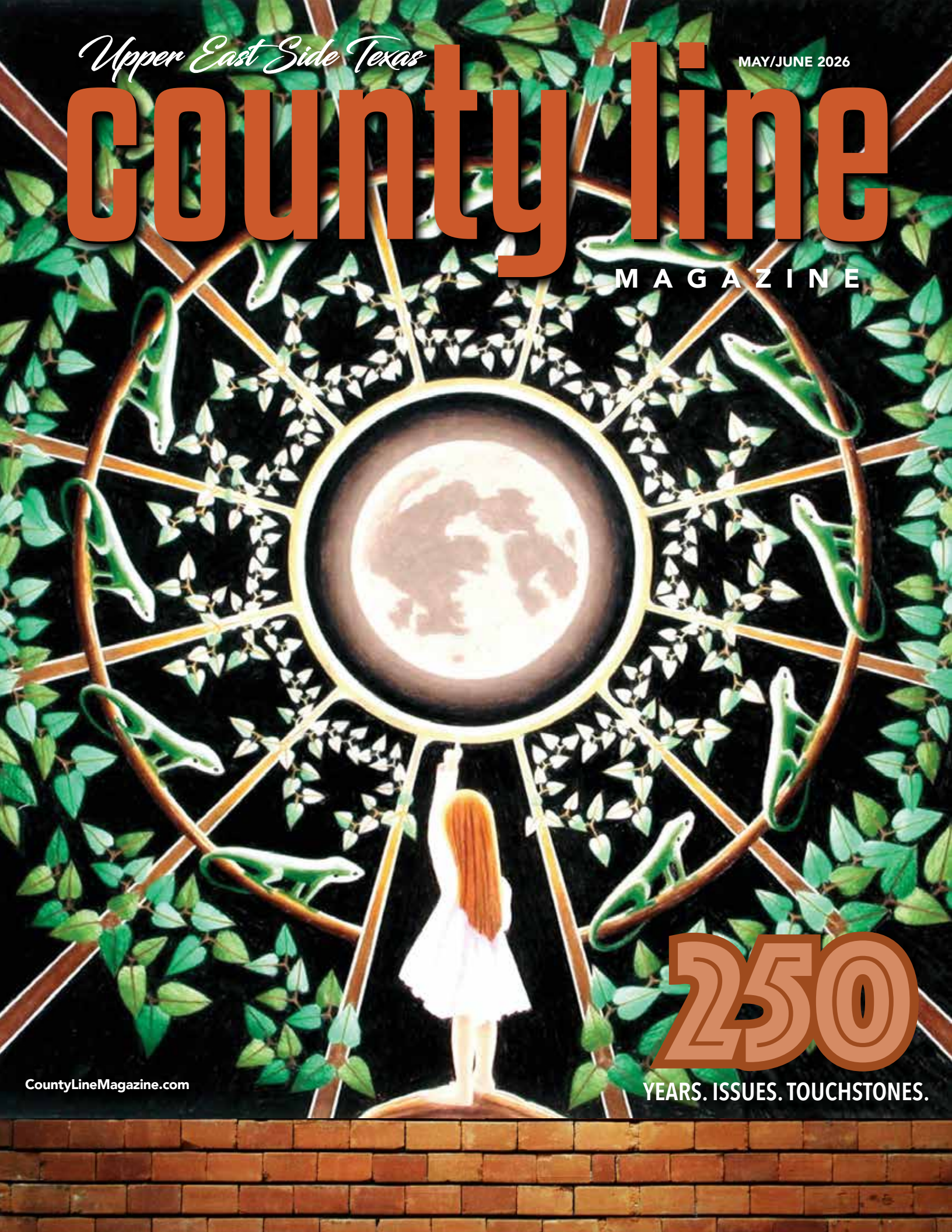


*Upper East Side Texas*

MAY/JUNE 2026

# county line

MAGAZINE



CountyLineMagazine.com

# 250

YEARS. ISSUES. TOUCHSTONES.

# THANK YOU, COUNTY LINE, FOR 26 YEARS OF GREAT SERVICE TO NORTHEAST TEXAS





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JULY 3-4, 2026

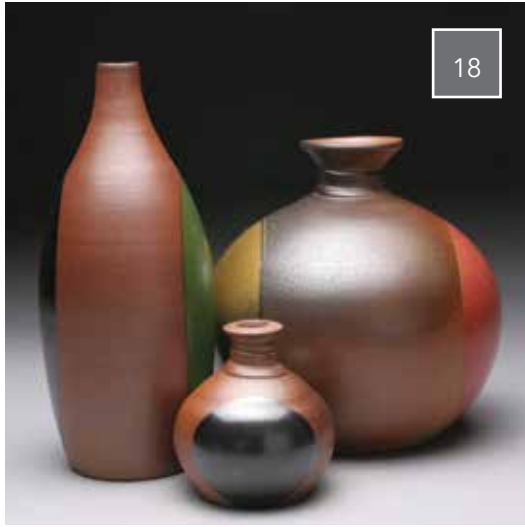


# EDDOM TEXAS

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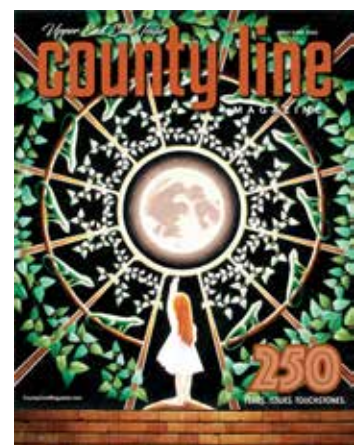


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COVER: "Pondering Our Place" by Gary E. Bachers

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## EDITOR'S NOTE



The number 250 takes center stage in this issue. Not only are we celebrating the freedom put into motion 250 years ago, but this is also *County Line Magazine's* 250th issue since we began in January 2000. With this milestone comes the announcement that we are closing *County Line Magazine*, and this issue is our last.

Please enjoy our interview with history professor Melissa Fulgham, Ph.D. as we “ponder our place” here in the Upper East Side of Texas amid America’s 250th birthday. We reflect on the promise made in the Declaration of Independence that all people are created equal. We haven’t fully lived up to that yet, but the promise is there. We are grateful for some progress accomplished over the past 250 years and are confident the strength of the people will to continue to lead us in building a better nation.

Discover more nods to America 250 in art exhibits, events, books, poetry, and a patriotic pool party.

Find a comprehensive list of 250 “touchstones” that help define our region through the magazine’s coverage, one person, one community at a time over the last 26 years.

It is fitting that we feature Van Zandt County now, as it brings us full circle to our beginnings. It is where *County Line* was born and was our primary focus for the first seven years before expanding to the entire Northeast Texas region.

In our 250-issue history, we’ve featured thousands of stories about interesting people, places, and things from the region. Our focus was on love, diversity, and tolerance. The “undertold” stories, not found anywhere else, were often a priority and broadened our perspectives in the best way.

Often, we shared stories of successful people who came from here and set good examples for others, especially kids, to follow their dreams. Two of the country’s finest singer-songwriters from Upper East Side Texas are featured in this issue. Kacey Musgraves followed her roots home in her new album *Middle of Nowhere* and Sunny Sweeney is headlining a concert in her Longview hometown.

Linden native and Eagles founder Don Henley told us a few years ago that he hopes young people here know they too can accomplish whatever they set their minds to do.

“Never let the fact that you’re from a small town shake your confidence or your belief in yourself,” he said. “Kids who grow up and go to school in the bigger cities may have some advantages, but

there are many very successful people in America who came from small towns. Get a good educational foundation first and then go out and work toward your dreams. Don’t be afraid to take a risk now and then as long as it’s a calculated risk. There will be failures and setbacks, but those are just part of the process. Perseverance and belief in yourself are key. Your small-town values and your work ethic will serve you well. Nothing great is ever achieved without hard work.”

I hope people are prouder of this region than they used to be. While not perfect, we can often fix the broken parts, or sometimes accept them, as in the idea of “wabi sabi” where beauty is found in imperfection. Many of us living, working, and playing in rural Northeast Texas prefer authentic moments over perfection. From Leonard Cohen’s song “Anthem,” we take to heart the phrase, “There is a crack in everything — that’s how the light gets in.”

As I come to the end of this chapter as publisher of *County Line Magazine*, I want to express my gratitude for the support of all the writers, photographers, advertising partners, artists, and all who helped make it successful year after year. I listed many out in our 25th anniversary issue last year so won’t do that again here, but do hope you will take another look at that list and show some love to all who contributed their talents to make the magazine live up to its mission to share the beautiful things about the region.

All the archives — close to 10,000 articles — are going to The Portal to Texas History. The University of North Texas manages the Portal as a gateway to rare, historical, and primary source materials from and about Texas. To have our entire body of work available to the public indefinitely makes it all worthwhile.

And there’s more good news. A new magazine is stepping up to continue telling the stories of the region. Please look for *Upper East Side TEXAS Magazine*, premiering this summer, and maybe a byline or two from me in the near future.

As I close this chapter, it’s hard to put into words just how much it has meant to me to serve this region these past 26 years. My roots run deep in this place, and it means the world to me.

I never imagined so many people would embrace *County Line Magazine* for so long. Thank you for taking this journey with me. I will never forget it.

P.A. Geddie

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ART EXHIBITION

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A Spring  
Art Exhibition

Mar. 26 – June 13

ART EXHIBITION  
**WOMEN in the ARTS**



Jun. 17 – Sept. 19

ART EXHIBITION

**HIGH SCHOOL**  
Art Competition  
& Exhibition

Mar. 26 – May 9



CONCERT

**BOB  
LIVINGSTON**

On The Bowery Stage

Friday, May 1  
7:30 p.m.



CONCERT

**BRI  
BAGWELL**

On The Bowery Stage

Friday, June 20  
7:30 p.m.

THEATER

**BROADWAY MUSICAL REVUE**

Songs from favorite Broadway Musicals presented by  
The Bowery Players and Winnsboro Community Choir

Directed by Dr. John A. Price & Fran Leddy

Two Weekends:  
June 6, 7 & 13, 14



FESTIVAL

**FESTIVAL  
OF  
BOOKS**

MAY 1-2



CONCERT

Winnsboro  
Community Choir  
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Concert**

Directed by Fran Leddy  
May 3 | 2:30 p.m.

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EMBRACE THE SPIRIT OF CREATIVITY

# America 250

## PONDERING OUR PLACE

*“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all (humans) are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”*

Declaration of Independence

By P.A. Geddie

The long-awaited celebration of America’s 250th birthday is upon us with the main events taking place on July 4, the anniversary of the signing of the document declaring independence from a restrictive British government as the United States of America (USA) became the “Land of the Free and Home of the Brave.”

It was indeed a brave undertaking for the colonists to establish a country where all humans are created equal, where citizens have the authority to govern themselves, and everyone has rights to the pursuit of happiness. Aligning with the rule of nature, the concept demands that people live for others, free from arbitrary power and unchecked law.

While the idea is good, and important to hold for dear life, clearly from the beginning some of the European men who wrote the rules didn’t think they actually applied to “all” as they continued to inflict oppression on everyone else including the enslaved, women, Indigenous, and the poor.

Some progress has happened in the last 250 years, but the country is still not living up to its promises.

For Upper East Side Texas and around the country, America 250 is a milestone offering space to review the past through a broadened lens of diverse perspectives, to assess progress, and to orchestrate a future that does indeed give all humans equal opportunities for happiness.

### The Land Remembers

Archeologists say the first humans in Up-

per East Side Texas were Clovis people, descendants of Asian groups who migrated across a land bridge that became passable between Russia and Alaska as the sea level fell during the Ice Age. Texas holds signs of the Clovis hunter-gatherers in Texas from more than 12,000 years ago. Descending from them are the Caddo, who are considered the most prominent Native Americans of East Texas.

Caddo Indians’ lives revolved around sustainable agriculture, hunting, basket and pottery making, and complex communal work. The Caddo culture was matriarchal. The women held top positions within their villages, and property passed from mother to daughter. Men would leave their own villages to join the community of their women. The Caddo raised corn, beans, squash, and other crops. They also hunted bears and deer in East Texas and headed west for annual buffalo hunts.

One of the most powerful Caddo settlements was in the present-day Caddo Mounds near Alto, about 30 miles west of Nacogdoches. The Caddo Mounds State Historic Site has several ancient burial mounds, gardens, walking trails, and a visitor center with detailed exhibits and programs outlining their history. It is a sacred ceremonial place for today’s Caddo Nation. Other signs of Caddo living are present throughout the region, most notably through archaeological digs discovering Caddo pottery.

Other Native American tribes lived in East Texas, including the Alabama-

Coushatta, Shawnee, Delaware, Kickapoo, and Cherokee. There were major skirmishes with invading Apaches and Comanches.

The Native Americans lived thousands of years all over the area before the Europeans began arriving. Major conflicts saw all but the Alabama-Coushatta forced out of the region by the late 1800s.

Texas is distinct as the only state to have operated under six distinct national flags: Spain, France, Mexico, Republic of Texas, Confederate States, and the USA. Nacogdoches, the oldest town in Texas, is named for the Caddo tribe that lived there. Besides the well-known six flags of Texas, in Nacogdoches, three additional flags were raised during various rebellions in the 1800s.

*“The land holds the stories of all who walk upon it, etched into its soul.”*

Native American Proverb

Spain was the first European power to lay claim to Texas, along with what is now Mexico and much of the western half of what would become

the United States. For 300 years, from 1519 to 1821, the Spanish ruled. They got along with the Caddo. The name Texas originates from the Caddo word “taysha,” meaning friend or ally. Spanish explorers adopted this term, translating it to Tejas to describe the Caddo people and region before it later evolved into the English spelling, Texas.

France attempted to expand its base from French Louisiana among the Spaniards and Natives in Texas from 1685 to 1690.

Mexico freed itself from Spain in 1821, claiming parts of today’s Texas..

By 1836, the growing number of Anglo settlers rebelled against Mexico's rule, and Texas became its own nation, the Republic of Texas, until it joined the United States in 1845. This period forever marked the Lone Star State as a trailblazer, blending European cultures into a new identity.

Melissa Fulgham, Ph.D. is a history professor and division chair of the Humanities & Social Sciences department at Northeast Texas Community College. She says the United States didn't invite Texas to join it for many years.

"For a long time the U.S. won't accept Texas because it's a hot potato," she says.

Sixteen years after becoming a USA state, Texas aligned with Southern Confederate states in the Civil War to protect its agricultural economy, which included the abhorrent institution of slavery. That ill-fated attempt lasted from 1861 to 1865.

Since 1865, Texas has kept in step with the rest of the United States of America, although always with its own unique personality.

### The Promise

European dominance in the country over Indigenous and other populations had a lot to do with their having more advanced writing systems, Fulgham says.

"The cultures that had a writing system (writing, printing, sharing) could defeat the ones that didn't. People gain more knowledge. They have books.

"The printing press is the second most important invention in world history," Fulgham says. "The first is the wheel."

The Europeans were well-skilled and equipped with both.

Having had printing presses since the 1400s, that technology was used in the new country to their advantage. The first press in America was in Massachusetts in the 1700s. By the time of the American Revolution, printers were playing a central role in the development of the 13 colonies.

Thomas Paine's pamphlet, *Common Sense*, was widely distributed in early 1776 and is credited with successfully swaying the colonists still pledging allegiance to the British government to join the fight for

freedom for the new nation. His writing ignited public opinion against autocratic rule and foreshadowed much of the phrasing and substance of the Declaration of Independence, adopted on July 4, 1776, which states in part:

"When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which

impel them to the separation.

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to in-

*continued page 10*

*"When it can be said by any country in the world, my poor are happy, neither ignorance nor distress is to be found among them, my jails are empty of prisoners, my streets of beggars, the aged are not in want, the taxes are not oppressive, the rational world is my friend because I am the friend of happiness. When these things can be said, then may that country boast its constitution and government. Independence is my happiness, the world is my country and my religion is to do good."*

Thomas Paine, *Rights of Man*





## AMERICA 250 *cont. from page 9*

stitute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to affect their Safety and Happiness....”

The birth of the nation continued to take shape, and the supreme law was established with the writing of the Constitution in 1787. It set the framework for the federal government by defining the rights of citizens and establishing three equal branches — legislative, executive, and judicial — designed to check and balance each other to prevent one branch from becoming too powerful. The Preamble clearly outlines that the people are the government.

“We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.”

Before consenting to live under the new federal government, the American people wanted to enshrine the liberties won in the Revolution. The Constitution was immediately amended with the first 10 amendments, which are called the Bill of Rights. James Madison drafted them on behalf of citizens calling to limit government power and protect individual liberties. Among their demands are freedom of worship, speech, and assembly.

Seventeen more amendments followed over the next 250 years that include abolishing slavery, ensuring voting rights for women and all races, and other rights to protect the people.

### 250 Years:

### Progress and Stagnation

While the new country promised power

to the people, inequities were present from the start. The equality rules seemed to only apply to Anglo men who placed themselves in superior positions to the rest of the humans in the country. Those men developed into a wealthy, massive machine during the last 250 years where an elite few shape political, economic, and social systems to serve their own interests, with little regard for the welfare of most Americans.

Armed with the Constitution, citizens today continue to fight for equal rights for everyone else, the struggling masses, however slow the progress may be.

Professor Fulgham says power shifting away from a monarchy or dictator-led government to citizens being directly involved in decision making has been happening for quite some time.

*“Oh America, how often have you taken necessities from the masses to give luxuries to the classes... God never intended for one group of people to live in superfluous, inordinate wealth, while others live in abject, deadening poverty.”*

Martin Luther King Jr.

“Over and over, power is shifting away from the king and down to the average person,” she says. “Government is not a gift from the king; it is the people.”

The hypocrisy of the USA founders highlighting the importance that “all men are created equal” in their fight for freedom, while they themselves continued to inflict oppression on everyone

else, is not lost on most.

“It’s the great paradox,” Fulgham says. “If you put this in a larger world historical context, you see there’s a long pattern of giving more and more power to the people.”

She cites the Magna Carta from the year 1215, a document forced upon England’s King John by barons to limit his powers; and in the 1680s, Parliament limited the king; and the French Revolution of 1789 declares the rights of man.

“The words create a set of ideas intended to eventually get themselves included.”

Martin Luther King Jr. famously called the Declaration of Independence a promissory note, a sacred promise that

all humans are guaranteed the unalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

“The words are there with this promise made in 1776,” Fulgham says. “Martin Luther King was fighting for it to be honored. There’s power in the words.”

Fulgham tells the story of an enslaved woman in Massachusetts in 1781 who heard the words that all are created equal and knew they should apply to her. After living 30 years in slavery, Elizabeth Freeman (also known as Mum Bett) went to court fighting for her freedom and won. That set a legal precedent for abolishing slavery in Massachusetts in 1783, long before the rest of the country, as they recognized slavery was incompatible with the concept.

“Regardless of the intent, the words are out there,” Fulgham says. “The tools are there to use to extend freedom as we have over the last 250 years. It set the idea in motion, and we can use it to keep it in motion.”

In the United States, the Constitution and amendments keep progress moving forward.

“What’s happened over the last 250 years is that our amendments have moved citizens from indirect to more direct participation. The people have more of a voice in the government.”

She notes that the 17th Amendment gave citizens the right to vote for senators; prior to that, a select few appointed them.

The 15th prevents the government and states from denying a citizen the right to vote based on race, color, or previous condition of servitude (slavery).

The 19th says women can’t be prohibited from voting.

“Race, gender, age, was up to the states before the amendments,” Fulgham says. “Over time, states arbitrarily limited voting to certain groups. The amendments prohibit them from doing that.”

Government bureaucracy is daunting to some citizens. As a result, many don’t always know their rights and feel powerless.

“We have more power than we think,” she says. “All these amendments give people rights. I encourage every citizen to read all seven articles (of the Constitution) and all 27 amendments.”

### Builders of a Brave New World

While monitoring the rights promised to them, America’s people didn’t sit back waiting for change. They built the country. Each generation accomplished good things worth celebrating. Besides abolishing slavery and giving all races and genders voting rights, there are improvements in poverty reduction, civil rights, women and non-Anglo men in leadership roles, life expectancy, major infrastructure development, and a lot of innovative technology that makes for a better quality of life for most Americans.

Most notably surfacing in the last 250 years are the conveniences of electricity, indoor plumbing, heating, and air conditioning, which were all part of most households by the mid-1950s. Innovations over the decades include the beloved coffee pot, zippers, roller skates, elevators, typewriters, telephones, cameras, and in more recent years, computers, drones, and cell phones with texting, gaming, and photography capabilities that are carried almost constantly in the hands of most humans today.

Transportation developed from the steamboats and trains of the early 1800s to the airplanes and automobiles of the early 1900s. And by 1981, the first reusable spacecraft launches and space exploration advanced over the decades. NASA’s most recent successful return to the moon and back with Artemis II happened this spring with a diverse crew including the first person of color and the first woman assigned to a lunar mission.

*“Be not afraid  
of growing slowly;  
be afraid only  
of standing still.”*

Chinese Proverb

*continued page 12*

Alabama-Coushatta child. Photo by Hector Maldonado





## AMERICA 250 *cont. from page 11*

Since 1776, mass communication methods have expanded from printed newspapers and books to the appearance of radio in the 1920s. More than 80 percent of households had a radio by 1940, and most tuned in regularly for entertainment programs and important news. It was particularly popular when President Franklin D. Roosevelt started his “fireside chats” on the radio to quiet public fears about the economy and World War II. Television broadcasting significantly upped the media experience with video images. Most Texas homes had televisions by the mid-to late 1960s. The invention and expansion of the internet in the 2000s opened up massive new viewing opportunities, and Americans continue to weigh its benefits versus the harm it causes with its unregulated dissemination of often false information.

The transition from traditional, trusted editor-driven media bound by journalistic integrity, to a digital system dominated by tech giants with social media algorithms and greedy corporate owners, led to rampant spreading of misinformation, making it imperative that people are extremely diligent in choosing their sources for both news and entertainment.

### Cultural Blends Create Unique Texas Identity

Texas’ location between the Western prairies, the South, and Mexico, combined with many cultural influences including those of Natives, immigrants, and pioneers with origins in Germany, Scotland, Ireland, Spain, Africa, and Asia, creates a distinct identity for the Lone Star State. These cultural blends are clear in cuisine and agricultural methods, architecture, music, and the state’s brave and independent spirit.

“Texas is not a melting pot — it’s a hybrid,” Fulgham says. “This is what gives it its unique identity. It’s the only state that has the agricultural economy of the South, the cattle culture of the West, and the Spanish architecture and heritage of Mexico.”

The languages of different cultures are

still used in Texas, most notably among Hispanics, but others as well. Names of places in Northeast Texas conjure many cultural heritages of the region including Caddo Lake, Kickapoo Creek, Cherokee County, Neches River, Lake Tawakoni, Nacogdoches, Alto, Angelina River, Sabine River, Arp, San Augustine, El Camino Real de los Tejas, Tenaha, Alba, Douglass, Naples, Paris, Athens, New Boston, New York, New London, Pittsburg, Atlanta, Kildare, Mission Tejas State Park, and Blarney Stone Street (Tyler).

The cowboy culture frequently connected to Texas’ tough, determined, independent identity comes from Spanish influence.

*“Live in harmony,  
for we are all relatives.”*

Native American Golden Rule

“Everything ranching is actually Spanish; all the cowboy culture — the gear, the words,”

Fulgham says.

