

Upper East Side of Texas

MAY/JUNE 2024

county line

MAGAZINE



W SHOWING
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FESTIVAL FUN TAMALE PIE TOMATO FEST WIRE ART
MY PEOPLES YOUNG MONTANA TEXAS BLUEBERRY

WILLIAMS YOUNG

ARTS IN BLOOM AT WINNSBORO CENTER FOR THE ARTS

WINNSBORO FESTIVAL OF BOOKS FEATURING POETRY SLAM CHAMPION MICHAEL GUINN

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APRIL 19-21 / APRIL 26-28



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SATURDAY, JUNE 8,
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ART EXHIBITION

AN ART EXPLOSION

CHRIS BROWN'S
ARTISTRY IN BLOOM
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MARCH 26 – MAY 18



ART EXHIBITION

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EDITOR'S NOTES

Dear Readers,

We have fun new annual festivals and other events starting just about every year now in the Upper East Side of Texas. That's because of the growing pool of savvy organizers in our communities who recognize the need of visitors and residents alike to enjoy themselves with different types of activities.

This started me thinking about how long some of the festivals I've enjoyed for decades have actually been going on. So I compiled a list and share it here with you.

The region has an enormous amount of holiday events so if you're ever looking to see great fireworks shows and parades in Small Town Texas, we've got you covered. There are way too many of those to list out as well as carnivals and county fairs, so we focused on a list of celebrations that are helping to define so many of our small towns and cultural districts.

Find celebrations for food and wine, art, books, heritage, pesky critters, races and rides, quilts, poetry, Western culture, and LOTS of great live music. Many of the

events serve to raise funds for local charities.

Events that have happened for a long, long time have a formula for success and it's evident in the quality of entertainment experienced at these affairs.

Get your calendars out and start taking notes so you don't miss all the fun taking place throughout the year.

A couple of festival happening soon are on June 8. Jacksonville is celebrating all things tomatoes while Nacogdoches honors blueberries. These two towns are just about an hour away from each other so attending them both sounds so fun!

Meet a few really talented artists in this issue and catch up with East Texan Montana Jordan whose success on the TV sitcom *Young Sheldon* has landed him a lead role in a new spinoff. Checking in with the talented people who grew up in this region is always a reminder that no matter where you come from, it's always a good idea to follow your dreams.

— P.A. Geddie

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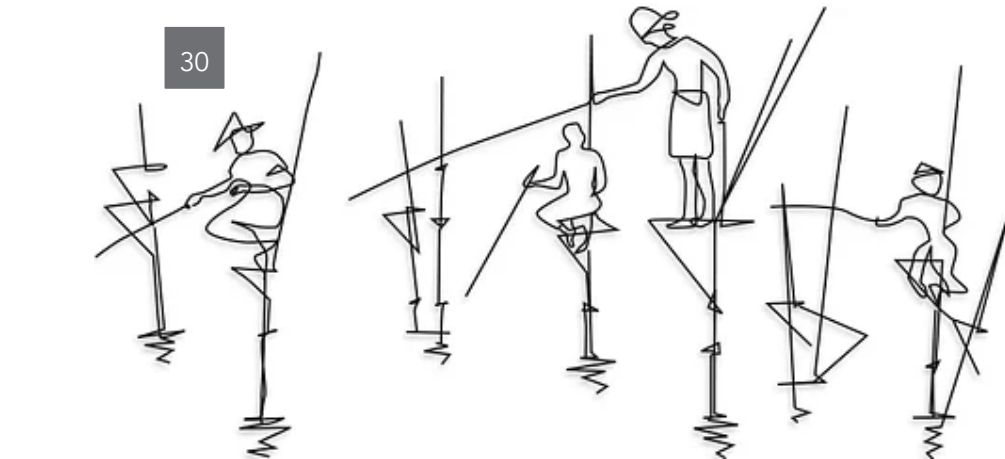
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MAGAZINE

E-EDITION

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Upper East Side of Texas

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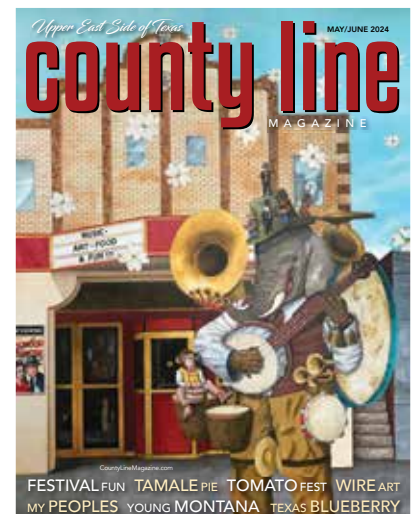
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COVER: Poster for a Dogwood Art & Music Festival in Palestine by William E. Young

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Dolly



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BOWIE COUNTY

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

GRAYSON COUNTY

United Way of Grayson County
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PO Box 1112, Sherman, TX 75091

HUNT COUNTY

United Way of Hunt County
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info@unitedwayofhuntcounty.org
PO Box 224, Greenville, TX 75403

DELTA COUNTY

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

GREGG COUNTY

Greater Longview United Way, Inc.
Contact: Dr. Evan Dolive, (903) 758-0191
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MARION COUNTY

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tonilwoods@aol.com
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MARSHALL

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NAVARRO COUNTY

Westminster Presbyterian Church
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NEW SUMMERFIELD

New Summerfield Education Foundation
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pcraft@newsommerfieldisd.net
PO Box 6, New Summerfield, TX 75780

RED RIVER COUNTY/LAMAR COUNTY

Paris Kiwanis Imagination Library
Contact: Claudia McKinney, (903) 784-6374
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RAINS COUNTY

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

RUSK COUNTY

Little Ones Literacy Program
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brian.ballard49@gmail.com
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SULPHUR SPRINGS

Sulphur Springs Independent School District
Contact: Amanda Ridner, (903) 885-4576
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WOOD COUNTY

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

Winnsboro Center for the Arts
Contact: Tona Blizzard, (817) 247-0607
dpilwinnsboro@gmail.com
655 CR 4592, Winnsboro, TX 75494

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

www.ImaginationLibrary.com

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THE OLDER, THE BETTER

Festivals and Other Fun Events Getting Better with Time



The Upper East Side of Texas is home to some of the oldest festivals and other special events in Texas. Long-standing car shows, holiday parades and events, rodeos, fishing tournaments, county fairs, and carnivals are too numerous to mention as are farmers' markets, although it is worth noting that many of them started as roadside stands and are now full-blown destination-worthy events with entertainment, picnic areas, and food demonstrations. Historic home tours are also popular in this region and have been going on for many decades.

This list contains long-running events unique to each community that helps define its character. With all the experience that comes with producing these popular events, each year they get better and gain more fans. Interesting to note is how the increase in the number of creative annual events grows each decade. That's

due to an ever-growing group of talented community organizers.

