Denton moves on up into the convention biz

Actress Susan Carol Davis came home for art

Thin Line looks for the stories of Texas to highlight

Plan your next getaway at: discoverdenton.com
The University of North Texas and Denton share a friendly, independent and original spirit. You can feel it as you walk the Library Mall, catch a game, attend a concert or enjoy one of the other 1,500 events held on campus each year. Find the events that spark your original and independent spirit at unt.edu/events and meangreensports.com.
Departments

The Main Events
Out and About
Tastes of Denton
Sounds of Denton
Dentonites
Discover Denton

Denton’s making moves, and now’s the time to be part of this growing city. Start here and find out what Li’l d has for you.

9 | Susan Carol Davis
She’s been to LA and back. See what brought this actress home

13 | Denton Convention Center
Get a glance inside the newest jewel in the Denton scene

19 | Denton Black Film Festival
Explore this safe haven to discuss diversity

25 | Denton Arts & Jazz Festival
Denton’s premier spring festival offers attractions for all

Everyone has a story to tell
Thin Line is going to be an electrifying experience. Go inside the fest with weather photographer Al Key

A Dime a Dozen
Have you discovered this mecca of locally-made goods? Denton Live takes you inside the DIME store.

Your adventure starts now.
Denton: where original meets independent

Denton. Original. Independent. Null 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 in 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, nothing 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.

Vice President
Denton Convention and Visitors Bureau
Denton has a robust community of makers that love to show off their wares, like @yandijester.

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 could win a cool #dentoning t-shirt.

One of Denton’s hidden scavenger hunts is the Purple Door. @hannahelizabethjordan found it, have you?

J.T. Clothiers

Address: 200 W Oak St.

Hours: Mon-Fri 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.
Sat 10 a.m. - 5 p.m., Closed Sunday

Phone: 940.387.0764

More info: jtclothiers.com

Story and photos by Savannah Hubbard

light pours through oversized windows, illuminating the large, brick-walled space. It spills onto sparkling jewelry displays, illuminating clothing-lined racks and just barely kisses the corner shelves stocked with candles and other delicate items. Like the historic building it’s in, this store has deep roots in the past, where the local haberdashery offered fine high-end tailoring and goods to discerning gentlemen. Yet this place also projects a modern vibe, much like the city itself.

The store is J.T. Clothiers, stocked with a wide array of beautiful, high-end home goods, clothing and accessories of such vibrant colors, unique textures, and products so fashionable you’ll feel as though you’ve been transported to a time where tailors fitted your clothes in-store and items were made with no detail left unattended. Hiding behind the Patagonia flannels and True Grit jackets lies the heart of the store, an area that pays homage to its original intent from 47 years ago.

Two upholstered leather chairs mark a change in atmosphere, and beyond lies a room filled with beautiful sport coats, silk ties, and dress pants just waiting to be tailored. This is where the magic happens. This is where it all began.

“Jimmy started the business in 1970.”

Third-generation clothier and store owner Jimmy Tritt relaxes in his chair, hands folded. In his mind, he has left the room and is standing in that original store on Sunset Blvd. “It started out as a men’s only store, men’s suits, and sport coats—all that kind of stuff.”

Eight years later, the neighboring store vacated, and Nancy and James Tritt saw an opportunity for expansion. So they cut a hole in the wall and the ladies section was born. J.T. Clothiers later relocated and spent 31 years in Denton’s South Ridge Village. When their son Jimmy took over management of the store, he began looking for a location that would put J.T. Clothiers at the center of the community, envisioning a space where the business could more closely connect with its customers.

“I had been looking on the square for about 3-4 years but there was nothing available that would suit our nature for the business,” Jimmy says. “Most of the buildings on the square are narrow and deep, not much window frontage—that kind of store is hard to lay out.”

But fate was on his side, and when Thomas Ethan Allen furniture store left their downtown corner location, Jimmy jumped at the opportunity. After taking a look at the location, Nancy and Jimmy decided that the space needed some work. The building holds important historical significance for Denton as the site of the original Texas Normal College, where in 1890, the room and is standing in that original time period and had it laid exactly as it would’ve been in 1890. Amidst brick laying and designing, the mother-son duo did some digging, and found priceless pieces of Denton’s history.

“Any time you can restore an old building like this you find things,” Jimmy’s eyes light up with the subtle twinge of excitement of someone who’s about to let you in on a secret. “We found things in the attic, checks that were from the 1920’s and all kinds of antique things.”

After three months of renovations, J.T. Clothiers opened its doors. Locals and out-of-towners alike, seeking quality clothing items and a custom experience, frequent the store.

“I think it’s very important that people feel like they’re always welcome to come in,” Jimmy says. “Most of my customers are friends of mine. I have second and now third generation family members that are shopping with us. We’ve known their grandparents, their parents, and now the kids.”

Serving the Denton community, cultivating relationships, and providing quality products. Forty-seven years ago James Tritt brought a custom menswear retailer to Denton. His legacy not only lives on today, but has expanded.

“I think quality is the big deal for my father and my mother,” Jimmy says. “They truly believed in providing a good value for your dollar. They always searched for great quality merchandise, and I think that’s something we will continue to do as long as this store is functioning.”

“I hope he’s proud of it.”

