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Issue
No 017

NOVEMBER, TWO THOUSAND TWENTY

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La Grange

CANDELA

Making Boots
in Weimar

PAPER CITY

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DADDY-O

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Texas Author





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The *Register* celebrates life in the Roundtopolis™ – and the people lucky enough to live it.

Circulation: Under the Roundtop.com umbrella, about 200,000 copies are distributed annually: *Round Top Register*, *Round Top Texas life & style*, and *Round Top Antiques Show Guide*.

Want to hang out more often?
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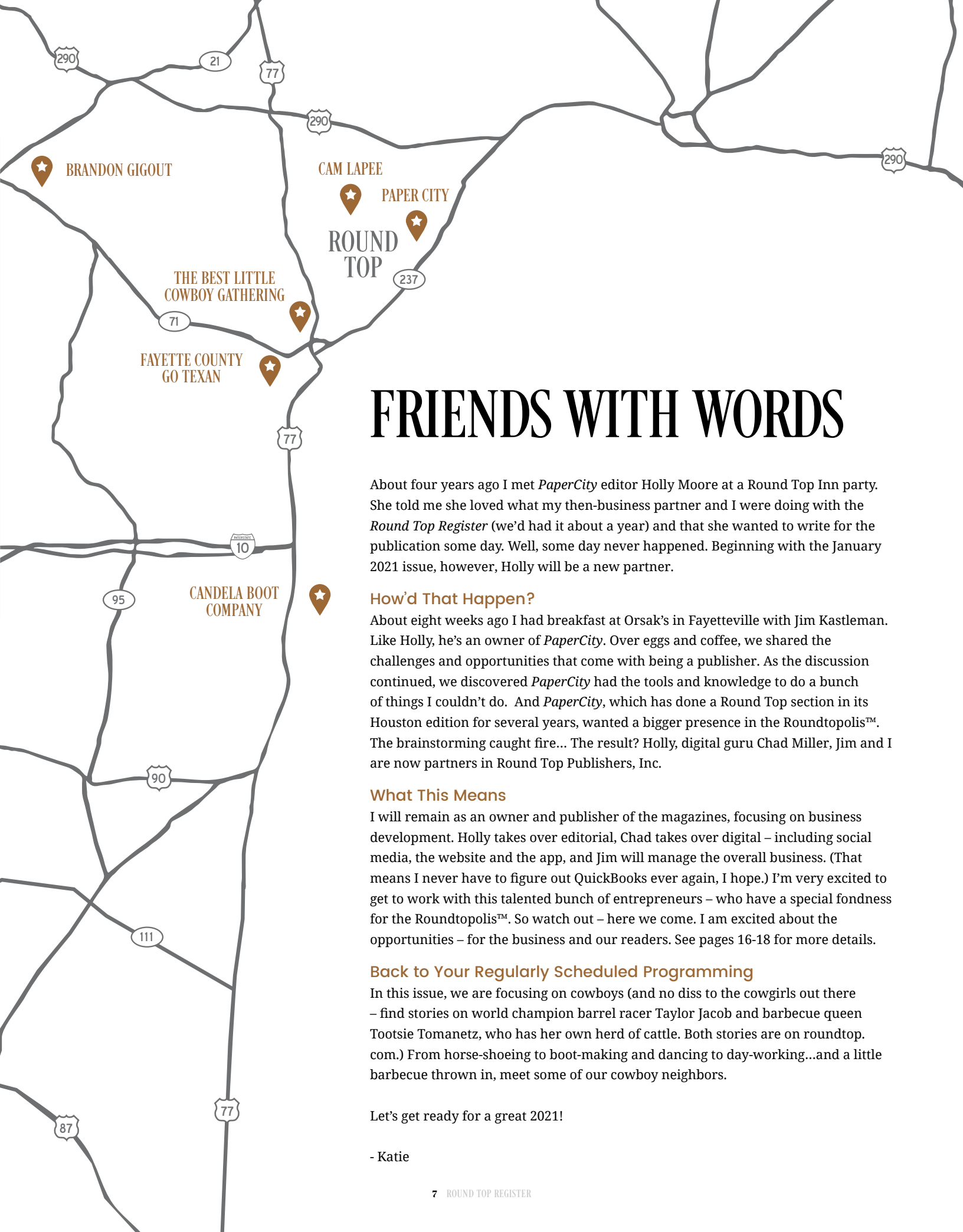
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FRIENDS WITH WORDS

About four years ago I met *PaperCity* editor Holly Moore at a Round Top Inn party. She told me she loved what my then-business partner and I were doing with the *Round Top Register* (we'd had it about a year) and that she wanted to write for the publication some day. Well, some day never happened. Beginning with the January 2021 issue, however, Holly will be a new partner.

How'd That Happen?

About eight weeks ago I had breakfast at Orsak's in Fayetteville with Jim Kastleman. Like Holly, he's an owner of *PaperCity*. Over eggs and coffee, we shared the challenges and opportunities that come with being a publisher. As the discussion continued, we discovered *PaperCity* had the tools and knowledge to do a bunch of things I couldn't do. And *PaperCity*, which has done a Round Top section in its Houston edition for several years, wanted a bigger presence in the Roundtopolis™. The brainstorming caught fire... The result? Holly, digital guru Chad Miller, Jim and I are now partners in Round Top Publishers, Inc.

What This Means

I will remain as an owner and publisher of the magazines, focusing on business development. Holly takes over editorial, Chad takes over digital – including social media, the website and the app, and Jim will manage the overall business. (That means I never have to figure out QuickBooks ever again, I hope.) I'm very excited to get to work with this talented bunch of entrepreneurs – who have a special fondness for the Roundtopolis™. So watch out – here we come. I am excited about the opportunities – for the business and our readers. See pages 16-18 for more details.

Back to Your Regularly Scheduled Programming

In this issue, we are focusing on cowboys (and no diss to the cowgirls out there – find stories on world champion barrel racer Taylor Jacob and barbecue queen Tootsie Tomanetz, who has her own herd of cattle. Both stories are on roundtop.com.) From horse-shoeing to boot-making and dancing to day-working...and a little barbecue thrown in, meet some of our cowboy neighbors.

Let's get ready for a great 2021!

- Katie



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The Best Little Cowboy Gathering

ALL ABOUT THE MUSIC AND DANCING

Article by LORIE A. WOODWARD Photos courtesy of BEST LITTLE COWBOY GATHERING

“It’s all about the music—good, old time country-and-western dance music,” said Jon Quinn, event co-founder and president of the The Best Little Cowboy Gathering. “Western swing, honky tonk and a little bit of cowboy music all served up over a weekend.”

