIONCU.COM

BROADCAST EDUCATION
Amarillo College

AMY (HART) PRESLEY, KACV-FM PROGRAM DIRECTOR

How did you get into your field? I've wanted to work in radio since I was a kid. I used to pretend my hairbrush was a microphone and recorded myself introducing songs on cassette tapes. Even as an Amarillo College student, I thought radio was out of reach, but after taking an introductory radio and television class, I realized I'd found my people. That class launched a career that led to nearly 15 years in commercial radio before returning to Amarillo College and FM90.

How has the industry changed since you started? Technology has changed tremendously, but the biggest shift has been the audience. Listeners have more choices than ever with streaming, podcasts and other media competing for their attention. That means radio has become even more focused on serving its local community. Our mission is to meet the needs of Amarillo and the surrounding area, and that local connection is what continues to make radio relevant.

What do you wish you'd known when you entered the field? How many evenings, weekends and holidays come with a career in broadcasting! Those hours are simply part of the job. Fortunately, it's work I've always loved, so it rarely felt like a sacrifice.

What do you enjoy most about the work you do? Without question, it's the students. They constantly bring fresh ideas and perspectives, and I enjoy helping them develop those ideas while learning from them at the same time. My job allows me to be surrounded by music every day. I wasn't destined to be a touring musician, but I found another way to make music part of my career.

What core philosophy guides your work? I try to find purpose in every day. Sometimes that means helping students reach graduation. Other times it's introducing a local artist to radio listeners for the first time. Whatever the task, I believe that if you genuinely enjoy your work, that passion shows. Students, listeners and the community can tell when you truly care about what you're doing.

If someone stepped into your shoes for one day, what would surprise them the most? How many different roles I juggle. In one day, I might switch between teaching students, managing the station, conducting interviews, handling FCC requirements and taking care of administrative work. People hear the music on the air, but they don't always realize how much planning and decision-making goes into every broadcast.

Tell us about a recent success story. Celebrating FM90's 50th anniversary this year has been incredibly rewarding. Reaching that milestone reflects decades of support from Amarillo College, the community and generations of students. What excites me most is that students still care deeply about radio and continue to invest their creativity and energy into the station, even with so many other media options available today.

How has operating FM90 in Amarillo affected your long-term success? I once planned to leave Amarillo after graduating, but after my father passed away unexpectedly, I stayed to be close to my mother. Looking back, that decision shaped my entire career. Staying here led to my first radio job and eventually brought me back to Amarillo College. Amarillo has given me opportunities to work with incredible students and build relationships throughout the community. I'm grateful my career unfolded here.

KACVFM.ORG

COMMERCIAL LENDING

FirstBank Southwest

MATT MATHIAS, AMARILLO MARKET PRESIDENT

Tell us about FBSW's history: FirstBank Southwest traces its roots back to 1907, when it was chartered as First National Bank of Ochiltree. The Ellis family purchased a controlling interest in the bank in 1934 and has remained involved in leadership ever since. What began as a small Panhandle bank now serves customers across the Texas Panhandle, DFW Metroplex, Austin and San Antonio.

What skills are required of your team members? Community banking requires a unique blend of financial expertise and relationship-building skills. Our bankers need to understand a wheat farmer's cash flow as thoroughly as they understand the financing needs of a small business owner. Beyond expertise in lending, treasury management, compliance and digital banking, we look for people who listen well, know their customers by name, and are actively engaged in the communities they serve. We want people who are comfortable being decision-makers in their own community rather than routing everything through a distant corporate office.

How has the banking industry changed since FBSW was founded? In 1907, banking was almost entirely local and relationship-driven, where a handshake and a banker's judge of character carried real weight. Since then, it has been reshaped by consolidation, digital and mobile banking, along with increased regulation and now the growing influence of fintech and instant payments. We've adapted right along with those changes, but our customers still want what they've always wanted: a banker they trust and one who understands their unique situation. The tools have changed, but the importance of relationships remains the same.

What's the biggest misconception people have about the banking industry? That community banks are simply smaller, less capable versions of large national banks. In reality, our size is often an advantage. Decisions are made locally by people who understand the customer, the market and the community. Another misconception is that "local" means limited. Today's community banks offer the technology, products and services customers expect while still providing a level of personal service that's difficult to replicate at a larger institution. That model has served FirstBank Southwest well for more than a century.

What core philosophy guides your work? Relationships come first. We've been around a long time because we focus on doing what's right for our customers and our communities. Sometimes that means taking the long view instead of the easy route. If we continue earning our customers' trust and investing in the communities we serve, the rest tends to take care of itself.

Tell us about a recent success. One of our biggest recent successes has been our ability to grow while staying true to who we are. We've experienced continued growth in our metropolitan markets while expanding our presence across the Panhandle. Recent milestones include the opening of our Canyon Banking Center in 2026, and we're looking ahead to continued growth with future expansion in Pampa. What's been especially rewarding is seeing that growth can happen without losing the community-bank culture that got us here in the first place.

How has doing business in Amarillo affected your long-term success? Being headquartered in Amarillo has shaped the way we do business. We understand the agricultural, energy and business cycles that drive this region because we've lived and worked alongside them for generations. Amarillo has also influenced our culture. People here value relationships, hard work and keeping their word. Those values still guide the way we serve customers today.

FBSW.COM

AUTO DEALERSHIP SALES EXPERIENCE

Webb & Company Chevrolet GMC

CHRIS AND TYLER WEBB

How did you get into the automotive business? After graduating from Hobbs High School, I took a summer sales position at a Toyota store, which was owned by family friends. I began college as a pre-med major, but soon realized I loved the car business. So I transferred to Northwood University in Dallas—which has earned the nickname "Car Dealer U"—and was one of two students that did not come from a dealership family. Now I get to work everyday with my brother, Tyler, who is also my business partner in our family dealership.

How has the automotive industry changed since you started? I graduated from college in 2009 during the financial crisis and General Motors' bankruptcy. It was the beginning of a new era, with new laws and major changes in industry practices. The post-COVID era has brought changes never before seen in this industry. Inventory supply has been the biggest challenge we have dealt with since then.

What do you wish you'd known when you entered the car business? Even though we are an independently owned small business, as a franchised automobile dealership, the manufacturer likes to keep their "thumb" on you. They can and will tell you how to spend your money.

What do you enjoy most about the work you do? The customer interaction. We meet many different people, everyday, from all walks of life. My brother and I sell some of the cars ourselves, which allows us to meet so many clients. I also feel blessed that I get to work with and around something I have always been so passionate about.

What core philosophy guides your work? We strive to do everything for the glory of God. Although we do not always succeed, everything is so much better when we do. We are not timid in saying we are a Christian company. With this in mind, our core philosophy is guided by Matthew 7:12: "So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you." Good customer service is not difficult if you use this philosophy. We came from a dealership in the Permian Basin with a generational customer base of 75 years, so we are trying to create that culture here in the Texas Panhandle. Service to our clients is most important and it is our promise that no dealership will treat you better.

If someone stepped into your shoes for one day, what would surprise them the most? I am very involved in the day-to-day operations of the store. We do not have a general or sales manager. This allows us to stay informed and connected. Also, each day is different than the day before. There is very little monotony, which I enjoy.

Tell us about a recent success story. We have a customer who purchased a used truck from us, which, unfortunately, ended up needing the engine replaced within the first month. Our team stepped up, followed our philosophy and made sure the customer was inconvenienced as little as possible. That customer later shared that he was a customer for life because of how the situation was handled. He and his family recently moved, but still drive a considerable distance to do business with us. He has referred many family and friends to us. That is exactly what we are striving for everyday.

How has operating your business in the Panhandle affected your long-term success? Amarillo and the surrounding area presented us with a challenge because we are not from here and didn't know anyone when we relocated. However, it's not been a long-term challenge. Everyone we've met has been kind and welcoming, and we are proud to call the Panhandle home.

1400 W. WILSON ST., BORGER
806.273.7171
WEBBCHEVROLETGMC.COM

RESIDENTIAL REALTOR

Frances Frost Rev Realty Group of Keller Williams Realty

How did you get into real estate? About 10 years ago, I unexpectedly lost a job I never imagined leaving. Although I had always wanted to pursue real estate, leaving a steady paycheck and benefits was intimidating. Encouraged by my then-boyfriend, now husband, I took the leap, completed 280 hours of coursework, and passed the licensing exam on my first try. I launched my real estate career in my late 40s—and haven't looked back.

How has the real estate industry changed since you started? In 2016, rates were below 5%, buyers had negotiating power, and prices were steady. COVID changed that, with rates dropping below 3% and demand surging for larger homes and home offices. Construction delays and limited inventory fueled bidding wars, with buyers often waiving inspections and appraisals. After rates rose in 2022, purchasing power declined, homeowners held onto low-rate mortgages, and the market cooled. Today, Amarillo is healthier and more balanced, but accurate pricing remains critical. Steady local demand and employment growth have helped Amarillo avoid the boom-and-bust cycles seen elsewhere.

What do you wish you would have known when you entered the field? How much work and training it takes to stay relevant and working as a full-time, top-producing agent. I didn't know how to grow and scale my own successful business, so that has been a learning curve for me.

What do you enjoy most about the work you do? Getting to know my client's stories and goals, and what brought them to me. When I bring their vision to life, whether it's buying their first home or forever home, selling a family estate, or helping with relocations, every client has a unique story and goal, and it is so rewarding to help them reach that goal.

What core philosophy guides your work? *Care deeply.* Everything I do is about the people I serve, not just in real estate, but in my community as well. Real estate is about serving people, not selling homes. My success is not only measured in the number of homes sold, but also in trust earned and lives positively impacted.

If someone stepped into your shoes for one day, what would surprise them the most? How busy I am. Real estate looks easy from the outside, but people don't see the hours spent networking or meeting people, time spent on the phone or computer (even when sick or on vacation), and the activity that goes on behind the scenes.

Tell us about a recent success story. I joined my new brokerage a year ago and in June, I ranked No. 5 out of individual agents. For the second quarter I was No. 10 out of about 160 agents at Keller Williams Amarillo. This was especially meaningful for me because it came during a period of intentional growth and leadership.

How has doing business in Amarillo affected your long-term success? Amarillo gave me more than a place to sell real estate—it gave me the opportunity to build a reputation based on trust. As my market knowledge, leadership and referral network grow, so does a business built on lasting relationships rather than short-term marketing.

806.626.2298
REVREALTY.NET

COSMETIC DENTISTRY

Advanced Dentistry of Amarillo

DR. TREY MILLER

How did you get into dentistry? I was drawn to dentistry because it exists at the intersection of science, design, technology and human connection. Few professions allow you to solve a health problem, create something beautiful with your hands, and immediately change how someone feels about themselves.

How has dentistry changed since you started? Dentistry has become far more precise, digital and technology-driven. We now use digital scanning, three-dimensional imaging, computerized muscle analysis, jaw tracking, complex photography, and digital smile design tools to understand a patient at a level that was not previously possible.

The greatest change, however, is the expectation that dentistry should be both medically sound and beautifully designed. Patients want teeth that look natural, complement their face, feel comfortable and remain healthy over time.

What do you wish you'd known when you entered the dental field? When you first enter dentistry, it is tempting to focus mainly on completing procedures. With experience, you realize the most important work happens before treatment begins—it is listening to the patient during the initial consultation and planning phase, gathering complete records with an eye toward the desired outcome, understanding the biology and function of the oral system, anticipating complications and planning to avoid them, and designing the final smile result, all before ever touching a tooth.

What do you enjoy most about the work you do? I enjoy creating meaningful transformations of my patients' self-confidence. A beautifully designed smile can change the way someone speaks, laughs, enters a room, appears in photographs and interacts with other people. When we can restore comfort and function while creating a smile that looks completely natural, that is the ideal outcome.

What core philosophy guides your work? Cosmetic dentistry should never look mass-produced. Every smile must be designed for the individual, taking into account facial structure, lips, complexion, age, personality, bite and natural tooth characteristics. The goal is not to give every patient the same bright, uniform set of teeth. The goal is to create the most refined and natural version of that person's own smile. A beautiful result is only successful if it is biologically healthy, comfortable and built to last.

If someone stepped into your shoes for one day, what would surprise them the most? How much thought and planning goes into smile restoration. We spend hours analyzing details to ensure the final results look amazing.

Tell us about a recent success story. One of our most meaningful recent cases involved a patient who initially came to us seeking a better smile, but was also experiencing significant jaw problems, headaches, neck discomfort, bite instability and disrupted sleep. The case required nearly a year of careful diagnosis and treatment. The patient now lives free from pain and instability, has improved sleep, and a smile that exceeds what they believed was possible. The improvement in the patient's quality of life is what makes the work significant.

How has doing business in Amarillo affected your long-term success? Being in Amarillo has shaped every part of my practice. I grew up in the Texas Panhandle, and understand the value people place on trust, accountability, personal relationships and doing things correctly. In Amarillo, your reputation is built one patient at a time. It has given me the opportunity to bring a level of cosmetic and reconstructive dentistry to the region that patients otherwise have to travel for. We regularly care for patients from throughout the Texas Panhandle, Oklahoma and Eastern New Mexico.

6834 PLUM CREEK DRIVE
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AMARILLOSMILES.COM

RELATIONSHIP-DRIVEN SALES
Street Toyota

DAVID SAIED, CERTIFIED SALES CONSULTANT

How did you get into automotive sales? Sales has always been what I was meant to do. Growing up, my family owned several retail stores, so customer service and sales were simply part of everyday life. As soon as I was old enough to work, I was helping at the stores everyday. Building relationships, helping people and earning their trust came naturally. It made pursuing a career in automotive sales an easy decision.

How has the auto industry changed since you started? The biggest change has been the internet. Today, customers have access to more information than ever before, and many arrive knowing exactly what they're looking for. That shift has made my role less about selling a vehicle and more about listening, educating and helping each client find the right fit. It's made the buying process more informed and, ultimately, more rewarding for everyone.

What do you wish you'd known when you entered the field? Never stop the learning process. Every day brings a new lesson—whether it's through experience, mistakes, mentors or the customers themselves. The best salespeople stay humble. They keep improving and view every challenge as an opportunity to grow. If you can turn setbacks into lessons, you'll always keep moving forward.

What do you enjoy most about the work you do? Without question, it's the people. One of the greatest rewards is watching clients I've worked with for more than 20 years return time and again—not only for themselves, but eventually with their children, parents, and even the next generation of drivers. Those relationships become friendships. Whether it's helping someone celebrate a birthday, Christmas, an anniversary, or simply catching up while they're waiting on an oil change, being part of those moments is what makes this career so meaningful.

What core philosophy guides your work? Always do what's right for the client. My goal is for every person to leave feeling confident they were treated honestly, respectfully and with their best interests in mind. I want to help people find exactly what they need—sometimes even more than they expected. At the end of the day, this isn't just the car business. I'm in the people business.

If someone stepped into your shoes for one day, what would surprise them the most? Everything that happens behind the scenes. Every client is different, and there's always something that needs attention. From locating vehicles and coordinating deliveries to following up with clients and solving unexpected challenges and service, no two days are ever alike. If there's ever a slow moment, I'm already looking for the next way to serve someone.