100+ YEARS

First Monday Trade Days. Canton. 1850s. Monthly. The largest flea market in the country featuring thousands of vendors and a retail wonderland began in the mid-1800s when the circuit judge stopped in Canton the first Monday of each month. While waiting for court proceedings, the locals starting bringing things to swap or sell with others. That practice expanded from the courthouse square to include more than 450 acres today. firstmondaycanton.com

State Fair of Texas. Dallas. 1886. September/October. The oldest state fair in America, it lasts for a whole month featuring amazing food, carnival rides, livestock shows, concerts, and so much more. The Art Deco buildings were built

(Above) Visitors have shopped and traded on the First Monday Trade Days grounds since the 1850s. Today, as many as 250,000 continue to come each month. COURTESY PHOTO (Opposite) The Athens Fiddlers Contest & Reunion on the courthouse square is enjoyed by all ages. CARRIE BENNETT PHOTOGRAPHY

in 1936, housing exhibits, museums, and entertainment. bigtex.com

East Texas State Fair. Tyler. 1912. September. Closed for three years in World War II, the fair celebrated 100 years in 2015. Attractions, food, entertainment, and livestock. The Park of East Texas. etstatefair.com

90+ YEARS

Athens Old Fiddlers Contest & Reunion. 1932. May. The longest running fiddle contest in Texas features fiddlers of all ages, live music, street dances, car

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FESTIVALS *continued from page 8*

show, a kiddie carnival, and street food. athensfiddlers.com

Texas Rose Festival. Tyler. 1933. October. Celebrating the role of the rose-growing industry in Tyler, the Texas Rose Festival features a queen and her court in elaborate, museum-quality gowns, a Queen's Tea, and the Rose Parade amidst a backdrop of thousands of vibrant roses. texasrosefestival.org

80+ YEARS

East Texas Yamboree. Gilmer. 1935. October. Queen's coronation, carnival, parades, live music, barn dance, car show, fiddler's contest, exhibits, livestock show and sale, arts and crafts. yamboree.com

Texas Dogwood Trails Celebration. Palestine. 1937. March/April. This celebration invites visitors to enjoy the delicate beauty of the dogwood trees in Davey Dogwood Park and the surrounding area. Activities are scheduled each weekend to compliment the celebration including excursion train rides at the Texas State Railroad, the Farm & Flower Market at the Farmers Market, a play at the historic Texas Theatre, and much more. visitpalestine.com/dogwood

70+ YEARS

Historical Pilgrimage. Jefferson. 1947. May. Includes home and garden tours, Diamond Bessie Murder Trial theatre performances, parade, artisan craft fair, quilt exhibit, and area attractions. jefferson-pilgrimage.com

Rangerette Revels. Kilgore. 1950. April. The high-kicking, world-famous Rangerettes annual spring show features a wide range of dance genres. rangerette.com

60+ YEARS

Autumn Trails. Winnsboro. 1958. October. A full month of scheduled activities take place with self-guided driving tours

of the beautiful fall foliage surrounding Winnsboro, Texas. Events include car parades; horse and wagon trails; contests for pets, beards, pies, cakes, chili, and hot pepper eating; beauty pageant, live music, trade days, arts and crafts, and mule rodeo. winnsboroautumntrails.com

Hopkins County Dairy Festival & Balloon Fest. Sulphur Springs. 1959. June. Hot air balloon festival, parade, Texas State Championship Ice Cream Freeze Off, carnival, street dance, museum and learning center, and a variety of dairy-related events. hopkinscountydairy-festival.com

Azalea and Spring Flower Trail. Tyler. 1959. March/April. This celebration of blooming azaleas, dogwood trees, and spring flowers was voted one of the Top 100 Events in North America. visitytler.com/azaleatrail

50+ YEARS

National Polka Festival. Ennis. 1967. May. Celebrating Czech heritage and traditions with dances, polka music, King and Queen Dance Contest, parade, and delicious food. nationalpolkafestival.com

Hopkins County Fall Festival. Sulphur Springs. 1969. October. Parade, crafts show, kids zone, carnival, exhibits, and hay bale contest. Hopkins County Regional Civic Center. visitsulphurspringstx.org

World Champion Hopkins County Stew Contest. Sulphur Springs. 1969. October. Teams compete in a campsite atmosphere with gingham, denim, and calico-clad men and women stirring simmering pots and stoking glowing campfires. Buford Park. sulphursprings-tx.com

Wildflower Trails of Texas. Hughes Springs. 1970. April. hughesspringstxusa.com

Edom Art Festival. 1972. October. The late potter Doug Brown started this artists-run two-day event soon after he made Edom his home and a hamlet for creativity. It features 60 plus artists with original clothing, paintings, pottery, and mixed media, as well as live music, wine, and food trucks. edomarts.com

Salt Festival. Grand Saline. 1974. Normally held in June with a full week of

activities in conjunction with the local Athena Club's Salt Pageant with a queen, duchesses, and little salt girls and their escorts, for their 50th anniversary in 2024 it moved to September with three days of concerts featuring WhiskeyFish, Billie Jo Jones, T Graham Brown, T.G. Shepard, Moe Bandy, and Glen Templeton. facebook.com/GSSaltFest

40+ YEARS

Derrick Days. Corsicana. 1976. April. Derrick Days Festival commemorates Corsicana's rich oil history with a four-day event featuring live entertainment, carnival, car show, chili cookoff, historic tours, and games. derrickdays.com

Edgewood Heritage Festival. 1977. November. In a backdrop of 19th century buildings, the festival celebrates regional heritage with an artisan village, classic cars, antique tractors, model train, blacksmithing, print shop, barber shop, bake sale, jams and jellies, and live music. Heritage Park Museum of East Texas, Downtown Edgewood. edgewood-heritagefestival.com

Great Texas Balloon Race. Longview. 1978. June. The largest sanctioned hot air balloon race in Texas, this three-day world-class competition also includes concerts, a balloon glow, and drone show. gtbr.net

Bonham Trade Days. 1978. Monthly. Shop antiques, collectibles, and more. Fort English Village Museum. cityofbonham.org

Van Oil Festival. 1979. October. A celebration of the Oil Boom days of Van includes music, vendors, parade, and queen's pageant. vanareachamber.com

Scarborough Renaissance Festival. Waxahachie. 1980. April/May. A Renaissance themed festival set in a recreated 16th Century English village celebrating the visit of King Henry VIII, his Royal Court and other dignitaries. Entertainment includes full combat armored jousts, Birds of Prey exhibitions, the Mermaid Lagoon and unique, interactive Renaissance entertainment on 20+ stages. There is also a 100+ member performing company that brings Scarborough to life through their portrayals of the royal court, dignitaries, vil-

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(Opposite Top) The world-famous Kilgore Rangerettes perform a wide range of dance genres during their annual spring show. COURTESY PHOTO. (Opposite bottom) Edom Art Festival began in 1972 by the late potter Doug Brown and still brings thousands of visitors to the tiny town each year. PHOTO BY CRAIG D. BLACKMON, FAIA

FESTIVALS *continued from page 11*

lagers and peasants alike. One-of-a-kind handmade crafts are found in 200 village shoppes. Find artist demonstrations, food, and pubs with wine and beer. srfestival.com