According to Co-founder and The Best Little Cowboy Gathering Vice President Bobby Gronewald, it’s possible to hear top-notch covers of Bob Wills, Hank Williams Sr., Johnny Bush, Merle Haggard, Gary Stewart and Sons of the Pioneers all in the same place and possibly in the same set.

“The Cowboy Gathering is the only place where people can hear the best musicians perform the best dance music—and have the opportunity to dance until they just can’t dance anymore,” Gronewald said.

Since 2009 people from across the country and around the world have flocked to the Fayette County Fairgrounds on the second weekend in March for a chance to dance to the music that has long been the unofficial soundtrack of the Lone Star State. This 2021 event is slated for March 11-13.

“Our attendees tell us that this music is hard to come by outside of Texas,” said Gronewald, noting that some of their regulars come from as far away as Sweden, France, Canada and Australia.

The annual line up is built on a foundation of bands such as Jake Hooker and the Outsiders, Jody Nix, Jeff Woolsey and the Dancehall Kings, Billy Mata and the Texas Tradition and the Rocky King Band who are well known to anyone who has ever scooted their boots in a Texas dancehall. The Jody Nix Fiddle



Extravaganza on Saturday is a special set featuring eight to 15 invited fiddlers.

The organizers also host headliners that have included Gary P. Nunn, Darrell McCall, Red Steagall and Johnny Bush. Saturday morning kicks off with a cowboy performer the likes of Kristyn Harris and KR Wood.

“And every year, we try to include some young up-and-comers to keep it fresh—and to encourage the next generation of musicians who will keep this style of music alive,” Quinn said. “We have a limited number of performing spots, so the hardest part for me is deciding who we can’t include.”

Early on, all dancing took place in the historic Round Up Hall.

“Then, there was the Friday night we had about 800 people inside dancing to Jake Hooker—and the fire marshal said, ‘No more!’” Quinn recalled.

Undeterred, the board expanded the opportunities for people to dance. Working with the Fayette County Fair Association and the City of La Grange, they expanded the nearby Marge Rosenberg Stage, a nearby, covered, open-air concrete slab with a raised stage.

“The front half of the covered slab is set up concert style,” Gronewald said. “We rent a 30’ x 40’ floating dance floor for the back half and line it with tables for a dancehall effect.”

To mitigate notoriously unpredictable March weather, organizers also rent and install vinyl “flaps” that convert the huge covered slab into a walled tent. The flaps can be raised up to catch the breeze and let in the sunshine or rolled down to cut the wind and block the rain.

“We’re virtually weather-proof now,” said Quinn, noting there is a permanent building that provides additional back up if a cold snap proves to be too much for the temporary walls.

Today, organizers sell 500 VIP lanyards that provide exclusive access to the historic dancehall and inclusive access to all other venues and activities. One-day and weekend Main Event Tickets provide admission to the covered slab and all activities.

“We have a band playing in the hall and another playing on the covered slab—and we stagger the breaks on purpose,”





WE ESTIMATE OUR EVENT PUTS ABOUT \$200,000 INTO THE LOCAL ECONOMY. MUSIC IS A POWERFUL ECONOMIC FORCE.



Gronewald said. “People come to dance—and they go where the music is.”

The atmosphere is family-friendly.

“It’s like the community dances we all grew up going to,” said Quinn, who is a native of La Grange. “We’ve got a lot of regular attendees who bring three generations of their family. I like to say, ‘The Best Little Cowboy Gathering is for old coots—and their young coots.’”

To keep the younger coots busy, the event also includes children’s activities such as bounce houses, face painting, treasure hunt, mutton busting and more. There are also special presentations that change from year to year ranging from Andalusian dancing horses to chuck wagon cooking, carriage rides and Buffalo soldier re-enactors. Western artists, craftsmen and entrepreneurs sell their jewelry, art, western fashion, and leather goods at a trade show. A sanctioned barbecue cook-off showcases the culture of smoke and meat.

“This year, on Saturday, we’ll have the documentary ‘Dancehall Daze,’ that features extensive coverage of the Round Top Rifle Hall and its members playing on a continuous loop,” Quinn said. “It’s a great way to see the film that showcases so many of our friends.”

Unlike many music festivals that target the young, rowdy, beer-chugging crowd, the Cowboy Gathering is designed to bring in a mature audience that appreciates the music, the dance floor and the camaraderie.

“Our clientele have outgrown their bar fighting days,” Gronewald said. “They still know how to have a good time and enjoy a good drink, but folks

don’t have to worry about beer getting poured on their heads.”

Many arrive in their RVs or pulling their travel trailers to take advantage of the free, dry camps or the limited number of full hookups.

“Some people come a week in advance to get their favorite spots,” Quinn said. “Through the years, they’ve gotten to know one another, so it’s just like tailgating before a college football game.”

The Fayette County Fair Association sells beer, burgers, soft drinks, water and set ups. (The event is BYOB; no glass containers are allowed.)

“It’s the Fair Association’s biggest fundraiser,” said Quinn, noting there are other food vendors on site.

The non-campers fill up local hotels. The guests also patronize local restaurants. Because of the event’s ability to attract visitors, it receives grant support from the La Grange Tourism and Visitor’s Grant Committee.

“We estimate our event puts about \$200,000 into the local economy,” Quinn said. “Music is a powerful economic force.”

All proceeds from the event go to fund scholarships for Fayette County students. Each year, the non-profit organization presents at least seven, \$1,000 scholarships. The winners represent every public school in the county.

“The Best Little Cowboy Gathering helps young people go to school and it helps keep this kind of music alive in Texas...and around the world,” Gronewald said. “On top of all of that, it’s just fun—big, big fun.” ★

If You Go ...

The Best Little Cowboy Gathering

March 11-13, 2021

www.bestlittlecowboygathering.org

FB@thebestlittlecowboygatheringinTexas

Artists:

FRIDAY

Justin Trevino 3PM

Eddie Raven 7PM

John Slaughter. 9:30PM

SATURDAY

Jody Nix Fiddle Extravaganza. 1PM

Jake Worthington 3PM

Steve Helms Band 5PM

Rick Trevino 7:30PM

Jody Booth 9:30PM

Tickets:

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Main Event Tickets

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Saturday only \$20

(Advance sales and on-site.)

