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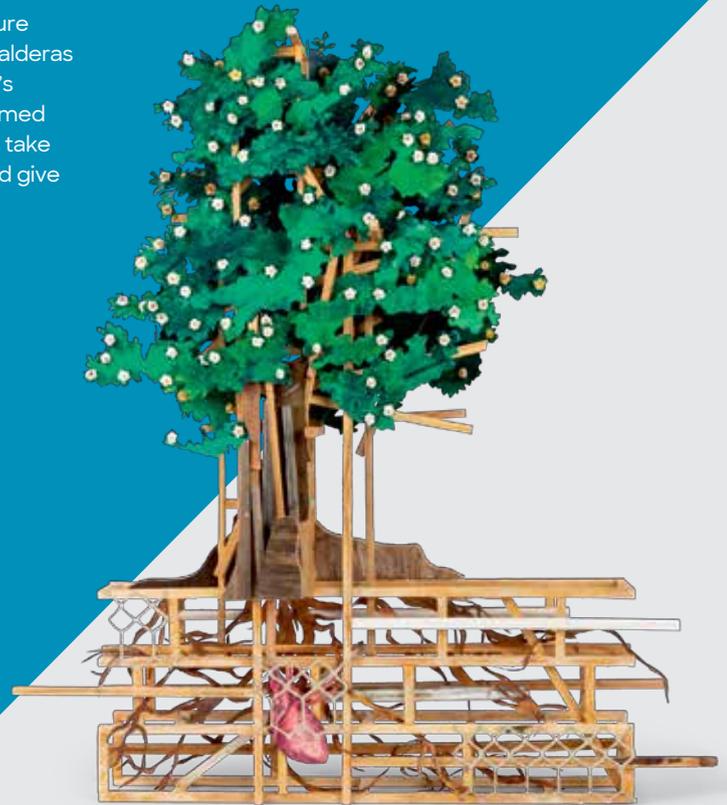


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Strengthening the Community

Local Nonprofits Provide Resources to Residents

By Jackson King

Page 6

Staying Hungry

A Texas A&M Professor's Journey

By Sarah Elmer

Page 8

Cold, Flu, Allergies

What's the Difference?

By Dr. Emily George & Jennifer Harris, NP, Baylor
Scott & White Clinic — Rock Prairie

Page 12

Flight Risks

Three Tips to Avoid Germs During Travel

By Elizabeth Grimm, Texas A&M Health Science Center

Page 14

TAVR Procedure

*Minimally Invasive Heart Procedure
Comes to the Brazos Valley*

Courtesy of Baylor Scott & White Health

Page 16

Best Practices

How to Safely Throw Away Old Medicines

By Lindsey Hendrix, Texas A&M Health Science Center

Page 18

Solve Problems, Help People

*Texas A&M Horticulture Research Affects
Everybody, Every Day*

Story and Photos by Rebecca Sloane

Page 22

Renzoe on the Run

A Look Inside the Renzoe Box

By Nicole Shair

Page 26



Natalie Wood Designs

Jewelry Built on Faith

By Brandi M. Gomez

Page 28

New Decade, New Trends

Kitchen Trends for 2020

Courtesy of Stearns Design-Build

Page 30

Tips From a Realtor

How to Make Your Home Stand Out When Selling

By Kristen Strother, REALTOR®, TM5 Properties

Page 24

Pastelitos Co.

College Station's Best Kept Secret

By Brandi M. Gomez

Page 36

Kathyna Hatla

Against All Odds

By Katie James

Page 40

Hands-On Experience

Burton Cotton Gin Festival

By Nicole Shair

Page 44

Lemonade Day

Celebrating 10 Years

By Brandi M. Gomez

Page 46

Brazos Reads

By Shelbi LeMeilleur

Page 48

Eats & Treats

Page 50

INSITE Magazine is published monthly by Integ, David Anderton, President & CEO, 123 E. Wm. J. Bryan Pkwy., Bryan, Texas 77803. (979) 823-5567 InsiteBrazosValley.com; email: admin@insitebrazosvalley.com Volume 36, Number 1.

Publisher: Kyle DeWitt; **Editor:** Shelbi LeMeilleur; **Editorial Assistant:** Katie James; **Account Executive:** Dave Marsh; **Editorial Interns:** Brandi M. Gomez; Jackson King; Nicole Shair. **INSITE Magazine** is a division of **Integ**. Reproduction of any part

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Letter From the Editor

Dear **INSITE** Readers,

We live in a time of uncertainty right now, but one thing is very certain from my perspective: Community is more important now than it ever has been.

Our mission at **INSITE** Magazine has and always will be to bring the Brazos Valley community together. That is why it is important for us to continue to put this magazine in your hands (or on your screens) so we can continue to support this community in this very unique time in our lives.

INSITE is a monthly publication, which means we write our stories a month or more before the issue they will be printed in. It also means we are finalizing the issue and sending it to print the month previous. What does this mean for you? It means we were working on these April stories before anyone had ever heard of coronavirus. It also means that I am writing this letter before we have any idea what the actual impact of this pandemic will be.

Many people are working from home, schools are closed, and we don't know when things will go back to "normal." In fact, many of the stories we wrote had to be scrapped due to event cancellations or indefinite postponements. However, by the time you are reading this, many things could have changed. I have no way of knowing what April will look like, but I do know that supporting local businesses and strengthening our community is still a priority at **INSITE**.

With all of this being said, there are some stories published in this issue about upcoming events. I worked closely with everyone to decide if we should still publish these stories, not knowing if the events will still take place. Ultimately we decided to move forward with these stories in the hopes things will have cleared up by then. If the events do get canceled, we still want you to know about these great local organizations. Just be sure to check back diligently on our website with all the latest updates.

This month is also a health-related issue. Great timing, right? You may notice that we tried not to address COVID-19 specifically in these stories. Why? Because with the ever-changing nature of the information about this virus, we didn't want to publish something that wouldn't be relevant by the time the issue went to print. Instead, we decided to focus on general health stories and resources for you at any time of the year or in the after effects of coronavirus.

Finally — and I cannot stress this enough — now it is more important than ever to support local. Our community thrives on small businesses and forced closures or modifications will have a marked effect. Shop locally whenever you can. Order takeout from your favorite restaurant, buy online from boutiques, get a gift card to use later. Visiting businesses isn't the only way you can support local. Supporting local also means helping out our neighbors. If you have the means, donate your resources to local charities — time, money, or materials. We are stronger together, so let's bond together however we can (whatever that looks like) to make sure this community continues to thrive no matter the circumstances.

Thank you to the nurses and doctors, first responders, truck drivers, grocery store workers, and **COUNTLESS** others who have worked to keep our community healthy, safe, and stocked. Of course, thank **YOU** for reading. — **Shelbi LeMeilleur**

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STRENGTHENING THE COMMUNITY

Local Nonprofits Provide Resources to Residents

By **JACKSON KING**

With the spread of COVID-19/coronavirus a big issue across the country, several local nonprofits and community organizations have stepped up to provide useful information and resources to local residents who need it the most. These community organizations provide a variety of services and free-to-use programs, including up-to-date health information, economic assistance to those in need, food and health care providers, and utility assistance. Here are a few of the programs available to Brazos Valley residents to help them deal with the COVID-19 outbreak and its after effects.

Brazos Valley COVID-19 Relief Fund

For those who have faced economic challenges due to CDC, state, and city guidelines designed to contain the spread of COVID-19, community nonprofits, in partnership with local governments and businesses, are launching a relief fund for Brazos Valley residents, giving those who need it the resources necessary to live during this time of economic uncertainty.

Spearheaded by United Way of the Brazos Valley, the Community Foundation of the Brazos Valley, the Bryan College Station Chamber of Commerce, and the cities of Bryan and College Station, the Brazos Valley COVID-19 Community Relief Fund is designed to help alleviate the stress on those who need it most. With the relief fund, small businesses can help keep workers employed by funding their paycheck through a payroll assistance program, while grant funding will be available to community nonprofits to provide services for residents needing food, rent, and more.

Small businesses or nonprofits wishing to apply for the program can do so at uwbv.org/covid19. Anyone can donate to the Brazos Valley COVID-19 Community Relief fund by texting BVCVID19 to 41444 or by donating online.

2-1-1 Texas and Option Six

The United Way will continue to facilitate the Brazos Valley version of 2-1-1 Texas. A program of the Texas Human Services Commission, 2-1-1 Texas is a free information and call center with the goal of connecting local residents to the best

community resources available, referring locals to a variety of services including food pantries, substance abuse programs, or housing assistance. It is recommended that people call 2-1-1 Texas first in order to assess their needs carefully, says Mickal Lewis, 2-1-1 resource and project coordinator for United Way.

One area where 2-1-1 Texas has created special accommodations is for people looking for medical advice. For those searching for answers regarding health and well-being during the self-quarantine, 2-1-1 Texas has created a special hotline as a part of their services for medical questions regarding COVID-19. While in the local area, people who call 2-1-1 and select option six will be sent to a medical

These community organizations provide a variety of services and free-to-use programs

hotline where they can speak to medical professionals about any questions they have about COVID-19.

Comprehensive Energy Assistance Program and Utility Assistance

For those who need assistance with paying off their utility bill, the Comprehensive Energy Assistance Program is a great resource available for anyone in the community. Part of the energy and housing assistance programs provided by the Brazos Valley Community Action Programs, the Bill Pay Program provides assistance with electricity, natural gas, or propane bills people are struggling to pay.

Additionally, many utility service providers have enacted measures to assist customers with their utility bill during

the COVID-19 outbreak. Atmos Energy says in a press release they are going to suspend any natural gas disconnections temporarily, while Altice USA says they will provide internet access to households with K-12 and/or college students for free for 60 days for new customers. *i*

Other Community Resources Available

- Texas Department of Health Services dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus/
- American Red Cross — Heart of Texas Chapter redcross.org/local/texas/central-and-south-texas/about-us/locations/heart-of-texas.html
- Texas Workforce Commission's Unemployment Benefit Services twc.texas.gov/jobseekers/unemployment-benefits-services
- Texas Workforce Commission's Shared Work Program twc.texas.gov/businesses/shared-work
- Economic Injury Disaster Loan, courtesy of Small Business Associations, via disasterloan.sba.gov/ela/
- Meals on Wheels, a food program for the elderly population of the Brazos Valley capbv.org/programs/meals-on-wheels/
- The Salvation Army of Bryan College Station salvationarmytexas.org/bryancollegestation/
- Brazos Church Food Pantry brazoschurchpantry.org
- First Baptist Church of College Station Food Pantry fbccollegestation.com/opportunities-blocks/2019/9/12/food-pantry
- Twin City Mission twincitymission.org
- Brazos Valley Food Bank bvfb.org
- U-Haul 30-Day Free Self Storage uhaul.com
- Catholic Charities of the Brazos Valley ccctx.org
- For a list of local restaurants: experiencebcs.com/eat-local

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STAYING HUNGRY

A Texas A&M Professor's Journey

By SARAH ELMER



Growing up as the son of farmers in rural India, D. Samba Reddy, a professor at the Texas A&M University Health Science Center College of Medicine, was familiar with food insecurity at a young age. Though the recurring need for food drove Reddy to work for long hours in extreme weather conditions, he also had a different type of hunger — intellectual hunger.