Terrell Jubilee. 1981. April. Features a carnival, food vendors, arts and crafts, 5K run and fun walk, live music and entertainment, and more. Ben Gill and Lion's Club Parks. Terrelljubilee.com

Sweet Potato Festival. Golden. 1982. October. Celebrating the sweet potato harvest in the Sweet Potato Capital of the World with activities benefiting local charities. goldensweetpotatofestival.org

Fire Ant Festival. Marshall. 1982. October. Gaining popularity as being one of America's most unusual festivals, the FireAnt Festival's entertainment includes a Diaper Derby, Chicken Chunking contest, FireAnt Calling contest, as well as Tour De FireAnt bike ride, scavenger hunt and dozens of vendors. marshalltexas.com/fireant-festival

East Texas Sacred Harp Convention. Henderson. 1983. August. Although held in Henderson for just a few decades, this annual gathering of shape note singers has a continuous history from 1868,

the earliest year noted in its minutes, having missed a few years of meeting because of the American Civil War. Re-established after the war, a large influx of Georgia and Alabama settlers added to its strength. Many are attracted to its folk music aspect using acappella and four part harmony. The convention is the oldest known singing convention in Texas, and the second oldest Sacred Harp Convention in the United States. Henderson Civic Center. easttexassingings.net

Tomato Fest. Jacksonville. 1984. June. First created during the Great Depression to celebrate Jacksonville's agricultural heritage, Tomato Week was revived in the 1980s and continues strong now each year. Activities include a tomato eating contest, farmers' market, salsa contest, tomato opening contest, and car show. Jacksonville is designated the Tomato Capitol of the World. jacksonvilletexas.com/tomato-fest

30+ YEARS

Helen Lee Estate Daffodil Gardens. Gladewater. 1985. February/March. Thousands of golden daffodils bloom each year for all to enjoy. *FB/The New Mrs. Lee's Daffodil Garden*

Tour De Paris. Paris. 1985. July. Features multiple routes tailored to riders of

(Below) Tour De Paris is a bicycle ride through beautiful Northeast Texas countryside. COURTESY PHOTO. (Opposite) The Fire Ant Festival has poked fun at the pesky insects since 1982. COURTESY PHOTO

all skill levels, including 14 and 24 mile off-road on the Northeast Texas Trail and five county routes. paristexasbiking.com

East Texas Gusher Days. Gladewater. 1985. April. Celebrating the nostalgia of the oil boom days, activities include food, arts and crafts, live music and entertainment, and a bass fishing tournament. Downtown Gladewater. gusher-days.com

Texas Shakespeare Festival. Kilgore. 1986. June/July. High quality, professional theatre productions. texasshakespeare.com

Bois D'Arc Bash. Commerce. 1986. September. Celebrating heritage as Bois D'Arc Capital of Texas. Live music, parade, vendors, and pancake breakfast. commerce-chamber.com/bois-darc-bash

Wonderland of Lights. Marshall. 1987. November/December. A magical site with millions of white lights and activities that include an outdoor ice-skating rink, vintage carousel, train, and a collection of tiny houses making up *continued page 14*





FESTIVALS *continued from page 12*

Santa's village with the backdrop of the 1901 historic Harrison County Courthouse. visitmarshalltexas.com

Texas Blueberry Festival. Nacogdoches. 1990. June. Celebrating the harvest of the blueberries, it features live music, blueberry picking, auto exhibits, shopping, and restaurant specials. texasblueberryfestival.com

Heritage Syrup Festival. 1989. November. Ribbon cane syrup making takes center stage with other activities including folk art and sawmill demon-

strations, carousel rides, antique tractors, storytelling, live music, square dancing, pony rides, chili cook-off, and children's section. Henderson. Depot Museum, Downtown Square. hendersontx.us/14/Heritage-Syrup-Festival

Iron Horse Heritage Days. Mineola. 1990. September. Honoring the railroad heritage of the town, the event features live entertainment, baking contests, and a weenie dog race. mineolachamber.org

Mardi Gras Up River. Jefferson. 1991. February. Activities include parades, bands, food, vendors, carnival, frosty beverages, and beads. Downtown Jefferson. mardigrasupriver.com

East Texas Oilman's Chili Cook-off. Kilgore. 1993. October. World's Richest Acre, Downtown Kilgore. visitkilgore.com

Dalton Days. Longview. 1994. April.

Inspired by the true story of a bank robbery in Longview in 1894, this annual event features Wild West shows, blacksmith demonstrations, children's activities, live music, concessions, and the famous Dalton Gang bank robbery reenactment. Gregg County Historical Museum. gregghistorical.org/dalton-days-2

Duwali Memorial Pow Wow. Ben Wheeler. 1994. Held annually to honor Cherokee Chief Duwali Bowles, who was killed in the Battle of the Neches on July 16, 1839. aics1839.com

20+ YEARS

East Texas Tractor and Small Engine Show. Henderson. 1995. April. Tractor pulls, large exhibit of antique tractors, small engine displays, corn grinding, horse-drawn equipment, tractor games, rope making, hay baling, antique tools, and a tractor parade. visithendersontx.com

(Below) Making ribbon cane syrup in Henderson. (Opposite top) Tomato Fest takes place every year in June in Jacksonville. (Opposite bottom left) Life size dinosaur exhibit comes to McKinney for several weeks each year. (Opposite bottom right) Texas Shakespeare Theatre is one of the top performance troupes in the state. COURTESY PHOTOS

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FESTIVALS *continued from page 14*

Cotton Patch Challenge Bicycle Rally. Greenville. 1997. September. Bike routes range from 12 to 75 miles with rest stops, scenic views. cottonpatchchallenge.com

HYPE Annual MLK Celebration. Winnsboro. 2000. January. The nonprofit HYPE (Helping Young People Excel) celebrates each year with a parade and picnic. Martin Luther King Jr Community Park. hypewinnsboro.org

Wassail Fest. Nacogdoches. 2000. November. Enjoy tasting delicious spiced wassail while shopping with participating merchants. Downtown Nacogdoches. visitnacogdoches.org

Krewe of Barkus Mardi Gras Dog Parade and Festival. McKinney. 2002. February. artinstituteofmckinney.com

Founders Day Festival. Rockwall. 2003. May. Concert, food trucks, and family fun activities. rockwall.com/mainstreet

Martin Luther King Jr. Citywide Celebration. Longview. Circa 2004. February. The annual Longview Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration includes a full weekend of activities including a parade celebrating the life, message, and dream of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. longviewtexas.gov

Indian Summer Days and Dutch Oven Cook-Off. Sulphur Springs. 2004. October. Native American dancers, music, candle making, quilt show, butter curing, soap making, blacksmithing and gristmill operation. Dutch oven cooking contest. Heritage Park. hopkinscountymuseum.org

10+ YEARS

Dinosaurs Live. McKinney. 2005. August-February. Seasonal annual exhibit featuring life-size animatronic dinosaurs along nature trails. Heard Natural

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(Opposite) German heritage is celebrated in several events each year, including this one in McKinney that began in 2007 and another in Kilgore that started in 2014. COURTESY PHOTO. (Top right) A fan gets an autograph from a performer during Junebug in Ben Wheeler. PHOTO BY TOM GEDDIE. (Bottom right) Bob Wills Fiddle Festival & Contest brings top entertainment to Greenville each year. COURTESY PHOTO.