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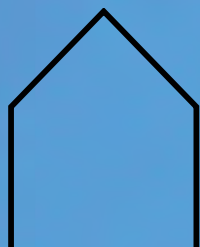


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Round Top, We're All In

PAPERCITY ACQUIRES ROUND TOP PUBLICATIONS

PaperCity magazine is bullish on Round Top, the tiny town with a population of 90, that swells with 100,000-plus antiques shoppers twice a year. The magazine has acquired the *Round Top Antiques Show Guide*, *Round Top Life and Style*, and *Round Top Register* publications with plans to create programming, and VIP and design events. The principals in this venture include former Round Top publications owner Katie Stavinocha and *PaperCity* principals Jim Kastleman, Holly Moore and Chad Miller. A new company has been formed, Round Top Publishers, LLC, to house the print publications, roundtop.com, email newsletters, and Facebook and Instagram social media accounts.

Stavinocha remains as publisher and will focus on business development. Jim Kastleman, co-chairman and president of *PaperCity*, is chairman and managing partner of the new entity and will coordinate the integration strategy of print, digital and events. Holly Moore, co-chairman and editor in chief of *PaperCity*, will become editorial director overseeing creative and editorial.

Chad Miller, partner and president of *PaperCity* Digital, LLC, will provide oversight of the digital and social media assets.

The new company will focus on growing its digital and social media channels and print circulation in an overall effort to promote Round Top, Fayetteville and surrounding counties. Importantly, it will develop new programming and opportunities centered around the massive Round Top Antiques Show, held two times per year, plus a smaller winter antiques show.

"We have all sadly watched the demise of small-town Texas," Kastleman says. "Over the past several years, there have been risk-takers and visionaries who have embraced Round Top and its environs, going to great lengths to build upon the positive aspects of the Round Top Antiques Fairs while striving to save the small-town atmosphere. Our endeavor will bring together our decades of operating in the media and special-events arenas, while treading carefully and embracing the greater rural community and way of life."

OUR GOAL OVER TIME
WILL BE TO MAKE
ROUNDTOP.COM
THE DESTINATION
WEBSITE FOR THE
ROUND TOP AREA.



WANDER INN AT SUNSET.



Moore says, “*PaperCity* Houston has published a Round Top Antiques Show Special Section twice per year for the past eight years and has distribution channels in Round Top and Fayetteville. With the acquisition of the Round Top publications, our editorial team, led by Catherine D. Ansporn, will continue to expand our print and online coverage of design, art, food, events, people, properties and, of course, the spring and fall antiques fair, with increased visibility in Houston, Dallas, Fort Worth and throughout Texas. And, of course, we will continue the tradition of the *PaperCity* Round Top party that occurs during the antiques fairs in spring and fall.”

PaperCity owns and produces Texas Design Week, which occurs twice yearly, spring and fall, in Houston and Dallas — a week-long

design symposium of salon talks, book signings, product launches, conversation and cocktails. The *PaperCity* Design Awards also occur twice yearly, culminating in an awards night, with entries judged by nationally recognized designers and architects.

“Katie has done a great job establishing a digital presence with roundtop.com and even creating an app,” says Miller. “I’m excited to grow the digital footprint by getting our digital team involved with everything from social media to programming, and even further developing the app’s functionality. Our goal over time will be to make roundtop.com the destination website for the Round Top area, for both residents and those attending the antiques fair and just visiting.” ★

OUR EDITORIAL TEAM WILL CONTINUE TO EXPAND OUR PRINT
AND ONLINE COVERAGE OF DESIGN, ART, FOOD, EVENTS, PEOPLE,
PROPERTIES AND, OF COURSE, THE SPRING AND FALL ANTIQUES FAIR.



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Boot Maker: Mark Candela

Article by LORIE A. WOODWARD Photos by JULIA ERVIN PHOTOGRAPHY

“Bootmaking allows me to indulge my lifelong passion for all things western, while bringing my clients’ personal visions—and their stories—to life,” said Candela, who, along with his wife Julie, runs the Candela Boot Co. from an 1880s farmhouse between Columbus and Weimar. “It’s really satisfying to make something for a client that is a unique expression of who they are and that means so much to them that they’ll keep it and use it for a long time.”

As a bootmaker, Mark Candela creates wearable art that stands the test of time.

About 20 years ago, Mark, a degreed accountant, CPA and software entrepreneur, began pursuing his dream of being a custom bootmaker. He read books and acquired an antique sewing machine.

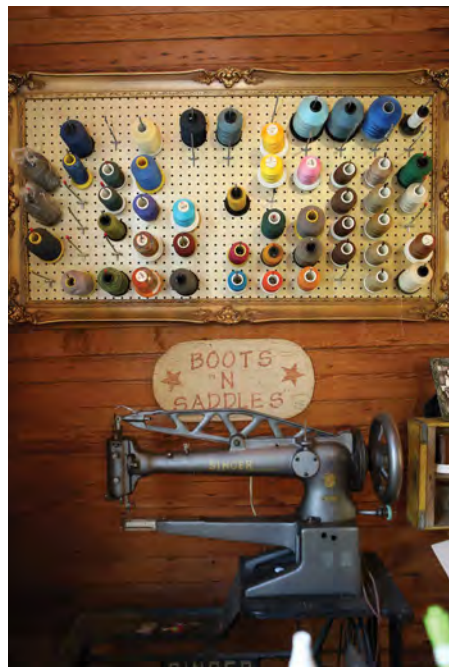
“When I told Julie what I wanted to do, she said, ‘Sounds like you need to make a pair of boots,’ said Mark, noting they were living in his native Houston, but already owned their property in Colorado County.

Eager to learn, Mark knocked on bootmaker Lee Miller’s door. Miller apprenticed under Charlie Dunn, a legendary bootmaker from Austin. Initially, Miller, who runs Texas Traditions (Dunn’s previous shop) in Austin, had reservations.

“Mark built a pair of boots on his own and took them back to Lee for a critique,” said Julie, noting Mark was still working full-time. “His focus and determination impressed Lee, who agreed to let him apprentice.”

Under Miller’s (and later Dave Wheeler of Wheeler Boot Company in Houston) tutelage, Mark honed his craft.

“There are very few custom bootmakers left,” said Mark, who left Houston and corporate America for full-time



bootmaking in 2008. “The older ones learned from their fathers who were bootmakers or repairmen. Without the benefit of that background, my learning curve was steep.”

He adopted time-tested techniques, including custom fitting that involves tracing each foot, recording eight crucial measurements, then taking ink imprints of each foot on graph paper, and noting any crucial anatomical points.