The desire to satiate his intellectual curiosity has resulted in breakthrough research to help those affected by serious medical conditions, including epilepsy, traumatic brain injury, nerve agent poisoning, perimenstrual seizures, and post-partum depression. Reddy's scientific achievements are extraordinary, but his journey from living in rural India to becoming the youngest full professor in his department is inconceivable.

Reddy was born in Cherlapally, a rural village in southern India. An estimated 80 percent of the Indian population is involved in agriculture, including Reddy's family.

Because of his family's limited financial means, Reddy was restricted to attending government-run schools in his village taught in his native language, Telugu. After becoming the first in his family

to complete primary school, Reddy was eager to get started with middle school.

"In our village, we don't have beyond primary school," Reddy says. "So, at the end of primary school, you only know how to read and write in your native language. Most of the students would stop at that point and keep working on the farm, but I was not happy with that."

The nearest middle school was located in a neighboring village roughly 6.2 miles away from Cherlapally. He could either walk the 12.4-mile round trip to school every day, or he would have to give up continuing his education and work on the farm instead. Reddy's deep-rooted hunger for learning drove him to choose the former.

For three years, Reddy made the same exhausting commute every day. School started at 9 a.m. every morning, but Reddy often could not get to class until 10:30 or 11 a.m. because he needed to finish his morning shift on the farm and then walk to school. By the time he finished and got home, he was exhausted and hungry and struggled to study.

The schooling system was set up in such a way that if Reddy could pass his final exams in tenth grade, he could

graduate high school and attend college, despite failing grades seven through nine.

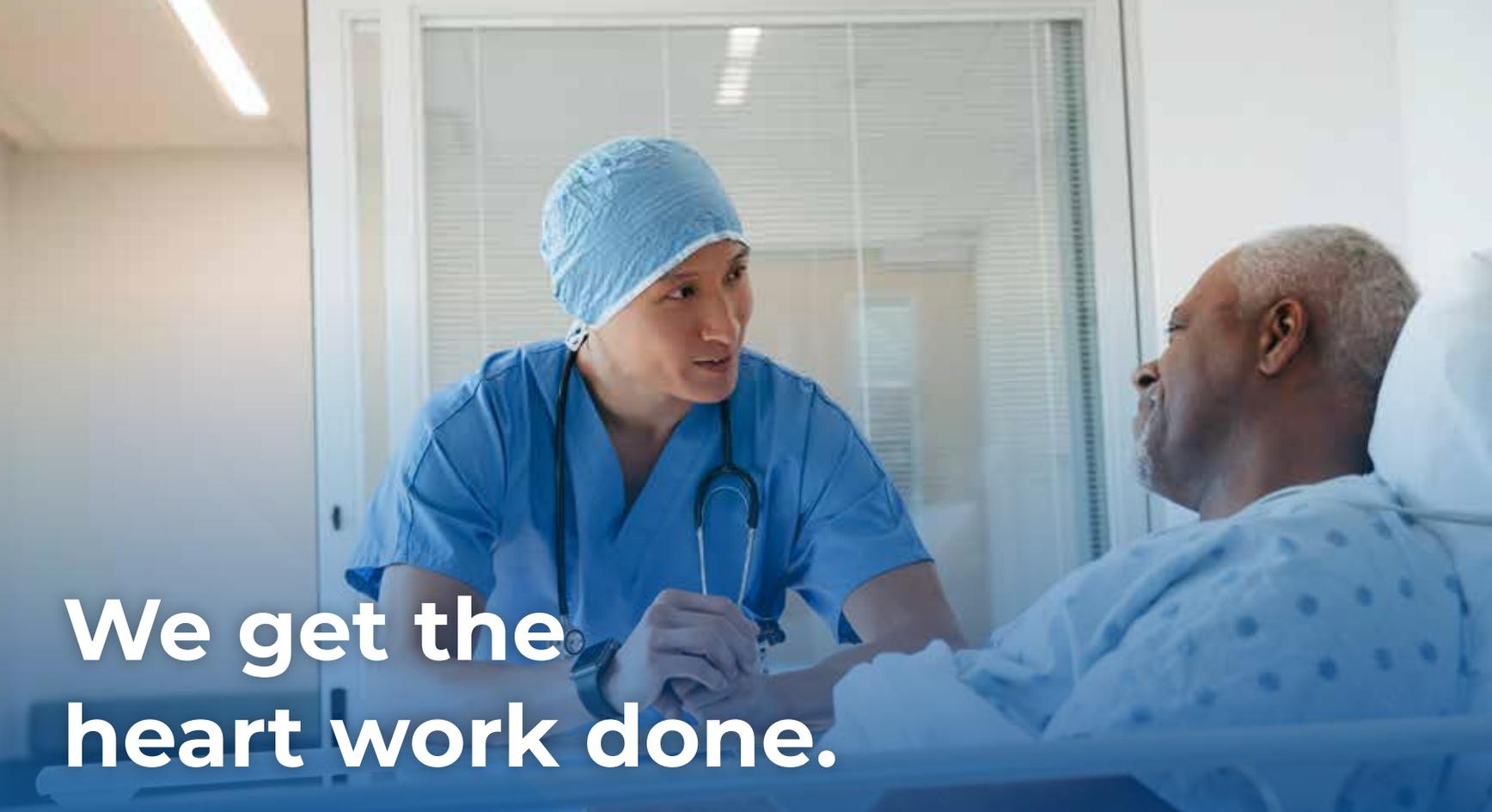
"If you get anything above 70 percent on the exams, they call it 'first class,' which is equal to earning an A here," Reddy says. "When I passed the exams in tenth grade, it was a big surprise for my entire town. That was my first A grade since primary school. From that point, there was no looking back."

Reddy's fascination with science led him to pursue a diploma in pharmacy at Government Junior College. This was the first time Reddy's education was taught in English, not in his native language.

"The challenges increased a thousand-fold," Reddy says. "I didn't know much English at first and I really struggled for the first six months in the program."

After his adjustment period, Reddy ended up being the highest scorer in the state during his second year.

Soon, Reddy graduated and became a licensed pharmacy technician. After working in the pharmacy for a while, Reddy was accepted to the highly selective Kakatiya University on a full-ride scholarship to begin his Bachelor of Science in pharmacy. During his fourth year, Reddy earned admission to Panjab



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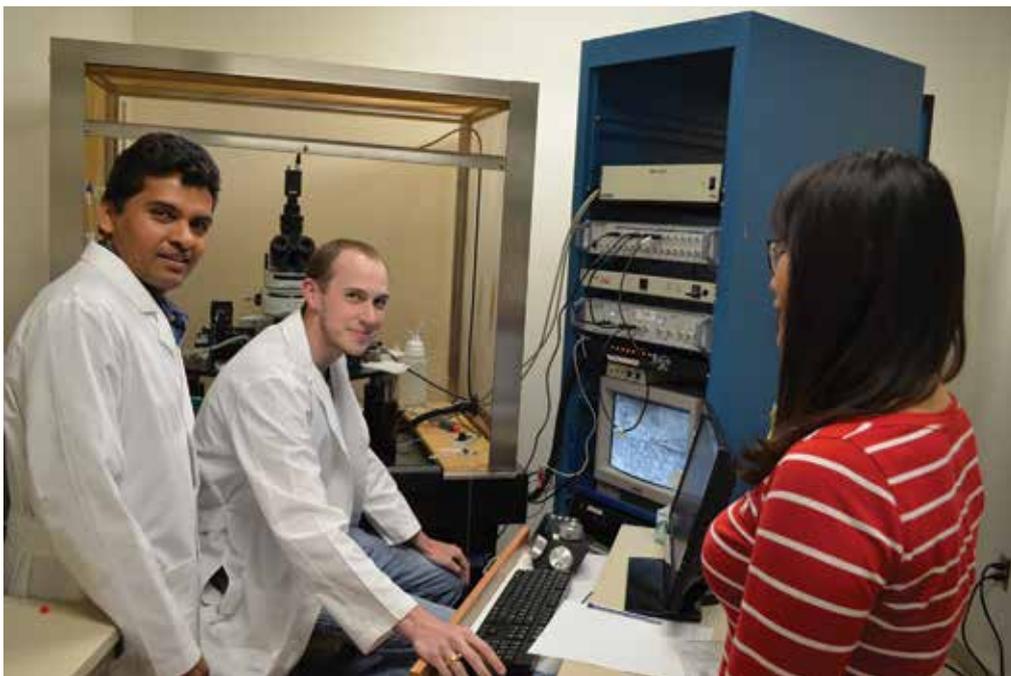
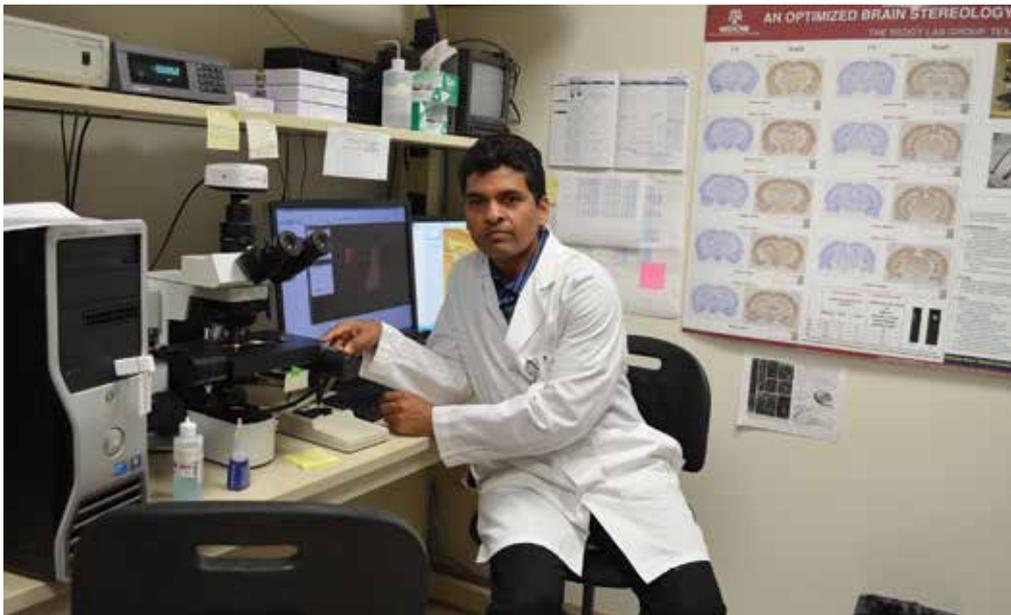
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University, one of the highest-ranked schools in India, for his master's degree.