Tell us about a recent success story. The accomplishment I'm most proud of isn't found at the dealership. It's my family. My wife and I raised four children who have grown into kind, hardworking and responsible adults. Watching them build lives of character and integrity has been the greatest success and blessing of my life.

How has selling cars in Amarillo affected your long-term success? Amarillo has been an incredible place to build a sales career. We're fortunate to serve clients not only throughout the Texas Panhandle, but also from New Mexico, Oklahoma, Kansas and beyond. The people here are kind, down-to-earth and easy to love—and that's exactly the kind of business I've always wanted to build. Over the years, those customers have become loyal friends.

4500 S. SONCY ROAD
806.355.9846 | STREETTOYOTA.COM

BUSINESS INSURANCE

Leslie Massey Farmers Insurance

How did you get into the insurance industry? A career in insurance was not on my radar until my brother suggested it after I was laid off from a pharmaceutical sales job in January 2009. I received a call to interview with the local Farmers District office and loved the opportunity to build an agency from the ground up. I jumped in with both feet, and the rest is history.

How has the insurance industry changed since you started? Technology now plays a larger role in everything we do, from marketing to claims and underwriting. Rising repair costs and more frequent, severe storms have also led the industry to shift more costs to consumers through coverage changes and higher deductibles. With so much change, having a trusted local agent is more important than ever.

What do you wish you'd known when you entered the field? How important it is to build a strong team and plan for the future. In this business, you can't do everything alone. Having the right people in place allows you to serve clients better, grow responsibly and create an agency that can adapt as the industry changes.

What do you enjoy most about your work? I love the relationships I have built with my clients and others in the community. It is rewarding to be out around town and see so many friends.

What core philosophy guides your work? We put our clients' best interests ahead of the agency's needs. We care deeply about our clients and our community, and we always try to do the right thing. Being clear about what is covered (and what is not) is essential. Insurance can feel complicated, so our goal is to make it easy to understand.

If someone stepped into your shoes for one day, what would surprise them most? Insurance is less about policy language and more about taking care of clients and supporting them through life's changes.

Tell us about a recent success story. I'd like to share two. We recently helped a large HVAC business in Amarillo save nearly $100,000 on its business insurance—money it can now use to hire additional staff and grow. Also, not long ago, a good friend's husband passed away. They had purchased life insurance from me when I first opened my agency, and I was grateful we had that conversation. That coverage is now helping her as she plans for the future.

How has doing business in Amarillo affected your long-term success? Amarillo has been a wonderful place to build a business because relationships matter here. People value trust, consistency and local service, and that has allowed us to grow through referrals and long-term client relationships. Being part of this community has helped us understand the needs of local families and businesses, and it has given us the opportunity to serve clients in a personal, meaningful way.

2700 S. WESTERN ST., SUITE 700
806.352.7388 | AGENTS.FARMERS.COM

PET BOARDING

Willow Creek Kennels

Tell us about Willow Creek's history: Willow Creek Kennels was bought by the Beard family in July 1995. We have been a family-run business helping to serve the area's pet needs for more than 30 years.

How has the pet care industry changed since Willow Creek was founded? We've seen the most change in how to exercise animals and how facilities are built.

Dogs are pack animals and are fine with dogs they associate regularly with. However, if you introduce someone new, it can take weeks or even months for them to accept a new pack member. When looking into the trend 20 or so years ago, we found that these introductions are often challenging for staff and pets alike. Even today, people will make reservations on two-day prep when going out of town, which is not enough time to evaluate and introduce a dog to pack play. We find that having a run of their own and individual rough 'n tumbles (playtimes) make dogs settle in faster and adapt to boarding easier.

Building codes inside city limits often dictate whether you can have indoor/outdoor facilities as well. Being in the country, just a 5-minute drive from downtown Amarillo, gives us space to have all indoor/outdoor runs as well as grassed-in play yards. These doors not only provide dogs free room to move in and out, it also allows a ton of air flow through the building when the doors are up.

What's the biggest misconception people have about your industry? That we just play with dogs all day. As we know, playing is the best part of the job so all our runs allow for some form of play. Our grooming clients are often here throughout the majority of the day, so they get spoiled by being taken outside on regular breaks. The majority of what we do is intensive work involving cleaning, feeding and general care. We chart every dog we attend to make sure they eat—how much they eat—and are going to the bathroom, along with their overall demeanor.

What core philosophy guides your work? We want to take the best care of your pets just like you do. A lot of our clients start with us as puppies, so earning their trust as well as the owner's is essential. We want every pet to come pulling (or meowing) in the door, happy to be here as well as happy to be heading home at the end of their stay.

Tell us about a recent success story. We love when people say they heard about us from someone. That means the world to us that people still see us as the one to choose as their pet's home away from home. Recently, we were awarded NewsChannel 10's Best Pet Boarding.

How has doing business in Amarillo affected your long-term success? Amarillo is unique in that people know you even if they have never had to use your services. The community will pull together and get you through tough times, will praise your success, and will often call upon you when they are in need. We love the Amarillo area. We are members of the Chamber of Commerce and the Better Business Bureau. We shop and buy locally and wouldn't have it any other way!

4339 ST. FRANCIS AVE. | 806.383.6155
AMARILLODOGBOARDING.COM

MEDIATION

Marble Mediation Group, LLC

(L-R): EARL GRIFFIN, JR.; PHOEBE PLEMING; ALEXIS LONGORIA

Marble Mediation Group, LLC was created in response to a need we saw—time and again—in the law office where we worked together. Earl Griffin, Jr., born and raised in Childress, and a graduate of Texas Tech School of Law, has practiced law since 1978. Phoebe Pleming, a WTAMU graduate and former public school teacher, has worked as a law office administrator for more than 28 years. Alexis Longoria, senior legal secretary and also a WTAMU graduate with a criminal justice degree, joined the law office in 2014. After years of seeing firsthand how mediation could benefit people, we became certified mediators and founded Marble Mediation Group, LLC.

In addition to advanced mediator training, we are skilled at listening—really listening. Hearing both what is said, and what is not. Patience, discretion, neutrality and a knack for putting people at ease are where we really make a difference. Our backgrounds in law, business, education and criminal justice supply the know-how. Empathy and attention to detail do the heavy lifting.

More Texans are now seeking out mediation on their own, choosing to keep private matters private and remain in control of the outcome. With an increase in demand for amicable and/or discreet divorces, as well as the rising trend of "gray divorces" among older couples who may have been married a long time, mediation offers a great deal of flexibility. With both in-person and remote options available, we are able to offer mediation that fits our clients' needs and schedules.

We still encounter many people who believe you have to wait for a judge to order mediation, but that's not the case. Anyone can seek out mediation—often before a lawsuit is ever filed. It's confidential, less stressful, cost-effective and keeps you in control of the outcome.

Your comfort and confidentiality are our priorities. Mediation works best when people feel heard. We keep things professional, yet relaxed and personal.

Our best stories are the ones we can't tell, because confidentiality is the cornerstone of what we do. But nothing compares to watching parties who arrived embroiled in conflict, and who leave with an agreement on their terms.

Amarillo is the crossroads of the Texas Panhandle and our roots run deep and wide in the region. Being able to serve in a community like ours, which values relationships, is a true privilege. Our goal is to serve people well and be the Texas Panhandle's go-to choice for mediation.

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MARBLEMEDIATION.COM

MEDICAL ONCOLOGY

Texas Oncology

PRAVEEN TUMULA, M.D., FACP

How did you get into the medical industry? My path into medicine was inspired by my father, who is a physician. His career exposed me to different cultures and healthcare systems around the world, allowing me to see firsthand the impact that medicine can have on people's lives. Later, I had the opportunity to conduct research at a leading cancer center. Being involved in leading-edge cancer research and witnessing the rapid advances in the field reinforced my passion for cancer care. It ultimately led me to pursue a career in medical oncology.

How has the industry changed since you started? The practice of oncology has transformed dramatically over the past two decades. When I was conducting research in 2007, cancer treatment was still largely centered on traditional chemotherapy. While chemotherapy remains an important treatment option, the field has evolved into an era of personalized medicine, where treatment decisions are tailored to the unique characteristics of each patient's cancer.

What excites me most are the innovations that have allowed oncology to move beyond a one-size-fits-all approach. Today, we can offer increasingly precise, individualized treatment plans that improve outcomes and quality of life for many patients. I am optimistic that ongoing advances in molecular diagnostics, immunotherapy and cellular therapy will further transform cancer care in the years ahead.

What do you enjoy most about the work you do? The opportunity to help patients during some of the most vulnerable moments of their lives. A cancer diagnosis can be overwhelming, and it is a privilege to guide patients and their families through that journey with compassion, expertise and support. It has been equally rewarding to build long-term, meaningful relationships with my patients. Oncology often allows us to care for patients over many years, celebrating successes, navigating challenges, and earning a deep level of trust. These relationships remind me why I chose this career.

What core philosophy guides your work? Always doing what is right for the patient. Every decision should be guided by each person's needs and circumstances. My goal is to ensure patients have access to advanced treatments, clinical expertise and personalized care without having to travel long distances whenever possible. That way, patients can receive high-quality care with the support of their local community.

If someone stepped into your shoes for one day, what would surprise them the most? Texas Oncology in Amarillo began as a small practice. Today, it has evolved into one of Texas Oncology's largest cancer centers in the West Texas region. Over the years, we have expanded the center's services, technology and multidisciplinary expertise to meet the increasing needs of the community. Advances in medical oncology, infusion services, clinical research, precision medicine and supportive care have allowed patients access to state-of-the-art treatments. This growth reflects a longstanding commitment to providing high-quality, comprehensive cancer care close to home for patients across the Texas Panhandle.

Tell us about a recent success story. Our ability to deliver advanced cellular therapies, including bispecific T-cell engager therapies, to patients who have relapsed after CAR-T treatment allows them to receive highly specialized cancer care close to home. This approach reduces the burden of travel to distant academic centers. It improves access to cutting-edge treatments and enables patients to remain connected to their local support systems while receiving innovative therapies. By bringing these complex treatments to our community, we can offer patients additional options at critical points in their cancer journey and help ensure timely, personalized care.

How has practicing in Amarillo affected your long-term success? As a physician-owned practice, we offer a comprehensive range of advanced cancer services. This means patients in Amarillo and throughout the Texas Panhandle have access to leading-edge treatments and specialized expertise comparable to those available at major tertiary care centers.

1826 POINT WEST PARKWAY
806.358.8654 | TEXASONCOLOGY.COM

MORTGAGE LOAN OFFICER

The Wood Group of Fairway

AUDREY CASTILLO

How did you get into the mortgage industry? I've always enjoyed working with people, and ever since I was young, people told me I should go into real estate. I love math, problem-solving and puzzles, so putting together mortgage solutions felt like a natural fit. Helping families achieve homeownership allows me to build relationships, strengthen our community and play a small part in helping my city grow.

How has the mortgage industry changed since you started? I was baptized by fire when I entered the mortgage industry during COVID. As interest rates rose in the years following the pandemic, many buyers found themselves hoping rates would return to historic lows. But people will always need a place to call home, regardless of the market. Amarillo continues to experience healthy growth, and by focusing on relationships, educating my clients, and helping them make informed decisions, I've been able to thrive even in a more challenging market.

What do you wish you'd known when you entered this field? I wish I had known how much time and repetition it takes to understand the mortgage process. Early on, I put pressure on myself to have all the answers, but I've learned to give myself grace and trust that experience is the best teacher. As I've built my team, every challenge helps shape the way we serve our clients.

What do you enjoy most about the work you do? Seeing the smiles on my clients' faces on closing day, especially when they never thought homeownership would be possible. One of the greatest rewards is watching their journey continue in the home they worked so hard to own. Knowing I played a small part in helping make their dream a reality is incredibly fulfilling.

What core philosophy guides your work? My core philosophy is that *everything is figureoutable*. There is almost always a solution. You have to keep learning, asking questions and working through the challenges. That mindset has helped me navigate difficult transactions and serve my clients with confidence.

If someone stepped into your shoes for one day, what would surprise them the most? They'd probably be surprised by the sheer volume of phone calls, text messages, emails and moving pieces that have to be managed every day. Operating at a high level in this business requires organization and the ability to switch gears quickly while still making every client feel like they're your top priority.

Tell us about a recent success story. As a working mom, the balance between work and family can be difficult, and we don't talk enough about the challenges that come with this season of parenthood. My son just graduated from Texas Tech and accepted a salaried position doing what he loves. Seeing him become disciplined, kind and hardworking means more to me than any academic award or athletic achievement ever could. That's the legacy I hope to leave—not just the loans I've closed, but the family I've helped raise and the values they've carried into the world.

How has doing business in Amarillo affected your long-term success? Amarillo is a growing community with incredible people, and we are here to stay. Our CEO recently visited to meet with local real estate leaders, reinforcing our commitment that we're a trusted partner who keeps our word and supports our community. I'm proud to be part of a company that invests in the people and relationships that make this city so special.

1906 S. VIRGINIA ST.
806.584.7777
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PROACTIVE IT CONSULTANTS

Run Business Solutions

Tell us about runbiz's history. Runbiz was founded in 2007 with a straightforward premise: small and mid-size businesses in West Texas deserve the same level of IT expertise and support that large enterprises take for granted. What started as a small team has grown into a full IT managed services provider serving clients across the Panhandle, Eastern New Mexico and Western Oklahoma. We've built our reputation on long-term partnerships rather than transactional relationships, and that philosophy has shaped everything about how we operate.

What skills are required of your team members? Technical skills are the baseline, but they are actually the secondary requirement. The people who thrive here live out our Core Values and are problem-solvers first. They're curious, empathetic, calm under pressure and genuinely good at communicating with business owners and staff who didn't sign up to struggle with IT issues. We look for people who take ownership of outcomes, not just tasks, and who understand that when a client's system is down, what's really at stake is their ability to serve their own customers.

How has the IT industry changed since your company was founded? Technology changes on a daily basis. One of the bigger shifts since 2007 has been the move from reactive, break-fix support to proactive strategy. Early in the managed services world, IT providers mostly showed up when something broke. Also, the rise of cloud computing changed the game entirely, making connectivity and security core parts of what a good IT partner does. Now, we're navigating two more simultaneous shifts as AI is changing how work gets done and how threats operate. The compliance landscape has grown significantly more complex. Our clients need a partner who can keep up with all of it, not just keep the lights on.

What's the biggest misconception people have about your industry? That IT is a commodity or that one provider is essentially the same as the next, and the decision should come down to price. In reality, the difference between a good managed services provider and a poor one shows up at the worst possible moment: a breach, a server failure, a compliance audit. By then it's too late to switch. The relationship, the documentation and the proactive maintenance habits compound over time, for better or worse. We'd rather have that conversation upfront than after something goes wrong.

What core philosophy guides your work? We believe that when a business's technology works, their people can focus on the work that actually matters to them and their clients. Our job is to remove IT as a source of friction, distraction or risk. To do that, we understand our clients' businesses, not just their systems. We're also deeply committed to running a healthy, well-organized company ourselves, and the discipline we bring internally is the same discipline we bring to our clients.