The Mexican herdsmen were called vaqueros, which became “cowboys” in English. Bronco is a Spanish word meaning wild, which is what they still call untamed horses. Lariat came from la reata, meaning the rope used for handling cattle. Chaps is the shortened term for chaparreras, the leather pants used to protect riders in thick brush. Even the word ranch is derived from the Spanish “rancho.”

The Mexican cowboys’ sombreros and similar wide-brimmed hats influenced the popular cowboy hats and boots worn today. Boots originally were designed to fit in the stirrup and protect legs from thorny bushes and snakes.

Cowboys came from diverse backgrounds. Besides the Mexicans, the developing cowboy life included those of African descent and Native Americans, as well as European settlers. Cattle drives became popular in the 1800s as men herded livestock from Texas into other parts of the country. Many East Texans owned or worked on ranches and joined the drive efforts along trails mostly on the west side of the state where the terrain was less forested.

While cattle drives are no longer part of Texas life, cowboy culture is evident throughout Upper East Side Texas today, with horse and cattle ranches dotting the

Sherman Scottish Fest. Courtesy photo.

rural countryside along with other agriculture environments. Rodeos, trail rides, and dude ranches provide authentic experiences, and just about every small town has at least one shop ready to get a customer into a pair of boots, a hat, and other Western attire.

Campfire songs along the cattle trails contributed to Texas' music scene, along with many other cultural influences. The banjo originated in Africa and was integral to early Texas string bands along with fiddles that came from Africa as well as Scottish and Irish cultures. Western swing was born in Texas, incorporating elements of country, blues, pop, big-band jazz, and Latin rhythms. Conjunto combines traditional Mexican music with the accordion and waltzes and polkas from German settlers.

Tejano broadened that sound with pop, rock, and electronic elements like brass and synthesizers. Zydeco comes from French and African descendants with elements of rhythm and blues. Country music was born from a cross-fertilization of European folk songs and African influences.

The Upper East Side of Texas has deep roots in music and has given birth to an incredible number of successful musicians. Some music genres born or practiced in the region still have very clear lanes, while others are a blend. Most music styles developed from combinations of sounds, including boogie woogie, jazz, blues, ragtime, rock and roll, Celtic ballads, Appalachian folk, country, and gospel. Genres and styles continued to develop, brought by waves of immigration and neighboring traditions from Mexico. Over the last 30 years, the term Americana came into mainstream media and in jam sessions across the country as singer-songwriters tired of trying to fit their styles into any one genre.

Leading the way in cultural heritage through music in Upper East Side Texas are ragtime composer and pianist Scott Joplin; folk singer Huddle "Leadbelly" Ledbetter; gospel musician Stuart Hamblen; ragtime's Henry Thomas; blues

legends Aaron T-Bone Walker, Omar Shariff, and Floyd Dixon; followed by pop crooner Johnny Mathis; country stars Ray Price, Tex Ritter, Jim Reeves, Johnny Horton, Johnny Gimble, Lefty Frizzell, Bob Luman, and Al Dexter; classical music's Van Cliburn; and rock's Don Henley.

In more recent years, popular musicians from the region include ZZ Top, Stevie Ray Vaughan, Jimmie Vaughan, Billy Joe Shaver, Michael Martin Murphey, Lee Ann Womack, Linda Davis, Neal McCoy, and newer superstars Miranda Lambert, Kacey Musgraves, Sunny Sweeney, and Chris Tomlin. Other music-related talent sprang from Upper East Side Texas as well, with lyricists, composers, and famous venue hosts including

Kenneth Threadgill, Will Jennings, Susanna Clark, and Blake Neely.

Marshall, Texas, was officially designated as the Birthplace of Boogie Woogie in 2010.

Besides some of these incredible musically inclined humans becoming national and international stars, the region has seen the emergence

of hundreds of local talented musicians and singer-songwriters. Over the years, more and more music venues, open mic stages, and restaurants featuring music nights emerged, giving them a place to showcase their talents for residents and visitors alike.

Jamborees, fiddle fests, seasonal and weekly music series, street jams, concerts, and music festivals are regular happenings in the region.

Perhaps because of its eclectic hybrid personality, imagination runs rampant in Texas, making it a breeding ground for creativity. In addition to the musicians and songwriters, Upper East Side Texas is home to thousands of talented people in theatre, dance, and various forms of entertainment and visual arts. In the last 25 years, the number of galleries, art centers, museums, and organizations has grown significantly. Art exhibitions are

*"The purpose of life is to live it, to taste experience to the utmost, to reach out eagerly and without fear for newer and richer experience."*

Eleanor Roosevelt

*continued page 14*



Tejano tunes. Photo by Roberto Galan.



## AMERICA 250 *cont. from page 13*

continuously held in the region, and arts organizations offer shows, classes, and other arts-related events regularly. This past year, a few Caddo artists revived some of the traditional arts, including basket weaving and pottery, bringing the art forms full circle.

Architecture styles in Upper East Side Texas include heavy influences of French, Greek, Roman, British, German, Italian, and Roman design, including Beaux Art, Art Deco, Second Empire, Victorian Gothic, Greek Revival, Classical Revival, and Spanish Colonial. Those designs blended with Craftsman bungalows, log cabins, dogtrot homes, and many other styles developed in the last few decades.

Nowhere is the fusion of cultures more apparent than in Texas food. German wiener schnitzel became chicken fried steak, and in East Texas that means the meat is dipped in egg and flour before frying and then smothered with white gravy.

French influence remains in East Texas cuisine in the form of Cajun dishes like gumbo and crawfish boils that take place in restaurants and at special events throughout the year.

French almond pralines merged with native Texas pecans, eventually leading to a favorite dessert recipe called pecan pie.

The culinary legacy of the South had a significant influence on Texas cuisine, especially in East Texas where saucy barbecue, fried chicken, and sweet tea are part of the fabric of life.

Barbecue today is a blend of German and Czech meat market smoking techniques and Southern, Spanish, and Native American open-fire cooking, paired with the booming Texas beef industry. The process made meats like brisket more tender and palatable. East Texas

barbecue is a little different from what is found in Central and South Texas, with more influences from those of African and Creole descent who are responsible for much of the region's Southern cuisine. Besides beef, East Texas barbecue aficionados cook chicken and pork — ribs are particularly popular — using similar dry rub spices and tomato-based sauces.

Cattle ranches remain a source of income for many in the region, mostly small herds often vital to local community economies.

*“Do not be dismayed by the brokenness of the world. All things break. And all things can be mended. Not with time, as they say, but with intention. So go. Love intentionally, extravagantly, unconditionally. The broken world waits in darkness for the light that is you.”*

L.R. Knost

Farming has long been a mainstay of the Upper East Side of Texas with its history going back to the Caddo's early reliance on corn, beans, and squash. The region has a rich history with cotton, grains, syrup, fruits, vegetables, and meats. Residents take their appreciation for local ingredients to a Texas-sized level. Farmers' markets today provide easy access to seasonal fresh foods and often

include breads, preserves, eggs, and hand-crafted items. Face-to-face interaction with farmers gives shoppers a chance to ask about their process, ensure organic practices, and get helpful tips for storage, preparation, and cooking.

Many settlers in this rural region were farmers and ranchers into the 1900s. After World War II, many moved to the larger cities for work and began focusing on higher education to get the best jobs.

Higher education trade schools, colleges, and universities sprang up around the region as early as 1849, offering citizens a way out of poverty and opportunities to follow their dreams and improve their quality of life. Several institutions like Wiley College in Marshall (1873) and Jarvis in Hawkins (1912) helped Black youth pursue higher learning. Other higher learning institutions were established in communities across the region, with more than 25 in operation today, some of those with multiple campuses.

East Texas A&M University. Courtesy photo.

Scholarships and other financial aid help fund higher education, but many families found them out of reach for various economic and social reasons. Women, for instance, were still being discouraged from higher education well into the 1960s and 1970s, and often still are.

Many colleges today offer zero tuition and other initiatives to help make college possible for low-income students, particularly over the last decade. Public school systems often partner with colleges to get students thinking about higher education from kindergarten through high school.

East Texas colleges and universities are now experiencing record growth in enrollment and graduates with degrees, many of them the first in their families to do so.

Dr. Fulgham says at Northeast Texas Community College near Mount Pleasant, much of the increased enrollment has to do with dual-credit programs that allow high school students to take college-level courses while earning their high school diplomas. They used to announce those students during public events, but the number of dual-credit enrollees has increased so significantly that they're not able to do that anymore.

She points out that the Texas Education Agency's 60x30 plan is helping with incentives for at least 60 percent of Texans age 25 to 34 to have a certificate or degree by the year 2030.

Education for youth and adults remains a high priority for many to boost quality of life and the regional economy. Numerous programs are actively in place to increase employment opportunities and promote economic growth. The rising opportunities for remote working situations are ideal for those who want to live and work among the natural beauty and low-traffic areas of Northeast Texas. While internet capabilities are challenging at times, broadband internet expansion remains a top priority.

Among growing industries, tourism provides an economic boost as visitors look for the small-town and cultural district experiences so prevalent in the region.

## United We Stand, Divided We Fall

Ancestors of the Native tribes and those who descended from Africans, Mexicans, and Europeans are living and working in Upper East Side Texas today. They are joined by thousands of others who came to the region over the last few decades, including many from the Philippines, India, and Vietnam. The region is surprisingly diverse and becoming more so every year.

*"Nobody wins  
unless everybody wins."*

Bruce Springsteen

"The area has had huge demographic shifts," Fulgham says. "There are pockets of different cultures all over the region. There's large Hispanic growth in some areas where you'll hear Tejano music playing in stores."

She says that with all the different cultures coming to the area, it usually starts with one finding a welcoming environment, then they bring their relatives and friends, and soon there's a community.

Just like groups of those descended from Scottish, Irish, German, and other ethnicities who have annual festivals and other celebrations of those cultures, newer immigrant groups form support systems and gather on a regular basis for events representing their traditions.

While many people are moving to Texas, others are moving out, some out of the country as they grow tired of waiting for the promises outlined in the Declaration of Independence. Some are moving back to the very parts of the world their ancestors left behind.

Fulgham said historically there's always been a back-and-forth flow of people coming and going as they seek to improve their quality of life, and urges any who are feeling powerless to start with local leadership.

"Get involved at the local level," she says. "That's where the actual, real power is that shapes everyday life. It's your city council that determines what businesses

come in, what incentives are allowed, and makes decisions that impact how people feed their families."

Cities, states, and nations are judged by how they treat their people. Respecting differences and appreciating human commonalities are key in the pursuit of happiness. Often standing in the way are the "divide and conquer" tactics long used by those in power to control and avoid accountability. Citizens win when they band together; when there is no "us versus them" among the people. Citizens win when they work together and hold elected officials accountable to live up to this country's promise that all humans are created equal and all are deserving of life, liberty, and happiness.

A celebration of America 250 is a perfect time to find gratitude for the progress made and renew a commitment to equal rights for all of humanity.

Looking at the past through a narrow perspective is not the whole truth. "Broadening the narrative" is a term historians are using frequently in recent years as they focus on expanding perspectives to better understand a more complete story.

Professor Melissa Fulgham uses the advances in photography as a metaphor for how historians are going beyond old, typical interpretations of the past in order to build a better future.

*"Learn from yesterday, live  
for today, hope for tomorrow.  
The important thing  
is not to stop questioning."*

Albert Einstein

"Like old-time photography, we only got a snapshot of one area," she says. "Today, with our phones

and video capabilities, we can scan 360 degrees. That's what we're trying to do with modern history. Where people can find themselves in the story, regardless of their background. History is the story of people. People from different ethnicities, social standing, and education levels helped create the world we are in today. We're reconnecting the past, and these choices help shape the future."

*SOURCES: Melissa Fulgham, Ph.D., Northeast Texas Community College; Texas Almanac; The Portal to Texas History; and Texas State Library and Archives Commission*

# READY OR NOT, HERE THEY COME.

girls  
inc.



[WWW.GIRLSINC.ORG](http://WWW.GIRLSINC.ORG)

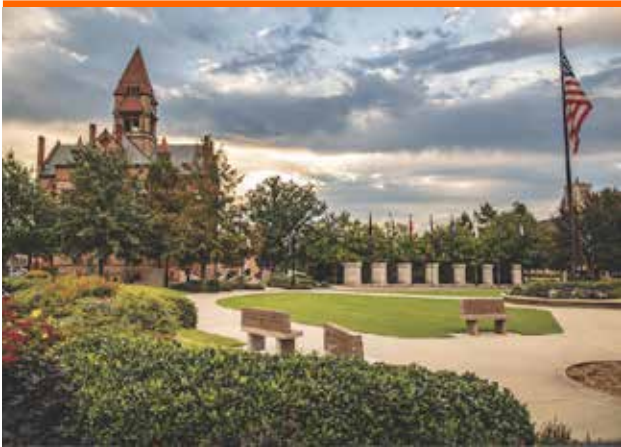
Just play. Have fun. Celebrate!

Downtown Dining District



# Sulphur Springs

TEXAS



[www.VisitSulphurSpringsTX.org](http://www.VisitSulphurSpringsTX.org)



# 250 TOUCHSTONES

*County Line Magazine Highlights the Region One Person, One Community at a Time*

*County Line Magazine's* goal to highlight beautiful things in the Upper East Side of Texas over the past 26 years has culminated in a massive collection of stories told one person, one community at a time. Below are 250 touchstones from those stories, forever part of the tapestry of people, places, and experiences that shifted the planet a bit.

The topics chosen are divided into seven categories: The Arts, Experiences, Food & Wine, Music, Nature, People, and Places.

To dig deeper on these topics and much more, explore the *County Line* archives in The Portal to Texas History.

## THE ARTS

1. **Art & Artists.** The arts are recognized as integral to the lives of the people and essential to healthy, vibrant, and equitable communities across the district. It was a priority from the start for *County Line Magazine* content, and the arts-related topics only picked up speed as the years went on. Find hundreds of artists, galleries, and creative talks on the arts in the archives.

2. **Tyler Museum of Art.** Nestled on a tree-shaded site on the Tyler Junior College campus, the museum has welcomed more than a million visitors to exhibition and educational events since 1971.

3. **Longview Museum of Fine Arts.** Bringing exhibitions, classes, and creativity to the region since 1972.

4. **Winnsboro Center for the Arts.** Celebrating 25 years this year, there are few art centers anywhere in a town of 3,500 that rival all this one brings to the region including concerts, education, exhibitions, theatre, and outstanding special events throughout the year.

5. **Creative Arts Center.** Art shows, music, and more in Bonham.

6. **Gallery 211.** An Athens organization featuring ongoing exhibitions, classes, and other uplifting community activities.

7. **Flying Fish Gallery.** Randy and Sherri Martin opened Flying Fish Gallery in Ben Wheeler in 2009 to showcase their own kinetic sculptures and reclamation art, but soon opened it to other artists to help them present their art to the public as well. Although the shop has long since closed, and Randy passed away in 2025, the ripple effects of their creations there still resonate across Upper East Side Texas today.

8. **Gallery Main Street.** Fine art gallery in downtown Tyler.

9. **Castles for Birds.** Joseph Hopps said, with a bit of a twinkle in his eye, that the sky's the limit at Arbor Castle Birdhouses in Edom where his creations look as much like magical fairy homes

as they do havens for feathered friends. Most come with stairs, ladders, turrets, dormers, and, often, two-story entryways under copper or gourd roofs.

10. **Street Murals.** The rise in the number of well-chosen public art murals on buildings keeps creativity and historic messaging in plain view of communities across the region.

11. **Anup Bhandari.** The late Anup Bhandari of Longview was one of those amazing people who made the world a better place in a big way before his life was cut too short. Besides gifting the world with his colorful art, he spent a great deal of time giving back and created the Healing Art Project for the homeless of Newgate Mission.

12. **Rob Toups.** "There is no education without arts education. Somebody competent only in numbers and science is not going to be a success in anything without understanding the human experience we all live day to day in terms of emotion, desires and ambition," says Rob Toups, director of bands and fine arts for Canton schools.

13. **The Art of Norman Rockwell.** In 2000, *American Life and Storytelling: The Art of Norman Rockwell* became the Tyler Museum of Art's most attended exhibition, a record it still holds to this day. *County Line Magazine* was proud to be involved through its partnership with Dairy Palace in Canton.



14. **John Biggers Wall.** Incredible story of a beautiful mural created by Dr. John Thomas Biggers, PhD, for a rural school showing the progress of education among descendants of the enslaved. The mural ended up discarded in an old barn for many years, then rescued and restored by a group of caring people. It is now in its own climate-controlled room at Northeast Texas Community College.

15. **Student Art Contests.** Giving thousands of young artists a place to bloom in the past 25 years, several art museums and organizations hold annual contests and exhibitions.

16. **Community Theatre.** Community theatre was one of the few performing arts consistently happening in small towns in the region when *County Line* began 25 years ago. Although some have come and gone, others have ramped up significantly and it continues to be a favorite way for residents and visitors alike to spend their time.

17. **Texas Shakespeare Festival.** Kilgore's theatrical experiences with high-caliber actors, designers, and directors from throughout the nation.

18. **Entertainment Venues.** Venues in the region upped their entertainment offerings considerably in the past few years including the Municipal City Hall Performance Center in Marshall; the Greenville Municipal Auditorium and Texan Theater in Greenville; Caldwell Auditorium, Liberty Hall, Rogers Palmer Performing Arts Center, and Cowan Center in Tyler; Whatley Center for Performing Arts in Mount Pleasant; Banita Creek Hall and W.M. Turner Auditorium in Nacogdoches; Belcher Center, Theatre Longview, and Maude Cobb Convention Center in Longview; Hopkins County

Civic Center in Sulphur Springs; Perot Theater in Texarkana; Winnsboro Center for the Arts; and Henderson County Performing Arts Center.

19. **Poetry.** Poetry became a regular part of *County Line Magazine* almost from the very beginning. Providing an outlet for children and adults in this way brought forth lovely and meaningful words to readers. Each issue published several poems and a contest was held annually with the winning poems published. More than a few of the young poets said the opportunity to take part changed their lives.

20. **Book Authors.** Herb Marlow, Joe Landsdale, Hank O'Neal, Matthew McConaughy, Colleen Hoover to name a few.

21. **Artsview Children's Theatre.** Changing lives since 2004 through education, outreach, and the performing arts.

22. **Linda Lucas Hardy.** The works of the Omaha, Texas, artist was often featured in the pages and a cover or two.

23. **JD Cole.** Nacogdoches artist featured on the cover and frequently noted over the years.

24. **Maureen Killaby.** Lindale artist voted Best Artist in the region and featured often.

25. **David Hendley.** Maydelle, Texas, is home to Old Farmhouse Pottery, the working studio of artist David Hendley.

26. **Kerian Massey.** Callender Lake artist's colorful work is often included.

27. **Pine Mills Pottery.** Operated by artists Daphne and Gary Hatcher for decades near Mineola, their exquisite handmade pottery and educational opportunities were a huge arts influence for the region.

28. **Lisa Hilbers.** Her outstanding photography is often featured in the pages and covers of *County Line Magazine*.

29. **William Young.** Palestine artist blends realism and surrealism into his paintings.

30. **Winnsboro Art & Wine Festival.** This popular, juried annual festival features talented participating artists and award-winning Texas wineries.

31. **Horsehair Pottery.** Find beautiful pottery by Cindy Fuqua in East Texas galleries and art shows throughout the year.

32. **Gary Bachers.** Amazing artist with an incredible story of resilience and second chances.

33. **Longview Ballet Theatre.** Find stories of founder Pat George Mitchell and students like Beckanne Sisk who has become very successful in the ballet world.

34. **Texarkana Regional Arts & Humanities Council.** Multidisciplinary organization founded in 1978 offering art exhibits, education, performances, and special events.

35. **Sculpture Gardens & Art Tour.** Featured two sculpture gardens with the works of internationally acclaimed art-

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## TOUCHSTONES *cont. from page 19*

ists James Surls and Glenna Goodacre and more than 70 other professional artists in Henderson, Kaufman, and Van Zandt Counties, along with a complementary book.

**36. Junebug Summer Fair.** The Forge Bar & Grill in Ben Wheeler holds this annual event featuring professional and up-and-coming artisans, music, live performances of Lyra artists, fire dancers, craft cocktails, and food using local and sustainable ingredients.

**37. Other Noted Artists & Arts Organizations.** Dan Harrison, Joe Dan Boyd, Edgar Sotelo, The Old Firehouse, Adrian Hall, Cheryl Hicks, Kelly Christine Musgraves, Karen Musgraves, Jenny Wingfield, Darrell Lindsey, Bobbye Koncak, Barbara Richert, Pat Rawlings, Daniela Matchael, Ine Burke, Franklin County Arts Alliance, Van Zandt Arts & Cultural District Foundation, Culture Club Art Gallery, The Kimbells, The Blade Bar, David Tripp, Randall Ricketts, The Great Debaters, Spring Parnell, Tyler Film Festival, Reel East Texas, Terry Crum, Jim Willis, Ava Arnold, Randy Mallory, Ryan Ayers, Linda Ayers, Chris Brown, Wendy Floyd, Brandon Adams, Craig D. Blackmon, Dave Shultz, Stan Johnson, Marshall Regional Arts Council, Ben Wheeler Arts & Historic District Foundation, Whatley Center for the Performing Arts and endless others who keep creativity constantly at work for the region.

## EXPERIENCES

**38. The Letters.** The letters received from *County Line* readers in the first 20 years or so helped keep the sails flying and often defined the direction of the magazine's content. With statements like

"This is the greatest treasure of a magazine EVER," how could they not. All that positive feedback truly inspired the magazine's longevity and much of the gratitude is captured in the archives. The letters stopped coming as much in the last few years as readership went digital and feedback was relegated to social media.

**39. Caddo Culture.** Find detailed history of the Caddo Indians of Northeast Texas at Caddo Mounds State Historic Site in Alto.

**40. Annual Festivals.** The Upper East Side of Texas is home to some of the oldest festivals and other special events in Texas. Long-standing car shows, holiday parades and events, rodeos, fishing tournaments, county fairs, and carnivals are too numerous to mention individually. Historic home tours are also popular in this region and have been going on for many decades. The increase in the number of creative annual festivals and other events grows each year.

**41. The Pulpwood Queens.** The Pulpwood Queens Book Club began in 2000 in a small hair salon — Beauty and the Book — in Jefferson, then Hawkins, owned by Kathy Murphy. With hundreds of club chapters around the world, their annual convention brought authors and their fans together for much fun including the Great Big Hair Ball.

**42. The Best.** Each year in January *County Line Magazine* published a list of readers favorite places, food, arts, attractions, and more. It was a fun time to highlight good things about the region. It gave noted businesses and towns a boost and gave readers a lot of new ideas for things to do. Many readers reported that they'd take the lists and use them to plan out fun things to do all year.

**43. Honoring Veterans.** People in the Upper East Side of Texas respect and honor veterans at every opportunity. Tributes, memorials, traveling Vietnam wall and other projects, and many beautiful veterans parks, are found all over the region.