While later working toward his Ph.D., Reddy had his first exposure to academic research. With his pharmacy background, he was naturally drawn toward pharmacology research and its application for serious medical conditions. After graduation, he was offered a position as a lecturer in pharmacology at Panjab University, which he accepted. Reddy taught for a year, but he still dreamed of creating his own therapeutic drug.

"By then, I realized that drug discovery doesn't happen in India because there are so few resources," Reddy says.

After his first year as a faculty member, Reddy was offered a prestigious postdoctoral position at the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland.

"I didn't even know what the NIH was," Reddy says. "I had to ask my former professor about it, and he was shocked that I didn't know what the NIH was. That was when I realized it was a big deal."

Reddy accepted the position and moved to North America. He spent three years at the NIH learning about how research was conducted in the United States.

After finishing his postdoc, he moved to North Carolina State University, where he opened his first research lab. During the six years that he spent in North Carolina, Reddy was promoted from assistant professor to associate professor and published research papers on therapeutic interventions for epilepsy. Eventually, he was offered a position by the Texas A&M University College of Medicine and he joined the faculty in 2008. In 2012, he became the youngest full professor in the department of Neuroscience and Experimental Therapeutics at age 42.

So far, Reddy has developed models and technologies for epilepsy and neurosteroid therapy, two of which have made it to clinical trials. Recently, his work has led to FDA approval of the first drug (brexanolone, Zulresso) for post-partum depression. This academic landmark exemplifies the impact of his translational research.

"My drive has changed a lot since I was in high school to now," Reddy says. "I no longer have to constantly worry about physical hunger. Now, my drive is that I am hungry to work hard and improve the lives of others through pharmacology research." *i*

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COLD, FLU, ALLERGIES

What's the Difference?

By DR. EMILY GEORGE & JENNIFER HARRIS, NP, BAYLOR SCOTT & WHITE CLINIC — ROCK PRAIRIE



There's so much excitement around the changing of seasons. New decorations are pulled out, houses are cleaned in anticipation of guests, and recipes are shared in preparation for fancy holiday dinners. But with all the excitement also comes a few downsides. The changing weather means weakened immune systems and an abundance of viruses that spread more easily in lower temperatures.

It's important to recognize when it may just be allergies, or when your body may need a little more to recover and it's something more serious like a cold or even the flu.

How to tell the difference

Colds and the flu are caused by viruses. The key to determining when it's a cold or the flu is if your runny nose and congestion are accompanied by general body aches, fatigue, a fever, and a cough. These cold symptoms will not improve with allergy medications.

Allergies are different from a cold or flu in that it is the body's response to something in the environment like dust or pollen. If you have symptoms like a runny nose, congestion, post nasal drip, sneezing, and itchy eyes or nose, it may be look similar to a cold or flu but this is actually caused by allergies. These symptoms can last for several weeks to months, depending on the cause, and will improve with allergy medications that help control the symptoms.

How long they last

Colds generally last about around two weeks, with the first three to four

days being the worst. The cough that sometimes comes with the cold may linger even longer. The flu will usually last five to 10 days without treatment.

How long allergy symptoms last depends on the environment. If the allergies are caused by pollen, allergies could last an entire season if they aren't treated. If they are caused by mold or dust, then allergies will correlate with exposure.

Tips for prevention

Hand-washing is one of the best things you can do to prevent the transmission of viruses that may cause colds or the flu. Hand sanitizer is also a good idea. Hand-washing should be done before eating, after coughing or blowing your nose, and if you come in contact with anyone who is ill. Be sure to get a flu vaccination to protect you and your loved ones. These viruses can spread in classrooms on hard surfaces like tables, doors, and chairs. Even highchairs at restaurants or grocery carts can be covered with contagious viruses.

Allergies are not contagious, even though they may affect multiple people in the same house or family. If allergies are related to environmental pollens, there is little that can be done. If they are related to dust, mold, or pet dander, then air purifiers, environmental cleanliness, and pet avoidance can help.

Best steps for treatment

Take good care of you or your kids when you get a cold or the flu. Hydrate

with plenty of water, eat a nutritious balanced diet, and get plenty of rest. Some over-the-counter medications may help with symptoms (if age appropriate) but will not cure the virus. Nasal saline can help to keep mucus flowing and can help to alleviate congestion and prevent sinus pressure. For the very young, suctioning to remove nasal mucus can help provide comfort and can help to minimize back flow of mucus that is often the cause for cough.

Allergies have over-the-counter medications that can help with symptoms. Colds and the flu will generally run their course with time and no treatment. There are some medications for the flu that can help decrease how severe they are and how long they last.

When you should see a doctor

Baylor Scott & White recommends children be seen by their pediatrician if they have a fever for 24 to 48 hours or if there is a concern for secondary infection like an ear infection, sinus infection, or pneumonia. Parents should be concerned about secondary infections if the child has symptoms that are improving and then worsen, last longer than seven days, or if the child complains of ear pain.

As always, if you are confused about something or have any questions, don't hesitate to reach out to your family medicine provider or your child's pediatrician. *i*



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FLIGHT RISKS

Three Tips to Avoid Germs During Travel

By ELIZABETH GRIMM, TEXAS A&M HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER



Many of us have experienced it. The woman next to you on the plane just sneezed without covering her mouth, the man behind you is coughing uncontrollably, and you can practically feel the germs closing in on you as you sit in your cramped seat on what appears to be a giant germ deathtrap. Traveling isn't always fun, especially during cold and flu season, but sometimes it's necessary.

While a plastic bubble and a personal supply of oxygen may seem like the only way to keep those germs away, Cristie Columbus, MD, vice dean of the Texas A&M College of Medicine in Dallas and an infectious disease specialist, offers some tactics to avoid catching anything in-flight.

"While airplanes seem like they're the surest way to catch a cold or something nastier, research suggests that the perceived risk is greater than the actual risk," says Columbus. "But it's always helpful to take some preventative measures, especially when the flu or another communicable disease is going around."

Be aware of your personal space

"Many of the germs you will come across will be on the armrest or the tray table in front of you," Columbus says. "You can bring a few sanitary wipes in your carry-on and eliminate much of your risk there."

For areas like the bathroom, follow the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's guidelines for washing hands: use plenty of soap and water and

wash your hands for at least 20 seconds. You can avoid touching surfaces by using paper towels to open and close the door and turning faucets on and off.

Columbus also suggests bringing a small, travel-sized bottle of alcohol-based hand sanitizer for before and after you eat or drink on the plane. The Transportation Security Administration allows passengers to bring 3.4 ounces of liquids per container in their carry-on bags, as long as they are kept in a quart-sized plastic bag and separate from other items.

Ask the flight attendant for assistance

If the person next to you can't stop coughing and refuses to cover their mouth, you can quietly excuse yourself and enlist the help of a flight attendant. If a passenger looks to be contagious, a flight attendant can request that they wear a surgical mask to reduce the chance of spreading the illness. The flight attendant may also be able to relocate the sick traveler away from other passengers if extra seating is available.

"It's an awkward social position to find yourself in, but if you feel like the person might be contagious, it's in everyone's best interest to take precautions. A flight attendant requesting they put on a mask might make your neighbor realize they're affecting the people around them," Columbus says.

However, it's important to remember respiratory etiquette when the shoe is on

the other foot. If you are feeling sick or have a cough, remember to cough and sneeze into the crook of your elbow and away from others. Wash your hands with soap and water or use hand sanitizer frequently.

"I would suggest avoiding flying if you're feeling ill, especially if you think you're contagious, but if you can't, be considerate of your fellow passengers and do your best to contain your illness," Columbus advises.

Bolster your own immune system pre-flight

Ultimately, your best defense against sickness is your immune system. Try to get plenty of sleep and drink water before your flight to boost your immune system. If you are on a long flight, stay hydrated and remember to move your legs or stand up every couple of hours to avoid blood clots.

If you have a cold or sinus infection, the change in cabin pressure might aggravate symptoms. Columbus suggests taking decongestants and ibuprofen (as long as there are no potential interactions with other medications you are taking) to help alleviate symptoms before the flight.

It's important to remember that not all communicable diseases are airborne. Being cognizant of the prevention techniques for different diseases will reduce your risk of contraction; for more information about in-flight transmission of communicable diseases and how to prevent them, visit the CDC's website on travelers' health. *i*



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Minimally Invasive Heart Procedure Comes to the Brazos Valley

Courtesy of **BAYLOR SCOTT & WHITE HEALTH**



Baylor Scott & White Health has launched a transcatheter aortic valve replacement program at Baylor Scott & White Medical Center — College Station. With six TAVR programs, Baylor Scott & White continues to be home to Texas' largest TAVR program, having performed more than 3,600 TAVRs. Baylor Scott & White is also a top-five provider of TAVR nationally.

"Baylor Scott & White Medical Center — College Station is the first and only hospital between Temple and Houston to offer this procedure," says William Rayburn, MD, chief medical officer of Baylor Scott & White — College Station. "I am so thankful for the perseverance and teamwork that made this happen."

Baylor Scott & White — College Station's commitment to cardiac care began six weeks after opening its hospital doors, performing its first open-heart surgery. Since then, the hospital has grown its cardiovascular services, achieving accreditation as a chest pain center, reflecting the organization's commitment to providing evidence-based care that prioritizes quality care and patient safety.

With the addition of the new TAVR program, patients diagnosed with aortic stenosis now have a minimally invasive heart procedure option closer to home, providing convenience and new access to an innovative treatment. As an alternative to open-heart surgery, this procedure has demonstrated fewer complications and shortened recovery time of one to three days in the hospital, with the typical patient being discharged the next day.

"This new procedure can provide a better quality of life for patients suffering from heart valve disease," says William Gray, MD, medical director of the structural heart program at Baylor Scott & White — College Station. "This new procedure means patients in the Brazos Valley can stay local, recover close to home and be near loved ones during their stay at the hospital."

Aortic stenosis is one of the most common and serious valve diseases, affecting an estimated 1.5 million people in the U.S. In 2012, the FDA approved TAVR as a non-surgical alternative for high-risk surgical patients with aortic stenosis, a condition that occurs when the

heart's aortic valve narrows and reduces or blocks blood flow from a heart to the aorta. With additional trials, the FDA approved TAVR for medium-risk surgical patients, and recently, low-risk surgical patients, after clinical trials demonstrated successful outcomes.

Baylor Scott & White — College Station joins five Baylor Scott & White hospitals that offer TAVR:

- Baylor Scott & White Medical Center — Round Rock
- Baylor Scott & White The Heart Hospital — Plano
- Baylor Scott & White Heart and Vascular Hospital — Dallas
- Baylor Scott & White All Saints Medical Center — Fort Worth
- Baylor Scott & White Medical Center — Temple

TAVR research at all facilities is led through Baylor Scott & White Research Institute. Learn more about Baylor Scott & White Health's TAVR clinical research at scrubbing.in.