“Apart from quality, the space needed some work. The building holds important historical significance for Denton as the site of the original Texas Normal College,” Nancy says.

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“We wanted it to be modern but historic. I love the historical downtown. I love the buildings, I love what you can find here,” Jimmy says. “I think it’s very important that people feel like they’re always welcome to come in.”

Local and out-of-towners alike, seeking quality clothing items and a custom experience, frequent the store.

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IN THE WORDS

OF DENTONITES

“DESCRIBE DENTON IN THREE WORDS”

Story and photos by Banin Fatima

Jake Laughlin, the voice of DentonRadio.com, usually watches people walk past the big picture windows surrounding the studio as he broadcasts from the Welcome Center on the Square. But today, he escapes his glass booth and takes to the streets for a chat with those to whom he normally just waves.

Sauntering up to people with a big smile, he asks if they are willing to participate in a man-on-the-street radio segment. If they say “yes,” out comes the recorder. Jake clears his throat, takes a deep breath and presses record:

“Alright everybody, we are on the beautiful downtown Denton Square with Peter and Dez!” he begins. “Describe Denton for me in a few words.”

It is entertaining to watch Jake engage with the people of Denton, but even more amusing hearing their responses.

friendly
family
comfortable
Kate Lynass, Director of Administration for County Judge Mary Horn

original
independent
loving
Randi Sue Surratt, Discover Denton Welcome Center retail manager

modern
hip
musical
Peter, Denton resident

forward
thinking
County Judge Mary Horn

unique
artistic
creative
Dez, Denton resident

discoverdenton.com

discoverdenton.com
Susan introduces me to all of the women sitting around her. Some of them are old childhood friends of hers and others she has just met tonight but they all have one thing in common: they are powerful women helping shape the arts community of Denton. And Susan seems to know all of them, which makes sense because she is like a physical manifestation of the Denton arts community. She is an actress, both in front of the camera and on the stage. She is a producer of documentaries. She is a creative consultant for her own company, Curious Dog Creative, where she helps people tell the stories they want to tell. She helped create Artists Enclave, a nonprofit organization that celebrates all forms of art in Denton. She is involved in seemingly every creative organization and artistic cause around the area from the Thin Line Festival to the Greater Denton Arts Council. And most of all, she loves people and is a true Dentonite.

When she grew up here in Denton and now, after going from Fort Worth to Nashville to Los Angeles, Susan has come back home to help shape the arts community in the same way it shaped her as a young girl. Susan's journey to find her home in the larger community of the arts wasn't as simple as you'd expect. Even though she wasn't involved in theatre in school and didn't get her degree in performing or producing, she has always been surrounded by art that helped cultivate her love for the arts. She remembers going to watch big, wonderful movies in theatres with her parents and has memories of her home constantly being filled with good music. To Susan, being surrounded by art was a normal way of life. Her passion for storytelling started when she was six years old and would hide away in her bedroom, creating stories with tiny figurines of Disney characters she had bought on a family trip to Disneyland. She would wake up in the morning and run over to where she kept Snow White and Tinkerbell so she could pull them out and create a new story for them with her sheets acting as the stage.

Her life is made up of little, creative moments that show the bigger desire within her to tell wonderful stories. When she got her first teaching job out of college, she used creative writing to inspire her students. When she went to graduate school, she learned how to do liturgical dance. When she worked for St. Stephen Presbyterian Church in Fort Worth, she used puppets and plays to get children involved. Even when she didn't realize it, she depended on telling stories and using creativity to help others. It wasn't until after attending TCU that she began acting, classes and performing on stage. Sitting in the darkness of the last row of theatre seats at Stage West in Fort Worth, where she ushered, she would watch the actors playing out a story in the spotlight. She remembers thinking, "Oh, I want to do that!"

So, that's exactly what she did. She moved to Nashville and became an arts education major. Thus began her pursuit of the arts, leading her to Los Angeles in the summer of 1999 where she lived for 14 years. She starred in movies like My Dog Skip and acted in television shows like Desperate Housewives while making meaningful friendships in a community of performers like herself.

In 2013, she decided to come back home to Denton so she could take care of her mother. But she also came back because every time she visited from Los Angeles, her friends took her to art shows and performances. With each visit, she was reminded that Denton is a place where the arts are alive, and she wanted to be a part of it.

Susan returned to the place where she had once dreamed up stories and found comfort in telling them, to a place rich with history and stories of its own to be told. Now that she is back home in Denton, she is helping grow and support a community of artists. With the help of her co-chair Randall Good, Susan made a big impact in Denton by creating Artists Enclave two years ago. At the time, Susan just wanted to create a place that promoted Denton's growing artistic community by supporting artists and their work. And while that's still the case, Artists Enclave has broadened her life in new ways she never imagined, forming a creative community that nurtures her too.

So far the group has held 20 events and received nonprofit status in the fall of 2017. From installing art in local businesses to hosting writing workshops for high school students, Artists Enclave is actively cultivating art in Denton. Even though things are going well, Susan says they are just scratching the surface in what they are able to do and who they are able to reach. She believes the ecclectic personality of Denton's creative community opens the doors for all types of art, which also means there needs to be more space for these forms of art to be expressed. She intends to be part of helping new homes for art evolve in the area. Susan has many hopes and dreams for Denton. Even though she has spent a lot of her time in Nashville and Los Angeles where many flock to achieve their artistic dreams, she knows Denton is right where she belongs.