Tell us about a recent success story. One of our bigger success stories is from an organization we brought on as a client last year. We received this feedback from them: "RunBiz has elevated The Bridge's cybersecurity, giving us confidence that our clients' sensitive information and the agency's financial data are secure. Their team responds promptly whenever we experience computer issues, helping minimize disruptions to our work. Our quarterly meetings keep us aligned and allow us to proactively forecast the agency's evolving technology needs. RunBiz has also been a valuable partner in helping us prepare for our future IT infrastructure and technology needs as we move forward with our capital campaign and planned expansion."— Shelly Bohannon, Executive Director, The Bridge Children's Advocacy Center

How has operating your business in Amarillo affected your long-term success? Amarillo is a relationship-driven community, and that suits us well. When you do business here, your reputation travels fast and the accountability that comes with being rooted in the community has made us better at what we do. West Texas businesses also tend to be resilient, practical and loyal—once trust is earned. These are exactly the kinds of people we enjoy serving.

9515 W. AMARILLO BLVD.
806.322.2150 | RUN.BIZ

PERSONAL INJURY LAWYERS
Wood Law Firm

Tell us about Wood Law Firm's area of expertise: Wood Law Firm, LLP, is a personal injury trial firm dedicated to representing individuals whose lives have been forever changed by catastrophic injuries or losses. Our clients often include those injured or bereaved due to 18-wheeler crashes, workplace accidents or serious motor vehicle collisions.

How does Wood Law Firm develop and grow the expertise of its team members? We are active members of national and state organizations providing advanced training for attorneys who represent victims of catastrophic injuries or wrongful death caused by negligent commercial carriers or industrial employers. Channy has held leadership roles in these groups, and both Channy and Leslie have served as invited speakers at industry seminars.

Both are graduates of Gerry Spence's invitation-only Trial Lawyers College, which hones trial skills for holding wrongdoers accountable through the jury process. Channy also holds board certifications in Personal Injury Trial Law (Texas Board of Legal Specialization) and Civil Trial Law (National Board of Trial Advocacy) and is an invited fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers (1 of 282 attorneys in Texas) and an invited fellow of the International Academy of Trial Lawyers (1 of 62 attorneys in Texas). These credentials ensure our clients' cases can be effectively and confidently tried to a jury when necessary.

What have been the challenges to growing your law firm? We choose not to advertise on television or radio, relying instead on referrals from other attorneys, friends and past clients. While this limits exposure, our reputation for personalized service and the willingness and ability to take cases to trial has allowed us to thrive in Amarillo and beyond.

What is the most important aspect of a thriving business culture? Personal relationships. We stay accessible to our clients and maintain strong, respectful connections with colleagues and coworkers.

How does Wood Law Firm use technological advancements? More than 25 years ago, we were early adopters of courtroom technology, using TrialDirector for presentations and RealTime transcripts during depositions. Today, we continue to lead with advanced trial presentation software, AI tools and custom-built case management applications designed by Leslie to streamline processes using Excel, Word and Adobe.

What's on the horizon for Wood Law Firm? We plan to continue helping people navigate the challenges of catastrophic life events, holding wrongdoers accountable, and fighting for the underdog.

610 SW 11TH AVE.
806.372.9663 | WOODLAWFIRM-TX.COM

CHANNY F. WOOD
LESLIE D. OWENS

OUTDOOR LIVING

Champion BBQ Supply

ROBBY STAGGS

How did you get into competitive and outdoor cooking? I've always believed great food has a way of bringing people together. That passion led me into the barbecue and outdoor cooking industry, and over time, it grew into multiple businesses centered around helping people enjoy that experience. Amarillo has been the perfect place to build those businesses because people here appreciate quality, hard work and supporting local businesses.

What do you wish you'd known when you entered the field? That relationships are your greatest asset. Products matter, but your reputation, employees and the trust you earn from customers determines whether a business lasts. I have also learned that you never stop learning. The businesses willing to adapt are the ones that continue to grow.

What do you enjoy most about your business? The people! I enjoy visiting with customers, helping them find the right products and watching their excitement when they master a new recipe or fire up a new grill. Many customers have become friends over the years. That's something you don't take for granted in a community like Amarillo.

If someone stepped into your shoes for one day, what would surprise them the most? How much of my day is spent solving problems and serving people instead of just selling barbecue products. Every day is different—from marketing and inventory to customer service and long-term planning. Owning a business is challenging, but it's incredibly rewarding because every decision directly impacts the people we serve.

Tell us about a recent success story. One of our biggest accomplishments has been continuing to expand our selection while creating destination stores that attract customers from across the Texas Panhandle and neighboring states. Seeing families drive hours to shop with us, attend events and support our local businesses reminds us that delivering a great customer experience still matters.

How has doing business in Amarillo affected your long-term success? Amarillo has been one of the biggest reasons for our success. This community believes in supporting local businesses, and that support has allowed us to grow while staying true to our values. Amarillo's central location also gives us the opportunity to serve customers throughout the Panhandle and into New Mexico, Oklahoma, Kansas and beyond. We're proud to call Amarillo home, and we believe investing in our community is just as important as investing in our business. When Amarillo succeeds, local businesses succeed, and we're honored to be a small part of that story.

7306 SW 34TH AVE., SUITE 10
806.418.6647 | CHAMPIONBBQSUPPLY.COM

INTERIOR DESIGN

Reserve Amarillo

How did you get into interior design? I have always enjoyed the creative side of things. After graduation from West Texas A&M University with a Bachelor of Fine Arts, I realized I wasn't a studio or commercial artist. Interior design was a fit for my appreciation for beauty and has become a great way to make a living. I've since opened Reserve Amarillo to stock some of my favorite home decor items, gifts, fine art and stunning floral arrangements created by my mother, Ann Beddingfield.

Tell us about a recent success story. After opening Reserve in Wolflin Village in 2018, we took a risk and purchased a building in downtown Amarillo last year. We've completely renovated the interior and combined the design side of the business with our retail store. It's full of inspiring vignettes and a breath of fresh air in our historic neighborhood.

What do you enjoy most about the work you do? There's nothing better than witnessing the excitement of a client on installation day. The lead-up to the BIG reveal is exciting, stressful, and worth every minute.

What core philosophy guides your work? Two major things come to mind. First, my mission is to help clients reflect the best versions of themselves and their tastes in their interiors. Second, we aim to provide outstanding service on the design side, as well as curating beautiful pieces in the Reserve that are accessible to everyone.

If someone stepped into your shoes for one day, what would surprise them the most? That this job isn't always as glamorous and fun as most people think. Some days, it's way more dirty job sites and construction details than shopping, pretty paint colors and fabrics.

How has doing business in the Panhandle affected your long-term success? I have met so many successful business people and interesting individuals through the years that have become wonderful clients and friends!

516 SW SEVENTH AVE.
806.382.4070 | RESERVEAMARILLO.COM

COMMERCIAL BANKER
Prosperity Bank

DEVIN SAVAGE, VICE PRESIDENT, COMMERCIAL BANKING

How did you get into banking? The summer of my junior year at West Texas A&M University, I interned with Alvarez & Marsal, a global professional services firm in Houston. That experience exposed me to banking and financial consulting, and gave me a firsthand look at how financial decisions impact businesses. I realized I enjoyed analyzing financial information, solving complex problems, and helping organizations achieve their goals.

After graduating with my business degree from WT, I began my career as a real estate loan processor before moving into commercial credit for a Texas regional bank. I spent several years underwriting simple to complex commercial loans, which gave me knowledge in credit analysis and risk management. From there, I became a portfolio manager and eventually transitioned into commercial lending full time.

How has the commercial loan industry changed since you started? There's been a transformation in the past 10 years into digital and mobile banking, while innovation into other fintech has boomed recently as well. Customers expect faster decisions, digital banking solutions, quicker access to information and want enhanced security. At the same time, increased regulatory expectations and competition through mergers and acquisitions from community banks to larger regional banks are common changes.

What do you wish you'd known when you entered the field? The power of networking and meeting people where they are. I wish I had understood earlier that banking is about people, not just numbers. Financial analysis is critical, but becoming a trusted advisor is what creates long-term success. Understanding a client's business, their goals, and the challenges they face is just as important as understanding their financial statements.

What do you enjoy most about the work you do? Helping businesses succeed. Whether it's financing a new commercial building or investment property, helping a company expand, or supporting entrepreneurship, I enjoy knowing we contribute to economic growth and job creation in our community. Not every deal is the same, so I enjoy finding financing solutions that help clients reach their goals.

What core philosophy guides your work? To build relationships and look for solutions. Trust is earned through consistency, honesty and following through on commitments. My responsibility is to help clients achieve their objectives while also protecting the bank's assets. By focusing on doing what's right for both sides, long-term relationships naturally follow.

If someone stepped into your shoes for one day, what would surprise them most? How much variety there is in commercial banking. People assume it's all spreadsheets and financial statements behind a desk all day, but each day is different. I might spend the morning meeting with management from the bank or with a business owner, the afternoon inspecting residential investment projects or collateral, and later reviewing financial statements, working with attorneys and title companies, or structuring a loan. It's a combination of finance, relationship management, problem-solving, and business development.

Tell us about a recent success story. I have a customer that was recently highlighted by *D CEO: Meet the Dallas 500* to speak on the success of their current business and where it is today. Our products are directly helping this business scale and expand into 200 locations across seven states. Those are the moments that remind me our work has a real impact on communities.

How has doing business in Amarillo affected your long-term success? It has opened doors to get involved in community development and nonprofit sectors through board service. These experiences have allowed me to build great relationships throughout the community and grow as a leader and banker.

3900 S. SONCY ROAD | 806.374.1000
PROSPERITYBANKUSA.COM

PRIMARY CARE

Care Options LLC

DENI BERRY, FNP

How did you get into nursing? My nursing journey has been very much God-directed. My sons were raised and I was considering a career change out of the technical/software world at the age of 44. All the advice I received was directed at nursing, and I thought everyone was crazy. At the same time, I was not exactly driven in a specific direction. I prayed and asked God to direct my path. And did He ever! I applied to the RN program at Amarillo College with the idea that if I were accepted, then I would know this was my path. My acceptance letter arrived about two weeks later. That was the beginning. Every step of this journey has had similar God-injected course corrections until arriving at this unexpected but most fulfilling place in my life.

How has the medical industry changed since you started? Possibly the most striking change would be the face of patient education. Information is more available to patients than ever before, as is the availability of more sophisticated diagnostic testing.

What do you wish you'd known when you entered the field? The amount of paperwork and hoop-jumping required by insurance companies. Nothing prepares a provider for this aspect of healthcare.

What do you enjoy most about nursing? I take great joy in seeing my patients improve. There is nothing better than hearing that a symptom has resolved and someone is feeling good again and thriving.

What core philosophy guides your work? Health is a state of physical, mental and spiritual well-being. Therefore, it is much more than simply not being sick. My primary care practice is a blend of Western and integrative/functional measures because there is no one-size-fits-all recipe that works for each person coming through my door. Each patient teaches me something new as we sort through issues and work through diagnostic processes.

If someone stepped into your shoes for one day, what would surprise them the most? The varied human complexities I encounter on any given day.

How has doing business in Amarillo affected your long-term success? Amarillo and the surrounding area have been very supportive and allowed me to launch my private practice successfully. Through word of mouth, my practice has continued to steadily grow. I know how many choices people have in pursuit of healthcare, and I know how blessed my practice has been by being part of the Amarillo community.

2920 DUNIVEN CIRCLE, SUITE 6B
806.877.1474 | CAREOPTIONSPCP.COM

EVENT CATERER

Black Fig Catering

ERIC, KITCHEN MANAGER, AND CHRISTINA, STAFF MEMBER

Tell us about Black Fig's history. Black Fig Catering started in 2013 as a part-time business. In 2016, I started a blog, *Black Fig Food*, to tap into my love of writing. It has since grown into a regular column in *Brick & Elm*, and on Substack called *The Black Fig Journal.* A few years into catering, I took a five-year pivot to work as a private chef, and reopened Black Fig Catering in 2021. Since then, we've gone from cooking for two people at a time to serving up to 800 guests at large events. Along the way, we've taught cooking classes, catered intimate private dinner parties and prepared weekly client orders. Beginning this fall, we begin online pre-orders for weekly meal service for Tuesday pickup from our commercial kitchen. What began as one person with a knife and a notebook is now a full operation, with my kitchen manager Eric and staff member Christina running the day-to-day in Amarillo. I divide my time between assisting with booked caters in Amarillo and managing the administrative side from Oklahoma City.

What skills are required for your team members? Beyond usual kitchen skills, I screen for adaptability. Event logistics change constantly. I need people who can hold a standard and still bend around whatever the day throws at them. I look for those who are genuinely curious about food outside the norm. They also need to be equally excited to execute the same six hors d'oeuvres on repeat, if that's what our clients request.

How has the catering industry changed since Black Fig was founded? There's been a shift toward elevated, global flavors. Clients in Amarillo want more regional cuisines, whether from coastal cities or across the pond. The same guests often show up at three different events in the same week. If someone does recognize a dish from earlier in the week, it usually means they've clocked that it's us. And that kind of brand recognition is worth everything. People want dietary accommodations available to them, and they are interested to know where ingredients came from. A catering company's digital presence now does as much work as the food itself in bringing clients in the door.

What's the biggest misconception people have about your industry? That it's just cooking. Food is maybe 40 percent of the job. People also assume catering means the usual banquet hall reputation of chicken, rice pilaf, nothing weird, or that might offend a picky eater. I'd argue the opposite. A captive, curious audience and one night to make an impression is exactly what makes events exciting for us. And when a price-per-person number seems too high, it's rarely just the food. Caterers have to build a different restaurant for one day, for every single client. We love the challenge.

What core philosophy guides your work? I'm someone who feeds people well and thinks hard about what that means. Black Fig Catering represents an open mind about the world and its influences. We embrace racial, cultural and gender diversity. We strive to learn from it and to make ourselves greater than who we are as individuals. Our main goal is to create unity, community and connection through food with those we love. Food should tell a story. It should connect to a place, revive a fine memory within the first bite, and never feel like it's trying too hard to impress anyone.

Tell us about a recent success story. Over the past two years, we've taken on events as big as the Amarillo Symphony Ball. Walking into something that colossal for the first time is scary. You don't know what walls you'll hit or what challenges will arise. But we did it. Nothing that big gets done alone. It takes a village, a dream team of culinary students and the best local chefs all working together and toward the same outcome. We have built a team that strives for the best possible experience for our guests.

How has doing business in Amarillo affected your long-term success? Amarillo gave me a market where I could build a reputation quickly. It's a tight-knit business community, and word travels fast when the food is good. Amarillo also shaped the food itself. Being in a market that hasn't necessarily seen a lot of elevated, globally influenced cuisine gave us room to define what that looks like here. Our success is built on what our clients walk away feeling, every time.

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AMARILLO SLIM WINS THE 1972 WSOP, COURTESY OF PICRYL.TIF

THE MAKING OF AMARILLO SLIM

The Pied Piper of Professional Poker

BY **CLAYTON TRUTOR**

What do Larry King, Larry Flynt, Lyndon Johnson, Richard Nixon, Evel Knievel, Minnesota Fats, Willie Nelson and Pablo Escobar have in common? Each one was hoodwinked by "Amarillo Slim," the Texas Panhandle's best-known gambler and arguably the most famous poker player of all time.