Learn more about Baylor Scott & White Health's heart valve disease treatment options at bswhealth.com. [i](#)

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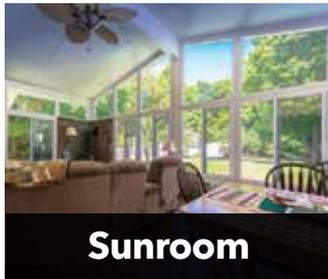
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BEST PRACTICES

How to Safely Throw Away Old Medicines

By LINDSEY HENDRIX, TEXAS A&M HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER



Medicine cabinets across the nation are full of expired and unneeded medicines. Although a seemingly innocent case of disorganization, failing to get rid of expired and unused medicines can lead to serious consequences. This is especially true for prescription medications, particularly opioids, because medicine prescribed for one person for a specific purpose could be harmful if used by someone else for a different reason. What's more, medicines that have passed their expiration date may not work as intended.

"Prescription medications are safe when used as prescribed for their intended purpose," says Joy Alonzo, clinical assistant professor at the Texas A&M Irma Lerma Rangel College of Pharmacy and member of the Texas A&M Health Science Center Opioid Task Force. "Once you no longer have a need for the medicine, there's no reason to keep it around. In other words, never use something that was prescribed for a broken ankle to help you sleep, don't keep pain medicine on hand for future use, and never take someone else's prescription."

Removing expired and unused medicines from your home helps reduce the chance that others, including children and pets, will accidentally take or intentionally misuse them.

But what is the right way to remove old medicines from your home? The U.S. Food and Drug Administration recommends two primary options for disposing of unused or expired medicines: prescription take-back programs or household trash.

"Take back" drug programs

The preferred way to dispose of medicines is through prescription drug take-back programs, which are offered in two different ways: periodic events and permanent collection sites.

The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration sponsors National Prescription Drug Take Back Day, when temporary collection sites are set up in communities nationwide. Many local law enforcement agencies also have their own drug take-back programs, and some pharmacies have disposal kiosks. Contact your city or county government,

pharmacist, or the DEA to find a program or authorized disposal location near you.

Note that take-back options will not accept used or unused sharps, such as syringes and needles. These items should be placed in FDA-approved sharps containers and disposed of using appropriate methods.

Throw medicine away

Nearly all medicines can be thrown into your household trash can. This includes prescription and over-the-counter varieties of pills, liquids, inhalers, drops, patches, and creams. The FDA recommends following these steps for safe disposal:

- Remove the medicines from their original containers and mix them with something foul-tasting such as used coffee grounds, dirt, or cat litter (do not crush pills or tablets). This step makes the drug less desirable to children and pets and less recognizable to someone who might intentionally look through trash for drugs.



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- Put the mixture into a sealable container such as a zipper storage bag or used coffee can.
- Throw the container into your household trash can.
- Before throwing away empty prescription containers and packaging, mark out all personal information to protect your privacy and identity. Then throw the packaging in the garbage.
- There are also special drug deactivation bags that render medicines useless and are considered safe for the environment. You can request them from your local pharmacy, mail-order pharmacy, or online retailer. Some local drug coalitions provide them for free while supplies last.

Improve how you store medicines

Accidental exposure to pharmaceutical substances is a major cause of unintentional poisonings of children. Each year in the United States, an estimated 60,000 emergency department visits and 450,000 calls to poison centers are made after children under the age of 6 find and ingest medicine without supervision. Even child-resistant containers have been found to be insufficient at keeping children from accessing medicines. For this reason, all medicines — prescription, OTC, and dietary supplements — should be stored out of children's reach, including when they're in handbags, tote bags, backpacks, suitcases, and jackets.

"Keep track of all your medications," says Alonzo. "Count your pills every day so you know what you have. Only use the medicine you need. Never give your prescription medications to another person or take someone else's prescription. Additionally, never let children 18 years of age or younger take opioids for any reason, unless prescribed for the child by a physician, and monitor carefully. Keeping drugs after they are no longer needed creates a needless health risk for children and others in the home. Dispose of old and unused medicines right away to reduce the risk of emergencies, misuse, and even death."

As a final note, Alonzo recommends everyone keep a naloxone overdose reversal kit in their home. For more information on how to obtain and use a naloxone opioid overdose reversal kit see the Texas A&M Opioid Task Force website. *i*

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SOLVE PROBLEMS, HELP PEOPLE

Texas A&M Horticulture Research Affects Everybody, Every Day

Story and Photos by **REBECCA SLOANE**



Gathered at the dinner table, a family is celebrating their recent graduate of Texas A&M University. They opened a bottle of wine to continue their celebration throughout dinner and paid some attention to the pairing the wine had with the food. Grape and wine quality can be traced back to vineyard practices says Justin Scheiner, Ph.D., assistant professor and extension viticulture specialist at Texas A&M. Scheiner notes those practices come straight from the textbook with citations that can sometimes represent 10 years of research or an entire career.

Researchers in the horticulture department at Texas A&M want to solve problems and help people. All of the research relates to things that grow, whether it is growing crops for food that's nutritious and delicious, so people want to eat it, or creating beauty in the world, but not at a costly expense. These research efforts also relate to people who want to attempt to be home gardeners for a low-impact food supply close to home. Researchers are looking for ways to provide all of this and more to people.

Many of the researchers have a focus on creating produce that is

more nutritious and flavorful so more consumers will want to buy it says Kevin Crosby, Ph.D., professor and plant breeding/genetics specialist.

"By making the vegetables more nutritious, which shows they have more antioxidants, they have more cancer-fighting compounds; they have more vitamin C and things like that. People will get that health benefit," says Crosby.

Variety is important in the peach studies conducted by David Byrne, Ph.D., professor and Basye Endowed Chair. He says his personal goal was to get his varieties produced commercially.



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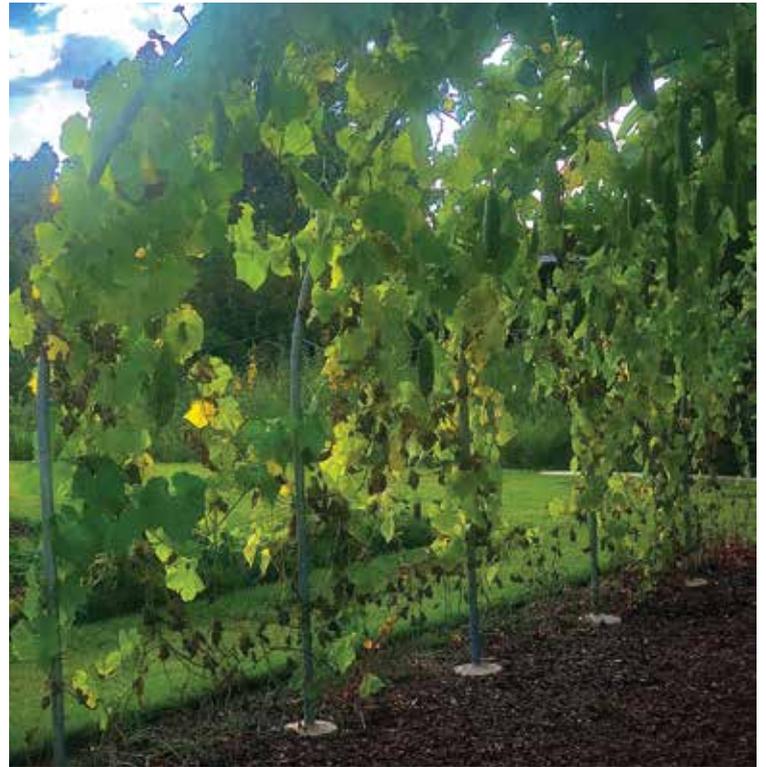
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“When I started 30 years ago, we had one or two varieties available,” says Byrne. “I have since released 20-some varieties and there is another 10 to go.”

Byrne says it is only now that efforts to get them out to the growers are being made. He stressed that growers are always slow to accept new varieties.

“Variety is the spice of life,” says Andrew King, Ph.D., lecturer and nursery/ornamentals specialist. “That is what my research motto is, which is, I would like for the people to know after I am finished that I brought a lot of plant material to the table.”

Having a wide variety of plant genotypes is what King says helps make resilient, sustainable, and beautiful plants last.

“We enjoy creating beautiful things like gardens, and we enjoy creating wonderful things like wine, and we enjoy creating the beautiful floral arrangements for weddings and funerals,” says Dan Lineberger, Ph.D., professor and head of the department of Horticultural Sciences.

Lineberger says he wants for the beauty of horticulture to go home with consumers. He adds that part of the research done helps develop varieties of plants that are easier for consumers to grow so this may be achieved.

Byrne says his research is fully focused on the consumer since it is done with garden roses.

“We are trying to get a variety that works for sustainable landscapes,” says Byrne. “Ones that are easy to maintain.

That’s why the emphasis is on adaptation to get things that are resistant to the common diseases, so you don’t have to spray them. They look good.”

According to Lineberger, having varieties in plants ends up making a more sustainable product. He adds that the horticulture department is similar in that way.

“The first thing you need to know about the horticulture department [is] the faculty that we have is very diverse,” says Lineberger. “I think the diversity is very important and achieving our goals.”

According to the horticulture department’s website, one of the many goals the department has is to deliver research-based knowledge about the ways horticulture improves the environment. Tim Davis, Ph.D., professor and senior scientist for the Borlaug Institute of International Agriculture, says he agrees with this in his personal goals.

“My personal goal is probably mostly to give back,” says Davis. “I have been very fortunate in my career to have the opportunity to do a lot of research that’s been interesting to me. But now I would like to help others be able to accomplish that.”

Davis says he knows horticulture is not part of most people’s daily vocabulary and therefore they might not completely understand the term.

“I’m not so concerned about the definition, but I’d like people to know the impact horticulture has globally,” says Davis.

Plants are just a daily backdrop to people says Charlie Hall, Ph.D., professor and Ellison Endowed Chair.

“They are not the main actors, but plants offer a tremendous number of economic, environmental, and ecosystem services benefits and health and well-being benefits,” says Hall.

According to Hall, in order for full success to exist for the department’s breakthroughs, it is important for everybody to be able to understand what was found.

“It’s not just doing the research but being able to convey the findings from that research in a manner so that people without a Ph.D. get it,” says Hall.

Scheiner says the importance of the relationship people have with horticulture is growing.

“The general public’s interest in where their food comes from and how to grow their own food will lead more people to be more interested in horticulture,” says Scheiner.

According to Lineberger, he wants to make sure that his department does whatever it can to improve the lives of others with their research.

“Horticulture is the part of agriculture that is targeted for the people,” says Lineberger. “We need to always make the public aware of the good things we do. Information that is generated by our extension specialists and researchers will be made instantly available to everyone.” *i*

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RENZOE ON THE RUN

A Look Inside the Renzoe Box

By NICOLE SHAIR



What first began as frustration with her chaotic and unorganized makeup bag has now become a revolutionary product perfect for the woman on-the-go: the Renzoe Box.

While in graduate school at Rice University to get her master's degree in architecture, CEO and founder of the Renzoe Box, Rene Graham, had to travel back and forth between campus and her office job, bringing along a change of clothes and her makeup bag to help her transition from student to worker. The problem, though, was that her makeup bag was so full of stuff it was hard for her to find what she needed without dumping out the contents of her bag.