**44. Tribute to Van Zandt County WWII Veterans.** The *County Line* published a special edition to honor veterans on the 60th anniversary of Pearl Harbor in 2001 and cosponsored a USO show that included more than 1,100 attendees at Canton Civic Center with the 17-piece Tyler Big Band providing period music, and more entertainment. Area high school students interviewed more than 100 World War II veterans and learned valuable lessons. One said, "I read about it in the history books but these guys were actually there and I finally understand." Many of the veterans said this was the first time they had ever talked about their experiences. Most of them were overjoyed at the attention. One attendee asked a veteran to pose with her baby so she'd always have a photo with an American hero. The veteran agreed with tears in his eyes.

**45. Women's Gatherings Break Down Divisive Barriers.** A Facebook post from a Muslim neighbor experiencing fear because of his faith in Tyler, inspired interfaith group meetings and support systems.

**46. East Texas Welcomes Victims of Hurricane Katrina.** Scenes of people weeping because they didn't know if family members were dead or alive, songs and prayers for comfort, volunteers working sometimes 14 to 20 hours a day to help people in need. Those fleeing from Hurricane Katrina in Louisiana found the best of humanity with extend-



ed handshakes and hugs from welcoming East Texans.

47. **Pet Rescue & Care.** East Texans take their pets seriously. Many well-supported rescue services are in the area finding homes for abandoned furry friends and others train pets to help people lead better quality of life through therapy.

48. **Pegasus Project.** Allyson and Mike DeCanio started The Pegasus Project in 2009, rescuing, rehabilitating, retraining, and rehoming hundreds of neglected and abused horses, donkeys, and mules.

49. **Wildlife Refuges.** Landowners in ranches all over the region raise and care for zebras, red deer, antelopes, elephants, giraffes, llamas, wildebeests, monkeys, tigers, lions, bears, kangaroos, camels, and other animals whose ancestors came from Africa, India, Himalaya Mountains, Australia, Asia, and other places around the world.

50. **Black Beauty Ranch.** A 1400-acre animal sanctuary in Murchison, Texas, providing lifelong care and natural habitats for rescued wildlife and farm animals.

51. **Goats.** From cheese and milk, to skin care and yoga, goats make everything better.

52. **Shepherds Watch and Weave.** Shepherds in the Upper East Side of Texas talk about their flocks and the products they help create.

53. **Pandemic Pause.** March 2020 had people around the world pivoting all aspects of their lives as they tried to figure out how to best manage the dangers of

the COVID virus. *County Line Magazine* began rounding up hundreds of ways for people to spend their time with safe fun and educational activities.

54. **East Texas Trains.** Railroads in their heydays changed the way people lived in East Texas, and continue to play an important role today. It is said that towns were “born, nurtured, or killed at the whim of railroad planners.” Railways are woven throughout the Upper East Side of Texas and museums and refurbished train depots capture the history of an era that is never far away from the ambiance today.

55. **Cowboy Culture.** Trail rides and rodeos fuse with art, music, and poetry.

56. **Black Cowboys.** Bringing Black contributions to country music and western history to the forefront of popular culture.

57. **The Ezekiel Airship.** Almost flying before the Wright brothers, the dream of Reverend Burrell Cannon continues to spark enthusiasm with a replica in the Northeast Texas Rural Heritage Museum in Pittsburg.

58. **Country Roads.** A frequent topic with those admiring the beauty and slower pace of backroads and byways meandering through the region.

59. **Fire Ant Festival.** One of America’s most unusual festivals in Marshall, Texas.

60. **Fall Feral Hog Festival.** The official Wild Hog Capital of Texas holds an event each year with a hog queen’s pageant, parade, live music, cook-off,

kids zone, pig races, hog calling contest, and more.

61. **Motorized Bar Stool Races.** The main attraction is the souped up motorized carts racing down Highway 279 in Ben Wheeler. Other festivities include artist vendors, street food, green beer, Irish tacos, leprechaun egg rolls, and live music all day.

62. **Texas Rose Festival.** Celebrating the role of the rose-growing industry in Tyler since 1933, activities include a queen and her court in elaborate, museum-quality gowns, a Queen’s Tea, and the Rose Parade amidst a backdrop of thousands of vibrant roses.

63. **Sail with Scott.** A great adventure on Lake Ray Hubbard from The Harbors in Rockwall.

64. **Great Texas Balloon Race.** The largest sanctioned hot air balloon race in Texas, this three-day world-class competition also includes concerts, a balloon glow, and drone show in Longview.

65. **Ennis Bluebonnet Trails Festival.** The Official Bluebonnet City of Texas is home to more than 40 miles of mapped driving bluebonnet trails, the oldest such trails known in the state. During the third weekend of April a festival is held in celebration of the blue beauties that includes arts and crafts, tasty food, kid’s activities, wine tastings, and live music.

66. **Heritage Syrup Festival.** Ribbon cane syrup making takes center stage in Henderson with other activities including folk art and sawmill demonstrations, carousel rides, antique tractors, story-

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## TOUCHSTONES *cont. from page 21*

telling, live music, square dancing, pony rides, chili cook-off, and children's section.

**67. Wonderland of Lights.** A magical site in Marshall during the holidays with millions of white lights and activities that include an outdoor ice-skating rink, vintage carousel, train, and a collection of tiny houses making up Santa's village with the backdrop of the 1901 historic Harrison County Courthouse.

**68. Texas Dogwood Trails Celebration.** Visitors are invited to enjoy the delicate beauty of the dogwood trees in Davey Dogwood Park in Palestine and the surrounding area. Activities are scheduled each weekend to complement the celebration including excursion train rides at the Texas State Railroad, the Farm & Flower Market at the Farmers Market, a play at the historic Texas Theatre, and much more.

**69. Autumn Trails.** Since 1958, Winnsboro has a full month of scheduled activities taking place with self-guided driving tours of the beautiful fall foliage surrounding the town.

**70. Hopkins County Dairy Festival & Balloon Fest.** In Sulphur Springs since 1959, activities include a hot air balloon festival, parade, Texas State Championship Ice Cream Freeze Off, carnival, street dance, museum and learning center, and a variety of dairy-related events.

**71. Tour De Paris.** Takes place in Paris since 1985 featuring multiple routes tailored to riders of all skill levels, including 14 and 24 mile off-road on the Northeast Texas Trail and five county routes.

## **72. New London School Explosion.**

A tragedy that shook the nation and continues to shape the region today.

**73. Higher Education.** Northeast Texas is home to 25 colleges and universities and hundreds of programs aimed at getting youth through high school and on to higher learning facilities to improve quality of life.

**74. Things to Do.** The number of fun things to do in the region increased dramatically over the past 26 years. In the early years, the staff had to dig deep to get a list together that would include such things as pool tournaments at the local VFW, karaoke, and bingo. Today, there are so many opportunities, the magazine often refers readers to individual town sites for help in capturing them all.

**75. Highway 80.** Goes through Kaufman, Van Zandt, Wood, Upshur, Gregg, and Harrison counties before entering Louisiana. Twice a year, a giant Hi-Way 80 Sale takes place with vendors set up along the highway.

**76. Texas State Railroad.** Twenty-five mile adventure between Rusk and Palestine, Texas.

**77. Other Experiences.** Big Foot, New York Texas Zip Lines, Mardi Gras Upriver, Bluebird Festival, Buffalo Girls Chili Cook-off, Mercy Ships, Art of Peace Festival, Malakoff Man, Star Gazing, Hatch Green Chili Festival, Eagle Fest, Dogwood Fairy Gardens, A Woman's Place, Hot Pepper Festival, Barn Quilt Trails, and Caldwell Zoo.

## FOOD & WINE

### **78. East Texas Wine Explosion.**

Vineyards and wineries popped up all around East Texas over the last 25 years.

**79. Berry Picking.** In season berries are the best with plenty of growers in the region.

**80. Farm to Table.** Locally grown; most tasty; good for health, economy, and the planet; and deeply ingrained in the fabric of life in the Upper East Side of Texas.

**81. Forge Fresh.** An excellent example of a successful farm-to-table event was covered in the March/April 2020 *County Line Magazine*. Taking place in the outdoor gardens of the Forge Bar & Grill in Ben Wheeler, guests described it as the ultimate culinary experience. All ingredients in the seven-course feast, down to the salt from Grand Saline, were sourced from the region.

**82. Farmers Markets.** Farmers in many small towns throughout the region sell their bounty on Saturdays at least April through October and some year around. Many of those started as roadside stands and are now full-blown destination-worthy events with entertainment, picnic areas, and food demonstrations.

**83. Culinary Tourism.** Experts in culinary tourism discuss roles of farmers, restaurant staff, and special event managers.

**84. Tara Vineyards & Winery.** A destination dining and wine experience surrounded by rolling hills, forests, a vineyard and the Tara Inn, a historic 1880s home with rental rooms available.



85. **Los Pinos Ranch Vineyards.** A perfect destination in the Pittsburg suburbs, the facility makes its own wines and features wine tastings, along with a restaurant menu designed so the meals pair well with the wines. There are several lodging facilities near Pittsburg and one of them, adjacent to Los Pinos, is appropriately called Relax and Wine Down. Three casitas offer concierge-style service to help guests create a customized destination experience.

86. **Enoch's Stomp.** Award-winning wines from beautiful vineyards in Harleton, Texas, with a restaurant and overnight villas.

87. **Landon Winery.** Established in 2005, they produce quality wines from their largest location in Greenville and have branches in numerous locations across North Texas.

88. **Kiepersol Estates.** A Texas food, wine and spirits destination with a restaurant, tasting rooms and production facilities, vacation rentals, and an RV park all set against a backdrop of beautiful vineyards.

89. **Piney Woods Wine Trail.** A group of wineries dotting the countryside of the region hold festivals and offer wine tastings and sales.

90. **Full Quiver Farm.** Operated by a Mennonite farming family that has a small store in Kemp, Texas, their outstanding products are also sold at popular grocers across the Southwest and at regional farmers' markets.

91. **Lindale Candy Company.** A must visit for any sweets lover, the candy shop — operating since 1946 — is one of the

last original hand-pulling operations for peppermint and it also sells gourmet chocolates in all shapes and sizes with seasonal twists.

92. **Greenburg Turkeys.** World-famous culinary favorite made in Tyler.

93. **Saxon Tomatoes.** Delicious tomatoes grown in fields around Ben Wheeler, Texas, are available at a roadside stand next to an old farmhouse and shipped to high end restaurants.

94. **Noonday Onions.** Certified Noonday Sweet Onions are grown within a 10-mile radius of Noonday, Texas, and are shipped all over the country and found at regional farmers' markets and roadside stands.

95. **Oxbow Bakery.** Tasty pies galore in Palestine, Texas.

96. **Dairy Palace.** "World Famous" hamburgers located near Interstate 20 in Canton, Texas.

97. **Four Winds Steakhouse.** Consistently voted best steakhouse in the region with Chef Frank Rumore at the helm.

98. **Efurd Orchards.** Located three miles south of Pittsburg is perhaps the largest roadside produce stand in the region.

99. **Other Food & Wine.** Red 55 Winery, Haute Goat Creamery, Nutty's Peanut Butter, Blackburn Syrup, Laura's Cheesecake, Sweet Shop USA, Greer Farm, Between Friends Homemade Fudge, Bryan's Cheesecakes, Eilenberger Bakery, Collin Street Bakery, White Fox Vineyard, Green Goat Winery, Sadler's,

Liefie Li Vine, Popkens Pickles, Wolf Brand Chili.

## MUSIC

100. **Live Music.** The region gave birth to a large number of up and coming and famous musicians and live music is a regular part of the culture of many communities.

101. **Don Henley.** Eagles legend Don Henley grew up in Linden in Cass County. He released a solo album called *Cass County* in 2015 to honor the region that nurtured him during his formative years.

102. **Kacey Musgraves.** She was only about 12 years old when *County Line* began 25 years ago, but even so, her name was already appearing on the pages. She was performing at local music festivals and released an album in 2000 with friend Alina Tatum during their time performing together as the Texas Two Bits. She's been featured on the magazine cover a record four times, a testament to her many achievements and trailblazing career that is stronger than ever today around the globe.

103. **Miranda Lambert.** The Lindale, Texas, hometown girl is one of the top country music stars in the nation. Featured in *County Line* while still a teenager just starting out her career, keeping up with her accomplishments is a joy.

104. **Ruthie Foster.** Born in Mineola, the popular singer-songwriter has performed in the Upper East Side of Texas more than a few times in the past 25 years.

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## TOUCHSTONES *cont. from page 23*

105. **Ally Venable.** Just 14 years old when she released her first EP, this Kilgore native is an amazing talent winning awards around the globe for her blues rock guitar performances.

106. **Meredith Crawford.** Sixteen-year-old Meredith Crawford won a Texas Talent Search contest held in Canton and landed the cover of *County Line Magazine* in July 2006. Twenty years later she's better than ever and bringing the party to venues all over Texas.

107. **John DeFoore.** Master musician and teacher John DeFoore purchased the Beckham Hotel in Mineola in 1989 and ran a performing/jam venue called the Piney Woods Pickin' Parlor for 17 years. He also opened DeFoore Music Institute where he helped to create such noted artists as Kacey Musgraves, Miranda Lambert, Michelle Shocked, Casey Rivers, Jeff Allen, Jon Wolfe, Riley Thompson, Kadie Lynn, and many others.

108. **Mount Vernon Music.** A restored prairie-style 1907 church-turned-concert-hall on Leftwich Street is the home of Mount Vernon Music Association. Founders and trained classical musicians Mark and Ute Miller and invited guests present a full season of concerts throughout the year. The couple also does extensive outreach, bringing age-tailored performances of musical storytelling into schools and "Musical Lifelines" concerts to long-term care facilities throughout East Texas.

109. **Tribute to Townes Van Zandt.** The Forge in Ben Wheeler holds this annual event featuring singer-songwriters performing and paying tribute to the late

Townes Van Zandt, one of the most influential singer-songwriters of the 20th century.

110. **Athens Old Fiddlers Contest & Reunion.** Since 1932, held annually on the Athens, Texas, downtown square.

111. **Legacy of the Country Blues.** An impressive list of country blues legends got their start in the cotton fields of this region including T-Bone Walker, Linden; Freddie King, Gilmer; Henry "Ragtime Texas" Thomas, Big Sandy; Alger "Texas" Alexander, Crockett; Blind Lemon Jefferson, Couchman; Robert Ealey, Texarkana; and Henry Qualls, Elmo, to name a few.

112. **Bob Wills Fiddle Festival & Contest.** Greenville honors the life and music of Bob Wills with fiddling contest, concerts, dance, and more.

113. **Bugs Henderson.** One of the nation's best blues guitar legends grew up in Tyler and in his later years lived in Jefferson until his death in 2012.

114. **Adler & Hearne.** Home based in Winnsboro, singer-songwriter duo Lynn Adler and Lindy Hearne take their spirited blend of original Texas folk with hints of blues, jazz, country, and bluegrass to listening rooms across the country. They were on the impressive touring roster for the Texas Commission on the Arts for many years. In 2005, they founded Crossroads Music Company, a premiere listening room, in downtown Winnsboro. They introduced many East Texans to legends like Ralph Stanley, Ray Wylie Hubbard, Druha Trava, Brian Burns, Rhett Butler, Jimmy LaFave, and performed there themselves along with their talented family.

115. **Sunny Sweeney.** Keeping up with the country singer-songwriter and Longview native Sunny Sweeney's music career over the years is never boring.

116. **Guy Clark.** Legendary singer-songwriter with a stellar reputation in East Texas.

117. **Action Sound.** A popular music store in little Hawkins, Texas, owned by Kelly Barber, with massive amounts of guitars and other instruments.

118. **Music City Texas Theater.** Presenting outstanding shows in Linden, Texas, since 2003.

119. **Heather Little.** Extraordinary singer songwriter whose vibe is felt all over East Texas as she gained a big following while living in Lindale.

120. **Oldtime String Shop.** Located in a 100-year old building on the downtown Nacogdoches town square, owners Steve and Sheryl Hartz operate a general mercantile store, fix musical instruments, and hold weekly jam sessions.

121. **Van Cliburn.** Kilgore is the hometown of the late Van Cliburn, and is where he learned to play piano before going on to world-wide recognition including winning the inaugural International Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow in 1958 during the Cold War.

122. **Texas Country Music Hall of Fame.** Carthage museum honors those born in Texas who made outstanding contributions to country music.

123. **Symphonic Sounds.** Numerous orchestras in the region provide an



in-depth look at the value of enduring classical music including the East Texas Symphony Orchestra, Longview Symphony Orchestra, Northeast Texas Symphony Orchestra, Marshall Symphony Orchestra, East Texas Youth Orchestra, and Sherman Symphony Orchestra.

124. **Blake Neely.** Born and raised in Paris, Texas, Blake Neely is an award-winning music composer for many Hollywood film projects.

125. **Kyser Capo.** The gadget that changed lives for many guitar players around the world was invented and produced in Canton, Texas.

126. **Ray Price.** Country music crooner Ray Price was born in Perryville between Winnsboro and Pittsburg and became a world-famous entertainer.

127. **Jim Reeves.** One of the earliest pioneers of the Nashville sound, Jim Reeves — born in Galloway in Panola County — played a significant role in the development of country music.

128. **Pickin' in the Pines.** Took place twice a year near Pine Mills, presented by musician T-Roy Miller and his family to make music and camp out and hear the likes of, from time to time, roots legends including Guy Clark.

129. **Boogie Woogie Highway.** The rhythm of the Texas and Pacific Railroad steam engine trains — running parallel to Highway 59 between Marshall and Texarkana — made its way into a genre of music called boogie woogie. Two other influences were ragtime — made famous by composer and pianist Scott Joplin who was born and raised in the region — and jazz, which entered the

area via steamboats bringing people and goods to Jefferson from New Orleans.

130. **Will Jennings.** One piece of East Texas' rich musical heritage, Jennings grew up in Tyler and Chapel Hill. Among many other popular songs, he wrote "My Heart Will Go On," which won an Oscar as sung by Celine Dion for the movie *Titanic*.

131. **Adam Carroll.** Tyler's Adam Carroll was a well-established talented Texas singer songwriter by the time *County Line* started in 2000. He brought his imaginative, humorous songs back to the region many times over the years.

132. **Henry "Ragtime Texas" Thomas.** An extraordinary early musician from Big Sandy, Texas, his influence is still felt today.

133. **Kenneth Threadgill.** The First Father of Live Texas Music was born near Greenville and honored with a concert series there for many years.

134. **Billy Joe Shaver.** From honky tonks to tent revivals, Corsicana native Billy Joe Shaver could hold a crowd anywhere in the palm of his hand.

135. **Leon Payne.** One of the greatest songwriters of all time is from the little community of Grit near Alba, Texas, in Wood County. Blind since he was a child, Leon Payne wrote thousands of songs, many of which became big hits and continue to be enjoyed today by people all over the world.

136. **Texas Music.** It's impossible to name all the incredibly talented singer-songwriters who performed in venues

throughout the region in the last 26 years, both visiting and local. Their impact on changing the vibe in the region is significant.

137. **Wesley Pruitt.** Talented musician from Canton, Texas.

138. **The Gillette Brothers.** Award-winning cowboy musicians and poets, brothers Guy and Pipp Gillette were home based in Lovelady, Texas, and ran the Camp Street Café in Crockett.

139. **Max & Heather Stalling.** The country gentleman and singer-songwriter and his talented wife, fiddler and singer formerly with blacktopGYPSY, are harmoniously entwined with the music scene in the Upper East Side of Texas.

140. **Blaze Foley.** The story and impactful music of songwriter Blaze Foley is introduced to East Texas through connections in Athens including a music venue and a restaurant called Yelof's (his name spelled backwards) open for a while to honor him.

141. **Cas Haley.** Paris, Texas, native specializes in reggae-influenced music.

142. **Johnny Mathis.** Gilmer, Texas, native who became an international sensation with an angelic voice and his romantic ballads.

143. **Other Music Notes.** blacktopGYPSY, Wes Jeans, Neal McCoy, Ruby Allmond, Linda Davis, LeeAnn Womack, Shy Blakeman, Don Williams, Michael O'Neal, Chris Tomlin, Ovid Stevens, Grant Cook, Matthew Davidson, Belamy Brothers, Dogwood Jamboree, Reo

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## TOUCHSTONES *cont. from page 25*

Palm Isle, Lou Ann Petty, Lynn Groom, Aubrey Lynn England, T-Bone Walker Blues Fest, Easley, Amber Carrington, Richard Bowden, Jimmy LaFave, Matt Bradshaw, Hannah Kirby, Ryan Beaver, Kadie Lynn, Uncle Lucius, Kevin Galloway, Purple Hull Sisters, Robin Hood Brians, Pauline Reese, Mundt Music, Mouse and the Traps, Kevin Tinney, Chase Glover, Owen Tiner, Chris Rasco, Art Sherrod Jr, Lauren Alexander, Jenn Ford, and so many more.

## NATURE

144. **Mrs. Lee's Daffodil Gardens.** Thousands of golden daffodils bloom each year over about 28 acres near Gladewater.

145. **Fall Foliage.** Best autumn transformational scenes in all of Texas.

146. **Wildflowers & Flower Trails.** Spring in the Upper East Side of Texas is full of colorful blooms along roadways and in well-manicured gardens with azaleas, dogwoods, bluebonnets, redbuds, paintbrushes, irises, daffodils, and so many more.

147. **Gardens of East Texas.** Stroll through Longview Arboretum, East Texas Arboretum in Athens, Blue Moon Gardens in Edom, Wood County Arboretum & Botanical Gardens in Quitman, the Ruby M. Mize Azalea Garden in Nacogdoches, and the Tyler Rose Garden.

148. **Parks & Recreation.** More than 15 Texas State Parks in this corner of the state are top notch, offering hiking, biking, boating, and other recreation and hundreds of city parks provide residents

and visitors spaces for enjoying nature and activities.

149. **Davey Dogwood Park in Palestine.** One of the most visited parks in the region year-round, especially when the dogwoods are in bloom and for those who enjoy the eight miles of unincorporated hiking and biking trails and picnic areas.

150. **Caddo Lake.** The mystical 25,000-acre Caddo Lake is draped with Spanish moss from towering bald cypress trees among a maze of bayous. Some of the cypress trees in the swamp are more than 400 years old.

151. **Sunrise-Sunset.** Readers never tire of seeing the sun's comings and goings in the region in person or captured by area photographers.

152. **Pesky Critters.** From bats, to wild hogs, to fire ants, snakes, mosquitoes and more, the experts give us the low down on managing a few of the drawbacks to rural living.

153. **Birds.** Birdwatching is rated way high on the list of joyful sites by residents and visitors alike.

154. **Lake Fork.** A world-class bass fishery and popular bird watching area.

155. **Mineola Nature Preserve.** A regional treasure for outdoor lovers.

## PEOPLE

156. **Two Families, One Heart.** A story of musician Andie Kay Joyner's journey through organ transplants, her donor, and his family.

157. **Butterfly Snuggles.** Thelma Barker and Lucille Geddie teamed up in Canton to provide thousands of small quilts to children in need.

158. **Pleasant Hill Quilters.** Clad in colorful handmade bonnets and aprons, the Pleasant Hill Quilters of Linden, Texas, work to decode and preserve a cryptic fragment of history, explaining how multitudes of illiterate people escaped slavery. Through meticulous quilting patterns and robust song performances, they offer a glimpse into a classified American past.

159. **Margo Martindale.** The award-winning Hollywood actress from Jacksonville, Texas, is as much fun in person as the characters she plays.