At least, that's how Thomas Austin Preston Jr. would tell it. The world knew him as "Amarillo Slim."

After winning the 1972 World Series of Poker, he quickly became the game's leading ambassador, a silver-tongued devil who appeared regularly on television in the 1970s. Slim used his storytelling ability, his long, tall Texan persona, and his remarkable capacity for self-promotion to pull Texas Hold 'em, from smoky backrooms into the mainstream of American culture.

"[Slim] was always in character," says Greg Dinkin, who co-authored Slim's 2003 memoir, *Amarillo Slim in a World Full of Fat People*. "Not only was he always in character, he was always trying to figure out how to make a score." Dinkin emphasizes that the

book is a memoir and not a biography. It is Slim's story in his own words, and Slim had a tendency to … embellish, to say the least.

"People that come into celebrity, they have split personalities. I believe he was two people," his daughter Becky Deane says. She describes him as a doting and devoted father. At the same time, she recalls a trophy that Slim's buddies gave him which read "Bullsh---er of the Year."

"He was extremely entertaining and had the gift of gab. He did promote poker at a time when poker needed it," says Tom McEvoy, who won the 1983 World Series of Poker. McEvoy characterizes a lot of Slim's stories as "B.S." and describes himself as a "critic, not a fan of Slim," whom he interacted with for decades on the professional poker scene.

True or not, Slim's wild stories of hustling and hoodwinking helped establish his greatest invention: his own legend.

Arkansas to Amarillo

Amarillo Slim was born Thomas Austin Preston Jr. in 1928 in Johnson, Arkansas, the son of Thomas Austin Preston and Pearl Lila Cardwell Preston. Thomas was the only child produced by their union. The family moved frequently and Thomas Jr.'s parents divorced when he was young. The boy split his time between Arkansas, where his mother returned, and Amarillo, where his father settled.

Slim said he moved to Amarillo at age 11 and graduated from Amarillo High School in 1945, but records are otherwise sparse. A 1944 *Amarillo Globe-Times* article indicates he took a job in Amarillo as a messenger in a local railroad relay office. It's the earliest newspaper reference to Thomas Austin Preston Jr.

In adulthood, Slim was not particularly close with either parent. His mother had been deeply religious, while Slim avoided church for most of his adult life. As a teenager, Slim came into frequent conflict with his father, as the adolescent sought out action in Amarillo's pool halls.

Those local pool halls, where Slim learned to hustle, are the most prominently discussed aspect of his upbringing in his 2003 memoir. Before heading out into the city's more rough-and-tumble establishments, Slim first hustled his peers. "He told stories about when he was in his teens and he would sneak out and go down to the pool hall and his dad would come looking for him," Dinkin says.

"I think his childhood upbringing with his parents being divorced and not really having a stable place for many years in his life, that's what caused his disconnect with his father and a little bit with his mom," Deane says. She saw her paternal grandfather rarely and knew that her father and grandfather had strained relations.

"We spent more time with my mother's family, for sure," she says.

Becoming Slim

High school travels gave Slim his nickname. At age 16, he started venturing to Hot Springs, Arkansas, to hustle pool alongside the likes of Minnesota Fats (then known as "New York Fats"—he didn't adopt "Minnesota" until there was a character by that name in the 1961 film, *The Hustler*). At the time, Hot Springs was a hotbed for horse racing and other vices. Slim learned to play poker for money and started gambling on horse racing and other sports.

The 6-foot, 4-inch, rail-thin Texan says he left Hot Springs with the "Amarillo Slim" nickname.

Like Minnesota Fats, Slim relied heavily on psychological warfare at the pool table, chatting up the opposition to keep them off-kilter. This became as much of a trademark as his belt buckles, Stetson hat, hand-tooled boots, and custom-made suits. Telling tall tales while alternately flattering and jabbing at his opposition became Slim's signature.

If Amarillo Slim did earn a reputation on the pool circuit under that name, the press certainly didn't take notice. Minnesota Fats, Wimpy Lassiter, Willie Mosconi, and Irving "the Deacon" Crane became celebrity pool players in the 1950s and 1960s, but the name "Amarillo Slim" did not appear in a keyword searchable newspaper until 1969. An article in the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* on the state's late-1960s billiards scene listed Amarillo Slim as one of the region's best-known pool hustlers.

His first mention in an Amarillo newspaper came in a late 1971 article about the upcoming 1972 World Series of Poker.

Boot Camp and Baseball

Slim graduated early from high school in December 1945 and enlisted in the Navy in January 1946. While in boot camp in San Diego, an officer saw Slim's pool skills and had him start putting on billiards exhibitions for his peers. Slim said he witnessed the atomic bomb explosion in Bikini Atoll while in the Navy, claiming he volunteered for the job because it gave him four days on the boat back to Hawaii to hustle all the other sailors out of their money.

In late 1947, Slim was discharged from the Navy. He reenlisted in the Army and was stationed in Stuttgart, Germany. In addition to putting on pool exhibitions for American troops, he says he made considerable money on the emerging black market—selling cigarettes, gasoline and coffee at markup to locals

PHOTOS COURTESY OF BECKY DEANE

constrained by post-war rationing. Slim also claimed to have made a fortune fixing one of the games in the 1948 GI World Series, the culmination of the annual Army-wide baseball tournament.

He got out of the service as soon as he felt the walls caving in on his not-quite-above-board enterprises. When a Wells Fargo branch opened in Frankfurt, he deposited his money and, by his telling, returned to the United States as a millionaire.

Marriage and Partnerships

Back in Amarillo in 1949, Slim reacquainted himself with Helen Byer, an acquaintance from high school. Helen was a year older than him. He said he didn't remember her, but he had signed her yearbook. They would soon be married by a justice of the peace in New Mexico. They purchased a home near West Hill Park when they found out Helen was pregnant.

The couple had three children, sons Thomas and Tod, and daughter Becky. Helen raised her children in a local Southern Baptist Church while their dad hit the pool hall circuit. During the 1950s, he spent months at a time on the road, sometimes even bringing his family with him.

It wasn't just pool. Slim moved on to poker, bootlegging and bookmaking. His partners were usually Doyle "Texas Dolly" Brunson and Brian "Sailor" Roberts, fixtures in the early years of the World Series of Poker.

"I grew up for many years not knowing what my father did for a living," Deane says. When asked what her father did at school, her mother told her to say "self-employed." Slim was arrested several times for bootlegging violations, paying fines but avoiding jail.

"Whether it's a bowling match or playing pool or shooting baskets, he was always trying to figure out how to come up with his next conquest," Dinkin says. Slim excelled at proposition betting, in which he created elaborate scenarios on which to wager. For instance, he once won a 100-yard dash against a horse, stipulating that the race was 50 yards down and 50 yards back, making it difficult for the horse to turn back in time.

"One time, he said to me 'This is who I am sweetheart, and I'm going to take good care of you, but this is who I am,'" Deane says.

During the 1960s, Slim, Brunson and Roberts started working their way around the American west as "rounders," finding their way into high-stakes poker games. The trio helped introduce the relatively new game of Texas Hold 'em to poker tables across the region. By revealing five common cards over several rounds of betting, Hold 'em turned up the psychology. It played to Slim's strengths.

In 1967, Slim and his compatriots convinced casino operator Benny Binion to start promoting Texas Hold 'em at his Las Vegas casino, Binion's Horseshoe. By 1970, Slim had become one of the first participants in a new event: the World Series of Poker, held at Binion's.

Slim was close with a few friends but made a lot of enemies who questioned his scruples when money was on the line. Which was regularly in his world.

Bad Reputation

McEvoy, his former competitor, says Slim was known for his poker skill but didn't have a great personal reputation. "I've been around poker more than 50 years. I've had many dealings with Slim over the years. That highly gregarious personality he had on the surface was just that. On the surface," McEvoy says.

The Amarillo-based gambler's greatest moment of glory came in the Main Event of the '72 WSOP. That tournament consisted of eight elite gamblers, a far cry from the more than 5,000 entrants at the 2025 WSOP. Over 22 hours of play, Slim's $10,000 stake dwindled to as little as

"He was extremely entertaining and had the gift of gab. He did promote poker at a time when poker needed it" – Tom McEvoy

PHOTOS COURTESY OF BECKY DEANE

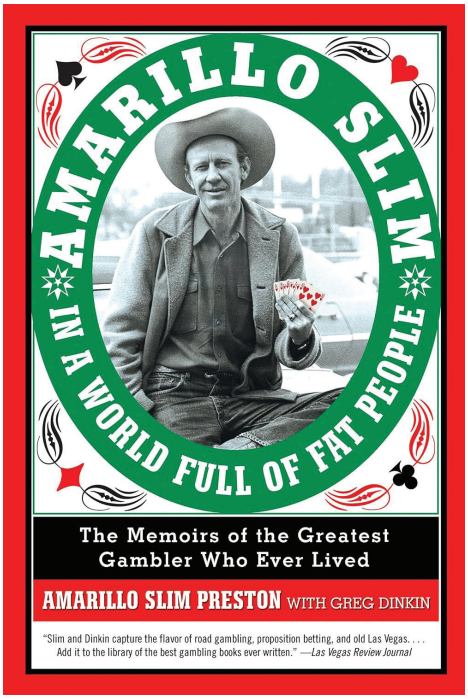
$1,700 before his luck started to change. He ended up totaling $80,000 in the Main Event.

Slim won several other WSOP events over the years and became a regular on 1970s television, including episodes of *I've Got a Secret* and *To Tell the Truth.* He became a frequent *Tonight Show* guest with Johnny Carson, making 11 appearances and leaning into his wild stories and colorful catch phrases.

In spite of his fame, Slim chose to stay in Amarillo, but his house and his lifestyle got a lot bigger. "Mom and Dad bought a lot on Virginia Street. It was just a simple home at that point. That was before Dad won the World Series of Poker," Deane says. "Then they rebuilt. They built a rather large house and a great, huge swimming pool. We had tennis courts and golf greens. We had a nice slice of life when Dad was riding the wave."

Slim loved hunting, horses and ranching and started spending lavishly on all three. At one point, he operated three different ranches. "Slim was a lot of fun and we did amazing things because of his celebrity. But mostly I liked it when Dad was home because he was just Dad," Deane says.

From time to time he suggested a move to Las Vegas, but Helen always shot him down. "Mother said, 'Absolutely not. I don't want my children exposed to parts of that life you live in.' And he acknowledged that. He honored that," Deane remembers.



Entering the Mainstream

From 1979 until 1991, Slim hosted The Super Bowl of Poker in Reno, which was the game's second most prestigious event behind the WSOP. Slim was inducted into the Poker Hall of Fame in 1992. By century's end, his fame had started to fade just as more states opened legal casinos. Texas Hold 'em was starting to inch closer to the mainstream.

Slim reintroduced himself to the public with a surprising second-place finish in an event at the 2000 WSOP. Rick Reilly at *Sports Illustrated*, one of the few mainstream journalists then writing about poker, profiled Slim in those days.

Author and literary agent Greg Dinkin met Slim at the 2002 WSOP while promoting his book, *The Poker MBA*. After listening to Slim's stories, Dinkin suggested Slim write a memoir. In 2003, Harper Collins published *Amarillo Slim in a World Full of Fat People*, which proved to be an immediate hit, coinciding with the poker boom on cable television and the expansion of in-person and online options for people to partake in Texas Hold 'em and other games.

To promote the book's release, Slim appeared on several early 2000s talk shows including Jimmy Kimmel, Carson Daly, and the *Best Damn Sports Talk Show, Period*. He was just as charming as he'd been on Carson in the '70s.

Actor Nicholas Cage expressed serious interest in playing Slim on film, meeting with him and Dinkin at his Bel-Air home in 2003. But the project never materialized: In August 2003, Thomas Austin Preston Jr. was charged in Randall County with indecency with a minor, who was a relative. In 2004, Preston pleaded no contest to a misdemeanor assault charge in the case. In later years, Slim insisted he was innocent and said he pleaded no contest to avoid a trial and further public scrutiny of his family.

A Poker Pariah

As Dinkin notes, Slim's strained relationship with the truth made it difficult for even his defenders to know what to believe in regard to that case. At any rate, Slim became a pariah in the poker world. "There was a really rough patch that happened in the family. We certainly wished it had been much more private than what it was," Deane says, explaining that significant reconciliation took place in the family in subsequent years.

Nevertheless, Slim and Helen divorced after 53 years of marriage. "At the time, my brothers and I were very reactionary. We were a strong part of my mother's decision for them to no longer be married. And that was very hard for us and for her," Deane says.

"It all really fell apart on him. That was his moment to cash in. And he lost it all," Dinkin says.

Slim's life got stranger and more dangerous in his final years. In the last decade of his life, Slim was the victim of at least three armed robberies, at least one of which took place while he was trying to collect a debt. "He was a guy who was known to carry a lot of money and made a lot of enemies," Dinkin says.

But toward the end of his life, Slim rebuilt his family relationships, including with his ex-wife. "[Slim and Helen] never didn't see one another," Deane says. "He came and visited mother all the time."

Eventually he was diagnosed with colon cancer, and Slim died in Amarillo on April 29, 2012. Despite a lifetime of avoiding church, Deane says her father made his decision for Christ near the end of his life.

To this day, Slim remains one of the most recognizable figures in poker history, widely regarded as one of the game's great popularizers.

Dinkin still hears from people regularly who are interested in optioning Slim's story for the big screen. He hopes that one day the stories of Amarillo Slim, partly truth and partly fiction, make their way to movie theaters.

"Slim was a lot of fun and we did amazing things because of his celebrity. But mostly I liked it when Dad was home because he was just Dad."—Becky Deane

Still Making Music

BY **CHERYLE COOPER**

Every Monday night, nearly 50 musicians of all ages, skill levels and walks of life fill the Amarillo College band room. In this eclectic mix, a former music professor sits beside a retiree, who sits beside a physician, who may be sandwiched in between a high school player and a CPA—and on it goes. But when the conductor lightly taps his baton and calls for a concert B, the shared goal of making music begins in unison.

That conductor is Bruce Collins, who's been leading the Amarillo College Community Concert Band since 2022. This ensemble is open to AC students and community musicians alike, including high school students who qualify. The band rehearses on campus and performs several public concerts each year.

"Music was always in our home," Collins says, reflecting on decades as a music educator and public school band director. "My mother was the pianist for our church, and my first instrument was the clarinet."

Collins describes his seventh-grade year in Lubbock as pivotal for him. He played in the school band until, mid-year, his family relocated to Clovis, New Mexico. It felt like a musical setback, but Collins' tenacious work ethic and strong rapport with his new conductor in Clovis improved his playing.