FESTIVALS *continued from page 17*

Science Museum & Wildlife Sanctuary. heardmuseum.org

Oktoberfest. McKinney. 2007. October. Authentic German food, domestic and imported beer, live music, and games. Downtown McKinney. mckinney-texas.org/664/oktoberfest

Fall Feral Hog Festival. Ben Wheeler. 2008. October. The official Wild Hog Capital of Texas holds an event each year with a hog queen's pageant, parade, live music, cook-off, kids zone, pig races, hog calling contest, and more. FB/FallFeralHogFestival

Arts in Bloom. McKinney. 2008. April. Featuring more than 120 juried artists and renowned Texas wineries. Downtown McKinney. mckinneytexas.org/687/Arts-in-Bloom

Rib Rub Run & Roll. Rockwall. 2009. October. Barbecue cooking competition with live music, 5K run, and more. Harry Myers Park. rockwall.com/parks

McKinney Art Studio Tour. McKinney. 2009. November. A self-guided tour featuring more than 60 artists in 20 loca-

tions across the community. mstmckinney.org

Winnsboro Art & Wine Festival. 2010. November. This popular, juried festival attracts talented participating artists from around the country. In addition to the variety of art, Texas wineries show off award-winning wines by providing tastings and bottles for sale. Specialty foods and other vendors attend as well. Live music provides entertainment on both Friday and Saturday. winnsboroartandwinefestival.com

July Fest. Gun Barrel City. 2010. High profile concert and drone show. Gun Barrel City Park. gunbarrelcity.net

Piney Woods Wine Festival. Lindale. 2010. May & October. Held in Mount Vernon for several years, it moved to Lindale in 2016 and expanded to include a second fall event a couple of years ago. Activities include a wine garden with tastings offered by wineries of the Piney Woods Wine Trail, artisan vendors, tasty food trucks, and live music. Picker's Pavilion at Blackberry Square, Downtown Lindale. visittindale.com

Brew Fest. Nacogdoches. 2011. April. Presented by Nac Brew Club, guests are

(Above) The pink pig bus is a favorite feature at the annual Fall Feral Hog Festival in Ben Wheeler. COURTESY PHOTO. (Opposite top) Caddo Culture Day is fun and educational each year at the Caddo Mounds State Historic Site in Alto. PHOTO BY DANA GOOLSBY. (Opposite bottom) San Jacinto Music Series features talented singer-songwriters on Friday and Saturday evenings in Rockwall every summer. COURTESY PHOTO.

invited to taste home brewed beer, wine, and mead. visittnacogdoches.org

Empty Bowls McKinney. 2011. April. Enjoy samples of gourmet soups prepared by local restaurant chefs and choose from hundreds of event bowls made by local artists. Proceeds go to local charities that provide food to those in need. McKinney Performing Arts Center. emptybowlsckinney.com

Downtown Live. Longview. 2012. April/May and Sep/Oct. Annual outdoor music series with food trucks. Heritage Plaza, Downtown Longview. visitlongviewtexas.com

Tatum Pecan Pie Festival. Tatum. 2012. April. Behind every pecan pie, corndog, funnel cake, handmade bow, antique car, and bounce house, is a mis-

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FESTIVALS *continued from page 18*

sion to bring free or low cost mammograms to the underserved. Crystal Farms Road. tatum.texas.gov

Junebug Music, Makers & Art Show. Ben Wheeler. 2012. June. Art by professional and up-and-coming artisans, live music, Lyra performances, craft cocktails, and kids arts and crafts area. The Forge Bar and Grill. theforgebenwheeler.com

Fresh 15 Race. Tyler. 2013. March. This event quickly became a destination race and leading 15K in the United States. It focuses on the runner experience with a spectator-filled course and a post-race party. In 2024, 14 states were represented and three countries. visittyler.com/business/fresh-15

Nacogdoches Wine Swirl. 2013. April. Features Texas wines, food trucks, local restaurants and downtown merchants along the old brick streets of Texas' first city. Enjoy sipping wine, shopping, live music, and historic sites. Downtown Nacogdoches. visitnacogdoches.com

Winefest. Paris. 2013. April. Sample Texas wines, dine in local restaurants, and shop with participating retailers, and enjoy an evening of entertainment. Downtown Paris. pariswinefest.com

Claws for a Cause Crawfish Boil. Sulphur Springs. 2013. April. All you can eat crawfish and fixings, plus live music. Downtown Sulphur Springs. FB.com/clawsforacause

Cinco de Mayo Celebration. Sulphur Springs. May. 2013. Live music, authentic Mexican cuisine, artisans, and colorful crafts. Downtown Sulphur Springs. visitsulphurspringstx.org

Red Dirt BBQ & Music Festival. Tyler. 2014. May. Features the best of Texas and Red Dirt music and celebrated barbecue. Downtown Tyler. reddirtbbqfest.com

Bob Wills Fiddle Festival & Contest. Greenville. 2014. November. Honors the life and music of Bob Wills with fiddling contest, concerts, dance, and more. bob-willsfest.com

Kilgore Oktoberfest. 2014. October. Authentic German-meets-Texas experi-



(Opposite) Scottish and Irish heritage are celebrated each year in Sherman. COURTESY PHOTO. (Above) A new queen and her court are selected every year as part of the festivities surrounding the Texas Rose Festival that's taken place in Tyler since 1933. PHOTO BY JAMES FRENCH.

ence with food, music, drinks, and family activities. Downtown Kilgore. visitkilgore.com/kilgore-oktoberfest

San Jacinto Music Series. Rockwall. 2014. May-September. Friday and Saturday evenings guests enjoy live music by regional talented singer-songwriters. rockwall.com/mainstreet_music.asp

ON THE RISE

The following events are less than 10 years old but there's ever indication that they are here to stay and well worth attending.

