DENTONLIVE
CELEBRATING ORIGINAL INDEPENDENCE IN NORTH TEXAS
FALL-WINTER 2015

In Living Color
Denton’s Art Goes Public

plus

A Pooch’s Perspective of Dog Days
Jeffrey Barnes:
The Wizard of Musictown

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Denton’s Art Goes Public

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Established in 1890, the University of North Texas thrives as a public research university with 36,000 students and a path to any career. As we’ve grown into the nation’s 25th largest public university, our impact has grown, too. Our programs are internationally recognized. Our research and scholarship spans all disciplines. Our world-class faculty are making breakthroughs every day. And our alumni are changing the world around them. This is UNT at 125.

Join us this year as we celebrate our 125th anniversary with university-wide celebrations.

Visit 125.unt.edu.

**Founder’s Week**  
*Sept. 16-19, 2015*  
UNT will formally kick off its 125th anniversary by honoring the day of its founding — Sept. 16, 1890 — with highlights including the President’s State of the University Address and the season’s first home football game on Saturday.

**Homecoming Week**  
*Oct. 5-10, 2015*  
Celebrate UNT’s spirit, history, traditions and achievements through a weeklong series of activities, including UNT’s Alumni Awards, Spirit March and bonfire that Friday and parade and football game on Saturday.

**Wingspan**  
*April 14-17, 2016*  
A series of events to culminate UNT’s 125th anniversary year including the grand opening and dedication of the new University Union, open houses and tours, concert series and the Wingspan Gala.
Denton’s making moves, and now’s the time to be part of the growing city. Start here and find out what Little d has for you.

10 | Jeffery Barnes
   Master class from the Master Sax.

12 | Higher Grounds
   Cup Creations, right here in Denton.

15 | Mural Around Town
   Hop in your car and paint the town.

22 | Chisholm!
   Some trails never end.
Cowboy Up
The North Texas Fair & Rodeo is back for its 87th year to celebrate Denton’s roots.

Fun for Fido
Bring your four-legged friend for Texas’ original celebration for pooches and their people.

[Discover Denton]

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Mull it over for a minute. Look at the image. Think about the words. What does it mean? What is it saying?

This is our brand. It conveys in a single image the essence of this place: Denton, Texas. Understanding our brand is the first step to understanding our vibe. And tuning to our vibe is the key to unlocking your own uniquely-customized, Denton-centric adventure.

The word original is a broad application. It’s more a description of spirit than physical attribute, though the spirit is manifested in the physical fabric of our city. The creative energy fueled by our universities, arts community, music industry, small business community, the North Texas Horse Country – it drives originality. Another example of our originality is our vibrant downtown. It’s the real thing, no faux about it. We hold fast to our history while progressively moving ahead. We hold originality in high regard.

Independent is more of the same spirit and springs from the same attributes as original. Consider our burgeoning music scene, for instance. Denton is known around the world for the music movement that’s been organically evolving here for many years. Interestingly, though, there is not a specific “Denton sound” that anyone can identify in a word. That is the result of original and independent. The sound is a combination of individual sounds where writers, musicians, poets and venues have their own messages, rhythms, tunes and atmospheres. Listeners get the entire breadth, as varied or not as they choose. And again, in the surrounding horse country, we have the most diverse equine population and disciplines in one area than anywhere else on Planet Earth. That’s independent, and it results in a lively, energetic culture.

The weathered appearance of the brand is quite intentional. Think about your favorite pair of jeans. They’re likely a bit worn-looking, because they are your favorite. They fit you perfectly, comfortably. And they wouldn’t fit anyone else in just the same way. Our brand says that’s how Denton fits too.

Denton is a place where people come to pursue their passions, and we’ve shared their dreams and journeys for more than 150 years. You’ll see it in our year-round festivals, museums, galleries and shops. You’ll taste it in the delectable art of local chefs and unique dining. You’ll feel it in our vibe.

Welcome to Denton. Now get ready for something different, an experience no other has had before, because this one is yours: Original. Independent.
PLACES OF HISTORY & INTEREST

1. Denton County Courthouse-on-the-Square
2. Denton Crossing Shopping Center
3. Denton Enterprise Airport
4. Golden Triangle Mall
5. IOOF Cemetery
6. Oakwood Cemetery
7. Rayzor Ranch Shopping Center
8. North Texas Horse Country
9. Unicorn Lake Shopping Center

PARKS, RECREATION & SPORTS

10. Civic Center
11. Denia Park
12. Denton Senior Center
13. Eureka! Playground
14. Fouts Field
15. Lake Ray Roberts Green Belt
16. North Lakes Park
17. North Texas Fairgrounds
18. Pioneer Hall
19. Quakertown Park
20. South Lakes Park
21. Texas Motor Speedway
22. UNT Apogee Stadium
23. UNT Coliseum
24. Water Works Park / City of Denton Natatorium / Skate Park & CH Collins Athletic Complex

Denton Convention & Visitors Bureau
414 W. Parkway St. | Denton, Texas 76201
940.382.7895 | 888.381.1818
www.discoverdenton.com
are you #dentoning?

Join the Dentoning craze by using the #dentoning hashtag on Instagram, Twitter and Facebook. We’ll publish our favorites in the next issue of Denton Live, and you’ll win a cool #dentoning T-shirt.

HARVESTING MUSIC @elliemeyer8 shows us a snap of her mic as she gets ready to perform at downtown Denton’s new live music venue, Harvest House. (Read more about Harvest House on page 8)

FOOD, FOOD, FOOD! @silverc10 grabbed some tasty food truck noms at Austin St. Truck Stop.

DENTON, JE T’AIME @tesamorin shows off her wonderful view just a few feet away from Denton’s iconic Courthouse-on-the-Square.
DentonRadio.com is an online, 24/7 radio station devoted to Denton’s one-of-a-kind sound, playing original songs by Denton musicians—and nothing else.

#dentonradio

**tune in.**

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**Claire Morales**  
*Amaranthine* is a dreamy ride from beginning to end. Claire and the band are a perfect fit for indie-folk music, with her warm vocals and rich melody. “Prettier” sets the album off to a lively beginning, and “Perfume” gives it a velvety ending with an airy and almost saccharine feel.

**Mink Coats**  
*Mink Coats* pairs a nostalgic sound, akin to The Kingsmen, with something that is as original as Denton’s music scene. The three men and lady make music that is enjoyable and easy to zone out to. “Middle Eastern Creep” and “Candybowl” are the standouts on the album as the most hip and tuneful.

**VoltREvolt**  
From the seemingly apocalyptic “Nukes in Space,” the achingly sublime “I Leave Behind,” and the anhemic “For the Love of God,” *Tangled in the Light* may be an instant classic for the Denton band. While their music is considered rock and roll, there are different moods in each song that will satisfy the traditionalist and the indie listener equally.

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**The BoomBachs**  
“Determination,” from their upcoming album *AlienNation*, will definitely be one of those memorable songs that you can’t help but hum. The smooth and well-shaped arrangement gives listeners a stable beat to nod to, lyrics that are thought-provoking, and vocals that are clear and crisp.

**The Demigs**  
In the latest single “Distress Signals,” from the four-man band’s upcoming album *Welcome to Hard Times*, is a melodic tale of longing that is heartfelt and edgy. The bass and drums are steady in the melody, while the guitars provide a balanced and driving sound to the song, brought together with stylish and distinctive vocals, a formula that worked well for the group in their past albums.

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**She Banshee**  
When a collection is created, it is normally comprised of the best that the creator has to offer. *Postieval* is just that. Each song includes raw lyrics and powerful arrangements that evoke really strong, soundly crafted music. “Sister Brother” is definitely a kick to the system, and “Darling Darjeeling” makes for a good endcap to the album.

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Album art courtesy of artist’s Bandcamp page

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—Ateanna Uriri
Everybody dancin’
C’mon children, c’mon children
Come on, clap your hands
Sun went down in honey and the moon came up in wine
You know stars were spinnin’ dizzy, Lord
The band kept us too busy, we forgot about the time

A couple dances and cheers under the night sky. He spins her out and brings her back, swaying and smiling. The music never stopped, they say, but this tune isn’t coming from The Grateful Dead. It’s coming from Forgotten Space, a tribute band, 30 years after the song’s introduction.

The ‘60s and ‘70s counterculture pioneered music that is still revered while much of today’s popular music comes and goes like the wind. The songs of these “cultural decades” have been immortalized in documentaries, album compilations and tributes.

But what about the people?
They are a little older – more experienced, they say – but the old free spirit hasn’t died, just matured, and the music lives on with them. Randy Robinson, President of Point Bank and notable character about Denton, is living proof. Randy thought that the music of his youth should be celebrated, preserved and enjoyed by young and old alike. He may not have been able to call up Chicago or Jimi Hendrix, but he had something else in mind for Denton: Geezerpalooza.

“The way it started was me and a couple of buddies were sitting around at Dan’s Silverleaf. We had talked about music in Denton and all the festivals,” Randy says. “So, I said ‘you know what’d be neat is to have some kind of music event that features music during the time we were in high school.’”