"Maybe one of the reasons I was supposed to come back here – apart from being a caregiver for my mom – was to see that returning to your roots enables you to have a good understanding of a community where you’re trying to grow something new."

Susan belongs here, sitting on the outdoor patio of East Side around a group of women who care just as adamantly about the artistic community as she does. Resting her chin in her palm, Susan nods gently as her new friend, Georgina, talks about her plans for the Greater Denton Arts Council. They talk about their dreams and goals as individuals and artists and for the community under a strand of twinkly lights stretched over their heads that has begun to shine brighter against the fading evening sky.

Yes, this is exactly where Susan belongs. She is home.
Story by Alex Helm and Karla Polanco

Springs and Ralph the Swimming Pig are consultant to the Texas Travel magazine to tell the stories of the Lone Star State. This new category, called Thin Line Fest, explained that True Texas Travel, running four to 10 minutes. This brand new category is an opportunity to do just that – a classification where Texas places and characters are the central part of films running four to 10 minutes.

Joshua Butler, founder and director of Thin Line Festival, explained that True Texas gives everyone a chance to display Texas travel destinations in a meaningful way. Thin Line Fest is creating a relationship with the state institutions that are focused on the travel niche, so everyone gets to enjoy special memories like Ralph the Swimming Pig. “Hopefully, it entices local community members to create meaningful stories... about their locals,” Joshua says.

Denton’s Thin Line Festival partners with Texas Highways magazine to tell the stories of the Lone Star State. This festival to include a robust photography exhibit, and encourage anyone to enter their work. He wants to make the contest accessible to all levels of photographers by creating entry categories that allow for people to feel as if they have the stuff to enter. That’s part of his strategy for keeping community connections.

“I think a lot of what I do is really attractive to people who like to do photography,” Al says, “I think they could be interested to be around other photographers who do that kind of thing and communicate with each other.”

That’s the end goal for Al. Making connections. Starting conversations. Keeping up with the amazing art the Denton community has to offer. For him, Thin Line makes that happen.

ANOTHER FIRST FOR THIN LINE: AL KEY BECOMES PHOTO DIRECTOR

More than anything else, photographer Al Key loves shooting lightning. And he would do anything to get a good shot, even if it means being struck by lightning.

Back in the early 1980s, around midnight somewhere between Watauga and Haslet, Key was sitting in the back of his truck, trying to get that perfect shot. The next thing he knew, he was lying on the ground, his face pressed against the edge of the driver’s side tire. Something was pricking his leg, it was it. He looked up and saw a wall cloud coming right at him. Raising himself out of his shock, he grabbed his tripod, checking it in the back of his truck before speeding down the road.

But as he was driving, he started itching all over. The copper and silver in the copper and silver in the sky had become superheated by the lightning, burning his skin. He got back out of the truck, kicked his shoes off and pants out and saw marks where the metal had burned his skin. He even has Lichtenburg marks – faded lines shaped like lightning – across his back where the lightning passed over his body.

For anyone else, this might have been the end of their lightning photography career. But not Al. He just shot storms to this day, along with the kind of nature that you can only find here in North Texas. His photos of lightning are some of what lined the walls in a display from last year’s Thin Line Festival photo entries, along with about 60 other photos from local high schools, colleges and universities. Veins of electricity shot across the sky, striking buildings and reaching spindly limbs through ominous black clouds.

This year, Al is the new photo director for the 11th-annual Thin Line Festival. Photography is one of the arts on display at the festival. Al’s been associated with the annual event for years; one of his films was screening in a UNT student film festival. And although the festival has shown works about Texas for the past 11 years, there is something new in 2018 for Thin Line Festival.

Susan Carol Davis, who serves on Thin Line Fest’s Governing Board, says Texas Highways magazine has partnered with the festival to add a new category of films about Texas. This new category, called True Texas Travel Experience, is for short films that, like Bob’s documentary, memorialize the places and people that are unique to the Lone Star state.

Susan explains that the kinds of films submitted to Thin Line are short films and documentaries coming from not just locals in Denton, but filmmakers throughout the country and even internationally. The filmmakers get a chance to show their work, and enter to win over $20,000 and other prizes depending on category.

Jennifer Batchelder, the Event Director for the College of Business at the University of North Texas, has co-produced and directed a film with Susan titled “Retro’s Refusal” which was submitted to Thin Line. “I think everyone has a story to tell,” Jennifer says. “And there are some very good stories out there that help bring communities and different parts of the world together.”

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Marvin first came there. We’re at Mr. The place hasn’t changed much since lit up, playing songs from the 1950’s. Ruyle. answers Denton postman Marvin Frosty, Marvin’s favorite in a long DENTON LIVE

In this rendering of the Embassy Suites by Hilton Denton Convention Center, the water feature that is a centerpiece of the lobby welcomes visitors to the hotel.

“You won’t find better root beer anywhere,” said Marvin Ruyle with a frosty mug of root beer at Mr. Frosty in Denton. Marvin is the Denton vice president of the Texas Association of Letter Carriers and was instrumental in bringing their 2019 convention to the Denton Convention Center. (Photo by Sheri-Lee Norris)

DENTON – until now.