"I'd always have to dig through it or dump it out to find what it is I was looking for and I thought to myself, 'There has to be an easier way for this,'" Graham says in a video on the Renzoe Box website. "That's when I got the idea for modular makeup."

The former Texas A&M professor applied her architectural knowledge in order to painstakingly design the Renzoe Box. From its geometry to volume to materials, Graham wanted to make sure the Renzoe Box was compact while also adaptable to any woman's schedule.

"No two women have the same routine and definitely not the same makeup routine," Graham says. "That was the challenge with the Renzoe Box: How do you reduce space without limiting the options?"

Describing it as "LEGO pieces," Graham designed a compact kit with small makeup pods, which can be customized and organized however the customer would like. Rather than having people buy full palettes of makeup, the Renzoe Box pods have specific shades and makeup from different beauty companies so there is no waste.

"Whenever you're buying individual makeup products, it'll be a pallet of stuff

that you aren't going to use, which is a waste of product," Graham says. "With the Renzoe Box, you are buying products a la carte, in these small pods with little packaging."

The bottom of the Renzoe Box is a compartment for other things like lipstick, bobby pins, or other makeup products. The hinge of the box acts as a storage compartment for makeup brushes and Graham designed makeup brushes that would fit perfectly inside the space. Graham designed the Renzoe Box so women didn't have to worry about this part of their routine and could make sure they felt confident and looked their best no matter where life takes them.

"Makeup should be fun and simple, not a hot mess," Graham says. "This is where the Renzoe Box comes in — an elegant solution to the messy makeup bag."

For more information or to purchase the Renzoe Box, visit renzoebox.com. *i*

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NATALIE WOOD DESIGNS

Jewelry Built on Faith

By **BRANDI M. GOMEZ**



Natalie Wood Designs is a jewelry company founded by Natalie and Ken Wood, Texas A&M University graduates from the class of 2011.

It was while co-owning Sabi Boutique, in about 2014, that Wood transitioned into her new business, selling her share of the store to her sister and mother and building up Natalie Wood Designs in Dallas.

"After being in the retail industry for many years, I realized there weren't enough brands ... that were [bold] in their faith and [creating] these positive communities for women to be a part of," says Wood. "I had been an artist growing up, and with my love for retail and art, I believed [my husband and I] could create this company."

Wood, raised in La Grange, graduated from Texas A&M with a biomedical science degree and a minor in creative studies.

"I was going to be a doctor, that was the one goal that I had, but I had always loved fashion, so I really felt like God was tapping me on my shoulder and leading me a different direction," says Wood. "I could remember what people wore to the Oscars, but I couldn't remember diseases after I took a test."

Wood describes herself as a southern girl and a proud Texas A&M graduate, two of the things that keep her tied to Bryan College Station, and she is eager to share her originally designed jewelry with the community.

"I chose jewelry because it has an artistic approach," says Wood. "Every piece begins as one of my sketches. That is what separates us [from other jewelry businesses]; we are not creating prefabricated jewelry, we are literally designing every single piece in our collection that is unique to Natalie Wood Designs."

Wood has an unconventional approach to designing her collection, but it comes from her background as a creative growing up in the South, she says.

"There is a lot of southern influence in my designs, but they are also very classic," says Wood. "I grew up surrounded by strong women in my life, my grandmother in particular — she was the epitome of classic."

Wood worked to focus on meeting that classic approach in all her pieces. They are great pieces that can be transitioned from season to season and year after year, she says.

"We don't like following trends," says Wood. "We like to set them and we are setting these classic fronts."

Wood's favorite piece is the "Believer earrings." The pair of drop earrings featuring a hidden cross within her signature design is a bestseller.

"It is really what started the brand for us," says Wood. "You will see that crosses are one of our signature styles. This piece in particular, the cross is hidden, so not so bold but it's there, representing something that is personal."

Earrings, necklaces, bracelets, and rings are included in Wood's collections and she is hoping to expand in other categories in the future. For now, her target customers are women who want to embrace the mission of Natalie Wood Designs, "Designing affordable luxury jewelry and inspiring and encouraging women to live beautifully," and live it out.

"We hope through jewelry we can impact [women] in some way," says Wood.

The Bryan College Station community can shop Natalie Wood Designs locally at Sabi Boutique or visit NatalieWoodDesigns.com. *i*



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NEW DECADE, NEW TRENDS!

Kitchen Trends for 2020

Courtesy of **STEARNS DESIGN-BUILD**



At Stearns Design-Build, they are constantly predicting, analyzing, and reflecting on home design trends that are constantly changing. While they do this year-round, they really dive headfirst into the trends of kitchen design at the beginning of a new year.

Within their design department, the focus is keenly on the character of their clients. Sometimes, that means paying close attention to today's trends, and other times it means throwing them all out the window. Regardless of the degree to which they follow trends in a particular job, they pride themselves on continuously honing their craft. They do this in a multitude of ways but mainly by understanding the connection of design to its time. Now, they've rounded up ten kitchen design trends they believe will dominate in 2020.

Get ready to spark your creativity and begin envisioning and planning your dream kitchen!

Open Shelving

Upper cabinets are not ideal since they are typically hard to reach, and they tend to make a kitchen feel smaller. Stearns Design-Build imagines they will be removing more upper cabinets than installing new ones. In their place, they will be adding open shelving. This creates a clean-lined functionality plus an open look in the kitchen.

There are a few downsides to open shelving, depending on personal preference. With open shelving, there is typically added dust accumulating on your dishes which requires extra cleaning. Another option is to mix the two and only replace your corner cabinets with open shelves for things such as cookbooks or décor.

Colorful Cabinets

Stearns Design-Build believes people are going to be moving away from the all-white kitchens and bringing in pops of color. Choosing the perfect color for your

kitchen can be daunting. There are many factors, such as the design of cabinets and how much natural light is in the kitchen.

They were thrilled to see that they were ahead of this trend last year with a blue kitchen remodel in College Station. In 2020, there will be a plethora of colored cabinets. They expect to see a wide range of blues and greens, from earthy greens to pale blues. Another bold choice is black cabinets mixed with wood tones for a more modern look.

Sleek Cabinet Doors

Say goodbye to the dense, wood-stained, arched, and raised panel cabinets of the past. Let's welcome in the simple shaker, or even smooth, cabinets doors that are easier to clean and match the elegance of a 2020 kitchen.

They combine aspects of modern design with other styles, including traditional and industrial, for a look that's contemporary and smooth, but not sterile.

SuperSlow Zone Healthy Slimming Program



For Jerry Ludwig, being a financial advisor gave him very few opportunities to exercise. When a doctor recommended he lose weight, Ludwig struggled to shed pounds, managing to only lose 10 pounds after more than a year.

"I kinda hit a wall and I couldn't seem to get anything past that," says Ludwig. "I kind of maintained it at that level." Looking for answers, Ludwig turned his attention to the healthy slimming program from SuperSlow Zone. After conducting his own research, Ludwig says he was impressed with the science behind the program.

"I'm a science guy by nature, so I like to know how things work before I decide I want to do something," Ludwig says. "When I read the science and looked at how it works online, I saw that there were some basis to this and thought, 'I'll try it.'"

Signing up for an eight-week program, Ludwig was so satisfied by the results that he continued with the program again.

"In the first eight weeks, I lost 15 inches and about eight pounds, so I decided to do another eight sessions," says Ludwig. "Between the two sessions, I have lost about 15 pounds. The amount of effort that I had to expend to lose that 15 pounds is very modest compared to what it takes to lose that 10 to 12 pounds over a year."

With his busy schedule, Ludwig says he appreciates how the program allows him to eat how he previously did.

"I don't change a whole lot about what I eat," says Ludwig. "I still have a burger and fries once a week, or a steak and maybe a bag of potatoes on the weekend. It's not like I'm depriving myself of a lot of food or anything."

The noticeable side effects from the healthy slimming program are the type that will be happy to deal with, says Ludwig.

"I had to go buy pants that were smaller because I'm now a 36-inch waist," says Ludwig. "I was about 40 when I started, so those are the good kinds of side effects."

For more information about SuperSlow Zone Healthy Slimming Program, visit www.superslowzone.com/collegestation or call (979) 693-6100

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Simple Knobs and Pulls

The accessories in your kitchen are an essential component in the design, especially with hardware. When you change something as simple as hardware, it makes a dramatic impact on the look of the space.

Kitchen hardware comes in a variety of metals and finishes. Staying on trend with the other clean lines in the kitchen will be simple, minimal knobs and pulls.

Veined Countertops

Quartz will continue to be the preferred material for countertops over granite and marble. However, homeowners are in search of more personality in their countertops. Quartz, inspired by marble, allows you to achieve the same look for less while also reducing routine maintenance.

You can get a specific veining for your style since quartz is manufactured, compared to marble or granite where veining is organic. As the art of veining has improved, Stearns Design-Build expects to see more of these noteworthy counters.

Large Pantries

When space is available, Stearns Design-Build expects to add large, functional pantries to make the kitchen more efficient. There are many types of pantries, such as butler's, pullout, and traditional. When they are large enough, you can store large appliances and install built-in microwaves and beverage refrigerators.

Pantries are easy to customize with sliding barn doors, accent and shelf lighting, and highly customized inserts and organizers. They provide more storage space for food and appliances, centralized storage, and flexible organization.

Who doesn't dream of a large and well-organized pantry?

Designs that Integrate the Outdoors

This type of design has always been a trend with Stearns Design-Build as it is part of their transition approach to ensure a seamless transition between nature and residential design. While not every home is designed with indoor-outdoor living in mind, you can construct this relationship by creating outdoor areas that are an extension of interior spaces.

You can use sliding glass or retractable doors to integrate the interior and exterior. In regard to the kitchen, with the upper cabinets gone, you can now enlarge a window, providing more natural light and connection to the beautiful outdoors.

Drawers in Base Cabinets

When you add drawers into base cabinets, there are many benefits: ease of access, more efficient use of space, and convenience. When certain kitchen items are stored in the back of a lower cabinet, they tend to be unused. Drawers solve this problem by allowing easy access to everything.

A new kitchen will bring the convenience of customized drawer

organizers with pull-outs for pots and pans, cookie sheets, spice racks, utensils, mixers and blenders, and other kitchen tools.

Painted Ceilings

Ceilings are often an overlooked aspect of design. It is commonly referred to as your fifth wall and doesn't have to be bland. A little color on the ceiling can cast a glow and brighten the mood of the kitchen.

If you have architectural details on or around your ceiling, such as crown molding, tray ceilings, or skylights, painting the ceiling a contrasting color is a remarkable design attribute. You can also add different materials other than the typical drywall to make it stand out.

Tiled Walls

Now that you've chosen the countertops, paint, and flooring, there is one more essential element for your dream kitchen. Kitchen wall tiles both protect and personalize the hardest-working room in the house. It is best if you choose wisely for upkeep and longevity based on your kitchen use.