Geezerpalooza is a free one-day event made up of tribute bands and vendors. It benefits the Salvation Army and Serve Denton. Despite the name, this isn’t your grandparents meeting for bingo or shuffleboard, but a musical celebration enjoyed by classic folk and rock music-lovers of all ages. In a city known for its unique music culture, this is one festival that rocks to the Wolfman and the Bandstand – the oldies but goodies.

“We just kind of invented our own music festival because… we felt like there was an empty niche waiting to be filled with that era of music,” Randy says.

Randy pulled together some friends and organized a committee to plan the first Geezerpalooza in 2013.

“The first year you do an event, it’s difficult,” says Julie Glover, committee member and Economic Development Program Administrator for the City of Denton. “You don’t know how many people are going to show up… you don’t know if anybody’s gonna show up.”

But the people did show up, about 300 people the first year and 100 more the next. The soundtrack of a generation is creating new memories and reawakening others.

“You can be listening to the radio and some song comes on, and you remember a particular date, where you were, the guy that you were with, even if that’s somebody who’s long gone,” Julie says. “It’s just an amazing thing that music can transport you like that”

Geezerpalooza will be held on Industrial Street in Denton on Sunday, October 18 at 1 p.m. For more details, check out the Geezerpalooza Facebook page.
Dentonites are used to seeing the road work. The Hickory Street improvement is a massive project turning this familiar favorite district into a symbol of Denton’s refreshing independent spirit. After a year of work, the end is in sight. Paving is finished, sidewalks widened, and Hickory Street is more beautiful than it’s ever been.

Part of the project’s goal is to make way for new businesses, such as Harvest House. Denton’s newest beer garden, coffee shop and live music venue is the latest newcomer to the city’s rich tradition of classic music venues like Dan’s Silver Leaf and Hailey’s. Harvest House adds an undeniable new flavor to the Hickory Street scene.

“I started throwing this party 11 years ago,” says Matt Arnold, one of Harvest House’s founders. “It was the first cold night of the year. We carved some pumpkins, drank some whiskey, and we called it Harvest Fest. Every year we threw the party, it kept getting bigger.”

Matt’s annual Harvest Fest parties evolved from a few friends at his home, dubbed “Harvest House,” to one of the key musical events of the year with hundreds, then thousands, in attendance. Matt, with his partners Ian and John Lenz, saw it was time to make Harvest House a business, with one requirement: “We wanted to create a place that felt like home.” Matt says.

The Hickory Street Project has had a profound effect on established businesses that have been mainstays for some time. Take Hickory Street Lounge. Ken Fallin, one of the founders, is tending bar. He is dexterous and energetic, often catering to the needs of new customers and regulars alike before they need to ask for what they want. He does it all with the effortless ease that comes from experience. The street construction, though, knocked him off balance.

“At first it was a mere inconvenience, but then sales really dipped,” he says.

For Ken and many of the businesses on Hickory Street, the construction has been problematic. It often limited pedestrian and driver access alike, sending revenue the wrong way: down. Some businesses were virtually cut off from sidewalk access. This forced customers to circumnavigate buildings to find a different entrance. That’s if they didn’t just assume the business was closed and go somewhere else. Despite the problems, Ken is jubilant about the project and thrilled to see it finished.

“We can already tell the difference,” he said. “We’re excited about people coming down to see what’s new.”

Perhaps because of their fledgling status, the people at Harvest House faced a different challenge.

“We thought that our fledgling status, the people at Harvest House, faced a different challenge. We thought that our business was going to open months ago.” Matt said. “And [construction] thought they were going to finish months ago. We’ve been on the same table and had the same delays. We basically opened the day after the street was finished so the timing could not have been more perfect.”

Now that the Hickory Street Project is complete, this storied entertainment district is even more vibrant and dynamic, emanating the Denton vibe.

Denton is no stranger to cultural touchstones, like the Denton Arts and Jazz Festival, that demonstrate just how strongly our music culture resonates with residents. Named for the street on which it originally took place, the Oaktopia music festival is the latest on Denton’s music festival calendar, with a character as unique as the city that it celebrates.

According to Matt Battaglia, co-founder of Oaktopia, the original Oaktopia was a grassroots effort, funded with the crew’s assembled life savings and loans from relatives. Now Oaktopia has hit the proverbial big time.

Although Oaktopia was inspired by the massive Denton Arts and Jazz Fest, a visible and obvious influence, Matt and his colleagues intended that the festival become something distinctly different. “We always wanted to transform Downtown Denton into a living piece of art,” he says.

Matt also has plans to make Oaktopia a more interactive experience. “We’re going to have more artists—more things for the attendees to do and touch. We’re going to have artistic activities for the attendees to engage in.”

This year’s lineup includes Aesop Rock, Immortal Technique, Denton’s own Brave Combo and many, many more. Oaktopia 2015 will begin at 5:00 p.m. Friday, September 25th, and run until 2:00 a.m. on the 27th.
In the bowels of a historic building that used to protect the assets of the people and businesses that founded this city is a room now filled with comic book action figures, high-end tower computers and four guys working like mad men on their projects.

In the middle of this frenetic activity is a man sporting a graying beard and dark circles under his eyes from too many sleepless nights working on his latest project. But this is what Mike Christian wanted to do. Ever since he was 14, Mike knew developing video games was his destiny.

“That was during a time where arcades were out, and it blew my mind,” Mike said.

Mike’s youthful inspiration led to the development of From the Future, his independent video game and application development company. The company is taking entertainment technology forward with games and apps for mobile devices and exploring new application fields.

From developing high profile projects such as the American Airlines app to The Terminator video game, the company is making great and fast strides.

Before becoming a player in the small, independent video game scene, Mike was a programmer at Paradigm Entertainment, a video game development company filled with hundreds of employees. Among the sea of employees, Mike would meet his future co-founders of From the Future: Joey Bryant, Stephen Hess and Kyle Rives.

Paradigm Entertainment was bought out by Toy Head Quarters in 2006, and then closed its doors in 2008. It was during that time Mike, Joey, Stephen and Kyle decided to launch their own company, originally named Jovian Minds.

The company began in Lewisville and moved to Denton six years ago. Besides affordable rent and a location conveniently close to the staff, Mike said they enjoyed the creative energy of the Denton community and wanted to be a part of it.

“We just like the whole vibe and music scene here,” Mike said. “I like the square and the fact that we can just walk to one of the bars here after a long day of work.”

The long days of work have led to the development of many apps and mobile games such as Dig Little d. The crew teamed up with the Denton Convention and Visitors Bureau to create an app that would help residents and visitors find their way around the downtown area.

Most notably, it features a game that involves a red mohawked Chihuahua named Little d, controlled by the player. Little d digs for coins in a virtual downtown Denton while avoiding Chuck Gable, the aptly named rooster guarding the buried treasure. Winning players redeem coins for real rewards such as Denton swag, records, gift cards and coupons to certain shops.

From the Future is currently looking at developing games for the Oculus Rift, a virtual-reality device. Mike believes that since the device is new, jumping on the technology early will land them into what he thinks will be a major market lead.

Mike’s upside for his chosen career and company? Working in a creative environment with people passionate about video games. This is the drive behind him and the company.

“You have to be optimistic about the way your company is going,” he said. “[Making games] is my way to create. I’m able to create these characters and breathe life into them.”

—Javier Navarro
It’s a typical night on Colorado Avenue. The bar is dimly lit and filled with phosphorescent smoke. Soldiers fresh back from the nightmares of Vietnam crowd around the stage sucking back beers. Exotic dancers swivel their hips up on the stage in time with bluesy R&B music. A fight will probably break out before the night is over.

It’s in places like this that Jeffrey Barnes played his first gigs – at sixteen. Today Jeffrey sits at the Greenhouse, a local Denton restaurant. He’s dressed in a billowing coat of flutes with a white dress shirt and tie.

Surrounded by a crowd wearing mass-manufactured T-shirts and jeans, he’s looking quite bohemian. He gazes down at the bar, shaking his head as he remembers a lifetime of adventures. This quiet unassuming man has an exalted reputation within the Denton music scene.

A breeding ground of musical talent, Denton even rivals Austin in the sheer volume of artists it produces. So when one can stand out as a musician in this kind of environment, it’s quite an achievement.

Jeffrey Barnes is best known for his work as the saxophonist for the ‘punk polka’ band Brave Combo. Nominated for seven and winners of two Grammys in their 30+ years together, Brave Combo is one of those acts that always draws a crowd.

From performances at Denton Arts & Jazz Fest, appearances on TV shows like The Simpsons and world tours, even through Japan, it’s safe to say that the group has wide appeal despite producing music of a decidedly odd genre. When Jeffrey announced that he was leaving the band after more than three decades, it sparked quite a reaction amongst fans. Jeffrey’s departure, in the words of one, is similar to hearing about the Beatles breaking up all over again.

Jeffrey’s love of music began casually, as a playful activity on sunlit days with his mother. She’d recite nursery rhymes to him, many
of which he can still recite. She’d play instruments while he toddled around. “My mother essentially made me a musician,” he says. “Before I could speak, music was a source of pleasure, and I got to hang around with my mother.”