Motorized Bar Stool Races. Ben Wheeler. 2015. March. The popular races began in Dallas in 1978 and moved to Ben Wheeler a few years ago. The main attraction is the souped up motorized

carts racing down Highway 279. Other festivities include artist vendors, street food, green beer, Irish tacos, leprechaun egg rolls, and live music all day. benwheeler.com

Caddo Culture Day. Alto. 2015. April. Activities include a live performance of Caddo Indian cultural music. Activities include clay bowl making, corn husk dolls and natural dyes, flint knapping, atlatl throwing, guided tours, American Indian exhibits, Native American jewelry, and beadwork and other fun activities for the children. Caddo Mounds State Historic Site. visitcaddomounds.com

Everything Texas Ranch Run. Mount Pleasant. 2015. April. 15K and 5K trail races, and a 1K Mutton Buster for kids. Other activities include inflatables, climbing wall, and ranch breakfast. Priefert Ranch. mpleasanttx.com

Red Brick Bluegrass Festival. Nacogdoches. 2015. May. Formerly called the Blueberry Bluegrass concert, the

event features top Bluegrass performers. Festival Park. redbrickbluegrass.com

Main Street Uncorked. Sulphur Springs. 2016. October. Wine and music festival featuring Texas wineries, shopping with local vendors, and live music. mainstreetuncorkedss.com

REEL East Texas Film Festival. Kilgore. 2016. November. Celebrating a slate of indie film projects with live screenings, filmmaker Q&As, and other activities. Texan Theater, Texas Broadcast Museum. reeleasttexas.com

Paris Balloon and Music Festival. 2016. September. Hot air balloons, live music, marketplace, food trucks, and more. Lamar County Fairgrounds. paris-balloonandmusicfestival.com

Sherman Celtic Festival & Highland Games. 2017. March. Live music, Scottish and Irish dance, clan village, highland games. Pecan Grove Park. shermancelticfest.com

continued page 22



FESTIVALS *continued from page 21*

Spring Fling. Rockwall. 2018. March. Wine, prizes, and shopping with participating merchants. Downtown Rockwall. rockwall.com/mainstreet

Winnsboro Festival of Books. 2018. May. Winnsboro Center for the Arts presents a celebration of all things literary. Event includes panel discussions, author readings, a children's performance, and writers' workshops. Published adult and children authors in attendance. Bowery Pedestrian Park, Downtown Winnsboro. winnsborocenterforthearts.com

Fiesta De Mayo. Mineola. May. 2018. Street festival with a Latin flavor with live music, vendors, food, beer garden, and entertainment. Downtown Mineola. mineolachamber.org

Tribute to Townes Van Zandt. Ben Wheeler. 2019. March. Features singer-songwriters performing and paying tribute to the late Townes Van Zandt, one of the most influential singer-songwriters of the 20th century. The Forge Bar & Grill. theforgebenwheeler.com

Dogwood Arts & Music Festival. Palestine. 2019. March. Showcases Texas artists and musicians and includes food, live street performances, and children's activities. Downtown Palestine. visitpalestinex.com

Wine Swirl. Longview. 2019. April. Wine tastings. visitlongviewtexas.com/wine-swirl

Eiffel in Love with Quilts. Paris. 2019. May. Presented by the Red River Valley Quilt Guide. parisquiltshow.com

Winnsboro Cowboy Poetry & Music Gathering. 2019. Fall. Missing two years due to COVID restrictions, this event is going strong consistently now, with exciting performances of music and poetry and fun activities celebrating cowboy culture. winnsborocenterforthearts.com

Texas Hot Links Festival. Pittsburg. 2019. April. The Hot Link Capital of Texas celebrates each year with entertainment, chili cook-off, cooking competitions, farmers' market, vehicle shows, artisan alley, craft vendors, food, and plenty of hot links. Downtown Pittsburg. texashotlinkfestival.com

Hunt County Festival of the Arts. Greenville. 2022. May. Experience the talents of regional artists and a day with games, vendors, food, and music. Downtown Greenville. travelgreenvilletx.com

Cinco de Mayo. Longview. 2022. May. Celebrates Hispanic culture, food, and entertainment. Longview Arboretum and Nature Center. longviewarboretum.org

Great Pumpkin Roll. Longview. 2022. October. Participants of all ages roll pumpkins down a hill to win up to \$500 in prizes. The cost is \$2 per roll and a limited supply of pumpkins are available for purchase. In past years pumpkins have rolled up to two city blocks. The festival also features a maze, outdoor games, and vendors, food trucks, and a pumpkin pie eating contest. visit-longviewtexas.com/pumpkin

(Opposite) Uniquely adorned motorized carts are raced down the main street in downtown Ben Wheeler each year during the barstool races. COURTESY PHOTO. (Bottom) Winnsboro Art & Wine Festival began in 2010 and continues to bring thousands of visitors each year to downtown Winnsboro. PHOTO BY P.A. GEDDIE.



40th Annual Tomato Fest Scheduled in Jacksonville

The 40th Annual Tomato Fest is happening Saturday, June in downtown Jacksonville. Five blocks packed with tons of activities including car show, tomato eating contest, \$500 talent contest, 300 vendors, farmers' market, kids zone, entertainment, food, tomato peeling contest, \$325 youth talent contest, soccer tournament and more. Activities are downtown on Commerce Street with the main stage under the overpass. Activities downtown are from 8 a.m. until 3 p.m.

Saturday evening Chili's is the host location for the Tomato Fest Street Dance as the final event for the festival happening from 7 to 11 p.m. Guests can bring chairs and enjoy entertainment by Brian Chance Band, Joint Custody and Don Louis brought to you by Walter Wheeler Entertainment. A Bloody Mary Contest takes place at 7:30 p.m.

Leading up to the big day are other activities starting June 1 with the JEF Fishing Tournament at Lake Jacksonville. On the same day is a new event organized by the Rotary Club, Tour de Tomato at Jacksonville High School.

Other activities include Tomato Fest Pageant on June 2; Family First Dodgeball Tournament on June 3; Diced Cooking Competition at Kiepersol Salt Room is June 5.

On June 6, 7 and 8 the Texana Museum is showcasing the history of the tomato industry; June 7 and 8 a soccer tournament takes place inside the famous Tomato Bowl Stadium; and Commerce Street Draft House Pre-Party happens Friday, June 7.

For more information, visit www.JacksonvilleTexas.com or call (903) 586-2217.



Hazel is all in for tomato fun at the annual Tomato Fest in Jacksonville. COURTESY PHOTO

Find Sweet Surprises at the Texas Blueberry Festival



One of the most delicious festivals in Texas returns to Nacogdoches the second Saturday in June with a day-long celebration of the annual blueberry harvest, featuring live music, pick your own, delicious blueberry fare, and children's activities. The 34th annual Texas Blueberry Festival takes place from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Saturday, June 8, in historic downtown Nacogdoches — the oldest town in Texas. Admission and parking are free.

A lot of the traditional favorites are back, like the Kiwanis Blueberry Pancake Breakfast, the Vehicle Function Car Show, the True Blue Pet Parade, and plenty of Texas-grown fresh blueberries are for sale, available by the flat or by the pint.

Exciting additions to this year's lineup include the Blueberry Festival Carnival from 6 to 10 p.m. June 7 and 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. June 8 in Festival Park. More than 200 arts, crafts and food vendors are on

site, in addition to the downtown merchants and other local businesses with tons of blueberry-sweet specials and sales.

Other attractions include a 42 tournament, pie-eating contest, washerboard tournament, a cooking demonstration and cupcake contest. Visit the Cool Zone locations that allow festival attendees to

relax and take a break from the summer heat.

Prime growing conditions make Nacogdoches County and East Texas leaders in blueberry production, and the annual harvest peaks in early summer. For more information about the Texas Blueberry Festival visit www.TexasBlueberryFestival.com.