160. **Susanna Clark.** The wife of singer-songwriter Guy Clark, and an artist in her own right, Susanna Clark is best known as the muse to him and others, including legendary songwriter Townes Van Zandt. After her death, her family scattered some of her ashes in a field where she played as a child near her beloved hometown of Atlanta, Texas.

161. **Sully Sullenberger.** Aviation hero Sully Sullenberger gave an interview to *County Line* for the January 2021 cover story that includes his growing up in Grayson County and his learning flying and leadership skills in rural East Texas.

162. **Fiddle Making Man.** *County Line Magazine* publisher P.A. Geddie's father T.D. Geddie was a fiddle maker among many other creative skills.

163. **Opal Lee.** Grandmother of Juneteenth got much of her inspiration and determination in her birth town of Marshall, Texas.



164. **Terry Fator.** The ventriloquist's talent won him the number one spot on the TV show *America's Got Talent* and *County Line Magazine* snared his first interview after the win as he prepared to perform in East Texas in 2007.

165. **Charlotte Brown.** An inspiring story of a blind 15-year-old pole vaulter from Emory.

166. **Charlie Ogilvie.** Dr. Charles Dean Ogilvie was a physician from Dallas, then East Texas, who ran Arc Ridge Ranch near Ben Wheeler. He was an award-winning marathon runner well into his seventies and was often seen running or bicycling the country roads of Van Zandt County. He died July 3, 2010.

167. **Vern Dailey.** *County Line* was fortunate to feature the talents of Vern Dailey and his Kids' Korner cartoons for more than 10 years. For nearly 30 years before, Vern was the hand and imagination behind Muffin, Mr. Wiggly Worm, and other characters on the *Mr. Peppermint* TV show with his co-creator Jerry Haynes. Here's something he wrote that gives a good idea of the spark he brought to the world: "I love to hear the birds singing, and bells on ice cream trucks ringing. I like the cool April showers and butterflies kissing blushing flowers. Marshmallow clouds in a grape juice sky and kites wiggling their tails as they fly. And ice cream cones stacked three gobs high!"

168. **Tom Perryman.** DJ Tom Perryman was a breath of fresh air on the radio for a career that spanned six decades.

169. **Henry Lewis.** He'll meet you at two in the morning if he knows you are coming.

170. **Kris Hunt.** Los Angeles screenwriter, producer and actor Kris Hunt was inspired by his colorful upbringing in Upper East Side Texas.

171. **Tex Ritter.** The singing cowboy from Carthage, Texas, left a long legacy through his body of work and his talented children and grandchildren.

172. **Matthew McConaughey.** A big cover story for *County Line Magazine* in 2014 as writer Elizabeth Branco secured an exclusive interview with East Texas native Matthew McConaughey. The magazine kept up with McConaughey through the years, including with the release of his book, *Greenlights*, which captures some of his time living in Longview.

173. **Yogi in the Bible Belt.** Yoga master Summer Smith was featured first in *County Line Magazine's* August 2007 cover story about her yoga studio and practice in Canton. She went on to produce a project called *Yogi in the Bible Belt* and contributed numerous articles on well being over the years.

174. **Gussie Nell Davis & the Kilgore Rangerettes.** Northeast Texas born, raised, and influencer of precision drill teams around the world, starting with a high school in Greenville, then founding the famous high kickers, the Kilgore Rangerettes.

175. **Edward H. Garcia.** Author of lovely poetry and short stories.

176. **Tom Geddie.** Author of poetry, many *County Line* articles, photographer, and coordinator for the annual poetry contest.

177. **Don Meredith.** Born in Mount Vernon, Texas, he became a quarterback for the Dallas Cowboys, commentator, and actor.

178. **Patti Ramey & Jeremy Light.** These two *County Line* contributors regularly wrote book and restaurant reviews. Bonding over that helped them get together long enough to fall in love and they married in 2011.

179. **Brandon Maxwell.** Longview, Texas-born luxury fashion designer to high profile clients.

180. **Sissy Spacek.** Born and raised in Quitman, Texas, which she says helped shape the rest of her life and acting career.

181. **Other Famous Folks.** Jamie Foxx, Sandy Duncan, Doolie Wilson, Tye Sheridan, Forest Whitaker, and Montana Jordan.

182. **Lady Bird Johnson.** Karnack, Texas, is the childhood home of Lady Bird Johnson.

183. **Bessie Coleman.** Bessie Coleman was born in Atlanta, Texas, and became the first woman of African and Native American descent to earn a pilot's license. Known for performing aerobatics, her nickname was "Brave Bessie" and she encouraged women and minorities to reach for their dreams. Her story continues to inspire people around the world.

184. **Cattle Baron John Chisum.** One of the first ranchers to run his cattle herds from Texas into New Mexico, John

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## TOUCHSTONES *cont. from page 27*

Simpson Chisum has a nuanced story that includes entanglements with the notorious Billy the Kid and a long legacy of successors through the children he had with Jesie, his common-law, formerly enslaved wife.

185. **Carroll Shelby.** Famous race car driver and classic sports car designer Carroll Shelby was the son of a rural Texas mailman born in Leesburg between Winnsboro and Pittsburg in 1923, who went on to high acclaim with the design of the Shelby Cobra sports car and the ever-popular Ford Mustang.

186. **Karen Silkwood.** Longview native whose story was told in the movie *Silkwood*, featuring Meryl Streep, Cher, and Kurt Russell. She was a nuclear whistle blower and labor union activist whose suspicious death is still a mystery.

187. **The Legend of Wild Willie.** A tale of a man that took a hillside at the edge of the “world’s largest flea market” in downtown Canton, Texas, and turned it into an 1800s pioneer and western-themed mountain town, before his life ended in ultimate Old West fashion.

188. **Women Making History.** Historian Elvis Allen began offering stories of women in the first year of the magazine and writers continued to highlight women’s accomplishments ever since. From *Texas Women of Strong Will* written in March of 2002 to *Where Are the Women* in March of 2026, it remains one of the publications top priorities to hear the voices of women. Some of the pioneering women covered include Ima Hogg, Mary Kate Hunter, Mary Louse McKeller, Lallie Brisco Carlisle, Bessie Coleman, Sarah

McClendon, Lady Bird Johnson, Hattie Brantley, Lulu Belle Madison White, Anna Pennybacker, Elise Tvede Waerenskjold, Jane Long, Francita Alavez, Mollie Bailey, Karle Wilson Baker, Corinne Griffith, Lillian Richard, and Opal Lee. The research to find more undertold stories of women continues.

189. **Audie Murphy.** Hunt County is home to one of the most decorated soldiers of World War II and American actor Audie Murphy. Visit the Audie Murphy American Cotton Museum in Greenville.

190. **Corinne Griffith.** Known as the Orchid Lady of the Screen, she was a silent movie star from Texarkana who led a very colorful life after talkies ended that career.

191. **Wiley Post.** Aviator born near Grand Saline. He and humorist Will Rogers died in a plane crash on a trip to Alaska in 1935. His plane, the “Winnie Mae” is in the Smithsonian Institution’s Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C. A historical marker dedicated to Wiley Post stands at the Salt Palace in Grand Saline along with a museum display of memorabilia.

192. **Chief Bowles & the Battle of the Neches.** Near the Neches River in Van Zandt County, visitors come to the Chief Bowles and Battle of the Neches Historical Site. In the summer of 1839, several hundred Cherokees, led by 83-year-old Chief Bowles, met Texas forces in the Battle of the Neches. At dusk on July 16, Chief Bowles and his troops — including Cherokees, Delawares, Shawnees, and other allies — battled the Texas militia soldiers along the Neches River.

193. **Other People.** Red Hat ladies, Debbie Robinson, Rope Meyers, Ben Spies, Cynthia Ann Parker, Jamie Foxx, Joan Hallmark, Heidi Bailey, Pattizo Humphries, Jim Tarver, Johnny Manziel, Liza Ely, Leah Lynch, the Gilchrist Family, Terry Britt, Forest Whitaker, Thomas J. Rusk, Bob Mauldin, Jim Willis, Ellen DeGeneres, Elvis Presley, Mineola Black Spiders, George Foreman, Ross Perot, Bo Pilgrim.

## PLACES

194. **The Villages Resort at Lake Palestine.** Lake Palestine has a surface area of more than 23,000 acres in parts of Anderson, Cherokee, Henderson, and Smith counties. It has many marinas and camping areas, and several golf courses. The Villages Resort at Lake Palestine is a popular getaway destination with loads of water sports and other activities including scenic horseback trail rides, eighteen-hole mini-golf course, and a year-round indoor waterpark.

195. **Retreat in the Pines.** Theresa Polley creates weekend retreats with just the right amount of exercise in the form of yoga, delicious meals, country ambiance, and the uplifting gift of a group of interesting and supportive women.

196. **The Salt Palace.** In the center of Grand Saline sits the only building in North America made of pure rock salt. The Salt Palace Museum celebrates one of the largest, purest salt domes in the nation with a supply estimated to last 20,000 years.

197. **Edom Artists Community.** Edom, with barely more than 300 residents, has a higher concentration of artists than most small towns, drawing people from all over East Texas and be-



yond to the little community established in the mid 1800s. The late potter Doug Brown started the Edom Art Festival in 1972 and it is still one of the best festivals in the region.

198. **Heritage Park of East Texas.** Edgewood’s turn-of-the-century historical park covers three city blocks with authentically restored and furnished structures representing rural life in East Texas from the 1800s to the 1920s. They hold an annual festival in the park celebrating regional heritage with an artisan village, classic cars, antique tractors, model train, blacksmithing, print shop, barber shop, bake sale, jams and jellies, and live music.

199. **Weeping Mary.** O. Rufus Lovett’s photo book, *Weeping Mary*, captures everyday life in the small community near flood-prone Bowles Creek in Cherokee County. Although some stories connect the community’s name to Mary Magdalene, it is most often attributed to the descendant of enslaved people, a woman named Mary who “wept inconsolably over the loss of her land to a deceitful Anglo man.”

200. **Redland Freedom.** Freed slaves inherited land of their former owner and developed a community called Redland between Ben Wheeler and Tyler.

201. **Mary of Puddin’ Hill.** A magical store of homemade treats and charming ambience in Greenville for many decades includes a rich history and several moves to try to keep it going.

202. **The Neches River.** Begins its 416-mile trek to the Gulf of Mexico in Northeast Texas.

203. **Angelina County.** The only Texas county named for a woman, learn about the young Haina woman called Little Angel by early settlers.

204. **The Resurrection of Ben Wheeler.** The once sleepy little town was brought back to life when entrepreneur Brooks Gremmels moved in.

205. **Northeast Texas Trail.** A popular 130-mile walking and bike trail across an old rail banked corridor connecting numerous towns in Northeast Texas.

206. **Mercy Ships.** The far-flung Mercy Ships operation headquartered between Van and Lindale serves the world through a small staff and many volunteers who have donated millions of dollars in care for more than 5.5 million people in 95 ports in 53 developing nations since 1978.

207. **Courthouses.** Photographed and enjoyed by residents and visitors, the architecture of the regions’ courthouses is top notch.

208. **Redlands Hotel.** Often one big renovation in a small town can lead to the rest of the community working harder to spruce things up. Such is the case in Palestine after Jean Mollard created the beautiful destination getaway. Redlands Hotel offers overnight suites, a fine dining restaurant, cozy bar, gift shop, conference room, library, and art gallery.

209. **Fredonia Hotel.** An excellent home base while out exploring the Nacogdoches area. Builders named it for the Fredonia Rebellion of 1826, when citizens of that era decided the oldest town in Texas needed its independence from Mexico. Inside and out, the six-

story mid-century modern building is a beacon for people from many generations who are drawn to its 1950s vibe with present day amenities.

210. **Uncertain, Texas.** Confusion perhaps led to the naming of this tiny town but one thing that is certain is its proximity to Caddo Lake, the only natural lake in Texas, makes it a perfect haven for nature enthusiasts.

211. **Stanley’s Famous Pit Barbecue.** This 65-plus year old establishment in Tyler consistently wins double-your-pleasure awards for best barbecue and best live music venue in the region.

212. **East Texas Oil Museum.** The vast area of the East Texas Oil Field and the resulting fulfillment of dreams ignited by the oil boom era is captured in this Kilgore museum.

213. **Johnny Cace’s Seafood Restaurant.** A favorite destination dining experience for the region located in Longview, the restaurant closed its doors in 2015 after Johnny’s death. Customers still craving the food convinced his family to open a smaller operation called Cace’s Kitchen with many of the family recipes on the menu.

214. **First Monday Trade Days.** Since the 1850s folks have traded and purchased goods, livestock, and horses leading to today’s world’s largest flea market in Canton, Texas.

215. **Texas Eiffel Tower.** A replica of the Paris, France, Eiffel tower, with a big red cowboy hat stands in Paris, Texas.

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## TOUCHSTONES *cont. from page 29*

216. **Museums of East Texas.** Besides first rate art museums, many communities feature their history and interesting collections in well-organized and operated museums.

217. **Ace of Clubs House.** The majestic Ace of Clubs House in Texarkana is one of the most unusual houses in the Upper East Side of Texas.

218. **Holly Lake Resort.** A popular getaway with built-in fun for families, with hiking trails, swimming pool, canoeing, disc golf, and sports courts.

219. **Love's Lookout.** Four miles north of Jacksonville is a lovely rest stop for travelers and a delightful destination all of its own. At an elevation of 720 feet above sea level and rising 240 above the surrounding terrain, the vaulted ridge affords a panoramic view of the eastern horizon as far out as 30 miles on a clear day.

220. **Mantle Manors.** Mickey Mantle's legend lives on at Cedar Creek Lake.

221. **Nacogdoches.** The Oldest Town in Texas has a "Nac" for lots of fun.

222. **San Augustine.** The area encompassing San Augustine along the Ayish Bayou, 23 miles west of the Louisiana border, is so desirable that history finds it selected first by the Ais people who placed their village there, then by the Spaniards who located their mission there, and then by European settlers.

223. **Henderson.** With lovingly restored historic buildings to modern-day amenities, Henderson has a way of mak-

ing visitors "feel at home in the present while reminiscing about the past."

224. **Kilgore.** A place of significant discoveries, Kilgore takes its oil boom days seriously.

225. **Longview.** With an active arts cultural district, nature trails, fun special events, history museum, and more, Longview is home of the Great Texas Balloon Race, and there's always plenty to explore.

226. **Marshall.** Marshall's small-town charm is beautifully matched with a wide variety of fun amenities often found in larger cities.

227. **Jefferson.** An important riverport town in Texas history, Jefferson today retains the ambiance of days gone by and the legends that keep it intriguing to visitors from all over the world.

228. **Texarkana.** One city, straddled across two states, Texarkana highlights arts and culture with its own state-designated cultural district.

229. **Paris.** The second largest Paris in the world doesn't officially share the same tag line as its "City of Love" sister city in France, but even so, expect a lovely time in Paris, Texas. Radio personality Paul Harvey once said it is a city "where tomorrow fell in love with yesterday, and side by side, they lived happily ever after."

230. **Bonham.** One of the oldest cities in Texas, Bonham offers rich history, attractions, museums, and ongoing events and recreation throughout the year.

231. **Greenville.** Greenville is a colorful town full of surprises. Its attention on entertainment and the arts is clear at every turn.

232. **Sulphur Springs.** The award-winning Romanesque Revival courthouse in downtown Sulphur Springs is the showpiece and inspiration for the lively Celebration Plaza at the heart of the community.

233. **Mount Vernon.** The inviting Plaza District of Mount Vernon is unusual in that the county courthouse — beautifully adorned with a clock tower dome — is on the north side instead of the center of the historic town square. Holding center stage is a plaza with a gazebo, landscaping, and plenty of benches for people to come together and enjoy this small-town treasure listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

234. **Mount Pleasant.** Home of the nation's largest handmade chocolate factory, Mount Pleasant is a seriously sweet spot on a broad hill in the Upper East Side of Texas.

235. **Pittsburg.** Strolling through historic downtown Pittsburg, visitors hear soft melodies played by Paccard bells from France. The peaceful tunes come from a prayer tower in a small park within walking distance of downtown shops in the Hot Link Capital of Texas.

236. **Winnsboro.** Nestled among lakes and forest-filled country backroads, Winnsboro's focus on the arts and history garners it a seat at the table with much larger towns as an official Texas Cultural District. With a very active art center anchoring the community, guests find creativity at every turn.



237. **Mineola.** With the arrival of the iron horse, Mineola began in the 1870s and remains a railroad and transportation hub today. Carefully maintained historic buildings provide a nostalgic backdrop.

238. **Lindale.** Sweets, scenic views, and the sound of music are Lindale's heartbeat. Famous for its 75-year-old home-made candy factory, its more recent claim to fame is the revitalized downtown Cannery complex and inspiration from hometown girl and award-winning country music sensation Miranda Lambert.

239. **Tyler.** The glitter that permeates the air coming out of the Rose Capital of America falls ever so lightly upon small towns across the Upper East Side of Texas.

240. **The Earth and Space Science Center.** Planetarium shows, museum, laser shows, and special events on the Tyler Junior College campus.

241. **Terrell.** Terrell Downtown Historic District keeps the charm of yesteryear with vintage lighting, wide brick sidewalks, and updated historic buildings.

242. **Athens.** A serene mix of art, nature, history, and culinary delights, Athens invites visitors to kick back, relax, and enjoy fun activities at a slow, but never boring, small-town pace.

243. **Corsicana.** A perfect combination of rich history and modern amenities, Corsicana rolls out the red, white, and blue carpet for fun and adventure.

244. **Rockwall.** The Free Live Music Capital of North Texas has a thriving downtown and The Harbors, a favorite destination against the backdrop of beautiful Lake Ray Hubbard.

245. **Palestine.** A Texan Top Travel Destination, Palestine flourishes throughout the year with eye-catching blooms, historic architecture, and plenty of local flavor.

246. **Jacksonville.** Nature lovingly embraces the Tomato Capital of the World with scenic landscapes, inviting waters, and outdoor adventures.

247. **Cedar Creek Lake.** Cedar Creek Lake is in Henderson and Kaufman counties. The lake is popular for fishing, boating, and other water sports. Several

marinas and public beaches and picnic areas give access to the lake.

248. **El Camino Real de los Tejas.** Also called the Royal Road and King's Highway, it was an important trail blazed in 1691, stretching from the interior of Mexico, across the Rio Grande, and then across Texas and into Louisiana. The East Texas section of the trail includes the communities of Alto, Grapeland, Hemphill, Nacogdoches, and San Augustine.

249. **The Links at Land's End.** Long-standing golf course on Lake Fork.

250. **Other Places.** Bug Tussle, Soda Fountains, Lake Athens Marina, Art & Espresso, Clarksville, Discovery Science Place, Gladewater, Moore's Store, A.C. McMillan African American Museum, Edom Bakery & Grill, Robertson's Hams, Mill Creek Ranch Resort, Crockett, Commerce, Emory, Yesterland Farm, Splash Kingdom, Paul Michael Company, Winona, Five D Cattle Company Steakhouse, Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center, Turner's Country Store, Van Oil Museum, Perot Theater, Pounds Tyler Airport, Clara Ida Frances, Waxahachie, Coffee Shops, Uptown Forum, The Ritual, Mineola Select Theater.



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**AND**

**Sunday, May 31, 2026 at 3:00 pm**

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Mark Miller

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*Mount Vernon Music Association is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization dedicated to providing outstanding performances of live music to communities, primarily in Northeast Texas. They present concerts of traditional chamber music, jazz and other styles as well as educational and family concerts, and programs for nursing homes, encouraging interaction of the performing and visual arts.*



# Towns Van Zandt

*Find History and Creativity at Every Turn in Van Zandt County*

*By P.A. Geddie*

Van Zandt County is named for early Texas settler Isaac Van Zandt. More famous in recent years is his four-times great-grandson, the late Townes Van Zandt, often referred to as the most influential Texas songwriter of the twentieth century. A Tribute to Townes Van Zandt takes place in the county each year in early March around his birthday with local singer-songwriters and special guests performing their favorite Van Zandt songs.

Several towns in Van Zandt County — surrounded by lovely countryside and au-

thentic attractions — are popular travel destinations.

Canton is the county seat and home of the “World’s Largest Flea Market.” First Monday Trade Days takes place four days every month, not a one of them a Monday. Dating back to 1850, people gathered around the courthouse square on the first Monday of the month to see the circuit judge, gather needed supplies, and watch court proceedings. People brought their livestock, produce, and farming equipment to sell or trade while in town.

Eventually, the buying and selling activities expanded, covering hundreds of acres in the downtown Canton area. The shopping moved to the four days prior to the first Monday to better accommodate weekend travelers. Today, an estimated 100,000 shoppers visit more than 6,000 vendors each month, finding home decor, antiques, collectibles, jewelry, clothing, and unusual gift items.

Beyond its world-famous flea market, Canton has a charming downtown center, ample shopping and dining experiences, attractions, and fun things to do



*OPPOSITE: The Tribute to Townes Van Zandt and other live music events take place on a regular basis at The Forge Bar & Grill in Ben Wheeler. Photo by Tom Geddie. ABOVE: Downtown Canton, Texas. Photo by Austin Melton.*

regularly, and it hosts annual events that rival any small town in America. Once the trade days' crowds subside, Canton settles in to anything but a sleepy little town. Those who prefer shopping at a leisurely pace find antiques, furniture, home decor, homemade arts and crafts, jewelry, clothing, gifts, and more in a variety of specialty and retail stores.

Friendly staff from long-standing restaurants serve delicious country cooking, baked goods, barbecue, fried pies, catfish, steaks, as well as Italian, Mexican, and Chinese dishes.

Area attractions and outdoor adventures include museums, historic sites, golf courses, a seasonal playland, a veterans memorial, a water park, and pickleball courts. Several community parks offer playgrounds, scenic lakes and walking paths, pier and bank fishing, swimming, and picnic areas. Canton is a state-designated Walking Capital of Texas because of the miles put on by shoppers while browsing the 450-acre flea market grounds and recreating at the local parks.

North of town, families enjoy seasonal attractions Yesterland Farm and Splash Kingdom. Golfers find the Van Zandt Country Club. South of Canton, attractions include Rocky Ridge Drive Thru Safari, featuring 25 species of animals on 200 acres. Cannon Creek Vineyard makes a variety of wines and has a tasting room, and guests are welcome to bring a picnic.

Mill Creek Ranch Resort offers RV sites, cabins, yurts, and cottage rentals, fishing ponds, nature trails, two swimming pools, paddleboats, and children's playgrounds.

The Silver Spur Resort has RV sites, cabin rentals, and glamping options. They have an on-site restaurant called Q & Brew with authentic Texas smokehouse-style barbecue along with local craft beers and assorted Texas wines. Amenities include a swimming pool, fishing ponds, and kids' playground. Escape rooms and other activities take place regularly.

Southeast of Canton is the unincorporated town of Ben Wheeler, the "Wild Hog Capital of Texas." It is a tiny town packed with live music, good food, wine, spirits, and regular special events. Several hotels and vacation rentals are nearby and Turkey Creek Country Resort with RV sites is downtown.

Folks in Historic Ben Wheeler are used to going hog wild. It is an unincorporated community, and the business owners like it that way. They have their own quirky, casual way of doing things, and visitors come from all over to see why it is sometimes called "One of the Coolest Small Towns in Texas."