As he got older, Jeffrey started playing in bands like the Lost Horizons and the Knight Riders, groups he describes as R&B garage bands. They played lots of wild parties, including seedy soldier bars. “These were rough places,” he says, “full of soldiers that were fixing to go off to Vietnam. There was all manner of bad activity going on. That’s where I began.”

While he was still a kid, the Barnes family moved to Beaumont, the humid marshlands of southeast Texas, so close to Louisiana that the influence of Cajun culture permeated everything. Jeffrey has fond memories of running across the border to Louisiana, often to go on bar runs. “I’m surprised we made it back,” he chuckles.

Back in the seventies, Beaumont was characterized by a vibrant music scene of its own. Beaumont, as Jeffrey put it, is “nestled in the birthplace of all this wonderful music.” Contrary to the stereotypical image of rural Texas, the town featured a thriving R&B culture and was filled with discos. Here Jeffrey played with African American blues acts like Carl Steward and the Sonic Show and Review and the Boogie Kings.

“Beaumont, Texas was a pretty rough place,” Jeffrey says with a nostalgic smile “But if you knew where to look, there were lots of wonderful things going on, and one of those things was music.”

Once in adulthood, Jeffrey moved to Austin. He worked construction gigs by day and played at clubs and bars by night. He packed everything he had in a backpack and crashed with various friends, fans and fellow musicians.

Jeffrey didn’t get a driver’s license until he was 40, so the gigs he played and where he slept on any given night depended on the Austin bus schedule. It was around this time that Jeffrey’s reputation as a gifted saxophonist took off. Some of his first gigs were playing with Jimmy Vaughn at the height of Vaughn’s popularity. Jeffrey shared an apartment with Vaughn’s tenor and sax player, where he met and started making music with Vaughn’s little brother Stevie Ray.

“Back in 1972 or 1973, I played with Stevie Ray Vaughn in his living room with a bass player for a while, because he was trying out various musicians,” Jeffrey says. “And he put up with me playing my bass clarinet that my mother bought me for eight dollars.”

Although Austin featured a vivid music scene, it was a difficult place for a musician to get by. Jeffrey had to work constantly, playing with anyone he could in order to make a living. What Jeffrey needed was a consistent paying gig.

Finally, he got a call from one of his favorite bands: Brave Combo in Denton Texas.

When they asked for a picture the only recent photo Jeffrey could find was a rather extravagant depiction of him in skull make up with a cigarette dangling from his mouth, lugging his sax around. Brave Combo’s response: “Yeah, he’s weird enough for us.”

The band said they’d try him out until Halloween, and if he wasn’t any good, they’d send him back to Austin. Jeffrey says, “Halloween came and went thirty one times.” Brave Combo concerts are always unique – nowhere else can you see audience members from six years old to seventy dancing together furiously, kicking up dust devils. The instruments Jeffrey plays are often large, unwieldy monsters of golden brass that require ruthless attention and incredible dexterity. But Jeffrey flows into them effortlessly, swinging his horns around as if they weighed nothing.

Jeffrey’s reasons for leaving Brave Combo have more to do with his health than anything else. He says he’s just tired of living on the road and wants to spend more time at home on other pursuits.

“I would like some time to spend with my instruments, so I can get up to snuff. I have a whole lot of instruments that I play pretty lousy,” he laughs. “My wife says you can do anything, but you can’t do everything.”

Jeffrey has left a definite imprint on Denton music and culture through his years with Brave Combo. “He is a true professional on and off the stage, and Jeffrey gives back to our community,” says Carol Short, founder and executive director of Denton’s storied Arts & Jazz Festival. “Sharing his extraordinary talent is a gift we all appreciate, respect and say: ‘WOW!’ We are proud that Jeffrey Barnes and Brave Combo call Denton their home, bringing notoriety not only to our town but to the music world.”

These days Jeffrey spends most of his time playing the occasional local gig and teaching music lessons. “The secret about music teaching is that everyone is self-taught,” he explains. “You might have a teacher who shows you the direction to go, but the real teacher is practice.”

According to Jeffrey, the hardest part about teaching music has been trying to break people from thinking of practice as a chore that they have to endure to get to what they want to do. “I’ve been trying to get them used to the idea that this is a sort of pleasure,” he says. “Playing the instrument is fun. Yeah, you got to learn the notes— but just sit around and make noise.”
It fits like your favorite pair of shoes. Like you’re walking into your own cozy den. Except hipper. And with your own wait staff and filled with friends you don’t necessarily know. It’s West Oak Coffee Bar, with its friendly staff, tasty menu and an exceptional cup of coffee every time.

West Oak Coffee Bar on the square fits right in with the classic culture of Denton. They are committed to doing coffee their way, right every time – with consistency, care and the Intelligentsia blend from master coffee roasters out in Chicago.

“Consistently cupping at just the highest levels – I mean everything they sell is phenomenal,” says Joel Upton, general manager of West Oak Coffee and an avid coffee explorer. Upton joined the West Oak team as general manager this past January with master coffee roasters Matt Fisher and Clay Rozell, the latter being the owner of the local Bookish Coffee just down the street on the Denton Square.

“I think it’s the craft of coffee,” says Joel. “I like to know how things are made, and that translates here. It’s a very technical process, but it’s also an art form. It takes time, and everybody has their own kind of signature.” He remarks on his first true experience trying a cup of simple black coffee at a very specific coffee shop in Fayetteville, Arkansas. “I was just blown away. And that kind of began my coffee adventure.”

Near the entrance, the modest menu is written in elegant pen and hangs off a vintage black board, with the day’s desserts displayed on the counter beneath. The hardwood floors lead to rows of chairs and desks suitable for everything from a late-night study session to Saturday’s date night destination. Animated chatter banters among patrons as friends catch up over West Oak’s homemade vanilla lattes. Mason jars of vanilla beans are perched on a shelf above coffee grinders and busy baristas, exuding a sweet aroma. Every piece of furniture is recycled and refurbished to its former glory, giving West Oak a vintage and antique vibe. There’s nothing automatic, except for the exceptional chocolate milk – yes, it’s on tap. Everything is handmade and handcrafted, exactly as it should be.
Koree Poe, a 23-year-old veteran barista of seven years, joined West Oak Coffee Bar this past summer and has enjoyed every minute.

“I actually moved to Denton for this job,” says Koree. “Really, the best thing about West Oak is the people I work with. The owners are fantastic. West Oak is a concept that I can really get behind and be proud of. And that’s hard to find in a food service job, to just be genuinely excited and proud about what you are doing every day.” Koree plans on continuing his barista career with West Oak, eventually roasting coffee himself. “I plan on sticking around for a long time,” he says. “It’s a really good place to get your foot in the door, because it’s erupting so fast. I’ll be with this company for a while, just because of the great people I work for.”

Upon entering the foyer to West Oak’s front doors, customers are treated to a warm and homey welcome, a vibe that sets West Oak Coffee Bar apart. This thriving company quickly nestled itself within the coffee bar niche of Denton and is the choice option for late-night owls or early-morning risers.
Little Restaurant, Big Heart

Story and photo by Kiandra Florence

He’s the first to get there and the last to leave. It’s been his second home for 20 years. He’s put his heart and soul into it. Lunch was pretty calm, as usual, but delicious. The smells and flavors still linger as he sweeps the empty restaurant’s kitchen floor. This is the quiet time before the dinner hour, and he takes this time while the restaurant is closed to clean, regroup and plan for the big part of his day. His hair, after being stuffed under his chef hat during lunch, has exploded wild and curly on his head framing his warm smile and friendly conversation.

The sound of laughter and cheer fill the air as Giuseppe Brownell chats with guests during lunch. His phone rings multiple times a day with inquiries ranging from renting out rooms to former employees wanting to work with him again. Though exhausted from running around the restaurant cooking, cleaning and greeting all day, Giuseppe answers each call with an enthusiastic “Hello!”

The restaurant is all about family and celebrating life while delivering attentive, “old-fashioned” service. Even when short-staffed, the service experience is top notch.

“When I hire people, the quality I’m looking for is: can you smile and are you friendly?” he explained. “Being that he is a people person, he feels it’s important that the people who work for him possess a kind and neighborly character.”

“Do you have to genuinely like people, and I do,” Giuseppe said. “I think everybody deserves a chance. I just enjoy people – I look at the good side of someone’s character.”

The restaurant is located in a quaint two-story Victorian-style home. With a vision for a restaurant that could host private events and have the feel and warmth of home, Giuseppe was looking in all the wrong places. While searching around in local strip malls and freestanding buildings for a potential space, a friend persuaded him to visit a place an owner was interested in leasing out to a restaurant.

“At first I thought, ‘This is a house. What is this guy talking about?’ Giuseppe says, “But the moment I walked in, I said ‘This is the place!’”

He saw the house as the perfect location to execute his vision. The place is spacious enough for dining and hosting private events, which is what Giuseppe’s is known for, but it also possesses the certain je ne sais quoi that other buildings were missing.

“I was cooking, hosting, waiting tables, whatever needed to be done,” Giuseppe says, recounting the restaurant’s early days.

Figuring out how to fix broken appliances, managing costs and figuring out what works best for the benefit of the customers were just some of the many challenges faced by this small business. Nothing stopped him from working hard to succeed and keep his vision alive.