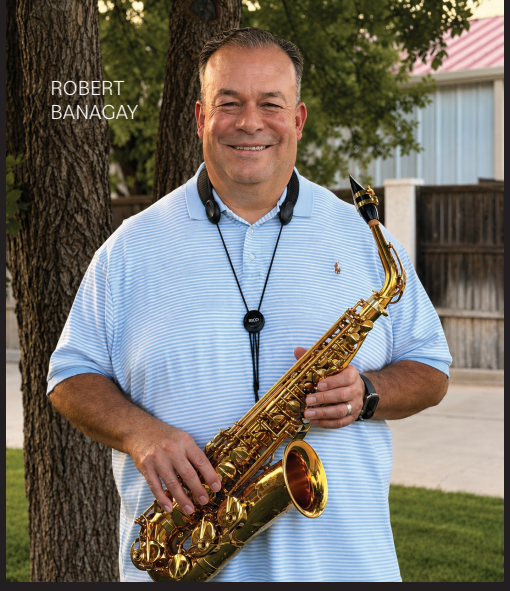
Ultimately, that experience drew him to the leadership/management side of music. "I love being in charge," he admits with a chuckle. "And I knew that my strong suit would be as a teacher and conductor."

A Place for Everyone

Directing a community band, Collins says, can be a bit like Forrest Gump's famous "box of chocolates" reasoning: He never quite knows what kind of talent might walk through the door. Unlike a symphony orchestra, where professional musicians undergo a strict audition process, the community band is more relaxed. AC's version is open to all, with no auditions required.

"I'm not always sure who can play what," Collins explains, especially when it comes to introducing new music. "Plus, I don't always know who is available at practice or rehearsal time."

Collins has learned to become a problem solver. "I modify pieces to accommodate the various skill levels so that the music and performance is never compromised," he says. Once, when a score presented a particularly difficult time signature—which dictates the rhythm and beat of a piece of music—Collins made charts to help each musician.



PROVIDED PHOTOS

"It became a teachable moment," he says, smiling. Every session provides the potential for new lessons learned.

Kellie Bartley, the development and donor relations officer for the Amarillo College Foundation who plays horn for the Amarillo Symphony, conducted the Community Concert Band before Collins. She keeps an anime-style drawing on the wall of her office. "This is a sketch of me conducting the community band along with one of our flute players in the background," she says. It was drawn during a concert by the grandson of that flute player, and reminds her how music intersects with other areas of creativity.

Bartlet's father played the tuba in the Army's marching band. "I was always fascinated by how big and imposing it was," she recalls. A multi-instrumentalist, she inherited a community band with only five members but worked hard to rebuild the band to its full complement.

Then came the pandemic, and the lockdowns and COVID restrictions of 2020. "Those were challenging days, indeed," she says. "I am super proud of this band and how far we've come."

She loves that it gives musicians, regardless of the detours in their lives, a chance to continue playing their instruments. It keeps the mind sharp. It offers a "home" to come back to. It acts as something of a family.

Finding a Way Back

Robert Banagay has recognized those benefits. "This is a really safe space to make some incredible music," the alto saxophonist says. He's performed with the band for three years. "You get it all: the rehearsals, the friendships, the performance nervousness and the joy of pulling it off."

He started with the band roughly three years ago and sees it as the fulfillment of something that hit him all the way back in second grade. Growing up in Clovis, New Mexico, Banagay remembers when the high school band came to perform at his elementary school. He was blown away. "From there I knew, immediately, that's what I wanted to do—play in a band," he says.

By age 12, he had learned the alto saxophone. After high school, unless you become a professional musician, opportunities to play in a group are limited. Banagay mostly played on his own, until he moved to Oregon to work for a start-up tech company. He had a grueling schedule. "Back then I was working 80-hour weeks," Banagay explains. "I just needed something."

Something that wasn't work. That's when he saw an ad about a community band. As he tells it, he didn't know exactly what a community band was. "I just grabbed my saxophone and showed up to the rehearsal," he says.

The thrill of performing was reborn. When life brought him to Amarillo, he knew exactly what to do.

Making Room for Music

Dr. Antonio Flores also knows something about demanding work weeks. He typically clocks up to 90 hours as a family physician. But, like Banagay, he also knows the alto saxophone. Flores spent his university years with a double major: human biology (pre-med) and jazz performance.

During college—and even in high school—Flores served as a band assistant, ran music camps, gave private lessons and even performed in jazz bands all around Austin.

Flores never stopped playing or performing his music, even after establishing a medical career, and joined the AC Community Concert Band in 2018. Work sometimes means missing Monday night rehearsals, so he works with Bruce Collins to coordinate music and concert dates. He rarely misses a concert.

"Music does something that brings communities together," he says. "There is something about experiencing music live in its rawest, purest form that you don't get from simply listening to music on the radio or on iTunes, where it is edited and artificial."

During those concerts, Jim Rennier keeps the beat as a seasoned percussionist and timpanist. A member since 2019 and former dean of the Sybil B. Harrington College of Fine Arts and Humanities at West Texas A&M University, he's spent decades teaching drum and percussion, and played with multiple orchestras in renowned music halls across the state.

Now retired, Rennier sees his role as a coach and mentor to less experienced musicians. "I have gathered lots of musical gifts along the way. I want to share and give back what I have gained," he says.

Showing Up Again

Trumpeter Tony Rea got his start in Kermit, performing in the high school band before earning a music scholarship to the University of

Texas El Paso. He intended to get a music degree and return home to be the school's band director.

Life, as if often does, threw him a curveball. At UTEP, he ended up managing a hotel unit, which thrust him into the business world. Rea transferred to WT to pursue a business degree, putting away his trumpet for several decades until 2018, when he sold his local Gold's Gym franchise.

Looking for a fresh start, he saw a Facebook ad about AC's Community Concert Band. "To be honest, it had been such a long time since I picked up my trumpet, I wasn't sure if I could even play anymore," he admits. "But Kellie [Bartley] was so approachable. She made me feel totally at ease." Rea discovered there were better trumpeters on both sides of him in his first rehearsals, but he persevered. His skills and confidence eventually returned.

Clarinetists Naomi Bencomo and Sammy Carter spend their days immersed in the music world. Both work full time on staff with the Amarillo Symphony, where Carter serves as marketing director and Bencomo as patron communication manager. After Bencomo joined the band in 2021, she convinced Carter to join.

Bencomo says heading into rehearsal after an exhausting workday can be a challenge. "Showing up is half the battle," she says. Both recommend showing up on a regular basis, staying connected and being willing to grow in your talent.

On Monday nights at Amarillo College, all these different paths converge in the same band room. Some members have spent their careers making music. Others have built careers in hospitals or gyms, far removed from concert halls. Some never stopped playing, while others put away an instrument for decades before finding their way back.

Those distinctions don't matter much once Collins raises his baton. Then, for a couple of hours at least, they're simply musicians again, listening to one another and playing in harmony. They prove that making music is something you never really have to outgrow.

TONY REA

SAMMY CARTER

NAOMI BENCOMO

JIM RENNIER

AMARILLO COLLEGE COMMUNITY BAND CONCERTS ARE FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC.

Fiesta Under the Stars (Sept. 26)
Stars & Stripes (Oct. 12)
Year-End Concert (Dec. 14)

Membership information:
actx.edu/music/band

ANTONIO FLORES

B&E ENCORE

Long before the lights go up or the galleries open, someone in the Texas Panhandle is pouring their heart into creating something beautiful. Previous generations recognized we couldn't simply import culture into the emptiness of the High Plains. We had to cultivate it ourselves. That desire blossomed into a cultural tradition fueled by the visionaries, directors, performers and patrons who call this region home. In this section, we pull back the curtain to introduce the arts organizations (and the passionate individuals behind them) who keep our cultural scene thriving.

Amarillo Art Institute

Rachel Flores, Executive Director

What inspired you to work in the arts? I loved drawing and painting from a young age. The opportunity to give others the gift of learning art has been a dream come true.

How do you choose the activities for the season? For our workshops, we bring in different master artists each year. Some are return favorites, and others are instructors we hear about from our members. We always try to feature a wide variety of mediums so everyone has something they can learn.

What is your favorite event to date? I love the annual Best of the Southwest Show. The entries get better every year, and I get the chance to see artists' work grow over the years, even artists I don't come into contact with regularly.

What does working in the arts reveal to you about Amarillo? We are an incredibly diverse group of people, and we have astounding talent in our area.

If you had no financial constraints, what would be your next exhibit? I would love to create a fully immersive exhibition, not like Meow Wolf, but something interactive that pulled together dozens of artists for a collaborative art installation.

What are your greatest needs right now? We ask that the community continue to support the arts, whether that is purchasing art for their home, gifting a mug to a friend, or sponsoring a program that is important to them.

3701 PLAINS BLVD. | 806.354.8802
ARTSINTHESUNSET.ORG

2026 Events

First Friday Art Walk & Marketown Fright: Oct. 2

Night Glow: Oct 10

First Friday Art Walk: Nov. 6

Holiday Open House: Nov. 14

First Friday Art Walk: Dec. 4

Holiday Market: Dec. 12

Amarillo Little Theatre

Jason Crespin, Managing/Artistic Director

What inspired you to work in the arts? Theater was my passion growing up. I was not a sports kid, so theater was where I found myself. I was lucky that I discovered Amarillo Little Theatre at 15 when I auditioned and was cast in *West Side Story*. Being in that show changed my life. I found a safe place to be creative and learn about the arts. I think what inspired me most was that it didn't feel like work. It felt like it was part of me and something I just had to do. I am very blessed to be able to have a career in the arts right here in Amarillo and get to work in theater every single day.

How do you choose the productions for the season? ALT has a play selection committee made up of board members and volunteers to help choose our shows each season. They submit a list of shows they'd like ALT to consider. A first review involves removing anything that is unavailable or out of our production scope. Then, ALT staff select titles we think could be strong shows for our season. That list goes back to the committee and they narrow it down to a reading list, which the committee and staff read to get familiar with each show. Then ALT patrons vote on what they would like to see next season. The committee reviews the results and staff recommendations and a season of shows is selected.

What is your favorite performance to date? Seeing Cynthia Erivo in *The Color Purple* on Broadway. I've seen it three different times and was blown away each time. Her rendition of Celie's "I Am Here" brought the house down.

What does working in the arts reveal to you about Amarillo? Amarillo is a community-driven city. What we do simply wouldn't be possible without the people who volunteer their time, donate their resources, show up to events and believe in what we're creating. It's amazing how many people in Amarillo are willing to invest in something bigger than themselves. For us to have a theater, opera, symphony, ballet, art museums, galleries, music venues—it is quite impressive that so many people support these organizations. It has made me appreciate that the arts aren't just something we provide to the community. They're something we create *with* the community.

If you had a dream ensemble and no financial constraints, what would be your next production? I think it would have to be *Hamilton*. The rights are not available yet, but can you imagine if ALT was the first community theater to produce that historic show? It would be epic! A guy can dream right? Who knows … ALT may one day be "in the room where it happens."

How long does your team rehearse for a show? Typically, we rehearse for six weeks for a play and eight weeks for a musical. With musicals, more time is needed to learn music and choreography.

What are your greatest needs right now? Donations and more diverse actors in our talent pool. We are hoping to do renovations at ALT as we prepare for our centennial next year, and that comes with a big price tag. If everyone was able to increase their giving this season by 10%, we would be able to cover much of our renovation costs.

Over the past five years, we have expanded our talent pool and volunteers, but we need to grow further. There are so many stories I would love for us to tell on our stage. For example, I would love to produce the musical *In the Heights*. We would need a large Hispanic group of actors to produce that show as intended.

Come From Away
(Sept. 3-20)

Dracula: A Comedy of Terrors
(Oct. 15-25)

The Outsiders
(Academy Show)
(Nov. 13-22)

White Christmas
(Dec. 3-20)

And Then There Were None
(Jan. 21-31)

Beehive
(Feb. 11-21)

SpongeBob SquarePants: The Musical
(Academy Show)
(March 5-14)

Clyde's
(April 1-11)

The Secret Garden
(April 29-May 16)

Amarillo Museum of Art

Education Team: Kegan Hollis, Rita Epp, and Colby Currie

What inspired you to work in the arts?

Kegan Hollis: I was raised in a rural community where there was very little access to the arts, so I understand firsthand what it means to grow up without those opportunities. It inspired my passion for making art accessible to everyone.

Colby Currie: I was drawn to visual art because of the powerful difference it can make in our mental and emotional well-being. I teach art because I want people to recognize that they have the tools within themselves to express their emotions, reflect on their lives, and better understand themselves through the creative process.

How do you choose the classes for the season?

CC: Our Museum School classes are thoughtfully developed to complement and draw inspiration from selections in AMoA's permanent collection, as well as the diverse temporary exhibitions we showcase throughout the year. This allows students to engage with works of art they may encounter in the galleries while exploring a variety of artists and techniques in the classroom.

What is your favorite education opportunity to date?

Rita Epp: The Museum in Residence program, which is a partnership between AMoA and AISD to address the lack of art education in area elementary schools. It is incredibly rewarding to bring the museum directly into classrooms and give students meaningful, hands-on experiences with art.

KH: The collaboration with World Refugee Day. After the last annual celebration, we partnered with Refugee Language Project and Bethesda Outreach to provide art classes that culminated in an art show overflowing with culture.

If you had a dream and no financial constraints, what would it be? What are your greatest needs?

RE: To expand our Museum in Residence program to all 36 elementary schools in Amarillo ISD. We know that early exposure to the arts can have a lasting impact, and our goal is to ensure every young student in our community has the opportunity to explore, create and discover themselves through art. Every child deserves the chance to experience the magic of creativity and the confidence that comes from artistic expression.

The Museum in Residence program is currently funded solely through the Amarillo Museum of Art, and expanding to serve more students would require additional resources, including the ability to grow our team of educators who can deliver TEKS-approved art lessons in local schools.

What exciting plans do you have for the next season? Our Fall Museum Classes are live and filling up fast. We are excited to introduce two new programs this season: Storytime Studio and Adult Portrait Nights.

2200 S. VAN BUREN ST.
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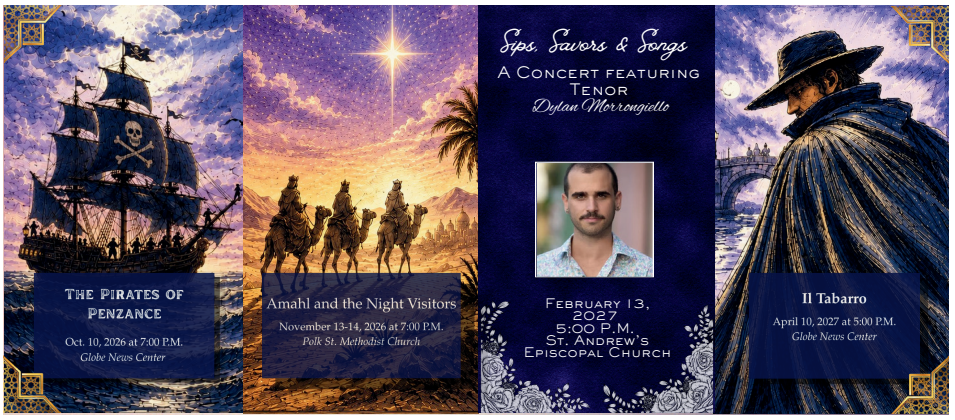
AMOA.ORG



Amarillo Opera

Mary Jane Johnson, General and Artistic Director

What inspired you to work in the arts? I have been a performer from a very early age. The transition from performer to an administrator is common in the opera world. After years on stage—from the Metropolitan Opera in New York to the opera houses of Prague or Paris—I discovered that I loved creating opportunities for other artists just as much as being in the spotlight myself. Helping audiences experience great music and helping young singers grow has become one of the most rewarding parts of my career.