“I’m ready to show off Denton,” said Marvin Ruyle, who has served as the Denton postman since 1986. Ruyle has served as the local postman ready to show off hometown to state brethren

LOCAL POSTMAN READY TO SHOW OFF HOMETOWN TO STATE BRETHREN

Story by Sheri-Lee Norris

Dent

Do you want a frosty mug or plastic, Marvin?” Patrick Webb asks his guest.

“Why, a frosty mug, of course,” answers Denton postman Marvin Ruyle. The jukebox against the wall was lit up, playing songs from the 1950’s. The place hasn’t changed much since Marvin came here. We’re at Mr. Frosty, Marvin’s favorite in a long list of local places to eat. Since 1952, the Webb family, beginning with Jack and Judy, Patrick’s grandparents, has owned and operated the hamburger joint on Route 377 serving up hamburgers, chili dogs and daily batches of fresh homemade root beer. His dad Randy owns it now. Other ones to try: A.J., Kim and Debbie. Marvin knows all of them.

“Being a postman is a social job,” Marvin says. His soft-spoken folksiness makes him well suited for his occupation. He knows all his customers on a first-name basis, where their kids go to school and when they got married. His territory is one big family. As our conversation goes on, it seems more like the entire town of Denton is extended family. He is, in fact, a walking encyclopedia of Denton knowledge. It’s so vast that you can’t Google for what’s in his head. Except for a four-year stint in Germany courtesy of the U.S. Army, he has called Denton County home his whole life. Marvin is a pearl and Denton is his oyster.

“We’re quaffing root beers and downing burgers and mountains of crinkle-cut fries at Mr. Frosty to talk about Denton’s newest jewel, the Embassy Suites by Hilton Denton Convention Center. You see, Marvin will retire from the United States Post Office in April 2018 after 33 years of service. But he will continue as Vice President of the Denton Union of Letter Carriers and is giddy about bringing the Texas State Association of Letter Carriers to town in 2019. Through the years, he’s criss-crossed the state from Corpus Christi to Houston, Dallas, San Antonio and Waco for conventions but could never bring his fellow postal workers to Denton. That, to this longtime member of the family of postmen and women and lifetime Dentonite, is an incredibly big deal. “San Antonio has the Alamo… and the Riverwalk,” he said. “I have Denton! I have all this,” he motioned around in the air with his hands.

But there was no space large enough to hold 500 people in Denton – until now.

An hour before hanging out at Mr. Frosty, we were on a private tour of the new Denton Convention Center. “It’s going to be fantastic,” Marvin said as he ambled around one of two Presidential Suites, marveling at the technologies built into rooms and the efforts taken to make the place its own destination. Electronic tablets will allow guests to change the temperature, TV and call room service or the front desk. The bathrooms have Bluetooth speakers built into the mirrors. This is the first ever Gold Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED)-certified Embassy Suites in the world. The tall hollow atrium footprint, for which Embassy Suites is known, has been replaced. The lobby focal point is a 22-foot-tall waterfall and living green wall. The entire place is a blend of The Jetsons meets Texas, with round LED lights in the ballrooms that resemble flying saucers and reclaimed wood on the walls of the 24/7 Starbucks.

The arts and music of Denton will be featured throughout the hotel, including work by local artists. A brass trumpet chandelier hangs over the front desk, paying tribute to the local music scene.

Marvin went to a window, pointing out the water tower branded with the city logo. The green UNT flag rippled in the gusty wind behind Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital. From another window we could see the towers at TWU.

“That’s where Andy B’s is going in,” Marvin said, pointing to all the construction behind the hotel. The entire corner of Rayzor Ranch, in which the convention center resides, will include an Alamo Draft House and Zoe’s Kitchen. Marvin’s already booked a private party night at Andy B’s Restaurant & Entertainment Center.

The wheels kept turning inside Marvin’s brain as the convention center’s General Manager Jeff Pritts took us to the ballrooms, the lobby and the connected Houlihan’s restaurant. The smile never left the postman’s face. He was envisioning how it was all going to look exploding with FANTASTIC’

IT’S GOING TO BE

Embassy Suites by Hilton Denton Convention Center

Address: 3100 Town Center Trail, Denton, Texas, 76201
Phone number: 940.243.3799
More info: dentonconventioncenter.com
QUICK FACTS
70,000 sq. ft. of meeting space with 20 breakout rooms
318 guest rooms
On-site Houlihan’s Restaurant and Starbucks Coffee

Discover Denton

13

DENTON LIVE

14

discoverdenton.com

out and about

out and about
Texas postal workers.

Showing off Denton to his postal buddies has been on Marvin’s bucket list for many years.

He will have quite a bit of help on that front. When he first learned the convention center was being built, he wanted to bid on the location for one of his upcoming state conventions. Dana Lodge at the Denton Convention and Visitors Bureau worked hand-in-hand with Marvin from the start. She helped create a budget and video for the site selection committee and continues to collaborate on itineraries that will transport conventioners around the community.

Busses have already been booked to take visitors to some of Marvin’s favorite spots outside Rayzor Ranch.

“Dana’s got that all under control,” he said. He will play the gracious host, but she’s got his back on logistics, and that gives him peace of mind.

That will be helpful when they visit East Side, one of his favorite bars on the square. It has more than 100 different beers on tap and another 130 types of bourbon and whiskey. There’s something for everybody there, he assures.