“Eventually, I will customize a set of lasts [a mechanical form in the shape of a human foot] adding thin strips of leather in different places to replicate the shape of the client’s feet,” Mark said.

During the initial consultation, the Candelas and the client work through the design process.

“While most of our clients are long-time boot wearers, they don’t know just how many choices they get to make as they create exactly what they want,” Mark said. “It can be overwhelming, so we guide them through the process.”

In addition to selecting leather for the vamps and tops, which can range from calf skin to exotics such as ostrich and alligator, clients get to choose the pulls, the stitching, the piping, the heels and the artwork, which depending on its style, will be inlaid by Mark or tooled by renowned leather artisan Peter Main of Houston.

“The creativity involved in the artwork is my favorite part of the process,” Mark said. “I want the finished boots to have balance and continuity—and after all of these years, I know what works in leather.”

The sky is the limit when it comes to artwork. College colors and logos are favorite inspirations as are brands, company logos and initials. An Olympian requested the Olympic rings. One client, a bride of Middle Eastern descent, chose a traditional Arabic pattern, which Mark copied from a family heirloom plate, as the inlay for her tops. An upcoming



project will include a reproduction of the Alamo on one top and the St. Louis Cathedral in New Orleans on the other.

"The most elaborate pair I ever created was for an artist who commissioned an inlaid garden scene on her tops," said Mark.

The design included a star-filled border, a sunburst, multi-colored flowers and flowing stems in hues of green cut into white tops. The dark brown, rough out calf skin vamps represented the turned earth.

Inlaying is a multi-step process that requires cutting shapes from the top and cutting matching pieces from different leathers. Each piece of the inlay has to be skived or beveled so it will fit flush. Then the cutouts are filled with another layer of leather topped by the corresponding shapes and stitched in place.

"I do everything by hand, and I'm the only craftsman in the shop, so it's not a high volume outfit," Mark said.

According to Mark, building a basic pair

WHEN THEY
LOVE THEM
AND THE BOOTS
FIT LIKE A
GLOVE, THERE'S
NO BETTER
FEELING.

of boots requires 30 to 50 hours; artwork such as Reveille, the Texas A&M University mascot, takes another 50 hours; and the garden scene took several hundred.

"It takes a lot of patience because everything has to be perfect," said Marking, noting he generally works in 1/64ths of an inch. "It can't be off."

The current wait list is about two years.

"As a bootmaker, you put in all of the effort and all of the work, but you don't know if it's successful until the clients slip the boots on their feet for the first time," Mark said. "When they love them and the boots fit like a glove, there's no better feeling."

"Ninety-nine percent of our clients can't believe what they get even though they were involved in the design. As I always tell them, 'This is your vision as well as mine. I just made it come together for you.'" ★

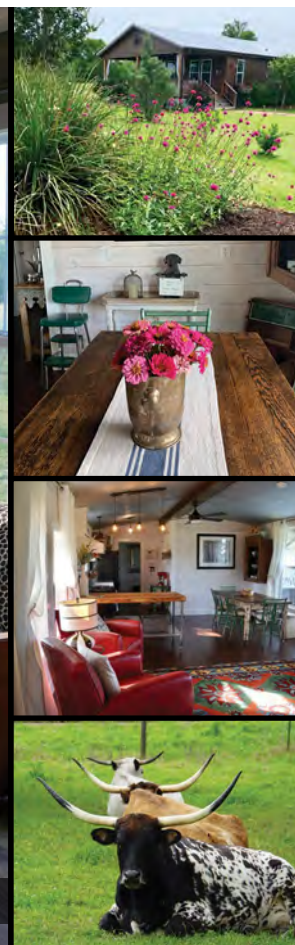
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Gardening

Article & photos courtesy of
CALVIN FINCH

Winter Color

There is still plenty of time to plant snapdragons, stocks, alyssum, ornamental kale, dianthus, and calendula in containers and flower beds for winter color. Now that we have moved into November we can also plant the more heat-sensitive pansies, cyclamen, primula and sweet peas.

For full sun in the winter it is hard to beat pansies and its cousins, violas, and Johnny-jump-ups. They produce colorful flowers (yellow, purple, blue, violet, white, and orange) plus can tolerate cold spells. Expect the pansy-related flowers to have blooms every day from now through the middle of May. They will survive temperatures into the low 20s without protection.

The regular pansy has monkey-faced blooms (dark-centers) and clear-faced blooms. The blooms vary in size from quarter sized to silver dollar sized, depending on the variety. Some varieties have a fragrance. The plants are generally one foot across and just as tall. They are good bedding plants, work well as borders and are exceptional container plants.

Violas are bushier than pansies with small nickel-sized blooms. Johnny-jump-ups have even smaller blooms. They are best when used in hanging baskets. Deer will eat all the winter annuals (except snapdragons in some neighborhoods) but they are especially fond of pansies, violas, and Johnny-jump-ups.

For deep shade consider cyclamen. They form one-foot mounds of attractive heart-shaped leaves decorated with etchings. The orchid-like blooms are intense red, white, lavender, pink, purple or bicolor. Plant cyclamen in containers or beds. If temperatures are predicted to fall under 30 degrees F it is best to cover the plants with an agricultural fabric or sheet to protect the blooms and buds. Cyclamen are imported from cool weather states in the West and the price of about \$6 per plant reflects the long trip. They are expensive but before you reject them out of hand, take a look at them. Cyclamen is spectacular.

Primula also thrive in full shade. One of the selections is low growing like pansies with showy leaves that are crinkly and Kelly green. The flowers are again pansy sized and shaped, but the colors are waxy red, blue, yellow, pink, purple, white and brown. They remind me of the show paint that clowns in the circus use to color their faces. Primula work best in containers. Protect them from snails and slugs with a regular application of a bait.

Sweet peas are the most difficult winter annual to successfully establish. They do not like the weather too hot or too cold so often we end up planting them more than once before we obtain a successful crop. It is worth the effort, however, because sweet pea blooms are very colorful and have a wonderful fragrance. They are one of my favorite cut flowers. Purchase sweet pea seed from your favorite nursery. Soak the seed in water overnight and then plant them in full sun at the base of a trellis. Portable trellises work, or you can even use tomato cages. The taller, the better.