The town is named for Benjamin Wheeler, the first man to carry mail into the area. Its rich history is part of the town's charm. Restored historic buildings provide an idyllic ambiance to go along with modern culinary and artisanal offerings.

Farmers and ranchers provide fresh ingredients for two restaurants anchoring the town, which are located in the former mercantile and blacksmith shops. A farmers' market takes place during the summer, and live music happens five days a week in several venues.

The rustic community is also home to boutique stores with clothing, antiques, vinyl records, and gifts. The downtown businesses sit among groves of tall, lush East Texas oak trees, and they take full advantage of utilizing park-like settings throughout the town.

Ben Wheeler is a fun visit any time of the year, but organizers go all out for their  
*continued page 36*

**VAN ZANDT** *cont. from page 35*

annual and pop-up events. With bar stool races, a summer art fair, and the Fall Feral Hog Festival, there is never a dull moment and plenty of room for people of all ages to find their own way to “ham it up.”

Ben Wheeler the postman, a higher education institute, and cane syrup production are topics documented on historical markers in and around town.

Just outside town is an upscale bakery and the farmhouse headquarters of the famous Saxon tomatoes, where guests can take what they need from a roadside stand and put their money in a jar.

White Fox Vineyards sits near the Van Zandt County border on 330 acres. The family-owned boutique winery produces hand crafted local wines on site. They make most of their vintages from estate-grown muscadines and grapes.

Historical markers on the south side of

Van Zandt County cover a variety of topics. One subject is a military road and cattle trail between Tyler and Porter’s Bluff that predates Mexican rule. Vestiges of the road are still visible in some locations in Smith and Navarro Counties.

Asbury Cemetery has burial sites going back to 1836 and chronicles pioneers of Van Zandt County. One famous marker there is the First Burial Site of Little Prairie Flower — also called Topsannah — the young daughter of celebrated Comanche captive Cynthia Ann Parker and Comanche Chief Peta Nocona. Prairie Flower was born in 1858 and died in 1863 of pneumonia while living with relatives of her mother. Her remains were later moved to Oklahoma to join those of her mother and her brother, famous Comanche leader Quanah Parker. Cynthia Ann Parker’s story is the subject of many books and has inspired various characters in works of fiction and film, from *The Searchers*, starring John Wayne and Natalie Wood, to *Dances with Wolves*, starring Kevin Costner.

In the most southeastern tip of Van Zandt County, is the artists hamlet of Edom. Visitors often find a handful of artists working in their studios. Surrounding Edom are farms with berries, grapes, seasonal produce, and flower gardens. Blueberry Hill Farms is an annual highlight for many during the summer to enjoy picking fresh blueberries. Several daylily and other flower farms are in the area and Blue Moon Gardens is a delightful oasis destination garden center built on a rural homestead. It features more than 20 demonstration gardens, an old farmhouse gift shop, an outdoor kitchen, a vast selection of plants, and a fiber arts studio.

Edom was established in the mid-1800s and, like many small towns that time forgot after World War II, it was nothing

*continued page 39*

*PHOTOS: Attention to details is apparent in each little specialty shop in downtown Ben Wheeler. Photos by Craig D. Blackmon, FALA.*









**VAN ZANDT** *cont. from page 36*

more than a dusty spot in the road when the late potter Doug Brown landed there in 1971. He opened Potters Brown, started the annual Edom Art Festival that is still going strong today, and invited other artists to join him. Year after year, artists set up shops along the one-block downtown farm-to-market road that is at the heart of Edom. More than 50 years later, the community is known far and wide for its authentic charm with numerous working artists and galleries adding the spark that makes Edom dazzle.

Folks in downtown Edom sit on porches and enjoy visiting with their neighbors and watching travelers slowly approach the only light in town. The town is a perfect mix of laid-back simplicity and creative energy.

The Edom Historical Museum has relics dating back to wars between Texas settlers and Southern Plains Native Americans and other local history.

The Neches River forms the county line in the southeast corner of Van Zandt County. The river gets its start in the Colfax community and snakes its way 416 miles down to the Texas coast, passing Port Neches and flowing under the

Rainbow Bridge into Sabine Lake just before merging with the Gulf of Mexico.

Just west of the Neches River near Edom is a Greek Revival two-story house built in 1852. Now a recorded Texas Historic Landmark called Roseland Plantation, period antiques fill the main house and reported ghost sightings add to its allure.

Heading north along the Neches River, visitors come to the Chief Bowles and Battle of the Neches Historical Site. Sam Houston, the first president of the Republic of Texas, deeded the land to the leader of the East Texas Cherokees, Chief Duwali Bowles. The treaty was not honored by the next president, and a battle ensued. In the summer of 1839, several hundred Cherokees, led by 83-year-old Chief Bowles, met Texas forces in the Battle of the Neches. At dusk on July 16, Chief Bowles and his troops — including Cherokees, Delawares, Shawnees, and other allies — battled the Texas militia soldiers along the Neches River.

Wounded, Chief Bowles sat on the battlefield and a Texan soldier killed him. The State of Texas erected a monument there many years later.

About 100 members of 13 tribes died in this last battle between the Cherokees and Texans. Others claim the losses were much higher. After the defeat of the tribes, most of the survivors fled to Native American Territory in Oklahoma. The

*continued page 40*



*OPPOSITE: Blue Moon Gardens. ABOVE: Downtown Edom. Photos by Craig D. Blackmon, FALA. RIGHT: Arbor Castle Birdhouse by Joseph Hopps.*



**VAN ZANDT** *cont. from page 39*

land there is now owned and managed by the American Indian Cultural Society (AICS). Each year on the Saturday closest to July 16, they hold a ceremony honoring those who died in the battle.

North of this site is the small community of Van. The discovery of oil there in October 1929 deemed Van a find of major significance and it became a boomtown. The oil company built a campsite and soon the roads were clogged with incoming trucks and automobiles. Tents and rough board shacks sprang up. Dance halls opened. Beds in the primitive, crowded “hotels” were going for four dollars a night. More than 40 “joints” opened to feed the crowds. Some oil production continues today, but the boomtown is long gone. The Van Area Oil & Historical Museum houses displays such as an old workable corn sheller, sewing machine, postal equipment, sur-

veying equipment, and many oil field tools ranging from wrenches to wooden sucker rods. A celebration of the community’s oil history takes place each year with a parade, car show, food, fun, and museum tours.

Van has a couple of long-standing home-style restaurants enjoyed by locals and visitors alike and several attractions nearby.

North of town is Sky Ranch, a recreational facility offering kids’ camps, family weekend programs, group retreats, and conferences. They have more than 30 individual cabins and lodges, some of which accommodate up to 80 guests. There are also wide-open fields and a private 90-acre lake.

Red Moon Farm is a 38-acre sustainable agriculture farm operated by Justin and Jessica Bullock, who provide chemical-free food through their community supported agriculture program and at local farmers’ markets.

*ABOVE: Historic Grand Saline Railroad Depot. Courtesy photo. RIGHT: Heritage Park Museum of East Texas. Photo by Howard Oliphant.*

Valle Della Pace Vineyards & Winery is a family-owned vineyard and winery open Wednesday through Saturday between Van and Lindale.

North of Van is the town of Grand Saline built upon one of the largest and purest salt mines in the nation, with a supply estimated to last thousands of years. Backroads around the “Salt Capital of Texas” are as beautiful as any in Upper East Side Texas. Salt deposits that seep up to ground level attract a wide variety of animals. A salt prairie southeast of town is the center of the deposit in Grand Saline. Once under water, the seas dried up, leaving the salt covered as the earth’s layers shifted and changed. The Caddo used the salt there as early as 800 CE and the Cherokee used it until 1839.

Grand Saline rolls out the “white” carpet to visitors throughout the year and takes every opportunity to honor its salty roots. Every summer, the community celebrates with four days of food, fun, and entertainment.

During the Salt Festival and throughout the year, visitors and residents alike enjoy a trip to the city’s claim to fame — the Salt Palace Museum, the only building in the United States made of pure rock salt. Inside the Salt Palace is a museum featuring photos and memorabilia of the salt industry dating back to 1845, and the rich history of Grand Saline and its citizens. On display is the history of native son and pioneer aviator Wiley Post with photographs and a small model of his famous plane “The Winnie Mae.” Post set two world records by circling the globe in the aircraft in 1931 and 1933. Music performer Chris Tomlin also hails from Grand Saline and a display in the museum keeps up with his roots and success.

Other sites to see are the old depot station, now serving as a public library, and a caboose, which tells the story of

the Short Line Railway used in the early 1900s to bring coal to the salt works.

U.S. Highway 80 goes through the north side of Van Zandt County, running parallel to the Union Pacific railroad tracks and connecting Grand Saline with Fruitvale, Edgewood, and Wills Point. Once part of the early auto trail known as the Dixie Overland Highway, the road originally ran from the Pacific Ocean to the Atlantic Ocean. The area of U.S. Highway 80 west of Dallas is now decommissioned and what remains is a route splitting off from Interstate 30 in Dallas all the way to Savannah, Georgia. Besides Van Zandt County in the Upper East Side of Texas, U.S. Highway 80 runs through Wood, Kaufman, Upshur, Gregg, and Harrison counties before entering Louisiana. Twice a year, a giant Hi-Way 80 Sale takes place with vendors set up along the road across Upper East Side Texas.

In Edgewood, visitors find the Heritage Park Museum of East Texas. Covering three city blocks, the site encompasses more than 20 authentically restored

and furnished structures representing rural life in East Texas from the 1800s to the 1920s. Special events take place throughout the year and an annual heritage festival is held every second Saturday in November.

Wills Point is a charming little town known as the “Bluebird Capital of Texas.” There are several noteworthy historical landmarks in Wills Point, including the Rose Monument in a downtown intersection, the Texas and Pacific Railway Depot, a train caboose, and Wills Cabin. The town is close to Lake Tawakoni State Park and the award-winning Four Winds Steakhouse.

Van Zandt County offers plenty of fun and meaningful things to do throughout the year. Check with each town’s visitor website and make a plan to visit.

*Excerpts of this article come from the book, Upper East Side of Texas: Small Towns and Cultural Districts. The book contains more than 300 photographs and commentary on the history, scenery, art, and agriculture of the region. Go to [www.SpeckledCrow.com](http://www.SpeckledCrow.com) to find it in shops or on Amazon.*





## Tyler Museum of Art

"Roadrunner near Marfa," 2007, Oil on canvas,  
by Billy Hassell, TMA Permanent Collection  
[www.tylermuseum.org](http://www.tylermuseum.org) (903) 595-1001



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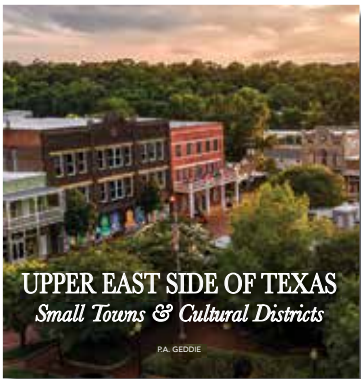
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# Vintage Vacation

*Tanglewood Resort Celebrates Timeless Appeal*



Tucked on the Texas-Oklahoma border on beautiful Lake Texoma lies an affordable vacation destination with a rich history. Tanglewood Resort has been a staple of north Texas for more than 50 years. The family-friendly resort has a championship 18-hole golf course, two restaurants, heated pools, a cocktail lounge with stunning views of the sparkling blue lake, 224 spacious guest rooms, and close proximity to everything Lake Texoma has to offer. Now Tanglewood Resort is celebrating its 50-year history by inviting guests to a Vintage Vacation this summer.

Tanglewood Resort traces its roots back to the late 1960s and early 1970s, a time when the American road trip was at its

peak and lakeside resorts became beloved weekend escapes for families and friends across Texas and Oklahoma. Developers envisioned a place where visitors from the Dallas/Fort Worth area could leave the city behind and find relaxation, recreation, and natural beauty just a short drive away.

The resort quickly became part of the region's growing vacation culture. With breathtaking views, fresh lake air, proximity to premiere fishing, and wide Texas skies, Tanglewood offered something special: a place where guests could slow down and enjoy the simple pleasures of a classic getaway.

Tanglewood has three months of vintage family-friendly fun planned for summer

*ABOVE: Tanglewood Resort offers an old-fashioned getaway this summer with music, lawn games, picnics, and ice cream socials. OPPOSITE Top to Bottom: Co-Owner Dani Cocanougher was presented the original architectural sketches of Tanglewood by Adam Reed with Ford, Powell, and Carson Architects in San Antonio. Vintage photos show guests enjoying a variety of activities. The cocktail lounge in the Tanglewood Tower offers a spectacular view. COURTESY PHOTOS.*

vacations this year including outdoor concerts, board game baskets, vintage lawn games, picnic kits to enjoy by the lake, water aerobics classes, pickleball, popsicle hour, ice cream socials, and so much more.

The Lake Texoma resort, which celebrated the 50th anniversary of the famous Tanglewood Tower a couple of years

ago and completed phase I of a multi-year renovation plan, has a long history of affordable family fun. Originally designed by prominent architect O'Neil Ford in 1974, the iconic Tanglewood Tower famously overlooks Lake Texoma with some of the best sunset views in the area. Guests can catch live music and karaoke in the tower on the weekends with a laid-back vibe and cozy community atmosphere.

"We're so proud that Tanglewood has been part of family memories for half a century and decided it's time to lean into that history," says Tanglewood Resort co-owner Dani Cocanougher. "Now is the perfect time for families to put down their phones and enjoy a vintage vacation with wholesome games and old-fashioned family fun."

Over the decades, Tanglewood has evolved with each generation of guests. From early lakeside vacations and golf weekends to weddings, conferences, and family reunions, the resort has welcomed travelers looking for the same thing it offered from the beginning: a place to unwind and reconnect.

As part of the Timeless Tanglewood theme, Tanglewood's villas are decorated with vintage artwork featuring old photos of the resort and vintage memorabilia. Cocanougher traveled to San Antonio this winter to meet with O'Neil's modern day firm Ford, Powell, and Carson, where she was presented with the original architectural sketches of Tanglewood, which will be on display in the lobby this summer along with other timeless resort memorabilia.

"We want to offer people an affordable place where they can make memories with their families," says Cocanougher. "As we restore and reimagine the resort, we're not just renovating buildings — we're honoring the spirit of those first vacations and ensuring that the timeless charm of Tanglewood continues for decades to come. So many guests who came here when they were kids are now bringing their kids and there's something so special about that. There's history in this resort and we're excited to share it with our guests this summer."

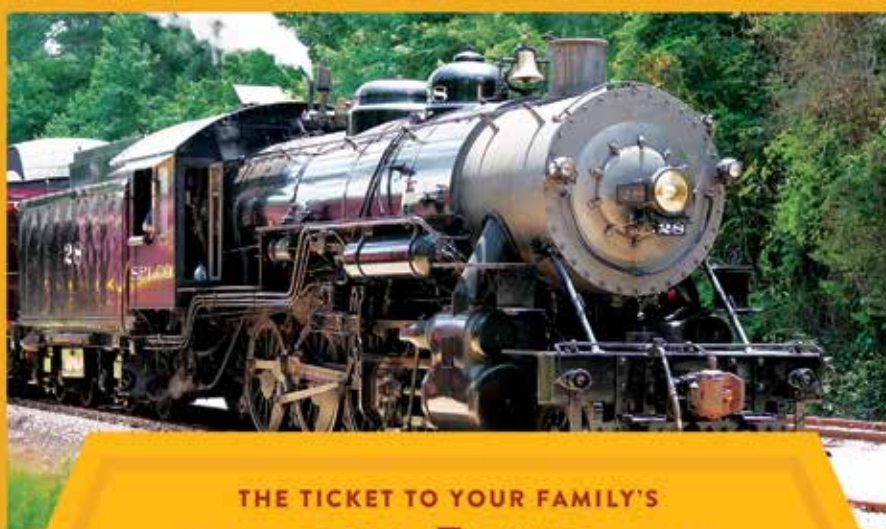
For more information and reservations, visit [www.tanglewoodresort.com](http://www.tanglewoodresort.com).



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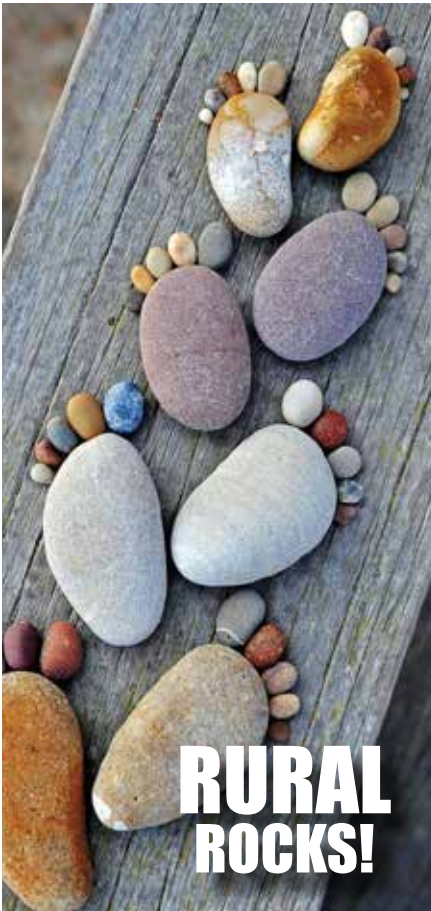
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# Fireworks, Festivals, and Fine Arts

## *Summer 2026 Events Promise Fun and Inspiration*

This summer promises to inspire visitors and residents alike in the Upper East Side of Texas with an eclectic list of things to do, culminating in a celebration of America's 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence on July 4. Here are a few events below. Be sure to check the calendars of the thriving small towns and cultural districts, venues, as well as the new *Upper East Side TEXAS Magazine*, and Explore-NortheastTexas.com.

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### THROUGH MAY 3

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**Historic Pilgrimage Weekend.** Jefferson. 79th Historic Jefferson Pilgrimage, themed "Honoring the Past, Celebrating the Future." Experience various events highlighting the charm and history of the town, including the Historic Home And Twilight Garden Tours, the Artisan Craft Fair, Jay Gould Rail Car Tours, a quilt exhibit, a plant sale, and a Saturday parade and luncheon at the Excelsior House Hotel. jefferson-pilgrimage.com

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### THROUGH MAY 3

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**Diamond Bessie Murder Trial.** Jefferson. This unique theatrical experience recreates the nationally famous trial that took place in Jefferson in the late 1800s. The adaptation, produced for more than seven decades, is a tradition during Pilgrimage weekend. Jefferson Playhouse. diamondbessieplay.com

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### MAY 1-2

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**Winnsboro Festival of Books.** Dynamic entertainer and poet, Michael Guinn, returns to emcee this year's event, which features singer/songwriter/author Bob Livingston. He performs and signs copies of his new book, *Gypsy Alibi: A Gonzo Memoir*, on Friday evening. He will have books for sale at the festival on Saturday and is interviewed by Michael Guinn on stage. Special activities are planned for the children, and parents can enroll young children from babies through age five to receive free books in Dolly Parton's



*Communities around the region are upping their game for July 4th this year in honor of the country's 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Pictured is a fireworks show on Lake Jacksonville.*

Imagination Library. [www.winnsboro-centerforthearts.com](http://www.winnsboro-centerforthearts.com)

**Slade Baker Memorial Crawfish Cookoff.** Paris. In memory of former fireman Slade Baker, who lost his life in 2019, this fundraiser includes an all-you-can-eat crawfish meal, live music, cornhole, and an auction. All proceeds from the event benefit first responder scholarships and help families in need. [sladebakermemorial.com](http://sladebakermemorial.com)

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### MAY 1-10

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**Mama Mia.** Athens. Henderson County Performing Arts Center. [www.hcpac.org](http://www.hcpac.org)

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### MAY 2

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**Cinco de Mayo Festival.** Waxahachie. Enjoy live music including mariachi bands and performances by folklórico dancers. [visitwaxahachie.com](http://visitwaxahachie.com)

**Cinco de Mayo.** Mount Pleasant. Live entertainment, food, and family fun. Fair Park. [www.visitmountpleasanttx.com](http://www.visitmountpleasanttx.com)

9th Annual Kentucky Derby Party. Longview. 4-7 p.m. Presented by the Gregg County Historical Museum. Derby Day attire. The Cherokee Club, NP-2 Lake Cherokee Drive. (903) 753-5840. [gregghistorical.com](http://gregghistorical.com)

**Horse Derby.** Palestine. A children's stick horse race for fun and prizes in celebration of the Kentucky Derby. Palestine Farmers Market. [palestinefarmers-market.com](http://palestinefarmers-market.com)

**Heritage Day Festival.** Bonham. Live music, food trucks, restaurant and shopping specials, kids activities, car show, 5K run, and tours of the 188 historical courthouse. Free. (903) 583-9830. [www.visitbonham.com](http://www.visitbonham.com)

**Taco'Bout Marshall.** Marshall. Taco trucks line downtown, each offering tacos for purchase so guests can taste as many flavors as they'd like. Visitors can sample their favorites and cast their vote in the People's Choice competition to help crown Marshall's top taco. [visitmarshalltexas.com](http://visitmarshalltexas.com)

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### MAY 2-3

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**Geekend.** Kilgore. The homegrown geek/pop culture convention in downtown features performances, cosplay, games, vendors, contests, and other activities. Geektopia. [facebook.com/kilgoregeekend](http://facebook.com/kilgoregeekend)

**Cinco de Mayo.** Ennis. This annual celebration includes artists that have the community dancing and singing. Visitors can also expect ballet folklórico performances, authentic food selections, and local artisan vendors. [visitennistexas.com/cinco-de-mayo](http://visitennistexas.com/cinco-de-mayo)

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### MAY 8

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**Lukas Nelson.** Tyler. UT Cowan Center. [www.cowancenter.org](http://www.cowancenter.org)

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### MAY 8-10, 15-17, AND 22-24

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**A Piece of My Heart.** Rockwall. A powerful, true drama of six women who went to Vietnam: five nurses and a country western singer booked by an unscrupulous agent to entertain the

troops. The play portrays each young woman before, during, and after her tour in the war-torn nation and ends as each leaves a personal token at the memorial wall in Washington. [rockwall-communityplayhouse.org](http://rockwall-communityplayhouse.org)

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### MAY 8-9

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**Spring Piney Woods Wine Festival.** Lindale. Wine garden, artisan vendors, food trucks, and live music. Picker's Pavilion. \$15. [www.visitlindale.com](http://www.visitlindale.com)

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### MAY 9

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**Chonda Palooza.** Greenville. Girls night comedy extravaganza with Chonda Pierce, Heather Land, and Karyn Williams. [www.showtimeatthegma.com](http://www.showtimeatthegma.com)

**Hunt County Festival of the Arts.** Greenville. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Artistic vendors, food truck court, musical, dance, and theatrical performances, Shopping at the downtown merchants and restaurants. Lee Street. (903) 450-1491. [travel-greenvilletx.com](http://travel-greenvilletx.com)

**Taco Festival.** Terrell. A flavorful fiesta in Historic Downtown Terrell celebrating local food, music, and culture. Guests can enjoy tacos, live entertainment, and artisan vendors. [discoverterrell.com](http://discoverterrell.com)

**Mother's Day Lunch Train.** Palestine. Whisk Mom away back in time as we journey through the East Texas Piney Woods on this 4-hour round-trip excursion. Deborah at the Rusk Depot and enjoy a savory, catered Mother's Day Lunch on beautifully decorated grounds by the lake. (855) 632-7729. [www.texas-staterailroad.net](http://www.texas-staterailroad.net)