It seems postal workers are going to eat their way through Denton.

Marvin also plans to hit one of his other favorite restaurants, Smokehouse Barbecue. He’s had union meetings there forever, alternating menus: beer-battered catfish or a barbecue plate of brisket and sausage.

“Smokey and Jeanette own that,” he told me.

Smokey owns the Smokehouse? Surely, I made a mistake taking notes. Maybe Marvin misspoke. A quick phone call was in order.

“Can you please tell me the name of the owners?” I asked.

“Smokey and Jeanette,” said the lady.

“Smokey owns the Smokehouse?” I asked.

She laughed. “Well, his name is Earl but we all call him Smokey.”

Marvin was right again – of course he was.
A DIME A DOZEN

Story by Taryn Land
Photos by Savannah Hubbard

Every day, they welcome people into their home, a small stone building on Locust Street with teal trim along the roof. The outside though, doesn’t compare in the slightest to what’s inside. The front door creaks as you enter. As soon as it swings open a soothing aroma of warm, earthy scents surrounds you. Greeting cards begging to be filled with words of love and sent away to special someones line the walls. Handmade tea towels, candles and soaps cover the tables. Stained glass pyramids dangle in front of the window capturing the sunlight and shedding a colorful shadow. Twinkle lights dangle above your head as gentle music flows around all the displayed wares.

A chalkboard wall is adorned with the word ‘gather’ scrawled across the top. Within these walls, a community finds its home. She sits at a workshop table smiling, surrounded by art that she’s curated or created herself. Looking around the room, she points to festive fall tea towels and a quilt-style pillow that are her own work.

Shellie Christner owns The DIME Store, a gathering place for local artists to showcase their creations. Shellie put down roots in Denton’s creative community at the inaugural season of the Denton Community Market in 2010. At the time, she and her husband were building and refurbishing furniture. Selling at the market, she was introduced to many craftspeople. As her relationships with makers grew, they saw a need for a more consistent way of selling their creations. Etsy Denton was created to bring Denton makers together and give them an additional platform to display and sell their work.

The transition from an online Etsy store to a brick-and-mortar storefront was an organic process that was supported by the community. “Denton is unique in that the community of makers here are very open to helping one another,” Shellie says. “People are not as competitive as they are in other creative communities. We all just want to encourage and strengthen one another.”

Home Again, Home Again is Christner’s line of home goods that includes anything warm and cozy. Hand-poured Resoycled candles, natural Austin Street Apothecary skin care, handcrafted Juniper and Gin jewelry, and many other homemade creations find their place at The DIME Store.

The DIME Store also has a presence on Denton’s downtown square. Inside the Discover Denton Welcome Center there’s a Denton-centric DIME Store pop-up shop, which includes items such as postcards featuring the courthouse and Denton pillows, all of which are handmade.

“The DIME Store embodies so much of what makes Denton a one-of-a-kind place and we are honored to have our local talent, whether it be music or products, represented in the Welcome Center,” said Randi Sue Surratt, retail manager.

Shelley never expected to own her own handmade haven or even be in an artistic career. She always had a passion for the creative, but ended up getting a degree in engineering geology from Texas A&M. She later was a high school physics teacher before her creations took center stage.

Denton’s creative community has been there first to inspire Shelley, and then to support DIME. “I’m happy wherever I’m supposed to be,” Shellie says. “And this is where I’m supposed to be.”

The DIME Store
Address: 510 S Locust St.
Hours: Monday-Saturday, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.
Phone: 940.381.2324
More info: dimehandmade.com

Locally-sourced store shows best of Denton’s character

MUSEUMS. GALLERIES. SHOPPING. DINING. FESTIVALS. LIVE MUSIC. PERFORMING ARTS.

Spring & Summer Promotions & Events:
Share the Love Shop & Dine - February
Spring Open House Weekend - March
Twilight Tunes - Every Thursday April 19 - June 29
Customer Appreciation - Wednesdays in July

For information on dates & more about downtown, visit:
DENTONMAINSTREET.ORG

GIFTS FROM DIME

Lauren Betancur watercolor card, $5
Shawna Smith cactus card, $4
Opening night was brisk, somewhere in the mid-40s, but if the chilly weather scared anyone away from showing up, you wouldn’t know it from the line that formed outside the Campus Theatre. The queue of people stretched down Hickory, turned on to Elm and came to an end near First People’s Jewelers. And that was just the first of two sold-out performances.

“We’d had screenings, but we’ve never had screenings like this before,” Denton Black Film Festival (DBFF) director Harry Eaddy said, then added that this is just the beginning — the DBFF aims to attract as many as 5,000-6,000 people in 2018. That’s a significant increase from the 3,500 that attending last year’s festival.

The bigger-than-ever fourth-annual Denton Black Film Festival is four days focused on film, but in its brief history has grown to include art exhibitions, musical and spoken word performances, educational seminars and, for the first time this year, a fashion show.

“The plan always was to grow it to include art, music, spoken word and other things that are culturally a part of what the black experience is,” Harry says.

The inspiration for this comprehensive cultural convention came from other film festivals that Harry and his wife Linda (now the director of film programming for the festival) attended around the country. The pair knows all about fulfilling potential; she is also on the board of the Greater Denton Arts Council, and he is chair of the African American Scholarship Foundation. And, along with festival co-founder Mesha George, they had a dream.