Giuseppe was born in Italy, but he’s lived in Texas since he was 3 year old. His love for food developed over years of exposure to the art of cooking. Growing up, he enjoyed his mom’s and grandmother’s cooking. Then as a young adult, he lived in Garland and worked at an Italian restaurant in Addison where he met and began dating his now wife, who was a student at UNT. He commuted to Denton to visit her, but the hour-long commute started to become unbearable. After many visits to Denton, he fell in love with the city and its people, making the decision to move an easy one.

“I found myself a little apartment, so I could be a little closer. Next thing you know, we were married with three kids,” he says with a laugh.

The bright and beautiful smiles of his three girls – his other pride and joy – are showcased throughout the restaurant. Various school portraits and family photos hang in the foyer, and a giant colorful portrait pops against the bright orange-colored wall of one of the dining rooms. Everyday at 3 o’clock he picks the girls up from school, helps them with their homework, and then it’s time for ballet lessons. Any time he’s able to spend with his family is time he cherishes.

Giuseppe must be doing something right. He’s won multiple accolades including the “Best of Denton” award five years in a row. Giuseppe’s receives rave reviews for its delicious Italian food. The restaurant provides a lunch and dinner menu with an array of exquisite, authentic Italian cuisine that Giuseppe and his staff have perfected over the years. His personal favorites are the homemade sauces he and his staff make that burst with flavors and bring unique food creations to life. From mouthwatering meatballs to juicy, plump, delicious shrimp, everything is cooked to order.

A special bond exists between Giuseppe’s staff and regular customers. They often know exactly what their customers want without having to ask. That’s the result of Giuseppe’s focus and feeding Denton for 20 years. Giuseppe also stays involved with the Denton community by donating food to churches and giving gift certificates to schools. It is important to him to give back to those who support Giuseppe’s.

“I think what has really made this restaurant successful has been the support of the community, and that’s really what I can attribute our success to,” he beams. “We’re pretty happy. Life is good, life is good!”
In Living Color: 
A Mural Tour of Denton

Story and photos by Kristen Watson

Welcome to Denton, an art mecca that’s home to painters, sculptors, printmakers and designers. Denton’s creative community cultivates the best art around, especially fantastic public art. From Fry Street to the Historic Downtown Denton Square to the halls of UNT, there’s a wall, fence or building to display every artist’s passion. Want to visit Denton and come back with photos of places to astound your friends? Follow some fellow Dentonites as they share their favorite murals around town.

Let’s begin with a local favorite, 24-year-old Mick Burson. Since he began five years ago, Mick has painted more than 60 murals. Shortly after moving to Denton, Mick was, “just trying to find [his] place within a new community,” and ended up painting the iconic houses mural on the side wall of A Creative Studio just off the square. With building owner Robin Huttash approving and paying for the work, Mick was able to use his talents to create something magnificent. Since then it has become a favorite spot to snap a selfie or two.

WANT MORE DENTON?
Check out the art studio that helped Mick’s mural come to life. A Creative Studio holds art classes for children and adults. As if that isn’t cool enough, the studio features live music and art demonstrations on the first Friday of every month!

A Creative Studio: 227 W. Oak Street
“I think public art is important, because it tells the story for the people that live there. I feel like there’s importance for something permanent from this generation to be left for the next.” –Mick Burson

Mosey on across the square, and you’ll find Mick’s latest work of art. When the 35 Denton music festival rolled into town in March, he was asked to paint another mural for this popular festival in the back patio area of Oak Street Draft House (OSDH). With the help of fellow artist Dan Black, the two created a piece that reminds residents of the festival’s melodies that filled the streets.

While you’re snapping selfies with the mural, grab one of OSDH’s 70 beers they have on tap. Oak Street is also home base for the popular Social Run put on by the Denton Area Running Club every Wednesday night. There’s a free drink waiting once you’ve completed the run. (Read more about the run on page 32.)

Oak Street Draft House: 308 E. Oak Street

Once you’ve had your fill of beer and board games at OSDH, hustle over to Eskimo Hut to meet UNT political science major Lauren Tracy. Eskimo Hut is one of her favorite spots that combines the quirky and creative qualities found only in Denton. You can get your Texan on at the Hut and take a photo with their giant Texas flag mural painted on the side of their building.

“Eskimo Hut is one of the perfect examples of a business that in any other town would seem strange, but here in Denton it is accepted and beloved. Living in a town with two universities gives us a unique opportunity to be around a lot of creative people!” –Lauren Tracy

Why not go through the famous Eskimo Hut drive-thru? This spot is loved by college kids and adults alike (especially on game days) since you can get to-go frozen daiquiris in every flavor imaginable. With names like Fuzzy Memory and Hazy Dream, your imagination is the only limitation.

Eskimo Hut: 717 Sunset Street
Once your brain freeze has melted away, head back to the northeast corner of the square towards the outside wall of Recycled Books to see the favorite spot of local writer and student Dafne Rojas. Here you will find a once-drab wall transformed into a colorful masterpiece by a group of Denton high school students. In a flurry of swirls and lines, the entire Denton community is incorporated into the mural in some way or another. You can’t miss this one!

Want More Denton?

Since you’re already there and wondering what the heck “recycled” books are, stop into the monstrous Recycled Books store and have fun getting lost in endless aisles of books, CDs and records at great prices.

Recycled Books:
200 N. Locust Street

“The mural is like a book cover with a whole world inside of it. I think art and murals specifically are important in Denton, because it showcases all the creative talent craving to emerge and show itself. You don’t know much about the artist or artists, except that little gift they leave behind in their city. To me, that’s totally awesome.” –Dafne Rojas

With your wallet lighter and your stomach fuller, head to Industrial Street to see local musician Ellie Meyer’s favorite spot to channel her inner rock god. Here, you will find Jimi Hendrix himself immortalized in paint on the side of Fuzzy’s Tacos. Hand someone else the camera and let your best air guitar moves fly, because this mural rocks.

Want More Denton?

Grab some walking food at Fuzzy’s before marching your newfound rock-star attitude down to Dan’s Silverleaf to check out some of Denton’s best local music talent at one of the city’s best live music venues. Don’t forget to grab a drink at the bar. You’ve earned it after all of that walking!

Fuzzy’s Tacos:
115 Industrial Street

“The Denton community doesn’t just reach out to one person or one demographic. It reaches out to everyone, not just through people, but through art. It’s a place that lets you be you in every possible way.” –Ellie Meyer
Mark Miller can’t stay put. It’s an average Saturday afternoon, bright and breezy, in the hours leading up to another Mean Green football game. Instead of being bound to a home tailgate spot like most, Miller is roaming the grounds around Apogee Stadium.

Going spot to spot allows him to catch up with the dozens of friends he’s made throughout the years, thanks to Mean Green athletics. He might linger at one tent for a bit longer than another, but he never stays put for long. It’s always off to the next one. “It drives my wife crazy,” he jokes, but it lets him get a taste of everybody’s grilling.

There’s the Greek Life row on the hill overlooking everything, complete with horseshoes, open grills and neon colors. The marching band is scheduled to pass through 30 minutes before kickoff on the way to their positions on the student side of the stadium.

On the far end of the Victory parking lots, friend Scott Campbell has brought his cousins – professional grillers happily feeding anyone who wanders in, whether it’s friends, family or strangers attracted by the smell of the barbeque.

Foot traffic is constant year-round in the parking lot and areas surrounding the stadium, but never more so than the hours leading up to a game. The spectrum of greens, wafting smells of food and hubbub of laughter gives this place life on game day.

Mark has been a mainstay at UNT games since starting as an undergraduate in 1966. Lately, he’s one of the few things that have stayed the same. Both Denton and the Mean Green game day experience have changed with the move to Apogee Stadium in 2011 and rapid growth of the city. Increased student involvement and a buzz about the team are both here to stay.

“I tell people all the time: there’s never been a better time to be associated with UNT,” he says. “It doesn’t matter who you are. There’s just never been a better time.”

Denton’s population has grown 52.8 percent since 2000, according to city-data.com. It’s developed past an awkward, pimply-faced stage and is finding its own unique self in these past few years. The Historic Downtown Denton Square is booming, the suburbs expanding and UNT is moving faster than ever.

Mean Green Game Days reflects every bit of that.
Denton County Transportation Authority (DCTA) offers free shuttles between downtown and the stadium every time the Mean Green takes the field. The CVB promotes many deserving business sponsors that can help you enjoy the hours before and after the game. And Mean Green Athletics brings it all together, providing a quality experience during the day’s number one show. Football, as they say, still reigns supreme in Texas.

“People like getting here early and being a part of everything,” Deputy Athletic Director Hank Dickenson says. “We’ve also got a revitalized downtown, which is a neat thing for people to experience. If you’re an alum from 10 years ago, you’re blown away with what’s going on down here.”

Now it’s easier than ever for alum to catch a game by riding the DART Green Line and connecting with the DCTA A-train to arrive in downtown Denton in less than an hour. Beth Marie’s Old Fashioned Ice Cream appeals to families; LSA Burger Co and their music-themed burgers for couples; Oak Street Draft House for those of age; Barefoot Athletics for Mean Green apparel; and the Courthouse lawn for everybody. Free DCTA shuttles take you from downtown Denton to the pedestrian bridge that stretches across I-35 over to Apogee Stadium.