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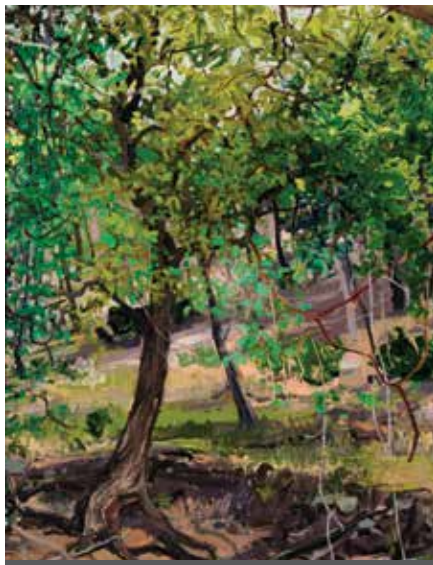


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Mother and Daughter Duo Present My Peoples Art

“My Peoples & My Partners” is an exhibition coming to Longview Museum of Fine Arts from May 30 through September 14. It features mother and daughter Lisha and Alex Mack and other local artists.

Lisha and Alex of Longview create abstract art together featuring Alex’s drawings on Lisha’s abstract background paintings. From as early as age 2, she started drawing her version of stick figures she called “My Peoples.” She filled the margins of her nursery books and pages of old magazines with her humanoid figures and eventually started using spiral notebooks. She has filled thousands of these journals with her drawings.

Lisha got the idea to collaborate with her daughter a few years ago, teaching herself to paint in the abstract to provide unique backdrops for Alex’s drawings.

Alex was the first person from her school district with Down syndrome to graduate from high school with a regular high school diploma, having advanced K-12 in totally inclusive education. She loves to write songs, poetry, and is a self-proclaimed prayer warrior. She graduates from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette in the UL LIFE (Learning Is For Everyone) program this month.

The mother and daughter team have created more than 230 paintings and sell them from their website and at nonprofit fundraisers and shows, helping to earn a living for Alex while contributing to good causes. To date, they have helped raise more than \$60,000.

A book of Lisha and Alex’s works entitled *My Peoples Art* was published by Sly-Girl Publishing House of the duo’s first 100 paintings along with stories showing the inspiration behind them.

For instance, one piece titled “The Classroom Talk,” comes with a story about how it depicts a scene from a particular day in Alex’s first grade class when her



mother came and spoke to the kids about Down syndrome and the differences in people.

The story of “Calling All Friends” is about a day in a classroom where Alex (almost) got in trouble for talking on her pretend phone.

Some of Lisha and Alex’s other painting titles include, “We Go Round in Circles,” “Our Perfect Imperfect Life,” “I Do,” and “Ring Around the Rosie.”

The “My Partners” part of the art exhibition includes 12 artists who created works in their preferred mediums. When

Lisha and Alex Mack have created more than 230 paintings together so far including “Our Perfect Imperfect Life,” (above), and “We Go Round in Circles,” (left). The mother-daughter team (opposite page) create abstract paintings with Lisha’s backdrops and Alex’s “My Peoples” stick figures. Photo by Lindsay Steele Photography

almost completed, Alex draws her abstract human figures onto the surfaces. At the point, the artist has the option to finish out the piece addressing the new elements. The partner artists are Charles Arnold, Kelly Dillard, Derek Frazier, Ryan Gillam, Frank Herbert, Zahck Israel, Dace Kidd, Becky Martin, Sara McInroe, Stacy Odum, Lauren Parish, and Carol Woolley.

LMFA is open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday through Friday and 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday. They are located at 215 E. Tyler Street in the Arts! Longview Cultural District. Visit lmfa.org for more information. Learn more about Lisha and Alex and purchase the book on my-peoplesart.com.



Writing on the Wall



By Tom Geddie

Bart Soutendijk saw the writing on the wall. And the pictures, too. The former technical writer retired from the fiber optics industry and moved from Fort Worth to Quitman about 25 years ago with his wife, Liz, to pursue art full time.

Writing — and pictures — on the wall still commands much of his time. He calls it wire wall sculpture. The concept is simple and dramatic to see, perhaps a bit more difficult to describe. The Netherlands native twists wire into images that hang on the walls of hotels, restaurants, convention centers, and other public centers and in galleries and at festivals throughout the United States.

Why wire, instead of some other medium?

“I’ve always wanted to do art, always made drawings,” he said. “It relaxes me, put me in another mindset. The work I did for Corning Glassworks, they liked because I illustrated the writing with photos and drawings, which made it easier to translate into other languages.”

An Alexander Calder exhibit in New York in 1972 influenced Soutendijk.

“I decided that was a good medium for the drawings I’ve been making all these years,” he said. Calder was famous for his mobile sculptures, but it was his earlier wire sculptures of celebrities and other subjects that impressed Soutendijk.

“I figured the drawing, which is restricted to a piece of paper, can be made very large and made a lot more exciting if it’s done with wire.”

Some of his pieces are as small as 8-10 inches high and two feet wide; others are a hundred feet wide.

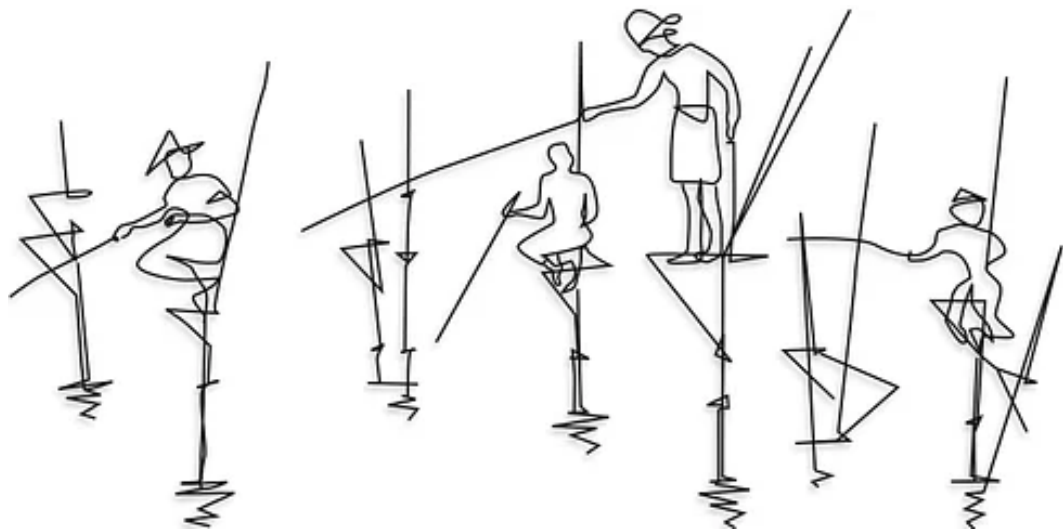
Soutendijk’s wire sculptures exemplify the Claude Levi Strauss comment that all art is essentially reduction, and the

Bart Soutendijk designs wire art for individuals, corporations, hospitals, restaurants, entertainment venues, and hotels like this one at a Hilton in New Orleans (above). Some of his custom commissions include “Stilt Fishing” (below), “Reaching Out” (opposite below), and a project for a California architect’s office (opposite top).

Charles Simic comment that the challenge in most art is trying to say more with less.