“There’s not a lot of black cinema,” Harry says. “We don’t really get a chance to tell our own stories.”

Even at some of the most highly regarded film festivals, like Sundance or Martha’s Vineyard African American Film Festival, there is little for festival-goers to do beyond attend screenings. There certainly isn’t much of a dialogue after the screening. Harry says that’s what sets this festival apart.

“At DBFF, people can begin to have a safe haven to talk about diversity. I think it’s helped the city.”

Harry encourages people to stay the whole weekend and take in as much as possible, to become completely engrossed in the films. When people do that, he said, they’ve told him they had conversations that never would have had otherwise.

“I don’t think you’ll have that at most festivals. They’d screen a film and you’ll leave, right? You’re not usually going to have those conversations after the film is over.”

According to Harry, these sensitive conversations about race, culture and identity are essential in bringing people together. While the Denton Black Film Festival is an examination of black culture specifically, it broadly helps us realize what we have in common and binds us together.

“Once people have those conversations, they start looking at each other going, ‘Why are we even talking about this?’” he says. “It doesn’t make sense. Biologically we’re all the same.”

A COMMUNITY CELEBRATION

The Denton Black Film Festival is a community-oriented event where the accomplishments of African-American filmmakers and other industry professionals are celebrated.

Unbeknownst to many, the organization is volunteer only — a significant amount of the festival’s success can be attributed to those who simply lend a helping hand. Some volunteers see it as a chance to network, while others consider it an opportunity to give back to the community. Regardless of the motivation, helping at the festival is rewarding.

“The success is definitely partially dependent on volunteers,” said Building Bridges director Meredith Buie. “We’re still in our formative years, so it’s great to have so many people passionate about the festival to help it succeed.”

The fourth Denton Black Film Festival will be from January 25-28, 2018, accompanied by new media partner, NBC Connect. NBC "Come for a little or come for a lot," Mesha says. “We love people who stay the whole weekend and embark on that journey of entertainment, discovery, education and inspiration.”
Inside the Robson Ranch gates with its most energetic residents

Story by Misti DeHart

The school bell rings on Wednesday afternoons at Argyle Intermediate School, launching students, book bags in tow, through steel doors thrust open and slamming against the bricked schoolhouse. But on Wednesdays, they barrel right past the parking lot and toward the gymnasium for one of the after-school highlights of their week – pickleball time.

For more than six years, Denton County’s Robson Ranch Texas Luxury Retirement Community has been visiting the school every week to share their passion for one of the fastest growing sports for all ages in the United States.

Pickleball, a mash-up of tennis, ping pong and badminton and one of many activities celebrated by residents and visitors “with relish” at Robson Ranch, has evolved into quite a draw in Denton. The retirement community recently completed the expansion of its world-class pickleball courts, which included taking over several of its world-class pickleball courts, which were previously tennis courts.

Mrs. DeHart

The tennis players used to have them, but not anymore,” the sandy-haired, petite woman shared proudly. “Now we’ve got 16 pickleball courts!”

The ‘ours’ Tricia is referring to is the Robson Ranch Pickleball Club, a group of 460-plus seniors in Denton County who play on a badminton-sized court using tennis and ping pong moves on a whiffle-ball-style ball with what looks like an oversized ping pong paddle.

Although the unusual game with an unusual name might not have always been on the tips of everyone’s tongues in North Texas, pickleball is rumored to have first appeared on the scene in 1965 when several Washingtonian men were looking for something for their kids to do on a dreary afternoon. As the story is told, the fathers riffed around through their sporting equipment for something to keep their children’s attention, and ended up sending them out to play on a badminton court with a hollowed-out plastic ball and a few rackets.

Not only did the kids end up loving the make-shift game, but so did all of the neighbors and family friends. The family dog, Pickles, would often intercept the game ball, and the sport, new unintentional name and all, ended up catching on like wildfire all through the Pacific Northwest.

While sister-sport tennis is still a very popular sport both in North Texas and with active seniors in general, Mark Kellam, Robson Ranch resident and pickleball club vice president explains the draw of the sport.

“I got into it because it’s low impact. It keeps my heart rate up, and keeps me competitive. Aside from health, though, the sport’s enthusiast continued, hands perched in the air as if he were clutching his winning-game paddle. “Really there are two things. First off, I’m retired. [I have] lots of time, so half of my goal is meeting people, volunteering, all of that. Two, I’m a sports junkie. I played softball, golf, basketball, soccer… and I get to travel everywhere.”

Travel? But pickleball is a friendly, non-competitive game that is played on either a dedicated or a modified court, right? And Robson Ranch now proudly boasts some of the highest caliber courts in the U.S., so there must be no motivation for local Denton County residents to go anywhere else in the name of this silly sounding sport—right?

Wrong.

Along with an average of 20-to-30 pickleball courts in the United States. While the 2,700 acre property itself is a single-family housing development community, it’s less than five minutes from 35W, and only 15 minutes away from Denton’s brand new Embassy Suites by Hilton Denton Convention Center. If visitors are searching for top-notch accommodations while they are in town for any Robson event, they need look no further.