The cool weather annuals described in this article require regular water and fertilization to make a good bloom show. Plant them in well-drained soil. Irrigate when the soil dries to one-half inch. Use Osmocote for fertilization for plants in containers. The product also works for bedding plants but "winterizer" or slow-release lawn fertilizer is a less expensive source of nutrients for plants in beds. Soluble fertilizers like Miracid, Miracle Gro, and Peter's can be applied on a regular basis through the growing season.



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Stirring the Pot

Article by
LORIE A. WOODWARD

Photos courtesy of
ANNIE MULLIGAN &
THE HOUSTON CHRONICLE

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Curt Harbers-Fayette County Go Texan Barbecue Team

In March, the Fayette County Go Texan Barbecue team made history by being the first team ever to win both the Go Texan Champion and overall Grand Champion titles at the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™ World Championship Bar-B-Que Contest.

The championship team was actually two local teams, CC's Country Barbecue and B.Y.O.B, combined. Team members, all of whom live in La Grange, included: Curt Harbers, head cook; Casey Harbers, Curt's wife; Ryan Harbers, Curt's brother; Charlie Schulz, Curt's father-in-law; Gina Adams, Arthur Bosque and Timmy Machala.

They earned the right to represent Fayette County at HLSR by being the highest-placing team headed by a Fayette County resident at the 2019 Fayette County Fair barbecue cook-off.

At Houston, the Fayette County team bested 251 others. To make the accomplishment even more notable, it was the first time any of the team members had competed in Houston, known around the globe as THE barbecue contest to win.

I caught up with Curt just as he finished dropping off coupons for a Whataburger-sponsored reading program to the Round Top-Carmine Elementary School. We talked about meat, smoke and Cinderella. The conversation made my mouth water, so I can't imagine what a rib would do.



RTR: How did you get started barbecuing competitively?

CH: I learned to barbecue and/or cook by watching my grandparents who cooked every day, who basically raised me along with my mom. We always had big family barbecues for Easter and other occasions. Then, when I started dating my wife Casey—we dated for 12 ½ years—I started helping her dad, who has cooked competitively for years, when I could. One time, my now-father-in-law entered a contest that included pork butt along with brisket, chicken and ribs. Knowing pork was a favorite in my family, he asked if I'd cook it for him. My pork took first in the category, along with his meats, and pushed our team over the top for Grand Champion. He began letting me cook different things. I'm super competitive. As a young guy, I played travel baseball and softball, but as I got older it began to hurt too much. Cooking competitively was a lot easier on my body and I didn't have to work so hard,



plus I could drink a lot of cold beer.

When my wife and I married in 2014, I told her I'd like to start my own team so I could do our own thing. Our team is named after our son, Cade Christopher, who my father-in-law calls C.C. We set up and cook side-by-side to my

father-in-law's team.

I put my competitive drive into barbecue and began really doing the homework. Competition barbecue is different from backyard or even restaurant barbecue, we paid attention and learned what it takes to place well consistently.

RTR: Without divulging any trade secrets let's talk barbecue basics. What's more important quality meat, seasoning or fire/temperature?

CH: That's not a fair question because they're all important for great barbecue, but fire/temperature and quality meat are the top two—and they can be flip flopped. You have to start with quality to get quality at the end, but not being able to maintain



Recipe for a Cinderella Story

The story begins in second place.

"We were reserve champions at the Fayette County Fair, but the grand champions lived in Katy, so our team qualified to represent the county through Go Texan," Curt said.

Participation in Houston is optional. The team took several days to decide. The Houston cook-off fell on the same weekend as Curt and Casey's only child's 5th birthday. And while Fayette County Go Texan pays the entry fee, the team is responsible for all expenses during the Houston festivities, which last almost a week. In addition to the competition supplies, the team essentially hosts a hospitality suite on behalf of Fayette County that entails meat and sides for three or four days, a walled tent, drinks, tables, chairs and more.

"I knew in my gut we were going to say yes, but we needed to talk through it," Curt said.

The pieces didn't fall into place easily. The entrance packet containing all the credentials was sent to the wrong address and wasn't found until the night before meat check-in. As a result, the team had to sneak their trucks and trailers in through the carnival, unload while trying to avoid security, and work for three days looking over their shoulders.

On the morning of the competition, the team contended with a dead truck battery,

barbecue pits with frozen air flow covers and ensuing repairs, and fires that started about an hour and a half late.

"But then the cook itself was flawless," Curt said.

When the top three finishers in the individual meat categories were announced, Fayette County Go Texan wasn't listed. Curt, who represented his team on stage, stepped to the back of the crowd. Based on the way most contests are scored, Curt assumed they were out of contention for the main titles.

"I was so busy getting ready, I hadn't studied the scoring system," Curt said.

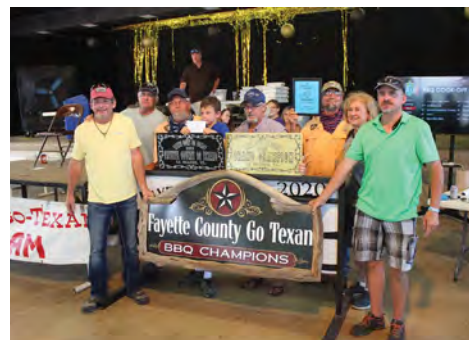
In Houston, each meat is scored individually on a scale to 100. They are ranked once in individual meat categories. Then, the scores of each individual meat are tallied. The highest cumulative score of all Go Texan teams earns the Go Texan title while the highest cumulative score of all teams earns Grand Champion.

Unbeknownst to the Fayette County team, their ribs had placed 4th, their brisket was 14th and their chicken was 34th. The average score was 96.

Go Texan was announced first.

"I had to push my way through the crowd on stage to get our award," Curt said.

Although Curt was giddy with the win, he assumed their team was out of running for



Grand Champion. Curt moved even farther back on the stage.

Then Grand Champion was announced.

"I pushed my way through again," he said.

This time Curt made it all the way to the stage's edge. Through his tears, he locked eyes with his teammates and pointed at those who were standing up front in the audience.

When asked by reporters on stage how I felt, he said, "There are no words, except thank the Lord. We did it! We...did it!"

consistent temperature throughout the cook is how you wreck quality meat.

RTR: Salt and pepper only, dry rub or marinade?

CH: Dry rub. I've got two I go to regularly. They began with a two-to-one ratio of salt and pepper and then were tweaked with other spices that complement specific meats.

RTR: Season overnight? Shorter? Longer?

CH: At least overnight, but generally I go 12-18 hours, depending on the meat. Salt pulls moisture out, so you have to balance

moisture loss with getting flavor all the way through.