None of this existed when Mark was a student. The university didn’t even allow tailgating around Fouts Field, the old stadium. Students who tried to hang out and drink outside the stadium before games used to be run off. But that was just an old, rundown stadium that was kind of depressing in a way. I don’t know if it was the football team’s season or the stadium, but it was always just, like, big clouds hanging over it.”

It’s all different now. The atmosphere is improved, the wins seem easier to come by and, since 2014, beer is now sold at the Apogee. Students don’t work games into their schedule, but rather work their schedules around games. Laura revisits Denton to see what’s new in the rapidly changing city.

“When I go back I don’t just go to the game and leave right away,” she says. “I go walking around campus, I go to the bookstore, I go exploring around Denton. I don’t work games into my schedule, but rather work my schedule around games. Laura revisits Denton to see what’s new in the rapidly changing city.

“[Apogee] definitely improves the atmosphere,” she says. “When we were there at Fouts it was just an old, rundown stadium that was kind of depressing in a way. I don’t know if it was the football team’s season or the stadium, but it was always just, like, big clouds hanging over it.”

An alum who experienced the campus five, 10 or 15 years ago wouldn’t understand how much change Denton and UNT sports have undergone.

“I always saw the upside of working closely with downtown,” Hank says. “Fouts was a huge deterrent. I realized at the time that it was a challenge. I look back on it now and see everything that we can get done at Apogee so seamlessly.”

Everything seems to be coming together – the city, the university, the team. But no matter if the Mean Green players jog off elated after a win or trudge away, shoulders slumped in a loss, game day still feels like something new and special when you’re in Denton.

“I’m old enough now that I don’t live and die by win-loss records anymore,” Mark says. “I just love the whole atmosphere. I never want to live anywhere that isn’t a college town – period.”
Cloads of dirt fly through the air as the rodeo crowd goes wild. Samantha Tippit’s adrenaline rushes through her veins as the speed of her horse and the noise of the crowd picks up. Her blonde hair is blowing behind her. One wrong step with her horse and her chances of winning fly out the arena. The risk of the crash: that’s the worst part of barrel racing. But the thrill of a good ride makes it all worthwhile.

“Arena lights are my kind-of Friday Night lights,” says Samantha, 2014’s Rodeo Queen.

As residents return from their summer vacations and students prepare for a new school year, the best way to wrap up the hottest season of the year in Denton is with the North Texas Fair and Rodeo. Going on its 87th year, for nine days this August, visitors and residents alike will come together to celebrate Denton’s cultural roots the cowboy way. Throughout the year, fair organizers Glenn Carlton and Nanci Kimmey work hard on a lineup of fun for the whole family. Between the free bounce houses, great shopping, the kid zone, special exhibits, introduction to agriculture, carnival, high-caliber rodeo and A-list concerts, there’s always something to do. “It is the whole A-Z experience... you just don’t have that in your everyday life,” Nanci said.

The Saturday morning before the fair opens, cars, tractors, floats and horses parade from Denton High School to the Square. “It’s kind of a social, Saturday morning coffee-and-donut deal,” said Denise Jackson, a regular attendee of the fair. But the socializing is just getting started with the parade. For the following nine days, many take the chance to meet up with friends they may only see once a year at the fair, college students re-unite before school starts, and out-of-town visitors mingle with folks in a truly Texas experience.

Scotland resident Alex Peat booked his return to Texas specifically around the fair. “I am looking forward to coming back this year for another visit in Texan hospitality... the best I have experienced anywhere in the world,” Alex said. “I have nothing but praise for every single Texan I met.”

Clay McCuistion, a calf-roper, has grown up in the world of rodeo. “It takes a lot of practice,” Clay says. “You definitely have to be mentally focused – like anything else, you really want a competitive edge.” At sixteen, Clay committed to practicing and has competed in this rodeo for the past eight years. Now roping year-round at rodeos around the country, he keeps the North Texas Fair and Rodeo at the top of his list, because he gets to see his friends and family.

Rodeo Teen Queen Kendall Jackson understands the thrill of competing in the rodeo as well. “You’re always on your toes in rodeo… it’s an adrenaline rush,” Kendall says.

The air-conditioned area offers the best break from the heat and excitement of the rodeo. Enjoy a cool dip from Beth Marie’s Old Fashioned Ice Cream while browsing or shopping unique goods only found at the fair. “There are custom carpets, custom hats, belts,” said fairgoer Ruben Rogerio. “It’s different but really cool.”

By Danielle Garcia
Photos courtesy of North Texas Fair & Rodeo

Photo courtesy of Jessika Curry

It Ain’t Their First Rodeo

By Danielle Garcia
Photos courtesy of North Texas Fair & Rodeo

20 DENTON LIVE
The fair’s most popular indoor exhibit is where fairgoers learn about sources of food and fiber and get a grip on the whole farm-to-market process.

This year’s feature exhibit is the Extreme Raptor show. Jonathon Wood captivates audiences with up-close experiences among Mother Nature’s flying predators.

The livestock show is always a fair highlight. Youth and adults alike show off their hard work raising heifers, pigs, steers, goats, cattle, and lambs – shown throughout the week in the giant exposition barn.

“My favorite part of the fair is the music... I keep coming back because of it,” said UNT graduate Jacob Flores. Once the sun sets low in the Texas sky, the stars come out. The party lasts the whole nine days with big-time country music artists Ronnie Milsap, the Charlie Daniels Band, Bobbie Pulido and Cody Johnson.

When it’s all said and done, the North Texas Fair and Rodeo will have an economic impact of at least $7.1 million on the county. All fair revenue is invested back into the community and its organizations.

Each year the fair grows in attendance, thanks a dedicated group of volunteers who make up 95 percent of the fair’s staff.

“We have about a dozen families that have been volunteering for generations at the fair,” Glenn says. “It’s like a huge family reunion.”

While the volunteers reunite, it’s also an opportunity for residents, visitors, college students, cowboys, rodeo queens, families and kids to come together to create lasting memories and to celebrate a big part of what makes Denton original and independent.

For more information, visit ntfair.com or their Facebook page.
The aroma of hot, thick, black coffee wafts in the still, cool predawn air. Bacon fat frying in cast iron crackles over a fire and plump, soft biscuits rise in a deep iron crock.

Cattle and cowboys snore rhythmically across the quiet sea of grass while Venus smiles brightly from the dark blue expanse above. Cookie is up earlier than the others, preparing breakfast from the back of his chuck wagon. Morning on the trail is off to a good start.

Dentonite Jim Daugherty, the young trail boss, is also up early preparing to leave. After double-checking his saddle, Jim sits down, leaning on the big wagon wheel. Cookie hands Jim a full tin plate.

"Thanks, this looks good," Jim comments, biting into the bacon. "Do we have enough supplies until Baxter Springs?"

"Think so, so long as you lay it easy on the bacon," says the cowboy. "Morning, Jim," John Dobbins, the foreman, yawns his greeting. "What’s the plan?"

Jim started his small cattle drive of 500 steers—bought from his previous employer—out of Denton towards Kansas. When he went ahead alone on the trail to scout the way to market, he heard rumors and reports about trouble brewing on the route.

A band of outlaws called the Jayhawkers had killed a drover and stampeded a herd from the Indian Territory. Rushing back to his own herd not far from Fort Gibson, Oklahoma, Jim tells his six men, "Stay alert and be on the lookout—the Jayhawkers are out for blood."

Cattle driving is slow going, 10-15 miles per day. As Jim’s herd meanders across the northern edge of Indian Territory, Jim once more leaves his men and the herd, riding hard and fast to Fort Scott on the southern edge of Kansas near the Missouri border. There he meets with Ben Keys, contracting to deliver his herd to the fort. Happy to have secured a buyer, Jim rides back to the herd once more.

Taking the road on the border between Kansas and Missouri, the dusty cattlemen continue leading the tired steers while keeping their six-shooters nearby. In the late afternoon, scarcely twenty miles from Fort Scott, fifteen to twenty riders ambush the herd from all directions. Yells and dust swirl around the confused cattle. "Do not move!" orders the head Jayhawker.

Suddenly all hell breaks loose. John Dobbins, riding in the lead with Jim, tries to protect the younger cowboy. He starts to draw his six-shooter when a Jayhawker shoots him dead in his saddle.

The sight of blood and the loud rifle shot cause the cattle to stampede, scattering cowboys and animals in all directions. Jim is disarmed and taken away to Cow Creek.

The vigilantes tie Jim to a tree with his own picket rope and whip him with hickory switches. After what seems to be forever, they leave Jim bound under the scorching sun while they discuss what to do with him and his herd.

Jim, John and Cookie drove cattle for a living, first on the Shawnee Trail then the Chisholm Trail, which opened in 1867, a cattle commerce route that saved the Texas economy after the Civil War. At a time when the state was "poor in cash but rich in cows," the trail gave Texas ranchers access to the northern beef markets.