Sure, there are hundreds of people planning their retirements that choose to come tour Robson Ranch each year because it boasts professional-level courts and an 18-hole championship golf course, as well as state of the arts crafts workshops, art studios, workout facilities and other ways to enjoy your leisure. But not all of Robson’s attractions are just for their residents.

The newly-remapped Wildhorse Grill is located at Robson’s Wildhorse Golf Club, both of which are open to the public. The bar and fine dining restaurant boasts a stunning heated patio overlooking the golf course and the Robson Ranch Veterans’ Park.

Whether you are looking for a place to stay while you visit or are looking to come tour Robson Ranch each year because it boasts professional-level courts and an 18-hole championship golf course, as well as state of the arts crafts workshops, art studios, workout facilities and other ways to enjoy your leisure. But not all of Robson’s attractions are just for their residents.

Since Denton County holds plenty of active seniors interested in various sports, it didn’t take long for Robson Ranch to start hosting USA Pickleball Association (USAPA) competitive events for out-of-towners and residents in both scheduled and bracket play. Robson just hosted the Quad States Senior Open which, although the name refers to Texas, Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Louisiana, represented players and spectators from over a dozen states.

Roberson and the RRDPSC work with the HOA of Robson Ranch Denton as well as the USAPA, which is the governing body for all things pickleball, to make sure that Robson is recognized as a “recipient club.” This means that anyone that is a member of the USAPA is invited to play at the courts at Robson Ranch and, in turn, the Robson Ranch players may play at any of the more than 15,000 dedicated pickleball courts in the United States.
plan your perfect i do at

the Denton Bridal Show

1. Venue

Location, location, location. But how about being able to easily compare venues? As if that wasn’t enough, there’s also a raffle for a free venue.

“Our favorite part of the show is the raffle. We love calling the brides and their families and hear them screaming and crying because they just won a free $5,000 venue!” - Lisa Moore, organizer

(photo by Mike Mezeul II)

2. Cake

“The feedback we’ve gotten from brides is that this event really relieves their stress when trying to plan the wedding.” - LeeAnn Widyn, organizer

The centerpiece of every wedding is the cake. Some of the best wedding cake bakeries have their most popular creations on display to ogle and taste. And imagine winning a free custom wedding cake in the raffle!

(photo courtesy of Heavenly Tailored Sweets)

3. Photo Booth

“There is so much energy at the show. It’s really great seeing everyone enjoying the planning process.” - Lisa Moore, organizer

Having activities or treats for everyone to enjoy on your big day, like a photo booth, cotton candy machine or kid’s activities, are important considerations. And another raffle prize will be a free photo booth!

(photo by Mike Mezeul II)

4. Caterers

The best moment for him at a wedding?

“When the mother of the bride comes and hugs me and tells me I’m the best.” - Federico Vizcarra, owner of Vizcarra Hospitality

If mom’s happy, you know it went well.

(photo courtesy of Heavenly Tailored Sweets)

5. Total Event Planning

Too often the honeymoon is an afterthought, or a couple runs out of time and money to do a dream trip. Planning ahead means that they can budget for the honeymoon, and get the best deals on their dream trip by booking in advance.

“It’s my chance to educate couples doing their wedding planning. They need to put as much effort into planning their honeymoon as their wedding. The honeymoon is the start of their new life together and it needs to be special too.” - Sheree Harris, owner of Cruise Planners

Denton Bridal Show

Date: Jan. 13, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Location: TWU Hubbard Hall
1600 N Bell Ave.
Tickets: $10 per person
Pre-registration starts in December, and runs until Jan. 12 (includes 2 extra raffle tickets)
More info: dentonbridalshow.com

24
discoverdenton.com
discoverdenton.com

DENTON LIVE

the main events

the main events
THE SHORT LIST

Story by Sarah Sarder
Photos courtesy of the Denton CVB

“Sometimes, I just sit and watch people enjoying the festival.”
Carol Short walks around the brightly lit office of the Denton Festival Foundation, recalling her favorite musical acts from the annual Denton Arts and Jazz Festival by peering at the patchwork of colorful posters that adorn the walls, jogging her memory of 38 years of music and arts.

Carol founded the festival, previously named Spring Fling, in 1991 after she became president of the Denton Festival Foundation, the entity behind Denton’s most popular annual event. But outside of her professional capacity in planning the event, she is a huge fan of what the festival’s musical offerings with the help of American Federation of Musicians President Ray Hair.

Pointing at individual posters, she describes the talents of the year’s headliners, their voices still resonating in her memory. The vibrant artwork, actually a collection of framed copies of the covers of the annual festival tabloid published in the Denton Record-Chronicle, remind Carol of some stellar moments, such as the performance from all five Neville brothers.

In 2018, the festival’s headliners will be Randy Brecker, Los Lobos and Brave Combo. Paintings are just one kind of art Carol’s collected from the festival. The huge range of arts and crafts included in Jazzfest’s offerings include handmade jewelry, artisan soaps, stained glass ensembles, pottery and woodworking, pressed botanical art, individually molded sculptures and more.

Carol’s favorite piece of jewelry from the festival is a fused glass dragonfly necklace with matching earrings. She says the blues and greens and aquas in the glass catch the light just right. The artisans who created her necklace come down from Colorado every year for the festival. They are among hundreds of artists and craftsmen from around the country selected by jury to bring their artwork to the festival.