How do you choose the productions for the season? I have chosen our productions based on our local audience and what I think they will be most interested in. People think about the music, but opera is really about compelling human stories. We want to include familiar stories, but also introduce something unexpected that produces emotion. We want our audiences to feel.

What is your favorite performance to date? *Cruzar la Cara de la Luna* from 2024 because this opera told a powerful story of a multigenerational Mexican family, with so much humanity and emotion. Seeing audiences connect with that production was unforgettable.

What does working in the arts reveal to you about Amarillo? Amarillo embraces the arts more and more each year. I've worked with artists and audiences in many places, and Amarillo continues to surprise me with its enthusiasm. People here genuinely want meaningful cultural experiences, and they're willing to support organizations that bring world-class performances to the community. We are so grateful for that support.

How long does your team rehearse for a show? We rehearse up to three weeks for an opera, not including the six weeks prior for our chorus rehearsals. By opening night, hundreds of hours have gone into preparing the music, staging, costumes and technical elements. It's an incredible collaboration.

What are your greatest needs right now? Mindfulness from all the area arts organizations for each other. We are all drawing from the same deep well of talent and creativity, and we should all be more aware of overworking those talents. Amarillo has an amazing arts community, and we all succeed when we work together to strengthen it.

What exciting plans do you have for the next season? Our next season is going to be a fabulous season that is—at this moment—a secret! We will share more soon.

Our fall production of *Pirates of Penzance* is scheduled for Oct. 10 at 7 p.m. This is a family-friendly production for ages 10 and older. Our cast is made up of many artists from Amarillo plus visiting artists of extremely high quality. Gilbert and Sullivan are known for memorable melodies and fantastic characters, so it's perfect for first-time audience members. Grab your swords and pirate gear and get your tickets!

There's a reason audiences around the world have loved opera for centuries. Support the arts in Amarillo and visit your local opera company to be delighted, transformed and happy when you walk out the door!

Scan the QR code for tickets.

***The Pirates of Penzance* on sale Sept. 8**

2026-27 Season

The Pirates of Penzance
Oct. 10, 2026 7 p.m.
Globe-News Center for the Performing Arts

Amahl and the Night Visitors
Nov. 13 and 14
7 p.m.
Polk Street Methodist Church

Sips, Savors, and Songs Concert
Feb. 13, 2027 5 p.m.
St. Andrew's Episcopal Church

Il tabarro
April 10, 2027 5 p.m.
Globe-News Center for the Performing Arts

Amarillo Symphony

Maestro George Jackson

What inspired you to work in the arts? I grew up in London with both parents working as actors, so the arts—and the precariousness that comes with that life—always felt completely natural. What continues to inspire me is the way music, theater, opera and visual art bring people together. The idea that the arts can act as a kind of social "glue" feels essential to any thriving society, and Amarillo is a powerful example of how that works in practice.

How do you choose the productions for the season? Conducting is about listening—and that doesn't stop at the podium. I spend time talking with musicians, patrons and community members to understand what they want from their orchestra. Programming becomes a balancing act: familiar favorites alongside unexpected discoveries. I think of each season as a journey—across countries, styles and even worlds. Bringing in film scores or video game music is another way we reach new audiences.

What is your favorite concert to date? It's hard to choose. *Celebraciones* in 2023 was incredibly special—it honored Amarillo's Hispanic community and brought together Mariachi singer Nayelli, the guitar trio Los Reyes, and our Youth Symphony performing side-by-side with our professional musicians. Another unforgettable moment was commissioning Michael Daugherty to write a piece inspired by Cadillac Ranch. Watching a sold-out audience leap to its feet and celebrate a living composer like a rock star—that was electric.

What does working in the arts reveal to you about Amarillo? Amarillo shows up. People here genuinely care about being part of something bigger than themselves. It's an exceptionally friendly place, but more than that, it's open—curious, engaged and willing to embrace new ideas. That combination makes it ideal for the arts to grow. Quality of life matters, and the arts are central to that.

If you had no financial constraints, what would be your next production? I already feel like I have a dream ensemble with the Amarillo Symphony. But if we're dreaming big—Texas big—I'd go for something massive and community-driven. A huge choral-orchestral production bringing together the symphony, youth musicians, choirs, students and visual artists from across the region. Something immersive and collaborative. That said, inviting Taylor Swift to join us wouldn't hurt either—or sending the Youth Symphony on a European tour!

How long does your team rehearse for a show? For musicians, it's a focused week—Monday through Thursday evening rehearsals leading into Friday and Saturday performances, about nine and a half hours total for roughly two hours of music. But the real work starts much earlier. Planning can begin two years in advance, from securing guest artists to coordinating logistics. Every department plays a role.

What are your greatest needs right now? Like most arts organizations, we're always building support—audiences, advocates and funding. Education is critical. Reaching young people isn't just about training future musicians; it's about building future audiences. As Amarillo grows, the arts remain a key part of what makes the city attractive and vibrant.

What exciting plans do you have for the next season? We're continuing to blend tradition with innovation, with collaboration at the heart of everything. Highlights include our principal horn, Dr. Guglielmo Manfredi, stepping forward as a concerto soloist, a Gershwin program with Grammy Award–winning pianist Michelle Cann, and Verdi's *Requiem* featuring Eric Barry. Beyond that, we have a top-secret commission from a major film composer. It's shaping up to be a bold, dynamic season.

806.376.8782
AMARILLOSYMPHONY.ORG

ARTWORK COURTESY OF THE PANHANDLE-PLAINS HISTORICAL MUSEUM, CANYON, TEXAS.

The West in Her Hands: Early Women Artists of West Texas

The Women Who Painted the Panhandle

The Citadelle's fall 2026 exhibition brings early West Texas women artists home.

Before there were highways or galleries, there were women with brushes. They set up easels on the open plains and painted what they saw, the buttes and bluebonnets and little churches out along the road, then hung their work in hometown halls from Canyon to Amarillo to Abilene. This fall, The Citadelle gathers more than two dozen of their paintings, watercolors and prints for The West in Her Hands: Early Women Artists of West Texas.

Guests will find a red-rock butte painted in 1926 by Anna E. Keener, who grew up in Dalhart and taught art at Sul Ross in Alpine. Then there's a field of Texas bluebonnets close enough to touch, a windmill dissolving into a watercolor sky, and a stand of yellow trees blazing against a dark mesa by Juanita Tittle of Abilene.

These women worked at the edge of the map, where the nearest art school was a train ride—and a long one. Many of them made that trip, studying in Chicago, New York and Philadelphia, then bringing what they learned home to their own students. They founded art associations in towns like Amarillo, Lubbock and Abilene and hung some of the first exhibitions seen in this region. In 1923, Mollie Crowther of San Angelo became the first West Texas woman accepted into the Texas Artists Exhibition at Fort Worth. By 1936, work by Isabel Robinson of Canyon was chosen by the all-male jury of the Texas Centennial in Dallas.

This show is their story, told in their own hand.

Join The Citadelle for the opening reception on **Thursday, Sept. 17 at 6 p.m.** Art historian **Michael Grauer**, a board member of the Center for the Advancement and Study of Early Texas Art, will speak on the women of the exhibition and the story of early Texas art. The evening includes light bites and good company. Tickets are required, and seating is limited, so RSVPs are kindly requested.

Make the drive to Canadian this fall and meet the women who painted the Panhandle first.

The West in Her Hands: Early Women Artists of West Texas
On view September through December 2026

A collection of work by pioneer West Texas women on loan from the Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum.

The Citadelle
ART MUSEUM

Open Tuesday through Saturday, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.
520 NELSON AVE., CANADIAN, TEXAS
806.323.8899 | THECITADELLE.ORG

Also This Fall

Native American Art Market

Oct. 17-18 | During Canadian's Fall Foliage Festival

Looking Ahead

There is more to experience at The Citadelle.

- **Annual Waterfield Christmas Lighting** | Nov. 30
- **Spring 2027 Exhibition**
- **Artist Workshops** for adults

Window on a Wider World

Dr. Christina Cox, Executive Director

New leadership for Window on a Wider World

We are excited to welcome Dr. Christina Cox as WOWW's new Executive Director. She brings more than 20 years of experience in education, student development, leadership and program administration. Cox holds a bachelor's degree from Briar Cliff University, a master's degree in higher education from Texas Tech University, and a Ph.D. in higher education research from Texas Tech. Throughout her career, she has been dedicated to creating meaningful learning experiences that support student success and expand educational opportunities.

What inspired you to work in education? Growing up on our family farm in a small rural community in Iowa shaped my passion for education and experiential learning. My graduating class had just 39 students, and I had very limited opportunities to travel or experience life outside our community. I had never experienced an opera, symphony, ballet or major art exhibitions. It wasn't until college that I was introduced to those experiences and realized how much there was to discover beyond the world I had known.

That experience stayed with me. In many rural communities, students grow up with limited opportunities to leave their communities, travel or experience the arts. I wanted to work in a field where I could give back to rural communities and help create some of those opportunities for students.

Through Window on a Wider World, we can bring STEAM—Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math—experiences directly to rural students. We can open a window to the world and give students opportunities to explore, learn and experience things they might otherwise never have the chance to encounter.

What are your greatest needs right now? The greatest need for WOWW is funding. We need to expand our outreach and bring more STEAM programming to rural communities throughout the Texas Panhandle. Additional funding would allow us to reach more schools, serve more students, and provide experiences that can broaden their horizons, spark curiosity, and inspire them to pursue new possibilities.

What are WOWW's upcoming programs for the year? WOWW has 145 programs available to schools each year through more than 60 learning partners across the Texas Panhandle. These programs provide students with hands-on opportunities to explore STEAM, the arts, entrepreneurship, science and other areas of learning.

Our **Science Collaborative** takes place in October at the Don Harrington Discovery Center. This event will bring science to life for more than 820 fifth-grade students from across the Panhandle.

In December at the Globe-News Center for the Performing Arts, we will host our **13th Annual Youth Art Show**, a free community art show where students can showcase their creativity and compete for prizes.

In May, **Emerging Entrepreneurs** will be held at West Texas A&M University. This program introduces students to all aspects of entrepreneurship, including marketing, branding, developing a business plan, financial literacy, and hearing personal entrepreneurial journeys from people who have built their own businesses.

Each of these programs is designed to give students experiences beyond the traditional classroom and help them discover interests, skills and possibilities for their futures.

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UNITED WAY
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ASPEN CREEK GRILL

This comfort casual chain has very few locations, but ours on I-40 is constantly busy. The appetizers are great for sharing and the popular Happy Hour is ridiculously affordable. Each location offers a signature menu. Try a Black Angus steak or pizza. 4110 W. I-40, 806.398.2776, aspencreekgrill.com $$

BEEF O'BRADY'S

After a brief hiatus, Beef's is back with its Irish pub vibe, popular wings and drink specials. This spot in the Summit Shopping Center gives parents a little downtime to watch the game. Kids can entertain themselves for hours in the arcade while the adults relax with a daily meal deal. 7306 SW 34th Ave., Suite 7, 806.437.1419, beefobradys.com $$

CAFE MARIZON

Lots of nostalgia here, from the daily desserts (BTS cake!) to the historic photos and Amarillo memorabilia on the walls. The down-home burgers are favorites, served on homemade bread. Try the French dip, spicy chicken salad, or lunch specials like green chile pie. 6151 Hillside Road, 806.352.2046, cafemarizon.com $$

CREAM OVER WAFFLES

After tempting locals with its homemade ice cream from a food truck, Cream Over Waffles opened a storefront on Soncy close to Westgate Mall. Complement your frozen treat with a decadent from-scratch waffle, served warm and topped with ice cream, or as a savory snack with melted cheese and pepperoni. Grab a stuffed baked potato and soup for a quick meal and finish it up with a perfectly blended Moo shake. 201-M Westgate Parkway West, 806.877.1485 $

DREAM CHASERS CAFE

Located inside Contagion Athletics, Dream Chasers is open to the public, and serves Palace coffee, protein shakes, energy juices, hydration drinks and snacks. Get your fix through the convenient drive-thru. 8210 W. Amarillo Blvd., Suite B, 806.599.4201, contagionathletics.com $

EL MANANTIAL RESTAURANT

This Amarillo Boulevard dive is regularly recommended as a favorite restaurant or ideal place to take out-of-towners. El Manantial serves the best chips in Amarillo, alongside fantastic salsa and a bowl of charro beans. On weekends you'll hear mariachi music. 3823 E. Amarillo Blvd., 806.383.1852 $-$$

FIRE SLICE PIZZERIA

A little hard to find—this pizzeria is hidden on the back-alley side of the Summit Shopping Center—but it's definitely worth the discovery. We love the fun atmosphere, calzones, paninis, craft beer and shareable starters. The brick-oven pizza toppings are inventive, too. 7306 SW 34th Ave., Space 10 Rear, 806.331.2232, fireslice.com $$

FREDDIE'S FISH & GRILL

Remember FatCat? That's the heritage of this fry shack, and the catfish is still the best thing on the menu. (Good news: It's actual, freshwater catfish.) The new incarnation serves beer and boasts an updated interior. The menu feels familiar to the FatCat of old: Lots of fried seafood, hushpuppies, fries and the popular Build-Your-Own-Bucket boil. 1309 Dumas Drive, 806.373.3581 $

GOLDEN LIGHT CAFE

This doesn't need an introduction from us, but are you a real Amarilloan if you've never dined at this icon? In business since 1946 at the same location, it's the oldest-operating restaurant in Amarillo and maybe even along Route 66. Fantastic greasy burgers with outdoor dining and a music venue next door. 2908 SW Sixth Ave., 806.374.9237, goldenlightcafe.com $

HOPE VILLAGE

Located on the property of the nonprofit Advo, this location offers a coffee shop, deli and ice cream parlor under one roof. You're likely to be served by adults who have intellectual and physical disabilities and are learning valuable workforce skills. The food is good. The smiles are even better. 5197 S. Washington St., 806.484.9257

JACKET POTATO

Part of the Toot'n Totum family, this little shop with a British name promises portions to serve a Texas appetite. You'll find 30-plus toppings to choose from. Go for the "Brisket Boss" for a smoky BBQ fix or the "Pizzatato" for a quirky, cheese-filled mashup. 4631 S. Western St., 806.323.7783, eatjacketpotato.com $

JORGE'S MEXICAN BAR & GRILL

The always-packed Tex-Mex restaurant is known for the chips and queso, fajitas and margaritas. You'll get great service, with the restaurant's owners working as servers, too. A separate bar area is available to wait or eat in when the dining room is full. 6051 S. Bell St., 806.354.2241, jorgesmexican.com $$

K-N ROOT BEER DRIVE-IN

This legendary, traditional drive-in opened in 1968. And while it lost its iconic covered parking in a windstorm, the wonderful burgers, shakes and floats are still around. And the root beer is still served in a frosty cold mug! As the sign used to say, it's "truly a bargain at today's prices." 3900 Olsen Blvd., 806.355.4391, knrootbeeramarillo.com $

This is not a comprehensive list of local restaurants. From issue to issue, we will try to include a wide variety of dining options based on the space available. If you notice an error, please email mm@brickandelm.com.