In anticipation of the Chisolm Trail’s upcoming 150th anniversary in September 2017, the National Park Service has just completed a feasibility study, recommending that Congress designate the Trail as the 21st National Historic Trail.

These designations of National Historic Trails have had major economic impacts on the regions around the trails, says the Denton Convention & Visitors Bureau Vice President Kim Phillips.

"That designation brings attention to all of the communities up and down the trail in a way that will never happen otherwise. The NPS designation will include federal funding that will help development," Kim says.

The Chisolm Trail was officially introduced by businessman Joseph McCoy, who was able to unveil the new trail after finding a loophole in a restrictive Kansas law banning the interstate transport of Texas longhorns. The Park Service study found that the trail passed by the west side of Denton County near the line of Wise County. It continued almost straight north into Indian Territory in present-day Oklahoma before entering Kansas toward Abilene or Ellsworth.

Some historians believe the trail originated in San Antonio. Others say that it started farther south in Kingsville or Mexico. In his book The Chisholm Trail, Wayne Gard compared the trail to an upside-down tree with many branches going through Texas.

Along the trail there are many dangers that made the cattle drive even harder than it already was. Outlaws have always been abundant in the old West, but quarantine laws in states such as Kansas and Missouri encouraged vigilante groups to drive out Texas longhorns. People believed longhorns carried ticks that infected local cattle populations. As settlement expanded westward, the quarantine laws also moved west to protect ranchers’ herds.

Besides outlaws, other dangers on the trail were the lack of adequate grass and water, gopher villages and terrain challenges and Native American marauders.

In the 1868 season, the second year after the trail’s official introduction, Joseph estimated that 75,000 cattle were driven to Abilene, and from there around 45,000 were shipped by rail. Between 1866 and 1890, according to estimates by Henry B. Jameson in The Miracle of the Chisholm Trail, 10 to 14 million longhorns were driven north out of San Antonio.
of Texas. The net result was that more than $300 million of new money flowed into southwestern cattlemen’s pockets.

By 1875, less than a decade after Joseph McCoy introduced the Chisholm Trail, changes in Kansas quarantine laws stopped drivers from going to Abilene. Starting in 1876 they used part of the Chisholm Trail in Texas before diverging to the Western Trail toward Dodge City or Ogallala.

Other factors that drove the cattle west were the railroad coming into Texas and widespread use of barbed wire to protect grazing land and watering holes. But perhaps the biggest reason why the Chisholm Trail ended is Joseph himself, according to historian Robin Cole-Jett.

“He invested money into refrigerated railroad cars, so the cattle could be processed locally,” Robin says. “He was based in Illinois and Kansas then moved to Denison, Texas and started a refrigerated cattle car business.”

Joseph wanted to improve the cattle handling and shipping process by creating the Chisholm Trail, but he made it even easier to simply ship the dead beef from any railhead in Texas.

“He undid his own cattle trail,” Robin says.

In Texas the trail has almost no clear markers. Each herd could go differently based on word-of-mouth, hoof tracks, wheel ruts and personal experiences about stops and crossing places.

Sometimes cowboys would leave signs along the Trail on trees and rocks, but it wasn’t until Kansas where Joseph and Jesse Chisholm built dirt mounds to help herds stay on track and out of trouble with the law. Now that the markers are gone the trail is even harder to find.

This is why the minimum effort to preserve the trail would be to put up trail markers, according to Alan Schiegg, co-chairman of the Denton County Historical Commission Chisholm Trail Project. The National Park Service may also have its own markers.

Schiegg describes little signs frequently found along the trail today as white concrete obelisks a few feet off the ground with the words “Chisholm Trail” painted in black vertically. Some counties have round brass medallion signs with a longhorn image in the middle framed by stars on the top and a chain of cactus on the bottom, with an inscription that reads, “Going up the Chisholm Trail, Texas, 1867.”

Other efforts underway are visitor-viewing experiences such as museums, viewing platforms, cultural centers and so on.

“Right now, Denton County really does not have any visitor viewing experience,” Alan says, “Many other counties do, so that will be our logical next step.”

A national research study in 2009 on US Heritage Travel by Mandela Research found that 78 percent of all US leisure travelers participate in cultural and/or heritage activities while traveling, which translates to 118.3 million adults each year. On average, cultural and heritage visitors spend $994 per trip, versus the average U.S. traveler spending $611.

“When people are in the area (along the Chisolm Trail) they are going to find out about this national trail even if they are not heritage tourism-minded. When people travel, they want to experience the area,” Kim says.

The Chisholm Trail is an important historical route that benefitted the economy back then and also today. The national designation will put it on the radar of future visitors who might otherwise miss Denton.

You can’t hear the twangy drawls and soft singing of cowboys lullabying longhorns under starry nights on the endless prairie anymore. The hostiles are gone now, along with the cattle drives, cowboys and the trail itself. But the adventures of Jim, John and all the rest live on along the Chisolm Trail.
A Chevrolet Bel Air glows like a radioactive cherry in the sunlight. High above, a few clouds drift lazily across a blue canvas providing shade as they pass over. A crowd lounges on the courthouse lawn where the band begins to play. Several couples have found space to dance under the shade of a large pecan tree.

A quick glance about the square is rewarded by a palette of brightly colored steel glittering in the sunshine. Children hover nearby to examine the work of an artist sitting cross-legged on the pavement. Dusty chalk coats the artist’s jeans in a colorful hue.

An All-American V8 growls at a small crowd of onlookers who lean in for a glimpse under the hood.

A family carrying several heirlooms pauses on their way to have their keepsakes appraised, smiling at the low rumble of historic Americana.

This is Arts, Antiques and Autos Extravaganza-- a unique tradition in Denton that is entering its 16th year. On September 12th the Denton Main Street Association (DMSA) will once again host the event exhibiting more than two hundred cars and showcasing local artists’ one-of-a-kind talents.

The DMSA is responsible for a number of festivals that attract thousands of visitors every year. In the winter, Wassail Fest (more on page 25) shares warm tidings. In the spring, Twilight Tunes offers a delightful way to wind down after a long day.

Beginning at nine in the morning, cars ranging from as far back as the ’20s all the way to modern autos surround the courthouse and compete for trophies and prizes.

Cash prizes are awarded for best in show for cars, trucks and motorcycles. Custom made trophies pieced together from car parts by local artists are awarded for other special categories.

This year, DMSA is adding a new category: rat rods—1920 to 1950 era cars chopped up and made into aggressive custom rods that would make Henry Ford run for the hills.

Nearby on West Oak Street, Chalkfest colors the sidewalks where artists create on concrete canvases. Last year 25 artists participated, including children seven years and older. The kaleidoscopes of color and three dimensional depictions of the courthouse and other locales remain for long after the festival.

Meanwhile, nearby studios, galleries and vendors exhibit and sell local art. Some even teach arts and crafts to patrons.

Elsewhere, antique appraisers offer their services to festival attendees who bring along their
“attic treasures.” While appraisals are not “official,” folks get a good idea of antiques’ values. Every person is welcome to bring up to three heirlooms and find out just how much that old thingamajig may be worth.

Bands and acoustic artists play on the courthouse lawn all day. Arts, Antiques and Autos Extravaganza likes sticking with classic Texas rock and Americana music. “It sets the scene to keep in spirit with the car show,” said Christine Gossett, one of the event’s coordinators.

There is plenty to do outside, but festivalgoers find more treasures inside the local businesses around the square as well as food and drinks. Beth Marie’s Old Fashioned Ice Cream, is a fixture in Denton’s culture and an excellent way to top off the day.

It’s three in the afternoon, and Arts, Antiques and Autos is winding down. Vendors are closing their booths. Nearly 300 cars are roaring to life to head home. But people hesitate, not yet ready to call it a day. Some meander among the shops around the square. Restaurants, pubs and patios teem with visitors. While Arts, Antiques and Autos brought them downtown today, this vibrant scene is here year-round. It’s a lively district that will draw them back again and again until the Arts and Autos return for the Extravaganza next year.

by Brittany Fholer

‘Tis a magical time. For thousands of years in the cold of winter, two symbols have come together as a celebration of life. Amidst the dreariness of the season, when many living things sleep or die off, evergreen trees stand out in their starkly contrasting color.

Festooned in sparkling lights, the traditional symbol of life in both pagan and Christian worlds, the trees seem to sing out and draw revelers to them, bringing cheer and good tidings as they have since the olden days.

And once upon a time, on a cold and blustery evening in early January, also known as the Twelfth Night in medieval southwest and southeast England, men, women and children bundled up to keep warm as they walked throughout the apple orchards.

A Wassail King and Queen led the singing of carols and the drinking of a heated cider mulled from the harvested fruit.

They toasted to the health of the cider apple trees and soaked bread, cake, or toast in their drinks. While traveling orchard to orchard, they buried the soaked pieces at the roots or hung them in the branches to tide the tree spirits over and scare away evil ones, thus ensuring a successful harvest of the fruit come autumn.

Wassailing became a way for people to get together and sing carols and share a drink, no longer limited to just the Twelfth Night but rather all of the winter season. And in present-day Denton, they gather, not in orchards, but amidst an urban forest of spectacularly lit trees at the Courthouse-on-the-Square, weather permitting, all bundled up and ready to participate in the kickoff to the best time of the year.