**Mark Hamre.** Sulphur Springs. Main Street Theatre. [www.communityplayersinc.com](http://www.communityplayersinc.com)

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### MAY 9-10

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**Eiffel in Love with Quilts.** Paris. Fourth annual Paris Quilt Show. Enter a quilt, be a vendor, or just enjoy the beautiful quilts on display. Love Civic Center. [redriverquiltguild.com](http://redriverquiltguild.com)

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### MAY 13

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**Clue.** Tyler. Cowan Center. [www.cowancenter.org](http://www.cowancenter.org)

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### MAY 16

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**Majors Field Fly-In.** Greenville. 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Airplane rides, food trucks, kids activities, mobile theater, and more. Majors Field Municipal Airport. [travel-greenvilletx.com](http://travel-greenvilletx.com)

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### MAY 16-17

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**North Texas Arts Festival.** Denison. Two days of art, music, and hands-on featuring more than 30 artists, live performances, and interactive activities like dumpster painting, a downtown scavenger hunt, and live mural art. Katy Depot. [tdenisonartscouncil.org](http://tdenisonartscouncil.org)

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### MAY 21-23

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**Salmon Lake Park Gospel Bluegrass Festival.** Grapeland. Bluegrass gospel artists perform uplifting songs. Salmon Lake Park. [slpbluegrass.com/gospel-festival](http://slpbluegrass.com/gospel-festival)

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### MAY 22-23

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**Piney Woods Express Steam.** Palestine. Step aboard the Piney Woods Express Steam Excursion for a scenic journey through East Texas and 135 years of history. Powered by No. 30, a 1917 Baldwin Locomotive Works, this 4-hour round-trip departs from the historic Palestine Rail Depot and includes a layover at Rusk Rail Depot for lunch, exploration, and history. Multiple seating options available. (855) 632-7729. [www.texasstaterailroad.net](http://www.texasstaterailroad.net)

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### MAY 22-24

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**National Polka Festival.** Ennis. Features live polka performances, traditional dances, and authentic Czech food. There is no admission fee to the downtown part of the festival. [nationalpolkafestival.com](http://nationalpolkafestival.com)

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### MAY 23

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**Matt Ferrell Comedy Show.** Sulphur Springs. Main Street Theatre. [www.communityplayersinc.com](http://www.communityplayersinc.com)

**Hunt County Carry the Load.** Greenville. 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Remembering those who paid the ultimate price for safety and freedom. Food trucks, play-

*continued page 50*

**EVENTS** *continued from page 49*

ground, splash pads, music, and recognition program. Graham Park. [travelgreen-villetx.com](http://travelgreen-villetx.com)

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MAY 23-SEPTEMBER 13

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**America 250: The Caddo Nation and Native Perspectives.** Longview. Longview Museum of Fine Arts. [lmfa.org](http://lmfa.org)

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JUNE 1 - JUNE 30

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**Juneteenth Exhibition by Humanities Texas.** Longview. Longview City Hall, 300 W. Cotton St. [longviewtexas.gov](http://longviewtexas.gov)

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JUNE 4

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**Patriotic ArtWalk.** Longview. 5-8 p.m. Presented by Arts!Longview, featuring patriotic tunes performed by the Arts-View Children's Theatre Show Choir. Downtown Longview. [artwalklongview.com](http://artwalklongview.com)

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JUNE 6

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**The Speakeasy Special.** Palestine. Journey back in time to experience an era of prosperity, indulgence, and care-free living. Twenties attire. At the Rusk depot enjoy a live jazz band and a 1920s themed dinner. (855) 632-7729. [www.texasstaterailroad.net](http://www.texasstaterailroad.net)

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JUNE 6, 7 AND 13, 14

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**Broadway Musical Revue.** Winnsboro. Songs from *Rent*, *South Pacific*, and other musicals. Presented by the Bowery Players and WCA Community Choir. Winnsboro Center for the Arts. [www.winnsborocenterforthearts.com](http://www.winnsborocenterforthearts.com)

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JUNE 12- 14

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**Great Texas Balloon Race.** Longview. Patriotic Drone Show, balloon glow, concerts, and competitive hot air balloon racing. [gtbr.net](http://gtbr.net)

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JUNE 12-20

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**Hopkins County Dairy Festival, Balloon Fest, and Ice Cream Freeze Off.** Sulphur Springs. (903) 885-8071. [www.hopkinscountydairyfestival.com](http://www.hopkinscountydairyfestival.com)

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JUNE 12-AUGUST 30

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**America 250 Trailblazing Texas Wonder Women Exhibition.** McKinney. Artworks highlighting women of Texas who transformed society as icons and pioneers in leadership, innovation, entertainment, business, and activism. Atrium Gallery, Cotton Mill Arts District. [millhousefoundation.org/atrium-gallery](http://millhousefoundation.org/atrium-gallery)

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JUNE 13

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**42nd Annual Tomato Fest.** Jacksonville. 8 a.m.-4 p.m. More than 500 vendors, food, shopping, entertainment, and fun. [www.jacksonvilletexas.com/tomato-fest](http://www.jacksonvilletexas.com/tomato-fest)

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JUNE 13

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**Texas Blueberry Festival.** Nacogdoches. [www.visitnacogdoches.org](http://www.visitnacogdoches.org)

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JUNE 19

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**Piney Woods Express Steam.** Palestine. Step aboard the Piney Woods Express Steam Excursion for a scenic journey through East Texas and 135 years of history. Powered by No. 30, a 1917 Baldwin Locomotive Works, this 4-hour round-trip departs from the historic Palestine Rail Depot and includes a layover at Rusk Rail Depot for lunch, exploration, and history. Multiple seating options available. (855) 632-7729. [www.texasstaterailroad.net](http://www.texasstaterailroad.net)

**Juneteenth.** Terrell. An important day of remembrance and cultural pride. Terrell's Juneteenth celebration honors freedom with performances, speakers, food, and community fellowship. This celebration is held in historic Breezy Hill Park. [discoverterrell.com](http://discoverterrell.com)

**Juneteenth in the Park.** Longview. Noon-8 p.m., Teague Park, 415 American Legion Blvd. [longviewtexas.gov](http://longviewtexas.gov)

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JUNE 20

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**Juneteenth.** Longview. Parade 10 a.m., Festival, Noon-7 p.m. with food, music, children's activities, historical sessions at Broughton Park; Business Expo, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. at Broughton Recreation Center. [longviewtexas.gov](http://longviewtexas.gov)

**Dogwood Jamboree.** Palestine. Musicians from all over East Texas gather to

perform live in this Branson-style event with comedy, music, and fun for the whole family. (800) 659-3484

**Father's Day Lunch Train.** Palestine. (855) 632-7729. [www.texasstaterailroad.net](http://www.texasstaterailroad.net)

**Bri Bagwell.** Winnsboro. Winnsboro Center for the Arts. [www.winnsborocenterforthearts.com](http://www.winnsborocenterforthearts.com)

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JUNE 25

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**Malpass Brothers.** Greenville. [www.showtimeatthegma.com](http://www.showtimeatthegma.com)

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JUNE 25, JULY 2, 4, 10, 12, 17, 19, 23, AND 25

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**A Midsummer Night's Dream.** Kilgore. Texas Shakespeare Festival. [www.texasshakespeare.com](http://www.texasshakespeare.com)

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JUNE 26, JULY 3, 5, 10, 12, 16, 18, 23, AND 25

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**Emma.** Kilgore. Texas Shakespeare Festival. [www.texasshakespeare.com](http://www.texasshakespeare.com)

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JUNE 27

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**Pints in the Pines.** Palestine. This is an adult-only excursion departing from Palestine and travel through the Piney Woods of East Texas to the Rusk Rail Depot while sampling several local or regional beers and appetizers. Upon arrival at the Rusk Depot, enjoy a catered dinner with dessert outside as the sun sets. (855) 632-7729. [www.texasstaterailroad.net](http://www.texasstaterailroad.net)

**Gregg County Historical Museum Block Party.** Longview. 1-3 p.m. Historical Marker display. [gregghistorical.org](http://gregghistorical.org)

**Independence Festival.** Sulphur Springs. Music by East Texas Symphony Orchestra, Veteran's march, giant fireworks display. Bring lawn chairs. Celebration Plaza, Downtown. (888) 300-6623. [www.visitsulphurspringstx.org](http://www.visitsulphurspringstx.org)

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JUNE 27, JULY 3, 5, 9, 11, 16, 18, 24, AND 26

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**Hamlet.** Kilgore. Texas Shakespeare Festival. [www.texasshakespeare.com](http://www.texasshakespeare.com)



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JUNE 28, JULY 2, 4, 9, 11, 17,  
19, 24, & 26

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**1776.** Kilgore. A musical theatre depiction of the birth of North America, filled with memorable songs and clever dialogue. Book by Peter Stone. Music and Lyrics by Sherman Edwards. Based on the events leading up to the signing of the Declaration of Independence, 1776 showcases the political drama navigated by John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, and Thomas Jefferson. Part of the 2026 Texas Shakespeare Festival. [texasshakespeare.com](http://texasshakespeare.com)

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JULY 3-4

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**America 250: A Star-Spangled Jubilee.** Palestine. Fireworks, live music by Detroit Steel, historical showcases, a barbecue food truck showdown, parade, car show, vendors, and. More. Friday, 6-10 p.m. and Saturday 10 a.m.-2 p.m. (800) 649-3484. Get full schedule and locations on [visitpalestine.com/america250](http://visitpalestine.com/america250).

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JULY 4

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**Terrell Freedom Fest.** Annual celebration of freedom with a spectacular Independence Day tradition that lights up the Terrell sky. [www.discoverterrell.com](http://www.discoverterrell.com)

**Freedom Festival.** Henderson. Lake Forest Park. [www.visithenderstontx.com](http://www.visithenderstontx.com)

**Fireworks & Freedom.** Longview. Free event featuring the Longview Symphony Orchestra in concert along with a headliner band, vendors, activities, and the biggest fireworks show in Longview's history. Longview Convention Complex. [longviewtexas.gov/2394/Fireworks](http://longviewtexas.gov/2394/Fireworks)

**Thunder Over Cedar Creek Lake.** [ccveteransfoundation.org/thunder-over-cedar-creek-lake-airshow](http://ccveteransfoundation.org/thunder-over-cedar-creek-lake-airshow)

**Lake Jacksonville July 4<sup>th</sup> Celebration.** Jacksonville. Public viewing is available from the campground and surrounding shorelines. Viewers on the water must stay clear of the barge setup

area. Free. Learn more on [explorejacksonvilletx.org](http://explorejacksonvilletx.org)

**Fourth of July Celebration.** Canton. Morning parade, followed by car show, live music, and wrapping up with fireworks at dark. [visitcantontx.com](http://visitcantontx.com)

**Tyler Independence Day.** Food trucks, music, games, and fireworks. Lindsey Park. [visitytler.com](http://visitytler.com)

**Independence Day Celebration.** Rockwall. Harry Myers Park. [visitrockwall.com](http://visitrockwall.com)

**Fourth of July Extravaganza.** Kilgore. Patriotic parade, live music by The Jukebox Heroes, food trucks, and fireworks. Bring chairs and blankets to concert and fireworks show. Extended hours at Kilgore City Pool and Lazy S Splash ranch until 8:30 p.m. [visitkilgore.com](http://visitkilgore.com)

**Annual 4th of July Celebration & Fireworks.** Mineola. Music, food, activities, fireworks. Mineola Civic Center. (903) 569-6115. [www.mccrvpark.com](http://www.mccrvpark.com)

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# Summer Concert Series Keep Music in the Air



Several communities in the Upper East Side of Texas offer weekly outdoor live music events.

As the Live Music Capital of Texas, Rockwall lives up to the title with two series, one at The Harbor next to Lake Ray Hubbard and the other on the downtown streets.

Concert by the Lake features regional bands from 7-9 p.m. every Thursday from May through July and in October. Many of them are tribute bands with music by Elvis, Aerosmith, Jimmy Buffett, Beach Boys, and Def Leppard, while other shows feature orchestras and party bands.

The Harbor is a premier destination district for music entertainment, fine dining and vacationing, in a picturesque setting offering magnificent water features and the serenity of the lake against a backdrop of breathtaking sunsets.

The San Jacinto Music Series features country, blues, Americana, and rock

sounds from regional singer songwriters every Friday and Saturday in a lovely downtown setting.

Go to [rockwall.com](http://rockwall.com) for a complete list of all shows and details on the events.

Mineola kicks off their season with local and regional songwriters performing each Thursday night in May at the downtown gazebo next to the railroad tracks. Guests are invited to bring lawn chairs from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Get more information on [mineola.com](http://mineola.com).

Music at the Market Concert Series takes place in Greenville. every Friday night in June and July. Go to [TravelGreenvilleTX.com](http://TravelGreenvilleTX.com) for details about the line-up and times of the concerts.

Denison presents Music on Main at 7:30 p.m. Friday nights from June 12 through July 31. Get details on [denisontx.gov/625/Music-on-Main](http://denisontx.gov/625/Music-on-Main).

Downtown Live takes place in Heritage Plaza in Longview from 5-8 p.m. Fridays

*Drifted Harmony at Downtown Live in Longview. The East Texas-based band features Heather Harper and Rylee Choate performing originals and covers.*  
COURTESY PHOTO

in April, May, September and October. Find a list of activities and music line up on [visitlongviewtexas.com](http://visitlongviewtexas.com).

Music offerings in the Upper East Side of Texas have grown significantly in recent years. Many communities are being welcomed into the Music Friendly Texas Certified Community Program that began in 2016 by the Texas Music Office. Some that are included in the region include Athens, Chandler, Corsicana, Dallas, Denison, Fate, Garland, Kilgore, Lindale, Linden, Lufkin, Marshall, McKinney, Nacogdoches, Rockwall, San Augustine, Tyler, and Waxahachie.

Several others are now in the certification process including Carthage, Texarkana, Sherman, Crockett, Heath, and Winnsboro.

# Sunny Sweeney Headlines Balloon Fest

## *Longview Native Performs Hometown Concert*

The 2026 Great Texas Balloon Race takes place June 12-14 at the Longview Convention Complex and features a hometown return by Sunny Sweeney headlining on Saturday June 13. The event includes dozens of hot air balloons and a drone show along with live music and other activities.

Marshall native Wes Jeans, a blues-rock guitarist and vocalist, will headline Friday, June 12. Opening acts are L.A. Roxx on June 12 and Roses & Weeds on June 13.

“We are proud to continue bringing high quality musical entertainment to Longview as part of the Great Texas Balloon Race. With a mixture of Country, blues-rock, and a great stage band, this year’s entertainment lineup is intended to appeal to a wide audience, and we look forward to showcasing these talented performers,” said Gai Bennett, chair of this year’s event.

Sweeney is a Country music performer who’s had songs climb the charts in her almost 20-year musical career, including Top 10 hit “From a Table Away” in 2011. In addition to releasing five critically acclaimed albums since her 2006 debut, “Heartbreaker’s Hall of Fame,” she has become a song curator and advocate for other artists as the host of her SiriusXM shows “The Sunny Side of Life” on Outlaw Country and “Sunny Side Up” on Willie’s Roadhouse.

Sweeney and her longtime guitarist, Harley Husbands, produced her newest album, “Rhinestone Requiem,” and are working as producers on additional projects. Recorded at Tommy Detamore’s Cherry Ridge Studio in Floresville, Texas, “Rhinestone Requiem” is a snapshot of an artist who knows who she is and what she loves.

Jeans is a Texas blues-rock guitarist and vocalist who was voted East Texas Blues Artist of the Year several times. His singles and EPs, such as “Save Me” and “One Day at a Time,” have garnered critical acclaim.

L.A. Roxx is a Louisiana-based rock and roll tribute band. With blazing dual solos,



Photo by Jacob Lewis

incredible riffs, thunderous drums and authentic vocals, L.A. Roxx will take audiences back to their favorite rock show. They perform tributes of such hits as “Living On a Prayer,” “Sweet Child O’ Mine,” “Here I Go Again,” and many more fan favorites.

Roses & Weeds is a Country music group based in Paris, Texas. Comprised of Caleb Moses and Tarren Keelie, Roses & Weeds blends Moses’ soulful vocal style with Keelie’s classic country twang. Along with their drummer, they formed Roses & Weeds and describe their sound

as being built on contrast and harmony.

Gates open at 5 p.m. or the festival, which includes (weather permitting) special shape balloon inflations, RE/MAX skydiving team, vendors, KidsLand, tethered balloon rides, Bill Bussey Balloon Glows and more in addition to the live music and drone shows. Opening acts take the stage at 7:30 p.m. with headliners scheduled to perform at 9:45 p.m. Tickets to the festival are \$20 for Friday night, \$25 for Saturday night, or \$40 for a weekend pass. Tickets are on sale now, exclusively at GTBR.net.



Photo by Kelly Christine Sutton

## Kacey Musgraves Comes Home to the 'Middle of Nowhere'

*New Album Features Duet with Miranda Lambert and Other East Texas Reflections*

Kacey Musgraves releases her sixth studio album, *Middle of Nowhere*, on May 1 with a return to Lost Highway Records. Musgraves produced the album alongside Daniel Tashian and Ian Fitchuk, and it features collaborations with Willie Nelson, Billy Strings, Gregory Alan Isakov, and fellow East Texan Miranda Lambert.

The sounds, stories, and sensibilities of her Texas upbringing inspired the album. Its title comes from an actual sign in her tiny hometown of Golden, Texas, with a population under 300, that reads, "Somewhere in the Middle of Nowhere." That message struck a chord with what's going on in her personal life during the creation of the album. It features pedal steel, accordion, and Texas dancehall rhythms backing the sound, and draws in touches of bluegrass, pop, Norteño, and Zydeco.

"The bulk of this record was made during the longest single period of my life," Musgraves says in a statement. "And I found that for the first time, it actually felt incredible being alone and existing in a space not defined by anyone else. I became fascinated with the concept of liminal space, both geographical and emotional. We don't linger in these transitional, empty spaces long enough and rush to define where or whatever is next. I became so at ease with being in the 'middle of nowhere' in many senses and sitting in the un-comfort of the undefined. I had a lot of time for creative ambling and leaning into myself in different ways: horses, humor, writing with my early collaborators again, and living out my very simple, inspired life between Texas, Tennessee, and Mexico."

*Middle of Nowhere* kicks off with the title track "Middle of Nowhere;" then "Dry

Spell," which released as a single in March; "Back on the Wagon;" "I Believe in Ghosts;" "Abilene;" "Coyote," featuring Gregory Alan Isakov; "Loneliest Girl;" "Everybody Wants To Be a Cowboy," featuring Billy Strings; "Horses and Divorces," featuring Miranda Lambert; "Uncertain, Texas," featuring Willie Nelson; "Rhinstoned;" "Mexico Honey;" and "Hell on Me."

Musgraves co-penned all 13 tracks on the album. Co-writers include Daniel Tashian, Ian Fitchuk, Luke Laird, Shane McAnally, Josh Osborne, Rick Nowels, Miranda Lambert, Scotty Emerick, and Steph Jones.

Fellow East Texans Musgraves and Lambert teaming up for "Horses and Divorces" marks the first time in a really long time since the duo had much of anything to do with each other. They knew each

other as they were growing up in the neighboring communities of Golden, Mineola, and Lindale. Both took music and songwriting lessons from the talented John DeFoore.

Lambert was already a national name when Musgraves co-wrote “Mama’s Broken Heart” with Brandy Clark and Shane McAnally in 2011. Musgraves thought it was the song that might launch her own path to stardom. Unbeknownst to her, someone pitched the song to Lambert, and Lambert wanted to release it. Having to consider what that meant to her co-writers, Musgraves relinquished. It was a big hit for Lambert.

Musgraves wasn’t far behind with another hit song she co-wrote with Shane McAnally and Josh Osborne. “Merry Go Round” released in 2012 and was a critical success, winning the Grammy Award for Best Country Song in 2014.

In an interview with NPR Music in Nashville, Musgraves talks about the songs and her relationship with Lambert.

“I knew I would have to go back to the drawing board,” Musgraves says, after letting go of “Mama’s Broken Heart.” “And ultimately, I’m really glad that I did, because it forced me to write ‘Merry Go Round,’ which ended up making way more sense for me anyways, aesthetically and lyrically, to kick my whole thing off, versus ‘Mama’s Broken Heart.’ And that ended up going No. 1 for her. So in the end, everyone won because I was able to let go of something.”

Fifteen years later, as Musgraves was having some nostalgic moments while working on her new album, she saw Lambert on social media riding one of her horses. A horse lover herself, Musgraves was inspired her to think about what other things the two have in common, and she landed on “horses and divorces.” She thought that theme could be a fun song and reached out to her to write and sing as a duo. Lambert was quick to respond.

“She was like, ‘Hell yeah, I’m in, let’s do it,’” Musgraves says. “So it was very full circle in so many ways. We aired out the old laundry. We had some laughs and wrote the song in a matter of a few hours.”

Other aspects of *Middle of Nowhere* also reflect a return to her East Texas roots.

“I grew up singing Western swing, yodeling — very traditional country music. Those sounds are baked into what feels like home to me. And so exploring them doesn’t feel like I’m trying on a hat that doesn’t fit. It just feels like part of me. It’s always there to some degree, but it felt good this time to really lean into it. For me it’s always about finding the balance. If a lyric is going in that direction really hard, maybe the track isn’t, so it’s never too on the nose.”

Continuing her ties to home, the cover for *Middle of Nowhere* features a photo taken by Musgrave’s sister, Kelly Christine Sutton, who’s often used her professional photography skills to capture her big sister’s career moments. For this shoot, the two took photos in several spots in Dallas with a bull supplied by a friend.

While in Texas during that time, Musgraves ended up at a dance hall in Austin one night. She told NPR Music how nice it was to see so many different kinds of people having a good time decked out in their western wear.

“It was hot Latino couples, it was hot Black cowboys, it was older white cowboys dancing with younger cowgirls, and everybody was having such a good time dancing with each other,” she says. “I was like, damn, America needs to two-step together. America needs to be on the dance floor. It’s really a great equalizer, and it’s where your differences sort of melt away, and the one goal is to connect via music and have fun and move your body. It made me really inspired to infuse some of that Texas dance hall feeling and rhythms into the record.”

Musgraves is doing three shows May 3-5 at the famous Greuene Hall in New Braunfels, Texas. Opening for her are three Texas brothers who are mariachi musicians. The brothers drew national attention earlier this year when they and other members of their family were detained by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. The family’s detainment sparked outrage and they were eventually released.

Musgraves performs October 10 at the American Airlines Center in Dallas.

# LMFA

LONGVIEW MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS

**ON DISPLAY**  
**MAY 23 - SEP 12, 2026**

## NATIVE PERSPECTIVES: *America 250*

A landmark exhibition developed in collaboration with Caddo artist Chase Kahwinhut Earles.