Planning and deciding who participates in the festival is just part of Carol’s responsibility – the other integral part of putting on Arts and Jazz is ensuring it goes off without a hitch.

And there’s always a glitch, Carol says. A burst of laughter escapes Carol, who can clearly relate. “In the mud,” she finishes for him. “People were sloshing through the mud that year, but they came.”

A burst of laughter escapes Carol, who can clearly relate. “I lost a shoe that year,” Kevin says. “In the mud,” she finishes for him. “People were sloshing through the mud that year, but they came.”

And they do. Each year, more than 225,000 people visit Denton Arts and Jazz Festival in Denton’s Quakertown Park, from those to whom the event is an annual tradition and for the past seven stages.

Though they say the festival has had good luck with the weather during its dates in late April, the two have vivid memories of the years when Mother Nature wasn’t cooperative. In 2015, Denton received more than triple its average rainfall for the month, with most of it falling just before the festival.

“In the mud,” Kevin says, “People were sloshing through the mud that year, but they came.”

They do. Each year, more than 225,000 people visit Denton Arts and Jazz Festival in Denton’s Quakertown Park, from those to whom the event is an annual tradition and for the defining cultural event of this uniquely artistic city.

One essential festival characteristic instrumental to attendance:
Free admission.

Keeping admission free is one of the main goals of the festival, but it’s a struggle. The main driving force behind free entry are the festival’s sponsors.

“We are proud to support this great event that offers free access to live music and the opportunity to enjoy the work of many local artists and small businesses alike,” said Meleia Waschka, district manager for Wells Fargo in Denton.

And there’s always a glitch, Carol says. “A burst of laughter escapes Carol, who can clearly relate. “In the mud,” she finishes for him. “People were sloshing through the mud that year, but they came.”

The Top Hands are key as well. These members of the Denton Festival Foundation volunteer more than 2,000 total hours at the festival every year. Watching the Top Hands have fun while they work is one of Carol’s favorite festival outcomes.

So is seeing exuberant children perform to what is often the largest audience they’ll experience.

Coming from elementary, middle and high schools, these young performers showcase their talents on the community stages, and are chosen by application. And alongside the senior center building, the internationally ranked University of North Texas jazz program, comprised of nine bands, merits its own stage for the weekend.

In 2018, the festival’s headliners will be Randy Brecker, Los Lobos and Brave Combo for Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights, respectively. The event is rain or shine, and visitors will be testing no matter what.
How great stories begin.

The exterior window is plastered with a door design that changes by season. A large head of an old-time delivery man is posted in the left side of the window, staring at passers by. Walking in the store we are greeted by the shop's weird, imaginative décor. There’s an Indian figure with lollipops as the feathers of his headdress, a giant hand coming down from the ceiling, a grotesque figure with a large head and a baby body. These bizarre denizens are just some of the handmade creations of Atomic Candy owner Tim Loyd that fill his confectionery store. And mixed underneath and all around the art, you have colorful candies old and new, sodas, odd toy trinkets, animal head masks and more wacky finds.

I was delighted one evening to find one of my favorite candies (the colorful Binky Pacifiers). Little did I know, even after shopping at the store a few times before, that Atomic Candy has been selling a sweet childhood memory of mine all along. There it was: its yellow-and-red-themed label with big, bold letters, practically screaming “Triple XXX Root Beer” from behind the clear glass door of the cold beverage refrigerator. Releasing a flood of memories of being at the Dr Pepper museum with my mom, aunt and cousin, I squealed in excitement. The store employees were not alarmed, clearly used to customer reactions like mine. I bought a bottle and immediately called my mom to reminisce about the past. This memory got me thinking that a lot of Atomic Candy shoppers likely experience the same kind of nostalgia. So I met with manager Teresa Rodriguez and employee Emma Manly to find out what Atomic Candy wants people to feel in their store.

“Our goal is to get people to find things they haven’t found in a long time and to relive those moments they loved when they were little,” Teresa says. “Maybe Necco Wafers hold a special place in your heart because your grandma fed them to you when you were four — that kind of stuff.” Atomic Candy carries your old-fashioned candies and even sweets that were once found in way-back-when nickel-and-dime stores.

“Our new online Master of Science degree in Digital Communication Analytics will guide the way to using data and information to find answers faster and more effectively — skills that can help you get ahead and stay there.”

Your Story Starts Here
Y’all come back now, ya hear?

Here are some fun events to look for from July through December.

North Texas Fair & Rodeo, Aug. 17-25 (Photo courtesy Denton CVB)

Denton’s Day of the Dead Festival, Oct. 27 (Photo courtesy Denton CVB)

ChalkFest at Denton Arts & Autos Extravaganza, Sept. 8 (Photo by Sydney Cooper)

Denton Holiday Lighting Festival, Nov. 30 (photo by Ed Steele Photography)
### Stay and Play

From dusk 'till dawn, Denton's hospitality team will work to make your visit a memorable one!

**PROPERTY**

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**QUALITY**

Since its founding more than a century ago, Texas Woman’s has become known for its contributions and leadership in the fields of nursing, education, the health care professions, nutrition, the arts and sciences and business.

**VALUE**

Texas Woman’s is No. 1 in the DFW area for graduates' earnings versus cost of education, according to The Dallas Business Journal.
ATTENTION: INDEPENDENCE-LOVING, ORIGINAL THINKERS

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