$	Most entrees under $10
$$	Most entrees $11 to $20
$$$	Most entrees over $21

LITTLE LAOS

The husband-and-wife operators of this Lao stop on Historic Route 66 are passionate about the flavors and freshness of Lao food, which relies on fresh herbs like dill, mint, lemongrass and fermented flavors. That flavor comes through in the popular Green Curry Chicken, or Yum Seen Nam Tok, a beef salad. Be prepared for the spice. The max level, "Lao Spice," is not for the faint of heart. Cool off with a refreshing Thai tea. 3811 SW Sixth Ave., 806.803.0373 $

MALCOLM'S ICE CREAM & FOOD

The place we all used to go to with our grandparents, this locally owned iconic restaurant has been serving scoops and comfort food since 1986. People love the burgers, chicken-fried steak and egg salad sandwiches. And no matter the age, no one can resist the malts and mundaes. 2100 Paramount Blvd., 806.355.3892 $

METROPOLITAN STEAK & SEAFOOD

Part of Town Square from its 2016 beginning, this elegant restaurant offers great service, a full bar and excellent cuisine. Metropolitan is a delightful spot to linger, with a seasonal menu and live music. 9181 Town Square Blvd., Suite 1201, 806.242.0117, metroofamarillo.com $$

MOTOMEDI

Healthy meets hearty at this modern Mediterranean kitchen. Build your own orzo rice or orzo salad bowl with grilled chicken, lamb and a variety of homemade dips like Pista Feta and Muhammara. (The pillowy-soft artisan bread is made fresh daily, and don't forget the soft serve!) 2301 S. Georgia St, Suite E2301, 806.410.2575, motomedi.com $$

NOMAD NAPOLETANA

Nomad Napoletana has turned up the temperature on an iconic stretch of Polk Street. Diners can expect East Coast-style pizza in an upscale dining area and bar. Beyond pizza, feast on a complimentary dish of *stecca*, a Sicilian version of the baguette drizzled in olive oil and served with tender, spreadable garlic confit. Don't miss the scratch-made meatballs, braised all day in California tomatoes and tomato sauce,

then served with a dollop of ricotta. 614 S. Polk St., 806.376.4700, nomadnapoletana.com $-$$

NORTH HEIGHTS DISCOUNT & CAFE

If you've ever thought twice about dining inside a convenience store, this will change your mind. This place serves some of the best soul food in the city. It's known for huge portions—the nachos probably weigh three pounds—as well as its ribs, pork chops, fried catfish and breakfast items. 1621 NW 18th Ave., 806.418.6751 $

OISHII JAPANESE SUSHI & SAKE

Oishii elevates the local sushi experience with creative flavor combinations and presentation. The menu is huge. The seafood is fresh. The dishes are designed to induce gasps as they arrive at the table. All the sauces are made from scratch in-house. If sushi's not your thing, the traditional Asian staples are just as worthwhile. 2721 Virginia Circle, 806.877.2464 $$-$$$

PACIFIC RIM

This longtime establishment on Paramount is one of our favorites, thanks to its excellent Asian-Fusion cuisine and huge portions. We love the build-your-own stir fry options and speedy delivery. Pay attention to the menu's spiciness levels, though. Level 5 ("Hurting") is no joke. 2061 Paramount Blvd., 806.353.9179, pacificrimam.com $

PAN-HANDLERS CAFE

The best restaurants never seem to shout their presence, and that applies to this tasteful lunch spot hidden in the basement of Amarillo National Bank Plaza One. It's locally owned and has a fantastic salad bar, plus sandwiches, daily specials and decadent desserts. It's always, always good. 410 S. Taylor St., 806.352.2590, thepan-handlers.com $

PONDASETA BREWING CO.

Already popular for its craft beer, a mobile trailer enables the brewery to serve a food truck-style menu. The focus is pub-style food like burgers, sandwiches and mac-and-cheese bites. Kids meals are available. The adults will want the charcuterie adventure board, with hummus, cheese, meat and crackers. 7500 SW 45th Ave., 806.418.6282, pondaseta.com $$

RED RIVER STEAKHOUSE

It's not hard to find a decent steak in the Panhandle, so when a local steakhouse earns a reputation for its hand-cut steaks, you pay attention. The Amarillo version of the owner's original Red River Steakhouse in McLean, this old-fashioned establishment may be one of the area's best-kept secrets. 4332 SW 45th Ave., 806.316.5082, redriversteakhouse.net $$

ROOSTERS CAFE

This coffee, breakfast and lunch stop near 34th and Bell is quietly one of the best dessert places in the city. (That apple pie: Whoa.) But the quiche, sandwiches, soups and salads are also worth an order. Be advised: The dining room fills up quickly for lunch, but we love the cute outdoor area. 3440 S. Bell St., Unit 110, 806.353.7309 $

SCOTT'S OYSTER BAR

There are dives and then there are places like Scott's Oyster Bar, a legit, shackety-shack hidden in a mostly residential area off Western. This tiny place has been here forever, though the interior and menu have changed slightly since Scott sold it a few years ago. Fresh oysters, tasty shrimp creole and classic Amarillo hospitality. 4150 Paramount Blvd., 806.354.9110 $$

SHELBY'S DINER

Never had a reason to go out to Tradewinds Airport? Now you do. This fun, home-cooking menu comes with runway views of private-plane takeoffs and landings. Locals love the breakfast options—served from 7 a.m. until 11 a.m.—as well as the burgers on the lunch menu. Open for dinner on Thursdays and Fridays. Don't skip the homemade pie for dessert. 4105 Tradewind St, 806.699.1008, shelbysdineramarillo.com $

SPICY MIKE'S BAR-B-Q HAVEN

The spice is nice at this popular barbecue joint in southwest Amarillo, known for chopped brisket sandwiches, tender pork ribs and more. We also love the daily specials—like Saturday's smoked turkey sandwich—and homemade cobbler for dessert. 6723 S. Western St., 806.358.8550 $$

TEXAS FIREHOUSE SPORTS BAR & GRILL

Maybe it's the abundant TVs. Or the incredible number of beers on tap. But this locally owned sports bar is a lot bigger inside than the exterior would have you believe. It's pub grub all the way—pizza, burgers, paninis, fried pickles—and it's all good. Plus, it's divided up between the family-friendly restaurant side or the noisier bar side. 3333 S. Coulter St., Suite D1, 806.351.1800, txfirehouse.com $$

TOOM'S RESTAURANT

Experts know that a lot of "Thai" food actually has origins in Laos, and that fusion is on display at Toom's, one of our favorite spots on the northeast side. The family owners are super friendly, the space is incredibly clean, and the authentic flavors pop. Get the sticky rice and beef jerky. 3416 NE 24th Ave., 806.381.2568 $

TYLER'S BARBEQUE

Amarillo has no shortage of authentic Texas barbecue, but Tyler's always seems to be residents' first choice. Maybe it's because he's got a reputation all over the Lone Star State. Or maybe it's secretly because of the Frito pie and green chile stew. Plan ahead: Most menu items sell out. 3301 Olsen Blvd., 806.331.2271, tylersbarbeque.com $$

WESLEY'S BBQ

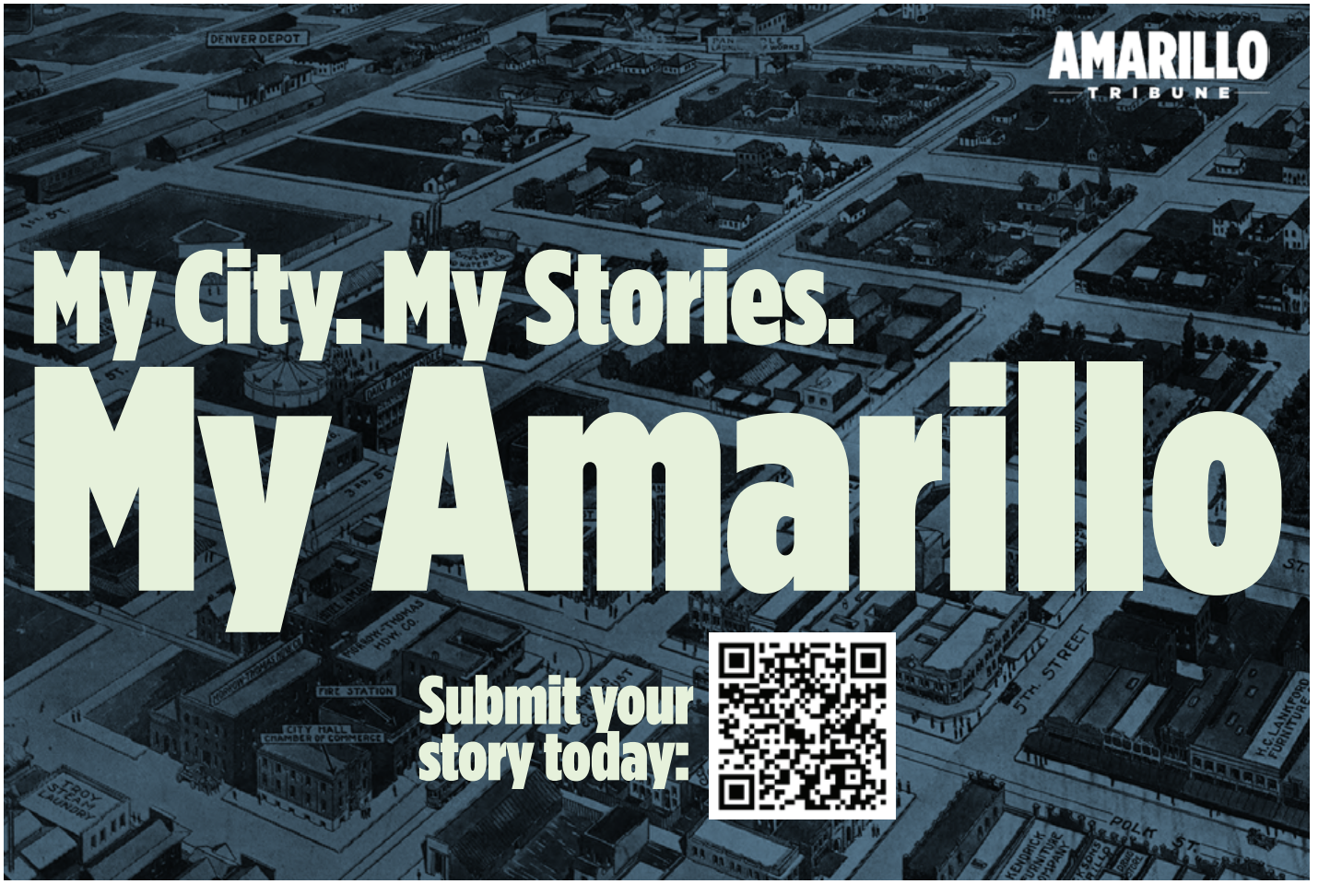
River Road restaurants aren't always on the radar of every local resident, but Wesley's has been around forever and deserves its legendary reputation. Loyal customers return again and again for the genuine Texas-style barbecue, especially the baby-back ribs, brisket and—yep—the beans. 6406 River Road, 806.381.2893 $

WESTERN HORSEMAN CLUB

In the 1980s, the Western Horseman Club was one of the hottest country-and-western bars in the city. Now, prominent local chef Rory Schepisi has taken on the task of breathing new life into the storied club. Schepisi has transformed the once-dingy, sprawling space with a swanky, modern-saloon vibe. The menu is western-focused, with options like Angus Beef burgers and sandwiches, Prime Certified Angus Beef steaks, chicken-fried steak, catfish and more. 2501 E. I-40, 806.877.1600, westernhorsemanclub.com $$-$$$

X- STEAKHOUSE

The name is a play on cattle brands—say "X-Bar"—and this Town Square steakhouse definitely knows beef. It's locally owned, has a full bar, and the prices are extremely reasonable for such a swanky atmosphere. We hear great things about the weekend brunch, too. 9181 Town Square Blvd., Suite 1311, 806.322.4227, xbarsteakhouse.com $$-$$$



Krissy Hurt, MSN, RN, Executive Director

MEDS THAT MESS WITH YOUR HEAD

xxx

OTCs or Over the Counter Medications, Vitamins, Herbs, Supplements and Inhalers can cause harmful side effects when mixed with certain prescriptions.

Dr. Ron K. Rankin, Medical Director

"People often assume if it's ***over the counter,*** it's safe to take. But it's often not safe when combined with prescription medications, especially in Seniors. That's why at **Jan Werner Adult Day Care,** we utilize the services of **Dr. Ron K Rankin, Medical Director** to monitor our participants and continually give a full medication review. Here's important information that could dramatically affect your well-being or your Senior loved one's health." **Krissy Hurt, Executive Director**

— Dr. Ron K. Rankin – Medical Director - Family Medicine Physician specializing in Geriatric Medicine, Hospice and Palliative Medicine offers these important tips.

Benadryl – often used for severe allergies or to sleep, will completely dry you out and can cause cognitive impairment, especially if taken daily. Many memory problems in Seniors stem from Benadryl use. **Tylenol PM** – The "PM" in Tylenol is Benadryl. As we age, drugs accumulate in our body and we don't excrete them as often as when we were younger which inhibits the efficiency of other prescription drugs taken. **Ibuprofen, Aleve, Motrin** – These anti-inflammatory OTCs have harmful effects in Seniors and can negatively affect your kidneys, increase blood pressure and stomach bleeding. **St. John's Wort** – This herb interacts with many meds; inhibiting the metabolism of other drugs such as migraine and antidepressants. **Opioids** for pain • **Benzodiazepines** for anxiety or sleep • **Benadryl** – These drugs present major Fall Risks, especially in Seniors. **Supplements** – Surprisingly, supplements are not FDA regulated and often contain unreported additives. We recommend that Seniors don't take them, but if they do, discuss it with their health care provider.

Our **Basics PACE Program** at **Jan Werner** provides a comprehensive team: Analyzing meds, consulting, physical and occupational therapy, dietary and socialization that's stimulating and fun for our participants. Let us help you find answers for your Senior loved one.