Featuring artists representing:

Caddo, Choctaw, Cherokee, Seminole, Chickasaw, Muscogee, Coushatta, Otoe-Missouria, Delaware, and Sac and Fox Nations



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# Native Perspectives: America 250

*A Landmark Exhibition Developed with Caddo Artist Chase Kahwinhut Earles*

The Longview Museum of Fine Arts (LMFA) marks America's 250th anniversary with a major regional exhibition elevating contemporary Indigenous voices from across the American South from May 23 to September 12. Visitors encounter ceramic traditions alongside contemporary painting, intricate beadwork, and mixed media works that connect ancestral knowledge to present-day Indigenous life. The exhibition brings together artists, scholars, and cultural leaders to honor the legacy, resilience, and creativity of Native communities. More than an art exhibition, it is a platform for dialogue, education, and community reflection.

Caddo artist Chase Kahwinhut Earles' pottery work is held in the collections of nearly 30 museums and institutions, including the Smithsonian Institution, the Autry Museum of the American West in California, the Dallas Museum of Art, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Arkansas, and the Detroit Institute of Arts. Grounded in lived experience and ancestral tradition, his practice explores themes of identity, continuity, and place. His voice brings an essential perspective to contemporary art, emphasizing the importance of Indigenous leadership in shaping cultural narratives.

The exhibition features 13 artists representing 11 tribes, including Choctaw, Cherokee, Seminole, Chickasaw, Muscogee, Coushatta, Otoe-Missouria, Delaware, and Sac and Fox Nations. In ad-

dition to Earles, artists include Martha Berry (beadwork), Jacqueline Bullard (basketry), Jason Carrasco (painting), Dylan Cavin (collage), Tom Farris (paintings), Yonavea Hawkins (beadwork), Elisse John (basketry), Bobby C. Martin (painting), Jeri and Moira Redcorn (pottery & collage), Tony Tiger (painting & printmaking), and Billy Hensley (printmaking & painting).

Earles says, "I am excited to be part of an exhibition that brings awareness to the Caddo people and to the art of the tribes of the Southeast. Caddo history and culture — along with many Mississippian tribes — are underrepresented in the broader Native American art world. There is so much contemporary Native art reinterpreting history, that should not be overlooked. These ancient cultures, present on this continent since time immemorial, played a significant role in shaping what is now the United States. I am especially honored that this exhibition is taking place in Texas — one of the Caddo homeland states — whose name derives from the Caddo word 'taysha,' meaning friendship."

LMFA hosts a special panel discussion on "Indigenous Voices 250" at 4 p.m. Saturday, May 23, followed by an opening reception for members and their guests from 5-7 p.m.

Earles teaches a workshop from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. June 15-18 on the history of the Caddo and their traditional pottery. Participants will make their own pots us-

*ABOVE: Plains Pattern by Billy Hensley. OPPOSITE: Large traditional Caddo utilitarian jar by Chase Kahwinhut Earles.*

ing Caddo methods. Class has limited seating and is for ages 16 and up.

Museum staff is also planning a tour bus field trip that includes viewing the Native Perspectives exhibition then heading to Caddo Mounds State Historic Site for an experiential traditional Caddo meal and docent tour to learn more about this important Caddo homeland.

The Longview Museum of Fine Arts (LMFA) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization located at 215 East Tyler Street. They serve approximately 12,000 visitors, members, and students annually from East Texas and surrounding regions. LMFA currently operates full programming — including exhibitions, education, and community initiatives — at its Tyler Street location. Its Fredonia Street building currently serves as an event center and site for concerts, pop-up exhibitions, and special programming. Acquired in 2021, the Fredonia facility will ultimately expand the museum's footprint to more than 50,000 square feet, positioning LMFA as a growing cultural hub in an underserved region.

LMFA is open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday through Friday, and 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday. Learn more about the museum and the Native Perspectives exhibition on [www.lmfa.org](http://www.lmfa.org).



# One Nation, Many Voices

AMERICANS BY UPPER EAST SIDE TEXAS ARTISTS



"Young Warrior"  
Tom Rice, Yantis, Texas.  
Photography, 2021



"Jaune et Noir," Terry Crum, Tyler, Texas.  
Painting on worn cardboard



"Willie," Karen Musgraves,  
Mineola, Texas. Painting

"Old Timer"  
JD Cole, Nacogdoches, Texas  
Oil painting



COLORED PENCIL

*Linda Lucas Hardy*

Omaha, Texas

# One Nation, Many Voices

AMERICANS BY UPPER EAST SIDE TEXAS ARTISTS



"Sugar," by Ava Arnold, Longview, Texas.  
Acrylic and joint compound on canvas



"My Mom Prepping for Battle," by Hayley Jasper,  
Hawkins, Texas. Graphite drawing,  
Best in Show, Winnsboro Center for the Arts  
High School Art Competition, 2024

Dallas Ballet: David Rodriguez, Marjorie Hardwick Schramel, and  
Nanci Woods, by Tom Geddie, Ben Wheeler, Texas. Photography






DRAWINGS  
*Maureen Killaby*  
Lindale, Texas




*Sidetrack in Mineola!*



# Mineola Nature Preserve


7:30 a.m. until sunset  
No admission fee

- Hiking and Biking Trails
- Photographers Paradise
- Wildlife Viewing Stations
- Equestrian Trails
- RV Hook-Ups/Equestrian Pens
- Pavilion & Amphitheater Rental
- Disc Golf Course
- Wildscape Garden
- Birdwatching
- Fishing Ponds



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*Binding Capital of East Texas*



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COMMUNITIES  
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**THINK**  
*globally*  
**ACT**  
*locally*

**NOBODY WINS  
UNLESS  
EVERYBODY  
WINS**

*Bruce Springsteen*

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CREATE  
JOBS**



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“YOU CAN NEVER GET ENOUGH  
**BOOKS** INTO THE HANDS  
 OF ENOUGH  
**CHILDREN”**



*Dolly*



## Inspiring a Love of Reading in the Upper East Side of Texas

### BOWIE COUNTY

United Way of Greater Texarkana  
 Contact: Molly Riley, (903) 794-3105  
 molly@texarkanaunitedway.org  
 214 Spruce St, Texarkana, TX 75501

### GRAYSON COUNTY

United Way of Grayson County  
 Contact: Katie Eubank, (903) 893-1920  
 literacy@unitedwaygrayson.org  
 PO Box 1112, Sherman, TX 75091

### HUNT COUNTY

United Way of Hunt County  
 Contact: Natalie Pegg, (903) 217-1694  
 info@unitedwayofhuntcounty.org  
 PO Box 224, Greenville, TX 75403

### DELTA COUNTY

Friends of the Delta County Public Library  
 Contact: Lisa Carter, (903) 395-4575  
 deltacountylibrary@gmail.com  
 300 W Dallas Ave, Cooper, TX 75432

### GREGG COUNTY

Greater Longview United Way, Inc.  
 Contact: Dr. Evan Dolive, (903) 758-0191  
 edolive@longviewunitedway.org  
 PO Box 411, Longview, TX 75606

### MARION COUNTY

The Rotary Club of Jefferson TX  
 Contact: Toni Woods, (903) 407-2231  
 tonilwoods@aol.com  
 PO Box 5, Jefferson, TX 75657

### MARSHALL

Mission Marshall  
 Contact: Misty Scott, (903) 472-4944  
 mscott@missionmarshall.org  
 2109 S. Washington St., Marshall, TX 75670

### NAVARRO COUNTY

Westminster Presbyterian Church  
 Contact: April Grant, (903) 874-3781  
 imaginationlibraryWPC@gmail.com  
 312 N 13th St, Corsicana, TX 75110

### NEW SUMMERFIELD

New Summerfield Education Foundation  
 Contact: Peggy Craft, (903) 726-3306  
 pcraft@newsummerfieldisd.net  
 PO Box 6, New Summerfield, TX 75780

### RED RIVER COUNTY/LAMAR COUNTY

Paris Kiwanis Imagination Library  
 Contact: Claudia McKinney, (903) 784-6374  
 cmck126@gmail.com  
 714 CR 35010, Brookston, TX 75421

### RAINS COUNTY

Rains County Public Library  
 Contact: Wendy Byrd, (903) 473-5096  
 wendy.byrd@co.rains.tx.us  
 PO Box 202, Emory, TX 75440

### RUSK COUNTY

Little Ones Literacy Program  
 Contact: Brian Ballard, (903) 521-6435  
 brian.ballard49@gmail.com  
 PO Box 1762, Henderson, TX 75653

### SULPHUR SPRINGS

Sulphur Springs Independent School District  
 Contact: Amanda Ridner, (903) 885-4576  
 aridner@ssisd.net  
 600 Calvert St, Sulphur Springs, TX 75482

### WOOD COUNTY

Pilot Club of Quitman  
 Contact: Susan Ukleja, (903) 243-9384  
 quitmanpilot@gmail.com  
 PO Box 1265, Quitman, TX 75783

### Winnboro Center for the Arts

Contact: Tona Blizzard, (817) 247-0607  
 dpilwinnboro@gmail.com  
 655 CR 4592, Winnboro, TX 75494

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library is a book gifting program that mails free, high-quality books to children from birth to age five, no matter their family's income. The Imagination Library relies on local partners to secure funds to cover the cost of the books and shipping fees.

[www.ImaginationLibrary.com](http://www.ImaginationLibrary.com)

**DONATE**

Contact a participating  
 community to contribute  
 to this worthy cause.

# Visit Downtown Winnsboro for the Festival of Books

*A weekend of books, authors and literary adventures*

A new chapter begins when the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Festival of Books returns to downtown Winnsboro on Friday and Saturday, May 1 and 2. Hosted by Winnsboro Center for the Arts (WCA), this free event turns the streets of downtown into a celebration of stories and storytellers, allowing guests to meet and mingle with authors from all over Texas and enjoy a variety of literary activities for all ages. The event takes place on The Bowery in downtown Winnsboro, where guests can stroll the town and pop in and out of charming shops and eateries.

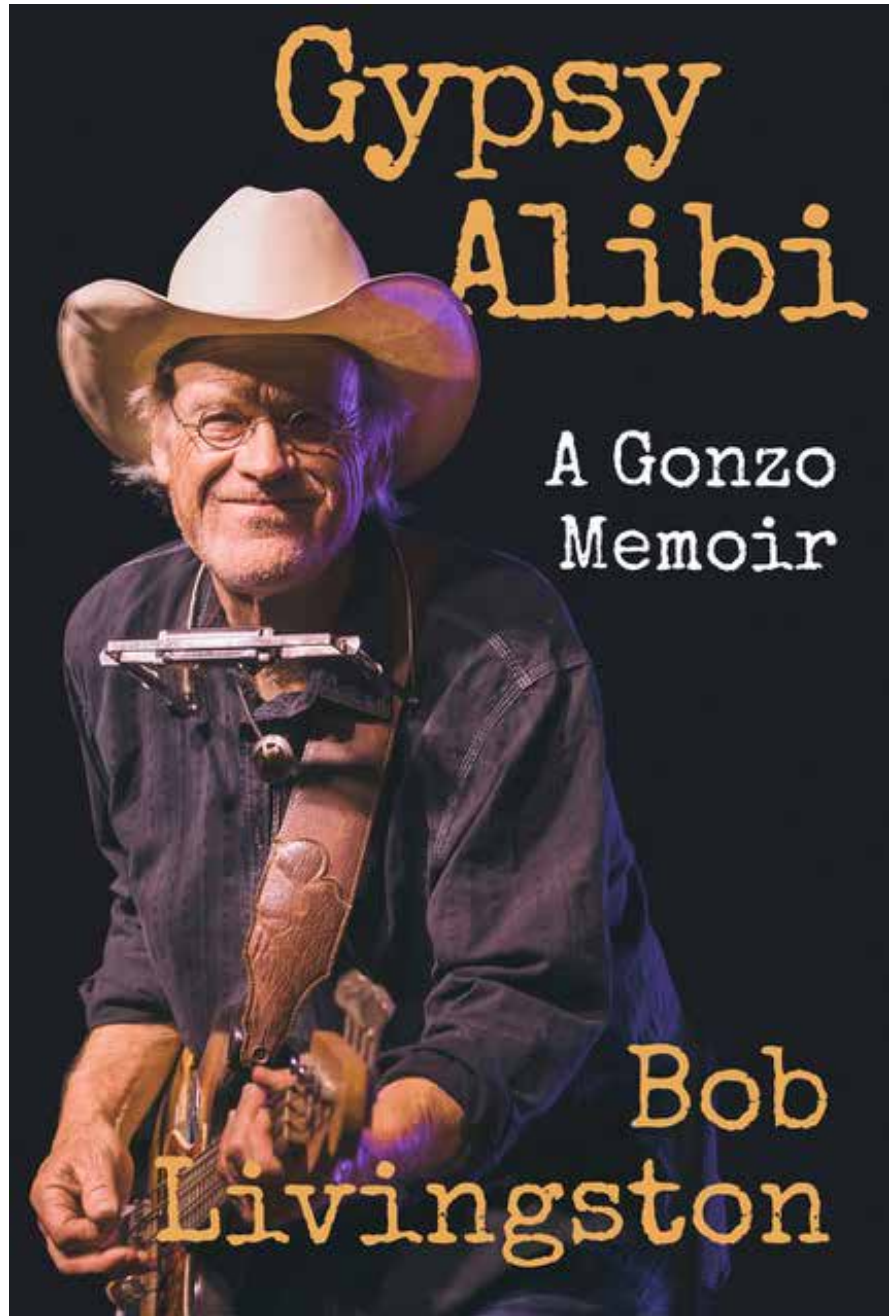
Bob Livingston is the featured author at this year's event. He is a pioneering Texas singer-songwriter and member of the legendary Lost Gonzo Band, a group that helped shape the sound of progressive country in the 1970s. Livingston is author of *Gypsy Alibi: A Gonzo Memoir*, winner of the Best First Book of Nonfiction by the Texas Institute of Letters for its colorful tales about the untamed world of Texas music. He has also served as a cultural ambassador for the U.S. State Department, taking his music to 30-plus countries and collaborating with musicians from around the world.

Also in attendance is Corduroy, a beloved storybook character who has entertained young readers with his adventures since the 1960s. Guests can get hugs, high-fives and photos with Corduroy at the event.

The festival kicks off on Friday with an author meet and greet from 6-7 p.m. followed by an evening of stories and music with the legendary Bob Livingston on The Bowery Stage from 7:30 – 9 p.m. (a ticketed event).

Activities take place from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday with a special performance by Livingston, Texas authors sales and book signings, and interactive art and literacy activities for kids.

Performing artist Michael Guinn, a two-time National Poetry Slam finalist, five-time Austin Poetry Slam winner, and six-time Fort Worth Poetry Slam winner returns to emcee the festival to include recitations by the Fort Worth Po-



etry Society, author book readings, and spoken word open mic.


WCA plays a key role in bringing cultural programming, exhibitions and entertainment to Winnsboro and East Texas. WCA is supported in part by grants from the Texas Commission on the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, Wood County EDC, Winnsboro EDC and Christus Mother Frances Health Systems. Winnsboro's Cultural District is

recognized by Texas Commission on the Arts for its vibrant arts scene. Winnsboro is recognized by the National Trust for Historic Preservation as a Texas Main Street Community and an accredited member of Main Street America for its successful downtown revitalization.

For updated schedules, artist announcements, ticket information and additional details, visit [winnsborocenterforthearts.com](http://winnsborocenterforthearts.com).

# county line

MAGAZINE



**Of all the paths  
you take in life,  
make sure a few  
are made of dirt.**

[www.CountyLineMagazine.com](http://www.CountyLineMagazine.com)

# Broadening the Narrative

*History books in Texas schools don't tell the whole story. Much of the recorded origins of human being is Anglo-male centric. It is important to hear others' perspectives. Thankfully in the United States of America citizens have the right to write, read, research, ask questions, and form their own opinions.*



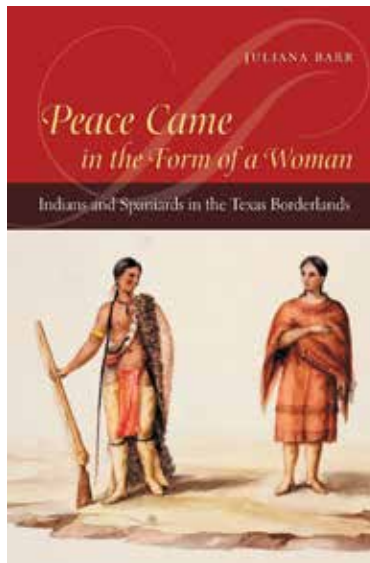
The story of Texas is the story of struggle and triumph in a land of extremes. It is a story of drought and flood, invasion and war, boom and bust, and the myriad peoples who, over centuries of conflict, gave rise to a place that has helped shape the identity of the United States and the destiny of the world.

"I couldn't believe Texas was real," the painter Georgia O'Keeffe remembered of her first encounter with the Lone Star State. It was, for her, "the same big wonderful thing that oceans and the highest mountains are."

*Big Wonderful Thing* invites us to walk in the footsteps of ancient as well as modern people along the path of Texas's evolution. Blending action and atmosphere with impeccable research, *New York Times* best-selling author Stephen Harrigan brings to life with novelistic immediacy the generations of driven men and women who shaped Texas, including Spanish explorers, American filibusters, Comanche warriors, wildcatters, Tejano activists, and spellbinding artists—all of them taking their part in the creation of a place that became not just a nation, not just a state, but an indelible idea.

Written in fast-paced prose, rich with personal observation and a passionate sense of place, *Big Wonderful Thing* calls to

mind the literary spirit of Robert Hughes writing about Australia or Shelby Foote about the Civil War. Like those volumes, it is a big book about a big subject, a book that dares to tell the whole glorious, gruesome, epically sprawling story of Texas.



Revising the standard narrative of European-Indian relations in America, Juliana Barr reconstructs a world in which Indians were the dominant power and Europeans were the ones forced to accommodate, resist, and persevere. She demonstrates that between the 1690s and 1780s, Indian peoples including Caddos, Apaches, Payayas, Karankawas, Wichitas, and Comanches formed relationships with Spaniards in Texas that refuted European claims of imperial control.

Barr argues that Indians not only retained control over their territories but also imposed control over Spaniards. Instead of being defined in racial terms, as was often the case with European constructions of power, diplomatic relations between the Indians and Spaniards in the region were dictated by Indian expressions of power, grounded in gendered terms of kinship. By examining six realms of encounter — first contact, settlement and intermarriage, mission life, warfare, diplomacy, and captivity — Barr shows that native

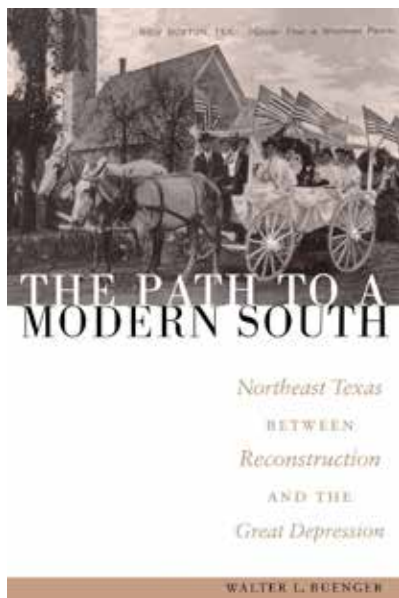
categories of gender provided the political structure of Indian-Spanish relations by defining people's identity, status, and obligations vis-à-vis others. Because native systems of kin-based social and political order predominated, argues Barr, Indian concepts of gender cut across European perceptions of racial difference.



When Americans turn on their laptops, play video games, go to church, vote, eat TexMex, shop for groceries, listen to music, grill steaks, or watch football, they are, knowingly or not, paying tribute to Texas. Tracing the profound and surprising story of the Lone Star State, Benjamin Heber Johnson shines new light on why Texas has had such a powerful influence on U.S. history.

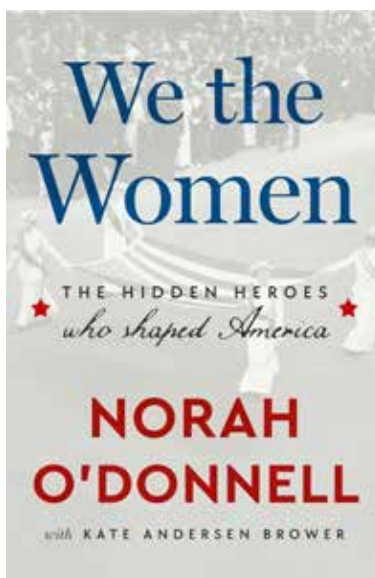
Texas is known to outsiders for mob violence, swaggering self-conception, and conservative politics, but Johnson reveals that the state has also been on the forefront of taming frontier violence, establishing LGBTQ rights, and developing modern businesses such as organic food and personal computing. Neither looking away from the dark chapters of Texas history nor letting them overshadow the achievements of democracy and pluralism that are some of the state's greatest legacies, Johnson offers a balanced and inclusive history of an often contentious

and stereotyped region, covering such topics as the persistence of Native Americans, the frontier story of the Alamo, agrarian populism, racial segregation, the state's porous border with Mexico, and the way historical memory continues to shape the state's identity. The reality of Texas, Johnson shows us, is even bigger than we think it is.



Federal New Deal programs of the 1930s and World War II are often credited for transforming the South, including Texas, from a poverty-stricken region mired in Confederate mythology into a more modern and economically prosperous part of the United States. By contrast, this history of Northeast Texas, one of the most culturally southern areas of the state, offers persuasive evidence that political, economic, and social modernization began long before the 1930s and prepared Texans to take advantage of the opportunities presented by the New Deal and World War II.

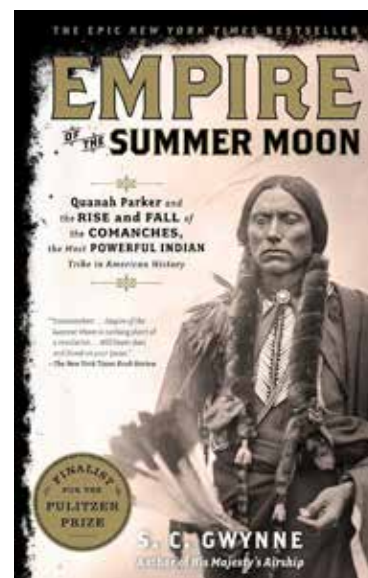
Walter L. Buenger draws on extensive primary research to tell the story of change in Northeast Texas from 1887 to 1930. Moving beyond previous, more narrowly focused studies of the South, he traces and interconnects the significant changes that occurred in politics, race relations, business and the economy, and women's roles. He also reveals how altered memories of the past and the emergence of a stronger identification with Texas history affected all facets of life in Northeast Texas.



Over a decades-long, distinguished career, award-winning journalist Norah O'Donnell has made it her mission to shed light on untold women's stories. Now, in honor of America's 250th birthday, O'Donnell focuses that passion on the American heroines who helped change the course of history.

*We the Women* presents a fresh look at American history through the eyes of women, introducing us to inspiring patriots who demanded that the country live up to the promises made 250 years ago in the Declaration of Independence: "that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." Since the signing of that document, the pressing question from women has been: Why don't those unalienable rights apply to us?

Through extensive research and interviews, as well as historical documents and old photos, O'Donnell curates a compelling portrait of these fierce fighters for freedom. From Mary Katherine Goddard, who printed the first signed Declaration of Independence, to the Forten family women, who were active in the abolition and suffrage movements and were considered the "Black Founders" of Philadelphia, to the first women who served in the armed forces even before they had the right to vote, O'Donnell brings these extraordinary women together for the first time, and in doing so writes the American story anew.