This year will see many elongated subway tiles as the kitchen backsplash, as well as the backsplash matching the countertops for a more contemporary look. Kitchen wall tiles are available in every color and a vast range of patterned, textured, or simple designs. *i*



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TIPS FROM A REALTOR

How to Make Your Home Stand Out When Selling

By KRISTEN STROTHER, REALTOR®, TM5 PROPERTIES



For most people, spring means longer days and nicer weather. For REALTORS®, it means busy season is here. This is when more buyers start to look and more sellers start to list their homes. As a seller, one of the biggest mistakes you can make is to help sell the competition. The question is how can you make sure your home stands out from all the others?

Curb Appeal

The first thing a buyer will notice about your home is the curb appeal. Usually, in MLS (multiple listing services) REALTORS® set the first photo to a photo of the front. This means potential buyers will see this photo first, which sets the tone for how they'll feel about the home. You want to make sure you are sending the right message about your home. Spring is a great time to plant flowers or any type of greenery. Greenery brightens up the front and is inviting for the buyer. It's important to make sure your yard is well-maintained. Many buyers will rule out a home if the front looks messy or unkept. Curb appeal is a mostly easy step and very important to selling your home.

Neutral Paint

When a buyer walks in your home, one of the first things they will notice is the paint colors. Buyers will be turned off by bright colors most of the time. Gray paint has been one of the most in-trend neutral

colors and continues to be. However, you want to make sure the neutral color you pick goes nicely with the overall color palette of the home. If your countertops, backsplash, and other more permanent features have hues of brown, then you should go with a soft neutral in the brown family. More buyers are having trouble seeing past colorful rooms because they see it as work. If anything, try to at least have your main living areas a neutral shade.

Declutter

Having big furniture pieces or too many knick knacks can make a room feel smaller. As a seller, you can truly make your home feel bigger just by removing items. A beautiful home can be ruined by too many items in it. Think about removing bulky pieces that make the room feel heavy. These days most buyers lean towards minimalism. Also, it's important to take down personal items that scream it's your home. Take down as many personal pictures as possible. This helps the buyer envision themselves at this home rather than connecting it with you, the seller.

Staging

Staging can be beneficial for homes that are vacant, but also homes that are occupied. When a home is vacant, sometimes buyers have trouble knowing how they would set

up the room with their furniture or if the room can fit their furniture. On the other hand, if the home is occupied and has big pieces or too many pieces, it can make the home feel smaller. A staging professional can help you furnish your home or rearrange your furniture to make it look inviting. They will help you see it from a buyer's perspective.

Professional Cleaning

Many sellers are asked to get their home professionally cleaned before closing, but it's important to have it as clean as possible when listing it as well. I can't tell you how many times I walked in a home with a buyer and they walked right out because of how dirty it was. People do not want to be in other's filth. Try to get a professional cleaning and then each week try to do a light cleaning to keep it up. Your home doesn't have to be spotless, but it needs to feel and smell clean. Also, it's easier for buyers to look past an "organized mess" than just a plain "mess" with items not having a home.

The most important part is hiring a good REALTOR®. We go through this every spring and truly know what we're doing. We will help you through the process while taking the stress away. These tips should at least help you get started to listing your home in the spring and help you stand out. Happy listing! *i*

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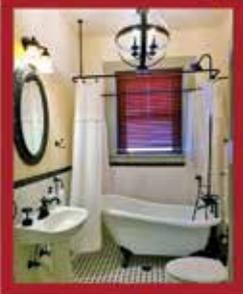
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PASTELITOS CO.

College Station's Best Kept Secret

By **BRANDI M. GOMEZ**



Pastelitos Co. is a local, student-run business founded by Diana Reyna, a Texas A&M University student from Houston, whose staff and owner identify as Latinx. Pastelitos started out as a small effort of making and selling cheesecake to raise money for Reyna to fund her college degree. Since July 2019, her effort quickly gained popularity across campus and became a trending topic on Twitter.

Reyna founded Pastelitos Co. by baking cheesecakes out of her home, and just a couple months after, she was approached by Angelique Gammon, a journalism professor at Texas A&M, who offered help after having experience with building up a business herself.

"Out of nowhere she rescued me out of a pit of despair," says Reyna. "I didn't know

how to do taxes, and she was like, 'Let me show you,' and I was just so grateful."

As quickly as Pastelitos grew, so did the need for space. Reyna moved her work to a local bakery and culinary studio Renegade, formerly known as Taylor Made Gluten Free Bakery. Denise Fries, who previously owned Taylor Made, also offered to help her with financial planning and other ideas for her business.

After three and half months, Reyna welcomed Maurscio Vargas, Danny Rodriguez, and Yazbel Rodriguez to the team. They clicked fast, so the atmosphere is now always loud and fun, says Reyna.

"I don't think I would be as fulfilled [working somewhere else]," says Vargas. "This is closely related to a Texas A&M

community, we have recurring customers, and we have that interaction."

Although anyone can come to Bryan College Station and visit its well-known restaurants and events, Pastelitos takes pride in being known as "College Station's Best Kept Secret."

"Even though there is a solid community built around the company, there are still people that say, 'Oh I never heard of it,' but when you show them, they are like, 'Oh wow,'" says Vargas. "It's like a hidden gem."

Reyna's goals for Pastelitos is to make everybody smile. With what Pastelitos has done for her, she wants to give that back and just make someone's day, she says.

"I agree, especially when someone comes in and it's their first time, they

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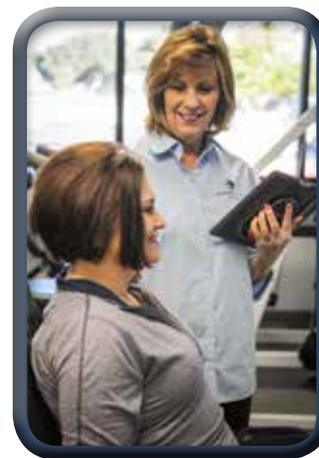
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look so excited and you get to be a part of that experience, of this craze that we have going on, and it is just awesome,” says Yazbel Rodriguez.

There are a variety of flavors to choose from — vanilla, strawberry, carjeta, cocoa caramel, Oreo, coffee, lime, white chocolate raspberry, raspberry, and pumpkin pie (seasonally) — and they all come with a specialty design.

“Specifically, we have been sticking to one design; it looks like a flower,” says Vargas. “It’s been old faithful. Most of the flavors associated with that floral design are very fruity and rich.”

Vargas then describes the cocoa caramel as kind of a “hippie” and looking very eccentric.

“The white chocolate raspberry has the same design pattern as cocoa caramel,” says Vargas. “Their dark, rich flavors and deep colors, in addition to the cheesecake, just gives it this [definitive] feel, which is what I think we are all about.”

The cheesecake is made to look amazing and then when you take a bite, it tastes amazing, says Reyna.

“You eat food with your eyes first,” says Reyna. “That is what Pastelitos hopes to accomplish with every single one of our cheesecake designs.”

With an average workday of seven to 10 hours, the team is always looking for new ways to become more efficient in the things they do, to cut down on their time as much as possible. This became important when they introduced the “minis,” says Rodriguez.

“A lot of people were super excited, but we are just trying to find a simpler way to do them,” says Reyna explaining this newer addition to their business.

The team has learned so much in the short time they have been building Pastelitos, from social media engagement to time efficiency, they say. Although this has been the members’ first real job, they are building success quickly.

Pastelitos has had people come from Mexico City, Colombia, San Francisco, Amarillo, and Huntsville to buy their cheesecakes. Reyna is looking to expand to the major cities in Texas, to reach even more people, but for now, she is looking to make the local bakery a walk-in service, she says.

To buy a cheesecake from Pastelitos Co., visit [@PastelitosCo](#) on Twitter, where order forms go live Tuesday and Thursday nights. They take about 100 orders each day and a couple of up-for-grabs for those who did not submit the form in time.

They are now taking orders over the phone as well. Call or text Reyna at **(713) 817-5336** with your desired flavor. *i*



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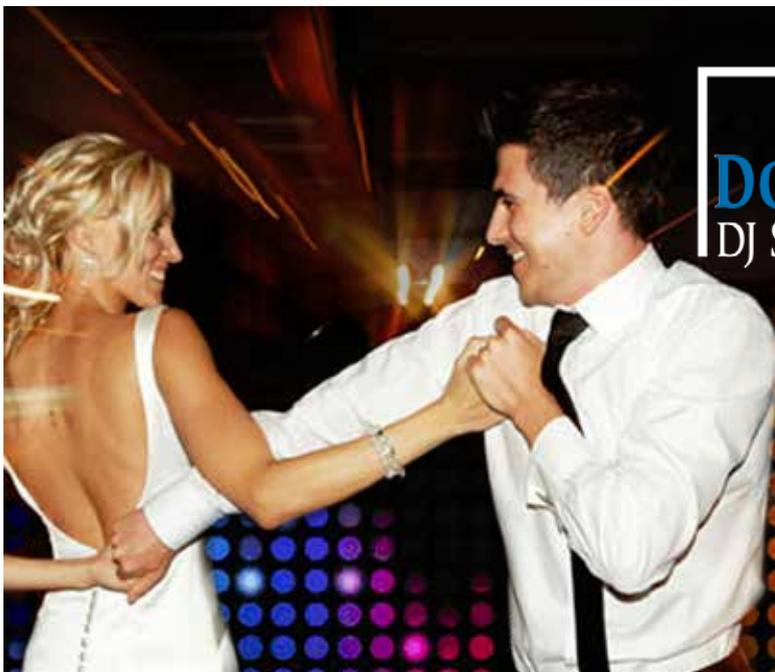


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KATHYNA HATLA

Against All Odds

By KATIE JAMES



Kathyna Hatla is a mother, teacher, and artist. On April 15, the Arts Council of the Brazos Valley is scheduled to open a three-month exhibit of her paintings, kicking things off with an opening reception from 5:30 to 7 p.m. that day.

The road Hatla took to get to this point wasn't a straight one, however. She never expected anyone to see her paintings, and there was a time when she thought she'd never be able to paint again. Twenty-one years ago, Hatla walked into the emergency room and never walked again after being diagnosed with transverse myelitis. This inflammation of her spinal cord caused by a lesion in her neck damaged nerve cells and led to paralysis — at first from the neck down. She still uses a wheelchair now, but gradually she gained enough feeling in three fingers of her right hand to be able to hold a paintbrush.

"When I was in St. Joseph rehab, I tried to paint a picture, and I just couldn't — my

hand was shaking too much," says Hatla. "That canvas sat in my closet until last fall, unfinished. My daughter pulled it out and said, 'You know what would be really cool, mom? If you finished this painting.' And I did, and it's going to be one of the paintings in the exhibit."

The exhibit will feature all of Hatla's work, about 25 pieces. Though she's been painting for 35 years, there was a five-year period where she didn't have the strength or desire to paint at all, and since her paralysis, it takes a lot longer to complete each piece. Despite the extra effort required, she credits painting as the thing that distracted her from sorrow and pain.