RTR: Wood? Charcoal? Or combination? I'm assuming it's not propane...

CH: Definitely no propane. I'm a combination guy and the combination depends on the meat. Charcoal only for chicken. Briquettes, lump charcoal and wood chips for pork ribs. Briquettes with wood chunks—either oak, pecan or cherry depending on what I'm trying to do—for brisket.

RTR: Mop sauce?

CH: Yes. I started with the one my grandmother used to make. My father-in-law's is real similar. I combined theirs and then tweaked it a bit. I use the same mop for chicken and ribs, but something a little different for brisket.

RTR: Other parts of the country claim to have the best barbecue, why does Texas barbecue reign supreme?

CH: Lone Star State barbecue is the best in the world because we let the meat speak for itself—and that's the reason our style will stand alone forever. ★

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Shoot the Breeze

Article by
LORIE A. WOODWARD

Photos by
MACY LANGE

Just the Facts

Name: Brandon Gigout

Occupation: Cow Hand

DOB: November 4, 1997

Education: Texas A&M, BS, Animal
Science, August 2020

Brandon Gigout - Day Worker

Although Brandon Gigout has been working cattle for the public for more than one-third of his life, he characterizes himself as a hand not a cowboy.

"I can't call myself a cowboy because that title is earned not given—and it doesn't come easy," he said. "I've met a whole lot of folks who have more experience, skills and cow knowledge than me. For me, it's a respect thing."

The Smithville native's introduction to day work, the term used to describe short-term jobs that require a cowboy's skills, through his dad, who worked cattle on his days off from his full-time job.

"I am the first one in our family to take it to this level," he said. "In high school, I started to make my own connections."

Initially, he worked primarily in Bastrop County. He was mentored by Troy Lee Townsend, a well-known local cattleman. To pay his way through Texas A&M, he expanded his network and began ranging throughout the Brazos Valley including Lee, Burleson, Brazos

and Washington counties, across the Lone Star State and into Oklahoma.

"I also went to Colorado," Gigout said. "I rode pens in a feed lot and I spent time on a 40,000-acre ranch, where we on one occasion we drove 2,300 head more than 24 miles."

Two-and-a-half years ago a referral from a Bastrop County customer led him to a job with Scarmardo Cattle Company, a cattle brokerage and order buying service, in Caldwell. No day is ever the same: he processes cattle, doctors sick animals, rides pens and pastures, loads trucks, and picks up cattle from one of the 80 auction markets the company frequents.

"Last week, I worked 78 hours," he said. "You don't get into the cattle industry if you're afraid of work."

"I was up and going before daylight this morning," he said. "I have no idea when I'll get home tonight, but it will be way after dark."





As is often the case in the ag industry, the long hours don't necessarily equal a big paycheck.

"Some days, I think about trading it all in for a desk and a suit," Gigout said. "It might be easier, but it wouldn't be me. There's a passion for this lifestyle, the animals and the land that is hard to explain unless you're living it.

"Who knows, maybe walking with a limp makes me feel like a man," he said laughing.

.....

RTR: What appeals to you about being a cowboy?

BG: There's a pride aspect—it's not something that everybody can do, although at one time or the other a lot of people dreamed about being a cowboy. It's dangerous, but fun, so there's an adrenaline rush.

And you have to have compassion. When I pull a calf (assist in the birthing process) and save it and its mother, it's an almost overwhelming sense of awe and wonder.

There's a bond between people who do it. They generally don't have much, but they'll give you the shirt off their back and you can take their word to the bank.

And there's a sense of responsibility and again pride that comes with feeding America. Without guys like me, there wouldn't be food on people's tables. At the end of the day, you know you've worked hard, done your part, so there's a deep satisfaction that comes from that.

RTR: What are the must-have skills?

BG: Patience and a mellow head. You can get yourself in a big wreck real quick if you don't have a mellow head and don't take the time to pay attention and think.

RTR: What do you carry with you if you're penning cattle?



BG: A solid horse, a good saddle, a string of well-trained dogs, two stocked medicine bags, at least one rope—unless I expect to doctor something and then I carry two. And if I'm going on a long drive where we'll be in the back country a revolver tied to my D-ring. My saddle probably weighs a hundred pounds with everything I tie to it.

RTR: Why does Texas need cowboys?

BG: Obviously, nobody would be eating chicken fries or ribeyes in cafes or throwing burgers on the grill without cowboys. But more than that...cowboys are our icons. Texas needs cowboys like grass needs rain. ★

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Ask Ag Attorney

Article by

TIFFANY DOWELL LASHMET

Do You Have a Flight Plan?

What is a flight plan and why do people need one? The name is derived from the song “I’ll fly away.” You know the one... “I’ll fly away, oh, glory, I’ll fly away. When I die, hallelujah, by and by, I’ll fly away.”

A flight plan is simply a folder containing important documents, key information heirs may need to access upon someone’s death, hospitalization, or other incapacitation. Taking time to gather important documents and critical information is one of the best gifts a person can give to his or her family.

What should be included in the flight plan? Here are some ideas to help get started:

- Current estate planning documents (will, powers of attorney, advanced directive)
- Retirement plan information (IRA/401K/Pension)
- Copies of any life insurance policies
- Copies of health insurance policies
- Burial plot location and funeral instructions
- Email, account, computer and phone passwords
- Bank account information (where accounts are held, account numbers)
- Safety deposit box information (location and who can access)
- Lock codes or combinations (gate locks, gun safe, in-home safes, barn or buildings)
- Payment information such as payee, due dates, and payment amounts for important debts (i.e. mortgage, land payments, operating notes)
- Identification documents: copies of driver’s licenses, birth certificates, social security cards, marriage licenses, military discharge papers
- Documents related to real estate: deeds, titles, registrations, leases, royalty documents, surveys, water permits
- List of assets (personal property and all business assets)
- List of livestock, stored crops, and marketing contacts
- Crop insurance policies and FSA contracts
- List of all key business relationships (attorney, accountant, banker, insurance agent, commodity buyers)

Once information is gathered, it needs to be put somewhere safe. It is also critical to let someone else know where this information is located and to ensure someone has access. For example, if the flight plan is stored in a safety deposit box, it is important to ensure at least two other people know the plan’s location and those people have access to the safety deposit box on the signature cards.