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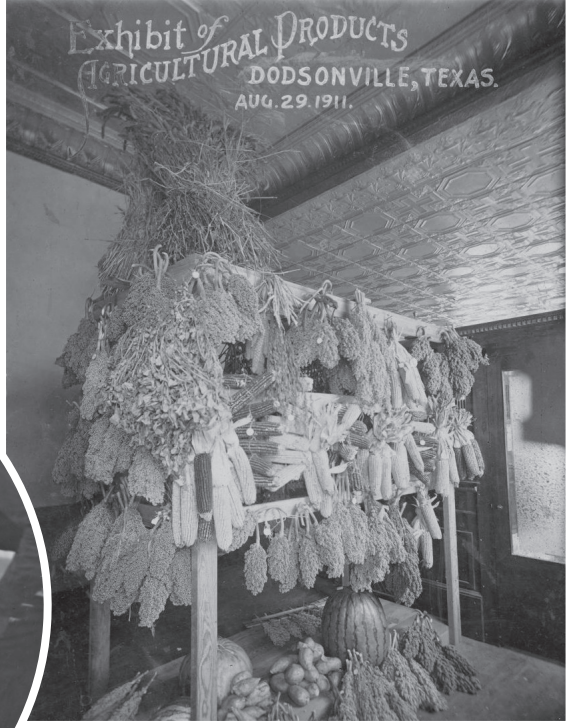

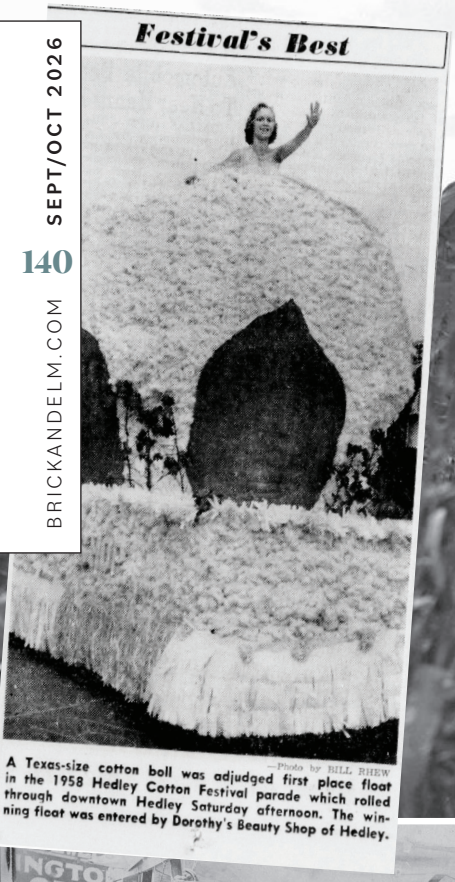
Festival's Best

Photo by BILL RHEW

A Texas-size cotton boll was adjudged first place float in the 1958 Hedley Cotton Festival parade which rolled through downtown Hedley Saturday afternoon. The winning float was entered by Dorothy's Beauty Shop of Hedley.

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PANHANDLE-PLAINS HISTORICAL MUSEUM

WHEN THE WORK'S ALL DONE THIS FALL

I've never farmed anything more than the struggling crop of fescue on my front lawn. The only livestock I tend is a pack of mixed-breed chihuahuas who won't go outside if the ground is wet. But I grew up in the Texas Panhandle, and like most of my fellow Panhandlers, I'm a sodbuster and a herdsman in my heart.

So when summer makes that turn to fall, we all live the poetry of harvest in our own way. Time stands still for a bit as we measure the fruits of our labor and call it good through fairs, pageants and feasts that showcase the best of what we made when the sun was high and hot.

The Antelope Creek people showed up in the Panhandle around 1150 A.D. and cultivated corn, beans and squash. We don't have knowledge of how these earliest of our Panhandle forebears celebrated harvest, but the Comanche and Kiowa who came later developed rituals of thanksgiving for successful buffalo hunts by feasting on fresh tongues and livers, not unlike cutting the heart out of a freshly harvested watermelon.

When the ranchers staked their claim on the Panhandle, they were averse to poking additional holes in the ground. But the great roundups, spring and fall, were a harvest of sorts—a hot and dirty job that made swinging a sickle look inviting. When it was done, cowboys enjoyed a time of revelry, and possibly debauchery, that involved hearty chuckwagon meals and trips into Tascosa or Mobeetie (but not Clarendon) for a taste of whiskey and maybe a cuddle.

The more pious farmer-types began to flood the open range once the railroads made farming viable and brought the crops and harvest traditions with them from the old country. My first assignment as a reporter at the *Amarillo Globe-News* was to cover the Umbarger Sausage Festival at St. Mary's Church, a harvest tradition dating back more than 100 years. Days in advance, almost everyone in the community was involved in preparing not just the sausage (the beef kind) but also sauerkraut, potatoes, applesauce and homemade bread—all the proof you'd need of a good harvest.

Down in cotton country, where my people settled, everyone was involved in the harvest and the celebrations that capped it off. My dad often told about Hedley schools letting out in September so kids could help bring in the crop. When it was all done, young and old alike celebrated with the Cotton Festival. Hedley folks couldn't eat the cotton, but they threw a big party with cotton-arrayed floats complete with cotton queens popping out of giant cotton bolls.

My great aunt Myrtle, a.k.a. Auntie, organized the artsy aspects of this celebration for many years, and once she dreamed up a love-themed float upon which my father, a kid at the time, was tapped to play the role of Cupid. I'm not sure what this had to do with cotton harvest, and my dad didn't make the connection, either. He bowed up in a way Auntie didn't expect and said he wasn't going to parade around in a diaper, even after Auntie tried to bribe him with a new pair of boots. So Cupid didn't happen and Myrtle Reeves never fully forgave my dad for doubting her theatrical genius. But Hedley's festival continues to this day.

The Collingsworth County Fair in nearby Wellington, my hometown, was perfectly timed to the brief idyll when farmers waited for cotton bolls to open up wide. If the weather changed early enough, we were blessed to celebrate with a draw of that first fallish air. Not cold, not hot, but delightfully crisp and clear. It always seemed this time of year brought out the best in everyone. But just whose best was better had to be judged, of course—thus the need for the county fair.

While there were plenty of cotton stalks and shocks from the amber waves on display, the women of the county stole the spotlight every year. Many had toiled all summer gardening, baking, crafting and sewing and were itching to stick it to Mabel or whoever reigned as Queen of Domesticity that particular year. Art was also celebrated, and half the community building was given over to student art projects. I thought of myself as somewhat of an artist, and I won a ribbon for my Crayola portrait of George Washington during the bicentennial run of the fair. Somebody quipped that GW's mouth looked funny, so I characteristically self-destructed at the first hint of criticism and decided I would be a writer instead.

The Tri-State Fair always followed our county fair. You might be a big shot in pumpkin pies or metal art in Wellington, but this was big city stuff and it was harder to stand out. But there was a certain *joie de vivre* in celebrating everything good about the Panhandle. My dad was the county agent in Wellington and was expected to set up a booth in the old ag building where all 26 counties would be represented. Months in advance he would gather samples of the county's finest wheat, milo, cotton and maybe even an outsized cucumber or a mutant pumpkin. Once on display, his agricultural art made Collingsworth look like the Eden of the Plains. Not fancy, but never sloppy. This from a man who could also ball up a show steer's tail with "spray-net" better than any beauty operator in the Panhandle. He always made me proud.

And that's just it, really. Being proud of who we are and what we can make from dirt and sweat, with a nod to the Creator who sustains us on an often unforgiving land. In our harvesttime labor and celebrations, there has always been a measure of worship and adoration for when it turns out right, and a streak of optimistic denial when it doesn't. I like to think we are still imbued with this harvest spirit, and that no amount of AI or pop psychology can dull the sensation of a September harvest evening or salve a nagging restlessness that inspires us to start all over again come spring.

REACH THE BEACH

As the crow flies, Amarillo is about 650 miles from the nearest beach, which would be a few miles southeast of Corpus Christi. That's nine hours on a good day. But there's another beach—albeit a smaller one—a little more than five hours away at Great Sand Dunes National Park & Preserve in southern Colorado. I have been to 48 of the 63 U.S. National Parks, and this park is one of my favorites.

Before and after dipping your toes in run-off snow melt from the Rockies, there's the added fun of getting to climb 750-foot dunes. That's something you can't do at our Gulf shores, and they are a serious workout. These are also the tallest dunes in North America.

From the parking area, the first encounter at the park is Medano Creek, the seasonal water flow that carries spring snow melt along the base of the dunes. Depending on how much snow fell the previous winter, and how fast the weather warms up, the creek can range from bone dry to 6 to 10 inches in depth, making it a sheer delight in summer's heat. Well, as long as the water keeps flowing.

On both of my visits, I felt like I was but one of thousands at what could properly be called Colorado's Beach. While the water is refreshingly cool, remember to bring protective footwear for the dunes, because the sun heats the sand to levels approximating walking on fire. Trust me on this.

Great Sand Dunes is one of four National Parks to feature sand dunes, the others being White Sands in New Mexico, Indiana Dunes along Lake Michigan, and Death Valley. But the ones at Great Sand Dunes are far and away the most challenging for hikers. They are very steep. Those "ants" farther up the dune are humans, all plodding along in a two-steps-forward-one-step-backwards cadence.

That steepness also means this is a great place for sand sledding, so bring a plastic disc or other slippery, flat surface for zooming downhill. A metal disc would likely get too hot during summer, so leave that one home. This activity alone will keep the kid in you—plus your kids—entertained for hours.

The park is located 346 miles, or about 5 hours and 20 minutes, from Amarillo. Drive to Raton, New Mexico, on US 87, then I-25 north to Walsenburg, Colorado. From there it is about an hour west on U.S. 160, and then north on CO 150.

Lodging is available at the Great Sand Dunes Lodge only three miles before the park entrance. The nearby Great Sand Dunes Oasis offers cabins and an RV park, while Pinyon Flats Campground is located within the park. Otherwise, Alamosa is the nearest city of any size, located 30 miles southwest of the park along US 160. All of the usual chain hotels are located there, along with more than 50 restaurants and a brewery.

Great Sand Dunes has a long geologic history, having formed more than 440,000 years ago when an ancient lake dried up. The remaining sand was pushed toward a curve in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains by the prevailing southwesterly winds. But storms in the mountains typically push downward in the opposite direction, pushing the sand into tall vertical ridges. The result is a land feature that is constantly in flux.

Indigenous habitation dates more than 11,000 years, and includes the Ute people, Jicarilla Apache Nation, and Navajo. They were fascinated by the dunes, calling them "sand that moves." The nearby peaks hold spiritual significance for the tribes.

Zebulon Pike was the first Anglo to document the dunes, arriving in 1807 while exploring for the U.S. government. A century later, prospectors tried mining gold from the sand, but those efforts did not bear fruit. In 1932, President Herbert Hoover established the Great Sand Dunes National Monument. The park was elevated to National Park status in 2004 to further preserve the ecosystem.

Dunes can be fragile by nature, but the National Park Service allows and encourages visitors to make the most of these massive sand hills. There are no established trails up the dunes, only the footprints of those who went before that same day. The constantly shifting sands guarantee a different experience every day.

Given the varying water flow in Medano Creek, it is worth checking online for park conditions, or calling ahead. Relaxing in the water is half the fun. Be sure to pack a cooler and food for a picnic, and bring all the usual beach toys.

Amarillo's distance from sunny beaches makes Great Sand Dunes National Park a fun alternative, with the added benefit of being in the Rockies. I will definitely go back. Besides, who doesn't like a little sand between their toes?

PHOTO BY VENICE MINCEY

AMERICA ADAME

Executive Director, Wesley Community Center

The best advice I ever heard is: My life is not just for me. I understand that the gifts, opportunities, education and experiences I've been given are not just for my own advancement. They are tools I can use to make someone else's life better.

My three most recommended books are: *The Untethered Soul* by Michael Alan Singer; *Outwitting the Devil* by Napoleon Hill; and *The Way of the Shepherd* by Dr. Kevin Leman and Bill Pentak.

To me, success means: leaving people better than I found them. I believe the greatest measure of leadership is not how many people serve me, but how many people I have served. If my life can create opportunities, strengthen families, empower others and make my community better, then I consider that success.

People who know me might be surprised that I: love crossword puzzles, napping is my love language, and I'm a complete introvert.

My biggest pet peeve is: when people underestimate the impact of small acts of kindness.

Everyone in Amarillo needs to experience: my parents' love, their food and their hospitality.

If I could change any one local thing it would be: ensuring that every person in Amarillo, regardless of their zip code or circumstances, has access to the same opportunities to dream, grow and succeed.

This city is amazing at: rallying around one another in times of crisis. When one person or family is hurting, Amarillo has a way of coming together, showing up and reminding people that they don't have to walk through difficult seasons alone.

My favorite place in Amarillo is: the Amarillo Wesley Community Center.

A local organization I love right now: To be fair, I have to give my top three: The Maverick Boys & Girls Club, Barrio Neighborhood Planning Committee, and Opportunity School.

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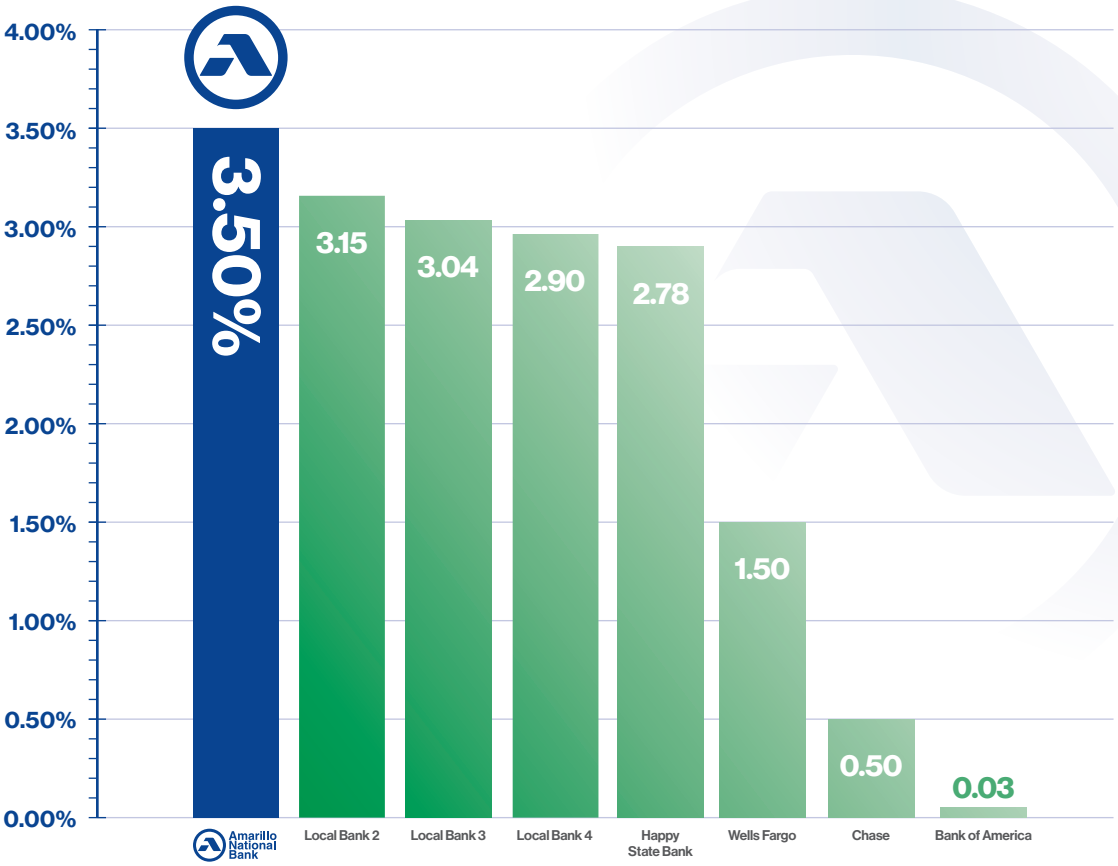

*Annual Percentage Yield (APY) is effective on July 31, 2026. $1,000 minimum balance required. Penalty for early withdrawal may be imposed. Rates subject to change. Competitor rates as of July 29, 2026 based on published information.

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