He used to do stained glass, which amounted to putting shapes together. Then he got more interested in the lines between the shapes.

“I essentially start with a drawing, a sketch





of whatever I kinda feel, then remove as many lines as possible without disturbing the feel of the image,” Soutendijk said. “I used to do that with a drafting pen and razor blade and redrawing, but the Adobe software packages changed my world, made it a lot easier.”

Sometimes Soutendijk works from photographs.

“I’ll take a photo of somebody at a carnival or someplace. I’ll look at it, at a specific line in the photo that attracted me to take the photo in the first place,” he said.

“Sometimes that’s all I end up drawing out of it. It’s not calculated. I’ve learned to look at things and see their shapes. I figure that’s pretty much what our evolutionary ancestors learned very quickly – to identify the shape of a predator without even thinking about it, so they could jump out of the way.”

The resulting wire sculptures are essentially large line drawings in space. Soutendijk normally installs the wire about an inch off of a wall so that shadows constantly change depending on the lighting and the time of day.

“The final installation, a solid line in front of a moving shadow, has scale enough to suit a large space without dominating the room,” he said. “Since it’s not on a large piece of canvas or in a frame, it sorta becomes part of the wall. The shadow gives it depth.”

Bart uses 3/32nd or 12-gauge, powder-coated bailing wire for most of his work.

“Nothing is permanent, as long as you have pliers,” he said. “I build these things, then I hang them on the wall of my workshop when they are welded together. I sit back and look at them, and

very often something’s just not right. So I cut away lines or take pliers and bend them, change things. When I have shows, I’m tempted but almost never go up and take pliers (to a piece) while people are looking at it.”

In 2020, Soutendijk started to spend more of his time selling online from his website along with two other art sites — Saatchi Art.com and Art Finder.com — and with art consultants.

“If you explore my website you will find that I create custom sculptures for residential, commercial, and public spaces. Even though I may limit my travel and don’t enter shows or approach galleries anymore, I’ve expanded my art to include mixed media sculptures, plus some very large pieces. The larger sculptures are made in several pieces that hang on the wall together. This way, they can be shipped in smaller boxes. Most recently, I have also been working on a collaborative effort with my wife on a picture book that is inspired by many wire wall scul-

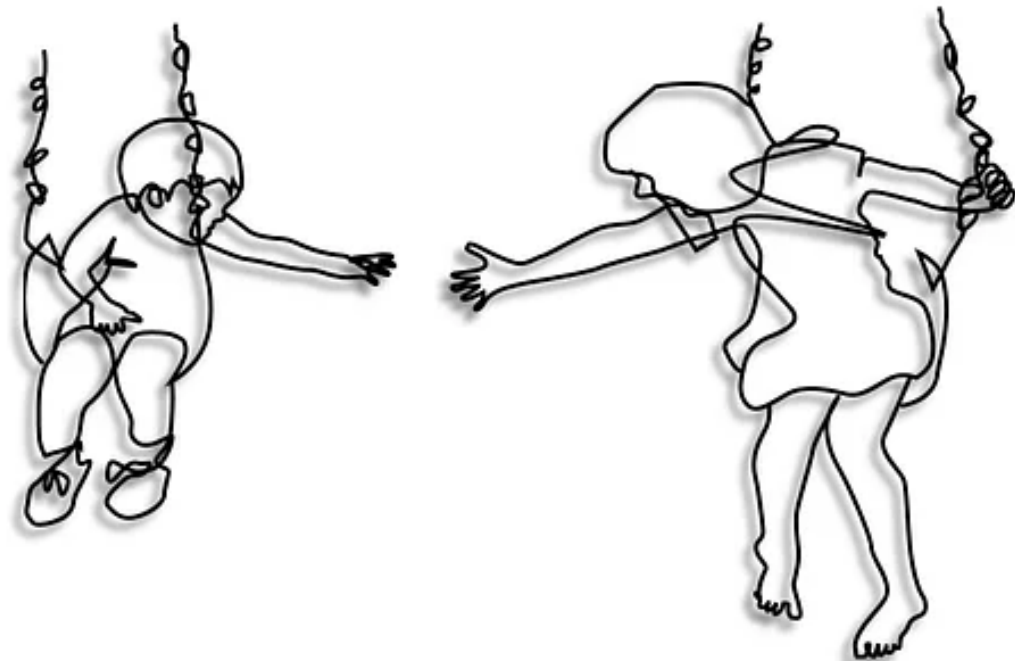
tures of children. It is called *We Played Outside*. This book will wake up the readers’ childhood memories of playing outside and the listeners will sense the fun, the playfulness and enjoy how the poems and illustrations stir their imaginations.”

Soutendijk aims for simplicity and lives by the Maya Angelou phrase that “people may forget what you said or did but they will never forget how you made them feel.”

“It’s the simpler things in life that we find we cherish when our world looks like it is coming apart,” he says. “Suddenly, holding someone’s hand takes on a new meaning, taking a bath, watching people at work and kids at play, just having fun and laughing or remembering the simpler things we enjoyed in our youth now becomes our joy.”

Explore more about the works of Bart Soutendijk on WireWallArt.com.

Excerpts of this article came from the County Line archives/April 2008.



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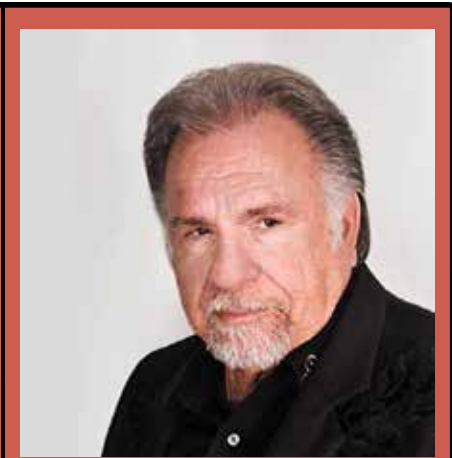
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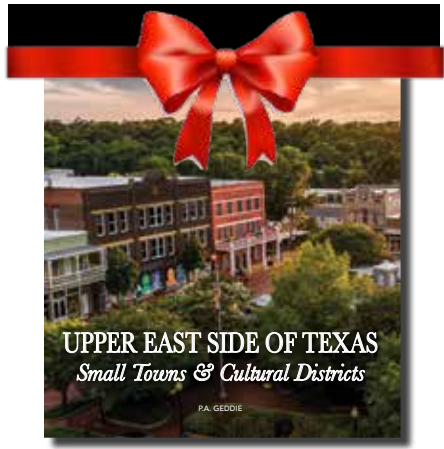


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An East Texas Tale Continues

From Big Bang to Young Sheldon, Now a Spinoff with Georgie and Mandy



Houston born Jim Parsons won the Emmy Award for Outstanding Lead Actor in a Comedy series four times for his portrayal of Sheldon Cooper in the television sitcom *The Big Bang Theory*. The show ran from September 24, 2007, to May 16, 2019, with Sheldon often commenting on his East Texas roots. The finale of *Big Bang* saw Sheldon and his longtime girlfriend Amy Farrah Fowler (Mayim Bialik) getting married.