Thanksgiving will have passed, and Christmas will be just around the corner. The trees on the Historic Courthouse-on-the-Square lawn shimmer from thousands of lights, and the smell of mulled spices and fruit from dozens of wassail stops fill the air as the Denton Holiday Lighting Festival and Wassail Fest begin.
The historic Courthouse-on-the-Square is the scene for this beloved dual-event festival full of traditions, and people come from near and far to participate. The trees on the lawn are blanketed in twinkling white lights, and with a flip of a switch, the official Denton Christmas tree colors the night.

The Denton Holiday Festival Association (DHFA) produced the Denton Holiday Lighting Festival for the first time back in 1988, with an all-volunteer board planning year-round for the one night of entertainment and fun.

Vice-chair of the DHFA Board, Kate Lynass explains how it all comes together. “The board works on getting sponsorships from businesses and individuals all year long. We work with local non-profit groups to provide activities and food. We work with restaurant professionals to bring in more food, and we work with various community groups, schools, and professional musicians to provide entertainment,” Kate says. “Overall, it’s this sense of ‘we are all in this together’ that makes the event so uniquely Denton.”

The Denton Holiday Lighting Festival has grown in attendance each passing year, with thousands of visitors now filling the lawn and the Square. The event is completely free and made possible through donations and county contributions, which also keep the Courthouse-on-the-Square’s lights twinkling throughout the year.

Wassail Fest came to fruition from Denton’s Main Street Association (DMSA) 15 years ago as a way to bring the ancient tradition downtown. The DMSA is made up of merchants, restaurants and other businesses who hope that people coming for the Lighting Festival or the delicious wassail will then stay to shop and eat and enjoy what the historic Square has to offer.

DMSA member businesses make up some 40 different wassail stops where people sample unique concoctions of the brew. The favorite is chosen by festival-goers casting their ballots. Last year, First People’s Jewelers won best-tasting wassail, with LSA Burger Company coming in second.

Wassail Fest partners with the Denton Holiday Lighting Festival during the first weekend of December to welcome the season of giving and family, Denton-style. This December will be the 27th annual Denton Holiday Lighting Festival and the 15th annual Wassail Fest.

In the past, the Wassail Fest was held on Friday night in tandem with the Denton Holiday Lighting Festival, but, in recent years it has claimed its own additional day on Saturday.

Helma Tarver, a Denton resident and teacher in Lewisville, is one of many who went to the Denton Holiday Lighting Festival when she was attending college in Denton, more than 20 years ago and has continued coming ever since, now a family tradition. They grab a bite to eat, watch the ballet dancers and pile in for their favorite – the horse-drawn carriage ride.

“It’s one of the things that makes Denton Denton and one of the reasons I wanted to come back to Denton when I got married and wanted to start a family,” Helma said. “It’s just one of those family events that is very unique to Denton and wonderful.”

The entertainment found at the Denton Holiday Lighting Festival is what makes the event purely Denton Original, according to DHFA Board chair Kelley Pound.

“There’s a little bit of everything,” Kelley said. “There’s dancing, there’s singing.”

The climax of the Holiday Lighting Festival is the “Denton Holiday Spectacular,” a variety show of Denton musicians and artists coming together. True to Denton, middle school and elementary school choirs and dance groups participate too, leading up to the finale made up of professional dancers and musicians.

“It really is community-based through and through,” Kelley said.

The Denton Holiday Lighting Festival and Wassail Fest are both Denton original opportunities to socialize, meet new friends and see others you haven’t seen in a while. Get some friends together, dance amongst the trees, grab a mug of wassail and celebrate. It’s time to get our Christmas on!

Visit dentonholidaylighting.com and dentonmainstreet.org for details on both events.
“Can I get a hell yeah?”
He stands on the brick flowerbed by the UNT Language Building and punches the sky.
“Hell yeah!”
The crowd standing with their bikes mimics their leader. There’s a familiar spirit in the air – like a sporting event.

Then, with a leap, Bubba, the leader, comes down from his throne and is absorbed into the group, shaking hands all around.

He has one last announcement, though it comes without the manic energy of before – a five minute warning. Call your friends, text them, send smoke signals. Let the stragglers know to get here before it’s too late. Several phones whip out to answer the call.

Tuesday Bike Nights gather riders of all levels each week by the UNT Language Building at 9:30 p.m. It’s for those who are still figuring out how the gears work, those who have ditched their vehicles in favor of a greener form of transportation, and anyone else wanting to pedal.

They set off on routes around Denton that vary each week, anywhere from three to eight miles. Sometimes the riders will stop for a break at a gas station or the playground at Eureka Park. The ride usually finishes around 11 p.m. Riders gather at the square afterward for socializing if they haven’t cruised home.

A regular attendee since 2014, Casey Carroll first spotted the group on the square. He investigated, found their Facebook page and joined in the fun.

“Regardless of where I was and how comfortable I was with bikes, they were welcoming,” Casey said. “It was a community thing that is really easy to be a part of.”

Even bicycle shop owners participate, including Sprockets co-owner Sipo Thao.

“We started doing the Tuesday night ride with the social group, and that was pretty fun,” Sipo said. “It’s a good bike community.”

“The city I was from, Weatherford, didn’t really like cyclists,” Sipo continued. “You’d get stuff thrown at you.” He chuckles, “Yeah, Denton’s a little more bike-friendly.”

Sprockets shares space with NV Cupcakes on Hickory Street next to Hypnotic Donuts and Cultivar Coffee.

“This is my favorite bicycle shop in Denton,” regular customer Aldo Ruiz said. “Sometimes I like to finish my rides here and fix things that need to be fixed on my bike to keep it really solid. There are great people working on bikes here, and they will just help you out, help you get it fixed.”

The other bicycle shops were doubtful about the premise: a shop that sold used bikes? No one would want to spend money there. Other businesses laughed at them for the idea, but Sprockets is a success. For college students, buying a bicycle for $200-$300 is a much more appealing option than shelling out twice that or more for a new bike.

“There’s less of a gap between our customers and ourselves,” longtime employee Brandon Dupre said. “We let customers work on their bikes. We try to keep our business close to the needs of the customer.”

Sprockets expands their inventory based on customers’ needs rather than just sticking to a set business model.

“This has turned into the bike shop that we wanted to have here in Denton five or six years ago,” fellow employee Randall Minick said. “There just wasn’t one at the time. But if this had been here five years ago I would’ve been shopping here the whole time.”
I take center stage, wearing nothing but my hiking backpack and a bandana tied around my neck. Self-conscious? Naw. I’m feeling good. It is, after all, a warm September day. The sun even makes me glow, and everybody’s looking at me. Hey! I smell a corndog —ack — sorry! Getting back in line now. Still drooling though. Corndog... corndog. Ack – gee, that’s a short leash, Ashley!

I’m Banjo, a five-and-a-half-year-old, chestnut-orange, Australian Shepherd-Pitbull mix. I’m strutting the stage with my owner, Ashley Reis, in the Spokesdog Pageant. I cut through the crowd and make my way to the judges. My essay is read aloud:

“In four years, I’ve gone from shelter-pup to ‘kind of a big deal.’ From poundin’ my paws at the Oak Street Social Run, to snackin’ on handmade dog treats at the Denton Community Market, I’m a pooch about Denton. Just look at my grin – I was born for this gig!”

Yeah, that’s me. We’re finishing our pageant strut, so we turn and stand beside the other 15 dogs on the grass, waiting for everyone else to take their turn. Where’s that corndog guy?

“Once everyone was done, they called first-runner up, then second-runner up. When we didn’t make a runner-up I thought, ‘Oh, he didn’t get anything.’ And then he won!” says Ashley, who adopted Banjo from the Denton Animal Shelter about four years ago.

The Spokesdog Pageant – which I won! – is just one highlight of Dog Days of Denton, “Texas’ original celebration for pooches and their people,” going into its 22nd year. Goes without saying that this is my favorite thing to do every year. So many dogs, so many dog things, so little time!

“There are other dog shows in town,” Dog Days coordinator Christine Gossett says. “But those are serious. We laugh – we are like the amateur dog show of Denton.”

Amateur, as in we all just wanna have fun, but that’s not to take away from our standing as a premiere local canine celebration with 6,000 to 7,000 humans coming each year. We’ve got big sponsors too, like Huffines Kia Subaru and Petco, who set up shop on the fairgrounds. Ooh, and the American Kennel Club – the doyenne of the dog world’s crème de la crème. Members of the American Kennel Club are sometimes present, providing information about different breeds – that’s me, different breeds! – for dog owners and those wanting a dog.

“A lot of the time people think a dog can just be one more expense, one more thing, but a lot of times the dog can be a life saver in a situation,” Christine says.

Last summer I learned how to be a therapy dog. Ashley wants to start going to the Scottish Rites Children Hospital to cheer up the kids that have to be there. I can hardly wait!

You know, one of the missions of Dog Days is to give nonprofits the opportunity to promote their causes by having a booth at this fun festival. They also think it is important to educate humans and raise awareness for these organizations and provide extra donations. It takes a special company like Muenster Milling Company, a local natural pet food distributor – mmm, mmm, Muenster! – to pay so that rescue organizations can set up for free. They’re over there – so many different types of dogs looking for safe homes – good luck guys!