*Empire of the Summer Moon* spans two astonishing stories. The first traces the rise and fall of the Comanches, the most powerful Indian tribe in American history. The second entails one of the most remarkable narratives ever to come out of the Old West: the epic saga of the pioneer woman Cynthia Ann Parker and her mixed-blood son Quanah, who became the last and greatest chief of the Comanches.

Although readers may be more familiar with the tribal names Apache and Sioux, it was in fact the legendary fighting ability of the Comanches that determined when the American West opened up. Comanche boys became adept bareback riders by age six; full Comanche braves were considered the best horsemen who ever rode. They were so masterful at war and so skillful with their arrows and lances that they stopped the northern drive of colonial Spain from Mexico and halted the French expansion westward from Louisiana. White settlers arriving in Texas from the eastern United States were surprised to find the frontier being rolled backward by Comanches incensed by the invasion of their tribal lands.

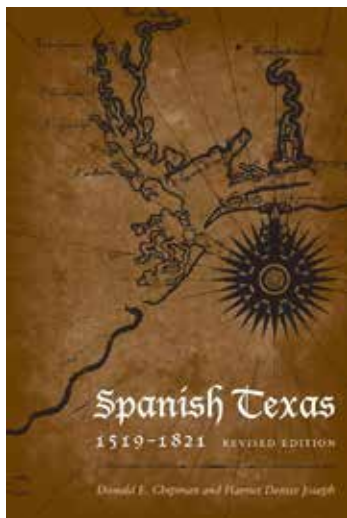
The war with the Comanches lasted four decades, in effect holding up the development of the new American nation. Gwynne's exhilarating account delivers a sweeping narrative that encompasses Spanish colonialism, the Civil War, the destruction of the buffalo herds, and the arrival of the railroads, and the amazing

*continued page 72*

**BOOKS** *continued from page 71*

story of Cynthia Ann Parker and her son Quanah—a historical feast for anyone interested in how the United States came into being.

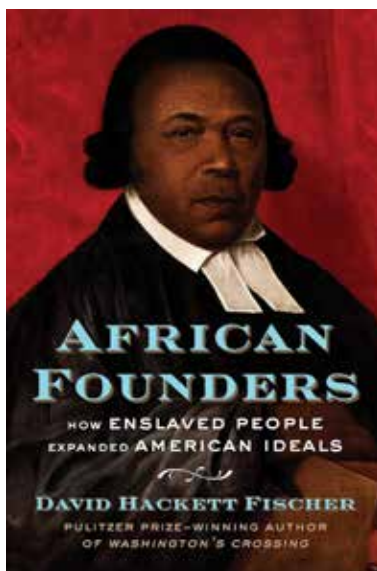
Hailed by critics, S. C. Gwynne's account of these events is meticulously researched, intellectually provocative, and, above all, thrillingly told. *Empire of the Summer Moon* announces him as a major new writer of American history.



Modern Texas, like Mexico, traces its beginning to sixteenth-century encounters between Europeans and Indians who contested control over a vast land. Unlike Mexico, however, Texas eventually received the stamp of Anglo-American culture, so that Spanish contributions to present-day Texas tend to be obscured or even unknown. The first edition of *Spanish Texas, 1519–1821* (1992) sought to emphasize the significance of the Spanish period in Texas history. Beginning with information on the land and its inhabitants before the arrival of Europeans, the original volume covered major people and events from early exploration to the end of the colonial era.

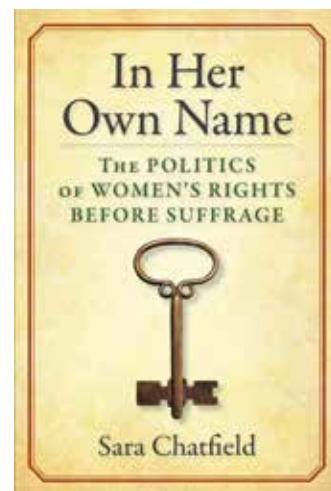
This new edition of *Spanish Texas* has been extensively revised and expanded to include a wealth of discoveries about Texas history since 1990. The opening chapter on Texas Indians reveals their high degree of independence from European influence and extended control over their own lives. Other chapters incorporate new information on La Salle's Garcitas Creek colony and French influences

in Texas, the destruction of the San Sabá mission and the Spanish punitive expedition to the Red River in the late 1750s, and eighteenth-century Bourbon reforms in the Americas. Drawing on their own and others' research, the authors also provide more inclusive coverage of the role of women of various ethnicities in Spanish Texas and of the legal rights of women on the Texas frontier, demonstrating that whether European or Indian, elite or commoner, slave owner or slave, women enjoyed legal protections not heretofore fully appreciated.



*African Founders* explores the little-known history of how enslaved people from different regions of Africa interacted with colonists of European origins to create new regional cultures in the colonial United States. The Africans brought with them linguistic skills, novel techniques of animal husbandry and farming, and generations-old ethical principles, among other attributes. This startling history reveals how much our country was shaped by these African influences in its early years, producing a new, distinctly American culture.

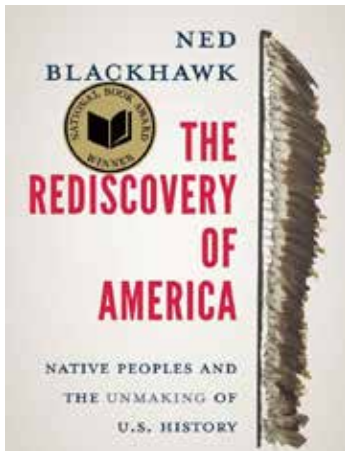
Drawing on decades of research, some of it in western Africa, Fischer recreates the diverse regional life that shaped the early American republic. He shows that there were varieties of slavery in America and varieties of new American culture, from Puritan New England to Dutch New York, Quaker Pennsylvania, cavalier Virginia, coastal Carolina, and Louisiana and Texas.



Long before American women had the right to vote, states dramatically transformed their status as economic citizens. In the early nineteenth century, a married woman had hardly any legal existence apart from her husband. By the twentieth, state-level statutes, constitutional provisions, and court rulings had granted married women a host of protections relating to ownership and control of property. Why did powerful men extend these rights during a period when women had so little political sway?

*In Her Own Name* explores the origins and consequences of laws guaranteeing married women's property rights, focusing on the people and institutions that shaped them. Sara Chatfield demonstrates that the motives of male elites included personal interests, benefits to the larger economy, and bolstering state power. She shows that married women's property rights could serve varied political goals across regions and eras, from temperance to debt relief to settlement of the West. State legislatures, constitutional conventions, and courts expanded these rights incrementally, and laws spread across the country without national-level coordination.

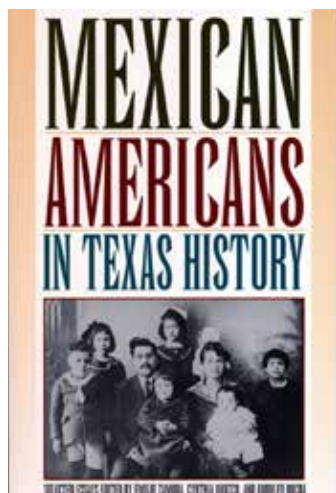
Chatfield emphasizes that the reform of married women's economic rights rested on exclusionary foundations, including protecting slavery and encouraging settler colonialism. Although some women benefited from property reforms, many others saw their rights stripped away by the same processes. Drawing on a mix of qualitative and quantitative evidence, *In Her Own Name* sheds new light on the place of women in the fitful democratization of the United States.



The most enduring feature of U.S. history is the presence of Native Americans, yet most histories focus on Europeans and their descendants. This long practice of ignoring Indigenous history is changing, however, as a new generation of scholars insists that any full American history address the struggle, survival, and resurgence of American Indian nations. Indigenous history is essential to understanding the evolution of modern America.

Ned Blackhawk interweaves five centuries of Native and non-Native histories, from Spanish colonial exploration to the rise of Native American self-determination in the late twentieth century.

Blackhawk's retelling of U.S. history acknowledges the enduring power, agency, and survival of Indigenous peoples, yielding a truer account of the United States and revealing anew the varied meanings of America.

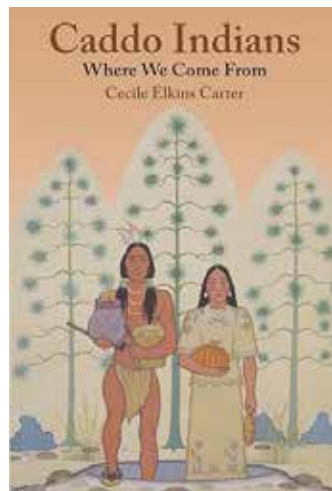


The contributions and influences of Mexican Americans in Texas history have been many and significant. Only in

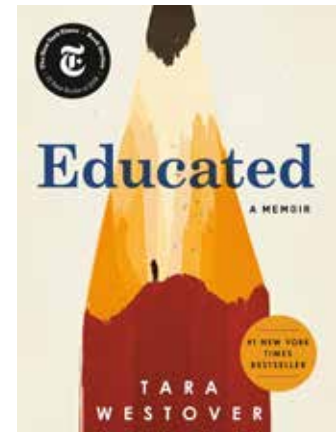
recent decades, however, have historians adequately told this story. The enormous strides made in the study of Mexican-origin people in Texas are reflected in this important new book of essays.

In May 1991 the Texas State Historical Association cosponsored a conference, "Mexican Americans in Texas History," which brought together some six hundred participants, including nearly one hundred leading scholars in the field of Mexican American Studies. In the words of the editors' introduction, this highly successful conference "confirmed and celebrated the existence of a substantial body of literature in Mexican American history." It showed that "Mexican American history was on its way to assuming its rightful place of importance."

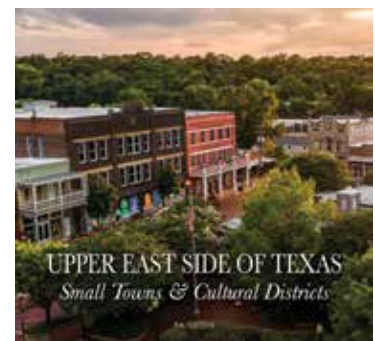
This groundbreaking volume, which contains eleven essays from that pivotal conference, corrects and amplifies the historical record. *Mexican Americans in Texas History* is of great interest to students, scholars, teachers, and general readers, and it is well adapted to classroom use.



This narrative history of the Caddo Indians creates a vivid picture of daily life in the Caddo Nation. Using archaeological data, oral histories, and descriptions by explorers and settlers, Cecile Carter introduces impressive Caddo leaders past and present. The book provides observations, stories, and vignettes on twentieth-century Caddos and invites the reader to recognize the strengths, rooted in ancient culture, that have enabled the Caddos to survive epidemics, enemy attacks, and displacement from their original homelands in Louisiana, Arkansas, Texas, and Oklahoma.



Born to survivalists in the mountains of Idaho, Tara Westover was seventeen the first time she set foot in a classroom. Her family was so isolated from mainstream society that there was no one to ensure the children received an education, and no one to intervene when one of Tara's older brothers became violent. When another brother got himself into college, Tara decided to try a new kind of life. Her quest for knowledge transformed her, taking her over oceans and across continents, to Harvard and to Cambridge University. Only then would she wonder if she'd traveled too far, if there was still a way home.



Explore the small towns and cultural districts of Upper East Side Texas. Find rich history, breathtaking scenery, fresh farm-to-table experiences, and an abundance of artistic and cultural interests. Experience wide-open spaces and instant relaxation while meandering through the backroads from one main street to the next. Standing at the center of any of the communities gives an immediate sense of the beauty that happens when the reverence of the historical past, the welcoming of contemporary culture, and a partnership with nature converge. That good vibration is the underlying current of the entire Upper East Side of Texas.

# Poetry & Prose

## Strings

Starlight  
on a guitar  
on the last road  
winding toward nirvana,  
each string  
fingered  
by the music of the sky  
living inside,  
and glimmering  
past all midnights.

*Darrell Lindsey, Nacogdoches*

## Here and There and Gone

Here and there and gone  
like a firefly  
on a summer night,

like a soldier  
in the trenches  
lost to fog and time.

Here and there and gone  
like a dream  
around the bend,

like a tender love song  
on the lips  
of a missing friend.

Here and there and gone  
sometimes coming back  
to glance at me,

some of those occasions  
eyeing me down now  
in these 3 A.M. memories.

*Darrell Lindsey, Nacogdoches*

## Red Man's Pledge of Peace

I pledge you by the moon and sun,  
As long as stars their course shall run,  
Long as day shall meet my view,  
Peace shall reign between us two.

I pledge you by those peaks of snow  
As long as streams to oceans flow  
Long as years their youth renew  
Peace shall reign between us two.

I came from mother soil and cave  
You came from pathless sea and wave  
Strangers fought our battles through  
Peace shall reign between us two.

*Alexander Posey*

Muskogee Creek poet, journalist, and educator

## The New Colossus

Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,  
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;  
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand  
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame  
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name  
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand  
Glow world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command  
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.  
"Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!" cries she  
With silent lips. "Give me your tired, your poor,  
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,  
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.  
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,  
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

*Emma Lazarus*

Engraved at the base of the Statue of Liberty

## The Sky is on Fire

Cold, wet and hungry, I anxiously wait as I sit in the deep muddy trenches of this tumultuous war.  
Some are writing their loved ones on torn pieces of paper while others pray or stare out into space.

We are all -

Waiting for something, or anything to feed our hungry souls.  
Waiting for something, or anything that can fill the empty void.

The sounds of war resonant in my bones and cause my heart to beat hard against my chest.  
The taste of gunpowder and metal lingers in the air and fills my lungs with its thickness.  
Fear tastes bitter and I wet my lips just to taste the salt from my skin, so I'll know I'm alive.

We are all -

Waiting for something, or anything to loosen the chains of fate.  
Waiting for something, or anything called hope in death's grip.

My sense of time grows stronger, as the enemy's voices grow louder as they draw closer to me.  
I know I must be ready to do the unthinkable, the unimaginable, to face this reprehensible evil.  
My body starts to shiver, as my senses seem to quicken, while sweat pours heavily from my brow.

We are all -

Waiting for something, or anything that fuels our inner strength.  
Waiting for something, or anything to prevail in this raging battle.

My courage builds as I realize that I can overcome fear as it is much weaker than who I am.  
We all climb up from the deep trenches in unison as we are a force of many meshed into one.  
The intensity of the noise builds and fuels my determination, my inner strength even more.

We are all -

Waiting for something, or anything to bring us all back home again.  
Waiting for something, or anything to heal when we cannot heal alone.

I feel the adrenaline rushing warm through my veins as my gut instincts grow stronger.  
It is then I realize that bravery is the result of the courage that lives in each one of us.  
I look up to see the moon shining full and bright in the black sky, making it look a deep blue.  
The red bursts of rockets set the sky on fire as they reach up to the stars shining so bright.  
I can hear our Anthem playing in my head as I see through the smoke our flag waving proudly.

The wait is over.  
The battle is won.

*Toni Stratton, Lindale*

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**COSTA RICA** | GARDENS, FARMS,  
CONSERVATION, & FOREST | *Travel Program with Ann Bush*  
**September 5 - 13, 2026**

IN A  
WORLD

WHERE YOU CAN  
BE ANYTHING

BE

KIND





**TEXAS**  
CULTURAL  
TRUST

ARTS  
ADVOCACY

# INSPIRE THE NEXT GENERATION

# Patriotic Pool Party



By *Katie-Rose Watson*

Looking for Independence Day party inspiration? I've got you covered. The 4th of July is a big deal in my family. My grandpa's birthday was the 4th of July and I spent many years at his cabin at Lake Tahoe celebrating with great fanfare. Now I spend every other year either eating Blueberry Hill Surprise at the lake house or by the pool. Here are some of my favorite recipes and party ideas for your Independence Day festivities. Find more details and videos on [www.therosetable.com/2023/06/25/patriotic-pool-party](http://www.therosetable.com/2023/06/25/patriotic-pool-party).

## The Table

I set up a 6' portable table by the pool and styled it with a fabulous (and inexpensive) firework tablecloth I found on Amazon. I decorated the table with white nautical lanterns, American flags, custom made

signs, one huge red, white, and blue floral arrangement, and tons of festive food.

## The Flowers

I styled blue hydrangeas, white roses, and red carnations to make the loveliest red white and blue bouquet.

## The Signs

My talented friend Anamieke, owner of Enchanted Farmhouse, made this custom "Party like it's 1776" sign for me and it was the star of my table. It's now available in her Etsy store. (If you're a big Rose Table fan, you'll recognize lots of my Disney Dinners decor on her shop page.) She also made three adorable firework blocks, which I've been loving in my living room all summer.

## The Drink

My Star Spangled Punch is sure to delight the whole family. An easy mix of

cranberry juice and lemonade, this refreshing punch can easily be spiked with gin or vodka or left plain for the whole family to enjoy it. Serve with adorable watermelon stars and blueberries.

### Star Spangled Punch

2 bottles lemonade

2 bottles cranberry juice

3 slices watermelon, cut into stars

Blueberries

Optional: ginger ale, vodka, or gin

Use a star cookie cutter to cut out watermelon stars.

Combine lemonade and cranberry juice in a punch bowl or drink dispenser. If you'd like, add vodka or gin to spike and/or ginger ale for a sparkling punch.

Add watermelon stars and blueberries and serve.

## The Food

Looking for an easy 4th of July Menu? You found it. This felt so easy to me because this is pretty much what my family eats every year on the fourth. Make the potato salad and pie ahead of time then all you have left is the five-minute fruit wands and sliders.

### **Patriotic Pool Party Menu**

All-American Sliders  
Chips, Assorted Fruit  
Buzz's Potato Salad  
Firework Fruit Wands  
Blueberry Hill Surprise  
The Sliders

### **Sliders**

I'm such a purist when it comes to burgers. All I want is super high quality beef, sea salt, King's Hawaiian Rolls, lettuce, tomatoes, pickles, and cheese. My secret? Despite being a grill-aholic, I prefer to do sliders in the house.

Makes 8  
1 lbs organic 80/20 ground beef  
Sea salt  
8 King's Hawaiian Rolls  
8 pieces of butterhead lettuce  
8 tomato slices  
Pickle slices  
Ketchup  
Mustard

Divide ground beef into eight equal parts and form fairly thin patties. (They will puff up as they cook.) Grind sea salt on one side.

Grill patties or cook on the stove in a nonstick skillet (no butter necessary – 80/20 has enough fat to coat the pan) with the lid on for four minutes per side.

Serve on King's Hawaiian rolls with lettuce, tomato, pickles, ketchup, and mustard for an All American slider.

### **Buzz's Potato Salad**

Finally my mom's potato salad makes its Rose Table debut. She perfected this over the years and I think it's quite different from most potato salads. The yogurt-dill dressing is so light and refreshing. She uses bacon, green onions, hard-boiled eggs, and pickles for the perfect potato salad.

2.25 pounds baby Dutch potatoes (approximately 48 small potatoes)  
Yogurt-dill dressing, recipe follows  
6 hard boiled eggs, diced  
6 stripes bacon, cooked and crumbled  
1 celery bunch, sliced  
1/4 cup pickles, chopped  
1 green onion bunch, chopped

Cover potatoes in cold water. Bring to a boil, cover, and boil for about 25 minutes or until fork tender.



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## **PARTY** *continued from page 79*

Remove from water with a slotted spoon. Cut larger potatoes in half or quarters. Gently toss with yogurt-dill dressing. It'll be soupy but don't panic. Refrigerate for 2-3 hours.

Give the potato salad a stir and notice how much less soupy it is. Toss potatoes with diced hard boiled eggs, crispy bacon, celery, pickles, and green onion. Refrigerate until ready to eat.

### **Yogurt-Dill Dressing**

1/2 cup plain Greek yogurt

1/2 cup mayonnaise

3 Tbsp fresh dill, chopped

Salt, pepper to taste

Whisk together yogurt, mayonnaise, fresh dill, salt, and pepper.

### **Firework Fruit Wands**

These are too adorable. Cut watermelons into stars using cookie cutters, then thread onto bamboo skewers with blueberries for the cutest 4th of July side dish. To be extra festive, arrange in a firework display.

1 whole watermelon

1 pint blueberries

Cut watermelon into slices, about three-fourths of an inch thick. Use star cookie cutters to cut out large and medium stars.

Thread blueberries on bamboo skewers, leaving three or four inches bare on the bottom to comfortably hold the wands. Add a watermelon star at the top of the wand. Arrange in a firework display.

### **Blueberry Hill Surprise**

Last but certainly not least, I served my famous Blueberry Hill Surprise, which is so good it's on the cover of *The Rose Table Cookbook*.

What's the "surprise" you ask? I use a German kuchen pastry instead of pie crust for this recipe so it might look like pie but it tastes more like a giant sugar cookie. It's one of my signature desserts.

#### **For the pastry:**

1 cup unsalted butter, room temperature

1 tsp vanilla extract

2 eggs

2 cups flour

1 1/2 cups sugar

1/2 tsp salt

#### **For the filling:**

1/2 cup sugar

2 Tbsp all-purpose flour

Pinch of salt

1/2 tsp cinnamon



5 cups blueberries, rinsed and dried  
1 Tbsp milk  
1 Tbsp unsalted butter, softened

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease and flour a 9-inch pie plate.

Make the pastry: Beat butter with vanilla. Add eggs one at a time. Mix in flour, sugar, and salt. Using clean hands, gently spread half of the dough on the bottom and up the sides of the prepared pie plate.

In a small bowl, whisk together sugar, flour, and cinnamon. Sprinkle about 2 Tbsp of the mixture over the crust. Pour half the berries onto the crust, sprinkle them with about 4 Tbsp of the cinnamon sugar mixture, then top with the remaining berries and sugar mixture.

Using the palms of your hands, flatten the pastry dough and set pieces over the pie. Repeat with remaining dough until the pie is covered. (It's okay if some blueberries peak out!) Lightly brush pastry with milk.

Make roughly 8 slits in the crust to ensure even baking. Bake until crust is golden and berries are bubbling, about 45-50 minutes.

Remove pie from the oven. Immediately spread a tablespoon of butter on the crust. Let cool completely before serving. Delicious with homemade vanilla ice cream or whipped cream.

Whipped Cream  
1 cup heavy cream  
¼ cup powdered sugar  
1 tsp vanilla

Beat heavy cream with a metal whisk in a chilled metal bowl until cream starts to thicken.

Add remaining ingredients and continue to beat until soft peaks form. Do not over mix. Store leftovers in the fridge for up to three days.

## More

Here are some other ideas to add to a fun Independence Day.

### Red, White, and Blue Cake

[www.therosetable.com/2023/05/25/red-white-and-blue-cake/](http://www.therosetable.com/2023/05/25/red-white-and-blue-cake/)

### Patriotic Cheese and Charcuterie Board

[www.therosetable.com/2024/06/28/patriotic-cheese-and-charcuterie-board/](http://www.therosetable.com/2024/06/28/patriotic-cheese-and-charcuterie-board/)

### Mixed Berry French Toast

[www.therosetable.com/2024/06/27/mixed-berry-french-toast/](http://www.therosetable.com/2024/06/27/mixed-berry-french-toast/)

*Katie Rose-Watson is the author of the beautifully illustrated cookbook The Rose Table and the cooking and entertaining blog, [www.therosetable.com](http://www.therosetable.com). Her imaginative dinners are featured on several national news media outlets.*





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