This is a time-consuming and daunting project and it is never enjoyable to think about one’s own death. By taking the time to prepare a flight plan, a person empowers family members to act when something happens without having to search for information. Additionally, collecting this information will be helpful for the estate planning process and will likely allow more efficient use of an attorney’s time, and the client’s money, when it’s time make an estate plan and draft documents such as wills, trusts, LLCs, or other necessary documents.





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On the Porch

Article and Photos by
ANITA JOYCE

Cedarhillfarmhouse.com

Anita Joyce has a city house in Houston, a country house near Shelby and a flair for French style. The former engineer is a wife and mother as well as a self-taught photographer, interior designer, blogger and online entrepreneur who founded *cedarhillfarmhouse.com* in 2011. Today that site has 80,000 unique visitors per month.

Making a cozy home in a crazy world

As things become more uncertain 'out there' we are all spending more time inside with our families. It seems everyone is focused on making their homes a retreat. Those of us that spend all day focused on interior design have been training for this moment for years. We've always understood the importance of having a relaxing, cozy and beautiful home. And now it seems the world is on board with us. That's exciting news, because I think everyone should have a home that they love, a peaceful place rather than one that feels chaotic and stressful. There are some simple, easy ways to create a cozy, peaceful home, and here are a few of them.

DECLUTTER

I know, you've heard it before and it sounds BOOOOR-RING, but decluttering is key to reducing stress in your house. When things are cluttered, you can't find what you are looking for, and the clutter creates visual noise, both of which can cause stress. Think about how you feel walking in your bedroom with an unmade bed covered in laundry that needs to be folding, and so much stuff covering the surfaces that there is no place to set a glass of water. Compare that to the same room, neatly tidying up, with the bed made, and everything put up in its place, and nothing out of place. See what I mean?





COMFY SEATING

If you don't have a comfortable sofa, then it won't be fun to sit there. As much as I love my antique French chairs, I don't use them for everyday seating. Don't tell my husband, but I do know they aren't comfortable. I often use them to add some elegant to a room, and place a stack of books on the seat, so that no one actually sits there. I want them to sit in my comfy chairs and the sofa. I love using loads of down-filled pillows too that make for comfortable lounging. I also often use an ottoman instead of a coffee table, so people have a soft place for their feet.

TEXTURE

Texture is something that adds dimension and depth to a room, and it's important to have a variety of textures in your home. For example, a room without texture would be a room with all smooth

surfaces, like a room with concrete floors and metal chairs and tables. You can add textures to a room by adding wood, rattan, fabrics, rugs, and metals. I like to add texture to a room with a wool rug, wood bowls, old books, vintage bottles, and old rattan baskets.

COLLECTIONS

A beautiful space is a good thing, but I also love to see the space personalized, so that the owner's likes and interests are part of the design. I love dishes, so I like to incorporate plate racks, and glass fronted cabinets in my design. Some other interesting collections include ironstone, vintage silver, copper pots, vintage flags or even floral frogs. It's not so important what you collect, but that you find a fun way to include it in your design.

It's all about creating a space that speaks to you, one that is comfortable and relaxing. Enjoy! ★




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Article by
CHRISTINE BROWN

*Publicity and Advertising Manager
Texas A&M University Press*

Book Information

Daddy-O's Book of Big-Ass Art

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University Press

Author: Bob Wade

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145 color, 11 b&w photos.

Appendix. Index.

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Daddy-O Wade: Book of Big Ass Art

Bob "Daddy-O" Wade started "keeping it weird" in 1961 when he arrived in Austin with his '51 custom Ford hot rod and his slicked-back hair. Primed to study art at the University of Texas, Wade's coif and dragster earned him his trademark moniker, and the abstract, welded sculptures he fashioned from automobile bumpers in his frat house basement laid the foundations for the distinctive, larger-than-life art pieces that would eventually make him famous.

Daddy-O is the creator of the 40-foot iguana that perched atop the Lone Star Café in New York City, the immense cowboy boots (entered in the Guinness Book of World Records) outside San Antonio's North Star Mall, and Dinosaur Bob, who graces the roof of the National Center for Children's Illustrated Literature in Abilene, Texas. He is widely recognized as one of the progenitors of the "Cosmic Cowboy Culture" that emerged in Texas during the 1970s.

As Bob Wade describes in his Artist's Statement, "This book is a chronological presentation of my projects about Texas, defined in this context as ideas and attitudes about scale, culture, myths, symbols, artifacts, history, customs, food, animals, experiences, kitsch, machismo, cross-fertilization, sign systems, tourism, country-western music, the picturesque, cowboys, boundaries, life and death. In Texas, there still exists a thin line between cynicism and humor. This new publication—created with the help of more

than 30 contributors who were either familiar with the projects or just took the facts and 'created a page'—is an attempt to add more information about my over 50 years of making stuff. I'm hoping the responses of the contributors will add entertainment and head-scratching to the reproductions and create more myths than already exist."

Sadly, Wade passed away unexpectedly just past midnight on Christmas Eve 2019. His family notes, "To say Bob 'Daddy-O' Wade was excited about this book would be an understatement. He threw himself into this project. Among other things, he decided which written pieces and photographs would appear in its pages, carefully edited copy to ensure its accuracy, and was involved with the book's format and design. To people close to him, he confided that he considered this book to be a legacy for his children. He had a sense of urgency about getting it finished." He finished most of the prepublication work before his death, and the final book reflects his vision. As he concluded his preface, "I consider this book one of my best projects, and a legacy for my daughters and grandkids."

Daddy-O's Book of Big-Ass Art features images of more than 100 of Wade's most famous pieces, complete with the wild tales that lie behind the art, told in brief essays by both Wade and more than 40 noted artists and writers familiar with Wade's work.



PHOTO COURTESY OF LISA SHEPARD WAD

BOB "DADDY-O" WADE

DADDY-O'S

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Maker: Cam Lapee

Article by LORIE A. WOODWARD Photos by KELLI SANFORD

Cam Lapee, owner of Moonlight Forge in Round Top, has shaped a career from metal.

“Frankly, I just enjoy the work,” said Lapee, who trained and worked as a welder before becoming a full-time farrier and part-time blacksmith. “I enjoy taking steel and transforming it into something else.”

In March, he marked his second anniversary of working in the former Knutzen Blacksmith Shop in downtown Round Top, where he crafts everything from barbecue utensils, candle holders and fireplace sets to custom fireplace screens, wine racks, table bases and more.

“I wanted to open a shop in Round Top ever since my wife and I moved here in 2011,” said Lapee, who showcases the work of five other metal craftsmen in the shop’s back showroom. “I just kept asking until Doug [Knutzen, son of the original owner] said yes.”