"I kind of went through depression for about five years," says Hatla. "It was just like I was floating in a dark place. I didn't really know where I was or what I was doing. About 10 years ago, though, we got my canvases back out, and my paint was so old that it was really thick, so that first

painting I did has a lot of texture to it. Then I gradually did more and more. It's an almost daily thing to go over and paint now. It's certainly been an ongoing process. I have to constantly talk myself into it."

The subjects Hatla paints have stayed mostly the same, but she says she notices a difference in style: the brushstrokes are less bold and confident. She has to do everything with one hand, which affects every part of the painting process from squeezing paint to adjusting the canvas without causing it to fall on top of her.

"I used to just paint little canvases because I can't really reach [the top] ... but I figured out I could turn the canvas upside down and paint it on its side," says Hatla. "It's kind of funny."

Hatla's unique painting technique, and her tenacity to continue to create and teach at a local private school despite all odds, inspired her future son-in-law, a film maker, to create a documentary about her

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story. Stephen O'Shea's film will be shown in conjunction with the opening of the Arts Council exhibit. Hatla says O'Shea acts as her agent of sorts, encouraging her to show her artwork. He was the one who reached out to the Arts Council to inquire about hosting an exhibit through them.

"I never had formal training or art education; it's something I've developed on my own, observing and watching Bob Ross videos or some other tutorials," says Hatla. "I approach it as problem solving. Here's this challenge: can I figure it out? I learn as I go."

Hatla does oil on canvas, focusing mostly on landscapes, although she has a soft spot for abstract art. She'll be at the opening reception to visit with people and explain the inspiration behind certain pieces.

"Someone told me one time to 'paint what you know,'" says Hatla. "Discover what your passion is. For me, I paint places that were my favorite places to go. Since I can't go there anymore, I live vicariously through expressing that in my paintings."

Looking forward, Hatla plans to continue teaching and running the afterschool program at work, but she's also considered writing an autobiography or children's short stories. Of course, she says, she'll continue to paint as long as she is able. Though she never painted for anyone but herself before, showcasing her work in exhibits and the possibility of doing commission work presents Hatla with her next challenge.

"I'm grateful to the Arts Council and humbled they'd consider displaying my work," says Hatla. "I'm very appreciative. I'd encourage everybody to see any and all of the exhibits. It's very fascinating to see the talent here in our community." *i*

Editor's note: At the time of publication, The Arts Council could not confirm if the exhibit would still open on April 15 due to coronavirus closures. Be sure to check back online for the most up-to-date information.

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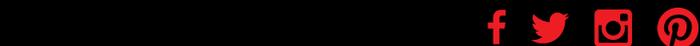


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HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE

Burton Cotton Gin Festival 2020

By NICOLE SHAIR



Spring is rolling in, bluebonnets are beginning to bloom, and festival season is right around the corner in the Brazos Valley, which means it's time for the annual Burton Cotton Gin Festival celebrating the 1914 Burton Farmers Gin, the oldest operating cotton gin in America.

The 31st annual Burton Cotton Gin Festival is on Saturday, April 18, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on the grounds of the Texas Cotton Gin Museum. The festival will begin with a parade, including the 16th annual Children's Bicycle Parade. The ever-popular tractor pull starts at 1 p.m. with a kiddie tractor pull at 4 p.m. Experience history first-hand with folk-life demonstrations such as blacksmithing, quilting, and spinning.

There will also be live gin demonstrations; various food options from

"You can see everything working in the gin the same way that it did for over half a century"

— Steph Jarvis

barbeque to chicken and waffles; crafts and contests for people to participate in; and various educational opportunities for children and adults alike.

"[The Burton Cotton Gin Festival] is amazing because you can see everything working in the gin the same way that it did for over half a century," Texas Cotton Gin Museum Director Steph Jarvis says. "We will be doing guided tours of the gin from noon to 3 p.m. and then we will be ginning some bales for people to see."

The Cotton Gin Festival is the biggest event held at the Texas Cotton Gin Museum, celebrating and preserving the history of the 150-year-old cotton gin and raising the funds in order to keep this piece of agricultural history in the Brazos Valley, according to Jarvis.



“The Burton Cotton Gin Festival is the biggest event that we have at the museum,” Jarvis says. “Part of the festival, of course, is raising the money to keep the museum here, but a bigger part of it is just celebrating the rich history of the gin.”

While the festival originally began to fund a museum and preserve the cotton gin, it has grown to include demonstrations and information on all facets of agriculture found in the Brazos Valley. From tractor pulling to the history of farming in the area, there is so much more to learn about and experience than there was when the festival first began, says Jarvis.

“There’s [an area] for antique tractors and engines where they will run them for people to see and hear as well as contests for pie-eating, bubblegum-blowing, and seed-pulling,” Jarvis says. “We have ladies who show hand quilting and there’s a petting zoo for the kiddos, which adds to the farm experience.”

For the children, the festival will include an area called “Farmer for a Day,” where children can go to different groups who will teach them about farming and animals and have hands-on crafts for them to do, Jarvis says.

“This year, there is someone who will be showing bee-keeping,” Jarvis says. “One year, the kiddos made pinecone bird feeders, so we definitely have things for them to be hands-on with and to interact with.”

For more information on the Burton Cotton Gin Festival, visit texascottonginmuseum.org, email director@texascottonginmuseum.org, or call (979) 289-3378. *i*



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LEMONADE DAY

Celebrating 10 Years

By **BRANDI M. GOMEZ**



Lemonade Day is a national event started in Houston 12 years ago to teach kids entrepreneurship through running their own lemonade stand. Not too long after, it was started in College Station in 2010 by Lenae Scroggins. Marie-Ann Holland and Amelia McCracken are the co-city directors of this large event this year, with the goal of opening a door for youth in learning about entrepreneurship and allowing the community to get involved by interacting with the young participants.

This year Lemonade Day was originally scheduled for May 2, but has been postponed due to the coronavirus. Hundreds of lemonade stands will be set up all around Bryan College Station by children kindergarten through 12th grade when the event takes place.

"I wish I had something like that as a kid, so I immediately jumped on it and I've been volunteering on and off since 2011," says Holland.

McCracken, who began volunteering in 2019, like most people, thought Lemonade Day was simply a day to go out and enjoy a cup of lemonade. However, "it is more than just a day," as advertised through the Lemonade Day tagline.

Lemonade Day has taught children there are different avenues than just going to school and being a teacher or an

accountant, but they can create something through having a business. This is implemented in the program before the kids start selling their lemonade.

"It's typically a five-week program, but easily adjusted if [they] wanted to," says McCracken. "It is about setting a business plan, a goal of how much they want to make, and essentially where they are wanting to set up ... just like a real business."

There are two different versions of the program: a physical workbook people can sign up to receive and an online version called Lemonopolis, an online game allowing children to play out their business plans.

"It gets them involved in learning about what makes them unique," says Holland. "At the end we teach them, 'Save a little, spend a little, share a little,' getting them to think about what to do with their money after the big day."

For Holland, Lemonade Day looks like carrying around an empty jug to fill up and stopping at as many stands as possible, she says.

"It is really cool to see the wide range of lemonade stands," says Holland. "Some kids go all out. One guy built a saloon, almost a legit store. So, some go all out, and some are the traditional table."

There is an opportunity to share this creativity both at the participants' table

and in their lemonade at the table and tasting contests.

"We also have an entrepreneur of the year contest," says McCracken. "We had a kid last year who won entrepreneur of the year nationally, and we've had several others simply go on and start their own businesses."

This year Lemonade Day will collaborate with Grand Station to make a Lemonade Village — a hot spot where groups of lemonade stands can sell. This is an effort to get more people in the community to join in, says McCracken.

"I encourage parents to drive around with a bunch of change to support as many kids as they can," says Holland. "If you don't have any kids, just buy lemonade."

Lemonade Day is a chance to experience youth creativity, from the originality in their stands to the flavors of their lemonade.

While the event may be postponed, interested community members are encouraged to check back regularly for more information on the rescheduled date. Local businesses will have the chance to host stands at their location by contacting Amelia McCracken at amelia@lemonadeday.org. Participants will be able to include their stand location on a live map, Brand Your Stand, at lemonadedaybcs.org. *i*

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BRAZOS READS

By SHELBI LEMEILLEUR



Angel Thieves by Kathi Appelt

A father and son steal marble angels from cemeteries late at night. A young girl mourns a friend who has moved away, while learning what it means to pray. A freed slave goes on the run with her young daughters. The bayou silently watches everything around it. Kathi Appelt's *Angel Thieves* follows all of these characters and more as they navigate their lives.

Angel Thieves is perfect for young adult readers. The multi-perspective book is told non-linearly. While most of the book appears to take place in modern day Houston, flashbacks to early America weave throughout the story as well. The book can seem disjointed at times, but each storyline threads together, slowly piecing together a larger picture. At the heart of the story is a marble angel, one hand reaching toward the sky and one closed into a fist at her side.

Kathi Appelt has written more than 40 books for children and young adults and lives in College Station. *Angel Thieves* is available in paperback, hardcover, or as an e-book. *i*

Are you a local author? Would you like your book to be featured in *INSITE Magazine*? Email shelbi@insitebrazosvalley.com for more information.



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BRYAN/COLLEGE STATION**C&J BARBEQUE**

cjbbq.com, 4304 Harvey Road, CS (979) 776-8969; 105 Southwest Parkway, CS (979) 696-7900; 1010 South Texas Avenue, Bryan (979) 822-6033. A family run business, C&J Barbeque serves sausage, pork loin, pulled pork, turkey, brisket, chicken, ribs, and more at each of their locations. Open M-Th 10:30am-8:30pm, F-Sa 10:30am-9pm, and Su 11am-3pm.

CAFÉ ECCCELL & LA BODEGA TACO BAR
cafeeccellbryantx.com, 4401 S. Texas Avenue (979) 599-7929. For private parties, weddings, or any event off premise from buffets and mixers to fine dining for 25-1,000 people. Café Eccell plus La Bodega Taco Bar plus your imagination adds up to Eccell Group Catering and anything you want!

CAFFE CAPRI ITALIAN RESTAURANT
theplaceforitalian.com, 222 N Main St, Bryan (979) 822-2675. This award-winning downtown restaurant has been serving creative and reasonably priced Italian dishes for 20 years. Enjoy their art deco interior, local art display, and upbeat atmosphere. Lunch M-F 11am-2pm; Dinner M-Th 5:30-9pm; F-Sa 5pm-9pm.

CAMPFIRE RESTAURANT AT THE STELLA HOTEL

thestellahotel.com, 4100 Lake Atlas Drive, Bryan (979) 421-4444. Here guests are greeted with the rich aroma of smoke and seasonings used to serve breakfast, lunch, and dinner made with the best ingredients in Central Texas. Raise a toast to bourbon-fueled cocktails and magnum wine tastings at the Chef's Table, an outdoor perch by the fire pit, or a table in the main dining room with a view of the open kitchen!