In the last few years – about 20 in dog years – Dog Days has focused on how important our relationship is with humans. The role of service and therapy dogs – like me – in particular.

“We had a Spokesdog three years ago, and he was a therapy dog,” says event coordinator Kevin Lechier. “As we become more aware of the different aspects of dog ownership, the more branches we start to take, and I think the therapy dog is a great thing. Most people don’t even realize you can train your dog to be a therapy dog.”
Time to check out all the different booths, demos and dogs. There’s something around every wagging tail and in front of every sniffing nose! What’s over there? Humans in uniforms, and a big shiny machine with a dog on it! We must go look. Now! “Baltic” K9 Arson Unit. Oh, a fire dog! How cool is that.

What’s all the sniffing over there by the fence? I love to sniff. “Nose work,” they call it. Hey! There’s a German Shepherd (he’s my friend from the park) running around an obstacle course trying to find a certain smell in a box. I hope he finds it! It’s hard doing what those police and fire dogs are trained to do.

Where’s that dance music coming from? Is it time for what I think it is? The Canine Couture Costume Contest! Dressed up dogs… who’d have thought? Makes me want to work on my model walk for next year.

“We have Frisbee demonstrations, singing dogs, dog dances and agility courses,” Christine says, naming more events. “Bigger dogs need exercise – they need to work their muscles. They won’t chew as much when they get their energy out, so that’s another reason we demonstrate and do agility.”

Tugging on my leash – time to move on. I hear a really familiar tune over there – and even some music accompaniment. It’s a Great Dane belting out his karaoke best in a dog singing contest! Wonder if it’s a sing along?

OK, enough of this. I’m ready to compete. I want to be a Frisbee-catching dog this year. I’m glad Ashley let me pull her into the line for this demonstration. OK, OK, my turn, my turn! I’ve been practicing my eye-mouth coordination all week. Wait on it, wait on it – go!

I’m running. I’m running so fast! Ooh, there it is! Frisbee! I can do it! I can catch it! Jump in 3, 2, 1… “Aww! That’s alright, fella! You’ll get it next time!”

So close! Oh well, just shake it off. More walking. Stopping. Walking. Stopping. Doggy webcams, homemade dog treats, bow ties and other canine-themed consumables for sale in lines of booths. Human things for sale too – jewelry, clothing, local artisans with food, gifts, crafts and more. Ashley keeps telling me to stop tugging on the leash, but I can’t help it! I smell treats ahead!

There are some pretty cool dog toys though. Time to beg. Better yet, puppy eyes! Works every time. Oh, yeah, a new bag of toys!

Where’s Ashley tugging me to now? Ooh! I love getting dressed up! Rose Costumes donates clothes, so there can be a Glamfur photo booth. I may have not shined during the Frisbee throw, but these will be some fierce dazzling dog-in-costume pictures. Put those sunglasses on me. Fabulous.

Pretty soon we’re off again… so much to see, smell and eat! What about this Lion’s Club – I thought this was a dog show? Oh, they’re talking about training some of us to be seeing-eye dogs for humans, like that black lab who’s sitting quite patiently while those people all talk about him. Wow, not even a fidget – how does he do that? This has been quite a full day out for me and Ashley. It’s great to belong to someone who takes care of me and understands me. And great to have an event like Dog Days that gives dogs and humans a chance to have fun together. And help those dogs not lucky enough to have a home – yet.

High-paws to all the great sponsors at Dog Days, like the Denton Record Chronicle, Southridge Animal Hospital, Invisible Fence of Greater Dallas, Denton County Animal ER, Dr. Norman Pomerance and Jayne Howell, Realtor.

“This event is able to happen because we have sponsors from the community, businesses and people who sponsor the event,” Christine says. “And that is how it is able to continue happening.”

I can’t wait to celebrate year 22 next September! Wags and licks all around!

What: Dog Days of Denton  
When: September 26, 2015 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.  
Where: North Texas Fairgrounds, 2217 N. Carroll Blvd., Denton, TX.  
Website: dentondogdays.com
Calendar  July - December 2015

FESTIVALS

July 4: Kiwanis Firework Show, North Texas Apogee Stadium
Aug. 21-29: North Texas Fair & Rodeo, North Texas Fairgrounds
Sept. 12: Arts, Antiques & Autos Extravaganza, Downtown Square
Sept. 25-26: Oaktopia, Downtown Denton
Sept. 26: Dog Days of Denton, North Texas Fairgrounds
Sept. 26: GreenFest, Greenbelt
Oct. 22: Planner’s Zone, UNT Gateway Center
Oct. 24: Denton Day of the Dead Festival, Industrial Street
Nov. 19: Beaujolais
Dec. 4: Denton Holiday Lighting Festival, Downtown Denton
Dec. 4 & 5: Wassail Fest, Downtown Denton

Center for Visual Arts
July 10-Aug. 23: Cosmic Visions
Aug. 7-Sept. 18: The Helmet Project
Oct. 2-30: Light, Space, and Beauty
TWU Margo Jones Performance Hall
Dec. 11-13: The Nutcracker
UNT Murchison Performing Arts Center
Nov. 24: One O’Clock Lab Band Fall Concert
Campus Theatre
Aug. 7-16: Big River: The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn
Sept. 11-20: Witness for the Prosecution
Oct. 23- Nov 1: The Addams Family
Nov. 13-22: Rocky Horror Picture Show
Black Box Theatre
July 31-Aug. 1: Take Ten

MARKETS & OTHER EVENTS

April-Nov: Denton Community Market, every Saturday 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., Denton County Historical Park
May-Sept: Denton Farmer’s Market, every Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday 7 a.m. to sellout, Denton County Historical Park
Sept. 5, Oct. 3, Nov. 7: North Texas Horse Country Tours, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., DATCU parking lot, 210 S. Elm St., corner of Mulberry and Elm
First Friday of every month: First Friday Denton, 7-10 p.m., downtown Denton square
Dec. 11-12: TWU Graduation, Kitty Magee Arena
Dec. 11-12: UNT Graduation, UNT Coliseum

For more calendar events in Denton, visit discoverdenton.com
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CITY HALL
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(940) 349-8200
cityofdenton.com
It’s night time, and a small army of tired but focused individuals are running – all at different speeds – through the campus of Texas Woman’s University and along some of Denton’s historical neighborhoods. It’s a social gathering as individual as each participant’s rhythmic pace. These Wednesday night runs are the highlight of the week for Denton’s rapidly growing running community.

The Denton Social Run is a free 5K for runners of all ages and skill levels. It’s an informal, stress-free environment. Participants from across the North Texas area come wearing brightly colored clothing, some bringing their furry friends out for some exercise, and others bringing their children to enjoy an evening run around Denton.

They run for a variety of reasons. Some people run for the challenge, some for exercise. Others run to escape the stress of daily life and free themselves from responsibility – family, work or otherwise – even if only for half an hour. But one thing is for sure: no one runs alone. A sense of the Denton experience and community is what the social run strives to achieve.

Started in March 2013, the run is organized by Tony Roman, a UNT graduate student and former Coast Guard wellness coordinator, as a way to interact with people in his new town. With his Coast Guard duties, taking him across the country, Tony looked for a running club every place he traveled, with Denton being no exception.

Tony connected with Oak St. Drafthouse (OSDH) and shared his running vision with owner John Williams. John loved the idea and agreed to sponsor and host the social run. It started with around 30 people, and it is now the largest social run in North Texas with a peak attendance of almost 300 for National Running Day.

It took years for Anyah Martinez to fully grasp the diversity of Denton and its people that participate in the social run. Anyah, a mother of three and a 12-year running veteran, finally understands Denton’s running community.

“The older I get, the more I appreciate the variety of the different types of people that run,” Anyah says. “Runners of all different shapes, sizes, ages and stages – slow runners, fast runners, distance runners, short runners – I never really fully appreciated that until I started running with this group.”

From UNT cross country athletes looking to maintain their skills to roller derby hopefuls doing endurance training, from teachers to musicians, from city council members to college students, there is no shortage of running variety that show up at OSDH’s bathtub-clad front lawn ready to run.

“I think this bar is truly the epitome of Denton,” Tony says. “Just like our run, we basically attract that eclectic group of people – the weirdoes, the hippies, the hipsters. We have doctors, lawyers and musicians that run with us. We have just about everybody. It’s a cool mix of people, and it’s definitely a Denton thing.”

Whether you’re looking for a way to stay active, meet some new running buddies or even if you’re just in it for the free shot at the end, there’s a place for you in the Denton Social Run. Anyah has solid advice for people wanting to come out and run, walk, jog or just enjoy the night with Denton’s fittest.

“It’s a great foot tour of Denton, that’s for sure,” Anyah says. “And it’s a great group, so don’t be intimidated. Just come on out.”

The Denton Social Run meets Wednesday nights at Oak St. Drafthouse, located east of the downtown square at 308 East Oak Street. Check out Facebook.com/DentonSocialRunners for start times and routes.
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