The shop, located on the corner of East Austin St. and Texas Highway 237, was built in 1946. The elder Knutzen, who repaired chainsaws, hand tools and animal-powered equipment, navigated between the technology of the frontier and emerging mechanical age of agriculture.

“As we were cleaning out the shop, the mixture of chainsaw parts, pick axes and other hand tools in various stages of repair, was about chest deep—and amazing,” Lapee said. “It was like a bridge between the past and the present.”

The geography between past and present is familiar to Lapee, who became interested in blacksmithing as a 16-year-old attending a traditional blacksmithing workshop held on six consecutive weekends at a historic fort in southeastern Colorado.



“THE MOST SATISFYING
PART OF THE PROCESS
HAPPENS AT THE ANVIL
WHEN I’M FORGING PIECES
AND THEY BEGIN TO
REVEAL THEMSELVES.”

“Honestly, my friends and I went because it was a chance to drive,” Lapee said, laughing. “But it planted the seed.”

The seed sprouted as he took welding classes in high school and post-graduation. (His family moved from Colorado to College Station when he was a high school senior. He later moved to southwest Houston.) Then, at 20, he apprenticed as a farrier. His mentor was a member of the Buckskinners, a traditional blacksmithing group.

“In addition to teaching me how to shoe horses, he taught me about blacksmithing—and he knew a lot more than I did,” Lapee said. “The skills you learn in welding, horse shoeing and smithing all lend themselves to each other.”

For years, Lapee adhered to the traditional-style of blacksmithing, eschewing technology for history. He embraced the time-consuming, labor-intensive techniques at the expense of productivity. Then, he had an epiphany.

“It dawned on me that the early blacksmiths were state-of-the-art for their day,” Lapee said. “I asked myself, ‘Why am I penalizing myself with much more difficulty when there is an easier process available?’”

The shift in perspective translated into higher productivity and a lower price point for his customers, but he maintained his allegiance to the

craft’s long-standing principles of quality and practical design. Lapee’s one-of-a-kind work can never be mistaken for mass production.



"All blacksmiths have their own style," Lapee said. "Some create in an assembly line fashion so that one piece is as close to the other as they can make it. I don't. Each piece I create, even those I make multiples of like flipping sticks, are slightly different, reflecting their hand-made origins."

As a result, his target clientele are those who seek out the unique.

"Round Top is a great place for my work because people come here expecting to find the unexpected," Lapee said.

While he maintains a small inventory of pre-made goods, his burgeoning custom business keeps him busy. To place an order, customers can stop by the shop, which is open Friday, Saturday and Sundays. At that time, Lapee will talk through the potential project, take down the details and calculate an estimate. If the customer accepts the estimate, the order is filed at the back of the line. With the exception of repairs for farmers, which take priority, projects are completed in the order they are received.

"I'm not exactly sure where my inspiration comes from," Lapee said. "Blacksmithing to me is about practical beauty—something that does the job it was created for, but doesn't sacrifice style or quality."

While he's been working in metal for 45 years, Lapee is still driven to solve problems and innovate. For instance, he figured out how to tie a square knot in a piece of steel while he was standing in the shower at 3 a.m.

"I went out to my shop right then, tried it—and it worked," Lapee said.

The challenge of pushing the metal and his skills into new realms is what keeps Lapee working.

"The most satisfying part of the process happens at the anvil when I'm forging pieces and they begin to reveal themselves," Lapee said. "For me, the craft is a continuous process of refining...figuring out what I can do better. Each time I look forward to progressing my skill set, so that each piece is better than the last."

Moonlight Forge is open Friday through Sundays in Round Top at 101 East Austin St. and Highway 237. ★



Wildlife

Article & photo courtesy of
TEXAS PARKS & WILDLIFE

Prescribed Fire: Management Tool & Resources for Landowners

Historically, the post oak savannah was maintained by periodic fires that swept across the landscape. Brush species were controlled by fires, and the habitat was an open grassland with larger trees and limited brush scattered throughout. Many settlers and travelers through the area described it as being able to see for long distances. Nowadays, due to fire suppression that began during settlement, most of the post oak savannah region has been invaded with brush understory and more trees on the landscape. This has resulted in limited native grass and forb species due to lack of space and thus reduced ground nesting/fawning habitat for wildlife.

Today, many wildlife agencies and landowners use fire to manage habitat, much like the periodic wildfires accomplished years ago, but in a controlled manner known as prescribed fire.

Prescribed fire is one of many tools for landowners who want to manage their properties for wildlife. Prescribed fire is the planned use of fire on the habitat, which follows guidelines and protocols to ensure the safest burn possible. Unlike wildfires, which are unplanned and often unpredictable, a prescribed fire is implemented only when a plan is developed and followed to ensure the safety of humans and structures and to achieve a desired result on the landscape. Prescribed fire can be used to regenerate growth of grasses and forbs and help to limit brush establishment in open areas.

Prescribed fire can be a great tool for managing the land, and when done in combination with other habitat management practices, can help landowners reach their goals. If you are interested in using prescribed fire as a management tool, but are unsure how to use prescribed fire, contact your local Texas Parks and Wildlife wildlife biologist. TPWD personnel are trained and available to use prescribed fire as a management

practice. Depending on the weather, TPWD personnel help many landowners burn their property each year and are available to anyone who would like to start using prescribed fire as a management tool. TPWD can assist in preparing a prescribed burn plan and conduct the first burn on your property.

The first step is for a local wildlife biologist to visit the site to begin planning your burn. A burn plan will be developed for each burn unit; a biologist can help develop the first plan. With the landowner, the biologist will determine if there is enough fuel for that year to burn, what wind direction will be needed to safely burn the unit, and other factors needed. Sometimes, reduced grazing pressure and even a period of exclusion is needed to ensure enough fuel to carry a fire in the burn unit. Once the actual unit is determined, it is the landowner's responsibility to put in firebreaks, which is a perimeter around the burn unit disked to mineral soil. These breaks can vary in size depending on the fuel load/type. The biologist can help determine the needed firebreak width. Firebreaks need to be properly created to ensure the safest burn possible. Firebreaks need to be completely disked down to mineral soil with no litter left. If litter is left in the firebreak, the fire can creep across and ignite other portions that are not targeted for the burn, which could then cause a wildfire or unsafe fire. It is critical for the biologist to check the firebreaks prior to burning.

If this management technique is interesting, call the local TPWD wildlife biologist.



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