CASA DO BRASIL

casadobrasil.com, 1665 Greens Prairie Rd W, CS (979) 596-5586. The first Brazilian steakhouse in the Brazos Valley is now open! You can enjoy meat delivered to your table on hot skewers and carved directly onto your plate. The steakhouse also serves traditional favorites including the national drink of Brazil, the Caipirinha. M-F 11am-2pm, 5-9:30pm; S 4-10pm; Su 11am-2pm.

CHEF TAI'S MOBILE BISTRO

cheftai.com, check website for daily locations and hours (979) 268-3251. Chef Tai's Mobile Bistro is America's Favorite Food Truck serving a blend of globally inspired cuisine.

DOWNTOWN UNCORKED WINE BAR

206 West 26th St, Bryan (979) 823-4837. Voted Best Wine By The Glass, Downtown Uncorked Wine Bar is where the adults go. Choose from more than 100 bottles! Special nights include Women Gone Wine Wednesdays, Half Price Bottle Thursdays, and Friday Night Flights.

THE ANGRY ELEPHANT BAR AND GRILL

650 William D Fitch Pkwy #500, College Station (979) 704-5110. Enjoy drinks and hot dogs at the politically themed bar featuring specialty cocktails and

items such as the George Bush BLT Dog. 11am-2am.

FOUR POINTS BY SHERATON

fourpointscollegestation.com, 1503 Texas Avenue South College Station, TX 77840. (979) 693-1741. A mile away from Texas A&M University, Four Points by Sheraton College Station is in the heart of town. Four Points is great for overnight stays, receptions and meetings, and more!

THE HONEYBAKED HAM CO. & CAFÉ

Order catering online at MyHoneyBakedStore.com, 3975 Hwy 6 S and Rock Prairie Road, CS (979) 314-1229. Visit for specialty foods, catering, and café. One size gifts all! HoneyBaked gift cards available in any denomination. M-F 11am-6pm, Sa 11am-5pm.

LUIGI'S PATIO RISTORANTE

luigispatoristorante.com, 3975 SH-6 S, CS (979) 693-2742. Luigi's Patio Ristorante offers genuine Italian cuisine in a cozy atmosphere that transports you straight to the heart of Italy. Live music, check website for schedule. Open for lunch Tu-Fri 11:30am-2pm. Open for dinner Tu-Su 5:30pm, call for closing times. Brunch Su 11:30am-2pm.

MESSINA HOF WINERY

messinahof.com, 4545 Old Reliance Rd, Bryan (979) 778-9463. Founded on the cornerstones of family, tradition, and romance, Messina Hof Winery & Resort has held its place as a Brazos Valley staple since 1977. Open M-Th 10am-7pm, F-Sa 10am-8pm, Su 11am-6pm.

MADDEN'S CASUAL GOURMET

maddencasualgourmet.com, 202 S Bryan Ave, Bryan (979) 779-2558. For catering and private party planning, call (979) 450-5334. Madden's Casual Gourmet is the perfect place for lunch or dinner, celebrations, and catering any event! Open M-W 11am-2pm, Th-F 11am-3pm, S 10am-4pm, Th-S 5pm-9pm.

MR. G'S PIZZERIA

gotomrgs.com, 201 W 26th St, Bryan (979) 822-6747. At Mr. G's, every slice is served with family pride, the freshest ingredients, original recipes, and only the finest imported Italian cheeses. Now serving gluten free pizza. Bryan location: M-F 11am-2pm & 5pm-9pm, Sa 5pm-9pm.

MUST BE HEAVEN

mustbeheaven.com, 1700 Rock Prairie Rd, CS (979) 764-9222. Reminisce the good ol' days of ice cream shoppes and hand-crafted sandwiches at Must Be Heaven. Bryan locations' hours: M-F 8am-6pm, Sa 8am-3pm. College Station hours: M-F 8am-6pm, Sa 8am-3pm.

NAPA FLATS WOOD-FIRED KITCHEN

napaflats.com, 1727 Texas Ave. S. College Station (979) 383-2500. Dining out never tasted so good. Enjoy California inspired cuisine made over a wood fired grill at Napa Flats. Open M-Th 11am-10pm, F-Sa 11am-11pm, Su 11am-9:30pm.

PAOLO'S ITALIAN KITCHEN

PaolosItalianKitchen.com, 809 University Dr #100, CS (979) 485-2704. Life is too short not to eat well. Signature dishes include Veal Marsala and Nonna's Lasagna. Paolo's also has catering options, as well as two banquet rooms to host private events! Lunch M-Sa 11am-2pm, Dinner M-Sa 5pm-9:30pm.

PEACH CREEK VINEYARDS

PeachCreekVineyards.com, 2029 Peach Creek Rd, CS (936) 825-3669. There's plenty of parking at this picturesque operation nestled in the beautiful countryside near College Station. Visit this winery and novelty gift shop in the heart of a Texas vineyard. While there, be sure to view the antique grape press from the late 1800s and ask about the Adopt-A-Vine program. Open Tu-F 3-6pm, Sa 12-6pm, Su by appointment.

READFIELD MEATS & DELI

readfieldmeats.com, 2701 S Texas Ave, Bryan (979) 822-1594. Your summer solution to meal planning and great BBQs, choose USDA Choice & Prime beef, Midwest Grain-fed Pork, Fresh Poultry, Lamb, Smoked Sausage, Cajun Boudin, and Honey Glazed Hams. Open M-F 8am-6pm, Sa 8am-4pm.

THE REPUBLIC

therepublic1836.com, 701 University Dr. E #406, CS (979) 260-4120. Recently receiving the designation of AAA four diamond steak house, The Republic offers a variety of gourmet steak options, seafood, wine, and whiskey. Their focus is on the use of fine, locally grown foods and simple Texas cooking in an elegant setting. Open M-Sa 5-10pm.

THE TAP

tapbcs.com, 815 Harvey Rd, CS (979) 696-5570. The Tap is a former train depot transformed into a sports bar and restaurant. This local favorite has more than 30 TVs, darts, pool tables, NTN trivia, dominoes, two huge porches, occasional live music specials, burgers, sandwiches, and free peanuts. M-Sa 11am-2pm.

TRUMAN CHOCOLATES

trumanchocolates.com, 4407 S Texas Ave, Bryan (979) 260-4519. Choose from signature series boxes or customize your own. Numerous flavors to choose from. Made on site by well-trained staff. Perfect to leave a lasting impression for any event! Open M-F 10am-6pm; Sa 10am-3pm; Closed on Sunday.

VERITAS WINE & BISTRO

www.veritaswineandbistro.com, 830 University Dr. E, Ste 400, CS (979) 268-3251. Classically trained chefs offer creative cuisine in a casual, contemporary setting. Veritas embraces usage of organic and local produce, wild caught seafood flown in directly from the source, as well as poultry and meat raised naturally. Lunch M-Sa 11am-2pm; Dinner Sun-Th 5:30pm-9:30pm, F-Sa 5:30pm-10pm.

WAYBACK BURGERS

waybackburgers.com, 3001 Wild

Flower Drive, Bryan (979) 703-6623. Made-to-order burgers & milkshakes fill out the menu at this family friendly chain. Open M-Sa 10:30am-10pm, and Su 10:30am-9pm.

ENTERTAINMENT & ATTRACTION**SCHLITTERBAHN**

schlitterbahn.com, (409) 770-WAVE, (830) 625-2351. With waterparks in Corpus Christi, Galveston, New Braunfels, and South Padre Island, Schlitterbahn is the perfect destination for your family vacation. Make a splash this summer and enjoy free parking, free tubes, and picnicking by the pool!

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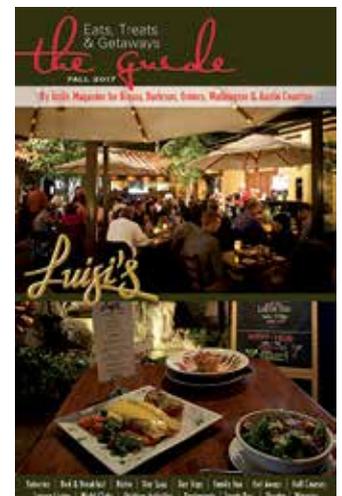
facebook.com/crcnavasotatx, 129 E. Washington Ave., Navasota, (936) 727-5613. Great coffee, great music! Stop by to hear some classic rock and try coffee from around the world. M-Th 7am-6pm, F 7am-7pm, Sa-Su 8am-7pm.

MARTHA'S BLOOMERS

MarthasBloomers.com 8101 Hwy 6, Navasota (936) 825-7400. Open Mon-Sat 9am-6pm, Sun 11am-5pm. Step back in time to discover unique home décor, distinctive gifts & exceptional shopping finds. Enjoy a relaxing lunch at Café M Bloomer's, a serene garden café offering scrumptious flavor, one delightful bite at a time. Choose from delicious soups, delectable sandwiches, fresh garden salads, tempting desserts, specialty teas, and more. Open Tu-Su, serving lunch 11am-3pm and desserts until 4pm (Café closed Mondays). Cafe@MarthasBloomers.com

WASHINGTON COUNTY**FUNKY ART CAFÉ & COFFEE BAR**

202 W Commerce St, Brenham (979) 836-5220. Delicious and different, Funky Art Café in Brenham offers enticing entrees to please the palate before shopping in its companion retail shop, The Pomegranate. M-Fr 11am-2pm; Sa 11am-3pm.



Check out *The Guide to Eats, Treats & Getaways* at InsiteBrazosValley.com. Listings provided as a service. Insite is not responsible for errors or omissions.

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Broker Owner &
Team Leader
979-450-4347
Chad@2020bcs.com



ESTELLE HANSON



Operations Manager &
Assistant to Chad Hovde
832-233-2249
Estelle@2020bcs.com



APRIL RIEGER



Associate Realtor
979-200-9990
April@2020bcs.com



LYNN ROELKE



Associate Realtor
979-224-0064
Lynn@2020bcs.com



PATRICK FARNSWORTH



Associate Realtor
979-255-6465
Patrick@2020bcs.com



RACHEL CARRABBA



Associate Realtor
979-324-3661
Rachel@2020bcs.com



CHELSTIE BREAU



Team Leader &
Associate Realtor
979-255-8637
Chelsie@2020bcs.com



CORI SNYDER



Associate Realtor
979-587-8444
Cori@2020bcs.com



JASON TILBY



Associate Realtor
979-224-0405
Jason@2020bcs.com



KAYLA ROBISON



Associate Realtor
979-587-8386
Kayla@2020bcs.com



JILL JONES



Broker Associate
979-255-1108
Jill@2020bcs.com



KATIE COMPIAN

Associate Realtor
979-220-5288
Katie@2020bcs.com



LISA JONES

Broker Associate
979-255-7010
Lisa@2020bcs.com



TRISH HAVEL

Associate Realtor
979-820-1122
Trish@2020bcs.com



ASHLEY RICE

Office Manager
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