Young Sheldon, a prequel spinoff depicting Sheldon's character as a boy, premiered on September 25, 2017, with Iain Armitage playing the young Sheldon. The story is set from 1989 into the mid 1990s

as he grows up in East Texas trying to fit into a world of people, including his own family and friends, who struggle to cope with his intellectual capabilities and social ineptitude.

His older brother Georgie is portrayed by Montana Jordan who grew up in the Ore City, Texas, community in the suburbs of Longview.

Montana made his acting debut with his role as Jaden in the film *The Legacy of a Whitetail Deer Hunter*, which starred Josh Brolin and Danny McBride. Though Montana had no previous acting experience, his funny, outgoing personality

Georgie Cooper, played by East Texas native Montana Jordan, and his wife Mandy (Emily Osment) discuss their young family dynamics in a Season 6 episode of Young Sheldon. The duo will star in a spinoff series yet to be named. PHOTO BY BILL INOSHITA/CBS. In his first role, Montana played Jaden Feruguson (opposite page), the son of a great hunter played by Josh Brolin.

prompted many in his small town to suggest that he respond to a local casting call for the movie and he was chosen for the role.

His parents are Kelli Pieratt Smith, a first-grade teacher, and Tony Jordan. He is the youngest of three children and has two older sisters. Montana spent most of

his youth racing dirt bikes and playing for the Ore City Rebels National team. He learned to play the acoustic guitar in preparation for his role as Jaden.

His endearing role as Georgie in *Young Sheldon* picked up speed over the years and this last year his character became involved with Mandy (Emily Osment) who's about 10 years older than he is and they now have a baby.

Young Sheldon is ending with a series finale airing Thursday, May 16 on CBS. Reprising their roles as the present day Sheldon Cooper and his wife Amy Farrah Fowler, Jim Parsons and Mayim Bialik will make an appearance during the final show making it extra special.

As sad as many are to say goodbye to *Young Sheldon*, the good news is there's another spinoff featuring Georgie and Mandy's characters raising their young family in East Texas. Chuck Lorre, Steven Molaro, and Steve Holland continue as the creators, the same brains behind *The Big Bang Theory* and *Young Sheldon*.

At the recent 2024 CMT Music Awards in Austin, Montana and Osment gave an update to *Entertainment Tonight's* Cassie DiLaura.

"We're so excited, I just can't wait," Osment said. "We're starting in July, I think, and we're kind of a little blown away by all the people that are around us right now, and the fact that we get to do this because this amazing show is so great."

The project has been in the works since January and is expected to be part of CBS' 2024-25 TV slate. The duo said they are ready to start filming this summer but haven't even seen a script yet.

"And we're not acting, we actually haven't," Osment swore as Montana reiterated that they "have no idea."

Montana regularly maintains his Instagram account and often shares TikTok reels.



Cinco de Mayo Calls for Delicious Tamale Pie

By Lyndsay Caldwell

I love tamales. No matter if I'm buying them for a dollar on the beach in Mexico, by the dozen from a friend's mom, or randomly from the meat market in Mount Vernon, I love them.

I do not have time to make them. They are truly a labor of love and patience that some of us, no matter how good of a cook we are, simply don't have the stamina.

But this slow cooker tamale pie I can handle on my busiest of days. The recipe is simple and slow cookers are the most under-used piece of home kitchen equipment. They do all the work! Let them! Plus, it's Cinco de Mayo time! (As if we ever need an excuse to make Mexican food.)

Tamale Pie

Makes 10-12 servings

8 oz pinto beans
 ¼ tsp baking soda
 1 ½ lb. ground beef
 1 cup diced onion
 1 Tbsp. minced garlic
 1 Tbsp. ground cumin
 1 Tbsp. smoked paprika
 1 Tbsp. chili powder
 2 tsp. salt
 2 tsp. dried oregano
 1 tsp. cayenne pepper
 1 Tbsp. olive oil
 1 14.5 oz can diced tomatoes
 1 cup frozen or fresh corn
 2 Tbsp. tomato paste
 1 recipe of Green Chile Cornbread batter (below)

Soak beans in 3 cups of water in a saucepan overnight. Add baking soda to pan and bring to a boil over high heat, reduce heat and simmer for 5 minutes. Skim and discard any foam from top. Drain beans; reserving 1 ¼ cups liquid to a 4-6 qt slow cooker.



Saute ground beef, onion, garlic, cumin, paprika, chili powder, salt, oregano, and cayenne in oil in large skillet over medium-high heat until beef is cooked through. Drain drippings and transfer mixture to slow cooker; do not stir. Cover slow cooker and cook until beans are creamy and tender on high setting, about 3 hours.

Add tomatoes and corn to slow cooker; stir in tomato paste to combine. Top filling with cornbread batter. Cover slow cooker and cook until a toothpick inserted in center of cornbread comes out clean, about 1 hour on low setting. Top with cheese and chives; cover until cheese melts; 5 minutes.

Green Chile Cornbread

¾ cup shredded sharp cheddar
 ¾ cup shredded pepper jack cheese
 ¾ cup cornmeal

¼ cup all purpose flour
 1 tsp. salt
 1 tsp. baking powder
 ½ cup buttermilk
 1 egg
 1 4.5 oz can green chiles
 2 tsp. fresh chives

Combine cheddar and pepper jack cheese in a small bowl. Whisk together cornmeal, flour, salt, and baking powder in a medium bowl. In a separate bowl, whisk together ½ cup of cheese mixture, buttermilk, egg, and chiles. Stir dry and wet ingredients until combined.* Pour into slow cooker.

*If you just want to make the cornbread, preheat the oven to 425 with a cast iron skillet inside. Follow directions above. Then pour batter into the hot skillet and bake 20 minutes. Top cornbread with cheese and cover to melt; about 3 minutes. Garnish with chives.

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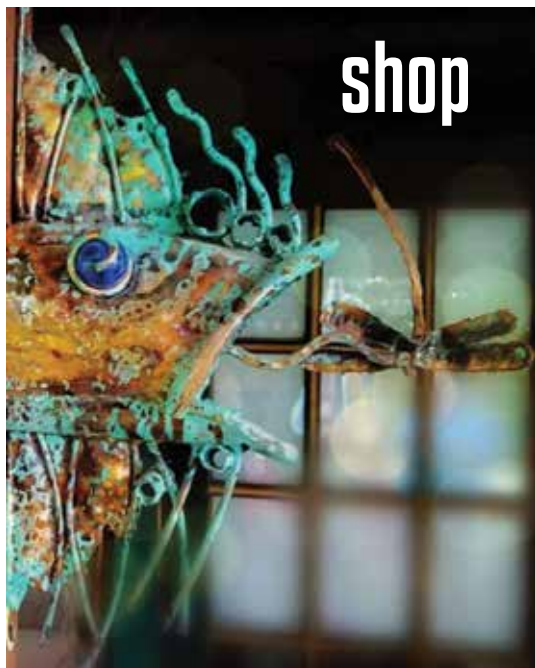


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